



Transfers

Information for Council Tenants

Your current council property may no longer meet you or your family's housing needs. For example you may wish to move to a smaller or larger property or one that is more suited to your health needs.

All East Lothian Council tenants that have a secure tenancy can apply to transfer to another council house.

In order to be considered for a move, all you need to do is complete an 'Application for Housing' form and return it to your local area housing office. Your housing circumstances will be assessed and an award of points made - we will confirm this to you in writing.

How long you have to wait for re-housing will depend on the level of points your application is awarded, your areas of choice and the property types you have selected.

If you have any questions your Community Housing Officer will be able to help you.

Incentives to Transfer

East Lothian Council offers existing tenants incentives to move if they meet the following conditions: -

1. They wish to move to a smaller property.
2. They wish to exchange their tenancy with another secure tenant (mutual exchange).
3. They would like to be considered for a new build property.

Important information

This leaflet also contains information on important points to note when you are considering moving home.

1. Moving to a Smaller Property - Downsizing

East Lothian Council offers grants to council tenants who wish to move to a smaller property either owned by the Council or another Housing Association in East Lothian.

This payment aims to encourage tenants who are living in properties that are too large for their needs to downsize, freeing up family sized accommodation for those who need it.

In addition, for single applicants who wish to downsize from a larger family property i.e. a 3 bedroomed property, it is also possible to qualify for a two bedroom home. The Council recognises that single applicants may need an additional bedroom for family visits and care.

Eligibility Criteria

1. The grant can only be paid to an outgoing tenant of East Lothian Council.
2. The outgoing tenant must move to a smaller house (including sheltered or amenity housing) located in East Lothian and owned by:
 - East Lothian Council.
 - A Housing Association/Registered Social Landlord.
 - A house that is in shared ownership, where one of the sharing owners is a Housing Association/Registered Social Landlord.
3. The transfer must not lead to overcrowding and must be consistent with the Council's Allocations Policy occupation levels (except in the case of a single applicant).

Payment Amounts

- £2,000 general payment per eligible move.
- An additional £1,000 for each bedroom downsized.

Example A	Example B
A couple in a 3 bedroom home wish to downsize to a 2 bedroom home.	A single person in a 3 bedroom home wishing to downsize to a 1 bedroom.
£2,000 general payment	£2,000 general payment
£1,000 1 bedroom downsized	£2,000 2 bedrooms downsized
=£3,000 grant payment payable	=£4,000 grant payment payable

Assisted Removal Arrangements

In addition, if required the tenant is entitled to up to two weeks overlap of tenancies (where they would have access to both properties). The rent for the larger property would not be charged.

2. Mutual Exchange Grant

This is where two (sometimes three) tenants, with the approval of the Community Housing Manager, agree to exchange their homes.

The value of the Mutual Exchange Grant is £200. In order to qualify for the Grant, the following criteria must be met: -

- All parties must have a secure tenancy.
- The grant can only be paid to an outgoing East Lothian Council tenant.
- The outgoing tenant must move to a house (which includes sheltered or amenity) located in East Lothian and owned by East Lothian Council or a Housing Association/Registered Social Landlord.
- When the mutual exchange results in a move to a smaller property only the Under-occupancy Grant will be paid.
- Tenants who have already been the subject of a mutual exchange within the last two years prior to entry are ineligible for a grant.

3. Transferring to a New Build Property

East Lothian Council has a programme of new build properties across the County. It is proposed to allocate the majority of these new properties to existing council tenants using a local lettings plan.

In doing this, the Council hopes to create 'vacancy chains' which meet the needs of not only the transferring tenant but allows the Council to meet the needs of another household on the housing list by offering them the outgoing tenant's vacant property.

All of the new build homes combine new fixtures and fittings with energy saving measures, such as insulation and in some cases solar panels, to support the central heating systems.

The rental costs for these new homes will be approximately 25% higher than for older council homes in East Lothian.

Transfer applicants who have selected an area in which new properties are being built on their application for housing will be considered for these new homes.

If you would like to be considered for a new build property please complete an 'application for housing' which is available from your local council office.

Points to note when considering a Transfer or Mutual Exchange

Right to Buy Entitlement

If you moved into your current council tenancy **before 30 September 2002** you will have the 'protected' right to buy with the older terms and conditions i.e. higher levels of discount and shorter qualifying period.

Should you choose to move to a new tenancy, you would then qualify for the 'modernised' right to buy. In general this means the level of discount has been reduced and a longer qualifying period.

However, if your tenancy started **after 30 September 2002** you will already have the 'modernised' right to buy.

If you require further information, please ask your Community Housing Officer.

New Build Properties

The rental cost in a new build property will be approximately 25% higher than in an older property provided by East Lothian Council.

Arrears

- Where rent arrears or other Council debt is known, the Council may offset the grant payment against such debt.

For more information please contact your local housing office: 01620 827827