

GUIDE TO RE-HOUSING OPTIONS FOR COUNCIL TENANTS IN WALTHAM FOREST

Introduction

We have produced this guide to provide Council tenants with a brief summary of the options available if you want to move home. There are a number of ways you can look for accommodation; how and what will depend on your circumstances, for example your age, the size of your family and where you want to live.

Social housing is not available to everyone and waiting times for social housing in London are extremely long. This is due to demand for social housing far outstripping supply in any London borough.

If you have applied for a housing transfer, unless you are applying to move to a smaller property, it is likely to be a number of years before you are rehoused. In certain situations, you may be expected to wait more than ten years, even if your current accommodation is overcrowded.

If you are unable to sustain your current Council accommodation for the foreseeable future, you should consider all the transfer options explained in this leaflet.

Mutual Exchange & Homeswapper

Mutual exchange

- Customers can swap their home with another Council or Housing Association tenant in Waltham Forest or anywhere else in the UK, provided their landlord agrees. This is known as mutual exchange.
- Properties can be swapped between two or more parties.
- All parties in the exchange need to obtain written authorisation from their landlords before the exchange can take place.
- People interested in mutual exchange can register with Homeswapper free of charge.
- No money or goods can be exchanged in order to secure a swap. If money or goods are exchanged the tenants may be liable to eviction and/or a fine.

Homeswapper

- Homeswapper is a UK-wide database of people who want to swap their home.
- All customers interested in Homeswapper need to complete a registration form which can be accessed online: <https://www.homeswapper.co.uk/>. Once a customer has registered they will be sent a letter within 3–4 weeks confirming their registration details.
- The details of all registered customers are entered onto a UK wide digital matching service that will regularly search for possible swap partners.
- Customer details and what they are looking for are displayed on the Homeswapper lists in the areas they are interested in.
- If a customer has already identified a swap partner, then you may not need to register with Homeswapper but you will need to apply to your landlord for permission to swap your home.
- All parties in any exchange need the written permission of each landlord to swap homes.
- On completion of an exchange, customers must remember to contact Homeswap to ensure that their registration is cancelled.

Who is eligible?

- Any Council or Registered Social Landlord (RSL) tenant with an assured or secure tenancy is eligible to arrange a mutual exchange, providing they have written agreement from all landlords involved in the exchange.
- The Homeswapper scheme is open to Council or RSL tenants, with permanent, self-contained accommodation, who wish to move.
- Tenants of private landlords, homeowners and people living in shared ownership properties, are not eligible for the scheme.

Advantages for the Customer

- Mutual exchange provides you with a broader range of choices regarding the size, type, and location of your home.
- It gives you the opportunity to find a home that is suitable for the needs of you and your family.

Homeswap Tips

- Be flexible about the area and type of property required. This will increase your chances of finding a suitable swap partner.
- On receiving information about possible swap partners it is your responsibility to make contact and provide details of your own exchange property.
- If both parties are interested in an exchange, arrangements should be made for a mutually convenient time for a viewing.
- When visiting properties or inviting someone to view your home please consider your personal safety, for example have a friend with you.
- It is your responsibility to be fully aware of the type of tenancy you will be taking on, since there can be differences between local authority and Housing Association tenancies (your current landlord will be able to advise).
- It is your responsibility to be fully aware of the rent level and tenancy conditions prior to accepting an exchange.
- You should make sure you can afford to pay for moving expenses.

Contact:

- Website: <https://www.homeswapper.co.uk/>
- Email: Tenants@HomeSwapper.co.uk

Seaside & Country Homes

About the scheme

- The Seaside & Country Homes scheme is part of the Mayor of London's housing options for Londoners. It offers a new start to people over 60 years of age who live in social housing in London by helping them to move to coastal and country areas.
- The scheme has access to over 3,000 properties, mainly two bedroom bungalows and one and two bedroom flats. These are located all along the south coast, from Cornwall in the South West to Norfolk and Lincolnshire in the East. Properties are also available across the country, including Dorset, Cambridgeshire and Shropshire.
- People moving out of the largest homes are given the greatest priority because there is such a high demand for family homes in London.
- In most cases, cats and dogs are allowed in bungalows and flats with private entrances but may not be allowed in flats with communal entrances. This can be checked before accepting an offer of a property. Permission to keep a Hearing or Guide Dog is likely to be granted.
- If you are currently receiving Housing Benefit, you will need to submit a new claim to the Local Authority where your new home is located.

