

Swapping homes

This information is for Housing Executive and housing association tenants, also called social tenants.

Swapping is when you exchange homes with another secure tenant. Swapping is different from a transfer because it can be done throughout Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

You can swap homes with another tenant if you both:

- are social housing tenants
- have lived in your home for at least one year (also called a 'secure social tenant')
- have permission from your landlords

You cannot swap if you're an introductory tenant.

Swapping is a good option for someone who does not have enough points or hasn't been a secure tenant long enough to transfer. For example, if you have extra bedrooms in your home and want to downsize.

The Housing Executive and Housing Associations are improving the use of the Mutual Exchange process which is the process for swapping homes. If you are interested in moving home and have been unable to access the transfer list or, if you are struggling to be allocated a new property, this could be another useful option for you.

All tenants will receive information relating to the new exchange service via text message and social media. If you are interested in accessing this option, you must give consent to your landlord to use your information to 'match' you with

appropriate properties.

The Homeswapper service will also continue to be in use and is an option for tenants interested in an exchange this can be accessed online using their [website](#).

Applying to switch homes

1. Find another tenant to swap homes with

You must find a partner to swap with yourself. You can:

- [check Homeswapper](#) for a list of tenants who want to swap
- check swap groups on social media
- ask your housing officer if they have tenants that might be a good partner for you

2. Apply to your landlord to approve the swap

Once you find a swap partner, you must both apply to your landlords to approve the swap. To apply, contact your housing officer or patch manager and ask for a transfer application. Fill out the form and return it to your housing officer or patch manager.

It is very risky to swap homes without your landlord's approval. You may be breaking the rules of your tenancy and be at risk of homelessness.

3. Wait for your landlord's response

Your landlord will either:

- contact you by phone, post or email agreeing to the swap within four weeks, or
- send you a written refusal within six weeks and explain why they refused the swap

If both your landlords agree to the swap you will work with your landlords and swap partner to set a date for the swap. Make sure to tell Universal Credit and Housing Benefit about your change of address. If you do not notify them, you might owe money to your previous landlord or lose these benefits.

Reasons you cannot swap

Your landlord can refuse your request to swap if:

- you have a court order to leave the property
- your landlord started the process to evict you
- you, or someone in your home, was convicted of an offence related to misusing a property

Your landlord can also refuse the swap if either of the properties:

- has more rooms than the new tenant needs
- is not suitable for the new tenant's needs
- is adapted for someone with a disability and the new tenant doesn't need an adapted home
- is meant for a certain group and the new tenant isn't in that group

[Speak to one of our advisers](#) if your landlord gives another reason for refusing the swap.

More advice

- [Check your points](#)
- [The waiting list](#)
- [Applying for a transfer](#)