

Draft Downsizing Policy Consultation

Southampton City Council is consulting on a Draft Downsizing Policy Consultation.

We would like to hear your thoughts on the proposals and any impacts or alternative suggestions you would like us to consider. Now is your opportunity to have your say.

An online version of this questionnaire can be found on Southampton City Council's website at www.southampton.gov.uk/consultations

You can also email your consultation feedback or queries to yourcity.yoursay@southampton.gov.uk

This consultation closes on **Sunday 19th October 2025**.

Background

Under-occupying can be defined as a household that resides in a property that is considered too large for their needs, typically due to having more bedrooms than are deemed necessary for the number of occupants.

Our proposed Downsizing policy will outline our plan to address under-occupying by helping those wanting to move to a smaller accommodation and return much needed larger accommodation to the stock provision.

The proposed policy focuses on offering incentives to those who are under-occupying by providing them with practical support and financial assistance to move from their existing Council home.

The proposed scheme is subject to a budget limit and payments are offered on a 'first come, first served' basis. Those who are eligible to downsize include secure tenants of Southampton City Council. Tenants of Housing Associations who are downsizing are excluded from this policy and, as a result, are not eligible for an incentive payment. Additionally, we are proposing that tenants who downsize by mutual exchange will also not qualify for an incentive payment under this policy. The full proposed eligibility criteria can be found in the full draft policy here: <https://www.southampton.gov.uk/consultations>

Tenants who wish to downsize are required to make an application to join the housing register and on occasions, a Housing Assessment Officer may need to visit their home to assist with completing the application form. Tenants that agree to downsize will be placed on the Housing Waiting List and awarded a high priority banding.

Subject to tenant application approval, we are proposing an incentive of a one-off financial payment made after the tenant has downsized.

To qualify for an incentive payment, we are proposing the tenant must submit a claim form within 3 months of vacating the property. The incentive would be paid after 28 days from the start of any new social tenancy. This timescale would be subject to having all the necessary information available.

The full draft policy can be found online here: <https://www.southampton.gov.uk/consultations> and covers the following:

- The aims of the policy
- The proposed eligibility criteria
- The proposed downsizing application process & incentives
- Mutual exchange

Before we begin, please let you know if you are any of the following:

	Yes	No	Prefer not to say
A tenant of a home rented from the council?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A resident of Southampton?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Someone that works, visits or studies in Southampton?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Responding on behalf of a business or organisation (including voluntary and community organisations)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
An employee of Southampton City Council?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Eligibility criteria

The full detail of the proposed eligibility criteria in the draft policy can be found on page 2 in the draft document here: <https://www.southampton.gov.uk/consultations>

The proposed eligibility criteria can be summarised as:

- Secure tenants of Southampton City Council who is giving up one or more bedrooms
- Those who have maintained their current home to a satisfactory condition
- Those providing vacant possession & living in general needs accommodation
- Those not in breach of tenancy conditions
- Those who do not have housing related debt with Southampton City Council that exceeds the incentive payment
- Tenants who have completed their probationary period

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed eligibility criteria in the draft policy?

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Slightly agree
- ☐ Neither
- ☐ Slightly disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

What impact do you feel this may have on you, your family or the wider community?

- ☐ A very positive impact
- ☐ A fairly positive impact
- ☐ No impact at all
- ☐ A fairly negative impact
- ☐ A very negative impact
- ☐ Don't know

If you disagree, or have any comments, impacts, suggestions or alternatives you feel we should consider, please provide details:

Incentives

Subject to tenant application approval, we are proposing an incentive of a one-off financial payment made after the tenant has downsized.

	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Detail</u>
Incentive for the first bedroom	£1000.00	A tenant moving from a two bedroom or larger property and giving up at least one bedroom will be able to claim a one-off incentive payment of £1000.00.
For every additional bedroom	£500.00	
Removals	£750.00	Any claim for removal costs will require a receipt.

