

What happens if you need to move? This leaflet explains how you can find a suitable home in the right area, what we can do to help and how to end your tenancy.

People need to move for a variety of reasons. You may have a new job in another part of the country or need to move close to relatives. Perhaps your family has outgrown your home, or you need a smaller property now that your children have moved away. Sometimes people need to move for their health or welfare.

What is my best option?

As a housing association tenant you can:

- apply for a transfer to another of our homes;
- 'swap' your home and tenancy with another housing association or council tenant through a mutual exchange;
- ask about special schemes to help housing association tenants buy a home.

You can see more details below. Talk to your Housing Officer about the best option for you.

Transferring to another Keniston home

If you are interested in transferring to another of our homes, talk to your Housing Officer. If you want to take it further you can ask for an application form. You can apply at any time after you have been a tenant for at least one year.

Before we put you on the transfer list we will inspect your home to make sure that you have kept it in good order. Within 15 working days of receiving your filled-in form we will tell you whether your application has been approved and the priority we have given it – low, medium or high. We review priorities every year to take account of changing circumstances.

Conditions for approval

We will normally approve your application if you meet one or more of the following conditions:

- your home is overcrowded or under occupied.
- repair problems are seriously affecting your health or making daily life unreasonably difficult.
- you, or a member of your family, are being harassed.
- it is hard for you or your family to cope in your present home or environment, perhaps because of a medical condition, and a move to another of our homes would improve matters.
- you have a new job which is difficult to reach from your present home.
- you need to move closer to an elderly or disabled relative who urgently needs family support.

We may take into account other reasons, including if anyone urgently needs the property you are leaving. If your relationship has broken down we cannot accept responsibility for rehousing you or your partner, but we may consider a transfer, particularly if the welfare of children is at stake. We cannot put you on the transfer list if you have broken any of your tenancy conditions, for example you owe us rent. Ask your Housing Officer for a copy of our *Selection & Allocation policy*.

Transferring to a new home

It may be some time before we can offer you a new home. Even if your application is high priority we have to wait for a suitable property to become available. When you transfer to another of our homes you keep the same type of tenancy you have now. If a transfer is not possible your Housing Officer will talk to you about other ways of finding the home you want.

Exchanging homes with another tenant

Sometimes the simplest way to find a suitable home is to exchange your home and tenancy with another of our tenants or with another housing association or council tenant. You can do this locally or with someone at the other end of the country! These 'mutual exchanges' are a valuable way of helping tenants to move and we will do all we can to help.

Finding a mutual-exchange partner

If you want to swap homes with another of our tenants, tell your Housing Officer. You can also advertise in local papers or newsagents' windows, but please remember it is illegal to charge or pay for a mutual exchange. You will take over the tenancy as well as the property of your exchange partner. The tenancy agreement may be very different – make sure you see and understand it before you decide.

Getting the landlord's agreement

Once you have found a suitable home and agreed the exchange with the other tenant you must get written permission from both us and your new landlord. This takes time but please be patient. Do not arrange a moving date until you have received permission. We will only refuse permission if:

- proceedings to evict you or the other tenant have begun or we have a possession order on the property;
- your home is larger or smaller than the tenant you are planning to exchange with reasonably needs (we will not usually object to the move if you have one more bedroom than you need, but this is at our discretion and subject to affordability assessment);
- your home is tied to your job (for example, it is a caretaker's flat);
- it would be against our rules to take the person you want to exchange with as a tenant (for example, they own another property); or
- your home has facilities or support services for tenants with special needs (for example, disabled or elderly people) and the person you want to exchange with does not need these.

We carry out affordability checks on incoming residents to ensure their new tenancy will be sustainable. Whilst we will not decline an exchange on the grounds of affordability, we may advise against it, and it may influence our decision as to whether we allow you to have one more bedroom than you need.

We normally insist you pay us any rent you owe us, or put right anything else you have done that has broken your tenancy agreement before we agree to an exchange. Other housing associations or local authorities may have different requirements, so check at an early stage.

Buying a home

If you have an assured tenancy you do not normally have the right to buy your home but there are sometimes special government schemes to help housing association tenants buy a home of their own.

If you have a secure tenancy you may have the right to buy your home. Ask your Housing Officer for details.

Ending your tenancy

Giving notice

To end your tenancy you must give us four weeks' notice in writing – starting and ending on a Monday.

Inspecting your property

Before you leave we will check that your home is in a good state of repair and decoration.

We will tell you if there are any items you must put right, including repairing or replacing broken fixtures or fittings. If we have to do any repairs or redecoration or replace anything because you have broken your tenancy agreement, we will charge you for the work.

You must leave the property clean and empty. If you have made any alterations without our permission, you must put these back to their original condition (unless the Housing Officer approved them at the time of the inspection).

Gas, water and electricity

Remember to tell the gas, electricity, council tax and water companies the date that you are planning to move. Tell them your new address so that you can start to receive services straight away.

Keys

Please return your keys by midday on the Monday your tenancy ends. **If we don't receive your keys on time we may charge you another week's rent.**

Hard to read?

If you would like this document in another format, such as large print or a coloured background, or if you would like this or any of our leaflets translated into another language, please contact our office:

Address: Keniston Housing Association
13 Artington Close, Farnborough, Kent BR6 7UL

Phone: 01689 889700

Email: enquiries@kenistonha.co.uk