



DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

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National Mobility Scheme

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MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND CONSTRUCTION

31 March 1981

Mike Pattison Esq
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street
London SW1

Dear Mike,

NATIONAL MOBILITY SCHEME

Mr Stanley thought the Prime Minister would wish to know before her Questions today that he will be holding a Press Conference at 12.00 today with the Housing Chairmen of the AMA, ADC, LBA and GLC to highlight the commencement of the National Mobility Scheme tomorrow, April 1st.

Proposals for this first ever National Mobility Scheme were produced by the local authority associations, and first announced by Mr Stanley last year. All the associations concerned have commended the scheme to their members. Participation is voluntary but some 300 authorities have already agreed to take part. The scheme will be monitored by a small office in London.

The scheme is for tenants, people with a high priority on housing waiting lists, or people with a pressing need to move for job or family reasons. They go to their local housing department and fill in a simple form, which the local authority then normally forwards to the authority in the desired area. Participating authorities have agreed to make 1% of their lettings, in addition to transfers and exchanges, available each year to people from outside their area.

/ I enclose a copy of the press notice, the publicity leaflet, and the basic statement of the scheme's objectives.

Yours sincerely,

R U Young

R U YOUNG
Private Secretary



March 1981

NATIONAL MOBILITY SCHEME

ITS OBJECTIVES, PRINCIPLES, OUTLINE PROCEDURES AND MANAGEMENT

Introduction

1. The National Mobility Scheme was launched on 1 April 1981. It encompasses the whole of the public housing sector in England and Wales. The provisions of the Scheme were drawn up initially by a joint working group of officials of the Association of Metropolitan Authorities, the Association of District Councils, the London Boroughs' Association, the Greater London Council, the New Towns' Association, the National Federation of Housing Associations, the Department of the Environment and the Welsh Office. The Scheme, as described in this paper, has been agreed by these bodies.

Purpose

2. The need for greater housing mobility has been recognised in recent years by an increasing number of public housing authorities in many parts of the country. But the arrangements - often informal - which have been established locally in many areas have in some cases been restricted to individual key workers and to mutual exchanges. The National Mobility Scheme is designed to build on these initiatives, to widen their scope and to establish a national scheme.

Scope

3. The Scheme is open to tenants of participating local authorities, new town development corporations and housing associations in England and Wales - hereafter called "housing bodies". It is also open to people high on the "active" waiting lists of these housing bodies or in pressing need to move to a different area. It is for each individual housing body to decide whether to participate. The value of the Scheme to each housing body depends however on the co-operation of others, and its success upon achieving national coverage. The basic mechanics of the Scheme are operated by local authorities and new town development corporations. The way in which individual housing associations can be integrated into the Scheme is set out in paragraph 6 below.

Eligibility

4. Tenants, or people high on waiting lists or people with pressing need to move to a different area, are able to apply for a move under the Scheme provided that:

- (a) the applicant has obtained permanent employment beyond reasonable daily travelling distance from his existing home; or
- (b) the applicant needs to move on social grounds, for example those who are elderly or handicapped; or perhaps single parents with young families needing to move nearer relatives or friends.

Levels

5. The Scheme is operated at two complementary levels.

(a) County level

Within each county (or in some cases groups of counties) each participating local authority and new town makes available a given number of lettings annually for people who need to move into its area from another local authority or new town within the same county (or group of counties). For each local authority and new town, except for those in London, this given number of lettings is approximately equivalent to the number of people from its area who are rehoused by other local authorities or new towns within the same county (or group of counties). Over a year therefore the total arrivals in any one local authority or new town balance the total departures. In London, the existing GLC Mobility Scheme and the Inter-Borough Nomination Scheme will continue, and will be the county level scheme as far as London is concerned.

(b) National level

At the national level there are two elements contributing to the Scheme. First, each participating local authority and new town makes available one per cent of its annual lettings for people needing to move to its area from beyond the boundaries of its county (or group of counties). Annual lettings are defined as the sum of lettings becoming available in any given financial year through:

- (i) new building;
- (ii) conversions;
- (iii) relets;
- (iv) nominations to housing associations' lettings; and
- (v) non-nomination lettings by any participating housing associations (see paragraph 6);

but excluding transfers and mutual exchanges both within and between housing bodies.

Second, in addition each local authority and new town makes available further lettings equal to the number of people from its area who are rehoused by local authorities and new towns beyond its county (or group of counties) boundaries.

