Relocation and Accommodation Schemes Policy

March 2022





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1. Objectives and scope

- 1.1. The Relocation and Accommodation Scheme Policy has been designed to assist new employees who need to move to a new house in the Reading area as a direct result of taking up a permanent appointment with Reading Borough Council.
- 1.2. The policy applies to all those employed by the Council on a permanent contract.
- 1.3 This policy covers three separate schemes:
 - Relocation Scheme UK Appointments
 - Relocation Scheme Overseas Appointments
 - Accommodation Allowance Scheme

2. Conditions for all schemes

- 2.1. This is a reimbursement scheme. Original valid receipts must be submitted for expenditure already made. The Council will reimburse the claims in monthly salaries.
- 2.2. Vacancies will be identified by each directorate's DMT as attracting the relocation and/or accommodation allowances before an advert is placed.
- 2.3. A post will only qualify for access to the scheme if it has received prior approval by the relevant Assistant/Deputy Director or Director.
- 2.4. Approval must be clear on the Request to Fill form prior to advertising the post. The criteria are as follows:
 - It is a recruitment incentive and the post has been agreed by the relevant Assistant/Deputy Director or Director
 - To enable an employee to take up appointment with the Council
 - That appropriate funds are available within the service area's budget
- 2.5 The offer of any relocation or accommodation allowance set out below will remain available/payable for **one year** from the employee's start date with Reading Borough Council. Where circumstances prevent this, a request for an extension may be made to the relevant Assistant/Deputy Director or Director, however, costs must be paid before the end of the tax year following the tax year in which the employee started their job.
- 2.6 All offers of the allowances are subject to the employee entering into a legal agreement with the Council.

3. Relocation Scheme – UK Appointments

3.1. An application under the scheme should normally be made within four weeks of an employee's start date even if expenses are not to be paid out immediately. The completed and authorised application form should be sent to Payroll pending further

claims for assistance. Evidence of circumstances and eligibility will be required prior to any payments being made under the scheme.

- 3.2. Claim periods and eligible expenses which do not attract tax or national insurance (NI) are determined by HMRC. Further details can be discussed with Payroll.
- 3.3. The postholder must remain with Reading Borough Council for a minimum of 3 years (permanent and fixed term) otherwise a proportion of the assistance must be repaid this can be done through direct deduction from salary.
- 3.4. Employees must repay all of the relocation allowance (or a proportion of) received if they:
 - Do not relocate within one year of commencement of employment
 - Do not remain with Reading Borough Council for at least 3 years
 - Either knowingly or unwittingly receive expenses for claims not permitted by the scheme, or in excess of the total permitted.
- 3.5. Repayment is not required if the reason for not remaining with Reading Borough Council for 3 years is related to redundancy or ill health.
- 3.6. Relocation reimbursements are treated as part of earnings for tax and NI contributions purposes. However, there is a HMRC limit of £8,000 which is exempt from tax and NI contributions as long as certain conditions are met.
- 3.7. The Council has set an overall maximum figure of £8,000 (not including Accommodation Allowance).
- 3.8. Employees should not assume that any assistance will be paid until individual particular circumstances are discussed and agreed with the Service Manager, who will submit a request to the Assistant/Deputy Director or Director for approval. Any questions about the scheme should be directed to the HR Services Manager.
- 3.9. No additional paid time off will be given for moving house.

4. Eligibility for the Relocation Scheme – UK Appointments

- 4.1. The employee must currently live more than 50 miles (by the most direct transport route) away from the Civic Offices, or their designated place of work within the borough boundary. The employee must move to within 25 miles of their place of work (by the most direct route).
- 4.2. The employee or their partner should not be receiving relocation assistance from another party, and the property that is being bought/sold or rented must be the main residence; the scheme is not available to purchase a second property.

5. What can be claimed under the Relocation Scheme – UK appointments

- 5.1. The employee must provide evidence of expenditure, and evidence of quotations, as applicable, before reimbursement is made. The expenditure must relate to:
 - Disposal/intended disposal of old residence
 - Acquisition/intended acquisition of new residence
 - Transport belongings
 - Travelling & subsistence
 - Essential goods for new residence
 - Rental fees

5.2. House Sale/Purchase

For house sale - the property must have been owned or jointly owned by the employee and relinquishes their rights to it

For house purchase - the property must be acquired or jointly acquired by the employee

- a) Legal/Estate Agent Fees
 - Reimbursement of necessary and unavoidable fees associated with moving house up to a maximum of £5,000. This will include agreed legal and estate agent fees for the sale of an existing home and for the purchase of a new property, including mortgage survey fee, stamp duty and other legal costs. This may include reimbursement for the property survey fee that your Bank / Building Society / other lender requires you to undertake, but will not include the cost of any additional survey which you choose to have undertaken.
 - Three **detailed** quotations for legal costs must be obtained. The employee may choose any one, but you will only be reimbursed for the cost of the lowest.

