



# Private Renting and the Local Housing Allowance

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[www.molevalley.gov.uk](http://www.molevalley.gov.uk)

## **Private Renting and the Local Housing Allowance**

### **Finding a property**

Properties can be found in letting agents and on the internet. You can also find them in newspapers, shop windows and sometimes on the information boards in major supermarkets.

### **Costs involved**

If you find a property through a letting agent they may charge a refundable holding deposit (maximum one week's rent). If however you find a property through a landlord directly you can often avoid this cost. The other costs that are involved are the deposit, (maximum 5 week's rent), the first month's rent (otherwise known as the rent in advance) and the monthly rent.

### **Deposit**

This is usually the equivalent of 5 weeks rent. In some circumstances the Housing team can assist with a deposit bond. If you would like to investigate this further please speak to a Housing Options officer.

### **Rent in Advance**

This is the first months rent and is payable on the first day of the tenancy. If you are having difficulty raising this amount please speak to a housing options officer.

## **Rent and the Local Housing Allowance**

Your monthly rent will be arranged before you move into the tenancy. If you are eligible for assistance with your rent from Housing Benefit or the housing element of universal credit, you will need to be aware of the local housing allowance (LHA) for the size of property that you are entitled to. To find out how many bedrooms your household is entitled to under the LHA, either contact the Housing or

Housing Benefit departments at the Council or access the room calculator online at:

<http://www.molevalley.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=17508>

A leaflet regarding the LHA is available from the Housing Benefit department at the Council. The Local Housing Allowances will be reviewed on an annual basis for all new tenancies.

The Mole Valley District is divided into two Local Housing Allowance areas:

**The North of the area incorporates Leatherhead.**

**The South incorporates Dorking.**

Please ask at the Housing benefit or the Housing department for the current LHAs for each area.

To find out the LHA for a particular property either contact the local Council for that property or enter the postcode at:

<https://lha-direct.voa.gov.uk/search.aspx>

When you move into a tenancy you will need to complete a Housing Benefit form or universal credit application online, if you are on a low income or benefits.

The amount of Housing Benefit or universal credit housing element that you will be entitled to will depend on the size of property that your household need and the amount of income and capital that you have. A Benefit calculator is available online: <https://www.entitledto.co.uk/>

Under LHA, any assistance that you may get with your rent will be paid directly to you. It will then be your responsibility to ensure that you forward the rent to your landlord. In some circumstances the rent can be paid directly to the landlord. If you have any questions about the circumstances under which the rent can be paid directly to the landlord please contact the Housing team or through the online journal of universal credit. Any change in your personal circumstances can affect your entitlement to Housing Benefit or Universal Credit housing element. Please ensure that you inform of any changes in your circumstances as soon as they occur.

## **Guarantors**

In some circumstances a guarantor may be requested. This is someone who will be prepared to underwrite the tenancy. If the rent is not paid for any reason then the landlord can ask the guarantor to pay the rent on behalf of the tenant. Most guarantors will be expected to have an income of over £20,000 per annum and will often be subject to a credit check before the landlord will accept them.

## **Final Points**

Never sign a tenancy until you have read it through thoroughly and are sure that you can afford to move into the property.

Mole Valley housing options team is happy to read through any tenancy agreements for you prior to you signing them.

## More Information

<b>You are entitled to a</b>
<b>Bedroom property</b>

<b>The Current LHA for the South of the area is</b>

<b>The Current LHA for the North of the area is</b>

## Notes

Mole Valley District Council, Pippbrook, Dorking, RH4 1SJ

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