



Right to Exchange

You can arrange to swap or 'exchange' with another tenant. It does not have to be another Villages tenant; you can arrange a swap with another Housing Association, Council tenant or private tenant, but check what your rights would be if you accepted a tenancy with another landlord.

Villages will not normally refuse an application to exchange. There are however, some circumstances where it may be refused:

- If a court order has been made against the tenant or the exchange partner requiring them to give up possession of their home.
- Proceedings for possession have begun or a Notice of Seeking Possession has been served (Notice Requiring Possession for Starter Tenants).
- If your property is too big for the needs of the person you wish to swap with. However, the Association would allow the exchange to go ahead if it is only one bedroom larger than a family's needs based on our allocation standards.
- If the property would be too small for the needs of the person you wish to swap with.
- You cannot exchange if your property or the property you wish to move to was let as part of conditions of employment or forms part of, or is in the grounds of a non-housing building (e.g. a school).
- If the property is designed or adapted to suit the needs of a disabled person and if swapped, it would be occupied by someone who doesn't need this type of property.
- If the property is part of a group of properties which are let to people with special housing needs and a social service or special facility is provided near the property. For example, sheltered housing for the elderly.
- You cannot exchange if certain court orders are in force or legal action is pending for anti-social behaviour. This could be action against either the tenant or a person living with the tenant. Your Estate Management Officer can give you more information.

Conditions may be attached to the exchange if you or your exchange partner has arrears or is in breach of the conditions of tenancy. For example, we can make it a condition of the consent that arrears are cleared or that any breach is put right.

To apply for an exchange, please complete the forms at your local Villages Housing office.

Before an exchange, your Estate management Officer will visit your home to check if it is in good order, and ask you to sign to agree to move into the other property 'as seen'.

It is important for you to be aware that, if you exchange, you accept the property 'as seen'. This means that the Association will not:

- Reinststate/repair any alterations that have been made to the property
- Carry out any repairs that are not deemed to be fair wear and tear, e.g. replace any missing/damaged internal doors
- Carry out any decorating or provide materials.

You will accept responsibility for such items and, if you then leave the property at a later date, **YOU** will be responsible for these items, and **NOT** the person that you originally swapped with. This does not affect Villages' usual repairing responsibilities.

Moving to another part of the country

You may wish to exchange to a Council or Housing Association home outside the area. You can try to move to another part of the country by using one of a number of websites specialising in putting people in touch with potential exchange partners.

An example of such a website is: www.home-swap.co.uk

The same rules apply as "Exchanges".

Leaving Your Home

If you decide to leave your home, you should:

- Give 4 weeks' notice to Villages by filling in and signing a 'Notice of Termination' Form at your housing office. We will need to know your forwarding address, so we can forward any mail or money that is owed to you.
- Give the Council four weeks' notice that you intend to leave your home (for Council Tax purposes).

If you move without giving notice, you will be charged four weeks rent from the time we find out that you have gone.

Returning the keys

ALL your keys must be handed in. If we do not receive all the keys, a lock change will be carried out and you will be re-charged the cost.

Your keys must be handed in **BEFORE MIDDAY** on the **Monday** on which your tenancy ends. If this is not done, your tenancy will be extended for the extra weeks that you do not return your keys, and rent will be charged for the whole of these extra weeks.

Payment of rent

Don't forget to pay your outstanding rent before you move. Tenancies start on a Monday and end on a Sunday. Your last payment is due during the last week that you occupy the property and you are advised to pay any outstanding rent when you hand in your keys (**latest Monday at 12 noon**).

If you hand in your keys on Tuesday or later you will be charged an extra full week's rent.

Clearing your Home

Before returning the keys, make sure that:

- All furniture, carpets and belongings have been removed.
- All cupboards, sheds, loft spaces and outhouses have been emptied.
- No rubbish or unwanted items are left.
- Any bulky items will be removed by your local council by arrangement before the tenancy ends.

Knowsley – call 0151 443 2400

Oldham – call 0161 770 6644

Please note that, if any items are left behind once you have handed keys in, you will be charged the cost of removal.

Alterations you have carried out to the property

In many cases, any home improvements or alterations that you have carried out to the property, and must be left in good condition or working order when you leave and will become Villages' property.

In some cases, you may be able to take the items with you (such as a gas fire). However, you must replace whatever fitting was there before, make sure it is in good working order and make good any damage this may cause.

Warning: Only contractors registered by British Gas or CORGI can remove gas appliances because supply pipes must be properly sealed. If they are not properly sealed, legal action may be taken against you, as this is very dangerous.

Remember! Any costs incurred by Villages in replacing or repairing fittings, improvements or alterations left by you – will be recharged to you.

Tenants' repairs

You must make good any items that are your responsibility before you leave. If you don't, we will do the work and recharge you.

Meter readings

Before you leave, contact your Gas and Electricity suppliers to arrange for your meters to be read. They can often do this on the day that you leave, but will generally need at least two days notice.

Water supplies

On the day that you move, remember to turn off the water at the stop tap, as well as the gas and electric at the meters.

Dealing with rubbish

When you prepare to move home, you may decide to throw some things away. Do not leave large piles of rubbish or packed bins outside your home.