

Grange Farm Estate, South Harrow

Frequently Asked Questions

for residents moving into new Phase 1 homes

The progress on building works for Phase 1 has now reached another milestone with the handover of the flats and duplexes now imminent. The houses will be the last homes to come over and we hope this will be in August.

We would like to thank everyone for their patience and understanding. Whilst the delays have been beyond our control, we understand this has caused frustration but hope that this is now turning into anticipation of moving day.

Residents allocated for Phase 1 homes have been invited to view their new homes and a significant number have viewed and signed acceptance forms. Upon occupation, you will be given the chance to have a technical demonstration of your new home (e.g.: entry-phone, heating, metering, etc...).

Details of the support offered to move into your new homes is set out later in this document.

This is the latest in a series of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) which we hope will make this whole journey a less stressful experience.

If you have additional questions

If you have further queries, you can speak with Salome Irungu at the fortnightly housing surgeries in the Community Centre, which are on alternate Wednesday's, from 10am to 4pm.

Salome Irungu contact details:

Email: salome.irungu@harrow.gov.uk

Mobile: 07927 548315

1. Home Loss

Secure tenants moving into phase 1 who have not received statutory home loss payments in the past will be eligible. This payment is paid only once. The payment is set by the government each year. This is currently £ 8,100. Please also be aware that any money owed to the council, regardless of the type of debt, will be deducted from the Home Loss payment before this is paid to you

The Home Loss payment is made 3 weeks after signing the new tenancy. At its sole discretion, the Council may consider making a part payment in advance, up to a maximum of £1,000. Residents will need to provide clear reasons and evidence to

support an advance payment; each case will be considered individually and payment by the Council is completely voluntary.

2. Disturbance Payments

In line with government guidance, the Council may consider claims for some other costs you may have in order to move and it is recommended that you seek clarity on what this includes before incurring them.

Please note that each application for reimbursement will be considered individually; residents must demonstrate that any such costs are reasonable and that reimbursement is justified.

Original receipts will be required for all refund of eligible costs and reimbursement will be made within 3 weeks of our receiving the receipts. Once you submit your claim along with your bank details to Salome, the claim will be vetted and then logged with the finance team. Payment will follow within three weeks of your submission subject to all information correctly supplied.

As standard, the Council will pay reasonable costs for:

In line with what has been offered to residents who have already moved, Royal Mail post re-direction for 3 months will be covered for households of up to 3 adults.

Some of the organisations you will need to notify when you change your address are:

- a) Utility provider – Gas, electricity, water
 - b) Council tax, housing benefits teams via the council's website through your my harrow account at harrow.gov.uk
 - c) social services or any agency that supports your needs
 - d) Home contents insurance
 - e) Inform the children's school / university / college
 - f) Inform GP / dentist / library
 - g) Inform your bank / credit card company
 - h) TV licence
 - i) Genuine companies you are happy to accept your change of details over the phone following personal identity verification
- Telephone disconnection and reconnection
 - Internet & broadband

- all new homes will be set up with Virgin Media and BT fibre optic cabling. We will pay the initial connection fee (or transfer fee if already with the service provider).
- **Individual satellite dishes are not permitted.** We understand that Sky services are available without the need for satellite dishes.
- In addition, 12 months after handover, the Council will work with Community Fibre to see if they can provide a service
- Security alarms disconnected
- Other reasonable costs where these are shown as being necessary and evidenced by receipts

Items not covered

Loss of wages

Please note that the disturbance payment will not include for loss of wages, because there will be plenty of notice given for the moving date and the council is assisting with provision of removal services. Nor will it include change of address on documentation where this is free – for example driving licence.

Window coverings

In line with increasingly standard practice on new build and regeneration schemes, windows in habitable rooms will be fitted with blinds which will be gifted to residents. At the end of the Defects Liability Period (12 months following completion of the new homes) residents can fit their own curtains if they wish and curtain rails can be fitted directly into the wall above window openings in living, bedroom, and kitchen areas.

In line with the Residents' Charter

- consideration of payment by the council towards other types of window fittings will be given only where residents' existing curtains cannot be re-used in their new home.
- In this case, the council will contribute of up to £100 for a living room and £50 per bedroom.
- no payment will be made for re-fitting costs or for net curtains.