A local authority or new town may at any time decline to accept any more nominations from outside the county (or group of counties) if the number of arrivals already accepted during a year exceeds - by a figure that constitutes more than one per cent of its annual lettings - the number of departures from that local authority or new town who have already been accepted by other local authorities or new towns outside the county (or group of counties).

6. Housing Associations

As indicated in paragraph 5(b), a local authority or development corporation's nomination rights to housing association lettings are included in the calculation of the one per cent obligation under the national level element of the Scheme.

It is also open to housing associations to join the Scheme in their own right, in respect of their own (i.e. non-nominated) lettings. They do so by agreeing with the local authority or development corporation a given additional number or percentage of the association's lettings for nomination by the authority or development corporation in recognition of the benefit to the association of participation in the Scheme.

The effect of participation by a given housing association is that:

- (i) the whole of the association's lettings in the authority's area are included with the authority's for the purpose of calculating the authority's one per cent obligation;
- (ii) the tenants of the housing association are free to make use of the Scheme, at county or national level, on the same footing as the authority's own tenants.

Obligations

7. Each participating local authority and new town accepts the numerical obligations in paragraph 5 above, though it is of course free to go beyond them if it wishes. The obligation applies only to nominations under the procedures of the National Mobility Scheme. In return, a participating authority can expect people within its own area to be accepted by other local authorities and new towns throughout England and Wales within the limits of their reciprocal numerical obligations.

Procedures

8. The fundamental basis of the Scheme is that nominations are dealt with bilaterally between the nominating authority and the receiving authority. A nomination form is completed in respect of each applicant. If the local authority or new town is unable to nominate the applicant it tells him what are the grounds of refusal. If the application is accepted by the nominating authority it forwards its nomination direct to the receiving authority. The receiving authority examines the nomination and if satisfied replies to the applicant accepting him unless it considers that it has already fulfilled its obligations under the Scheme. If the receiving authority is unable to accept the nomination, it refers the nomination to any second-choice authority named by the applicant. If either the receiving or the second-choice authority is unable or unwilling to accept the nomination it informs the applicant accordingly and explains why.

Application of Criteria

9. Receiving authorities would be able to apply their normal eligibility criteria to those people seeking to move into their areas under the Scheme, but of course residential qualifications would need to be waived. For those wishing to use the Scheme to move on job grounds, it is suggested that either tenant or spouse should have an offer of permanent, and not merely temporary or seasonal, employment in the area to which they want to move.

Steering Committee

10. Management of the Scheme is by a Steering Committee. The Committee comprises members from the Association of District Councils, the Association of Metropolitan Authorities, the Greater London Council, the London Boroughs' Association, the New Towns' Association, the National Federation of Housing Associations and the Department of the Environment. The Committee is responsible for policy on the operation and future development of the Scheme, and is supported by an officer-level Advisory Group.

National Mobility Office

11. Both the Steering Committee and the Advisory Group are served by a National Mobility Office comprising a small team of permanent staff. The Office is responsible for:

- (a) drawing up the details of procedure for the Scheme, including the design of a standard form for mobility applicants, and record keeping, and the preparation of practice notes for the guidance of participating authorities;
- (b) initiating and co-ordinating any national publicity arrangements;
- (c) advising authorities on general matters concerning the Scheme's operation and how the guidelines should be interpreted;
- (d) collecting monitoring statistics about both county level and national level moves; and
- (e) developing any information systems required to support the operation of the Scheme.

The Office does not deal with individual applicants; any person contacting it would be immediately referred to his local authority or new town housing department. It is however able, if asked, to help resolve any differences in interpretation between authorities.

Funding

12. The Department of the Environment is funding initially the central costs of running the National Mobility Office under Section 46 of the Housing Act 1980. The local costs of operating the Scheme at both levels are borne by participating housing authorities.

Director

13. The National Mobility Office is headed by a part-time Director. He prepares monitoring reports on the operation and effectiveness of the Scheme and can make proposals for improvements in procedure for consideration by the Steering Committee. The Office's first Director is Mr Ben Affleck, formerly Housing Director for Milton Keynes Development Corporation. His office is situated, as a convenient location, in the County Hall of the Greater London Council (Room 347, Main Building, telephone (01-633 6358)).



