

Mutual Exchanges

Hjaltland tenants may apply for a mutual exchange with tenants from another Housing Association or Local Authority. There are certain criteria that need to be met prior to a mutual exchange being granted. In reaching a decision the Association will take the following into account

- A tenancy check will be under taken, in the case of tenants from other organisations a written tenancy report will be requested.
- Applicants to have resided in their property for at least twelve months before an exchange can be considered.
- The exchange must not result in overcrowding or any other breach of existing Association policy. In addition, mutual exchanges are likely to be refused where significant under-occupation would result e.g. two bedrooms in excess of required bedroom need.
- Each tenant must have a clear rent account and not been the source of anti-social behaviour. If there are exceptional circumstances that warrant relaxation of this rule, then the Housing Services Manager will report this to the Chief Executive for decision.
- Each house must be inspected, prior to consent being given, to ascertain its condition. The parties to the exchange will be required to agree in writing to accepting the other property in its present condition. In respect of the Association's tenants, where such inspection reveals unauthorised works to the property, this may require to be reinstated, at the tenant's expense and to the satisfaction of the Association, prior to consent to the exchange being granted.
- It is a requirement that, in giving consent to a mutual exchange, both parties must reside in their new properties for at least twelve months. An application to exchange will be refused if there is reason to believe that one or both parties do not intend to reside in their new properties for this minimum period.
- In any instances where one of the parties fails to take up occupancy of the property to which they agreed to exchange or a mutual exchange without the consent in writing of the landlords, then the Association reserves the right to commence legal action requiring the parties to vacate the properties which they exchanged.
- Before transferring, each tenant will be required to terminate their existing tenancy and each shall sign a Tenancy Agreement with respect to the new tenancy.

- Routine repairs will only be carried out in the normal way by the Association. Where major refurbishment or planned maintenance is programmed, this will be carried out as part of the Programme in the normal way. A change of tenancy will have no effect on programmed work.
- Where consent is refused, then the tenant will be given reasons for refusal in writing.

The Association and the Shetland Islands Council encourage their tenants who are interested in a mutual exchange to register on the Homeswapper website. This is a national organisation that assists tenants to be matched with other tenants who wish to move. It is free of charge for Hjalmland tenants to register on the system at www.homeswapper.co.uk.