



HomeSwapper®

Top 10 tips!

Moving home is one of the biggest changes you can make, and it's really important to do it right. When swapping, especially if you're keen to get out of where you're living, it can be easy to get swept away in the excitement and forget the practicalities.

Here are our top 10 tips for a successful swap!

1

Research the area

Location, location, location – for some this is almost as important as the home itself. Think of what is important to you - do you need good local schools? A quiet area with parks and playgrounds? Or is your priority being close to public transport? Does it feel safe during the day? What about at night? Are there playgrounds and good schools nearby for the kids? Is it near a hospital? If so, can you hear ambulances all the time? Make sure you've researched it all before making the move.

2

What's included?

You need to find out what belongs to the tenant and what belongs to the landlord. Even if they say they're leaving something of theirs behind, there is no guarantee they will as this isn't included in the paperwork. If in doubt, assume anything that isn't the landlord's property will be going. Ask specifically about white goods, curtains etc.

3**Décor**

Many swappers are searching for a 'dream home' that ticks all their boxes. Whilst this can happen, the realistic chances of finding perfection will reduce your options a lot. It can often be necessary to do a bit of decoration (with permission of course!) once you move in to make the property really feel like home. It's worth jotting down what you'd like to change and how important it is, so you've got a realistic picture of any costs before you move in. Most of all when searching, keep in mind a property's potential! Once you've put your mark on it, you might just find that it is in fact that dream home you were searching for after all.

4**Tenancy type**

Check the tenancy type of the home you want to swap into, and make sure you know yours. If you're not sure, ask your landlord. A different tenancy type means that you may lose your 'Right to Buy' or may not have the 'Right to Acquire' with this new property, so it's worth checking this ahead.

5**Rent and bills**

Find out how much the rent is. Remember this can be different to the amount the current tenant pays as they may receive housing benefit as a 'top up'. It's also worth asking what the usual bills are – gas, electricity, internet, water, council tax – as these can vary a lot between council areas. It's no guarantee that yours will be the same, but at least you'll have an indicator.

6**Neighbours**

A great neighbour is almost priceless, but a bad neighbour can ruin your experience of a new home... so what are the neighbours like? Can you meet them? Are there any disputes or noise issues? Visit a potential home at different times of day to really get a feel for the area, and if it's a block of flats, make sure you think about the neighbours above and below too.

Condition

Remember that you're accepting the property 'as seen' – so give it a good look over! Inspect any white goods that will be staying (fridge, freezer, washing machine, cooker, microwave, dishwasher, etc) and check they're in good working order.

It's really important to check that the current tenant has permission to make any changes to the property. If they haven't got this permission, it can be a reason for the landlord to refuse a swap.

Some things you should think about are:

- Is it in good condition? Are there signs of damp, flaking paint or infestations of any kind? Do repairs need to be carried out?
- Are there any broken items of furniture that will be staying?
- Is there central heating? Do all the radiators function properly? Is it properly insulated? Is there double glazing?
- Is there enough storage space for your belongings?
- Are there enough kitchen cupboards and work surfaces?
- Check the bathroom(s) and make sure taps are not leaking. Does the shower work properly? Are the sealants around the bath / shower intact?
- Are there enough electrical and telephone points and are they in the right places for your needs?

All of these are important things to look out for during any viewing and the landlord will have expected you to do your research.

8

Any eligibility issues

Some homes have eligibility rules in place that you must meet in order to move in. These often don't come up until late in the process and we've seen plenty of swappers be really disappointed because of this.

Some of the things to check are:

- Age restrictions
- Mobility restrictions, e.g. it's a sheltered home
- The need for a local connection
- If it's been adapted for disability and this isn't applicable for you
- You have to work for the council or in a specific job to move in

There can be other eligibility issues, but these are the most common. If you're unsure, ask.

9

Occupancy requirements

If the home is too big or too small for your needs, you probably won't be able to move in.

Some landlords are more flexible about 'over-occupation' than others, but it is a valid reason to decline a swap and it's one of the most common.

How serious is the other swapper?

Anyone on a swapping site will have read stories about 'timewasters'. People selling furniture only to be let down at the last minute, even withdrawing their children from schools in advance of a move. Our advice is simple:

Don't make any major changes to your life until your swap has been approved and you've signed the paperwork. Swappers (including you) have a legal right to pull out of a mutual exchange at any point before paperwork is signed.

If you're worried about not having time to do everything, sign the paperwork and set a swap date for a couple of weeks later to give you chance to make all these changes. Remember that swaps can fall through for lots of reasons, and someone pulling out usually has a valid reason – they're not doing it to be spiteful. We know it's really tough but try not to get too emotionally invested in your potential new home before the paperwork is signed.

If you have any questions or need further advice, please contact your landlord or get in touch with our Help Desk team by emailing **tenants@homeswapper.co.uk**.

Good luck with your search!

Find out more at
www.homeswapper.me