

10 steps to a stress-free mutual exchange

Moving can be a challenging time and it is important to make sure that you are fully satisfied with the home you are looking to move into.

Here are our top 10 tips to make the mutual exchange process as smooth as possible.

- 1 When advertising your home, include as many details as possible and recent pictures; this will increase your chances of finding a successful match.
- 2 Allow plenty of time for your move – do not put unnecessary pressure on yourself. For example moving in time for Christmas or the start of school term can add additional stress.
- 3 The viewing/visiting process should be hassle-free. You should be ready to answer any questions your potential mutual exchange partners may have; similarly, you should also feel free to ask any questions you may have about their home. If you have any doubts, feel free to contact us to ask for information or advice.
- 4 Follow the 'Viewing checklist' on the back of this document; this will help you ask the right questions and get the most out of your viewing/visit.
- 5 We aim to provide a final decision within 42 days (six weeks) of receiving your completed mutual exchange application. This does not mean that you will be able to move within 42 days; most exchanges take between eight to ten weeks to complete.
- 6 To avoid any delays, make sure your rent account is debt-free. If you have any concerns, please contact us for advice.
- 7 Make a note of any outstanding repairs that are required in your home. Allow plenty of time to log the repairs and take note of the individual job numbers. If some minor repairs are outstanding, you can pass this information on to your mutual exchange partner.
- 8 Be patient. For many people, moving is a big step, you should try not to rush your mutual exchange partner as they may decide to back out as a result.
- 9 Likewise, you should never feel pressured into completing a mutual exchange, you have a choice. If you do feel pressured, please contact us for guidance and support.
- 10 Consider all moving costs such as van hire, removal men, lock changes, decoration cost etc. Do not book any removals until you have received a confirmed date for your mutual exchange.

Viewing checklist

This viewing checklist offers some guidance on things you need to consider before submitting your mutual exchange application. The list is not exhaustive but will help you assess whether the home you are viewing is suitable. We also recommend viewing the property at least twice to ensure that you are fully satisfied with your final choice, especially if you are not familiar with the local area.

Location	Yes	No
Are you familiar with the local area?		
Have you visited the property more than once and at different times of the day? NB: This is to ensure that you are happy with the home and its location both during the day and at night.		
What public transport systems (bus, train, underground etc.) are available around the property?		
Safety and security		
Are the roads or surrounding areas well lit?		
Are there suitable locks on the front and back door? NB: Southern Housing Group will not change the locks after your mutual exchange has completed.		
Are there locks on the windows? NB: Southern Housing Group does not guarantee the provision of new internal locks or replacement keys after your mutual exchange has completed.		
Do the windows above the ground floor have opening restrictions on them? NB: This may be important if you have children. Southern Housing Group does not provide these fixtures; however they can be purchased from DIY stores.		
Are the outside perimeters secure? Check for gaps or missing fence panels.		
External features		
Do you have access to a garden? Is it shared with other residents or is it for your own use?		
Is there any external storage?		
Is there sufficient space for a pet? NB: Please check with your new landlord if you can keep a pet.		
Are the windows double or single-glazed? NB: Single-glazed windows may transfer more heat which can lead to higher energy bills.		
Are the windows and window frames free from cracks or damages?		
How does refuse collection work? Is there a communal bin store or will you have an individual wheelie bin?		
Internal features		
Are the floors in good condition?		
Are the walls in good condition? Is the property free from holes or gaps in the walls? NB: Do not forget to check in hidden areas like behind doors, pictures or posters.		
Are the staircases safe? Do they have secure handrails?		
How is the property heated (gas/electricity)? Are there enough radiators?		
Are there any signs of damp, mould or condensation?		
Are there enough electrical sockets in each room? NB: Southern Housing Group will not install additional sockets.		

Have you checked where the aerial points are located? Can you access all media and broadband services (e.g. Sky, Virgin, BT etc.) that you require?

Are the cooker fixtures and fittings (size, gas/electric, location) suitable for your own cooker?

NB: Southern Housing Group will not install alternative fixtures and fittings to accommodate your cooker.

Are the worktop surfaces in the kitchen sufficient for your needs?

Is there good ventilation in the kitchen and the bathroom?

Are there any extractor fans? Do they work properly?

Is there a supply of hot and cold water with steady pressure to all sinks, bathtubs and showers?

Do you have access to a loft space? Are the items in the loft being removed before the mutual exchange?

NB: Check that there are no signs of damage or pests.

Have you agreed on what items are being taken or left in the property (e.g. carpets, curtains, internal doors, cooker etc.)?

If items are left in the property, what condition are they in?

Rent, Council Tax and bills

Have you confirmed what your rent and service charges are for the property?

If applicable, when is the next rent review/increase due?

Have you checked the costs for Council Tax, water, electricity and gas?

NB: Costs may vary depending on the size of the property, usage and the area you live in.

If you receive any housing benefits, have you discussed changes in the amount of rent that you pay with the Local Authority? ? If you are in receipt of Universal Credit, you will need to contact the Universal Credit helpline.

NB: A mutual exchange can result in payment gaps especially when transferring to another Local Authority.

Extra costs

Have you considered the costs of moving, redecorating (if required) and lock changes to front/back doors?

If there is a communal entrance, how many keys/fobs will be provided? If you require more, how much will it cost?

Does the property you are viewing have any adaptations that you will become responsible for?

NB: In some homes, residents seek permission to install items such as showers, sheds or even a conservatory; which they are fully responsible for repairing and maintaining.

Your notes and comments

Contact us:

Email: servicecentre@shgroup.org.uk

Write to: Customer Service Centre
Southern Housing Group
PO Box 643
Horsham RH12 1XJ



01403 220 440



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