



RIGHTSIZING POLICY

Policy reference	HM004
Department	Housing Management
Author	Tracy O'Connor
Owner	Carl Tring-Willis
Version	1
Reason for revision	Triennial Review of previous policy (Home Release Policy)
Status	Final
Intended recipients	Tenants and Staff
Training and dissemination	Internal/External
To be read in conjunction with (other policies)	Allocations Policy
Has equalities impact assessment been considered? Please include within policy.	Yes
Policy approved by Designation/Date	
Meeting Approved	Operational Committee
Date	12.06.2026
Implementation Date	13.06.2026
Review period	Triennial
Next review date	June 2029

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Scheme Objectives**
- 3. Scheme Eligibility**
- 4. Rightsizing Scheme Incentives**
- 5. Applications and Assessment**
- 6. Allocations Policy**
- 7. Accepting an Offer of Accommodation**
- 8. After Rightsizing Takes Place**
- 9. Budget Limitations of the Scheme**
- 10. Right to Appeal**
- 11. Responsibilities Under This Scheme**
- 12. Risk Management**
- 13. Data Protection, Record Storage and Retention**
- 14. Equality and Diversity**
- 15. Communication**
- 16. Learning and Development**
- 17. Consultation and Continuous Improvement**

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Over time, a household's accommodation needs may change, and a property may become larger than required. This commonly occurs when household members move out of the family home.

1.2 Where a household is under-occupying a property following a change in circumstances, tenants may also be affected by under-occupation deductions to eligible benefits.

1.3 Moving to a smaller property can offer practical and financial benefits, including reduced maintenance responsibilities and lower heating, council tax, and water costs.

1.4 Tenants of Derby City Council or Derby Homes may qualify for the Rightsizing Scheme. The scheme provides support and financial assistance to tenants who wish to transfer to smaller, more manageable, and more affordable homes.

1.5 The scheme also supports the more effective use of the Council's housing stock by releasing larger family-sized properties that are in high demand for households who need them most.

1.6 The Council recognises that moving home is a significant life event. Following consultation with tenants, this scheme has been updated to improve clarity, accessibility, and support, particularly for vulnerable households and those facing practical or emotional barriers to moving.

2.0 Scheme Objectives

2.1 The key objectives of the Rightsizing Scheme are to:

- Encourage and support tenants who are under-occupying family accommodation to move to smaller homes that better meet their needs.
- Make the best use of the Council's housing stock.
- Release larger family homes to help meet housing demand.
- Provide tenants with financial incentives and practical support when moving home.

3.0 Scheme Eligibility

3.1 To be eligible for the Rightsizing Scheme, the following criteria must be met:

- The applicant must be a tenant of Derby City Council or Derby Homes.
- The applicant must hold a secure or assured tenancy at their current home.
- The applicant must have complied with the terms of their tenancy agreement.
- The applicant must be under-occupying a general needs family home by one or more bedrooms when assessed against Derby City Council's Allocations Policy.
- The applicant must agree to provide vacant possession of their current home.

3.2 Applications will not be accepted where:

- The move would result in homelessness for a member of the current household.
- The move would result in the tenant or their household becoming overcrowded.
- The tenant holds an introductory or flexible tenancy.
- The tenant is required to downsize following a succession where they are not the deceased tenant's spouse, civil partner or surviving joint tenant.
- The tenant is being decanted due to redevelopment or major repairs to their current property.
- The tenant has received a Downsizing or Rightsizing incentive payment from Derby City Council within the previous two years.

3.3 The Council will provide clear guidance to applicants on how eligibility is determined, including tenancy type and how under-occupation is assessed under the Allocations Policy. Assistance will be available where tenants are unsure of their eligibility.

4.0 Rightsizing Scheme Incentives

4.1 Eligible tenants who downsize through the scheme will receive:

Financial Incentive

Eligible tenants who choose to downsize through the scheme can receive a one-off home set-up payment to help them settle into their new home:

- £1,000 will be paid for each bedroom they release.
- Payments are capped at a maximum of £3,000, even if more bedrooms are released.

For example, a tenant moving from a 3-bedroom property to a 1-bedroom property would release 2 bedrooms and be eligible for £2,000.

Practical Support

Tenants will be supported by a **named Housing Officer**, who will act as a single point of contact throughout the process.

