

Things to remember

- Your property must be ready for a mutual exchange - if you have any outstanding repairs we can cancel your exchange.
- Before you move, all rubbish must be cleared out.
- If you have carried out any alterations without getting permission, you will be asked to make sure they meet our specification, or you may be charged for the cost of repairs.
- We will arrange for gas and electric checks to be carried out on the day that you move. These slots can get booked up, so your move may be delayed if you don't book in time.
- If you need to amend your tenancy in other ways such as a change of name or from a joint tenancy to a sole name, this should be done before you apply to exchange.
- Remember to let your gas, electricity and water suppliers know you're moving and let them have your meter readings.
- You'll need to inform the Council Tax team at your local council, and if you claim Housing Benefit, you'll also need to advise the housing benefit team.

Local office contact details

Berkshire, Wiltshire, West of England, Devon

T 0800 587 2325

E contact@sovereign.org.uk

(all enquiries and out-of-hours emergencies)

Dorset

T 01202 460460 or 0800 169 5686

E contactdorset@sovereign.org.uk

(repairs and out-of-hours emergencies)

Oxfordshire

T 0800 587 2325

E contactoxon@sovereign.org.uk

(repairs and out-of-hours emergencies)

Hampshire

T 0800 988 4858

E contacthants@sovereign.org.uk

(all enquiries and out-of-hours emergencies)

Head office

Sovereign Housing Association Limited

Woodlands


90 Bartholomew Street

Newbury RG14 5EE

sovereign.org.uk

 [facebook.com/asksovereign](https://www.facebook.com/asksovereign)

 [@sovereignha](https://twitter.com/sovereignha)

 **MySovereign app**
CAN BE DOWNLOADED
TO PAY RENT OR REPORT
A REPAIR FROM YOUR MOBILE

Sovereign Housing Association Limited is charitable

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Swapping your home through mutual exchange



What is a mutual exchange?

If you need to move home, you can apply to swap homes with another Sovereign resident, a council tenant, or a resident of another housing association. This is called a mutual exchange.

You won't be able to exchange if you, or the resident you want to exchange with, has a licence agreement, a probationary tenancy or an assured shorthold tenancy. Everyone involved needs to have permission from their landlord.

Think carefully before agreeing to an exchange. Visit the property to make sure you are happy with the condition it is in. If you can, we recommend that you visit more than once at different times of the day and week.

How do I find someone who wants to exchange?

You will find people who want to exchange properties by registering for free at www.homeswapper.co.uk. You can also check social media, especially Facebook, as lots of pages have been created for people to advertise mutual exchanges.

You could place an advert in a shop window and local paper, or your council may run their own mutual exchange register.

What happens next?

Once you've found a suitable property, please ask for a mutual exchange application form at your local office, or download one from our website. Once we have received application forms from all households involved, we will check them to make sure everything is OK.

If we are happy with all the application forms, we will contact you to arrange a property inspection. Everyone involved in the exchange will be invited to attend the property inspection with a housing officer.

You'll need to make sure your home is ready by this inspection otherwise your application could be cancelled. Please see our factsheet, 'Are you mutual exchange ready?' for information about the condition your home should be in, before you apply.

We try to approve as many applications as we can. We will make a decision within 42 days of receiving the application but sometimes we have to refuse an exchange. This is normally because:

- we are taking legal action against the resident(s) of one of the homes involved. This could be for rent arrears, anti-social behaviour or any other breach of their tenancy agreement
- the property would be over-crowded or under-occupied
- the exchange would mean that a home adapted for the elderly or disabled would be lived in by someone who did not need those adaptations
- the property is part of a sheltered scheme and the incoming resident is too young to live there
- one of the properties is in poor condition
- the person you want to exchange with is not eligible. We cannot offer a home to someone who has the income or savings to find their own home privately
- the property was built for people who have a strong local connection with the area, and the person or family moving in doesn't have those connections.

When can I exchange?

You'll be able to go ahead with the exchange if:

- you don't owe any rent, legal fees or recharges
- your home and garden are in good condition and any repairs have been carried out
- gas and electric checks have been booked for the date of the move
- written approval has been given by all landlords involved and tenancy documents have been signed.

Frequently asked questions

What happens if the property needs decorating or repairs?

When you agree to a mutual exchange you are accepting the property as it is, so any decorating or repairs are your responsibility.

What about carpets and curtains?

You are responsible for fitting carpets, curtains and curtain poles when you move in. You may agree with your exchange partner that they will leave their carpets and curtains for you. If you decide when you move in that you no longer want them, you are responsible for removing them.

What about right to buy?

If you have the right to buy your property and are unsure whether a mutual exchange could affect this, you should check with your housing officer.

Can we swap garages?

If you both have garages it may be possible to swap them. You'll need to request this in writing.

What about removal costs?

You'll need to arrange and pay for your own removals.