

Section 08 **Moving on**



We would like every customer to have the home which best meets their needs. So, as your circumstances change there is the opportunity to apply for a move to another property.

We may be able to help you find a new home by:

- Arranging for you to move to another of our properties ('A transfer')
- Helping you find someone to swap homes with ('A mutual exchange')

Whilst we will try to help you move when your household circumstances change, it is always a good idea to register immediately with your local Council's general waiting list: the 'Common Housing Register' or 'Choice Based Lettings Scheme'. By doing this you will give yourself a chance of finding a more suitable home with another social landlord providing affordable homes, rather than only relying on the Partnership.



Transfers

As your circumstances change, there is the opportunity to apply for a move to another property. However, except in exceptional circumstances, you would not be eligible for a transfer within the first 12 months of your tenancy.

In addition to being able to apply for a transfer to another property with the same landlord, you also have the right to apply for a transfer to another property within the Partnership. Acceptance onto any waiting list within the Partnership will be dependant on each landlords' Allocations Policy. Please speak to a member of your Housing Team for more information.

Mutual exchanges - 'swapping homes'

You have a right to swap your home with another Partnership tenant or a tenant of another housing association or Council. You need to get our permission but we cannot refuse permission without a good reason.

Your local Council has lists of people in council houses or other housing association homes wanting to move into the area. You should be able to go and look at these lists at the Council offices.

If you want to move to another part of the country there is a national scheme called Homeswapper which helps you find someone to exchange with. This is a free service. You can get details of how to join Homeswapper from their website (www.homeswapper.co.uk) or from your Housing Team. For customers in the East of England, we also subscribe to House Exchange. You can get details of how to join House Exchange from their website (www.houseexchange.org.uk).

If you have found someone to swap with, please ask us for a Mutual Exchange information leaflet and application form. Complete the form and return it to your Housing Team. We must give you a decision within six weeks.

Do not move until you have the written permission of both landlords.

In later life

Most of us want to stay in our own home and be independent for as long as we can. However, as time goes by, managing a house can be difficult. They can be expensive to heat and the stairs can become a problem. Gardens can also be hard to look after. But, if you have support from family and friends locally you probably will not want to move.

In these situations it is worth finding out about all the support you can get in your present home through your local Council. They may help with regular visits from Home Care Assistants, Meals on Wheels or perhaps a Home Bathing service. It may be that some alterations or extra equipment would help you stay in your present home. More information is available through your doctor or Social Services department. We can also help with some aids and adaptations to make your living conditions easier.

In most areas, there is a Home Improvement Agency that can provide lots of support and information about adaptations or equipment that you might need. Their details will be in your telephone directory or Yellow Pages.

Your Scheme Manager or Housing Team will be able to talk to you about the different options that are available to you to help you stay independent.



Moving on. Although at the moment you might be quite settled in your home, there may be a time when you want or need a different home.

Moving to sheltered housing

If you decide you need more support, you might want to consider sheltered housing. This is usually a group of flats or bungalows designed for older people to live independently but linked to an alarm system in case of an emergency. Some schemes have someone on-site who is responsible for the day-to-day running of the scheme and can help to organise any extra support you might need. Often there are communal facilities such as a lounge and laundry.

Guinness Care and Support manage many schemes in different parts of the country.

Talk to your Housing Team about whether there is a scheme near you that might have accommodation available. If we do not have one where you want to live the local

Council or another housing association probably does. Please speak to your Scheme Manager or Housing Team for more information.

Moving on

Sadly there is another way your tenancy could end. If you die and have been living alone, we will talk to your family about the necessary arrangements. Different arrangements will apply if you do not have family members who will deal with things.

If you were the tenant and your family is still living with you, your tenancy may not end. This is because some people have the right to take on the tenancy, called succession. This does not mean you can leave your home to someone in a will. Please contact your Housing Team who will explain this in more detail.



What is succession?

Succession means that your wife or husband or partner can take over the tenancy after your death if:

- They have lived at the property with you for the last 12 months, or
- It is their only or main home, or
- The tenancy has not been passed on before.