Practical support may include (subject to assessment and availability):

- Arranging and coordinating removals
- Assistance with packing and moving for vulnerable tenants
- Liaison with utility providers (advice and/or practical support)
- Support with updating benefit claims and address changes
- Disposal of unwanted items (where agreed)
- Disconnection/reconnection of appliances where appropriate

4.2 The Council will provide clear written guidance setting out what support is directly provided and what is facilitated through partners or contractors.

The Council will provide clear information prior to the move outlining:

- When payments will be made
- Potential deductions and how these are calculated
- Examples of fair wear and tear versus rechargeable damage

5.0 Applications and Assessment

5.1 Applicants wishing to be considered for the Rightsizing Scheme must complete the Rightsizing Application Form. Assistance with completing the application form can be provided upon request.

5.2 Applicants must also be registered with Derby Homefinder, the Council's Choice Based Lettings Scheme. Assistance with registration can be provided if required.

5.3 Applications will be assessed to determine whether the eligibility criteria for the Rightsizing Scheme are met.

5.4 Applicants may express an interest in available properties by placing bids through the Homefinder Scheme. Assistance with bidding can be provided upon request.

5.5 Applicants may also receive a direct offer of suitable smaller accommodation.

5.6 The Council will ensure that guidance clearly explains:

- When and how to apply to the scheme
- How the scheme interacts with the Homefinder bidding process
- What happens after an application is approved

5.7 The Council anticipates that most applications to access the Rightsizing Scheme will be made prior to a tenant accepting an offer of accommodation, as information about the scheme will be proactively provided throughout the rehousing process. This will include promotion of the scheme through published materials, offer correspondence, and discussion at both offer and escorted viewing stages.

5.8 To provide additional flexibility, applications will normally continue to be accepted for up to four weeks following the completion of a move. Where an application is submitted after the move has occurred, the incentives that could have been offered prior to the move may be reduced.

6.0 Allocations Policy

6.1 Derby City Council's Allocations Policy gives the highest priority band to tenants who are releasing under-occupied properties, provided they meet the eligibility criteria. Tenants must demonstrate that they are:

- Eligible for accommodation in accordance with the Allocations Policy.
- Able to demonstrate sufficient income to pay rent.
- Receiving an offer of accommodation considered suitable and reasonable in accordance with the Allocations Policy.

6.2 The Council may make a direct offer outside of the Choice Based Lettings bidding system and occasionally outside of the band and date order system for strategic, operational, or financial reasons.

6.3 The number of offers made under the Rightsizing Scheme will be in line with the Council's Allocations Policy.

6.4 The Council will provide support to tenants who may have difficulty accessing or using the Choice Based Lettings system, including assisted bidding and alternative methods where appropriate.

7.0 Accepting an Offer of Accommodation

7.1 In determining whether an offer is suitable, the Council will consider:

- Medical and mobility needs

- Safety and wellbeing considerations
- Access to support networks where relevant

7.2 An escorted viewing will be arranged for properties offered through the Rightsizing Scheme. The applicant will be shown around the property and asked to decide whether they wish to accept the offer.

7.3 Acceptance of an offer of smaller accommodation will not affect the tenant's continuity of tenure.

7.4 If the property is accepted during the viewing, a dedicated Housing Officer will be appointed to support the tenant through the moving process.

7.5 Once the property is ready to let; the tenant will terminate their current tenancy and sign a new tenancy agreement for the property they will move into.

8.0 After Rightsizing Takes Place

8.1 The Council will provide clearer guidance in advance regarding property condition expectations and how post-inspection deductions are assessed to ensure transparency and reduce uncertainty for tenants.

8.2 The tenant will receive the incentive payment via bank transfer once the move has been completed and the keys to the vacated property have been returned.

8.3 Prior to issuing any payment, the vacated property will be inspected. Any rechargeable repairs or clearance costs identified that exceed normal wear and tear may be deducted from the incentive payment. This may include the cost of removing excessive items left in the property or garden without prior agreement with Derby Homes.

8.4 Where the tenancy is a joint tenancy, the incentive payment will normally be split equally between the tenants. However, the payment may be made into one bank account with written agreement from both tenants.

8.5 Tenants who have received an under-occupation incentive payment should not subsequently increase their household size in a way that results in overcrowding in the new property.

8.6 Tenants may apply for a further transfer in the usual way under the Council's Allocations Policy. However, if another transfer takes place within two years of receiving the incentive payment, the Council reserves the right to request repayment of the incentive grant.

