

# Disturbance Allowance Policy



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## **Policy Statement**

### **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 The Council is committed to employing the right people in the right jobs and whilst it is hoped that the majority of its recruits will live in the local area, or at least within commuting distance, the Council also recognises that its catchment area is limited by the Districts coastal location.
- 1.2 This policy outlines the payments that will be made to new employees who need to relocate from outside of the area in order to take up their appointment.

### **2 Scope**

- 2.1 This policy applies to all posts within the Council.

### **3 Roles and Responsibilities**

- 3.1 Employee's will:
  - i. Agree expenses with their manager in advance, where possible;
  - ii. Seek the options that provide best value for money, where possible;
  - iii. Provide receipts and/or invoices for expenses for which they are claiming, in line with the policy
- 3.2 Manager's will:
  - i. Make it clear on the job advert whether the payment of relocation expenses may apply to the post they are advertising;
  - ii. Ensure that the policy is applied fairly and equally to all staff.
  - iii. Check all claims for expenses are reasonable and within the spirit of the policy.
- 3.3 Head of Paid Service / Directors will:
  - i. Ensure managers are clear about their roles and responsibilities when discussing claims for relocation expenses with their employees/potential employees
  - ii. Check and approve claims for relocation expenses as appropriate
  - iii. Give consideration to any claims for relocation expenses that go outside of the normal criteria set out in this policy.

#### **4 Eligibility for Relocation Expenses**

- 4.1 Notwithstanding anything set out in this policy, the decision to pay relocation expenses will be at the absolute discretion of the Council and will be assessed on a case by case basis.
- 4.2 Where they are applicable, relocation expenses will normally only be paid where there has been difficulty recruiting to the post from within the local catchment area or to make the offer of appointment more attractive to senior managers or to posts where market forces make it difficult to recruit.
- 4.3 In order to be eligible for the payment of relocation expenses an employee must:
  - i. Maintain their own home, whether privately rented or owned
  - ii. Currently live in an area that is not within a reasonable daily travelling distance of their new place of work and;
  - iii. Be moving closer to their place of employment and to a home that is within a reasonable travelling distance of their new place of work
- 4.4 For the purposes of this policy, reasonable daily travelling distance is considered to be 50 miles or less from the employee's new place of work.
- 4.5 The Head of Paid Service may decide that an employee is able to relocate outside of the normal criteria. This will be dependent upon the needs of the business.
- 4.6 The employee will not be eligible for relocation expenses if they are moving as a result of their partner having to relocate.
- 4.7 Authorisation for payment of relocation expenses is as follows:
  - i. Head of Paid Service for posts at Director level
  - ii. Director for posts at Head of Service level or below
- 4.8 Relocation expenses will only be paid upon receipt of original, official receipts for the expenses being claimed.

## **5 Payment Rates**

- 5.1 Employees must seek the lowest possible cost for the expenses that they wish to claim and must demonstrate this to the Council. The Council will usually ask that three written quotes are provided to support this.
- 5.2 Relocation expenses can be claimed for up to six months from when the employee starts their employment with the Council. If the employee fails to relocate in that time, without good reason, the Council may require reimbursement of some or all of the expenses paid. The Head of Paid Service will decide on individual cases. In exceptional cases, the Head of Paid Service and Section 151 Officer may decide to extend this period.
- 5.3 The total of allowances payable under all headings of this policy will not exceed £8000 plus VAT. Subject to the maximum amount under each heading (where applicable) the policy allows for some flexibility in balancing the various costs of relocation, within the overall limit of £8000.
- 5.4 Within this limit of up to £8000, employees can claim expenses from any one or more of the following categories provided that they meet the necessary criteria and can provide full original receipts to support their claim:

### **Removal of furniture and effects**

To cover some or all of the cost of the removal of the furniture and effects of the employee and his/her immediate family from their existing home to their new home within 10 miles of the Dover District boundary by a recognised firm of removal contractors. Payment will be based upon the lowest of three quotations and must not exceed the payment limitations of this policy.

### **Contribution towards legal and agents fees**

To cover up to two thirds of the expenses of selling a previous house and buying a new one including:

- i. Estate Agent fees
- ii. Survey fees
- iii. Solicitors fees
- iv. Land Registry fees
- v. Stamp Duty
- vi. Mortgage guarantee premium (where a mortgage lender will not accept the Council's guarantee and where an employee is unable to purchase a property in the area without accepting the fee). Payment is limited to two thirds of the premium. The Head of Paid Service must approve all applications for assistance with mortgage guarantee premiums

Payment of these expenses will be based on up to two thirds of the expense incurred, within the payment limits of this policy.

In cases where only a sale or purchase is undertaken, up to a maximum of 50% of the two thirds of the total fees incurred will be paid, provided it does not exceed the payment limits of this policy.

No payments will be made in respect of unsuccessful attempts to purchase a house, unless expressly agreed by the Head of Paid Service.

### **Lodging Allowance/Travelling Allowance**

In cases where an employee has to take up temporary lodgings near to their new place of work whilst also maintaining a home elsewhere, or where employees have to travel between their existing home and new place of work whilst a purchase and/or sale are proceeding, they can claim the cost of their lodging or travel, provided it does not exceed the limits of this policy.

### **Settling In Allowance**

A settling in allowance can be claimed as a contribution towards items such as carpets, curtains etc. that are necessary when moving house or towards essential minor adaptations to the new home. In all cases, proof of expenditure must be provided to the relevant Director for approval.

## **6 Leaving Employment**

6.1 Where an employee in receipt of relocation expenses leaves the employment of the Council voluntarily or is dismissed for misconduct within their first two years of joining, they will be required to repay some or all of their entire fee on a sliding scale as follows:

<b>Month following payment</b>	<b>% due for repayment</b>
1 - 6	100%
7 - 12	75%
13- 18	50%
19 - 24	25%

6.2 Where an employee leaves the Council for any other reason, there will be no requirement to repay the relocation expenses.

## **7 Equality Statement**

The Council is committed to promoting equality, valuing diversity and combating unfair treatment. We will endeavour to ensure equal access to its policies and procedures and will combat discrimination or less favourable treatment on grounds of any irrelevant consideration, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.