

Applying for housing and transfers

A guide for new housing applicants and existing council tenants



This authority is under a duty to protect the public funds it administers, and to this end may use the information you provide for the prevention and detection of fraud. It may also share this information with other public bodies responsible for auditing or administering public funds for these purposes.

Contents

Introduction	4
Social housing in Wandsworth	5
Who may apply: eligibility and qualification for social housing in Wandsworth	5
How to apply for social housing in Wandsworth	8
Completing the application form	9
Who to include on your application	9
Joint tenancies	9
Disability and medical conditions	9
Misleading information	10
Change of address and / or circumstances	10
Assessment of applications for social housing in Wandsworth	11
How we allocate properties	12
Allocation plan	12
Banding system and points scheme	12
Banding system	13
Main points scheme	14
Which queue will my application be registered on?	15
General needs queue	15
Council tenant transfer queue	15
Council's interest queue	15
Room to Move scheme	15
Homeless queue	16
Supported queue	16
Social care queue	16
Physical disability queue	16
Older persons housing queue	16
Sheltered housing	17
Priority rehousing status	17
Discretionary tenancies for family members or carers of Wandsworth Council tenants	17
What size of property (number of bedrooms) do I require?	18
Offers of accommodation	19
Consequences of refusing a suitable offer of housing	20
Accepting an offer	21
Other housing options for council and housing association tenants	21
Mutual exchange scheme: swap with another tenant anywhere in the UK	21
Homefinder UK scheme	22
Seaside and Country Homes scheme: tenants aged 55 plus	22
Housingmoves Scheme: help for social housing tenants who want to move to another part of London	23
Other options for moving out of Wandsworth and / or into private rented housing	24
Home ownership: buy a home	24
Your rights	24
Your right to confidentiality	24
Your right to information	25
Your right to request reviews	25
Your right to complain	25
Further information and contact details	26

Introduction

This booklet provides information for those who are interested in being housed by the council or a housing association and tenants who want to transfer from their home. When we refer to tenants, this will mean Wandsworth Council tenants.

It does not set out details of the types and lengths of tenancies that will be offered to applicants who are allocated properties. Most applicants offered Wandsworth Council properties will be offered an introductory tenancy followed by a flexible fixed-term tenancy of five years. Different rules apply to existing council tenants. Both the council's tenancy policy and a 'Tenancy types explained' leaflet is available on the website (www.wandsworth.gov.uk) and copies will be provided free of charge on request.

For housing association properties, applicants will be offered tenancies in accordance with the housing association's tenancy policy.

Your chances of being offered a council or housing association property in Wandsworth will depend on whether you are eligible and qualify for social housing. It also depends on the supply of, and demand for, homes in the area and the priority awarded to your application.

Wandsworth is a popular place to live and it may be easier or more convenient to find somewhere to live in other parts of the country.

You can apply directly to any housing authority in the country. However, if you don't meet their qualification criteria your application will not be registered.

This booklet contains information about a number of schemes through which we may be able to help you move to other areas.

We are committed to the promotion of equal opportunities and aim to ensure that homes are let fairly to all sections of the community.

When we refer to the council, it means Wandsworth Council, unless stated otherwise.

Social housing in Wandsworth

The council owns some 17,000 rented properties. However, demand for housing far exceeds supply so you are unlikely to be offered social housing unless you are assessed as having a very high priority or need for housing.

In order to increase your chances of meeting your housing need, you should be as flexible as possible in terms of where you want to live and also consider other housing options (see page 21).

On average, we are able to offer approximately 800 council homes for rent each year. These properties are mainly flats in high rise blocks on estates.

We work closely with private registered providers of social housing (PRPs), also known as housing associations, who own or manage property in the borough and we have nomination rights to a number of these properties. On average, we are able to offer approximately 300 housing association homes for rent each year.

Some blocks or estates are managed by Resident Management Organisations (RMOs), which means that a resident group provides services to the block or estate. Residents who live in RMO properties are encouraged to participate to some extent.

