

HR & OD POLICIES

human resources and organisational development



Relocation and Resettlement Procedure

INDEX

INTRODUCTION 3

SCOPE 3

PROCEDURE 3

ELIGIBILITY 4

Fixed Term Contracts 4

CONDITIONS 5

ALLOWANCES 6

Travel to View Area 6

Travel to Visit Previous Place of Residence 6

Removal 6

Storage 7

Legal and other fees 7

Stamp duty 7

Disturbance 8

ACCOMMODATION COSTS 8

Maintaining Former Residence 8

Temporary Relocation Allowance 8

EXEMPTIONS 9

REPAYMENT 9

1. INTRODUCTION

Aberdeenshire Council recognises that in order to recruit and retain high quality employees across the organisation it is necessary to have a competitive relocation and resettlement scheme. The purpose of the scheme is to compensate employees for reasonable expenses directly incurred as a result of a change in their primary residence. The change must be wholly or mainly to bring their residence within a reasonable daily travelling distance of the place where they will normally perform their work.

Under the terms of this procedure relocation expenses of up to £8,000 (including vat) will be reimbursed.

2. SCOPE

Please note:

This scheme only applies to specific posts as pre-determined by the Service in conjunction with HR&OD. The recruitment information will indicate to candidates if a post attracts a relocation payment. Please refer to the [Recruitment and Selection Guidance](#) for further information.

The relocation allowance does not apply to compulsory transferred teachers, who should refer to the SNCT Handbook part 4, 14.7 Allowances for Compulsorily Transferred Teachers.

3. PROCEDURE

All costs for submission for reimbursement must be detailed on the [Relocation Expenses Claim Form](#) and passed to the employee's Head of Service for authorisation.

VAT invoices and receipts must be attached to all claims as appropriate, please refer to the [VAT Examples](#) which indicates details of the appropriate VAT invoices for submission.

The Service is responsible for recording each claim amount made by the employee to ensure that the claims do not exceed the maximum relocation allowance. **Claims must not be authorised for payment if the appropriate evidence is not attached as required.**

*It must be ensured that the subjective code **0954 General – Relocation/Resettlement** is allocated to all costs reimbursed under this procedure.*

Any queries regarding eligibility for these allowances or any other part of this procedure should be referred to the Travel & Benefits Officer, HR&OD before any commitment is undertaken.

4. ELIGIBILITY

Relocations costs can be requested by existing or prospective employees of Aberdeenshire Council and be relocating for one of the following reasons:

- New employees taking up a new appointment with Aberdeenshire Council.
- Accepting suitable alternative employment as the result of redeployment.
- In exceptional circumstances existing employees may be offered assistance to take up hard to fill posts in other areas of Aberdeenshire Council. All other criteria will need to be satisfied, and the approval of the Head of Service (HR & OD) will be required.

In all cases, these allowances are intended to assist with the actual costs of relocating from their previous home to work for Aberdeenshire Council and obtaining reasonably equivalent accommodation.

New employees, and in exceptional circumstances existing employees, will qualify for reimbursement to the approved limit provided they:

1. Live more than a 50 mile radius from the new work place **and**
2. Move to within a 50 mile radius of the new workplace.

In exceptional circumstances only, approval for eligibility for a lesser distance may be requested from the Head of Service HR&OD and Head of Service Finance.

Fixed Term Contracts

Relocation expenses will be reimbursed for employees contracted for a minimum duration of 2 years, who take up a post with Aberdeenshire Council from outwith the Aberdeenshire area, and exceptionally within Aberdeenshire as above. Applications for relocation may be considered from outwith the UK.

An individual employed on a fixed-term contract with a duration of less than 2 years will be eligible to claim the relocation allowance if they are offered a permanent

appointment within 12 months of joining the Council. There is also an option (subject to approval by the employee's Head of Service) that the claim can be backdated up to a maximum of 26 weeks.

5. CONDITIONS

Where more than one member of the household is appointed to Aberdeenshire Council only one claim for reimbursement of relocation expenses will be accepted.

