

- double-glazing or other window replacement or secondary glazing
- rewiring, or the provision of power and lighting or other electrical fittings (including smoke detectors)
- security measures (excluding burglar alarms).

Interior decoration (painting and wallpapering) **does not** qualify for compensation.

For more information, you can get a copy of the free “Your Right to Compensation for Improvements” leaflet from the Department for Communities and Local Government, or your area housing office. You can also read our leaflet “How to claim compensation”.

You should apply for compensation within 14 days of your tenancy ending.

The improvement should have been authorised in writing by us or by the Council (for improvements made before transfer of housing stock), and you will have to provide receipts for the work to support your claim.

Compensation can be paid for the materials used (not including appliances) and labour, but not if the labour was carried out by you.

Compensation will not be payable if you buy your home through the right to buy.

WHERE CAN I FIND OUT MORE?

- Our Lettings Team
Merlin Housing Society
Building 2, Riverside Court
Bowling Hill
Chipping Sodbury
BS37 6JX
Tel: 01454 868576
- The Council’s Housing Needs Team
South Gloucestershire Council
The Civic Centre
High Street
Kingswood
South Gloucestershire
BS15 9TR
Tel: 01454 865382
- Your area housing office

WHAT IF I’M NOT HAPPY WITH THE SERVICE I HAVE RECEIVED?

We want to know when we get things wrong so we can make sure we get them right the next time. If you think you haven’t received the best service from us, please let us know. There is a range of ways you can make a complaint, and more information is available in our leaflet “How to make a complaint or give feedback”.

We want to be an organisation that treats everyone fairly. It is vital that you let us know if you feel you have been treated differently by one of our staff because of your gender, race or ethnicity, age, sexuality or disability.

The information in this leaflet is also available in other languages, in large print, Braille or on audiotape. Please contact your area housing office if you need any of these services.



Merlin Housing Society

Building 2 | Riverside Court | Bowling Hill | Chipping Sodbury | South Gloucestershire BS37 6JX

www.merlinhs.co.uk

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How to change or swap your Merlin home





How to change or swap your Merlin home

There are several ways you can move from one of our properties to another, or to one belonging to a different housing association or council.

TRANSFERS

If you are an assured tenant and you feel the size and type of the property you live in is not suitable for your needs, you can apply to transfer to another that is bigger or smaller.

You will be assessed by the Council's Housing Needs team using a points system based on your level of need.

If the size and type of the property you live in is not suitable for your needs, you will be awarded points accordingly. Extra points may be awarded for medical and social reasons.

In exceptional circumstances a transfer may be granted in cases of racial or serious harassment, but only if the application is supported by the police, your housing officer or some other relevant agency.

To apply for a transfer:

- complete a transfer application form, available from any area housing office or Council One Stop Shop. Ask for a Medical Request form if you are applying on health grounds
- return the forms to: **Housing Needs, South Gloucestershire Council, The Civic Centre, High Street, Kingswood, South Gloucestershire, BS15 9TR**
- the Council will process your application, and if it is accepted you will be sent a letter telling you the number of points you have been awarded and a transfer registration number

You should quote the registration number every time you contact the Council to ask about your application

The Council will nominate you to another suitable property once you are at the top of the points list and when an appropriate property becomes available

If you are breaking the terms of your tenancy agreement your application to transfer will be suspended until you comply with your tenancy conditions. This includes tenants who owe rent or some other housing debt.

Tell the Council as soon as your circumstances change so that your records can be kept up to date.

INCENTIVES FOR MOVING TO A SMALLER HOME

We offer an incentive package worth up to £3,000 for people moving to smaller properties. Contact your area housing office to find out more.

MUTUAL EXCHANGES

A mutual exchange is a swap of homes between two or more tenants. The other tenant/s may rent a council or housing association property and may live outside South Gloucestershire. To qualify for a mutual exchange you must be an assured non-shorthold tenant, you must not be in breach of your tenancy conditions and you must have our permission to exchange.

You can get a form to register for a mutual exchange from your area housing office or the Lettings Team. Complete the form and return it to the area housing office and your details will be entered on a register.

A copy of the register is held at all area housing offices and is available for you to look at to find another tenant to swap with. Once you have found something suitable, contacted the other tenant directly, viewed the property and decided to exchange, you must complete a mutual exchange form and return it to your area housing office. The tenant you intend to swap with must also contact their landlord and fill out a form.

If your application is accepted we will arrange to visit your home to check that it is in good order and that you have not made any unauthorised alterations. If your home is in poor condition or you have made unauthorised alterations, you will be asked to rectify the problem at your own expense before permission for a mutual exchange is granted.

You must not carry out a mutual exchange without the agreement of all the landlords involved or before all the relevant legal documentation has been completed. You should also note that if you do swap your home with another tenant by mutual exchange, you must accept their property 'as seen'. We will not accept any responsibility for repairs immediately after the exchange.

When you exchange properties, you also exchange tenancies. This means that you take over the tenancy agreement of the person you are swapping with, and they take over yours.

You should make sure that you are happy with the tenancy agreement you will be taking over. This is particularly important if you were previously a tenant of South Gloucestershire Council before the transfer to Merlin Housing Society, because you have extra rights. If you swap with another Merlin resident who didn't transfer from the Council or with someone from another Housing Association, you will probably lose those extra rights. The extra rights include, for example, the right to buy.

HOMESWAPPER

HOMESWAPPER is a UK-wide register of council and housing association tenants who want to swap homes. To register on the scheme you must complete a HOMESWAPPER form online. You can find the form at:

www.homeswapper.co.uk

Registration can only be done online. Registration is free although it is possible that a small charge may be levied some time in the future.

Once HOMESWAPPER has found a suitable swap partner you must contact them direct to arrange to view each others' homes. If you agree to swap homes you must have our permission before an exchange takes place.

WHAT DO I NEED TO DO WHEN I MOVE OUT?

You should leave your home in the same condition as when you moved in. The less time that we have to spend cleaning out a property, the quicker the next tenant can move into their new home.

Make sure that you:

- remove all your kitchen appliances, like fridges and freezers
- remove showers above baths and other non-standard fixtures if they were fitted during your tenancy, and return the plumbing to the state it was when you moved in
- clear and dispose of all rubbish, along with any unwanted personal possessions.

We will charge you if we have to clear the property after you leave.

RIGHT TO COMPENSATION FOR IMPROVEMENTS

If you end your tenancy, you may be eligible for compensation for improvements you have made to your home on or after 1 April 1994.

These improvements are the installation of new:

- bath or shower, wash-hand basin
- toilet
- kitchen sink and work surfaces for preparing food
- storage cupboards in bathroom or kitchen
- central heating, hot water boilers and other types of heating
- thermostatic radiator valves
- pipe, water tank or cylinder insulation
- loft and cavity wall insulation
- draught-proofing of external doors or windows