Who may apply: eligibility and qualification for social housing in Wandsworth

Any person may apply to the council for housing. However, housing will only be allocated to applicants who are registered on the council's housing queues for social housing. To be registered an applicant must be:

- (a) eligible for social housing in England (that is, not ineligible due to their immigration status); and
- (b) a qualifying person for social housing in Wandsworth (as determined by the following provisions of the housing allocation scheme).
- (c) Be 18 years old or over, unless applying under the homeless, supported, social care queues, or accepted under the New Generation scheme. Applicants will not usually be offered a tenancy until they are at least 18 years of age.

Who is not a qualifying person

This scheme has been framed to give reasonable preference to those groups identified within the Housing Act 1996 S.166A(3). These are:

- (a) people who are homeless (within the meaning of Part VII);
- (b) people who are owed a duty by any local housing authority under section 190(2), 193(2) or 195(2) (or under section 65(2) or 68(2) of the Housing Act 1985) or who are occupying accommodation secured by any such authority under section 192(3);
- (c) people occupying insanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions;
- (d) people who need to move on medical or welfare grounds (including any grounds relating to a disability); and
- (e) people who need to move to a particular locality in the district of the authority, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or to others).

If, upon assessment, you do not fall within one of the reasonable preference categories you will not be a qualifying person. There may be exceptions to this rule if it is in the council's interest to provide accommodation e.g. under-occupying social tenants. The following will be considered as not a "qualifying person".

Persons who have refused an offer or nomination of suitable accommodation

You will not qualify for social housing in the borough and be (or remain) registered on the council's housing queues if you have refused any offer or nomination of suitable accommodation within the last two years, made or arranged by the council, and there has been no material change in your circumstances so as to make the earlier offer clearly unsuitable in the light of your changed circumstances.

Persons with no recognised housing need

You will not qualify for social housing and be (or remain) registered on the council's housing queues if the council is satisfied, once the application has been assessed, that they are suitably housed, that is, you have no recognised housing need under the Housing Allocation Scheme. This criteria will be disapplied for applicants applying to the older person queue. Applicants on the older persons housing queue with no recognised housing need will be placed in Band D.

Persons who do not qualify on the grounds of behaviour

You will not qualify for social housing in the borough and be (or remain) registered on the council's housing queues if, following assessment, any of the following circumstances apply:

- (a) The council is satisfied you have, within the preceding 10 years, obtained or attempted to obtain housing or other housing related services/welfare benefits /public funds, from any public body in the UK, by making a false or misleading statement or withholding information, or encouraging someone else to do so on your behalf;
- (b) The council is satisfied that you are unlikely to satisfactorily manage the tenancy and /or pay your rent because, for example:
 - (i) You have been evicted due to anti-social behaviour (including domestic violence and abuse and noise nuisance) or rent arrears;
 - (ii) you have been served, within the last year, with a notice for breach of your tenancy conditions;
 - (iii) another person who shared a property occupied by you left because of your violence/abuse or threats of violence/abuse against them or a person associated with them;
 - (iv) you or a member of your household have a history of anti-social behaviour (including domestic violence/abuse and noise nuisance);
 - (v) you have a record of failure to pay rent;
 - (vi) you have outstanding debt liabilities to the council and are not making satisfactory arrangements to repay those debts.

Persons who will be accorded lower priority

If your application falls into one of the reasonable preference groups (see above) and you do not satisfy the criteria set out below, your application will be placed into band D, or lowest available band for the relevant access queue as applicable, until you satisfy the criteria.

Residency

If you have not been resident within the borough for a continuous minimum period of three years immediately preceding your application.

Homeownership, high income or high savings

- (a) you own or jointly own accommodation (including shared ownership accommodation) in the UK or elsewhere, or have a legal right to occupy accommodation in the UK or elsewhere (other than as a tenant or licensee) unless you satisfy the council that it would not be possible and reasonable for you to:
 - (i) occupy the accommodation; or
 - (ii) sell or let the accommodation in order to obtain suitable accommodation; or
- (b) the council is satisfied that you have income* or savings that it would be possible and reasonable for you to use in order to obtain suitable accommodation.

*An applicant, or one of joint applicants, must have a household income that is no greater than the household income threshold set by the GLA (Greater London Authority) for the 'First Steps to Homeownership in London' scheme and in place at the time the decision on qualification is made.

