



Grenfell Settled Home Policy

Frequently asked questions



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF
KENSINGTON
AND CHELSEA

Introduction

In the aftermath of the Grenfell tragedy of 14 June 2017, the survivors were in a unique situation. In a traumatic and highly pressurised environment, it was sometimes difficult to make important decisions about their housing future. While many households are happy in their new homes, some households have subsequently found that they now cannot settle, and do not feel they can rebuild their lives in their current homes. For these families, their homes now feel like a barrier to recovery.

The Council remains committed to helping former residents of Grenfell Tower and Grenfell Walk find a home that feels like a home for life, and the *Grenfell Settled Homes Policy* has been adopted to support that commitment and to provide survivor households with the opportunity to move one further time to an alternative permanent home.

This factsheet explains the priority for rehousing that will be given to households who feel they need to move once more. It also sets out how the Grenfell Settled Home Policy will seek to safeguard original commitments on rent, service charges, and home ownership options when households move to a new permanent home.

1. How many times can I move under this policy?

Households may only move **once** under the Grenfell Settled Home Policy.

After a household has moved to a permanent home under the Policy, their Grenfell Settled Home application will be closed.

The Policy aims to help unsettled families move where they otherwise would not qualify for the Housing Register.

2. What constitutes a second move?

A second move is one further move to a permanent home.

The significance of a second move, either secured via the Grenfell Settled Home Policy or the main Housing Allocation Scheme, is that survivor households are in general entitled to the same commitments with regard to the type of tenancy, rents and service charges, council tax and succession rights. There may be some exceptions for households moving to registered provider properties, as detailed in question 11.

3. Who can be rehoused under this policy?

All households who formerly lived in Grenfell Tower and Grenfell Walk as well as the following,

3.1 Were rehoused under Grenfell Rehousing Policy, including

- original tenants and their families
- new tenants and their families that split from their original household through the original rehousing process

3.2 A separating or separated tenant or partner where:

- they were joint tenants or spouses or partners living in Grenfell Tower or Grenfell Walk at the time of the tragedy, and
- they were rehoused to a permanent home with the joint tenant or spouse or partner under the Grenfell Rehousing Policy, and
- they have now separated, find it necessary to leave that permanent home, and need their own home.

Applications for rehousing will also be considered on a case-by-case basis from the following:

3.3 Adult household members who could have split and been rehoused separately during the original rehousing programme under the Grenfell Rehousing Policy but chose not to at the time.

3.4 Children household members that resided in Grenfell Tower or Grenfell Walk and were rehoused during the original rehousing programme under the Grenfell Rehousing Policy but could not have split because at the time they were not yet 18 years old.

A number of factors would form part of any evaluation including:

- whether other housing options are available and suitable
- the viability of their current accommodation
- their ability to manage a property
- their ability to afford a separate tenancy

and any other relevant considerations. This list is not exhaustive.

4. What size of property will I be offered?

Under this Policy, eligible households will be offered the **same size** of home (number of bedrooms) as their original permanent home: this means they will transfer on a like-for-like basis in terms of property size.

- Households with **spare bedrooms** in their original permanent home may choose to downsize to a smaller home if they wish. They will be able to retain one spare bedroom in their new permanent home.

5. Are there any provisions for visiting children where parents have separated?

Where a separated parent is rehoused to a new permanent home and has children who will stay with them (i.e. their children's main residence is elsewhere), the following rules will apply.

- Where a parent would ordinarily be rehoused to a studio or one bedroom home, they may have one additional bedroom for visiting children.
- Where a parent is rehoused to a two bedroom home or larger, visiting children will be expected to share bedrooms with any siblings resident in the new permanent home.

6. Does this policy apply to overcrowded households?

Households who are overcrowded in their current permanent home may move under this policy but only for a like for like property. We recognise that this move will therefore not resolve the overcrowding situation households may be dealing with. To resolve overcrowding, households are encouraged to apply for a move under the Council's main Housing Allocation Scheme.

7. What is your priority for rehousing?

Households qualifying for rehousing under this Policy will be awarded a high priority for rehousing.