National Mobility Office
Room 347, The County Hall
London SE1 7PB

Telephone 01-633 6358

Director B Affleck FIH MRS

Reference **Press Notice 140**

Please reply to 01 - 633 6358

01 - 633 7543

Date **31 March 1981**

NATIONAL MOBILITY SCHEME STARTS ON 1 APRIL 1981

The National Mobility Scheme to help tenants of local authorities, new towns and housing associations in England and Wales to move to a different area for job or social reasons, starts tomorrow (1 April 1981).

The Scheme is sponsored by the Association of District Councils (ADC), the Association of Metropolitan Authorities (AMA), the London Boroughs Association (LBA), the Greater London Council (GLC), the New Towns Association (NTA), the National Federation of Housing Associations (NFHA) and the Department of the Environment.

The Scheme will be open to the tenants and people high on waiting lists of all participating local authorities, new town development corporations and housing associations, who need to move to a different area for employment or social reasons. Other people with a pressing need to move will also be able to apply. Leaflets describing the Scheme will be available from local authority housing departments, job centres and elsewhere. The Scheme is described in a paper entitled 'National Mobility Scheme: Its Objectives, Principles, Outline Procedures and Management' copies of which are available on request.

Proposals for setting up a voluntary national mobility scheme were produced by the local authority associations and first announced by John Stanley, Minister for Housing and Construction during proceedings of the Housing Bill Standing Committee on

6 March 1980. (See DOE Press Notice 84, 7 March 1980).
Soon afterwards, in collaboration with the sponsoring organisations (ADC, AMA, GLC, LBA, NTA, NFHA), he set up a joint study group to work out the detailed operation of the Scheme. When the group had completed its work, the Associations presented the Department with a set of final proposals - including the setting up of a small office to monitor and promote the Scheme.

The National Mobility Office will be run by the Scheme's Director, Mr Ben Affleck FIH, MRSH, who was formerly Housing Director for Milton Keynes Development Corporation. The cost of the Office will be met initially by the Department of the Environment under new powers provided in section 46 of the Housing Act 1980.



NATIONAL MOBILITY SCHEME

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What is the National Mobility Scheme?

The National Mobility Scheme is a Scheme agreed between most public housing authorities and new towns in England and Wales to help tenants, people with high priority on housing waiting lists and people with a pressing need, to move to a different area. Housing association tenants may also be included if their associations are participating in the Scheme.

Who can apply?

The Scheme is for people who have a definite need to move either for job or for social reasons, to somewhere beyond reasonable travelling distance from their present home.

If you are applying for job reasons, either you or your wife or husband should have already started a job, or received a firm job offer which you will accept provided that you can get a home in the new area. Your local council housing department will be able to tell you whether the council in the area to which you want to move is taking part in the Scheme.

What sort of social reasons count under the Scheme?

A good example is a relative who needs your help and support, because they are old or permanently ill. Or, if it is you who needs help you may want to move closer to other members of your family. Councils will look at each case individually, and will tell you whether they need any supporting papers.

Who could go with me if I moved?

Everyone in your family who normally lives with you now, but not normally any lodgers or anyone to whom you sub-let a room. You should be quite sure that you want to move home permanently before applying: once you have moved, it might not be easy for you, or anyone moving with you, to move back to the area you have left.

How do I apply for a move?

You go to your local council's housing department who will help you fill in a form; but if you are a tenant of a new town, you go to the new town development corporation housing department. Take along any papers which may help your application.

How long will it be before I know my application has been accepted?

Your application has got to be looked at by your own local council (or new town) and the one in the area to which you want to move. If your council's housing department (or new town) is not prepared to nominate you to your chosen area it will tell you why. Your council's housing department (or new town) will keep you informed of progress. If you haven't heard after a month you should ask them about your application.

Should I continue to try to find accommodation myself?

Yes: if you think there are other ways of moving to the new area which would meet your needs and circumstances you should keep trying them as well. For example you may be able to find a council tenant (or a tenant of a housing association or new town) in the area to which you want to go who would exchange with you; or you may be able to find one who is willing to sub-let part of their home

or to take in lodgers; or you may be able to find a suitable private letting. The council of the area to which you want to go may be able to give you information about low-cost home ownership schemes for first time buyers or might be able to make a house available for you up to one year while you look for permanent accommodation.

Before you commit yourself to one of these other ways of moving you should first tell your council (or new town) housing department, so that they can explain how it would affect your chances of moving under the Scheme.