Social tenants making a transfer application to their landlord

You are a tenant of a registered provider of social housing and have not made a transfer application to your landlord. This applies unless the application to the council is for sheltered housing or your landlord does not maintain a housing waiting list.

Applicants placed in band D are highly unlikely to be made an offer of social housing. The onus is on you to contact the department when you satisfy the criteria and your application will be reassessed.

Discretion to waive qualifying and/or relative priority criteria

In specific circumstances the qualifying and/or relative priority criteria maybe waived.

How to apply for social housing in Wandsworth

Under section 213B of the 1996 Housing Act, specified public authorities should notify a housing authority (with their consent) of anyone who they consider may be homeless or threatened with homelessness (ie. it is likely they will become homeless within 56 days).

Referrals can be made via

wandsworthself.achieveservice.com/service/Make_a_Homelessness_Reduction_Act_referral_online

Applicants who are homeless or threatened with homelessness within 56 days should contact the Customer Services and Housing Options team. You can find contact details and opening hours on page 26.

An application for the allocation of accommodation by the council must be made by accessing the online form at www.wandsworth.gov.uk/hcs/housingoptions. To complete the online form, you will need to provide the following information about yourself, your partner (if applicable) and any other household members:

- Full name.
- Date of birth.
- Current address and previous addresses over the last two or five years (if you are applying for homelessness assistance).
- National Insurance numbers (for adults only).
- Passport number and expiry date or travel document number, if applicable.

Based on your circumstances, you may be advised that you do not qualify and are ineligible for housing.

We will contact you for further information and identification when required. Please note that when we ask for photographs, these will need to be recent and provided for all household members. Those aged 16 years old and over are required to provide their full name and signature on the back of the photograph.

Persons needing advice or practical assistance with making an application should contact the housing assessment section (see page 26).

Completing the application form

Who to include on your application

Generally, you should only include members of your immediate family who usually live with you, or could reasonably be expected to live with you.

Other people will only be accepted as part of your household if it is reasonable for that person to live with you. This will normally exclude any lodgers you may have but might include, for example, a foster child.

An adult applicant may not appear on more than one housing application.

Joint tenancies

Where two or more people apply jointly for housing, both applicants must be eligible for allocation and at least one of them must be a qualifying person (see pages 5 to 8).

If you and your spouse / partner apply for housing together, you will normally be offered a joint tenancy. We will also consider requests to create joint tenancies between other applicants.

Disability and medical conditions

You should inform us if you or anybody included on your application have medical conditions or disabilities which:

- (a) are made worse by your current accommodation; or
- (b) would affect the type of housing that we may offer you.

We may ask you to complete a medical assessment form.

You do not need to get a medical certificate or letter from your doctor or hospital.

We may seek advice on the relevance to current or future housing needs of you or your household member's medical condition(s)/disability from the council's medical adviser. If further information is required we will, with your consent, contact your medical professional.

Misleading information

If you try to obtain housing by making false or misleading statements, you may be prosecuted and have your application refused or cancelled on the basis that you do not qualify for social housing in Wandsworth (see page 7).

Change of address and / or circumstances

If there are any changes in your circumstances, please notify the housing and assessment section as this may affect your chances of being offered housing. For example, tell us if:

- you move.
- you need to add someone to or remove someone from your application, for example if:
 - you become pregnant or have a child;
 - you want to add a new partner to your application; or
 - someone on your application will no longer be living with you.
- you, or anybody included on your application has medical conditions or disabilities which have changed since you last provided us with information about them and they:
 - are made worse by your current accommodation; or
 - would affect the type of housing that we may offer you.

In order that your application can be assessed in the light of changed circumstances or to check that information held is correct and up to date, you may be required to complete a new application form.

Assessment of applications for social housing

Your application for housing will be assessed under the council's housing allocation scheme according to the information provided by you and established from enquiries.

When we have received sufficient information and supporting evidence to enable us to assess the application you will be notified in writing which queue and band you have been placed in, as well as the number of points your application has been awarded. For points and banding information please see pages 13 and 14.

