

Lack of space at home



St Albans
City & District Council

Housing Services
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There is a high demand for housing in the St Albans area and a limited number of properties available. This means that it may take a long time to move to larger accommodation if you are overcrowded.

You may want to consider looking for a mutual exchange. A mutual exchange is when two or more tenants want to swap homes. As there is a high demand for social housing, this is often a quicker way for you to move to a suitable property. The easiest way to find a swap with another tenant is by using [Homeswapper.co.uk](https://www.homeswapper.co.uk) or scanning the QR code below. It is free to register and you will be able to view other people's properties.

Living in an overcrowded house can be difficult and affect everyone in the family. If you are in this situation, here are some ideas to think about and some information to help.



SCAN ME

Make the best use of the space that you have by decluttering your home.

If you are overcrowded it is important not to have items that you don't need taking up space in your home.

When having a clear out, start with a small task, such as clearing a cupboard, and build up from there. Items that are no longer needed can be sold, recycled, or donated to charity. Declutter regularly to make best use of the space available.

Think: Do you need it? Is it broken?
Does it fit? Do you like it?



Freeing up space

Think about your furniture and how you use your rooms. This will be a personal decision based on your circumstances, but here are some suggestions:



- Use bunk beds instead of single beds if your children are old enough.
- If your living room is needed as a sleeping space, use a sofa bed or futon.
- Futons are also a good way to free up space in bedrooms. Use during the day and early evening for study / play then convert to a bed at night.
- Use space under beds. Shallow boxes will fit under the bed to store things like clothes and spare bedding.
- Make use of walls and under staircase space. Shelving is a good way to keep the home decluttered and frees up much needed floor space.
- Desks, tables and chairs that fold can free up space when not in use.
- Use hanging laundry bags for storage and stackable boxes to store small items.
- If you have safe loft space use it to store items that are not used frequently e.g. Christmas decorations, luggage, or painting and decorating equipment.



Control condensation

There is always moisture in the air even if you can't see it. If the air gets colder it can't hold all that moisture and tiny drops of water appear on hard surfaces, this is called condensation.



When people are living in overcrowded conditions there are more likely to be problems caused by condensation.

Some ordinary daily activities produce moisture very quickly. You can reduce this by:

- Covering pans when cooking and turning the heat down.
- Drying washing outdoors on a line, or putting it in the bathroom with the door closed and the window open, or an extractor fan on.
- Venting any tumble dryer outdoors, unless it is the condensing type.
- Not using paraffin heaters and portable flue-less bottled gas heaters, as these put a lot of moisture into the air.
- Ventilating your home to remove moisture by keeping a small window ajar when the house is occupied.
- Ventilating kitchens and bathrooms when in use by opening the window or by using an extractor fan.
- Closing kitchen and bathroom doors when these rooms are in use, to prevent moisture reaching other rooms.
- Avoiding putting too much in wardrobes and cupboards, so that air can still circulate.



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