Cookers

The new homes will require the use of electric cookers

The Council asked residents if they would be interested in having a cooker supplied by the Council and were asked for their preference. Based on the majority choice (double oven + ceramic hob + stainless steel finish) we have ordered cookers for those residents who took up this offer. These will be installed shortly after we take handover of the homes.

Any cookers provided by the Council will be gifted to tenants. In this case no payment will be made for a new electric cooker. If you took up this offer and need more information including the type of cooker being provided, please contact Salome Irungu

Residents also have a choice to provide their own cooker. However, the purchase cost will be capped to reflect the price that would have been paid had the Council provided it. This will be no more than £510 and includes supply and installation.

Please note if you are supplying your own cooker, the cooker maximum width of the cooker should be 600m wide.

Cooker hood

The ventilation system in the new homes is designed to negate the need for a ducted extraction hood over the cooker space. The extractions system installed has a boost function for residents to use when cooking.

However, if residents wish to have a hood fitted above their cooker space, there is a power point for them to install a filter style cooker hood. Please note that this is an optional feature and as such the cost of ordering and installation is not covered by the disturbance provisions.

Flooring

Also, in line with standard practice, the floor coverings will be provided:

- laminate flooring will be fitted in the living room and in open plan kitchen areas.
- slip resistant vinyl will be fitted to bathrooms and toilets.
- carpet will be fitted in the bedrooms

Samples were made available in the Community Centre for residents to view during construction in 2022.

Please note that no payment will be made in respect of floor coverings to the new homes. Further assessment of individual households may be undertaken, provided strong evidence supports a need to do so.

If residents wish to change the flooring, they can do so 12 months after moving in and must do so in line with guidance in the new homes guide: the 'Home User Guide ('HUG')'.

Gifted items

Please note the following items - if fitted at the point of occupation- will be gifted to residents:

- appliances
- kitchen light track
- floor coverings
- bathroom cabinet and mirror
- blinds

This means that they will become your responsibility to maintain and replace if damaged.

Where an appliance gifted to you is covered by a guarantee, you will need to register this with the manufacturer and if you experience any issues with appliance/s you will need to contact the manufacturer directly, details of which will be in the relevant booklets left with the appliance in your new home

3. Help with Moving

In line with previous moves, the Council anticipates residents will have one week to complete the move into their new home and return the keys to their previous home to the Council. There will be plenty of notice and time to prepare in the run-up to moving day

The council will work with residents to support their move into their new home. This will be done in phases, and we will advise of the timing of your move as soon as we have confirmation of handover.

In order to make it easier for residents and the council, we have arranged for removal contractors (Central Moves) to move you and a number of residents have already been visited and given packing materials in which to move their possessions.

The service will reflect those commitments within the Residents' Charter, where more detail can be found. Please let us know if you would like another copy of this document.

Items to be moved will include:

- domestic furnishings, including but not limited to, sofas, chairs, tables and carpeting (if large carpets are left behind, please cut the carpets to 6 – 8 equal pieces to enable easy disposal)
- white goods, such as washing machines and washer-driers, cookers (electric only), dishwashers, fridges and freezers (any contents and other perishable items are specifically excluded from this contract)
- electronic equipment, such as TVs, sound systems, games consoles and computers
- mirrors, linen, ornaments, lamps, books, house plants
- domestic utensils
- clothing
- gardening, DIY tools and equipment from external storage.
- Any items you do not need can be left behind will be cleared by the council

Please note that no flammable items will be moved by Central Moves

Disconnection

Central Moves will disconnect electric cookers and reconnect in the new home, Central Moves will also disconnect your washing machine, hose outlets for reconnect in your new home.

Packing

Central Moves will assess on a case-by-case basis the number of boxes and packing materials required which will be provided free of charge to each household.

- Residents will be required to pack their personal belongings in advance of the move
- Vulnerable tenants without family members or friends will receive help from Central Moves with moving home

If you think that you have additional requirements, please contact **Salome Irungu** before committing to any costs, as the Council may not reimburse them.

