

Mobility Schemes for Social Housing Tenants (*ref 12*) (Moving to a New Council or Housing Association Home)

This *Quick Brief* outlines how tenants of Local Authorities (councils) and Registered Social Landlords (Housing Associations) can move home whilst remaining in the Public Housing Sector.

1. Traditionally tenants have less flexibility than those in other tenures for example owner occupiers. Movement within the Public Sector is usually by transfer or mutual exchange.

2. Transfers usually happen within the existing housing authority e.g. London borough or district housing authority. These are administered by your housing office. A tenant wishing to transfer should request and complete a Transfer Application Form. Help is usually available to do this. Once the application is completed details of individuals are placed on a waiting list to await suitable offers of accommodation. In theory the more points awarded the sooner an offer is made. Points are awarded in a number of circumstances.

- Too few bedrooms
- Too many bedrooms
- Medical reasons
- Social reasons
- Time spent on list

This list is not exhaustive and each housing provider should have a written policy on transfers which explains how the system works.

3. In emergencies for example where a tenant has suffered harassment then fast track transfers (management transfers) may be offered.

4. Mutual Exchange allows tenants to look for a property and then 'swap' with another tenant. Exchanges are more like to occur across county boundaries. Tenants need to satisfy themselves that the property concerned is in a good state of repair and that it meets their needs before they agree to an exchange. A tenant moving from a property adapted to meet their needs may be blocked from moving to a non adapted property.

5. There are various house exchange organisations. These are all web-based. These have some of their access free, but charge for enhanced services:

[www.exchangeforum.co.uk]

[www.houseexchange.org.uk]

[www.houseswapforum.co.uk]

[www.northwardshousing.co.uk]

There are others who charge a fee:

[www.ukhomeswap.co.uk]

[www.exchange-homes.co.uk]

6. Tenants can also be proactive by placing adverts in shop windows and on community notice boards both in the area they live and the one they want to move to.

7. Certain criteria must be met and the exchange must be approved by the landlord who will request references for the incoming tenant.

- There should be no rent arrears or outstanding court orders
- There should be no breaches of the tenancy
- The home should be neither too small or too big
- Swaps can only be with other public sector tenants i.e. you can't swap with someone who rents privately.

Tenants may be offered cash incentives to move into smaller homes at the discretion of the landlord.

If you require further information or have other queries contact Housing Options.

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