



Your housing options

As a Southern Housing resident looking to move there are a number of options available to you.



Introduction

There are a number of reasons you may need to move. For example, your home may be:

Underoccupied

This is generally considered to be when you have more bedrooms than the number of people who live in your home.

Overcrowded

Generally if you have less bed spaces than your household needs you're considered to be overcrowded. Each local authority is different and will assess your housing need and prioritise you accordingly.

If you're looking to move home there are a range of options available to you. This booklet details some of those options. It looks at six ways you can move:

- ✓ Mutual exchange
- ✓ Registering with your local authority
- ✓ Mobility schemes
- ✓ Shared Ownership schemes
- ✓ Private Rented Sector
- ✓ Independent Living for over 55s.



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Contact us

☎ 0300 303 1066

✉ hello@southernhousing.org.uk

🌐 www.southernhousing.org.uk/online

If you'd like to write to us, you can send a letter to the following address:

**Southern Housing, Building 800, Guillat Avenue,
Kent Science Park, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME9 8GU**



Section 1

Mutual exchange



Mutual exchange allows you to move home by swapping with any social housing resident across the UK.

There are two online schemes which are free for all of our residents:

House Exchange
www.houseexchange.org.uk

HomeSwapper
www.homeswapper.co.uk



Our 9 tips when preparing for a mutual exchange

When advertising your home, be sure to include:

- 01 As much detail as possible and recent pictures. This will increase your chances of finding a suitable match
- 02 Allow plenty of time for your move and try to avoid busy times such as holiday periods or the start of school term
- 03 Be ready to answer any questions about your home and resident responsibilities including gardens, parking and repairs. Also have some questions ready when you're viewing
- 04 Be sure to thoroughly check the property condition on viewings as you may be responsible for taking over any resident repairs as part of the move
- 05 We'll give you a decision on whether we approve your mutual exchange within 42 days. This doesn't mean you'll move within this timeframe
- 06 To avoid any delays, make sure your rent account is up to date. If you have any concerns, please get in touch
- 07 Report all repairs you identify in your home to keep your home in good condition
- 08 Try to avoid applying pressure on your exchange partner and equally, do not feel pressured to move. It's an important decision and shouldn't be rushed
- 09 Moving can be an expensive process and it's important to consider all costs such as utilities, removals, lock changes and decoration. Don't book any removals until your move date is confirmed

Section 2

Registering with your local authority

You can register with a local authority if you have a priority need to move.

Once you've registered with a borough, you'll be able to 'bid' on the homes you're eligible for. Some boroughs may offer a waiting list rather than a bidding system.

You'll be contacted when a suitable property is available. You'll be prioritised based on your housing needs.

To register with the local authorities you must have:

- ✓ A local connection who has lived in the area usually for a minimum of two to five years (depending on the borough you live in)
- ✓ A priority need to move, for example if you're underoccupying or overcrowded.

Below is a list of all the local authorities we operate in. Please apply to your local borough only.

Kent

Ashford	Maidstone
Canterbury	Medway
Dartford	Sevenoaks
Dover	Swale
Folkstone	Thanet
Gravesham	Tonbridge & Malling

Essex

Thurrock

Sussex

Arun	Lewes District
Brighton & Hove City	Rother District
Eastbourne	Worthing
Hastings	

Berkshire, Hampshire, Isle of Wight and Surrey

Bracknell Forest	Portsmouth
Reading	Rushmoor
West Berkshire	Southampton
Wokingham	Elmbridge
Isle of Wight	Guildford
Basingstoke and Deane	Reigate & Banstead
Eastleigh	Runnymede
East Hampshire	Surrey Heath
Gosport	Tandridge
Havant	Waverley
	Wokingham



London

Barnet
Bromley
Camden
Croydon
Ealing
Enfield
Greenwich
Hackney
Hammersmith & Fulham
Haringey
Hillingdon
Lambeth
Lewisham
Kingston upon Thames
Kensington & Chelsea
Merton
Reigate & Banstead
Sevenoaks
Southwark
Sutton
Tandridge
Tower Hamlets
Wandsworth
Westminster

Midlands

Birmingham
Bromsgrove
Coventry
Daventry
East
Northamptonshire
Kettering (Key worker accommodation)
Leicester
Milton Keynes
North Warwickshire
Northampton
Sandwell
Solihull
Stratford-on-Avon
Tamworth
Walsall
Warwick
Wellingborough



Section 3

Mobility schemes

Housing mobility schemes enable local authority and housing association tenants to relocate from their current area to other parts of the country. We currently have three mobility schemes online to bid on an available home you're interested in.