Any offer made to you under the housing allocation scheme will be made in accordance with the bedroom entitlement rules applicable at the date of the offer.

Eligibility and qualification

If we decide that you are not eligible for housing or do not qualify for social housing in Wandsworth we will notify you in writing of:

- (a) our decision and the reason(s) for it; and
- (b) your right to request a review of the decision and the timescales.

If your application is accepted, we will send you a registration letter.

How we allocate properties

Allocation plan

Each year, we estimate how many council and housing association properties are likely to become available for letting during the year. We also decide how many properties should be offered to applicants on each queue. This is known as the 'allocation plan'.

Banding system and points scheme

Within each queue, all eligible and qualifying applicants are placed within one of four bands, with band A being the highest and band D being the lowest, as set out in the table opposite.

The main points scheme (as set out in the table on page 14) is used to help determine applicants' priority within the general needs queue, the council tenant transfer queue and the older person's queue.

Subject to suitability considerations and targets within the annual allocation plan, offers for each queue are made to whichever applicant is in the highest band and has been registered in that band for the longest (and, if there are no applicants in the highest band, to whichever applicant is in the second highest band and has been registered in that band for the longest, and so on). Therefore, even applicants registered in the highest band may have to wait some time for an offer.

Band	Description of housing circumstances falling within band
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accepted homeless families with or expecting a child in bed and breakfast (unless matched to a private rented sector offer) • Urgent cases where a homeless duty has been accepted under prevention of homeless duties (s195) or relief of homeless (s189b) (unless matched to a private rented sector offer) • Urgent cases where a homeless duty has been accepted under prevention of homeless duties (s195) or relief of homeless (s189b) (unless matched to a private rented sector offer) and accepted on to the older persons queue • All assessed qualifying cases with 300 points or more • Cases awarded priority rehousing status • Management transfer and essential repair cases accepted onto the council's interest queue • Management transfer and essential repair cases accepted onto the older persons housing queue • Under-occupying social housing tenants where two or more bedrooms would be released upon transfer • Urgent cases approved by senior management • Cases needing adapted housing due to physical disability where there is an urgent need to relocate
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All accepted homelessness cases in temporary accommodation provided by the council or in referring accommodation (unless matched to a private rented sector offer) • All other assessed qualifying cases with 150-299 points • Cases accepted onto the supported and/or social care housing queues • Sheltered housing support need transfers • Under-occupying social housing tenants affected by the social sector size criteria where one bedroom would be released upon transfer • Under-occupying social housing tenants on the older persons housing queue where one bedroom would be released upon transfer • All other cases needing adapted housing due to physical disability. • All assessed, qualifying households accepted under either the New Generation scheme, the Housing into Work scheme or the Armed Forces scheme and ready to be made an offer of accommodation • Qualifying households where an offer of accommodation would prevent a statutory homeless duty • Cases moving under agreed housing mobility schemes including Housingmoves and pan London domestic violence reciprocal protocol
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All other assessed qualifying cases with between 50 and 149 points • All other under-occupying social housing tenants • Other cases on the physical disability queue who are already in adapted housing
D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All other assessed qualifying cases including those with 1 to 49 points • All assessed qualifying cases who have not resided continuously within the borough for a minimum period of three years immediately preceding their application • All assessed cases who do not satisfy the home ownership, high income and high savings criteria • All assessed cases of social tenants who can apply to their landlord for a transfer but have not done so

Order of offers

Time waiting - offers made to cases in date order from date of entry into each band, subject to suitability considerations and targets within annual allocations plan

