

MultiSwap in real life

Melanie's* story

Melanie completed a 4-way MultiSwap in 2010. She was living in a two-bedroom flat in London but was looking for a change of scenery. At first, she had tried to find a direct swap but when she couldn't find one, she decided to try a MultiSwap.

After speaking with a lot of different people, Mel found the links for her MultiSwap chain. The 4-way MultiSwap looked like this:



*Not her real name

Mel's MultiSwap tips

Mel learnt a lot through her MultiSwap experience. Here are some of her top tips for building a successful MultiSwap:

1 - Be organised



When Mel was looking for a MultiSwap one of her strategies was to keep a little book of everybody who had contacted her, recording what they were offering, what they were looking for and their contact details. What she found was even if someone may seem like they might not suit you or your swap chain right now, things might change, or you might hear of another MultiSwap to recommend them for.

2 - Talk to each other

If it's possible, have meetings with everybody in the chain. Mel says: *"Getting people together makes people trust each other more and then it becomes more of a joint venture."* In London and big cities this is quite easy, but if you're building a chain across the country, why not try group video calls? This helps everybody to feel like they're working together as a team.



3 - Always be polite and considerate

The more polite and understanding you are, the smoother the MultiSwap will be. Mel in particular thinks you should *"try not to use language like 'timewaster'. As nobody thinks of themselves as a timewaster really. You don't start your day thinking 'I'm going to waste people's time.' It's not something most people would deliberately do."*



4 - Be careful and look after yourself

Before viewings make sure that someone knows where you're going or that someone is coming round to view your place. You can also invite someone to be there with you, although make sure you let the person on the viewing know that there'll be someone else there! Mel says: *"When I've taken a friend with me to a viewing I have told the person I am visiting because it may be quite intimidating for two strangers to turn up at your house if you're on your own."*

5 - Make it simple for your landlord

When Mel got in contact with her landlord to get the paperwork started, *"One of the ladies at the housing association gave us the advice to put all of the paperwork for the swap in on the same day. If you've got four landlords, it can be a little bit of a minefield."*

From the day you put in the paperwork, your landlord legally has 6 weeks to approve the swap. For some that can be *"a very long time and that's when you need to support one another. Talk with the landlords, be patient and realise that it takes time. Don't blame others in the swap or think that they are messing you about because they may have their own reasons for doing things."*

