

A guide to Harlow Council's Relocation and Home Loss Policy

For tenants of
The Briars, Copshall Close and Aylets Field

Update
Harlow Housing Service

Updated 1 March 2016

This leaflet provides you with the changes to the Relocation Policy 1 March 2016, it gives you up to date information about relocation, moving to a new home, home loss and disturbance payments for Council's tenants that are required to leave their homes at The Briars, Copshall Close and Aylets Field on a permanent or temporary basis, due to the redevelopment of the area.

Harlow Council wants to ease the stress and inconvenience with people having to leave their home. We will work closely with you to ensure your move is as easy as possible. You may be entitled to a Statutory Home Loss payment. The Government decides the amount that you are entitled to receive in these circumstances. You may also be entitled to a disturbance allowance.

Some of the changes to the policy include:

- An increase in the amount of money you may receive through the home loss payment
- More details of how the Council will provide you with an alternative home temporary or permanent
- More flexibility for those that have special circumstances
- Additional information of what happens if I refuse a property

What is a 'Relocation'?

A relocation is where we need to move you to alternative accommodation either temporarily or permanently due to your home being demolished for redevelopment.

When will my home be demolished?

The Council aim to move all residents in Phase 2 by 1 April 2017. Once all residents have vacated their property the Council will pass the properties with the land to the developer who will decide when the properties will be demolished. The developer will demolish the properties in line with their planned programme.

When can I move?

Residents in Phase 2 are required to commence the process of moving to an alternative property this year. The resident will be entitled to a Home Loss Payment and a Disturbance Allowance (see page 6)

Residents in Phase 3 do not need to move at this time. They will not be entitled to any additional payments unless the Council has agreed due to special circumstances.

Can I remain living in the area?

You will be given the option to remain living in the area, in one of the new homes, when they have been built. However, due to the redevelopment you may be required to move on a temporary basis until the development has been completed.

Can I move to alternative permanent accommodation?

Yes, you can move to an alternative accommodation owned and managed by Harlow Council. You may also wish to consider a property owned and managed by a Housing Association; any such properties available will be advertised through the Council's bidding system.

What size and type of property am I entitled to?

Overcrowded: If you live in a property where you are overcrowded you will only be entitled to the same size property when you move, with the exception of those that are living in a bedsit.

Under-Occupation: If you live in a property larger than your housing need and are under-occupying by one bedroom or more, you will be re-housed into a home which is more suited to your housing need. However, you will be entitled to a maximum of one bedroom over.

This table gives you details of your property entitlement.

Current Property Type	Family Composition	Property Entitlement
Bed Sit	Single person/Couple household	1 bed flat
	Couple or Single household plus 1 or more dependants	2 bed flat or maisonette
3 Bed bungalow (includes conversions from 3 beds to 2)	Single Person/Couple household	2 bed house or flat
	Couple or Single household plus 1 or more dependants	3 bed house or flat
4 Bed bungalow	Single Person/Couple household	2 bed house or flat
	Couple or Single household plus 1 dependant	3 bed house or flat
	Couple or Single household plus 2 or more dependants	4 bed house

What support will I receive as I need more help?

The Council are aware that some of its tenants may be vulnerable due to age, disability, illnesses or health problems and you may require extra support. In exceptional circumstances the Council may move a tenant and their family earlier than planned. The Council will complete a housing needs assessment and consider each tenant on a case by case basis. If you think you may need to move earlier or require support please contact the Council.

If I move now before the re-development will I receive a compensation payment and will I be entitled (if under-occupying) to still move to a property larger than my needs?

If you move home before the start of your phase of the relocation programme, you will not be entitled to a Home Loss Payment or a Disturbance Allowance.

You will only be entitled to move to a property that meets your housing need. No additional priority will be awarded due to relocation and your application will be assessed based on the Council's Allocation Policy.

Will I be able to move to a bungalow?

The Council own a very small supply of two and three bedroom bungalows; therefore it is very unlikely you will move to another. Bungalows that are available will be advertised so you may wish to place a bid. Alternatively, consider a one bedroom bungalow where there is slightly more availability.

Can I move into Supported Housing (Sheltered Housing)?

