

EXPECTATIONS DOCUMENT 1
For
Secure Tenants in Blocks to be Refurbished
(DRAFT)

BACKGROUND

The Woodberry Down Regeneration Team (WDRT) working with members from the EDC Rehousing subcommittee has produced this expectations document. The intention is that the Council approves this document as a local policy for the regeneration of the Woodberry Down estates. Whether homes are refurbished, or new homes built following demolition, all tenants who wish to live on the Woodberry Down estates will be permanently rehoused on the estates following regeneration.

The following will inform secure tenants of what they can expect in terms of standards of performance and compensation when they are asked to move from their home so that improvements can take place. This is called decanting and this document has been written to ensure all tenants are treated fairly and have confidence in the decanting process.

HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY

Before any final plans can be made for the regeneration of the estate, WDRT will need to visit all residents and conduct a housing needs survey. The survey will identify the number and size of households across the estates. This and other detailed information about your housing needs will ensure that future plans include the type and size of homes suitable to rehouse all tenants of the Woodberry Down estates.

REHOUSING FOR EXISTING SECURE TENANTS

Once a programme of works has been agreed following consultation with residents and approval by Council Members, the order in which blocks are to be decanted will be identified.

Refurbishment

If a block is identified for refurbishment, the works will include internal and external works as well as new servicing to the block (gas, water, electricity and sewerage). This will almost certainly make it necessary for tenants to move out temporarily while the works are carried out. Before you are asked to move you will be given detailed information about the:

- Types of works being carried out.
- The time they will take.
- Options around internal works such as kitchen layout.
- Temporary accommodation.
- Help available to move home.
- Your Right to Return after works have finished.
- Compensation.

YOUR OPTIONS

Moving to a Temporary Home

If you wish to return to your home after works are completed, you will be temporarily rehoused. Temporary housing will take a variety of forms; specially built temporary accommodation in the area, existing homes that have not yet been demolished or refurbished, or homes leased to provide temporary accommodation. These homes

will be for temporary use only, as they will be needed for other tenants as the regeneration of the estates progresses.

Can I move off the estate permanently?

The Decant team will help, where possible, all residents who wish to take the opportunity to move away from the estate. The availability of homes outside the Borough is beyond the Council's control and will be very limited. If you are interested in this option please make this clear at the decant interview.

Single Move

As the regeneration of the estate progresses, the option of a single move to a newly built or refurbished home may become possible. This option is likely to be extremely limited in the early stages of regeneration. The WDRT recognise that the stress associated by moving will be particularly difficult for elderly and infirm residents and every effort will be made to minimise disruption, including the offer of a single move where possible.

Number of offers

Tenants will be made one offer of temporary accommodation, you will be able to view this accommodation with a member of the Rehousing team before accepting it. All offers will meet the *essential* needs of the household, e.g. in terms of size and level of accommodation.

However, if the residents are over 55, one additional offer of sheltered housing will be made if requested.

Right to Appeal

If a property offered is unsuitable, for instance, for medical reasons, you have a right to appeal to a Senior Officer Review Panel. This panel will consist of senior Council Officers (not members of WDRT) who will hear appeals where individual tenants and the WDRT disagree as whether a refusal of alternative accommodation was reasonable.

SIZE OF YOUR HOME

Overcrowding

If families are currently overcrowded, their housing needs will be assessed at the decant interview before they are asked to move. It may not be possible to offer larger temporary accommodation, but on their return to a permanent home they **will** be rehoused in a suitable size home.

Under occupation

Tenants who live in properties larger than their needs are under occupying and will be re-housed in the size of home more suited to their current needs.

Separate consideration will be given to residents over 55 who currently under occupy their homes on whether an offer of one bedroom above housing need should be made. This recognises that there may be a need in some instances for carers to stay with residents who are in poor health.

Adult children

If the family wishes, it may be possible to offer adult children (those over 18) separate rehousing. The ability of adult children to manage the tenancy will be

discussed with the whole family prior to the offer. The property offered to the rest of the family would be allocated on the basis of need.

PROPERTY SIZE / HOUSEHOLD SIZE RATIOS

During the regeneration of the estates every effort will be made to try to ensure that the size of the property matches the size of the household as far as possible. The table below sets out the *ideal* property size/household size ratios the Council aims to achieve.

Household size	Standard property size
Single person	1 bed 1 person
Couple (no children)	1 bed 2 person
2 adults not living as a couple	2 bed 2 person
1 or 2 adults + 1 child	2 bed 3 person
1 or 2 adults + 2 children	2 bed 4 person
1 or 2 adults + 3 children	3 bed 5 person
1 or 2 adults + 4 children	3 bed 6 person
1 or 2 adults + 5 children	4 bed 7 person

Children of different sexes, where the eldest is over 10 years, should not have to share a room.

Children of the same sex are expected to share a room. Where there is an age gap of more than 8 years, consideration will be given to provide an extra bedroom.

BEFORE YOU MOVE

Decant Interviews

When the plans for regeneration are advanced, all residents will be consulted on the options available. When the type of works and order in which they are carried out are clear, decant interviews will be conducted by the WDRT with all residents affected by the first phase of regeneration. These interviews will identify the date you will be asked to move, and where you move to.

