

Further information

Please contact

Housing Options Team
Housing Options Centre
Phoenix House
1 King Street (public access via Welford Place)
Leicester
LE1 6RN

Tel: 0116 252 8707

web:
leicester.gov.uk/housingoptions

email:
housingoptions@leicester.gov.uk



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Private
Sector
Lettings

Housing
Options
Centre

**We can
guarantee
up to £400 as a
deposit on
private rented
accommodation**

Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme

for singles and childless couples



What is the Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme?

The Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme is designed to help single people or childless couples on low incomes or in receipt of benefits to find private rented accommodation in the Leicester area. The Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme can do this by guaranteeing a deposit with a private landlord.

Who can apply under the scheme?

To use the scheme you must:

- be living within the Leicester City boundary.
- be single or a childless couple and must not qualify for council housing as a homeless person(s).
- be on a low income, or in receipt of, or entitled to claim income support, job seekers' allowance or housing benefit. Proof of wages or entitlement will be required.
- be capable of keeping a tenancy and must understand the responsibilities of being a tenant.

How much is the Rent Deposit Guarantee?

- The Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme will guarantee up to a maximum of £400.
- No money is paid to the landlord at the beginning of the tenancy, instead the landlord and the tenant will enter into a legal agreement with the Council. If, at the end of the tenancy, the landlord has suffered a loss they can submit a claim to the Council for compensation up to a maximum of £400.

What does the Rent Deposit Guarantee cover?

- accidental damage or theft to furniture, fixture or fittings.
- rent arrears, net of housing benefit payable, up to a maximum of £400.

What does the Rent Deposit Guarantee NOT cover?

- any over / under payment of the housing benefit that is the responsibility of the tenant.
- services that the tenant is responsible for, such as gas, electricity, water rates, TV licence etc.
- damages resulting from fair wear and tear to the furniture, fixtures or fittings.
- rent when the property is empty.
- items not covered in the inventory.

How does the scheme operate?

- If you are suitable for the scheme you will be given a certificate of approval. You can then start looking for private rented accommodation anywhere in Leicester.
- Landlords and tenants are free to negotiate the terms of the letting themselves.
- Once the landlord and tenant reach an agreement the tenant visits the Housing Options Service at Phoenix House. We will discuss the terms of the letting with the tenant, especially the amount of rent to be paid, to ensure that the tenant can afford to pay any shortfall in the housing benefit payment. We may also contact the landlord at this stage to confirm the details of the tenancy.

- Once we are satisfied with the terms of the letting, the tenant is provided with a Rent Deposit Guarantee agreement for the landlord to sign and an inventory for the landlord and tenant to complete. At this stage the tenant will be given, or told to collect, a housing benefit claim form and a payment direct form.
- After the tenancy agreement and the inventory have been signed we will sign the Rent Deposit Guarantee agreement.
- All parties will be given copies of the relevant documents.

What help will the Housing Options Service provide?

- We will be available to advise the landlord and tenant on rent levels, tenancy agreements and procedures for claiming benefits.

How does the landlord or agent make a claim under the scheme?

- At the end of the tenancy the landlord can make a claim subject to the cash limit for that particular property and for the items covered by the guarantee that are detailed in the inventory.
- The proper claim form must be completed and sent to the Housing Options Centre, Phoenix House, 1 King Street, Leicester, LE1 6RN. (public access is via Welford Place)
- The claim will be checked by a manager who may wish to visit the property. A meeting between the tenant, landlord or agent and a council officer may be suggested.
- **The Council will try to settle any claims within 10 working days.**

Important notice for landlords

The Council, in approving clients for the scheme, will take all reasonable steps to verify the credentials of the client.

Landlords and their agents are advised to make their own checks on the client's suitability.

Except for issues covered by the Guarantee, the Council cannot accept responsibility for any act or omission of the client.

Important notice for tenants

The Council cannot take responsibility for the suitability, general safety or state of repair of the properties under the scheme. You are advised to satisfy yourself on the suitability of the prospective landlord and property as the Council can accept no responsibility for this.

Should you have any concerns about the condition of the property you may wish to consider raising your concerns with the Private Sector Team on 0116 252 6339.

Guidance note for Rent Deposit Guarantee

Supplementary Notes:

- There are restrictions in place for housing benefit purposes for single people under the age of 25 years.
- You are entitled to make a claim for housing benefit if you are in receipt of low income or other benefits.

However:

- you will only receive what is called a single room rent either until you are over the age of 25 years or there is a change in your circumstances.

What this means:

- Is that you should consider renting either one room in a shared house or a bedsit.