Who is eligible?

Anyone aged 60 or over and capable of independent living, who is a Waltham Forest Council tenant. Housing association tenants need to speak to their landlord directly.

Advantages for the Customer

- Provides you with a broader range of choices regarding the size, type, and location of your home.
- Provides you with assistance to find a home that is suitable for your needs.
- Better quality of life in a seaside or country location.

Things to consider

You should carefully consider the following when making a decision to apply through this scheme:

- Amenities: properties may be quite isolated from shops and services.
- Transport: buses may be less frequent and in many cases local councils do not offer concessions to pensioners, so fares may be more expensive.
- Provisions: the cost and choice of foods will be different, and may cost more, especially in the more remote areas.
- Are you ready to leave London? Do you have family or cultural ties which will be hard to maintain if you move out of London?
- The right to buy is not available on properties through this scheme.

How to apply for the Seaside & Country Homes Scheme

More information about how to apply for Seaside & Country Homes can be found on the Mayor of London's website: <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/housing-and-land/renting/seaside-country-homes>

Homefinder UK

About the scheme

- Homefinder UK allows people to access social housing across the whole UK and gives them the opportunity to move faster than waiting for a London property.
- Eligible customers should register their interest on the national website, where they will be able to see available properties. Properties are allocated to households who closest meet the allocation policy of the landlord who owns the home. Not all allocation policies are the same and so not all properties will necessarily be offered to all households.
- Allocation policies are set by local councils in accordance with government guidance. Your priority is likely to be determined by the information you provide when completing the registration form so please be sure to provide as much information as possible.
- Some landlords will give higher priority to households looking for (or who are in) work and to those who have local connection (such as family in the area).
- If an application is successful, the council which has accepted the nomination will contact the customer directly. All unsuccessful customers will also be advised in writing.
- How long it takes to find a home through Homefinder UK will depend on the type of accommodation customers have asked for and what is available in the area they want to move to. You should try to be as flexible as possible since this could help to improve your chances.
- Each authority makes its own decision whether to accept or reject an application. An application may be rejected if the authority cannot offer the customer the type of accommodation requested.
- Once you have identified and been offered a property, it can take a few weeks to complete the move. Homefinder UK staff will help you through the move to make sure it goes through smoothly.

Who is eligible?

- Anyone willing to move nationwide or at least 100 miles outside your area including:
 - Homeless households
 - Applicants living temporary accommodation
 - Private sector tenants threatened with homelessness
 - Victims of domestic abuse or gang violence
 - Overcrowded families
 - All Council and Housing Association tenants

Contacts

- Apply online at <https://homefinderuk.org/>
- You can complete the online form at any time.
- You can contact the Homefinder UK team by telephone: 020 7619 9705
- Email: enquires@homefinderuk.org

Housing Moves

About the scheme

Housing Moves is the Mayor of London's housing mobility scheme that allows tenants of London boroughs or housing associations to move to a different part of London. It is run by the Greater London Authority and the majority of London boroughs and housing associations participate.

To be eligible for Housing Moves, you must:

- be a current Waltham Forest Council tenant. If you are a tenant of a housing association you will need to check with your landlord.
- have a secure, assured or fixed term tenancy
- not be subject to possession proceedings or being evicted
- be up to date with your rent
- have no ongoing anti-social behaviour issues.

Who is eligible?

Priority for this scheme is given to the following groups of people:

- Tenants who are downsizing (moving to smaller accommodation)
- People who need to move to be near a permanent place of employment
- People who need to move to provide care

Contacts

Find out more about Housing Moves and register your interest online at www.housingmoves.org

Once you have registered you will be given User ID and password to view the properties that are on offer and available for you to bid for.