All secure tenants will be visited a minimum of six months before they are asked to move and their needs and preferences discussed. The Rehousing team will conduct an interview with all tenants affected to explain:

- The decant process.
- The programme of works.
- Provide you with a re-housing pack.
- Discuss re-housing options.
- Expected length of time of temporary housing.

At this interview occupancy details will be checked to ensure you are a legal tenant. You will, therefore, be asked to provide proof of identity and address.

Medical and social issues will be assessed after the visit (if applicable).

A Right to Return

A certificate will be issued confirming your right to return to a refurbished property, providing you are not in rent arrears, or have maintained a rent payment agreement six months prior to decanting.

Notice of Seeking Possession

Notices of Seeking Possession will be served to ensure timescales and costs are not disrupted. The notice does not require you to leave your home immediately and is a **safeguard** to protect the Council's interest in cases where negotiations on re-housing fail between the Council and tenants. In the vast majority of cases, legal proceedings do not progress beyond the issue of this notice. The Council will always seek to reach a voluntary agreement with all secure tenants. Only the issue of a possession order granted by a court can end your tenancy.

If you are returning to the same home as a Council tenant, in most cases you will keep the tenancy on your home, and be given a license to occupy temporary accommodation. You would continue to pay the rent on your original home not the temporary accommodation.

CONSULTATION

The Woodberry Down Regeneration Team will hold regular consultation meetings to involve tenants in the redevelopment of properties. Tenants will be informed of:

- Dates properties will be handed over to the developer on a phased basis and dates on which new properties will be available.
- Timetable slips.
- Summary of the schedule of works/demolition.
- Plans for refurbishment/building of new homes.
- Design layout and standards of properties to be discussed with tenants.

In addition to estate-wide consultation, tenants will be consulted individually on options for their permanent home. This will include preferred locations for: telephones, t.v.s, lights and kitchen equipment

Consultation will also include options for:

Kitchen cabinets, worktops, floors coverings, wall tiles and décor.

Further information will be given on the actual development, such as who your new landlord will be and details of the weekly rent.

During the course of the decanting process a survey will be carried out after residents are re-housed, to obtain your views of the decant process and our performance so we can make improvements if necessary.

COMPENSATION

Disturbance Payments

When you are asked to move you should not suffer financially, you will be eligible for disturbance payments on each occasion you are asked to move. These payments are not fixed and should reflect "reasonable" costs incurred as a direct result of moving home.

It is expected that the average payment for disturbance caused by a single move will be approx £1,000. You could qualify for payment for the following items (on production of receipts) during your move:

- Removals (if Council contractor is not used.)
- Cost of altering soft furnishings (floor coverings, curtains etc.) if affected by the move.
- Redirection of mail for six months.
- The disconnection and reconnection of the following:
 - Telephone.
 - Cooker.
 - Washing machine.
 - Other plumbing.
 - Refitting of alarms/security/grills.
- Decorating allowance (if applicable).
- New school uniforms where, as a result of temporary decanting, children have to change schools and uniforms.
- The cost of moving and re-erecting aerials and satellite dishes will be reimbursed if tenants were given permission to erect them in the first place.

Homeless Payment

If you are returning to your original home following refurbishment, you **will not** be entitled to a home loss payment.

For tenants who are entitled to a home loss payment because they are unable to return to their original home, a home loss payment of £1500 will be made if you have lived in the property for more than 12 months.

For those who have been in their homes for a shorter period, they may be entitled to a discretionary pro rata payment. Home loss will be paid to you by cheque (or a nominee, if you do not have a banking account) when you leave the home that is being demolished or if you are in rent arrears, credited to your rent account.

Rent arrears

The amount of compensation you receive will be affected if you are in rent arrears. Before being moved you should have made an agreement with housing management to repay rent arrears six months prior to decanting and kept to that agreement.

If you are in arrears the home loss payment will be paid into your rent account. Disturbance and other payments will be paid to you by cheque.

It is important that you contact *name and number of officer* as soon as possible if you are concerned about issues relating to rent arrears. This officer will assist you in drawing up a repayment agreement if necessary and advise you on issues such as Housing Benefit. Delays or mistakes in the payment of Housing Benefit which result in arrears through no fault of the tenant will not have an adverse affect on a tenant's options and compensation.

Removals

The Council will employ professional contractors to move your possessions, this will be arranged by a decant officer on your behalf.

If you wish to arrange your own removals the Council will pay up to the following amounts upon a valid receipt:

One bedroom/studio flat property	£130+VAT
Two bedroom property	£145+VAT
Three bedroom property	£160+VAT
Four bedroom property	£175+VAT
Five bedroom property	£205+VAT

A professional packing service will be available for elderly or disabled tenants.

Storage

You can expect the Council to pay for and arrange storage of belongings.

You will be involved in the process:

- Preparing a inventory.
- Labelling items and taking notes of condition.
- Taking Photographs of the belongings.

Tenants will be given a copy of the inventory to avoid contention later if anything is missing or damaged.

The Council will arrange 'new for old' insurance cover for furniture in transit and in storage.