5.3. Rental Fees

For termination costs, the tenancy must have been held or jointly held by the employee and they must have relinquished their rights to it

For new rented accommodation, the new tenancy must be held or jointly held by the employee

- a) For a non-homeowner seeking rented accommodation any finding/letting agency fees will be reimbursed **up to a maximum of** £5,000, including fees to cover early termination of tenancy costs.
- b) Security deposits are not expenses as they are returnable and therefore cannot be claimed.
- c) Rental fees cannot be claimed in additional to house sale/purchase fees or in addition to the Accommodation allowance

5.4. Settling In Allowance

This is a maximum reimbursable sum of £3,000, **in total** to cover any combination of the following, available to house purchase and rented accommodation where appropriate:

a) Lodging Allowance

For lodging in temporary accommodation pending the house move (house purchase only), OR securing a longer-term rental property for a maximum period of six months or sooner.

b) <u>Removal Expenses</u>

Up to 100% of approved expenses for <u>one</u> move to either rented accommodation or house purchase (i.e. removal costs and insurance in transit). This also applies to removal from temporary rented accommodation to a permanent address.

Three written quotations **must** be obtained; the employee may choose any one, but we will only reimburse the amount of the lowest quotation.

c) <u>Travel Allowance</u>

An employee may claim standard second class public transport or petrol costs (whichever is cheapest) for journeys from home to work pending the permanent house move.

d) <u>Storage of Furniture</u>

Up to 100% of the necessary cost of storing furniture and effects. Again, 3 written quotations must be obtained – an employee may choose any one of the 3 but we will only reimburse the lowest one.

- e) <u>Search for accommodation</u> An employee may claim standard second class public transport or petrol costs (whichever is cheaper) for journeys from home to the Reading area to search for accommodation pending the move to either rented or house purchase. No travel allowance for any subsequent move.
- f) Other Incidental Expenses

Only allowable if the employee relinquishes their rights to the old house i.e. sold/tenancy ended and acquires an interest in the new home i.e. house purchase/new tenancy

An employee may claim payment for the replacement of items that are **essential** for them to live in the property you have purchased or rented, not desirable items such as TV's etc. This is intended to replace essential items that are unsuitable for the new property, for example, curtains and carpets. You must offset any amounts received from selling unsuitable items.

Only one claim will be possible for either a move into rented accommodation or the purchase of a new home.

5.5. The Relocation Scheme provides for most situations which are likely to arise when a new employee takes up employment. In the event that an item arises that is not covered but it is clear is within the spirit of the scheme, then agreement can be

obtained from the Assistant/Deputy Director or Director to seek discretion to vary the scheme. Any additional item may be subject to tax if it falls outside of the HMRC guidelines.

- 5.6. Employees will be entitled to the level of reimbursement which applies on their start date with the Council.
- 5.7. Receipts are required for ALL claims without them payment cannot be made.

6. Relocation Scheme - Overseas Appointments

- 6.1. The Relocation Scheme (Overseas Appointments) has been designed to assist employees who need to move to the Reading area from overseas **as a direct result of** taking up a permanent appointment with Reading Borough Council.
- 6.2. All offers of relocation allowance are subject to employees entering into a legal agreement with the Council, employees must undertake to work for the Council for 1 year from the start date otherwise a proportion of the assistance must be repaid this can be done through direct deduction from salary.
- 6.3. If the employee leaves Reading Borough Council before 1 year, a proportion of the assistance received must be repaid on the basis of the weeks not worked. The Council will also be able to deduct any money owing to it from salaries.