Deliveries to your new home

Once a moving-in date is known, residents can arrange for deliveries to be booked in advance, but delivery or installation cannot take place until your new tenancy is signed

4. Allocations Queries

An allocation policy was agreed with the Grange Farm Steering Group. Residents are allowed up to 3 offers in accordance with the policy.

All residents - apart from those who have pending housing needs assessments - have received their pre-allocated properties showing flat type, floor level and outlook. In all cases, the Council has worked to meet household needs although it may not be possible to meet all household aspirations. If you do not accept your first offer, the Council will make you two further offers but depending on availability, these may not be on Grange Farm.

Due to size, location and accessibility of adapted/adaptable homes, we may not be able to make more than one offer for those whose properties require adaptations.

5. Rents and service charges

Rent and service charge information are set in line with the Council policy. The information is given to residents when viewing their new homes and will reflect the higher level of amenity being provided in Phase 1.

We will provide clear instructions about what to do in terms of your rent account (change of address, moving period and avoiding double-rent) nearer the time.

However, if you need to discuss that matter now, please contact your Housing Officer:

Rita Contractor contact details:
Email: rita.contrator@harrow.gov.uk

Direct Dial: 0208 7366513

6. Requirements for the vacated property

Residents can leave any unwanted items in their existing property when they move. Residents will be asked to sign a form confirming that they have left items and that the Council can dispose of them. If large carpets are left behind, please cut the carpets to 6 – 8 equal pieces to enable easy disposal.

However, fly-tipping and other inconsiderate disposal of unwanted items is not permitted. The council has arranged for the disposal of unwanted larger items.

7. Repair Work in the New properties

The new properties will be ready for residents to move into. Any works which are necessary are likely to be covered by the Defects reporting process. You will be issued with the Home User Guide (HUG) along with your tenancy pack. Please see section below

8. Reporting Defects

What is a Defect?

Defects are aspects of a building that are not performing adequately for their intended use. Defects may occur because of: Design deficiencies. Product or material deficiencies. Poor specification.

Higgins is responsible for dealing with any defects which arise in the 12 months after we take handover of the new homes. The council is drafting a Defects process document which will be consulted on by the Steering Group.

Residents will be provided with information on the defects process (See Home Users Guide. HUG), including:

- what defects are and provide examples
- how to report defects
- timescales for responding (as this will vary depending on the type of defect reported)
- a clear process for escalation
- 'Out Of Hours' information
- What can and cannot be put up on the walls

Defects do not cover domestic appliances, gifted or personal items and will not cover any damage to the new home caused by residents. Where damage has been caused by a resident, this may result in a re-charge to them to cover the cost of any repairs where these are carried out by the council or the contractor.

9. Home User Guidance Manual

Every household will receive a 'Home User Guide' (HUG, in a user-friendly, easy to read format) explaining how the systems in your new home work and the Residents Steering Group (RSG) have been involved in the design and content of this.

Some RSG members have also volunteered their time to translate and explain how the systems in your new home work.

Videos will be provided and will also be available with voice-overs in those languages offered by the volunteer residents.

The HUG will have links to demonstrate how to use the systems in your home effectively providing the technical detail for easy and clear use and should also include a help line if further assistance is required.

Please read the Home User Guide carefully which will detail what you can or are **not allowed to do** in the first 12 months of handover of your new home from the contractor and thereafter. This is very important because it allows for building guarantees and warranties to still be valid.

The council and Higgins have held 'demonstration days' which included 'Super Users from the RSG who will be at hand to explain how the system in the homes are used, locations of the stop cock, how your heating and hot water works etc. Your housing officer or your repairs and maintenance surveyor have knowledge how the system in your home operates therefore may be able to assist you with basic queries.

10. Contents Insurance

It is recommended you get contents insurance in the new property or you are looking to change your provider.

You can go to the Harrow website and look for Home Contents Insurance for Council Tenants.

11. Services

Heating and Hot Water

A detailed guide how the under-floor heating and hot water system works is in the HUG. Each home will have its own heating and hot water meter. You can choose either a prepayment system or monthly billing, the cost per unit of energy will be the same regardless. Residents will be asked their preference when viewing their new home.

