

# **Information for Landlords on the Rent Bond Scheme**

HS10 Rent Bond Scheme  
Information for Landlords  
Date Reviewed: March 2018

## What is the Rent Bond Scheme?

The Rent Bond Scheme is run by Hart District Council to support the development and sustainment of lasting tenancies for both landlords and tenants. The Council offers landlords and tenants a range of support services to help people who are living on a low wage or are receiving benefits to secure accommodation in the private sector. By becoming part of the scheme landlords can gain support to meet their own needs and will also be helping people who are homeless or facing homelessness.

The Council offers landlords a rent bond on behalf of our clients and can also offer the first month's rent in advance if required. Once the tenancy is in place, the Council then continues to support tenants to enable them to maintain their tenancies.

The Council can also advise landlords on changes in the law and upcoming legislation, handle all the paperwork including the inventory and act as a mediator if disputes arise. We interview and assess all tenants before approaching any landlord and work hard to match tenants to suitable properties.

The Rent Bond Scheme can offer you as a landlord:

- The chance to let your property promptly and reduce property voids
- A written bond guarantee in place of a deposit which does not have to be protected under the tenancy deposit protection legislation
- Housing Benefit liaison and assistance with applications for direct payments where appropriate
- Free advice and information, including forums, newsletters and access to an accreditation scheme
- Free tenancy agreements and inventories for your property
- Support to help ensure that tenancies last
- A professional service at no cost.

## How do you, as a landlord, benefit?

Hart District Council will make the following commitments to you as a landlord:

- We will vet prospective tenants
- We will provide our tenants with pre-tenancy training on their responsibilities
- We will help set up your tenant's claims for local housing allowance, apply for direct payment of rent for you when appropriate and will follow up any queries that may arise
- We will give tenants support and advice to help increase their knowledge and experience of being a tenant in the private rented sector
- We can provide financial security in the form of a rent bond
- We can help sort out the necessary paperwork for the tenancy
- We can provide advice on tenancy matters and changes in the law to help you keep up to date with housing legislation
- We will provide you with a point of contact from the start of the tenancy
- If problems do arise, we can provide assistance to both you as the landlord and your tenant to help get it back on track, or to end the tenancy as smoothly as possible for both parties.

## What does Hart District Council ask of you?

In return for the services offered above we ask that you make the following commitments to us:

- To meet the service's standards for property fitness and safety (including annual safety checks of all gas appliances – copy of the certificate to be provided to the Council)
- To use the free independent professional inventory service provided by the Council for the check in and check out of the tenanted property unless you have access to your own independent regulated inventory scheme
- To let to people receiving benefits or on a low income
- To work with us in trying to resolve any problems.
- To inform us before taking any action to bring the tenancy to an end
- To uphold your responsibilities as a private sector landlord.

### Claims procedure

With the Councils Bond Agreement it will indemnify the Landlord up to a maximum sum of £1600 or six weeks rent (whichever is the lesser sum) saving the landlord from having to put the deposit into a deposit scheme.

In the event the Landlord wishes to lodge a claim through the Bond Agreement, the landlord must notify the Council in writing of that claim within 14 working days of the tenant vacating the property or at the expiry of the tenancy with two quotes per item of work.

The Council shall make a decision within 14 days of receipt of full written particulars of the claim and shall notify the landlord and when agreed payment will be made.

### How to claim at the end of a tenancy

In the event the landlord wishes to lodge a claim pursuant to this Agreement the landlord must notify the Council in writing of that claim within 14 working days of the tenant vacating the property or at the expiry of the tenancy granted pursuant to the Tenancy Agreement, whichever shall occur first (and howsoever arising).

The landlord will be eligible to submit a claim in respect of:

- accidental or criminal damage to the property, damage caused by the tenant to the property, including damage to any communal areas which is directly attributable to acts of the tenant unless covered by household or any other type of insurance applying to the property
- loss of rent
- clearance and cleaning costs attributable to the tenant's neglect.

For the avoidance of doubt a claim WILL NOT be considered in respect of the following items:

- unpaid bills
- personal debts owed by the tenant to the landlord
- fair wear and tear to the property (and in considering what fair wear and tear is in any particular case, regard will be had to the inventory applicable to the property, any photographs taken at the commencement of the tenancy granted pursuant to the Tenancy Agreement and the length of time the tenant has been in residence at the property).

The landlord shall allow the Landlord Liason Officer or any other Officer authorised by the Council access to the property at all reasonable times for the purpose of assessing any damage to the property upon the Council giving not less than five working days notice to the landlord.

The Council will not pay the value of any claim to the landlord (regardless of its merit) if the landlord has allowed a new tenant (or anyone else) to access the property or to occupy the property prior to an inspection of the property by the Landlord Liason Officer.

If the Council determines the landlord's claim to be valid and

communicates this to the landlord in writing the landlord may upon receipt of that written confirmation immediately proceed with the carrying out of any repair works and upon completion of those works the Council shall pay the value of the approved claim within 30 days subject to the landlord producing relevant receipts for all costs incurred.

A claim for loss of rent will only be considered by the Council if the landlord has provided evidence that rent has remained unpaid for 7 days in the absence of a prior arrangement and evidence in the form of a valid rent book or rent statement showing how and when arrears have occurred.

## Terms and conditions

Hart District Council's Rent Bond Scheme aims to match suitable tenants and landlords, and to support the development of successful and long lasting tenancies. However, the Council does not make any warranty or representation as to the suitability or otherwise of any tenant who is introduced through the scheme. Nor can the Council make any representation as to the suitability of the property, its general safety and state of the property. Through the work of the scheme, the Council will strive to ensure that problems are minimized, but the Council cannot take responsibility for the conduct or behaviour of tenants or landlords once the tenancy has been agreed. The selection of the tenants must ultimately remain the responsibility of the landlord.

Hart District Council and its Rent Bond Scheme aim to help all eligible people regardless of ethnicity, gender, age, sexuality, disability or religion. By joining the Rent Bond Scheme, landlords will be expected to follow this policy.

## Service standards

Hart District Council's Housing Service has a comprehensive set of Customer Service Standards which we aim to deliver to all our customers. For further information please refer to our leaflet 'Customer Service Standards' which is available on our website. As a landlord, you can also expect us to deliver the following customer service standards:

- If we are unavailable to take your call we will respond within 1 working day.
- We will respond to e-mails within 1 working day.
- We will inspect your property within 2 weeks.
- We will carry out an inventory within 2 weeks.
- We aim to let your property within 1 month.
- At the end of a tenancy we will deal with any claims against the Rent Bond Scheme within 14 working days.

## What do you need to do next?

Hart District Council wants to work with as many landlords and letting agents in the local areas as possible.

If you would like more information, or you wish to discuss the service in more detail, or you are ready to offer your property to be used in conjunction with the scheme please contact the Landlord Liaison Officer at Hart District Council on **01252 774420**. The service is available Monday to Thursday from 8.30am until 4.30pm and on Friday from 8.30am until 4.00pm.

“ **We work with our tenants and landlords to make sure the end of the tenancy is as hassle free as possible. We conduct a pre check out with our tenants and inspect the property at the end of the tenancy with the check out clerk.**

**We invite landlords to attend so they can see if work needs to be done and provide two quotes to the council promptly so work can begin.**

**We aim to work with the landlord to resolve the claim and reduce the void to enable another tenant to move in as soon as possible. ”**

*Hart District Council's Landlord Liaison Officer*

## Contact details

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