Main points scheme

Overcrowding	For one bedroom lacking	50
	For two bedrooms lacking	150
	For three or more bedrooms lacking	200
Statutory overcrowding	Additional overcrowding points for households statutorily overcrowded	20
Unsanitary	Lacking a living room, kitchen, bathroom/WC	30
Sharing	Sharing a living room, kitchen or bathroom/internal WC with persons outside your household	15
Unsatisfactory housing	Two or more children having to share bedroom with a parent or parents	25
	<i>Exception to the above points: single persons assessed as requiring a self-contained studio flat</i>	
Medical need	Diagnosed ill health or disability, but not of significance to current or future housing needs	0
	Diagnosed ill health or disability, with minor relevance to current or future housing needs	25
	Diagnosed ill health or disability, with moderate relevance to current or future housing needs	75
	Diagnosed ill health or disability, with major relevance to current or future housing needs	150
	<i>The above points award will be made in respect of the person in the household whose ill health has the greatest relevance to current or future housing needs. Five additional points may be added for each additional person within the household affected by diagnosed ill health or disability which is relevant to current or future housing needs</i>	
Tenure	Households who are homeless, including rough sleepers, within the meaning of Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended), excluding cases accepted within the 'Homeless Queue'	25
Hardship	Households with an established need to move to a particular locality within the borough where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or others)	10
Back boiler	Additional points for overcrowded households who use the living room for sleeping purposes and a back boiler is located in this living room	25
Working households	Households awarded points under any of the criteria above with at least one household member who is 16 years old or over and working 24 hours or more per week in paid employment	50

Which queue will my application be registered on?

General needs queue

Most applicants will, if accepted, be registered on the general needs queue. Applicants on this queue will be assessed under the main points scheme.

Council tenant transfer queue

Applications from Wandsworth Council tenants will, if accepted, be registered on the council tenant transfer queue. Applicants will be assessed under the main points scheme.

Council's interest queue

Some transfer applications made by Wandsworth Council tenants will be registered on the council's interest queue. These would be for:

- tenants required to move because of the need to carry out major works or essential repairs.
- tenants needing to move from a situation of immediate risk. These are known as management transfers. If you or a member of your household is being threatened or harassed, you should contact your area housing manager or managing agent. Tenants will normally be offered a similar-sized property to the one they are living in (i.e. the same number of bedrooms) unless they are under-occupying or statutorily overcrowded.
- tenants willing to move to a smaller home under the Room to Move scheme.

Room to Move scheme*

The Room to Move scheme offers Wandsworth Council tenants who are under-occupying (i.e. who have at least one spare bedroom) the opportunity to transfer to smaller accommodation more suited to their needs. The bedroom size will be agreed when an application is accepted.

The scheme may also offer tenants who transfer to a smaller home a range of flexible assistance, such as financial incentives and other assistance.

Homeless queue

In the first instance, applicants who are homeless or worried about losing their home should contact the housing assessment section.

If the council has accepted a duty to house you under current homelessness legislation your application will be placed on the homeless queue.

* Terms and conditions apply

Supported queue**

This queue is for applicants with support needs who have been nominated by the housing and regeneration department, social services or other approved organisations.

Social care queue**

This queue is for families with children or other persons nominated by children's social services under referral arrangements to the housing and regeneration department.

Physical disability queue

This queue is for people seeking a specially designed or adapted property suitable for those who are physically disabled, including wheelchair users. Applications are subject to an assessment by, and recommendation from, the council's occupational therapy service or the children's occupational therapy service.

Eligible and qualifying applicants requiring specially designed or adapted sheltered housing will, if eligible, be registered on the older persons' housing queue.

Older persons housing queue

Anyone who is aged 55 years or over can apply for sheltered housing. A qualifying applicant will also be assessed if they are suitable for sheltered housing based on their ability to manage independently and without any risk to existing residents or staff. Based on the information submitted, it may also be decided which schemes would be appropriate.

Sheltered housing is designed to help residents maintain an independent and active lifestyle in a secure and friendly retirement community with the added security of an alarm service and sheltered housing officer for help and support.

Priority rehousing status

Under the Housing Allocation scheme, additional preference may be given to any application within any access queue which meets the criteria for 'priority rehousing' status. Priority rehousing status will usually be awarded to applications involving multiple needs and/ or where there is a serious and credible risk to the applicant's safety in their current accommodation.

**Applicants do not apply directly to these queues.

Discretionary tenancies for family members or carers of Wandsworth Council tenants

In exceptional circumstances, the council may consider allocating council properties to eligible and qualifying family members or carers of Wandsworth Council tenants who have passed away or moved to receive care or support (for example, if they have moved to extra care housing or a care home).