Any assistance with relocation costs for which the employee's partner will be eligible from another employer must be declared when these allowances are claimed and will be offset against any payments to be made by Aberdeenshire Council.

The offer of relocation assistance will only remain valid **for a period of 12 months from the date of taking up employment** or becoming permanent. If an employee is unable to actually move within 12 months then a written request stating reasons must be submitted to the Head of Service (HR & OD) no later than 1 month before the 12 month period expires. The accommodation allowance will apply for a period of 26 weeks. Any increase to this timescale would require to be approved by the Head of Service HR & OD.

For example:

- **Example One**

Employee joins Aberdeenshire Council on a fixed term 12 month contract on 1/5/2014. Offered a permanent contract on 1/11/2014 therefore may apply for relocation costs (subject to eligibility criteria and receipt of appropriate evidence) from either 1/5/2014 or 1/11/2014. Only valid for 12 months - employee will not be able to apply for reimbursement of relocation expenses after 30/04/2015 (claim from 1/5/2014) or 31/10/2015 (claim from 1/11/2014).

- **Example Two**

Employee joins Aberdeenshire Council on a fixed term contract for 24 months. May apply for relocation costs.

- **Example Three**

Employee joins Aberdeenshire Council on a fixed term 6 month contract on 1/5/2014. Offered an extension of 18 months on 1/11/2014 therefore may apply for relocation costs (subject to eligibility criteria and receipt of appropriate evidence) from either 1/5/2014 or 1/11/2014. Only valid for 12 months – after 30/04/2015 (claim from 1/5/2014) or 31/10/2015 (claim from 1/11/2014).

Before an employee makes a claim under these provisions he/she must settle the accounts personally. With the exception of the removal costs of more than £250, the employee will be required to submit receipted invoices acceptable to HM Revenue and Customs for VAT purposes where possible before reimbursement will be made by the Council. If the expenditure is less than £250 a less detailed invoice will be acceptable.

If the Head of Service HR & OD considers it inappropriate to approve payments (or part of a payment) and the employee feels aggrieved the matter will be referred to the Chief Executive for a final decision. If any employee is found to have misused the provisions of the scheme then the matter will be investigated under Aberdeenshire Council's [Disciplinary Policy](#).

6. ALLOWANCES

The following allowances may be claimed:

Travel to View Area

The travelling costs of the employee and partner for one visit to the area to seek housing, prior to taking up the appointment. Where an overnight stay is required, reasonable expenses will also be reimbursed. Please note that payment will be paid after the employee commences employment.

Travel to Visit Previous Place of Residence

One return journey per month following appointment, to the employee's previous permanent place of residence to visit dependant members of the family still living at the previous address and/or to supervise the disposal of the property until moving into permanent accommodation in Aberdeenshire.

In the case of travel costs, reimbursement will be at a published standard class bus, rail, and air fare on submission of a signed claim from the employee. If a private car is used, cost of fuel (receipts required) or the current fuel cost mileage rate will be reimbursed. The rate is currently **12.6p**.

If travelling by air on any part of the journey standard rate fares will be claimable, i.e. 1st Class fares will not be repaid.

Travel to seek housing and reimbursement of overnight expenses in addition to travel costs will only be made where the distance from the present address is sufficiently great that it is not possible to make a visit to seek housing in one day.

Removal

The costs of moving household furniture and effects including insurance during transit, as well as the packing and unpacking, the removal and refitting of domestic goods and the transport of domestic pets.

Reimbursement under this heading will be made for;

- One move, where the move is directly from the former principal place of residence to new place of residence or for,
- Two moves, where the employee is required to live for a period in temporary accommodation, or to put furniture into storage.

The method of transportation will be selected by the employee.

Employees must obtain and submit **two** estimates with the claim form to their Head of Service, the lowest of which will normally be reimbursed unless there are valid reasons for accepting a higher estimate e.g. availability of firms to supply the service on the required date. This applies even when the employee is considering the removal of household goods themselves.

Arrangements can be made to pay the invoice for amounts over £250. To allow the council to recover VAT a proper VAT invoice must be received. Please refer to the [VAT Examples](#).

Storage

The cost of temporary storage of household furniture and effects, until a new permanent place of residence is available. This facility will be available for up to nine months.