To qualify for an incentive payment, we are proposing the tenant must submit a claim form within 3 months of vacating the property. The incentive would be paid after 28 days from the start of any new social tenancy. This timescale would be subject to having all the necessary information available.

The full detail of the proposed incentives in the draft policy can be found on page 4 in the draft document here: <https://www.southampton.gov.uk/consultations>

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed policy to provide incentives for secure tenants who wish to downsize?

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Slightly agree
- ☐ Neither
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

What impact do you feel this may have on you, your family or the wider community?

- ☐ A very positive impact
- ☐ A fairly positive impact
- ☐ No impact at all
- ☐ A fairly negative impact
- ☐ A very negative impact
- ☐ Don't know

The following question is for those responding as a tenant of a home rented from the council.

If there were no financial incentive, how likely is it you would consider downsizing?

- ☐ Very likely
- ☐ Likely
- ☐ Neither
- ☐ Unlikely
- ☐ Very unlikely

If you disagree, or have any comments, impacts, suggestions or alternatives you feel we should consider, please provide details:

Reading the draft Downsizing policy

Have you read the proposed draft Downsizing policy?

- ☐ Yes, all of it
☐ Yes, some of it
☐ No, none of it

If you have read the proposed draft Downsizing policy, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Slightly agree	Neither	Slightly disagree	Strongly disagree
"The draft policy is easy to understand"	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
"The draft policy provides sufficient information"	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If there were parts of the draft Downsizing policy that you did not understand or you feel need more information, please provide further details:

About you

Only answer the following questions about your postcode, sex, gender, age, ethnicity, property and disability if you are responding as an individual, and not as a business or organisation.

What is your postcode?

This is used for geographical analysis only and will not be used to identify or contact you.

What is your sex?

- ☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Prefer not to say

Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Prefer not to say

If no, please write in
your gender identity:

What is your age?

☐

Under 18

☐

35 - 44

☐

65 - 74

☐

18 - 24

☐

45 - 54

☐

75+

☐

25 - 34

☐

55 - 64

☐

Prefer not to say

How would you describe your ethnic group?

☐

Asian or Asian British

☐

White other

☐

Black, Black British, Caribbean or African

☐

Other ethnic group

☐

Mixed or multiple ethnic groups

☐

Prefer not to say

☐

White British

If other, please specify:

Do you own or rent the property where you currently live?

☐

Own

☐

Rent from a private landlord

☐

Rent from the council

☐

Rent from a housing association

☐

Other, please specify

☐

Prefer not to say

If other, please specify:

Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more?

☐

Yes

☐

No

☐

Prefer not to say

If yes, do any of your conditions or illnesses reduce your ability to carry out day-to-day activities?

☐

Yes, a lot

☐

Not at all

☐

Yes, a little

☐

Prefer not to say

The following three questions are for those responding as a business or organisation.

Businesses and organisations

Can the name of your business or organisation be attributed to your response?

☐

Yes

☐

No

Can we contact you about your response to this consultation?

☐

Yes

☐

No

If yes, please provide us with the following details:

Business/organisation name:

Contact name:

Contact email:

What happens next?

The consultation closes on **Sunday 19th October 2025**. After this date, all feedback will be analysed and considered before a final decision is made.

Please return completed surveys to:

*Consultations,
First Floor, West Wing,
Civic Centre,
Southampton,
SO14 7LY.*

Alternatively, please hand completed surveys back to any Southampton City Council-run library.

The information collected about you during this survey will only be used for the purposes of research. We may use it to contact you about this. We will only share your information with other organisations or council departments if we need to. We may also share it to prevent, investigate or prosecute criminal offences, or as the law otherwise allows. Please be aware that any comments given on this form may be published in the report. However, the council will endeavour to remove any references that could identify individuals or organisations. Our Privacy Policy (<http://www.southampton.gov.uk/privacy>) explains how we handle your personal data, and we can provide a copy if you are unable to access the Internet.