

Using the Mutual Exchange Scheme to Move Home

If you are a secure tenant of a social landlord in Northern Ireland (the Housing Executive or a registered Housing Association) and you are thinking about moving home, you may be able to exchange your home with another Housing Executive or Housing Association tenant, provided your landlord agrees.

WHY EXCHANGE?

Mutual exchange is especially useful for tenants who:

- ✓ Need a smaller or larger home
- ✓ Are interested in moving to a new area
- ✓ Want to find a more suitable home
- ✓ Want to avoid a lengthy wait for a transfer.

WILL YOU BE ABLE TO EXCHANGE?

Secure tenants have a legal right to ask for a mutual exchange (Assignment by Way of Exchange under the Housing (NI) Order 1983).

You must get permission to exchange your tenancy.

We will not unreasonably refuse permission; however, there are some reasons why we may not be able to consent to an exchange:

- x You owe us rent
- x The new property is too small or too large for your household ;
- x Your current property has been adapted or is part of a sheltered scheme and the new tenant has no need for this type of accommodation;
- x Your home is subject to a court order for possession;
- x You have carried out improvements/alterations without consent.

HOW TO EXCHANGE?

- 1) Contact your landlord and register for a mutual exchange. Your local housing officer will visit you and explain the process.
- 2) You can ask your landlord to carry out an electronic search for potential properties to 'swap' with at any time. Your landlord may also contact you with details of potential house swaps.

- 3) You can also find potential home swaps by word of mouth, advertising in newspapers, advertising online or postcards in shop windows.
- 4) If you find a suitable swap, you both need to contact your landlord(s) and complete the application forms. Both homes will be inspected by local housing officers before approval is granted. The landlord(s)' decision is sent out to both tenants in writing within 42 days.
- 5) Once approval is granted both tenants sign a form to complete the tenancy assignment.

N.B. When exchanging your tenancy by way of assignment you are accepting the property you are exchanging to in the condition it is in. Your landlord will not carry out any change of tenancy repairs except for those that are required to comply with health and safety legislation. You may also need to check your Right to Buy your new home, before you make your decision.

PRECAUTIONS

Whether viewing someone else's home or showing your own, we recommend that you take some basic precautions to make sure you are safe.

Here are some pointers:

- ✓ Try to arrange the viewing time in daylight
- ✓ Don't go and view or show your own home alone – have someone else with you
- ✓ Tell someone when and where you're going
- ✓ Have a mobile phone with you and keep it switched on.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information, contact your local Housing Executive District Office or Housing Association or visit our website at www.nihe.gov.uk

HR/382/06/12
June 2012

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Want to Move Home?

Mutual Exchange Scheme
for Northern Ireland



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