



Seaside & Country Homes

Guidance notes for applicants



Who can apply?

The Seaside & Country Homes scheme is open to households living in Council or Housing Association housing in Greater London where at least one member of the household is aged 60 or above. In cases where other members of the households are under 60 years of age they must be either the partner, joint tenant or registered carer of the lead applicant. We regret we are unable to consider applications where there are more than two persons on the application.

Applicants for the scheme will need to be nominated by their landlord and will need to complete an application form.

Unfortunately we are unable to accept applications from households where all members are younger than 60 years of age or where the lead applicant does not currently live in social housing.

You can apply by filling out an application form. These are available from your local council and from the housingmoves office.

Introduction to the scheme

The Seaside & Country Homes scheme offers housing opportunities away from London. The scheme's landlords manage approximately 3,500 bungalows and flats: Along the coast from Cornwall on the south west to Norfolk and Lincolnshire in the east; and, across the countryside from Dorset to Cambridgeshire. These properties are specifically designed for older people and are ideal for those wishing for a less hectic pace of life.

The properties have either one or two bedrooms and are managed by local Housing Associations. Rents vary depending on the size, location and services available.

Every year more than 250 households move home through the Seaside & Country Homes scheme. Priority is given to applicants who will free up the largest homes in accordance with local and national Government objectives.

Some London Boroughs will help people to move home by arranging removal costs or by offering assistance payments. Applicants may also be eligible for financial support offered through Under Occupation Schemes. If you feel you will need support to enable you to move then you must check whether your landlord offers such payments and whether you are eligible for them before applying for the scheme.

What to consider

Moving away from London and giving up a secure home is a big step. Once a move has taken place it is extremely difficult to return to a Council or Housing Association property in London. Quite simply the demand for social housing in the capital far outstrips supply. If a move back does become possible, it is quite likely to be to a different type of property to the one originally left behind.

If you are offered a move through the scheme it is important to be prepared for a different type of life. Many of our homes are in quiet cul-de-sacs or estates and are in much smaller places than London. Things you might take for granted in London might not always be available in the area you choose to move to. Also, please remember, there is a huge difference between staying in an area on holiday and choosing to spend your life there. It may be worth considering looking at areas before completing an application form as this will give you a good idea of what areas may be suitable for you. It is also important to consider that a move may mean leaving family and friends, support networks and familiar surroundings behind.

These considerations should be weighed up carefully against the improved quality of life a Seaside & Country Home may offer you. It is also important to note that as a Seaside & Country Homes tenant you would no longer have the "Right to Buy" as you will no longer be a council tenant.

How to apply

Application forms are available from your local council and from the Seaside & Country Homes office.

If you complete a paper form you will need to ask your landlord to sign the nomination slip at the end of the application and forward it to our office. If you complete an online application we will contact your landlord and ask them to authorise your application.

When completing the form it is important to complete all relevant questions. Applicants are advised to select as many areas that they are interested in moving to as possible so as to increase the chance of a move. A list of the areas where there are Seaside & Country Homes properties can be obtained from the housingmoves office. If you need help completing the form you can call the Seaside & Country Homes team on 08450 21 20 20.

Applications will be assessed upon receipt to ensure that eligibility criteria are met. Priority will be awarded according to the size of the property currently occupied. Priority is given to applications that will free up the largest homes simply because there is a large shortfall in the number of family sized homes available in London.

All applicants will be written to once assessment checks are complete. Applications will be refused if the household does not meet the eligibility criteria. If an application is received that has not been approved by their landlord then it will be returned to the applicant and only accepted once the landlord's approval has been given.

Applicants with the highest priority will be able to move quickest; applicants who have less priority may be advised to consider areas where there is less demand for a move.

Before deciding on whether to view home the applicant should be satisfied that they will be happy living there. For example, some properties do not allow pets; others are in remote areas where transport links are limited. The Seaside & Country Homes landlords are happy to answer questions regarding the property and

the new area before a tenancy is signed

If an offer to view a property is accepted then the applicants' details will be passed on to the relevant landlord who will call to arrange the viewing. If the applicant then refuses the opportunity to view or refuses the property after viewing it then it will be offered to the next applicant on the list and so on, until the property is let.

If an applicant refuses three property offers they will be invited to reconsider their application.

Applicants are reminded also that if their housing situation changes in any way, or their contact details change, then they should contact the Seaside & Country Homes team and let them know of the new arrangements. This is very important because if we cannot get in contact with an applicant then the chance to view a property, and maybe move home, will be missed.

What happens next

If an applicant accepts the offer of the tenancy of a Seaside & Country Homes property they will be asked to sign an Assured Tenancy Agreement. This may be different to the type of tenancy an applicant currently has and applicants are advised to check any differences with their current landlord.

Once a tenancy agreement has been signed by the applicant then (s)he becomes a tenant of a Seaside & Country Homes landlord. Applicants should contact their current landlord to notify them of their intention to end their tenancy. Some landlords will insist on the applicant serving a four-week notice period; Seaside & Country Homes staff may be able to intervene if this occurs.

If an applicant is receiving Housing Benefit then (s)he must make a new claim to the Local Authority where the new home is so that benefit entitlements can be reassessed and adjusted as appropriate. Many applicants who may not currently be eligible because of savings or private pensions may qualify when they move so it is worth considering an application.

Data Protection Act 1998

The information you put on the Seaside & Country Homes application form (called 'personal data' in the Act) will be put on the Seaside & Country Homes database and will be processed for the purpose of helping you move. Seaside & Country Homes may disclose your data to any person or organisation in accordance with the Act. This may include disclosing data to a prospective landlord, to your current landlord or both. Seaside & Country Homes may also use your data for its own market research purposes (but not for direct marketing)

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housingmoves

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