- **1500 points** – Grenfell Settled Home Priority
- **No additional points will be awarded:** for example, other points categories such as health and independence points, or overcrowding points, cannot be awarded in addition to *Grenfell Settled Home* priority.

8. How will vacant properties be prioritised?

Where two or more households are interested in the same available home, the home will be offered:

first to a household who is assessed as requiring a home accessible for a resident with mobility needs, where the home meets those needs (using the Mayor of London's Accessible Housing Register guidance)

second to a household who lost a family member in the Grenfell Tower tragedy,

third if two or more households still retain the same priority and accessibility recommendation, the property will be offered first to the household that lived in Grenfell Tower or Walk the longest.

9. What type of accommodation will be offered?

New permanent homes offered to residents will be owned and managed by:

1. The Council (RBKC Housing Management)
 2. Private Registered Providers (housing associations)
 3. On rare occasions a home owned and managed by a neighbouring local housing authority may become available.
- All Council tenancies will be let as lifetime (periodic) secure tenancies.
 - Housing association tenancies will be lifetime (periodic) assured tenancies. Where such homes are offered, the landlord's tenancy

terms may apply. However, the Council will request that the landlord provides a lifetime (periodic) tenancy though this cannot be guaranteed.

- Other local authority tenancies will be lifetime (periodic) secure tenancies.

10. Will I receive help with adaptations?

Yes - households with family members who have mobility difficulties and who may require adaptations to their new permanent home will receive advice and support either from the Council's Housing Occupational Therapists or the Council's Adult Social Care Occupational Therapists.

Households should note that major adaptations can take time to assess and to complete. Households who may require major adaptations will be provided with all the information they need to make a fully informed choice.

11. Will households keep the original commitments on capped Grenfell rent, service charges and council tax?

Yes – if they move to a 'Grenfell acquired' home or to any RBKC Council home

Where a household moves to a RP (or home owned by another local authority) not previously occupied by a survivor household, the landlord's rent and service charges policies may apply. The Council will request and try to persuade the landlord to align with the rent and service charge commitments set out above though this cannot be guaranteed. The Council

will not cover the financial shortfall between a capped rent and service charge and the landlord's full rent and service charge for the home.

Commitments on Rent and Service charges

A. Where a household moves to a home formerly occupied and vacated by a survivor household or to a Council home, the Council's original commitments on capping rent and service charges will apply.

- where household moves to a home with the same number of bedrooms as their original permanent home, they will continue to pay the **same rent and service charges**;
- where a household choose to move to a home with fewer bedrooms as their original permanent home, their rent and service charges will be the **lower of**:
 - **the actual rent and service charges** they paid for their tenancy at Grenfell Tower or Grenfell Walk, if applicable
 - **the average rent and service charges** at Grenfell Tower and Grenfell Walk for the size of property they move to
 - **the actual rent and service charges** for their new permanent home.

B. Where a household moves to a home owned and managed by housing associations (and other local authorities), and that home was not formerly occupied and vacated by a survivor household the **landlord's rent and service charges policies may apply**. We will however try to persuade the landlord to apply same commitments.

Commitments on Council Tax

Former residents of Grenfell Tower and Grenfell Walk will retain the Council's commitment on Council Tax if they move to a new permanent home under this Policy. These commitments are as follows.

- Former residents of Grenfell Tower or Grenfell Walk rehoused to a home in Kensington and Chelsea will pay the **lowest of**:
 - the **current** Council Tax for the household's current home
 - the rate for the **equivalent band** at Grenfell Tower or Grenfell Walk for the size of property the household occupies

Households rehoused to a home outside of Kensington and Chelsea will pay the host authority's Council Tax at the Council Tax band that applied to the home the household lived in at Grenfell Tower or Grenfell Walk.

12. Will the rights to succeeding the tenancy be affected by this move?

If there has been no succession or assignment of a tenancy, the new tenancy agreement will continue to allow family members to succeed in the same way as the tenancy agreement for the original permanent home.

If a household moves to a home owned and managed by housing associations (and other local authorities) not formerly occupied and vacated by a survivor household the landlord's succession policy may apply.