Yes, the Council provides supported housing that is self-contained. This is for people aged 65 or over or people who have been assessed for support who do want to live independently, whilst having the added security of knowing that assistance is available 24 hours a day.

How will I receive an offer of alternative accommodation?

You can bid for properties every week through the Councils Housing Allocations Scheme www.harlow.homefinder.co.uk . You will be placed in Band 1 (the highest band position on the Housing Needs Register).

You will need to make sure you place regular weekly bids for an alternative property. The Council will make a direct offer of a property if you have failed to secure an offer within 18 weeks of the initial interview with the Housing Officer.

If no bids are placed or no successful bid is received within the first twelve weeks you will be contacted, advice given, area requirements discussed and a further six weeks for bidding allowed.

If no subsequent successful bid is received, the Council will make a direct offer of property.

What happens if I do not move?

If you refuse to move or refuse an offer of suitable accommodation, the Council may start legal proceedings to gain possession of your property. It is important you discuss any concerns with your Housing Officer early to prevent the Council from taking legal action.

What happens if I refuse offers of accommodation?

It is really important that you bid for properties where you do want to live, if you are successful and you refuse a property:

- The Council will allow you to refuse your first offer of accommodation
- Second offer the Council will review, if the offer is found to be reasonable, you will no longer be able to bid for properties. The Council will make you one reasonable direct offer of a property.
- Third offer the Council will review, if the offer is found to be reasonable legal proceedings will commence to take possession of your property

Moving temporarily or permanently

For each phase of the relocation process tenants who are moving permanently will be considered first for each property they have bid for. i.e. they will be considered ahead of those moving on a temporary basis.

For Example

Mrs A is moving temporary and will return once the development has been completed. (Phase 1)

Mr Z is moving on a permanent basis and will not be returning. (Phase 1)

Ms T is moving on a permanent basis and will not be returning (Phase 2)

Mrs A, Mr Z and Ms T have all bid for the same property Mr Z will be offered the property as Mrs A is moving temporary and Ms T is in phase 2.

The Council has the right to gain possession of the property if you refuse to move or accept an offer. We will only consider taking legal action as a last resort and will work with you to prevent this from happening.

Will I be entitled to compensation when I move?

The Council will make reasonable payments to tenants who suffer a loss, disadvantage or have extra costs to pay because of having to move home. There are two types of payments that you will receive: a Home Loss payment and a Disturbance Allowance.

What is a home loss payment?

This payment is a fixed payment that we give to tenants to compensate for the loss of their bungalow due to redevelopment.

How much will I receive?

The Government decide how much you will receive. This is currently a flat rate payment of £5,300.

What is a disturbance allowance?

When you vacate your home we will meet the reasonable disturbance costs you incur for moving out of your home on a permanent or temporary basis. You will need to produce receipts.

How much will I receive?

The Council will consider up to a maximum of £8,000.

Are there any other financial incentives?

Through the Tenant Moves Incentive Scheme, the Council can offer further financial assistance to those moving on a permanent basis and who are downsizing their property by at least one bedroom.

Current payments are:

- £1,000 for giving up one bedroom
- £1,500 for giving up two bedrooms
- £2,000 for giving up three bedrooms
- £1,000 If you move from a bungalow to a flat or maisonette

What can I claim for?

- Removal expenses
- Costs of altering soft furnishings
- Re-connecting movable fixtures and fittings
- Telephone and broadband reconnection charges
- Storage
- Disconnection and reconnection of cookers and gas fires, washing machines, dishwashers and television aerials, satellite TV equipment
- Carpeting: uplifting, refitting and/or replacement
- Curtains and blinds - refitting and/or replacement
- Redecoration - in those cases where the present standard exceeds current Council standards - which may mean you will not get enough to fully redecorate your new home
- School uniforms (for change of school)
- Loss of wages incurred in the removal
- Agents fees (e.g. solicitors or surveyors costs in connection with the claim)
- Redirection of post
- Refitting of alarms and alarms systems

How do I find out further Information regarding the relocation and home loss policy?

The full policy is available on the website **www.harlow.gov.uk**

If you do not have internet access you can contact Harlow Council by telephoning **01279 446655** to request a copy or alternatively call into the Civic Centre.