Housing Moves (for London residents only)

- ✓ Do you want to move to another part of London?
- ✓ Would you benefit from being closer to work or college?
- ✓ Are you looking for a smaller home?
- ✓ Do you want to be closer to family and friends?

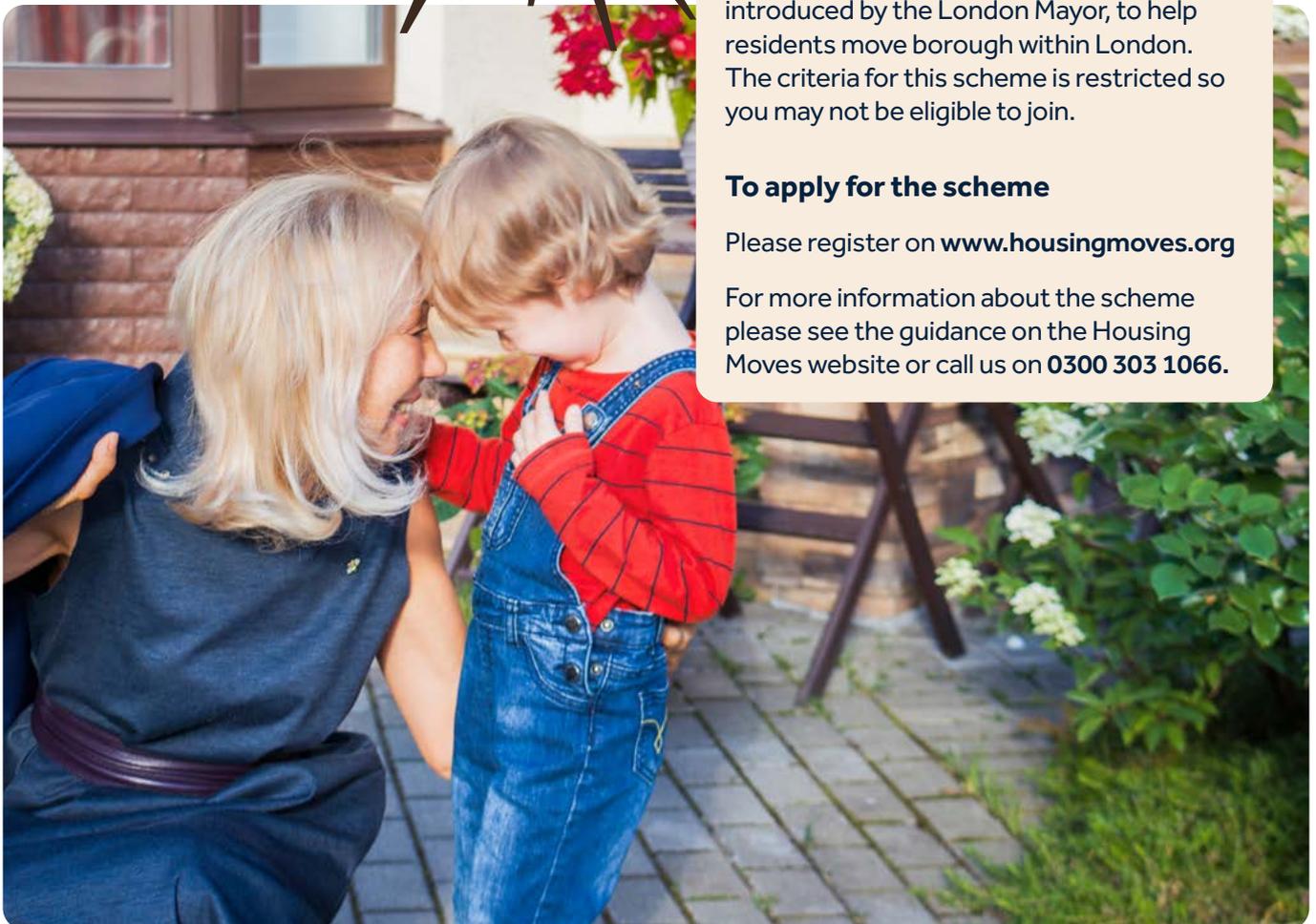
If the answer to any of these questions is yes, then Housing Moves scheme could be just what you need.

