

Swindon Borough Council People Development

Title:	Relocation Policy
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Endorsed by:	Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services
Implementation date:	January 2017
Date last reviewed:	January 2017
This document replaces:	Relocation Policy (October 2005)
Reference Number:	PD 016

Introduction

Relocation assistance may be provided to assist with out-of-pocket expenses incurred when new employees relocate as a result of their employment with the Council.

Employees will need to meet the eligibility criteria in order to qualify for any relocation assistance.

Relocation assistance is discretionary. It is not a contractual entitlement and the Council reserves the right to withdraw it at any time.

This policy supports the recruitment process by offering financial assistance to new employees who have to move home to take up a role with the Council.

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What does the relocation scheme involve?

1. The aim of the scheme is to provide financial assistance to employees (up to a maximum of £8000 (including VAT)) who need to move from their main residence to take up an appointment with the Council.
2. The scheme does not cover the purchase of a second property.
3. The scheme includes:

Legal and Estate Agent Charges (including stamp duty)	The cost of legal, estate agents, advertising mortgage and survey fees attributable to the sale of the main residence and purchase of a new property as a result of the appointment are refundable. Original receipts must be provided.
Disturbance / Settling in Allowance	The cost of the necessary adaptations of furniture, fittings and carpets are refundable up to a maximum of £750. This does not apply to portable items such as sofas, televisions etc. Original receipts must be provided.
Search for accommodation	Employees may be granted up to 2 days additional paid leave, if necessary, following the date of appointment for the purpose of searching for new accommodation.
Weekly travel home costs (up to 6 months)	Employees may be granted (up to 6 months from appointment) return travel costs where they are necessarily separated from their family. A return standard rail fare or mileage will be refunded in respect of an employee's journey home once a week.
Removal expenses	The full amount of removal expenses, including insurance in transit, will be refunded based on the lower of 2 quotations from recognised contractors.
	Where an employee chooses to carry out a removal on their own, expenses will be restricted to the reimbursement of vehicle hire and fuel.
	Expenses arising from temporary accommodation or storage to permanent accommodation will be reimbursed only if incurred within 12 months of appointment.
	The cost of a single journey at standard rail fare rate or mileage rate in respect of the employee and their direct dependants with them will be refunded in connection with any necessary removal.
	The Council will accept the full cost of any necessary storage of normal household effects and furniture for a period of not exceeding 6 months based on the lower of 2 official quotations.

Temporary accommodation	Temporary accommodation may be secured for up to 6 months with the agreement of the Director. The Council may make a contribution to the additional costs of the accommodation only, up to a maximum of £165 a week for up to 6 months.
	Deposits to rented accommodation will not be paid.

4. All the above provisions are subject to the completion of a completed Relocation Expenses Form (RE2) and authorised by the employee's line manager.
5. No expenses will be paid for travel or transportation of people or goods other than from the United Kingdom. Employees moving from overseas shall be required to produce separate tenders for costs incurred after disembarkation on the mainland.
6. The scheme is limited to one member of each household. No payments will be made to an employee whose partner or other members of the household has already obtained employment in the area and has been eligible to receive financial assistance from another source.

Advertising a role

7. A role is deemed to be suitable for relocation expenses if it is a hard to recruit role or has a salary of £50,000 and above. The role will be determined by the Recruitment Business Partner, Head of People Development and the HR Business Partners.
8. The decision to offer a relocation package will be made prior to the role being advertised and must be authorised by the relevant Director following a discussion with their HR Business Partner and Head of Finance.
9. The maximum amount of expenses offered is £8,000 (including VAT).
10. Relocation expenses will be paid out of the service area's budget.

Eligibility

11. Employees taking up their first appointment with the Council will qualify for consideration of a relocation package provided that:
 - At the time of appointment the employee does not live within a 25 miles radius of their main work base.

- Arising from the appointment, the employee is moving to a main residence and can provide evidence of this move within 12 months from appointment.
- The employee relocates their main residence to within a 25 mile radius of their new work base in order to carry out their duties. Directors have the discretion to vary this distance if it enables a prospective employee to relocate.
- The employee must certify that removal has occurred solely as a result of the appointment.
- The employee must declare on the Relocation Expenses Indemnity Form the amount of relocation expenses / assistance (if any) is being received by other members of the family / household from another source. Any false declaration is a disciplinary offence and will be managed under the [Council's Disciplinary Policy](#).
- Assistance will be granted on the assumption that an employee relocates their main residence and after appointment makes a serious effort to secure appropriate permanent accommodation as soon as is reasonably practicable.
- Tenants of rented properties will not be eligible for all payments. If an employee is buying their first home then assistance will not be given towards legal and estate agents fees.
- Reimbursement is conditional upon the employee producing all the necessary official quotations, VAT invoices and original receipts for any expenses incurred. The Council is able to recoup any VAT amounts paid on receipt of full VAT registered invoices and original receipts, therefore these should be submitted to the Council for payment. Employees will be required to complete the Relocation Expenses Form, which is available on the intranet, to claim for any expenses incurred.
- They complete the Relocation Expenses Indemnity Form (RE1).

Leaving the Council

12. If an employee voluntarily leaves employment with the Council, within 3 years of appointment, they will be liable to repay the financial assistance granted under this scheme as follows:

Leaves within 24 months of commencement.	Pay back 100% of the cost.
Leaves after 24 months but within 36 months of commencement.	Pays back 60% of the cost.

13. Employees who are made redundant by the Council or leave the Council under ill-health retirement are exempt.

Tax and National Insurance

14. Under Inland Revenue Regulations, the first £8,000 (including VAT) of any relocation expenses provided by an employer is exempt from tax and National Insurance Contributions.
15. If the total exceeds this limit, the excess is subject to tax deductions under the Inland Revenue benefits in kind (P11D) arrangements, which the employee has to pay.
16. The Council's relocation package is up to £8,000 (including VAT).

Equal opportunities

This policy has been Diversity Impact Assessed (DIA) to identify opportunities to promote equality and mitigate any negative or adverse impacts on particular groups.

Legislation

- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Income Tax (Earnings and Pensions) Act 2003

This policy has been reviewed by Legal Services to ensure compliance with (the above legislation and) our statutory duties.

Advice and guidance

If you require help in accessing or understanding this policy you should contact your line manager or trade union representative if you are a member.

If, due to the nature of your query, it is not appropriate to contact your line manager you should contact your head of service who will nominate an appropriate manager or colleague to help you.

Further information

There are a number of related policies and documentation that should be read in conjunction with this policy:

- [Disciplinary Policy](#)
- [Relocation Policy Employee Factsheet](#)

For further information please speak to your supervisor, manager, head of service or contact HR First Response. Trade Unions members can also contact their Branch.