Residents will be required to sign a Heat Supply Agreement when they sign their new tenancy. This is so that everyone understands their obligations in respect of paying for heating and hot water charges. There is no gas supply to your home.

Electricity

Electrical supplier for the lighting and cooking will be Scottish Power, the SMART meter will be located in the airing cupboard or outside the front door of duplex / triplex homes.

Water

All homes will have an individual water meter.

Parking

Phase 1 will deliver 48 car parking spaces, 3 spaces will be designated for use by Blue Badge holders but will not be allocated to specific homes and you must hold a valid blue badge parking permit to use one of the spaces.

In line with existing car parking on the estate, the parking spaces on Phase 1 will be available on a first-come first-served basis and be available to people who do not live in a Phase 1 home. Whilst the council can look into installing signage to deter non-residents, we must stress that this cannot be enforced.

As advised previously, following completion of all phases of the regeneration, the Council will undertake a detailed exercise to assess the merits of introducing a Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ).

There will be a Car Club in the future, when there are sufficient new homes to meet the capacity/demand requirements to implement one.

Building evacuation procedures

Signage will be provided within the new buildings and information has been included in the event of a fire within the Home User Guide.

Access to the new homes and security

The design of and access to the new buildings has involved close liaison with relevant officers of the council and neighbourhood officer in order to meet the stringent 'Secure by Design' requirements.

Information on the video entry system and the number of fobs provided to new residents with replacement cost is covered within the HUG.

Refuse and recycling information

The information on refuse and recycling is included within the Home User Guide (HUG).

Estate Management

Both internal and external communal areas will be cleaned and maintained by caretakers.

Confirmation of adaptations

Salome Irungu has been working with residents and the Occupational Therapy (OT) team in Harrow to assess the needs of resident's requirements and where appropriate, these are to be incorporated within the new homes.

Items which are not included within the contract with Higgins will have to be commissioned by the Harrow Adaptations & Repairs team (also known as 'HART') at Harrow and the team will liaise with and advise individual households as necessary.

Smoking policy, including in communal areas

Smoking and vaping is not permitted in any communal area within the building

Good Neighbour Agreement

Working with the Steering Group, the Council has developed a 'Good Neighbour Agreement' to set out what you can expect from Harrow as your landlord, as well as our expectations of residents and in so doing, develop a spirit of joint working to ensure everyone enjoys their new home.

12. Handyperson Service

Free handy person service

Harrow has a handy-person service in place to assist eligible residents who require additional support. Details are set out in the attached document. To qualify contact details are 020 8424 1894 or hart.hart@harrow.gov.uk

In addition, Higgins will be able to provide a service which is likely to involve a presence on site one day a week for a period of 3 months following handover. The handyperson services will be by appointment and we will provide the name and contact details to you when you move to your new home.

13. Miscellaneous

Pets

In line with Harrow policy, pets are allowed - provided they are well behaved, looked after responsibly and the Health and Safety of residents is not compromised. The Council retains the right to take action if this is not the case

New Tenancies

Your new tenancy will be the same as the one you currently have, other than to reflect the new address, rents and service charges

14. Shared Ownership and Shared Equity Homes

Altogether, there are 20 Shared Ownership Homes for sale.

Connell's Estate Agents are currently marketing the homes on behalf of the Council. If you are interested in purchasing a property, feel free to contact Connells who can explain to you the processes and confirm if you meet the eligibility criteria. Their contact information is detailed below:

Victoria Vale
New Homes Sales Manager
Connells
Telephone: 01923 674504
E-mail: grangefarm@connells.co.uk

15. Useful Contacts:

Resident Steering Group (RSG), email: grangefarmsteeringgroup.co.uk

Independent Tenant Adviser Raj Kumar email address: raj@1enterprise.co.uk

Harrow Council Project Manager email: kamal.uddin@harrow.gov.uk

Harrow Council Project Manager email: mathew.carvalho@harrow.gov.uk

Harrow Council Decant and Rehousing Officer email: salome.irungu@harrow.gov.uk

Harrow Council Housing Officer –Rita Contractor email rita.contractor@harrow.gov.uk

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