



Rent Deposit Scheme

A Guide for Prospective Tenants

May 2018



www.molevalley.gov.uk

What is the Home choice Plus scheme?

The Home choice Plus scheme is where Mole Valley District Council assists potential tenants with a deposit bond for a property in the private rented sector.

What is a bond?

A bond is a letter of promise to a landlord from Mole Valley District Council on behalf of the tenant. This is instead of providing the landlord with a monetary amount.

How much will the bond cover?

It will cover the equivalent of a five weeks rent. Landlords also have the option of extra one months' rent, which is part of the damage and arrears guarantee. This will only apply, if they agree to grant an initial fixed term tenancy of twelve months, which may have a six months' break clause inserted.

What will the bond cover?

The bond will cover any damages to the property known to have been caused during the tenancy or any rent arrears.

Am I eligible for a rent deposit bond?

A deposit bond is only available to certain households who have been able to demonstrate that they have no means of funding a cash deposit themselves. The deposit bond scheme is financially limited and some households will be prioritized above others. To see if you are eligible for assistance, you must first have a housing options interview with one of the housing options team. At that interview your current housing situation will be assessed. You will be asked to provide proof of any savings, income and identification. You will need to bring with you to the interview two months' bank statements, three salary slips and any benefit award letters or evidence of any benefits that you are receiving. You must have no other means of being able to fund a deposit yourself (e.g. family / friends / employer / bank loan). Households with a known history of rent arrears or anti-social behaviour may not be eligible for the scheme.

Can the Housing department help me find a property?

In some circumstances we may be told of a property to rent. Should this happen we will nominate a household to the property depending on their circumstances. It is therefore important that you do not rely on us finding a property for you and instead actively search yourself.

What happens when I find somewhere I would like to rent?

If you find somewhere that you would like to rent you must let your housing options officer know. If the rent is within the Local Housing Allowance rates the private rented sector officer will contact the landlord and arrange to view the property and check that all safety certificates and energy performance

certificates are in order. If the property is considered to be in good condition, has all relevant certificates and is affordable you and the landlord will be advised that we are prepared to support the tenancy.

How does the landlord get the bond?

A bond letter is issued by the Council. Before the bond letter is sent you will be asked to sign a bond form. This form states that you will let the Council know if you are asked to leave or choose to leave the property. It also confirms that if at the end of the tenancy we need to pay money to the landlord you understand that we will recover these monies from you.

What happens after I have moved into the property?

After you have moved into the property, you will be visited by a tenancy sustainment officer. The officer will check that you have moved into the property and assess how often you will be visited. The sustainment visits are compulsory and should you not comply with the visits your landlord will be informed. The visits give the officer an opportunity to ensure that the property is being cared for and gives you an opportunity to raise any issues or concerns that you have with the tenancy. We will visit the property during the first year of the tenancy. After this time further visits will be considered on a discretionary basis.

What happens at the end of the fixed term of the tenancy?

If the tenancy continues after the fixed term our bond promise will also continue. If the tenancy ends, and the landlord wishes to claim some of the money from the deposit bond, we will want to see proof of any arrears or damages before we pay against the deposit. You will be advised of any claims being made against the deposit, so that you are aware of them. It is very important that you complete an inventory at the beginning of the tenancy (including where possible photographic evidence) as this can then be referred to should any claims for damages be made. Prior to the tenancy ending the tenancy sustainment officer will visit you at the property to carry out an 'Exit meeting' - this is basically a check-list as to what condition you must leave the property in on the day you leave.

What should I do if I am interested in applying for a deposit bond?

Contact the Housing Team to arrange a Housing Options Interview. They can be contacted on **01306 885001** and asking for a member of the Housing Team or email housing@molevalley.gov.uk

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