9.0 Budget Limitations of the Scheme

9.1 The Council will communicate clearly with applicants where budget limitations may affect access to the scheme.

9.2 The Rightsizing Scheme is subject to an annual budget. Once the allocated budget has been fully committed, the scheme may be paused for the remainder of the financial year.

9.3 Where this occurs, a waiting list may be maintained. Priority may be given to applications that release the greatest number of bedrooms or where the move will have the greatest positive impact on housing demand.

9.4 The Council reserves the right to reduce incentive payments by:

- Any current or former rent arrears
- Use and occupation charges
- Housing benefit overpayments
- Court costs
- Rechargeable repairs including those that might arise after the vacated property has been inspected.
- Repayable rent deposits owed to the Council at the time of transfer

9.5 Payments will be authorised once the tenant has moved and following inspection of the vacated property.

10.0 Right to Appeal

10.1 Appeals will take into account individual circumstances, including vulnerability, medical needs, and safeguarding considerations.

10.2 All tenants who apply to move under the Rightsizing Scheme will be informed in writing of the decision regarding their application.

10.3 Applicants have the right to appeal the decision through the Council's appeals procedure. Details of how to appeal will be provided in the decision letter.

10.4 Incentives under this scheme are only available for new applications made after the implementation date of this policy and while sufficient funding remains available.

11.0 Responsibilities Under This Scheme

11.1 The Head of Housing Management is responsible for overseeing the implementation of this scheme.

11.2 The Area Housing Services Managers and Social Housing Options Manager are responsible for operational delivery of the scheme and the associated procedures. This includes responsibility for monitoring, reviewing, staff awareness and training, policy development, and communication with tenants.

11.3 All housing staff will be made aware of the scheme so that they can identify tenants who may benefit and promote the initiative.

12.0 Risk Management

12.1 The key risks associated with this scheme include:

1. Failure to effectively promote the Rightsizing Scheme

Potential impact:

- Inefficient use of council housing stock
- Reduced availability of larger homes for families
- Increased resident dissatisfaction and complaints
- Reputational damage

2. Insufficient budget allocation to meet demand

Potential impact:

- Reduced ability to release under-occupied properties
- Increased resident dissatisfaction
- Reputational damage

- 3 Failure to adequately support vulnerable tenants through the process

Potential impact:

- Reduced uptake of the scheme
- Increased tenancy sustainment issues
- Increased safeguarding concerns
- Reputational damage

13.0 Data Protection, Record Storage and Retention

13.1 Personal data will be handled in accordance with the **UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)** and the **Data Protection Act 2018**.

13.2 Personal information relating to tenants will be stored securely on Derby Homes and Derby City Council systems and managed in accordance with the Council's Data Protection and Document Retention Policies.

14.0 Equality and Diversity

14.1 The Council recognises that some tenants may face additional barriers to moving, including disability, age, mental health, or digital exclusion. Reasonable adjustments and enhanced support will be provided to ensure fair access to the scheme

14.2 This scheme has been assessed through an Equality Impact Assessment and complies with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

The Council will not discriminate against customers on the grounds of:

- Age

- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage or civil partnership
- Pregnancy or maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Upon request, the Council will provide translations of documents and alternative formats where required and will make reasonable adjustments to ensure services remain accessible.

15.0 Communication

The Council will take a proactive approach to communication by:

- Directly contacting tenants identified as under-occupying where appropriate
- Providing clear, accessible information on eligibility and support available
- Ensuring information is available in alternative formats upon request

Additional support will be provided for tenants who are digitally excluded, including telephone and face-to-face assistance.

The scheme will be actively publicised to ensure tenants know what the scheme is and who is eligible via the website and any updates sent to tenants.

16.0 Learning and Development

The Council is committed to ensuring staff receive appropriate training to support the effective delivery of this scheme.

17.0 Consultation and Continuous Improvement

The Rightsizing Scheme has been reviewed following customer consultation. Feedback highlighted the need for improved communication, clearer processes, enhanced practical support, and greater flexibility for vulnerable households.

In response, the Council has:

- Introduced named officer support
- Improved clarity around eligibility, process, and incentives
- Strengthened support for vulnerable and digitally excluded tenants

The Council will continue to monitor feedback and review the scheme periodically to ensure it remains effective, fair, and responsive to tenant needs