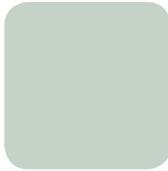




Housing Services

Mutual Exchanges



A guide to
exchanging your
property

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What is a Mutual Exchange?

A Mutual Exchange is where two or more Council or Housing Association tenants swap their homes if the landlord agrees.

If everything goes well you could move to a new home in as little as 4-6 weeks.

Do I need permission to do an exchange?

Yes. The landlord(s) of each tenant involved in an exchange must agree to this in writing.

An exchange will normally be allowed, although there are a few reasons why this might not be possible or where you might get 'Conditional consent'. Conditional consent may be granted where you are breaking your current tenancy conditions and an exchange cannot take place until the matter has been put right.

So for example, if you have current rent arrears you would not be able to exchange until you had cleared them, or if you have an Inspection that fails, you will not be able to exchange until your inspection has passed.

If the Exchange is not agreed you will be given the reason for refusal in writing within 42 days of the application. If you swap without the correct permission from each landlord, you could be evicted.



What are the reasons for Refusing a Mutual Exchange?

The 1985 Housing Act (part 4, section 92) gives tenants this right under certain circumstances. An exchange will normally be allowed, and can only be refused on the following grounds.

- The tenancy is subject to a court order for possession
- The tenancy is subject to a notice seeking possession or possession proceedings are pending
- The tenant or a household member is subject to any court order or any proceedings are pending in respect of antisocial behaviour.
- The property is substantially larger than you and your family need.
- The property is too small for you and your family and would result in Overcrowding/Over Occupancy, or would break the normal letting criteria in relation to the size of the property and the number of occupants.
- The property has been let as a service tenancy.
- The property has been adapted for a person with a physical disability and is very different from other properties and if the exchange were to go ahead, a disabled person would no longer live in the property.
- The property is one of a group let to people with special needs near to Social services or a special facility and if the exchange was to go ahead someone needing those services or facilities would no longer be living in the property.
- The property is the subject of a management agreement of a Housing Association and at least half the tenants of the properties within the agreement are members and the proposed tenant is not willing to become a member.

What type and size of property can I exchange to?

Sheffield City Council tenants can exchange 'like for like' - this means you can move to the same size of property you are leaving, even if you don't meet the eligibility criteria for a property.

Property Type

Bedsit

1 bedroom property

2 bedroom property

3 bedroom flat/maisonette

3 bedroom house

4 bedroom flat/maisonette

4 bedroom house

5 bedroom house/maisonette

Smallest Household

Single Person

Single Person

Single Person

Single person with access to a child, couple or two adults sharing

Family with one child, couple or two adults sharing

Family with two children or household of four people

Family with three children or household of five people

Family with five children or household of seven people

How do I find someone to exchange with?

There are different options available for you to find someone to swap with. You might already know someone who you would like to exchange homes with or you could try HomeSwapper or other online services, adverts in local shops, newspapers or libraries, or speak to family, friends and/or neighbours.

You should not offer or receive money to carry out a mutual exchange, including paying off rent arrears. There is no guarantee that the exchange will take place and Sheffield City Council will not get involved in any disputes that relate to such matters.

What is HomeSwapper?

HomeSwapper is an independent nationwide service for social housing tenants who want to exchange their property. As a Sheffield City Council tenant you can register for free and this will allow you to search for a property anywhere in the UK.



How does HomeSwapper work?

Tenants join HomeSwapper to find other tenants who may be interested in their home. Once you've registered your property on HomeSwapper they will check for potential new swaps for you; called "matches". They will match you with tenants whose requirements match the property you want to swap.

To increase the number of matches you get try to be flexible about the areas and type of property you want to move to - it could increase your chances of success. Be realistic about the size of the property you need.

How do I advertise my property details?

One of the options for advertising is by HomeSwapper. If you want to advertise in this way, you can register online at **www.HomeSwapper.co.uk**.