Housing Moves is a mobility scheme introduced by the London Mayor, to help residents move borough within London. The criteria for this scheme is restricted so you may not be eligible to join.

To apply for the scheme

Please register on www.housingmoves.org

For more information about the scheme please see the guidance on the Housing Moves website or call us on **0300 303 1066**.



Homefinder UK

Homefinder UK is an easy to use, online service for social housing tenants who would like to move to another area within the UK.

Homefinder UK allows you to access vacant properties provided by a range of social landlords. This scheme is open to all social housing tenancy holders as well as adult members of the household who do not hold a tenancy.

To apply for the scheme

Please register on www.homefinderuk.org

For more information about the scheme please see the guidance on the Homefinder website or call us on **0300 303 1066**.

To be eligible for Housing Moves and Homefinder UK You must:

- ✓ Have a clear rent account
- ✓ No record of anti-social behaviour (ASB)
- ✓ Not be on a Starter Tenancy (for Housing Moves only)
- ✓ Be willing to move out of the borough

Seaside & Country Homes

Seaside & Country Homes is a housing mobility scheme targeted at older households. One and two bed bungalows and flats are available helping residents to move to the coast or countryside.

How it works

Seaside & Country Homes administer all applications and match residents to their preferred homes. They'll contact you when a suitable home becomes available, and priority is given to residents downsizing.

To be eligible

The lead applicant must be at least 60 years of age and a social housing tenant in London. Applicants must be free of rent arrears and have no history of anti-social behaviour.

If you're interested and want to apply you can download an application pack or register online. Go to www.london.gov.uk and search for 'Seaside and Country Homes'.

Alternatively you can pick up a pack from us, your local council office or call **0845 0212020**.



Section 4

Shared Ownership schemes and Home Buy schemes

Shared Ownership means buying a share of your new home and paying rent on the remainder. You can buy additional shares up until you own 100%. This is called staircasing.

Help to Buy is a government scheme to help make buying a home more affordable. These properties are available at less than the market rent, allowing you to save for a future deposit.

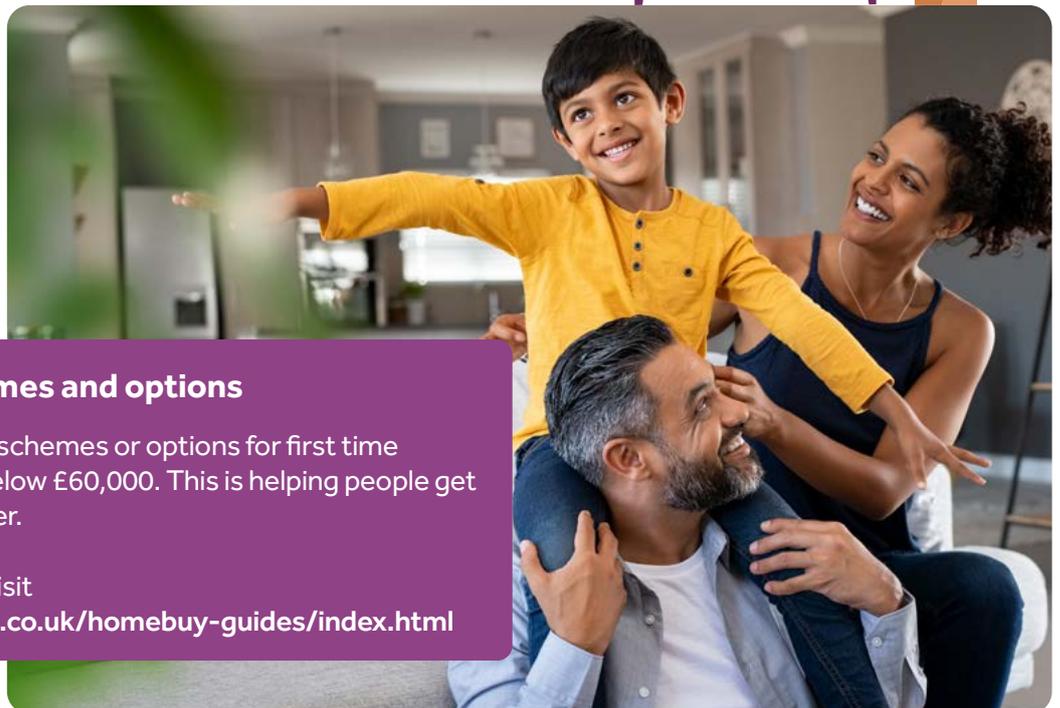
The income cap for eligibility for these schemes is a gross household income of no more than £90,000 per annum in London and £80,000 outside of London.



