

Changing Your Home

Over the course of your tenancy your housing requirements may change and you may wish to move to a larger or smaller property, or to a different area.

There are several ways by which you can consider doing this.

- **Transfer** to another council, or housing association property.
- **Mutual exchange** - This is basically a 'house swap'. Two housing association or council tenants, within East Devon, who wish to move swap homes with each other.
- **Home2own** - For people who want to consider buying a part share of their property.

The allocation of our properties is dealt with by our Housing Needs Team, and details of how to contact them are given at the end of this leaflet.

Transferring to another council or housing association property within East Devon

If you wish to be considered for another council or housing association property you will need to complete an application form which is available from the Council Offices, Knowle, Sidmouth, or at the Town Hall Offices, Exmouth. It is important that you answer every question as this will help us work out your housing need.

Most requests to transfer will be accepted but you must have no significant rent arrears.

Your application will be assessed and placed on the Housing Register.

We will write to you to tell you:

- which banding your application has been placed in,
- the size of home you can apply for, and
- the application date and registration number.



There are 3 bands into which applications are placed:

Gold Urgent need to move

Silver Needing to move

Bronze Wanting to move

In some circumstances your need for housing may be assessed as so urgent that you should take priority over all other applicants. In this case you will be given a **'Priority Card'** and placed in the Gold Band. If you do not use the priority card within 3 months your needs will be reviewed.



If you would like to know more about the banding system please ask for a copy of our leaflet 'Information for people who are on the Housing Register'.

Transferring to a smaller property

We have a shortage of family housing in East Devon. So if you are prepared to move from a 3 or 4 bedroom property to a smaller property then you may be eligible for financial assistance with your moving expenses and given priority over other people on the waiting list. Please speak to a member of our Housing Needs team for further details.

Allocation of properties

We let the majority of council housing through a scheme called "Choice Based Lettings". This gives you a greater choice of where to live, while continuing to meet housing needs, and ensuring sustainable, settled communities.

The Choice Based Lettings system allows you to bid for a vacant property that you would like to live in. You can bid for any property that falls within the band you have been allocated. The Housing Register works on a date order basis and the property will normally be let to the bidder who has been on the register longest. If you would like more information about this system please ask for a copy of the leaflet 'How the Housing Allocation Policy works with the Choice Based Lettings System'.

The average waiting time to be rehoused from our Gold Band is four years. This will depend on the size and type of accommodation you are requesting given the location you choose. We have very high demand for accommodation in the seven main market towns, and you may have to wait longer to be housed in these areas.

Mutual Exchange

You may find that a mutual exchange may be quicker than waiting for a transfer. You can swap your home with another council or housing association tenant providing both landlords agree.

It is up to you to find someone who is also looking to swap. Once you have found another tenant and agreed the move in principal, then you must seek permission from us. It is very important that you do not move until you have approval in writing.

Once a formal application has been received we have 6 weeks to make the decision.

An exchange may be refused if:

- one of the tenants is in rent arrears,
- one of the tenants is under notice to leave the property,
- the properties are too big or too small for the people intending to move there,
- one of the properties is designated for elderly or disabled persons.

With a mutual exchange, you will be asked to accept the property in the condition it has been left in by the previous tenant. We will carry out routine repairs in accordance with the tenancy agreement, but no demand can be made for specific work to be undertaken as a condition of accepting the exchange. We do carry out health and safety checks as part of the approval process but it is your responsibility to undertake any repairs not covered by the agreement.

Mutual Exchange in East Devon

We have an Internal Mutual Exchange Register for East Devon tenants who would like to swap their homes with another tenant in the district.

You can see this register by coming into our offices at Knowle, Sidmouth or Town Hall, Exmouth or online at www.eastdevon.gov.uk.

How to register for Mutual Exchange in East Devon

To add your home to the register, contact the Housing Needs team for an application form or download a form from our website www.eastdevon.gov.uk.

Mutual Exchange in the UK

The national homeswap database (a register for those tenants wishing to move from one area to another) has now closed. Information about alternative schemes and other useful information is available at www.direct.gov.uk/socialhousing.

Tenants looking for a mutual exchange may also wish to consider advertising in local newspapers or newsagents.

Home2own

This is a 'one stop shop' to register your interest in home ownership.

It is designed to help:

- first-time buyers,
- those without the resources to buy a suitable home on the open market, and
- those with sufficient resources to afford to buy and sustain low cost home ownership.

You can contact Home2own for further information on:

Freephone: 0800 9751915

Email: info@home2own.org.uk

Website: www.home2own.org.uk

You can contact the Housing Needs Team of East Devon District Council by:

Writing to: Housing Needs Team,
Communities Directorate,
East Devon District Council,
Knowle, Sidmouth EX10 8HL

Telephoning: 01395 517469

Emailing: housingneeds@eastdevon.gov.uk

Visiting our offices:

Council Offices
Knowle, Sidmouth

Monday – Friday 8.30 am to 5.00 pm

Exmouth Town Hall
St Andrews Road, Exmouth

Monday – Friday
9.00 am – 1.00 pm and 2.00 pm – 4.30 pm