They must write to us within a month of your death to say that they want to take over the tenancy. We must confirm in writing that they can remain in the property.

We will also consider giving the tenancy to someone else if:

- They have been living with you for the last 12 months so they can look after you, or
- They have accepted responsibility for your dependants.

In this case we may offer them a different property if yours does not meet their needs. You will find more information about succession in your Tenancy Agreement or contact your Housing Team for more information.

Helping you buy your own home

In the future you may decide you want to stop renting a home and buy your own property.

If you are living in a property that was built after April 1997, you may be able to buy using the Right to Acquire Scheme, which allows the property to be sold at a discount from the market value.

This scheme has restrictions about which properties can be sold. Please contact your Housing Team for information.

Buying another home

There are various schemes to help housing association tenants who want to and can afford to buy a property. These include Shared Ownership and other Government supported schemes.

Shared Ownership

Shared Ownership is a way of buying a home, where the buyer owns a percentage of a property and pays rent to a housing association on the remaining percent. You usually have to buy a 50% share, but on some schemes the initial share may be less. You can also buy further shares when you can afford it.

This is a way into home ownership without having a large cash deposit saved up. You are responsible for repairs, maintenance and insurance, but you have a capital stake in your home which may increase over time though there is no guarantee.

Shared Ownership schemes and details of these and other home ownership schemes are available from your Housing Team.



Moving out

There are so many things to remember and do when you move home. This section explains what we will expect as you move out of your home.

Giving notice

To end your tenancy under the terms of your agreement you must give at least four weeks' notice, ending on a Sunday, or at least one calendar month if you are on a monthly tenancy. If you move out before this notice ends you will still be charged the full rent for this period. The only time this doesn't apply is if you are moving to another property within The Guinness Partnership or doing a mutual exchange.

You can always give longer notice, but if you give less we will charge you rent to cover the notice period. We need this time to arrange for another tenant to move in.

Notice must be given in writing to your Housing Team, preferably using a Notice of Termination Form, which you can ask us for.

Please say which day you expect to move out, when it would be convenient for someone to come and inspect your home before you leave and the address of where you're moving to.

We will:

- Inspect your home and tell you what work we want you to do before you leave
- Tell you exactly how much rent you need to pay to have a clear account when you go
- Arrange what you should do with the keys if there is no local office
- Ask you to show your home to possible new tenants. They will always come with a member of our staff or a letter from us.

Before you move

Make sure you repair or replace any fittings you have broken. If you do not we will charge you for doing them ourselves. Remove your own floor coverings e.g. carpets, grippers and laminate flooring, unless you have arranged with your Housing Team to leave these for the next tenant.

Your home should be cleaned ready for the next person to move in. Any redecoration that needs doing should be done before you leave. You should agree this with your Housing Team.

Make sure your rent is paid up to date.

Let the following know you are moving and where to:

- The electricity and gas companies so that they can read your meters
- The water company so they can stop charging you water rates
- Your telephone company, if applicable
- The Housing Benefit Office, if you receive Housing Benefit
- The local Council so they can stop charging you Council Tax
- Bank or building society and any other company you have finance agreements with
- TV Licensing (Tel: 0844 800 6790) to get your licence transferred to your new address
- The Post Office to arrange for your post to be re-directed
- TV cable or satellite company.

On the day you move

Make sure that you have arranged to pay your bills for gas, water, electricity and telephone. It is a good idea to read the meters yourself, keeping a written record in case of future problems, and to turn off the services before you go.

Sweep through the property and put out any rubbish tidily for collection in the usual way. Any items left in the property will be regarded as rubbish and disposed of by the Partnership. If we have to pay for clearing out unwanted or abandoned personal items then the costs will be charged to you.

Lock all the doors, close and lock all windows and hand all your keys to your Housing Team or leave them at the local office. If there is no office on your estate, put them in the post to the Area Office by recorded delivery. You are responsible for the rent until we get the keys back.

