

Walden House Residents

Support with your move

January 2020



The lease Westminster City Council holds at Walden House is coming to an end in 2023. We are committed to supporting all residents with their move from Walden House to a new home in Westminster.

Over the next four years, we will work closely with secure tenants in identifying your housing needs and assist you with finding a new home. When the time is right, we will work with you to prepare for a move and will then help you with the move itself.

The developer has committed to provide enough social rented homes on the basis of current circumstances, and we will be offering Walden House council tenants the right to return to the new development on this site when it has been completed – subject to planning approval.

We understand that moving home is a big step to take and we are committed to helping you throughout this. To help minimise disruption we are offering:

- A single discretionary payment of £6,400 (for the disruption in having to move home).
- High priority bidding status to enable you to find a new home (450 points per households).
- A right of return is available to secure tenants of Walden House, giving you first opportunity to bid on the new homes.
- A full support package including furniture removals, reconnection and other sundry expenses.
- A dedicated rehousing officer to support you throughout.

Support available

Disturbance Payments

Disturbance Payments are there to provide financial support to you for any reasonable expenses associated with your move. They typically include charges such as:

- removal costs
- redirection of mail
- telephone and internet disconnection and reconnection
- disconnection of any TV aerials/ satellites
- curtains and flooring (where no flooring is in situ)
- dismantling and re-fitting of fitted resident owned furniture
- extra costs of new school uniform if moved to a different area, which requires your child to move school (supported by letters)

When moving, disturbance payments will be made once you move to your new home only.

Disturbance Payment procedure

Your Relocations Officer will confirm which payments will be made directly and which payments you will have to complete a Claim for Disturbance Payment form for any legitimate expenses you incur in relation to moving home (receipts and proof of expenses/purchase will be required).

Split Households

In some cases, households needing homes with two bedrooms or more might be offered separate properties. This is known as 'splitting' the household.

If the council agrees to split a household, reasonable disturbance claims for costs related to the move (only) of all parts of the household will be considered on a case by case basis. Your Relocations Officer will be able to assist you with this process.

Frequently asked questions

Can I stay in Westminster or will I be moved out of the borough?

As a secure tenant of the council you will be rehoused within Westminster. You will have opportunities to move to other boroughs, if and only if, you choose to bid on properties through Choice Based Lettings.

If I move away from Walden House now, do I still have a 'Right of Return'?

Yes, your rehousing is necessary for Grosvenor to redevelop the site – subject to planning approval. Now that Grosvenor have confirmed they are able to provide enough social homes in their development based on residents' current circumstances, the council has now been able to commit to a right of return when you move.

What does Right of Return mean?

Once the new homes are completed, the residents of Walden House will be given the first opportunity to bid on the new social homes built on the site. This will be in line with your current assessed housing needs.

What if my housing circumstances change?

The developer is making homes available for residents based on current circumstances. Please note that if your circumstances change (for example if your household increases in size), we cannot guarantee that there will be an available property for you to bid on that meets your household requirements.

What if my household changes before I return to the new Walden House?

Before your return to Walden House you will need to complete a housing needs assessment. If there are suitable properties within the new site, you will have the opportunity to bid. We will be able to advise you closer to the time of the new homes being completed.

Will my rent be the same in my next property?

When moving to another council home your rent will stay at social rent levels. Whilst we cannot say it will be the same rent, it will be a similar weekly rent.

Will I stay as a council tenant?

When looking for a new home you will be able to bid on available council and registered providers' (housing association) properties. Tenants who transfer to a council property will remain as a council tenant on a social rent. If moving to a registered provider home, residents become a tenant of that organisation on the equivalent social rented tenancy agreement.

Will I be offered a council tenancy on my return to the new homes?

The social housing provider for the new homes has yet to be appointed. The type of tenancy will depend on the chosen housing provider. If the council is the housing provider, then a secure tenancy may be offered. If a Registered Provider is chosen, then the tenancy will be an assured tenancy. In either case, the tenancy will remain as a social tenancy and at an equivalent social rent.

I'm really worried about my belongings – will I get any support with packing etc?

Residents will receive advice and support throughout the moving process. Staff can arrange the booking of removal companies, advice on packing of belongings, co-ordinate disconnection and reconnection of services and offer any other moving assistance required.

I have a storage shed at Walden House. What is happening to this?

Storage sheds need to be returned to Grosvenor in June 2021. Unfortunately, we cannot promise we will be able to provide comparable storage in your new home. We will work with you to understand your circumstances and any specific storage requirements you have.

Will I have a Right to Buy?

Currently residents are not eligible for the Right to Buy scheme. As a provider has not yet been chosen for the new development, we are not able to determine at this point if residents will be eligible for Right to Buy.

The moving process

1

All residents will receive a letter and this rehousing leaflet detailing the offer and the support you will receive.

2

You will then receive a visit from your re-housing officers, where they will carry out a survey to understand your housing needs and preferences.

3

We will then write to you with your bidding information and instructions on how to start looking at potential properties.

4

We will meet with you regularly to help you bid and provide advice on the lettings process.

5

Once you've seen a property that you like, you will make a bid. If you are shortlisted a viewing will be arranged.

6

Following the viewing, if you are successful you will receive confirmation about moving in.

7

At this point we will begin working with you to arrange the move, provide any other support needs and arrange your disturbance payment.

8

You will move in to your new home and sign your new tenancy.

Contact your dedicated Relocations Officers

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