Such applications are investigated and considered jointly by the area housing manager and senior officers in the assessment team on a case by case basis. Discretionary applications are considered for those living in Wandsworth Council housing only.

What size of property (number of bedrooms) do I require?

The size of property you are assessed as requiring will depend mainly upon the make up of your household e.g. how many people live in it, the number of children, their ages and sexes.

The following will apply in assessing the number of bedrooms required by an applicant:

Property size guidelines

Single person households

Generally, single person households will be assessed as requiring self-contained studio flat accommodation. However, the following will be assessed as requiring self-contained one-bedroom accommodation:

- single people aged 60 or over.
 - lone pregnant women and couples who are expecting their first child.
 - accepted homeless households consisting a single person or couple and one child who is younger than three years of age will, as long as they are not expecting a second child, be offered self-contained or one-bedroom accommodation.
- and
- single people with regular, established and demonstrable staying / visiting contact / access to their children following relationship breakdown, where it would be unreasonable to allocate a self-contained studio flat.

Other households

Thereafter one bedroom is required for:

- a couple.
- each unpartnered adult aged 21 years or more.
- each pair of adolescents aged 10-20 years of the same sex.
- each pair of children aged under 10 years regardless of sex.
- Where none of the above applies, a person aged 10-20 years will be paired with a child aged under 10 years of the same sex.
- Any remaining unpaired person will be allocated a separate bedroom.

These criteria may not be applied in specific circumstances where there are risk factors. Such decisions are taken by senior officers in the housing services team.

Notes

- (a) Other applicants requiring separate bedrooms for medical purposes (as recommended by the council's medical advisor) will be allocated separate bedrooms.
- (b) Where additional persons or family members are married or co-habiting they will be considered as a couple and assessed as requiring one bedroom more than the recorded needs of the main household.
- (c) Tenants moving through a mutual exchange may be allowed one extra bedroom.
- (d) Applicants are able to register for one or two bedrooms less than their assessed need, except where statutory overcrowding is likely to be caused.
- (e) A bathroom or shower room is defined as a separate room. A WC may be a room on its own or incorporated within a bathroom. Under the points scheme a maximum of 15 allocation points can be awarded for applicants sharing a bathroom and WC.
- (f) Single person households living in bedsit or studio accommodation are considered to be adequately housed unless they lack or share facilities.

Households requiring family-sized accommodation may be offered more than one unit of accommodation if the properties are so located as to enable the family to live together in practical terms.

Offers of accommodation

If we are considering making you an offer, you may be visited or contacted by an officer to discuss and verify the information you have provided on your application form and any additional information you may have provided since. We may also need to see any original documents in support of your application.

Offers of accommodation are made on condition that any existing council tenancy is given up.

We will normally make you only one suitable offer of housing (i.e. an offer which we think is suitable based on the information you have provided).

You will not normally be competing with other applicants when viewing council properties. We will advise you if you are invited to such a viewing. In these cases, where more than one applicant wants the property, we will offer it to the applicant with the highest priority.

Offers of council accommodation are made in writing. The offer letter will set out details (type and length) of the tenancy being offered, details of the property, the rent and the arrangements for viewing.

You should view the property promptly and let us know your decision by the date shown in the offer letter, otherwise the offer may be withdrawn and your failure to do so may be classed as a refusal and result in the cancellation of your application. If we nominate you to a housing association property, we will notify you in writing and the housing association will contact you to arrange a viewing and/or interview.

Formal offers of council sheltered accommodation will be made to a qualifying applicant following a viewing of the vacant accommodation and successful completion of the Independence Plan with a sheltered housing officer.

Consequences of refusing a suitable offer of housing

We aim, where possible, to meet applicants' area preferences and take into account any other relevant factors when we decide whether to offer a property but they may be overridden due to the supply and availability of accommodation.

If we do offer or nominate you to a property, you are advised to give the offer serious consideration even if it is not in one of your preferred areas or does not fully meet your preferences as, in accordance with the council's Housing Allocation scheme, **we will normally make applicants only one suitable offer (or nomination) of housing and, if you refuse an offer of suitable accommodation, your application will be cancelled.** For applicants on the homeless queue, refusal of a suitable offer may end the council's duty to provide temporary accommodation.

