

APPLYING TO MOVE HOME

This leaflet explains what happens when you apply to move home – a ‘transfer’.

It should answer most of your questions but if you would like any further information, please contact the Customer Service Centre on 020 8778 6699.

The information is divided into the following sections:

1. What Happens when you ask for a Transfer?
2. Information to Support your Application
3. The ‘Banding’ Priority System
4. Allocating Homes to Transfer Applicants
5. Offers
6. Refusals
7. Exclusions from the Transfer Waiting List
8. Reviews
9. Information for Applicants
10. Complaints and Appeals

1. What Happens when you ask for a transfer?

When you contact us to tell us you want to move, we will take some basic details from you and an appointment will be made for your Housing Officer to visit you at home.

At the same time, we will send you an Application Form and a letter explaining what information we need you to have ready when your Housing Officer visits.

When your Housing Officer visits you, they will talk to you in detail about your housing situation. They will discuss with you why you want to move, and will talk to you about other options apart from a Hexagon transfer that may be useful to you.

After the visit, your application will be assessed based on the information you have supplied and will be given a **Priority Band** (see section 3). We will write to you to confirm that your application has been accepted onto the Transfer Waiting List, and what Band it is in.

This whole process should take no longer than two weeks – less if your circumstances are very urgent.

We will contact you from time to time with information about your application, and we will carry out a full review of your application once a year – please refer sections 7 & 8.

2. Information to Support your Application

We **always** need to see written information or evidence to support any transfer application. What we need to see depends on the reason you are applying.

As a minimum we need to see proof that you and everyone included on your application lives permanently with you at your current address. This proof could be any official document that contains the name and the address. Passports are not useful as they do not give your address. Birth certificates are not useful for the same reason, although we will accept them for children under two years old.

If you are applying for medical, health or disability reasons we will need a medical assessment form. We will give you the necessary forms.

If you are applying because you are a victim of harassment, or domestic violence we will need independent supporting evidence, such as from the Police, doctor etc. We know this can be quite difficult to obtain sometimes and we will do what we can to assist.

3. The Banding Priority System

Based on the information you tell us, your application will be placed in one of four **priority bands**. Band A has the highest priority, and applicants in that Band will be considered for offers first. Details of the bands are set out below:

BAND A

- Urgent Domestic Violence (where there is high risk of serious personal injury or the victim has had to leave home)
- Harassment (where it is agreed no other options are available)
- Urgent Decant – where someone needs to move so we can carry out extensive repairs
- Urgent transfer approved by Housing Services Manager
- Urgent Medical – where the current home is severely affecting the health or condition of the applicant, as assessed by Hexagon’s medical assessor

BAND B

- Domestic violence (all cases other than above)
- High medical priority – where the current home is unsuitable in the medium or long-term and the tenant’s health is adversely affected, as assessed by Hexagon’s medical assessor
- Under occupation where someone is giving up a four-bedroom house & moving to a two-bedroom, or giving up a three-bedroom house to move to a one-bedroom home
- Overcrowded by 2 bedrooms or more (as defined by Hexagon’s overcrowding policy), or have two or more children in a one-bedroom home
- Move-on from Supported Housing

BAND C

- Normal medical priority – where a move would be beneficial, but not essential, as assessed by Hexagon’s medical assessor
- Overcrowded by 1 bedroom (as defined by Hexagon’s overcrowding policy)
- Under occupation releasing 1 bedroom or more & not in band B or to free up a property suitable for a disabled person
- To give or receive support
- Non-urgent transfer approved by the Housing Services Manager

BAND D

- All other applications

You should be able to work out for yourself which band your application would be in. If when we confirm your band you think we have got it wrong, please let us know and we will check.

Overcrowding

From February 2004, we assess overcrowding and the need for extra bedrooms in the following way:

Family Size

Single adult
Couple or head of single parent household
One child in family
Child over fourteen years
Two children under fourteen years of the same sex
Two children of opposite sex where oldest is not yet 9.
Two children of opposite sex where the oldest has reached 9.

Bedrooms Needed

1 single bedroom or bedsit
1 double bedroom

Single bedroom of their own
Single bedroom of their own
Double bedroom

Double bedroom

Two single bedrooms

Medical

If you are applying to move for reasons of health or disability, we will arrange for a medical assessment to take place. Your banding will depend on the medical assessor's decision. We will pay reasonable costs associated with obtaining a medical assessment.

Application Date Priority

Within each band, all applications are prioritised in date order, so people who have been waiting longest get more priority than those that have recently applied to move.

If your situation changes, and your application moves to a higher priority band, your application date will be **the date your application was given the new higher priority**. If your application moves to a lower priority band, your application date will stay the same – the date of your original application.

You can increase your Application Date priority by 3 months, if you register for housing with your Council, and register for a Mutual Exchange. Full details about this are on the information Sheet 'Transfer Application Date'. Please ask Customer Services Centre for a copy.

