



Top tips for tenants

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

Here are our top 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? Are there playgrounds and good schools nearby for the kids? 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 Council. 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 Council's property will be going. Ask specifically about washing machines, refrigerators, curtains etc.

3

Furnishings

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

Bills

It's worth asking what the usual bills are – gas, electricity, internet, water, waste collection, etc. It's no guarantee that yours will be the same, but at least you'll have a good indicator.

5

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? Visit a potential home at different times of day to really get a feel for the area, and if it's an apartment or block of flats, make sure you think about the neighbours above and below too.

6

Condition

Remember that you're accepting the property 'as seen' – so give it a good look over!

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 Council 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 Council will have expected you to do your research.

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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
- If it's been adapted for disability and this isn't applicable for you

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

8

Occupancy requirements

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

It is a valid reason for a swap to be declined 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 new tenancy agreement. Swappers (including you) have a legal right to pull out of a mutual exchange at any point before the agreement is signed.

If you're worried about not having time to do everything, sign the agreement 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 new tenancy agreement is signed.

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

Good luck with your search!

To get started, go to
www.homeswapper.ie