Furthermore, for a period of two years following your refusal of any offer of suitable accommodation, any application you make during that period to be registered on the council's housing queues will be refused unless there has been a material change in your circumstances so as to make the earlier offer clearly unreasonable in the light of your changed circumstances.

Accepting an offer

Once you accept an offer of accommodation, you will need to sign a tenancy agreement. This sets out the terms and conditions of your tenancy and its start date. This usually takes effect from the following Monday, on which date you become liable for the rent.

If you are offered and accept a council property, you will normally be given an introductory tenancy (unless you are transferring from a secure tenancy or an assured/assured shorthold tenancy with a private registered provider of social housing that has lasted over 12 months).

Introductory tenancies usually last 12 months (but may be shorter in certain circumstances). As long as you do not break any of the tenancy conditions during this time, you will automatically become a secure (secure periodic or flexible fixed term) tenant when the period for the introductory tenancy expires.

Other housing options for council and housing association tenants

Mutual exchange scheme: swap with another tenant anywhere in the UK

This scheme helps existing council or housing association tenants move to another home by swapping their properties with each other. You can swap homes provided both households agree to move, and you have each received written consent from your landlord before you move, which can only be refused on certain grounds.

Tenants who swap with an overcrowded tenant who lives in Wandsworth may also be entitled to an incentive cash payment. For more information, please contact the allocation team – see page 26.

To find someone to swap homes with, you can register for free with www.houseexchange.org.uk.

Free internet access is available in the housing office reception and local libraries. If you find a swap or would like further details, please contact the accommodation placement team.

Homefinder UK scheme

Homefinder UK is a scheme to help social housing tenants and accepted homeless households move from one part of the UK to another. Through the scheme landlords advertise available social housing (council and housing association) properties on www.homefinderuk.org and applicants can bid for (express an interest in) properties. Tenants can also find other tenants to swap with.

Wandsworth Council tenants and accepted homeless households can use the website for free. Further information about the scheme is available at www.homefinderuk.org.

Seaside and Country Homes scheme: Tenants aged 55 years and above

This scheme helps existing council or housing association tenants move to the coast or countryside. You must be 55 years old or over, be capable of independent living, and meet the eligibility criteria. Priority is usually given to tenants giving up a larger home.

To apply, complete an online registration form at www.housingmoves.org. Free internet access is available in the housing office reception and local libraries. If you are a Wandsworth Council tenant and need help to complete the online form please contact the allocation team (see page 26). If you are a housing association tenant, please contact your landlord for assistance.

For further information about the Seaside and Country Homes scheme (including how to apply if you are unable to apply online) please contact Housingmoves (08450 21 20 20, www.housingmoves.org) or your landlord.

If you are a Wandsworth Council tenant, please contact Housingmoves or the council's allocation team.

Housingmoves scheme: help for social housing tenants who want to move to another part of London

Housingmoves is a scheme run by the GLA (Greater London Authority) to help council and housing association tenants who live in London to move to other parts of London. Housing association tenants should contact their landlord if they need advice on the scheme.

To register for the Housingmoves scheme, you must:

- be a current council or housing association tenant with a secure or assured tenancy (i.e. not an introductory or probationary tenancy) of a property in London and, if you have a joint tenancy, you must make a joint application with the joint tenant;
- not have, or be part of a household containing individuals who have, an ongoing record of antisocial behaviour;
- have had a clear rent account for the last 12 months; and
- not be the subject of a Notice of Seeking Possession or a Notice to Quit.

When you are registered on the scheme your application will be placed into one of four bands. Applicants in band 1 have the highest priority and applicants in band 4 have lowest priority. If you meet the criteria for more than one of the bands you will be registered in the higher band. The bands are as follows:

Band 1 (highest priority): households who are underoccupying their current home (i.e. have more bedrooms than they need) and are willing to move to a property with fewer bedrooms*.

Band 2: households where the tenant or a household member is:

- In employment for at least 16 hours a week for the last six months.
or
- In training that leads directly to employment (e.g. an apprenticeship).

Band 3: you must be overcrowded in your current home and living in accommodation that is too small for your needs.