4. Allocating Homes to Transfer Applicants

Whenever a property of the right size (based on your transfer application details) becomes available, we will write to you with details of the property. We will include a picture of the property and we will tell you

- whether it is a house or flat
- where it is
- how big it is
- the garden and car parking arrangements
- the weekly rent, and any other charges
- whether pets are allowed
- the number of stairs/steps inside and outside
- any other special features

When we send you the details, we will ask you to let us know if you want to be considered for the property. This is called 'bidding'. **You must do this, if we do not hear from you, we will assume you do not want to be considered.** Details of how to bid are given further on in this Guide, and will also be included when we send you the Property Details. Every property will have a bidding 'deadline', and if you want to be considered, you must bid before the deadline. By bidding, you are not committing yourself to the property, but we ask that you only bid if you are serious about the property.

Once the bid deadline has passed, we will check all the bids, and offer the property to the bidder with the highest priority. We assess priority first by Band, and within the Band, the person who has been waiting longest has highest priority.

If it is you, we will write to you about it, and make you a formal offer (subject to certain conditions, see section 5).

If you have not heard from us within 10 days of the bidding deadline, it will mean your bid has not been successful on that occasion.

For more details about this process, and how to bid, please refer to the 'Guide for Transfer Applicants'. You should have copy of this. If not, please contact Customer Services for a copy.

Offers are always conditional!

Whenever we make an offer, it is always subject to the following conditions:

- You must have a clear rent account. If you do not pay off any arrears, you will not be able to take up the offer, and it will be deemed to be a refusal of the offer
- Your housing circumstances must be the same as those given on your housing application. You may be asked to provide up to date proof of all the people living with you
- You must leave your current home in clean and tidy condition, in good repair, free of any rubbish or unwanted items. This includes the garden if you have one. Your Housing Officer will visit you at home before you move to check everything is in order, and to discuss any concerns
- You must move out on the day your new tenancy begins, and return all the keys to us by 12.00 midday on that day

Slightly different conditions apply to applicants with Band A priority. These will be explained by your Housing Officer.

6. Refusals

If you are offered a property, but decide not to take up the offer, this will not count against you. There is no limit to the number of times you can decide not to take up an offer. We will ask you to let us know why the property was not suitable, to help us improve our services.

In the unlikely event that any transfer applicant is made numerous offers and declines them all, we will talk to that person about their application in more detail.

7. Removal or exclusion from the Transfer Waiting List

You can remove yourself from the Transfer Waiting List at any time. Just contact our Customer Services Centre and we will take care of it.

We can remove you from the list, or exclude you from joining it under the following circumstances:

- Perpetrators of anti-social behaviour will be suspended from the Transfer Waiting List for 6 months if legal action (including Notice of Seeking Possession) is started
- Applicants who have worsened their own housing conditions will not be able to apply for a transfer based on those conditions. For example, if you let a friend move in with you, you cannot then apply for a transfer on the grounds of overcrowding
- Any tenant found making a fraudulent application will be removed from the Transfer Waiting List
- Applicants who have outstanding rechargeable repairs will be suspended from the Transfer Waiting List until the repairs have been paid for
- Tenants cannot apply for rehousing if they plan to leave other members of the household in occupation after they move. This includes relationship breakdown

8. Reviews

We review all transfer applications, to ensure the information we have is up to date, and the Banding is correct. How often we review depends on the circumstances:

- If you are in Bands B – D, your application will normally be reviewed once a year.
- If you are in Band A for medical reasons, your application will normally be reviewed once a year.
- If you are in Band A for any other reason, your application will normally be reviewed every three months.
- If your application includes medical information, we will review the medical details once every three years, unless the medical assessment recommends otherwise.
- When your application is due for review, we will write to you and ask you to confirm the details we have, and to notify us of any changes. After you have responded, we will write back to confirm that your application has been reviewed.
- If we do not hear from you, we will send you a reminder. If you still do not respond, we will remove your application from the Transfer Waiting List. You will be told about this.

9. Information for Applicants

We will try to give you as much information as possible about your application and about your prospects for a Hexagon transfer. This information will include:

- As part of the initial assessment visit, we will give you information about all the housing options that may be available to you
- When you first apply for a transfer, we will write to you with details of your Band
- When we write to you with details of available properties, we will tell you about any recently let properties, and the Band and application date of the successful applicant
- Every three months, we aim to send you information about how many vacant properties we have had, and who they were let to
- Every year (or more frequently if you are in Band A) we will send you a summary of your application, and ask you to confirm the information is still correct. This is part of the Review process (see section 7)
- From time to time we will write to you with up to date information about rehousing options

10. Complaints & Appeals

As with all our services, we encourage tenants to complain or appeal if you think we have not acted correctly or not applied our policies properly.

If you are unhappy with any aspect of how your transfer application has been handled, you should speak to your Housing Officer or a Customer Services Adviser about it first. If you are not satisfied with the response, you should write to the Housing Services Manager.

Full details of our Complaints Procedure are available in your Tenants Handbook, or you can get a copy from our Customer Services Centre.