7. What can be claimed under the Relocation Scheme (Overseas Appointments)

- 7.1. The Relocation Scheme (Overseas Appointments) provides for reimbursement of a range of incidental costs and is subject to a maximum reimbursement figure of £1,000. All reimbursement is subject to documented evidence of expenditure, and evidence of quotations as applicable.
- 7.2. The maximum reimbursable sum of £1,000 can be used to cover costs towards any combination of the following:
 - a) Removal Expenses Including flights, visa, checks etc
 - b) When the employee moves into the Reading area a claim may be made for required professional fees (for example, HCPC fees for Social Workers)
- 7.3. In addition to this financial assistance, employees from overseas can access the Relocation Scheme (UK Appointments) in relation to rental fees (see above), appropriate settling in allowances (see above) and, subject to approval, an accommodation allowance subsidy.

8. Accommodation Allowance Scheme

8.1. The Accommodation Allowance Scheme provides support towards the cost of relocating to Reading and the additional costs of paying a mortgage or rent.

- 8.2. If the employee is eligible, this allowance can be claimed in addition to the Council's Relocation Scheme.
- 8.3. The accommodation allowance will stop if the employee ceases to live at the property on which the subsidy is paid (unless this is as a result of being given notice on the property by the landlord or other reasons outside of the employee's control e.g. flood or fire) or if they leave Council employment.
- 8.4. The accommodation allowance will form part of remuneration and an employee will be taxed at either standard rate or higher rate depending on personal circumstances.
- 8.5. Evidence will be required to show that an employee is either paying a new mortgage or has entered into a new rental agreement.

9. What can be claimed under the Accommodation Allowance Scheme

- 9.1. The allowance has been set up to help employees moving from an area of lower house prices (over 50 miles from Reading Civic Offices) to Reading. This is a fixed payment to any employee with the qualifying criteria, irrespective of the region of the UK from which they are relocating.
- 9.2. The scheme pays a monthly allowance for up to 3 years from the completion of a new house purchase or commencement of a rental tenancy. The payment is based on a sliding scale over the 3 year period.
- 9.3. Employees will be entitled to the level of reimbursement which applies on their start date with the Council.
- 9.4. The level of accommodation allowance will be reviewed on a regular basis.
- 9.5. The Inland Revenue sees the allowance as part of an individual's assessable income and it is therefore subject to tax and national insurance contributions.
- 9.6. The fixed payment over 3 years is as follows:

Year 1 - £300 per month Year 2 - £200 per month Year 3 - £100 per month

10. How to claim reimbursement – all schemes

Receipts are required for all claims. Payments cannot be made without them.

<u>STEP 1</u>

The employee should consult the guidance outlined above. The level of assistance required should be discussed between the employee and manager, checking eligibility and documentary evidence to support the request.

<u>STEP 2</u>

Complete the appropriate form for Relocation Assistance (appendices), which must be sent to the relevant Assistant/Deputy Director or Director for approval. A Legal Agreement (3 years for UK appointments, 1 year for overseas appointments) will be entered into by the employee and the signature witnessed by a non-family member over the age of 18.

<u>STEP 3</u>

Following approval, the claim form can be submitted (Appendix I). Receipts and any other necessary documentation, for example, quotes must be attached. Please note that payment will not be made without the relevant receipt(s).

Payment is made through the monthly payroll system so it will appear as part of an employee's salary. It is therefore important that claims are submitted to Payroll by the 10th of the month. Claims submitted after the 10th will be paid in the following month's salary.

A record of all claims made will be held on an employee's personal file.



RELOCATION SCHEME – UK APPOINTMENTS APPLICATION FORM

Please ensure that you have read the explanatory notes on the scheme, and that you have discussed your application with your manager. The decision column must be completed by the Assistant/Deputy Director or Director.

NAME:

POST TITLE:

START DATE:

SERVICE:

PRESENT / FORMER ADDRESS:

CONTACT TELEPHONE NO:

HOUSE MOVE DATE:

NEW ADDRESS / INTENDED ADDRESS OR LOCATION:

ITEMS FOR MANAGER APPROVAL Manager/employee to tick boxes as required Director	DECISION Assistant	
House Sale / Purchase Costs		
For sale of existing property and purchase of new property (legal fees etc)	YES/NO	
Rental fees	YES/NO	
Settling In Allowances		
Removal Expense	YES/NO	
Lodging Allowances	YES/NO	
Travel Allowances	YES/NO	
Storage of Furniture	YES/NO	
Search for Accommodation	YES/NO	
Incidental Expenses	YES/NO	

EMPLOYEE DECLARATION

Please approve my application for those items of financial assistance that I have requested, the details of which we have discussed.

I agree to comply with all the conditions of the scheme set out in the explanatory notes, a copy of which I have read.

