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LOCHALSH AND SKYE HOUSING ASSOCIATION

# Highland Housing Register Downsizing Policy

<b>DATE APPROVED:</b>	<b>8 November 2010</b>
<b>APPROVED BY:</b>	<b>Management Committee</b>
<b>DATE OF REVIEW:</b>	<b>November 2013</b>

# **HIGHLAND HOUSING REGISTER - DOWNSIZING POLICY**

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## **HIGHLAND HOUSING REGISTER - DOWNSIZING POLICY**

### **1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to maximise opportunities for much needed family homes by assisting tenants of Highland Housing Register landlords to move to a smaller home when they want to.

The policy aims:

- a) To provide financial and practical assistance to tenants who already want to move to a smaller home.
- b) In turn, to encourage other tenants to consider a move at an earlier stage than they might otherwise have done.

Reasons to consider moving to a smaller home include:

- Finding your home becoming too costly to run and difficult to manage
- The number of people in the household has reduced (eg, children have grown up and left home)
- You may want to move to a different location to be nearer family, work or carers
- Finding the stairs too difficult to manage

- 1.2 In these circumstances, eligible Highland Housing Register tenants who would like to move to a smaller home can be supported with financial and practical help that make moving home a more positive experience

### **2. PRINCIPLES**

- 2.1 This approach to managing under-occupation supports 2 of the main aims of Highland Housing Register Allocations Policy:
- Making best use of any available social rented stock
  - Helping households in housing need achieve suitable housing

### **3. ELIGIBILITY**

- 3.1 Eligibility for the ***Downsizing Scheme*** is open to secure tenants of any Highland Housing Register landlord who applies to move to a smaller house in the Highland area **where:**

- There is evidenced need that the type, size and location of the home they are leaving can be used to accommodate a family in housing need
- **and** they accept an offer of a smaller sized house from one of the Highland Housing Register partner landlords.

**Additional priority will apply where** an adaptation is required to the existing home and a move to a smaller house will appropriately meet this need.

#### 4. **WHAT'S INCLUDED IN THE DOWNSIZING SCHEME?**

Eligible tenants will qualify for the following financial and practical support. This is separate to any Decoration Allowance that a landlord may pay for the condition of the new home.

<b>Financial Assistance</b>	
£300	For accepting a home with one less bedroom
£400	For each subsequent bedroom given up
£800	For removal costs to cover <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Packing &amp; unpacking</li> <li>• Van hire</li> <li>• phone reconnection</li> <li>• mail redirection</li> <li>• white goods disconnection &amp; reconnection</li> </ul>
<b>Practical Assistance</b>	
Helping with information & advice about the Downsizing Scheme	
Helping with form filling	
Helping with viewings and removal arrangements	
Helping with arrangements to disconnect & reconnect utilities	
Helping with notifications eg, change of address, GP, Bank	
Helping with arrangements and disposal of unwanted furniture	
Helping with Housing Benefit and income maximisation	
Helping with preparation of the new home	

#### 5. **HOW TO APPLY FOR THE DOWNSIZING SCHEME**

- 5.1 Interested tenants should complete a Highland Housing Register Application Form if they have not already done so. This provides personal information about the circumstances and reasons for applying for a smaller home as well as details of the type & location of housing choices.
- 5.2 Applications from households seeking to move to a smaller home will be assessed according to the demand and need for the property type, size and location of their current home. The relevant Highland Housing Register landlord will write to confirm when such applications are eligible for the Downsizing Scheme and that that

payment and practical help will be made available once an offer of alternative housing has been accepted.

- 5.3 A Housing Officer will make contact with eligible applicants to help them through the process of moving home. This will include information and advice about the possible timescales, starting to take practical steps to prepare for moving and building confidence for the move.

## 6. **REVIEW**

- 6.1 This policy was approved by the Management Committee on 8 November 2010 and will be reviewed by the Management Committee or Sub-Committee set up for that purpose no later than November 2013.
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