Legal and other fees

The reimbursement of reasonable advertising costs, legal, survey estate and mortgage redemption fees directly associated with the sale and/or purchase of a residence including any unsuccessful bona fide attempt to purchase.

The cost of bridging loan interest will be paid to cover the interest costs of a bridging loan necessarily taken out because the employee has not been able to sell is/her home and has purchased a new home within the criteria detailed in this procedure.

Aberdeenshire Council's Legal and Governance will be consulted in any cases where there is a question of the validity of any claim made under this section.

Stamp duty

Reimbursement of stamp duty on the house purchase price.

Disturbance

An allowance shall be available up to a maximum of £800 excluding VAT, for the alteration or replacement of curtains, carpets, light fixtures, relaying floor coverings and domestic appliances (less any amount received for the replaced goods).

7. ACCOMMODATION COSTS

Maintaining Former Residence

When an employee has to move into temporary accommodation to commence the new job the actual additional costs arising from the temporary accommodation (including breakfast if provided, but not other meals) will be met for a period of up to 26 weeks. The costs of electric, gas and a refundable deposit cannot be reimbursed. This may be extended in exceptional circumstance at the discretion of the Head of Service and in agreement with the Head of Service HR & OD. The payment will cease as soon as the employee is no longer maintaining the former residence.

A copy of the rental agreement is required and this must be supplied at the outset.

A hand written receipt is acceptable and, where possible, should include all the details required to be a vat invoice. If it is less than £250, it has to detail the name and address of the supplier, the vat registration number (if applicable), tax point (date of supply), description of supply, the total charge including vat and the rate of vat included. Please refer to [Recovering VAT](#) for further information.

The amounts claimed cannot exceed the total relocation reimbursement costs as detailed within this procedure.

If the employee subsequently relocates (within 12 months of taking up the appointment) then any amount reimbursed for accommodation will be deducted from the overall relocation allowance (£8,000 including VAT).

Temporary Relocation Allowance (Special Circumstances Only)

Payment will be made (subject to approval) in relation to accommodation expenses for an appointee who is to retain their permanent residence and **move temporarily** near to their required workplace whilst undertaking work for Aberdeenshire council.

The payment of these expenses must receive prior approval by the Director of the service and the Head of Service HR&OD before the appointment details are finalised. This allowance can be claimed for a maximum of 26 weeks. This may be extended only in exceptional circumstances.

These expenses will be reimbursed via the appointee's salary payment on a monthly basis until the end of the lodging period or on the completion of 26 weeks. **Please note that this allowance will be liable for tax and national insurance contributions which will be deducted accordingly.**

Receipts or documentation providing proof of payment should be submitted along with the temporary accommodation expenses form.

Advice and accommodation booking will be provided by Aberdeenshire Council's Corporate Travel team. They can be contacted either by telephone 01224 664800 or by emailing travel@Aberdeenshire.gov.uk.

8. EXEMPTIONS

There are some payments, goods or services that do not qualify for reimbursement. Some examples are compensation for a part used season ticket, a penalty for giving insufficient notice of a child's withdrawal from school, re-direction of mail, council tax bills, and the cost of having to join a new sports or social club.

9. REPAYMENT

The full amount of reimbursement, or such proportion as is thought appropriate by the Council, will be repayable should the employee leave the Council's service within 2 years of taking up the appointment.

- Within one year - Full amount
- 12 -18 months - 50%
- 18 months - 2 years - 25%

This provision may be waived in exceptional circumstances for example in relation to ill health retiral. This would require approval from the Head of Service HR&OD.

For further advice and guidance on any of the above please contact [Human Resources and Organisational Development](#).

Relocation and Resettlement

Index of Documents

Procedure

Revision Date	Previous Revision Date	Summary of Changes
31-03-2009	-	Creation of all Documents
18-04-2013	31-03-2009	Modification of document
06-06-2014	18-04-2013	Updated to reflect recent changes to LG terms and conditions
12-09-2014	06-06-2014	Financial Code details added
12-02-2015	12-09-2014	Revision of Procedure

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