

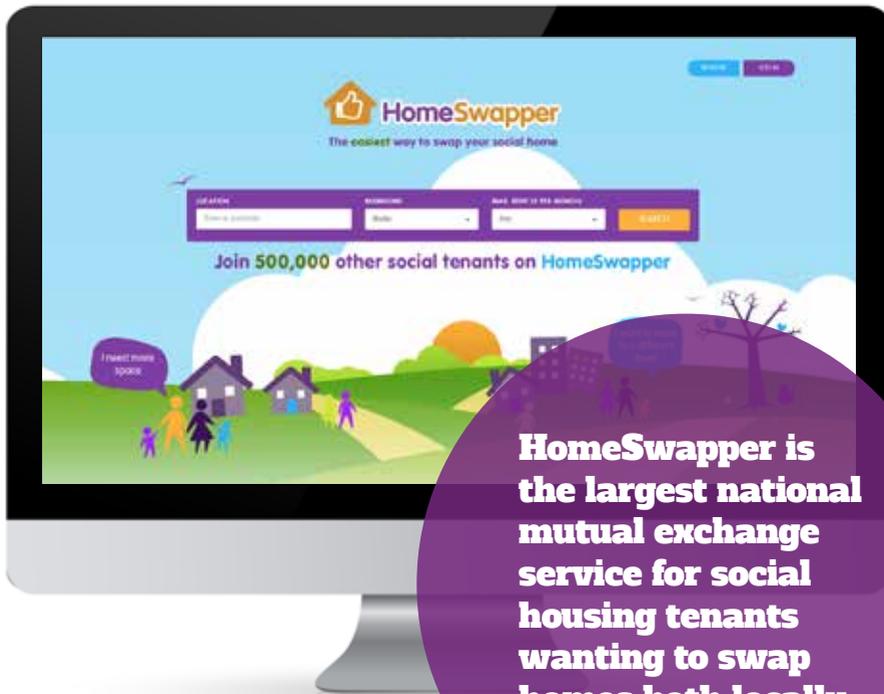
Home-swap with ease



Bolton
at **Home**



The quick and easy way to find the right property for you.



HomeSwapper is the largest national mutual exchange service for social housing tenants wanting to swap homes both locally and nationally.

www.homeswapper.co.uk

Are you considering a move?

Do you know you can swap your house, locally or nationally, through HomeSwapper? It's the UK's largest direct home swap service.

At any one time, around 1,000 Bolton at Home customers are registered with HomeSwapper and over 500,000 members are looking for potential swaps at **www.homeswapper.co.uk**.

You can use HomeSwapper to change your type of home, move location, get a garden, or find one that's already adapted for disabilities. It works by matching tenants who want each other's home, with 90% of members receiving potential matches within 24 hours.

Advantages:

- More choice.
- Less competition.
- No time spent on the housing register.
- 'Like for like' moves allowed between Bolton at Home properties.

To register for free and see your potential swaps, visit **www.homeswapper.co.uk**.

For more information, phone us on **01204 328000** or ask at your local UCAN centre or Valley House office.

Mutual exchange



A mutual exchange is when you swap homes with someone. It means you're taking on somebody else's tenancy rather than being given a brand new tenancy agreement. If you're already a Bolton at Home tenant you can swap with any other social housing tenant if you have an assured non shorthold tenancy with us. You could upsize, downsize, move location, get a garden, or find a property that's adapted for disabilities. There's no limit to the number of participants in a mutual exchange, but usually it will be a direct swap between two social rented households. Occasionally it might involve three or more different households.

How can I put my name down for a mutual exchange?

You can advertise your home for a mutual exchange for free at www.homeswapper.co.uk. This is the main way in which to find someone to exchange with, but you will still need permission from your landlord to actually swap.

Full details of the registration process are available on the website.

Some people also use Facebook or place an advert in their local newsagents, post office or front windows.

You can visit any UCAN centre or library for internet access.

If you need further advice on making an application please contact us using the details given on the last page.

Once you have registered follow some golden rules:

- Check the website frequently for potential exchange matches.
- Preview your advert and check it looks appealing with plenty of photos. Include a good description of the property and promote its good points.
- Message and phone possible matches regularly to see if they're suitable.
- Agree to visit and inspect each other's property before you then apply to exchange.

What size of property can I exchange with?

Unlike with our Moving Options Policy, if you find an exchange we may allow you to move to a like-for-like property, with the same number of bedrooms, or even under-occupy by one bedroom subject to demonstrating affordability.

For example; a couple in a one bedroom flat may be allowed to exchange for a two bedroom house, not permitted under our Moving Options Policy.

You need to explain your reasons for moving as part of your application.

Further information about the reasons for this though should be provided with your application form.

