TRANSFER INCENTIVE SCHEME POLICY

1. Introduction
Brighton & Hove City Council has a limited supply of family sized accommodation and properties adapted to be wheelchair accessible. The council has therefore adopted an under-occupation incentive scheme in order to free up these properties. This scheme (TIS) is for council tenants who have 1 or more bedrooms they no longer need and are interested in downsizing or ending their tenancy. Tenants have the option of transferring to another social housing property or moving to the private sector.

The scheme is also available for tenants who have a wheelchair-adapted property they no longer require and who could move to a new home without adaptations (even with the same number of bedrooms), freeing up an accessible property for someone who needs it.

Under the Transfer Incentive Scheme, council tenants who are giving up these types of accommodation are eligible for cash incentives and are given the highest priority for re-housing in the allocations scheme.

Housing association tenants living in Brighton and Hove who are either under-occupying or no longer need a wheelchair-adapted property can apply to move through Homemove on the Transfer Support Scheme and if eligible are also given the highest priority for re-housing.

For more information, please contact the Homemove Team on 01273 294400 (please select option 1) or e-mail TransferUnderOccupying@brighton-hove.gov.uk

2. Eligibility
The Transfer Incentive Scheme (TIS) is available to tenants who meet the following criteria:

- Have held a Secure Tenancy Agreement for at least 12 months (Introductory Tenancies are not eligible)
- Occupy a general needs family property* or occupy wheelchair accessible accommodation**
- Agree to transfer to smaller accommodation that meets their needs and/or a non-adapted property, and provide vacant possession of their present home. Or to relinquish their Standard Tenancy completely and move to the private sector. Proof of tenancy agreement or proof of purchase will be required before any payments are released.
- Have a clear rent account or have an agreement in place to clear arrears and Housing Income Management agrees that a move can take place

Housing income management will be consulted to confirm they are in agreement for them to move specially when tenants are in rent arrears, but are not subject to a possession order.

* through this scheme general needs family properties are classified as houses, bungalows or flats with two bedrooms or more
** in this instance a wheelchair accessible property would be classified as accommodation fully adapted for a wheelchair user or a property that has level or ramped access with wheelchair access to all essential rooms within the property, but may not have wheelchair access to all areas of the property

3. Ineligibility
A Transfer Incentive Grant will not be available to those persons:

- Who are subject to a possession order
- Who have been served with a Notice of Seeking Possession for anti-social behaviour
- Who have been served with a Demotion Notice
- Who hold an introductory tenancy or are licensees
- Who have previously received a Transfer Incentive Scheme payment
- Who are above the income and savings cap established in the Housing Allocations policy.
  (band A will be given – no money incentive)
4. Incentive Payments
A fixed incentive payment will be paid at the following rates to those transferring from family-sized general needs accommodation to smaller or non-adapted property.
- £1,000 if you give up one bedroom
- £1,500 if you give up two bedrooms
- £2,000 if you give up three bedrooms
- £2,500 if you give up four bedrooms
- £1,000 if you give up a wheelchair-adapted property (even if you keep the same number of bedrooms)

The above payments will be subject to budget limits. If there are more requests for transfer incentive grants than there is funding available, the council will:
- Reduce the amount of payments made through the scheme
- Give priority to those moving from accommodation that is more urgently needed
- Assist with a transfer in the new financial year

Brighton and Hove City Council reserves the right to reduce the payments above by:
- Any Housing Related Debts owed to the council at the time of transfer; and/or
- The cost of any works that the Council has to undertake to the vacated premises as a result of damage or neglect on the part of the tenant; and/or
- Any outstanding court costs

Payments will be authorised once the tenant has moved, provided their new tenancy agreement or proof of purchase and following an inspection of the vacated property. Applicants must be registered on the scheme 1 month before a move takes place for a payment to be authorised.

5. Financial Resources
The annual budget for the existing scheme is currently £150,000. The scheme will be kept under review and the need for any additional funding will be dealt with as part of the annual budget setting process.

6. Applications & Assessment
Transfer applicants must complete a Housing Register application and The Transfer Incentive application form is included as part of the housing application form.
Application forms are available from our website www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/ and any council housing offices in Brighton and Hove.

Once a transfer applicant has been accepted onto the scheme they will be given a Band A priority by the Homemove Team with details of the size of property they are eligible for. Applicants will then be able to ‘bid’ for available properties. Full details of the scheme are available at www.homemove.org.uk

7. Private Sector Renting
Incentive payments are also available for those who wish to move into the private sector to rent privately and are giving up family or adapted accommodation, as described above. Tenants must complete a TIS application form and return to the Homemove team prior to a move taking place. Proof that the applicant is moving into a sustainable tenancy will be required (e.g. tenancy agreement). Please note that applications for this scheme must be received at least one month before the tenancy ends.

8. Purchasing a property
Incentive payments are also available for those who wish to move into the private to purchase a property and are giving up family or adapted accommodation, as described above. Tenants must complete a TIS application form and return to the Homemove team prior to a move taking place. Proof that the applicant has purchased a property will be required (e.g. deeds). Please note that applications for this scheme must be received at least one month before the tenancy ends.