Employee name:	Signature:
Date:	

MANAGER DECLARATION

I confirm that this application is made in accordance with the conditions of the scheme. I have received confirmation from the Assistant/Deputy Director or Director that this is post has been identified as qualifying, and that this can be evidenced from the list held by the Assistant/Deputy Director or Director in relation to this scheme.

Manager name: _____ Signature: _____

Date:	

DECISION OF ASSISTANT/DEPUTY DIRECTOR OR DIRECTOR

This application for assistance **IS** approved as detailed above.

Name: ______ Signature: _____

Date:

This application for assistance **IS NOT** approved as detailed above. My reasons for this are as follows:

Name: ______ Signature: _____

Date:

If approved, please send the original form to Payroll and give a copy to the employee.



LEGAL AGREEMENT – UK APPOINTMENTS

TO BE ATTACHED TO REQUEST FOR

RELOCATION SCHEME TO BE SUBMITTED AT THE SAME TIME

I, (name)

of : (address),

being over the age of 18, acknowledge that I have received the sums itemised in the schedule hereto paid to me by Reading Borough Council ("the Council") in accordance with the terms of the above mentioned Scheme and in consideration of those payments. I HEREBY UNDERTAKE:

a. to remain in the service of the Council for a period of three years from the date on

which my employment with the Council commenced,

namely

- b. in the event of my employment with the Council ceasing or being terminated for any reason whatsoever within the said three year period, to repay to the Council a proportion of the sums I have received and the further payments (if any) mentioned in the said Schedule, and I agree that the amount to be repaid shall be proportionate to the number of weeks by which my employment by the Council falls short of the said three year period. I also agree that any part of a week shall count as a full week for the purpose of this calculation.
- c. I further agree that any such sum owing by me to the Council may be deducted by the Council from my salary/wages.

I acknowledge that notwithstanding the undertakings herein contained the Council shall be entitled at any time to terminate my employment in accordance with the conditions of service under which I am employed and relevant employment law.

DATED this	day of
Signature:	
Signature of Witness:	
Address of Witness:	
Occupation:	

Classification: OFFICIAL



RELOCATION SCHEME CLAIM FORM

Name:	Position:	
Service:	Payroll No:	
Legal and Estate Agent's Fees (lowest of 3 of Please ensure all receipts and quotes are		£
Legal fees Details:		
Estate Agent's fees Details:		
Rental fees Details:		
TOTAL (max up to £5,000):		
<u>Settling In Allowances</u> Please ensure all receipts and quotes are	e attached to this form	
Removal Expenses (lowest of 3 quotes)		
Lodging Allowance Details:		
Travelling Costs (from existing home to Rea or petrol costs) (please attach details of jour	•	
Storage of furniture (lowest of 3 quotes)		
Search for Accommodation Details of journeys:		
Other Incidental Expenses (Please offset any amount received from se that were unsuitable – HMRC requirement) Details:	lling goods from the old home	
TOTAL (max up to £3,000		

Details of Claim

I declare that I have actually incurred the above expenditure, and attach documents to prove it. The expenditure is incurred directly as a result of my taking up appointment with the Council. The expenditure is additional to, and not a replacement for, expenditure which I would have incurred normally.

Total Claim amount £			
Signed: (Employe <u>e)</u>		Date:	
Name (Employee)		-	
Authorised by (Budget Holder)		Date:	
Name (Budget Holder)			
Please charge to cost code	<u>R</u>		



RELOCATION SCHEME - OVERSEAS APPOINTMENTS APPLICATION FORM

Please ensure that you have read the explanatory notes on the scheme, and that you have discussed your application with your manager. The decision column must be completed by the Assistant/Deputy Director or Director.

NAME:

START DATE:

POST TITLE:

SERVICE:

PRESENT / FORMER ADDRESS:

CONTACT TELEPHONE NO:

HOUSE MOVE DATE:

NEW ADDRESS / INTENDED ADDRESS OR LOCATION:

ITEMS FOR MANAGER APPROVAL Manager/Employee tick boxes as required	DECISION Assistant Director
Support Expenses (Flights, visa etc)	YES/NO
TOTAL (max up to £1,000	

EMPLOYEE DECLARATION

Please approve my application for relocation assistance that I have requested, the details of which we have discussed.

I agree to comply with all the conditions of the scheme set out in the explanatory notes, a copy of which I have read.

