

SEVENOAKS DISTRICT COUNCIL PRIVATE SECTOR LETTINGS SCHEME

Q. WHAT IS THE PRIVATE SECTOR LETTINGS SCHEME?

A. The Private Sector Lettings Scheme is an initiative created by Sevenoaks District Council to work in partnership with private landlords and agents. The Council recognises that it is often difficult to find accommodation when you are on a low income or claiming benefits. The aim of the Private Sector Lettings Scheme is to assist single people and families access private rented housing by providing financial assistance through the Deposit Bond Guarantee Scheme and the Rent in Advance Scheme. To qualify for financial assistance under the Private Sector Lettings Scheme, applicants must have to leave their current home, be on a low income or benefit and have a connection with the Sevenoaks area.

Q. WHAT IS THE DEPOSIT BOND SCHEME?

A. This scheme provides a bond to landlords of up to one month's rent, as a replacement for a cash deposit to enable privately rented accommodation to be secured. A deposit bond is an understanding by Sevenoaks District Council to underwrite the cost of any damage caused during the first six months of the tenancy (including fair wear and tear) up to the equivalent of one month's rent. During the first six months of the tenancy, the tenant will have to save up the amount of the bond and pay this to the landlord when the bond expires. An inventory and schedule of condition will be drawn up and agreed by all parties prior to the start of the tenancy. Should there be the need for the landlord to claim against the bond a Housing Officer will investigate before any funds are released. If the claim is upheld, the Council will pay the landlord or appointed contractor directly. Any claim paid out by the Council for damages will be recovered from the tenant.

Q. WHAT IS THE RENT IN ADVANCE SCHEME?

A. This scheme provides an interest free loan to cover one month's rent in advance to enable the private rented accommodation to be secured. If the tenant needs to claim housing benefit, housing benefit can be used to repay part of the loan. If you are working, then an arrangement to repay the Council will need to be made.

Following this initial payment by the Council, all other rental payments should be made by the tenant or housing benefit, as with any tenancy.

Q. WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

A. If you wish to apply for assistance under the Deposit Bond or Rent in Advance Schemes please contact the Duty Housing Officer at Sevenoaks District Council on 01732 227438 or 01732 227373 to request an application form. Alternatively, if you have a property you wish to rent and would consider working with the scheme, please contact the Housing Officer (Private Sector Lettings) on one of the above telephone numbers for further information.

The Council does not offer a management service but can provide general advice on housing and benefit issues for landlords and tenants. To find out more, or to arrange an informal chat, please contact:

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