

Seaside & Country Homes Scheme Guidance Notes for Applicants

What is the scheme?

The Seaside and Country Homes Scheme offers housing opportunities away from London. The scheme's landlords manage approximately 3,200 bungalows and flats in the following areas:

Cornish coast
Norfolk
Lincolnshire
Dorset
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 around 300 households move home through the Seaside and Country Homes scheme. Priority is given to applicants who will free up the largest homes in accordance with local and national Government objectives.

Who can apply?

The scheme is open to single people or couples living in Council or Housing Association accommodation in Greater London where at least one partner is aged 60 or above.

We are unable to accept applications from single people or couples where the lead applicant is under 60 years or does not currently live in social housing.

How to apply

Contact the Mobility team for an application form.

When completing the form it is important to complete all relevant questions. Applicants are advised to select as many areas as possible to increase the chance of a move. A list of the areas where there are Seaside and Country Homes properties is available on the website.

Send your completed application form to

Mobility Team
Department for adult services and housing
Taberner House
Park Lane
Croydon, CR9 1DH.

If you need help completing the form you can call the Housing Mobility Team on 020 8726 6100.

What happens next?

Once we receive your completed application form we will assess it to ensure that you meet the eligibility criteria.

Priority will be awarded according to the size of the property currently occupied. Priority is given to applications who will free up the largest homes – this is because there is a large shortfall in the number of family sized homes available in London.

We will write to you once assessment checks are complete.

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 the home you should be satisfied that you will be happy living there and that the property will meet your needs. For example, some properties do not allow pets; others are in remote areas where transport links are limited. The Seaside and Country Homes landlords will be happy to answer questions regarding the property and the new area before a tenancy is signed

If you accept an offer to view, your details will be passed on to the relevant Housing Association. They will call to arrange the viewing.

If your housing situation changes in any way, or your contact details change, you should let us know. This is very important because if your contact details are not up to date you could miss an offer of a property.

We may be able to assist you financially with:

- disconnection and reconnection of gas, electricity and telephone
- removal costs
- travel costs to view properties
- you may also be eligible for a special transfer payment if you move to a smaller home

What to consider

Moving away from London and giving up a secure home is a big step. Once you have moved 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 the 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. 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 and Country Home may offer you.

It is also important to note that as a Seaside and Country Homes tenant you will not have the "Right To Buy" your property.

What happens if I am offered a property?

If you accept the offer of the tenancy of a Seaside and Country Homes property you will be asked to sign an Assured Tenancy Agreement. This may be different to the type of tenancy you currently have and you are advised to check any differences with your current landlord.

Once you have signed the tenancy agreement then you become a tenant of a Seaside and Country Homes landlord. You should contact your London landlord to notify them of your intention to end your tenancy. Some landlords will insist on you serving a four-week notice period. Seaside and Country Homes staff may be able to intervene if this occurs.

If you are receiving Housing Benefit you must make a new claim to the Local Authority where your new home is so that benefit entitlements can be reassessed and adjusted as appropriate. If you are not currently eligible for Housing Benefit because of savings or private pensions, you may qualify when you move so it is worth considering an application.

Data Protection Act 1998

The information you put on the Seaside and Country Homes application form (called 'personal data' in the Act) will be put on the Seaside and Country Homes database and will be processed for the purpose of helping you move. Seaside and Country Homes may disclose your data to any person or organisation for the purpose of where the Act allows disclosure. Seaside and Country Homes may also use your data for its own market research purposes (but not for direct marketing).
