
I am at risk – can I get help to move?

A management transfer may be considered on an **exceptional basis** for households who are at risk of harm from someone who does not live in the same home. This is always considered as a **last resort** after all other options to resolve the risks have been explored.

It is often possible to mitigate any risks by taking preventative action, and this is always our preferred option. We have a specialist anti-social behaviour team who have the tools and powers to act to protect any resident at risk. We also work closely with our partners in the Council and commissioned services with the aim to keep our residents safe at home.

We also work closely with the police to ensure risks are managed effectively.

Management transfers are not appropriate to deal with issues such as repairs, damp and mould, and pest infestations. Such cases will be managed under different processes.

In what circumstances might a management transfer be considered?

We may consider this an option if the tenant or member of the household is fleeing actual or threatened violence and/or harassment but only if:

- ▶ all other rehousing routes have been explored (such as moving via another priority need waiting list or exploring a mutual exchange), and only if
- ▶ the household can be re-housed safely in Westminster in an area deemed to be safe. It is highly unlikely that any household at risk will be offered alternative accommodation within the area where they currently reside.

What is the process?

If the housing service is made aware of a high risk to a tenant or member of their household we will arrange for a housing officer to review whether the case meets the threshold for a management transfer. The housing officer will:

- ▶ Make contact with the tenant to get full details of the risk.
- ▶ Complete a “Management Transfer” referral form with the tenant. We will ask for details such as any police reports, known as “CAD” numbers, and any other information to independently confirm the risks.
- ▶ Ask the tenant to give us consent to discuss the risks with our partners in the Council and police, and with any other agencies supporting them.

The final decision is made by a Panel of senior officers.

How is risk determined?

Each case is assessed on a case by case basis. In the vast majority of cases we will ask the police for an independent risk assessment. There may be some cases – for example those involving victims of domestic abuse – where the tenant or member of the household does not feel confident to report all matters to the police. In these situations we will carry out our own risk assessment.

What happens if the risks are so great that the household cannot be safely rehoused in Westminster?

In such cases the City Council will not be able to assist with re-housing as the vast majority of our stock is within the Council boundary. Households facing high risks in the whole of Westminster will be given advice on alternative housing options and signposted to get independent legal advice. In most cases this will mean making a homeless application to another borough away from the risk.

What is offered if a case is approved?

In approved cases the tenant must complete a transfer application form and will then be placed in the “pressing needs priority group”. All approved cases are kept under review.

How many offers will the tenant get?

One “like to like” offer is made of an alternative property in a safe area. If for example a household is in a two bed flat the offer will be of another two bed flat in an area deemed safe via risk assessment. We cannot guarantee that the property offered will have the same amenities, such as a balcony or garden. The aim of the offer is to address high risk and ensure the household is safe.

What happens if the household is overcrowded?

If the household is overcrowded by two bedrooms or more an offer of larger accommodation will be offered. For example, if the household is in a 2-bed property but are a 4-bed need the ‘larger’ property offered will be a 3-bed. All offers of accommodation are dependent on the available supply at the time.

Management transfer moves are made to resolve risk. We have a limited supply of larger properties and therefore cannot assist with moves to manage overcrowding except in the circumstances detailed above.

What happens if the household is in a property too large for their needs?

In these situations the tenant will be required to downsize to appropriately sized accommodation by making use of the cash incentive scheme.

What happens if an offer is refused?

If an offer is unreasonably refused the application is closed, and the “pressing needs” priority is removed. If a household was registered on another priority need list (for example the overcrowded list) before being placed in this category they may, if still applicable, be placed back on that list from the original date they were registered.

What happens if the risks are so high that the household cannot stay in their current accommodation until an offer is made?

We can arrange emergency housing in exceptional cases of very high risk for a limited period. This is likely to be hotel or temporary accommodation outside Westminster.

Can a tenant appeal a Panel decision?

Any appeal of a decision by the Panel will only be considered if there is new evidence to support the referral, in which case a new referral will be considered.

Otherwise, any complaints by residents whose requests have been turned down must be made through the complaints process.