Employee name:	Signature:
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Date:_____

MANAGER DECLARATION

I confirm that this application is made in accordance with the conditions of the scheme. I have received confirmation from the Assistant/Deputy Director or Director that this is post has been identified as qualifying, and that this can be evidenced from the list held by the Assistant/Deputy Director or Director in relation to this scheme.

Manager name:	Signature:
Date:	

DECISION OF ASSISTANT/DEPUTY DIRECTOR OR DIRECTOR

This application for relocation assistance **IS** approved as detailed above.

Name:_____ Signature: _____

Date:_____

This application for relocation assistance **IS NOT** approved as detailed above. My reasons for this are as follows:

Name: Signature:	

Date:			

If approved, please send the original form to Payroll and give a copy to the employee.



LEGAL AGREEMENT

TO BE ATTACHED TO REQUEST FOR

RELOCATION SCHEME (OVERSEAS APPOINTMENT) TO BE SUBMITTED AT THE SAME TIME

I, (name)

of (address):

being over the age of 18, acknowledge that I have received the sums itemised in the schedule hereto paid to me by Reading Borough Council ("the Council") in accordance with the terms of the above Scheme and in consideration of those payments I HEREBY UNDERTAKE:

a. to remain in the service of the Council for a period of one year from the date on

which my employment with the Council commenced,

namely

- b. in the event of my employment with the Council ceasing or being terminated for any reason whatsoever within the said one year period, to repay to the Council a proportion of the sums I have received and the further payments (if any) mentioned in the said Schedule, and I agree that the amount to be repaid shall be proportionate to the number of weeks by which my employment by the Council falls short of the said one year period. I also agree that any part of a week shall count as a full week for the purpose of this calculation.
- c. I further agree that any such sum owing by me to the Council may be deducted by the Council from my salary/wages.

I acknowledge that notwithstanding the undertakings herein contained the Council shall be entitled at any time to terminate my employment in accordance with the conditions of service under which I am employed and relevant employment law. DATED this day of

Signature:	
0	

Signature of Witness: _____

Address: of Witness: _____

Occupation:



OVERSEAS APPOINTMENT CLAIM FORM

Name:	Position <u>:</u>	
Service:		
Payroll Number:		
		£
Incidental /Settling In Expenses		
Please ensure all receipts and quotes ar	e attached to this form	

Removal Expenses - Including Flights, Visa, other checks

HCPC Fees

TOTAL (up to a max up to £1,000)

Details of Claim

Total Claim Amount £

I declare that I have actually incurred the above expenditure, and attach documents to prove it. The expenditure is incurred directly as a result of my taking up appointment with the Council. The expenditure is additional to, and not a replacement for, expenditure which I would have incurred normally.

Signed (Employee)		Date:	
Name (Employee)		_	
Authorised (Budget Holder)		Date:	
Name (Budget Holder)			
Please charge to cost code	<u>R</u>	-	



ACCOMMODATION ALLOWANCE SCHEME APPLICATION FORM

Please ensure that you have read the explanatory notes on the scheme, and that you have discussed your application with your manager. The decision column must be completed by the Assistant/Deputy Director or Director.

NAME:

POST TITLE:

START DATE:

SERVICE:

PRESENT / FORMER ADDRESS:

CONTACT TELEPHONE NO:

HOUSE MOVE DATE:

PAYROLL NUMBER:

NEW ADDRESS / INTENDED ADDRESS OR LOCATION:

ITEMS FOR MANAGER APPROVAL

Manager/Employee tick as required

Accommodation Allowance

(Evidence must be attached)

DECISION Assistant Director YES/NO

EMPLOYEE DECLARATION

Please approve my application for accommodation allowance that I have requested, the details of which we have discussed.

I agree to comply with all the conditions of the scheme set out in the explanatory notes, a copy of which I have read.

Employee name:	Signature:
· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	V

Date:_____

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MANAGER DECLARATION

I confirm that this application is made in accordance with the conditions of the scheme. I have received confirmation from the Assistant/Deputy Director or Director that this is post has been identified as qualifying, and that this can be evidenced from the list held by Assistant/Deputy Director or Director in relation to this scheme.

Manager name:	Signature:

Date:_____

DECISION OF ASSISTANT/DEPUTY DIRECTOR OR DIRECTOR

This application for accommodation allowance **IS** approved as detailed above.

Name: _____

Signature:_____

Date:_____

This application for accommodation **IS NOT** approved as detailed above. My reasons for this are as follows:

Name:_	 	 	

Signature: _____

Date:_____