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A guide to the Council's Rent in & Advance Deposit Guarantee Scheme



Mid Sussex District Council Housing Options series book:

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The Council's Rent in Advance & Deposit Guarantee Scheme

The Council's Housing Needs Team (01444 477574) offers a Rent in Advance and Deposit Guarantee Scheme to assist people who wish to rent privately but cannot afford the upfront payments required by most private landlords.

What is Rent in Advance?

A down payment of the first month's rent before you can sign a tenancy agreement. We may be able to help with this by making a payment to your landlord by way of an interest-free loan to you which we will normally recover from your Housing Benefit.

What is a Deposit Guarantee?

Landlords often require a deposit to cover rent arrears or damage. We can provide them with a letter guaranteeing a deposit so that, if necessary, they can make a claim from the Council when you leave.

Who qualifies for help under this scheme?

Anyone who has a local connection with Mid Sussex and is homeless or threatened with homelessness. You must be unable to meet the cost out of your own money and be eligible for Housing Benefit.

How does the scheme work?

You will be interviewed by a Housing Needs Officer to see if you are eligible. Once accepted on to the scheme, you may start looking for a place to rent. You will need to make sure that the rent charged does not exceed the maximum level set by the Local Housing Allowance for your needs.

Local Housing Allowance (LHA) is a way of working out and paying Housing Benefit for people who rent from a private landlord and is based on the number of bedrooms you need, rather than how much the rent is. We will be able to advise you of the Local Housing Allowance rates that apply to you. The Local Housing Allowance rates are also available on our website at www.midsussex.gov.uk/benefits. If you are looking to rent outside Mid Sussex, you will need to know the relevant Local Housing Allowance rates for that area.

The Local Housing Allowance rates set out the "maximum" Housing Benefit that would be paid to you. Whether you receive Housing Benefit up to this level will depend on your own particular circumstances. In many situations, even if you are entitled to Housing Benefit, you may have to find part of the rent from your own money.

What happens next?

For help with a Rent in Advance loan:

Your future landlord will need to invoice the Council for the amount of Rent in Advance required and we will then pay them directly, usually by BACS payment to their bank account. This payment is an interest-free loan to you which you will have to pay back to us. You will need to sign up to a loan agreement and agree to repay us from your Housing Benefit. The loan will normally be recovered as a lump sum from your first benefit payment or until the loan is repaid.

What happens next?

For help with a Deposit Guarantee:

Your landlord will need to confirm to us the amount of the deposit and we will write to them confirming our Deposit Guarantee. We will ask you to sign an agreement to reimburse the Council if we pay out at the end of your tenancy. If your landlord makes a valid claim for damages or rent arrears at the end of the tenancy, the Council will agree to pay up to the level of the Guarantee. Before we pay out we will examine any damage and ask for a detailed rent account. You will be given a chance to comment on any claim before it is settled. However, you will be liable to refund the Council for any money we pay out.



Special note for landlords

Letting to a tenant who is getting help under our scheme can have certain advantages:

- **A named officer from the Council's Housing Needs Team** will be on hand to help both you and your tenant if problems arise and to liaise with the Housing Benefits Team on your behalf.
- **Exemption from the Government's Tenancy Deposit Protection Scheme** introduced in April 2007. Because our scheme does not involve a cash deposit, you will not have to lodge your tenant's deposit with a Government-appointed third party or be subject to Alternative Dispute Resolution by the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators. Instead, all dealings in connection with the deposit will be with us.
- **More information on Local Housing Allowance (LHA)** is available from the Council's website www.midsussex.gov.uk/benefits (search for "Local Housing Allowance")

Please ask for our leaflet No.4 Finding somewhere to rent privately for more information on finding somewhere to rent

There is a shortage of affordable private rented accommodation in Mid Sussex, so it may be worth looking further afield. For properties to rent locally or throughout the UK, try searching the web at:

www.fish4homes.co.uk

www.friday-ad.co.uk

www.primelocation.com

www.findaproperty.com

www.rightmove.co.uk.

You may also find that rents are cheaper outside Mid Sussex.

Useful contacts

Housing Needs Team

Mid Sussex District Council,
Oaklands, Haywards Heath,
RH16 1SS

HousingAdvice@midsussex.gov.uk

01444 477574

www.midsussex.gov.uk/housingadvice

housingadvice

Housing Benefits

Mid Sussex District Council,
Oaklands, Haywards Heath,
RH16 1SS

benefit@centralsussex.gov.uk

www.midsussex.gov.uk/benefits

01444 477264

Leaflets in our Housing Options series

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