What other things should I consider?

Remember that you could be taking on someone else's tenancy so there may be some changes to your tenancy conditions. For example; the rent you pay when you move may not be the same as the rent your exchange partner is currently paying. We can advise you what you'll need to pay.

You may also want to get in touch with us so you can confirm if you'll have the Right to Buy or Right to Acquire your property once you've exchanged, where discounts differ.

Please also think about whether you can live in the property as it is when you view it, as properties are taken-on as seen. It's helpful to prepare a list of questions to ask when you visit the property. For example; will fixtures and fittings be left behind? Will it be easy to fit your appliances? Is it a furnished tenancy that stays with the property?

You'll need to keep your own home clean and tidy too. If you have difficulties with this, please contact us so we can discuss what support options might be available to help you.

If your application is approved, you'll need to plan for removals. Please budget for this.

If your application is refused, there's no time limit on when you can reapply for a mutual exchange.

What do I do when I have found someone to exchange with?

All parties to the exchange need to complete an online mutual exchange application form. You can get this from www.boltonathome.org.uk/find-a-home.

Please complete the mutual exchange application form as fully as possible to avoid unnecessary delays in our checks.

What does Bolton at Home do when a mutual exchange application is received?

We'll give you a final decision within 42 days (six weeks). First, we'll need to carry out some checks, for example:

- if you have rent arrears
- if there have been any unauthorised alterations
- if the move would result in overcrowding or under-occupation.

We won't unreasonably refuse permission and, if there are solvable issues, we'll talk to you first about how these may be put right.

But if we do refuse your application, we'll tell you why and discuss what needs to happen to allow for a successful future application. Some of the main reasons we would refuse an exchange include rent arrears, property damage, antisocial behaviour, or ineligibility for the type of property.

What happens next?

We'll conduct our initial checks and contact you to confirm we've received your application form and discuss any immediate questions or issues with you.

If everything appears to be in order we'll indicate this to you, but the exchange going ahead will be subject to a survey of the property, and gas and electric checks taking place on the day of exchange.

You'll need to be at home for the survey and checks to give our staff access. They'll contact you directly to make appointments and will show you identification when they arrive.

If you're exchanging with the tenant of another landlord, we'll ask that landlord for a reference for their tenant. Remember that it's quite likely that they'll also ask us for a reference about you.

What happens if the survey or an inspection highlights a problem?

In-line with your tenancy agreement you must have kept your property in good condition, clean throughout, have a tidy garden and no damage. If there's an issue that you need to put right, we'll tell you what is required and ask when you can complete the work. When you tell us the work is done we'll re-inspect it.

If it's an issue that is our responsibility, we'll do the work. If we're unable to complete it straight away, we'll usually let the exchange go ahead providing the work is not urgent and the new tenant agrees.

If inspections reveal a significant health and safety issue, such as an urgent electrical problem, we may have to refuse the request.

Once you've exchanged you can't report day-to-day repairs such as plastering or carpentry for the first six months, except for repairs considered an emergency such as no heating, hot water or lighting. It's therefore very important that you report all repairs before you leave the property.

If everything is in order, we'll contact you to let you know and you can then think about move dates, which must always be on a Monday with gas and electric checks on the same day. However, before you move, you'll need an appointment with us to sign your agreement. This will be done by way of Deed of Assignment. Once you've signed you can't change your mind.

What do I need to bring to the appointment?

You'll need to bring with you:

- Proof of identification that has your photograph on it.
- Your current tenancy agreement. If you don't have a copy of your tenancy agreement, please let us know before your appointment.
- One week's rent in advance (we'll let you know how much you need to pay).
- Your bank account details if you want to pay your rent by Direct Debit.
- If you're claiming Housing Benefit or Council Tax Reduction, proof of your income, benefits and savings.

What should I do when I get the go-ahead to move?

Make sure you:

- Contact the gas, electricity and other utilities companies for both your old and new addresses.
- Apply for any benefits you receive to be paid at your new address.



Once you've found a tenant match on HomeSwapper who you want to exchange with, please submit your completed online mutual exchange application form at www.boltonathome.org.uk/find-a-home

You can contact us:

By phone:
01204 328000

Web: www.boltonathome.org.uk/contact-us

Please visit www.boltonathome.org.uk/find-a-home for details about other moving options.

Get in touch

Bolton at Home

98 Waters Meeting Road
Bolton BL1 8SW

All enquiries

01204 328000

Contact Centre opening hours:

Monday to Friday,
8.00am to 6.30pm

Web

www.boltonathome.org.uk

Twitter

@boltonathome

Facebook

www.facebook.com/fbboltonathome

Vimeo

vimeo.com/boltonathomeonfilm