



Department for
Communities and
Local Government

Social Housing Mobility Funding Scheme

Bidding prospectus

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Policy context

1. This Government is committed to increasing mobility for social tenants. Greater mobility brings benefits for tenants and landlords alike. Tenants are able to meet their aspirations, whether to move closer to family or friends, take up work or move to more suitable accommodation. Landlords can make better use of their stock, for example, by helping under-occupying households to free up family-sized accommodation, or by ensuring that sought after accessible accommodation is occupied by those with access needs.
2. We've already made important steps in the right direction. *HomeSwap* Direct is helping social tenants search for a new home right around the country. We will shortly be implementing a Right to Move for social tenants who need to move to take up a job or be closer to work or training.
3. Through the Localism Act we have given local authorities the freedom to make better use of the social housing stock by taking transferring tenants who are not in housing need out of the allocation legislation. This has given local authorities more flexibility to develop appropriate policies for transferring tenants without the risk of challenge by applicants with greater housing needs. And yet, relatively few local authorities have seized the opportunity provided by these new flexibilities.
4. The purpose of this funding scheme is to support local authorities and their partner Private Registered Providers to test out approaches that make use of the new transferring tenant flexibilities in the Localism Act, as well as existing allocation flexibilities, to increase mobility for existing social tenants within the local authority district, in order to reward positive behaviour, and to make best use of the social housing stock.

General information about funding scheme

5. DCLG is making £500,000 available from the start of 2015/16. While the Department is keen to test out approaches which make use of the transferring tenant flexibilities in the Localism Act, we recognise that there may be other allocation approaches which could open up mobility opportunities for social tenants, and so we are open to other ideas and innovation.
6. There will be **one bidding round**. We intend that successful bids will be announced by end of March 2015 and the grant payment for 2015/16 will be made in April 2015.

How to apply

7. **Applicants are required to submit bids no later than 5 March 2015 to:**
mobility@communities.gsi.gov.uk
8. Bids should be submitted using the attached application form. Bidders are encouraged to limit their application to 2 sides of A4.

9. An official should be nominated for contact purposes. Please provide a telephone number and email address.

10. Local authorities considering submitting a bid should contact Frances Walker if they have any queries about the bidding process on telephone number 03 03 444 3655 or by email to frances.walker@communities.gsi.gov.uk

Assessment of applications

11. Bids will be evaluated by DCLG officials, and Ministers will take the final decision on which bids to support.

12. Bids will be assessed against the following criteria:

- **Innovation.** We will be looking for innovative approaches that make use of the new and existing flexibilities in the allocation legislation to increase the opportunities for existing social tenants to move within the local authority district - in order to reward positive tenant behaviour and/or to make best use of the social stock.
- **Ambition and value for money.** Bids will need to demonstrate that the proposals go beyond what the local authority is already doing to provide for mobility for existing tenants, and that they will increase the number of lettings made to transferring social tenants. In assessing the bids, we will also take into account the level of grant funding the local authority has indicated it requires.
- **Deliverability.** While we are interested in innovation, we will also be looking for proposals that are sound and will deliver results.
- **Transferability.** We will be looking for approaches that can be adopted more widely by other local authorities.

13. Proposals must demonstrate that they have at least “in principle” support from the leadership of their authority (for example, by showing Director-level endorsement). If the bid involves a number of authorities working in partnership, each partner authority must demonstrate “in principle” support for the bid.

14. Bids must demonstrate how the local authority proposes to involve Private Registered Providers operating in the district in taking forward the proposals; where Private Registered Providers are formal partners to the bid, they must demonstrate their “in principle” support as well.

Sharing good practice and evaluation

15. Local authorities that receive funding should be prepared to help other social housing providers by sharing their experiences and supporting efforts to spread good practice.

16. The Department may commission an external evaluation of the schemes in order to identify and share good practice, or request information at the end of the process (on a voluntary basis). Bids should indicate willingness to take part in any evaluation should this take place.

Costs and funding arrangements

17. DCLG would expect to provide, per authority, a maximum of £75,000. **Proposals must set out the total amount of funding sought** and provide a brief breakdown of costs (and timing of those costs) so that DCLG can assess whether these costs are reasonable as part of the bid process. Where DCLG has concerns about an item in the cost breakdown, it may choose not to make funding available or raise the issue with the bidder.

18. Bids must include timescales (for outputs and costs). They should also indicate:

- what contribution is being sought from the Department
- what contribution is to be made by the authority and its partners

19. Bids which include more than one local authority must designate the lead local authority to which payment is to be made. That authority is then responsible for delivering the outputs.

20. Funding will be issued as unringfenced resource grant under s.31 of the Local Government Act 2003. Funding is only available to local authorities.

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