Where there has been a succession or assignment of a tenancy for an original permanent home, the landlord's succession policy for the new permanent home will apply. This means that the original commitment on the equivalent of pre-Localism rights of succession will not apply.

If members of the household find that they cannot succeed to the tenancy because a succession has already occurred, they will be granted one further offer of accommodation. Where this is agreed, the Council will undertake an assessment of the household member's needs.

The one further allocation may be to another social housing home and not necessarily the home the household member has been occupying. However, if the family member has been living in a home acquired for former residents of Grenfell Tower or Grenfell Walk during the original rehousing programme, the family member may choose to be allocated a tenancy to that home on the 'average Grenfell rent' for that size of home, even if this results in there being spare bedrooms. The tenant may be liable for bedroom tax in such circumstances.

Residents will be provided with all the information they need to make a fully informed choice. If the household member chooses to move to a smaller home that reflects their needs, the rents and service charges they will pay will be capped at average Grenfell levels.

Further information on succession, as set out in the Grenfell Settled Home Policy, can be made available to families on request, including personalised advice and assistance to make fully informed decisions.

13. What are the rehousing options under this policy?

Rehousing options are available to former residents of Grenfell Tower and Grenfell Walk both under this Policy and outside of it.

- Homes that have become available to let (formerly occupied by former residents of Grenfell Tower or Grenfell Walk)
- Homes that become available to the Council to let through the usual supply of social housing (not occupied by former residents of Grenfell Tower or Grenfell Walk during the original rehousing programme).

14. Can I swap my home with another family?

Mutual exchange is where a survivor swaps homes, and tenancy agreement and terms, with another tenant. Households swapping with another survivor or moving to a new Council owned home through this option will retain the commitments on rent, service charges, and council tax, and commitments to a lifetime tenancy and on succession rights.

The Council will ask and expect housing associations to do the same, but it is not guaranteed that they will honour these commitments. Residents will be provided with all information they need to make a fully informed choice.

Original permanent homes available for mutual exchange will be advertised on a **relaunched Grenfell Home Connections Portal**, available only to former residents of Grenfell Tower or Grenfell Walk.

15. How will the properties be advertised?

Once a household has been awarded Grenfell Settled Home Priority and is included on the Council's Housing Register, they will be able to express an interest in available homes advertised on the Council's choice-based lettings system, Home Connections. Two Home Connections portals will be available to former residents of Grenfell Tower and Grenfell Walk:

Grenfell Home Connections portal

This is an exclusive portal that will only be accessible to former residents of Grenfell Tower and Grenfell Walk. Homes formerly occupied and vacated by survivor households will be made available and offered first to survivor

households seeking rehousing through the Grenfell Settled Home. These homes will be advertised first on the relaunched Grenfell Home Connections portal, which is exclusive and will only be accessible to survivor households.

Main Home Connections portal

Original permanent homes not accepted by former residents of Grenfell Tower and Grenfell Walk will be made available for expressions of interest from other residents on the Housing Register.

Households who are not able to access or do not feel comfortable using Home Connections be offered assisted choice: support from the Council to make suitable expressions of interest in available homes.

Assisted choice may also be used where a household has particular needs that require a particular property: for example, an accessible home.

If a household has an overriding need for a specific type of property, a direct offer may be made. A direct offer of a property is one made directly to a household rather than advertising on Home Connections.

There is no limit to the number of expressions of interest a resident can make or offers of accommodation made to any household under this policy.

16. How long will I have to make a decision on the new property?

Having been offered a home and indicated a wish to move to it, households will have **two weeks** to accept the offer. Residents will be required to sign a **memorandum of understanding** clarifying any personalisation works to be undertaken if the home is not yet ready to move in to.

Where a household has accepted an offer of a new home, they will be required to relinquish their existing tenancy within five working days of acceptance. The Council will not expect a household to move out of the original permanent home if their new permanent home is not ready to occupy (for example, due to ongoing works) and they have not signed the tenancy for the new property.

