

Can I change my mind?

Yes, either party can change their mind and pull out of the mutual exchange up until the legal paperwork is signed. Once you have signed the paperwork, it is legally binding and you will be expected to move on the date agreed.

What can I do if the property is not in the condition I expected?

It is your responsibility to inspect the property thoroughly before agreeing to move and ideally again before signing the legal paperwork. You should agree with your exchange partner exactly what state the properties must be left in on the exchange day, as well as who will be responsible for any outstanding repairs or rubbish.

Never assume that we will take responsibility for carrying out any work unless we have given you written confirmation of this.

Things to remember

- The move is at your expense. You must pay all the costs of the move.
- The moving day should be a Friday or Monday.
- You accept the property, garden, fencing, shed, any outbuildings and/or garage in its current condition. You agree between yourselves who is to be responsible for any damage or rechargeable repairs.
- Check to see that there are gas and/or electric cooker points. Mid Devon District Council will not pay to fit them.
- Any rent arrears must be paid before any exchange can take place.
- You must sign the legal paperwork before you can move.
- Do not pay or accept any money to make a swap happen, if you do we can take legal action and you could lose your home.

If you want more information, please contact us:

Housing Services
Mid Devon District Council
Phoenix House
Phoenix Lane
Tiverton
EX16 6PP
Tel: 01884 255255
Email: htenancy@middevon.gov.uk

Alternative formats are available and requests will be considered on an individual basis. Please telephone 01884 255255 or email

customerfirst@middevon.gov.uk



Swapping your home



What is a mutual exchange?

It is a way of swapping your home with a tenant of any council or housing association across the country. Most secure and flexible tenants can look for an exchange. You need written permission from your landlord before you can move.

Advertising your home

You can advertise your home on www.houseexchange.org.uk, which holds details of tenants from all over the country looking to swap their property. You can also advertise for a swap on www.devonhomechoice.com. Some people find swaps through friends, by advertising in free papers or in local shops.

What should I check?

It is important that you inspect the property to check that you are happy with it, because what you see is what you get. Things to consider include:

- How near are the shops, the local schools or the doctor's surgery?
- Is there good public transport? Is there enough parking?
- Is the property the right size for you? Will your furniture fit?
- Can you take your pets?
- Consider the condition of the property. We will be responsible for normal repairs but not for repairing any damage caused or any alterations or improvements made by the tenant you swap with.

Can I have an extra bedroom?

We will allow you to swap into a property with an extra or spare bedroom. If you claim housing benefit, it may not cover all the rent due leaving you to pay the difference. If you swap with a flexible or fixed term tenant, the tenancy may not be renewed at the end of the fixed term if you are under occupying the property. Please ask your Neighbourhood Officer for advice.

I have found a swap. What do I do next?

Complete a Mutual Exchange Application Form for each property involved in the exchange. You can download a form from our website at www.middevon.gov.uk, email htenancy@middevon.gov.uk or call 01884 255255. If your exchange is with a tenant of another landlord, you must also complete application forms for that landlord.

Home Checks

When we receive the application forms, we will check the details. If your exchange partner is not our tenant, we will send a reference about you to their landlord and ask for a reference about their tenant.

We will also arrange to inspect your home. The reasons we do this are to:

- identify any damage that you will have to put right before you move
- identify any improvements you have made that will become the responsibility of the new tenants to repair or replace
- identify any repairs that are our responsibility
- identify any features/furniture/fixtures you are leaving that the new tenants will have to take responsibility for

We will also need access to carry out electrical and gas safety checks.

How long will it take us to make a decision?

We will decide as quickly as possible. By law, we have to make the decision within 42 days of receiving all completed applications.

Can we refuse permission?

Yes, in certain circumstances we will refuse permission, this includes where:

- legal action is being taken – a Notice Seeking Possession may have been served or a court order may have been issued
- the property is unsuitable for the household wanting to move – perhaps it's too large or too small for the number of people that will be living there, or perhaps it's been adapted for people with disabilities, or it's supported accommodation
- you have an introductory or starter tenancy

How will we let you know our decision?

We will write to you. If successful, our letter will give permission to exchange and outline any conditions you have to meet before the move can go ahead. We will agree a date for the exchange to take place with you, the other tenant and the other landlord (if there is one). We will arrange to meet you and the other tenant so that you can both sign the legal paperwork to swap properties. We will arrange a gas safety check on the Friday or Monday you move, if the property has a gas meter.

If we refuse your application, we will write to you and explain why.

What if we move before we get written permission?

If you move without written permission, you risk making you and your family homeless. Both you and the person who moved into your home would become illegal occupants. You would have no right to move back to your current home, as you would have breached the tenancy of that property by giving up possession.