What you need to do?

Contact our Sales Team or visit our Homes for Sale page www.shoales.co.uk

Register with the Government's HomeBuy scheme on www.helptobuy.gov.uk. This scheme is for first time buyers and people who don't currently own a home. There's a dedicated section for people looking for homes in London visit www.shareto-buy.com/firststeps



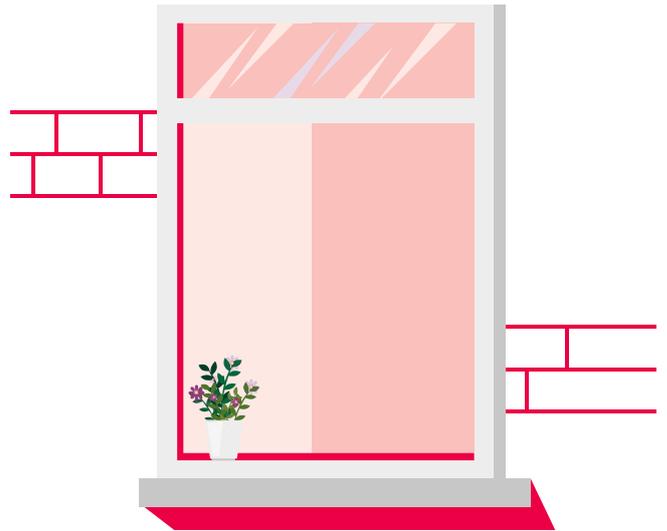
Home Buyer Schemes and options

The Government have schemes or options for first time buyers with incomes below £60,000. This is helping people get onto the property ladder.

For more information visit www.homebuyservice.co.uk/homebuy-guides/index.html

Private Rented Sector

Another option for moving home is to rent in the private sector. This is generally more expensive than social housing but is in greater supply.



What is it?

Private Rented Sector (PRS) is housing that is rented out as a business. A private sector landlord can be one person or a large company.

How does it work?

Just like in social housing, when you move into your new home you'll get a tenancy agreement. This gives you a legal right to occupy a property for an agreed period of time.

How do I find a PRS home?

All local councils can give advice on renting in the private sector. If you're interested you can contact their housing advice team for more details. Lettings agencies are another option. But remember to check their charges for using their services and if there are any other associated costs.

Section 6

Independent Living for over-55s



We provide secure and accessible social housing for people over the age of 55, or 50 with a long-term health condition, who have a housing need and meet our eligibility criteria.

We have homes throughout London, Kent, Sussex and the West Midlands, and we aim to meet a variety of needs through a range of options, including:

- ✓ Sheltered
- ✓ Over 55s apartments and bungalows
- ✓ Extra care housing.

We provide Extra Care schemes for both rent and Shared Ownership sale in Kent, London and Sussex.

For more information visit
www.southernhousing.org.uk

The www.housingcare.org website has details of all our sheltered, Extra Care and over 55s schemes, along with those provided by other organisations. Our Digital Champions can offer support if you need help using computers and getting online.

ACCESSIBILITY AND ALTERNATIVE FORMATS

We're committed to ensuring our services are accessible to all residents and service users. Our goal is to create an inclusive environment where everyone can engage with us in a way that suits their needs.

We're happy to provide the information in this document in an alternative format to ensure you have the best possible experience. We've an accessibility and language translation tool on every page of our website that you can use alongside this report. The tool can be accessed by selecting the orange button located in the bottom right corner of your screen when on the relevant website page.

You can:

- ✓ Increase text size
- ✓ Change colour schemes
- ✓ Translate content into multiple languages
- ✓ Convert text into audio.

If there's a way we can adjust our services to better support you, we encourage you to let us know.

For more information visit www.southernhousing.org.uk/Easy