17. What standard will the property be?

The *Grenfell Housing Standard* sets out the standard for high quality, personalised and responsive repair and maintenance services provided to all survivor households in permanent homes and to bereaved households living in Council homes.

Homes formerly occupied and vacated by survivor households

All homes will be brought and maintained to the Grenfell Housing Standard, with any outstanding repairs resolved as per conditions of tenancy agreement.

Homes not formerly occupied and vacated by a survivor household

Homes will be brought up to the landlord's usual lettings standard prior to letting. For RBKC Council properties, this will be in line with the new home standard used by Grenfell Housing Services.

A brochure will be provided to residents so they know what they can expect, and where a full refurbishment is required, they will be able to use the brochure to make decisions on specific finishes available. Any additional elements requested outside of the brochure will need to be paid for by the tenant either using the personalisation fund below or their own funding.

Personalisation works

Cost of personalisation works that fall outside of works required to bring the new permanent home up to the letting standard will be capped at the following rates.

- £3,000 for single households and couples
- £5,000 for families

18. Will the Council purchase new homes?

The Council will **not purchase** any further homes for former residents of Grenfell Tower and Grenfell Walk except in very exceptional circumstances where the Council determines that the specific needs of a household cannot be met within the available stock of original permanent homes or the standard supply of Council and non-Council homes made available to the Council for letting. For clarity, this will be based on suitability needs assessment rather than individual preference.

19. What assistance is available if I want to own a property?

Three home ownership options are available to residents who were Council tenants, or were placed by the Council in temporary accommodation, in Grenfell Tower or Grenfell Walk at the time of the Grenfell Tower tragedy, or who became social housing tenants as a result of the original rehousing programme. Qualifying tenants can only choose one option: they cannot be used in combination.

The three options are as follows.

- **Statutory Right to Buy (assistance to purchase your Council home)**
- **The Grenfell Assisted Homeownership Scheme (assistance to purchase a share of your existing home)**
- **Enhanced Portable Discount (assistance to purchase a home on the open market)**

More information on the three home ownership options can be made available to residents on request.

A new permanent home and the Grenfell home options

- **Homes formerly occupied and vacated by survivor household, and Council homes**

The three home ownership options will be guaranteed for former residents of Grenfell Tower and Grenfell Walk, who are tenants, and who move to a RBKC Council home or a home formerly occupied and vacated by survivor household.

- **Homes owned and managed by housing associations not formerly occupied and vacated by a survivor household**

Where a household moves to a home owned and managed by housing associations not formerly occupied and vacated by a survivor household the Enhanced Portable Discount option will remain guaranteed. However, the contractual right to buy / the Right to Acquire and the Grenfell Assisted Homeownership Scheme may not remain available.

20. What support will be provided?

Advice about a move to a new home

Households thinking about a move to a new permanent home will be offered support and advice by teams within the Council (including Grenfell Liaison and the Dedicated Service), from advocates and advice agencies, from medical and healthcare professionals such as the Grenfell Health and Wellbeing Service, and any other relevant services or support available.

It is recommended that advice and support covers issues such as whether a move to a new permanent home will address barriers to recovery, realistic expectations about timescales

waiting for a new home, the features and standards of a new home, and support before, during and after the move.

Removals

The Council will cover reasonable costs of moving to a permanent new home.

Storage of possessions

The Council will not offer any storage of household possessions.

21. What level of communications should I expect during the settled home rehousing process?

The Council will commit to high and personalised communication standards throughout the Settled Home rehousing process. This will include:

- a simplified and **personalised rehousing application** process
- a **personalised rehousing plan** for each household summarising options, commitments, responsibilities and expectations
- **advice and information** on the supply and typical waiting times for the homes households are seeking, so that households can make informed choices about their rehousing

- **regular personalised updates** to households seeking rehousing, where requested (and at a frequency to be agreed between the Council and the household)

- **information and updates** to all households seeking rehousing, including FAQs, reports on properties let, and explanations on rent uplifts and service charge changes.

Sources:

- Survivor's Subsequent moves factsheet – draft – unpublished
- Grenfell Settled Home Policy March 2022 – published

