

Need to Move?

Read our guide to the three ways you can move from your council home, which includes:

- 1 Mutual Exchange
- 2 Transfer through your local council
- 3 Moving to a privately rented property

Need this leaflet in another format? Contact your local housing team using the details on the back page.

You can swap your home with another tenant living in a council or housing association property anywhere in the country.

Here's a quick guide for what you need to do:

1. Advertise your home - through Homeswapper, (www.homeswapper.co.uk) a local Facebook group or an advert in local shops
2. Make sure your rent arrears are paid off and you haven't breached your tenancy as this could stop your move
3. Complete a 'Mutual Exchange' form and return it to your housing office once you have found someone to swap with.
4. Make sure your home is in good condition- arrange to have any repairs carried out and replace any things you may have damaged or moved such as internal doors
5. Have an inspection of your home once your application has been approved so we can check the condition of our property
6. Arrange your reference and get permission in writing - you can't move without a letter from the Council Housing Department which you need to confirm your Mutual Exchange has been authorised.
7. Once the exchange has been approved in writing agree the date for moving - with the person you are swapping with and also the Housing Department and the landlord of the person you are swapping with.

Be aware:

- It can take up to 42 days for a decision to be given for a mutual exchange from the time all parties submit their paperwork
- You can't mutually exchange in the introductory period of your tenancy
- Not all housing association tenants are eligible for exchange
- If you or the person you are swapping with has a flexible tenancy - make sure to get some advice from your landlord on what this might mean in the future.

Remember:

- The key to a successful exchange is to make sure that everyone involved is happy with the condition of each home - as when you swap homes you take your new home 'as seen'. If the previous tenant has caused damage, left it dirty or full of rubbish it will be **your** responsibility to put this right.
- If the home has unusual features in it - you should consider if you want, or are able to look after these - for example, things like decking or a garden pond may

look pretty but they are not standard and won't be covered by our repair service or tenancy agreement. This means that you would take on responsibility for the maintenance of such items. Similarly, if the property has a fitted shower and you want a bath, we can't change this for you.

- If you aren't happy with what you see, then don't make the exchange as you can't go back on an exchange once it has occurred.

How to Move Applying for a transfer.

You can apply to your local council for a transfer if you have a housing need, this could include:

- Your family has grown and your home is now overcrowded
- You are under-occupying your home, and you can no longer afford the rent
- Your current home isn't suited to your needs e.g. you have a disability
- Your home is now too big for your household.

You must be a secure tenant before you can transfer.

Be aware:

- You need to apply online to go onto the Council's housing register
- DDC follow their housing allocations policy to decide who should be given priority to move - so it's worth reading the DDC allocation policy before you apply. This can be found on the DDC website <https://www.dover.gov.uk/Housing/Strategic-Housing/Allocations-Policy.pdf>
- Your request for a transfer may be refused if you are an introductory tenant, owe rent, your existing property is not in a good state of repair or you are guilty of a serious breach of your tenancy condition.

You will be recharged for the cost of any repairs that is tenant's responsibility which have not been carried out before you leave.

You will be recharged for the cost to repair any damage to the property unless you have a crime report number showing that you have been a victim of crime.

Deciding to rent privately.

If you are moving to private accommodation or moving in with family or friends, you will need to:

- Terminate your tenancy in writing, giving at least four full weeks of notice
- Complete a Tenancy Termination Notice form- you can download this from DDC website- search 'ending your tenancy'.
- Follow our 'moving out checklist' which explains what you need to do and how to arrange your 'pre-termination visit.

It's important to be aware:

- Renting privately is much more expensive - you may need to provide money for a bond, a deposit, a month's rent in advance and pay agent fees
- Your rights and services you receive from a private landlord will be different
- You may have a shorter tenancy agreement which could be ended with a month's notice
- It won't be easy to get another council home if you change your mind once you have moved.

Need some help?

One of the most frequent things we get asked by tenants is 'How can I move home?' and with many people feeling the pinch after changes to housing benefit saw those with a 'spare room' having their housing benefit payments reduced by between 14% and 25% - this continues to be a popular request. We have been working hard since the benefit changes in April 2013 to offer a range of support to those tenants affected. For some, this has meant a move to a smaller home and for those who wanted to stay in their homes, we have helped with budgeting to make sure they can pay the additional rent required.

If you need help to move to a smaller home because you have received a reduction in your benefits, please get in touch with your local housing team for advice:

- doverhousing@dover.gov.uk or call 01304 821199

Dover District Council is a data controller under GDPR. We process your personal data in compliance with data protection legislation. For more information on how we collect, process and protect your personal data and for information on your rights, please visit our website at www.dover.gov.uk/privacy to view our corporate and housing service privacy notice.