Band 4: you must be providing unpaid, voluntary care to a family member or friend who is not a member of your household and lives in a different borough.

Band 5: if none of the above bands applies to you then your application will be placed into band 5.

* Wandsworth Council tenants who move to a smaller home in Wandsworth or elsewhere may be eligible for a financial incentive and other assistance. For further information please contact the allocation team (see page 26).

To apply you will need to complete an online registration form at www.housingmoves.org.

Once your application has been assessed and approved, you will be able to view and bid for (i.e. express an interest in) properties that are advertised on the Housingmoves website www.housingmoves.org.

Your chances of being offered a tenancy of the properties you bid for will depend on who else has bid for the property, whether they are in a higher band than you and whether they have been registered on the scheme longer than you.

For further information about the Housingmoves scheme and to make an application please go to www.housingmoves.org.

Other options for moving out of Wandsworth and/or into private rented housing

We may be able to help if you are a Wandsworth Council tenant, a housing association tenant who lives in Wandsworth, or registered on the council's homeless queue and you are interested in moving out of the borough or into privately rented housing. For further information, please contact the housing assessment section (see page 26).

Home ownership: buy a home

The council runs various affordable home ownership schemes to assist with buying your first home. If you live or work in Wandsworth and are a council tenant or first-time buyer then contact the home ownership team (see page 26).

Your rights

Your right to confidentiality

All information you provide will be treated in the strictest confidence and will only be disclosed to third parties (e.g. your doctor) if it assists your application.

Your right to information

Under the Data Protection Act 1998, you have the right to see any information we hold about you. There is a fee for this service and you can find more information about this on the council's website:

www.wandsworth.gov.uk

Once you are registered for housing, you have a right to be informed of any major policy change which affects the housing queues.

You also have a right to request a copy of the council's housing allocation scheme, which is also available on the council's website:

www.wandsworth.gov.uk

In accordance with the Housing Act 1996 s166A(9) you have the right to request information to enable you to assess how your application is likely to be treated under the scheme including whether you fall within one or more of the groups entitled to reasonable preference and whether accommodation is likely to be allocated to you and, if so, how long this is likely to take.

You can also request that the council informs you of any decision about the facts of your application which is likely to be taken into account when considering whether to allocate accommodation.

Your right to request reviews

You have the right to request the council to review certain decisions made under the housing allocation scheme. These rights will be notified to you in any correspondence communicating a reviewable decision, with details of any timescales in which a review must be requested and the administrative arrangements for requesting a review.

Your right to complain

You have the right to be treated fairly and courteously, as do our staff. If you are not satisfied with the way your application has been handled, you have a right to complain. Details of how to complain can be found on the council's website. **www.wandsworth.gov.uk** and in the leaflet 'Suggestions and Complaints', available from all main service points.

Further information and contact details

Contacts

Wandsworth Council switchboard

Phone: (020) 8871 6840
Postal address: Housing and Regeneration Department
Town Hall, Wandsworth High Street, SW18 2PU
Visiting: Housing Reception
90 Putney Bridge Road, SW18 1HR
(opening hours 9am-4.30pm)

Housing assessment section

General enquiries regarding:

- General needs queue
- Homeless queue
- Homelessness prevention
- Finding private housing
- Older persons housing queue
- Council tenant transfer queue
- Under-occupation
- Physical disability queue
- Supported queue
- Social care queue

Phone: (020) 8871 6840 (9am-5pm)
Email: housingapplications@wandsworth.gov.uk

Allocation team

Mutual exchanges, Seaside and Country Homes scheme (for tenants aged 60-plus), Housingmoves and Homefinder schemes

Phone: (020) 8871 6840
Email: allocationteam@wandsworth.gov.uk

Home ownership team

Phone: (020) 8871 6016
Email: housesales@wandsworth.gov.uk

Information and leaflets are available on the website:

www.wandsworth.gov.uk/housing

If you have any questions about this booklet,
please phone (020) 8871 6840 or email
housingapplications@wandsworth.gov.uk

If you need it in a different format
(for example, large print) please phone
(020) 8871 6840

www.wandsworth.gov.uk/housing