If you do not have internet access yourself you can access the website at the Sheffield Property Shop or in any of the area offices.



Can I add photographs of my property?

Yes, you can, but we reserve the right to withdraw this for anyone who uploads inappropriate material. We would also advise that if your property is easily identifiable from an exterior photo then you should only use photos of the interior to prevent someone turning up without prior contact.

There's a home I like, what do I do now?

You can contact the tenant of the property you're interested in on HomeSwapper by sending a message through the Message Centre. You can ask for more details and arrange a time to view each other's property. Do not call at the address unless you have arranged to do so.

Remember when arranging to view one another's homes, you are dealing with a stranger it would therefore be preferable to have someone with you. Try to arrange property viewings

in daylight and do not give out unnecessary personal details.

Landlords can at no stage of the process divulge any personal information concerning their tenant to any other tenants.

How do I apply to exchange my property?

Once you have found a suitable property to exchange with, you and the tenant you are swapping with will need to contact your individual landlords to get their approval and complete application forms. If you have different landlords both you and the tenant you are swapping with will need Mutual Exchange application forms from both landlords.

What should I consider before I agree to swap?

Before you agree to exchange, check what the new rent and any other costs (such as service charges) will be and make sure that this is affordable.

If repairs are needed, check if they will be carried out under the conditions of the tenancy. Repairs to improvements carried by tenants are not usually covered. We do not clear gardens or decorate homes as a result of a Mutual Exchange.

Make sure you can afford the moving expenses. Try to keep your expenses to an absolute minimum before moving - there is no legal comeback if your swap partner withdraws from an exchange at any time.

What checks will be carried out?

Before we can let you go ahead with any exchange, we will check that:

- You qualify for the size and type of property you wish to move to
- Your rent account is clear and there is not a possession order on your home for either rent arrears or antisocial behaviour
- Your home is in a satisfactory condition - you must allow an officer access to inspect your property



When can I move?

It will usually take us from four to six weeks to process your application and carry out the necessary checks.

If you want to exchange with someone who is not a Sheffield City Council tenant it may take a little longer. We will process your exchange as quickly as possible and we will let you know if there are any problems.

Once our checks are complete, we will arrange to assign your properties to each other. Please do not book any removals until after all parties have signed up to the exchange and a move date has been agreed.

Remember that if you are moving any gas appliances the work must be carried out by a contractor who is on the Gas Safe Register. Once you have moved we will arrange for a gas inspection to be carried out. If supply pipes are not properly sealed, legal action can be taken against

you and you will be charged for any repair costs. Please note that this inspection is obligatory and if you fail to keep the appointment or to change it giving at least 48 hours notice you will be re-charged for the failed appointment and a new one will be arranged.

If you do move without permission or refuse to move once you have signed your property over, we can take legal action against you.

Want more information?

Visit our website at www.sheffield.gov.uk/councilhousing or ring us on **0114 205 333** or **0114 293 0000**. Alternatively call into your local Housing Office or Sheffield Property Shop to speak to a member of staff.

Contact Housing Services



Phone: Call Centres 0114 293 0000
0114 205 3333
Repairs 0114 273 5555



Online:
Enquiries: www.sheffield.gov.uk/contacthousing
Website: www.sheffield.gov.uk/councilhousing

Follow us:   



Write: Council Housing Service
PO Box 483
M33 0DH



Visit Us: To find your local office please telephone us or alternatively you can visit our website and search for your local office using our interactive map.

Some calls may be monitored by Sheffield City Council and its partners for quality and training purposes.



Need help accessing our services?

A translation of this leaflet is automatically available in the languages below. It can also be made available in other languages on request.

Arabic

تتوفر نسخة مترجمة من هذه الكراسية باللغة العربية

Farsi

ترجمة ان برگچه در فارسی دستیاب است

Somali

Turjibaanka guub-yarahaan waxaa lagu heli karaa Soomaali

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Sheffield City Council
www.sheffield.gov.uk/councilhousing



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