



South
Derbyshire
District Council

A Guide to Renting in the Private Sector



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE



GOLD
Award

Finding accommodation in the private sector can be a long and worrying process, but a little guidance can make it easier and hopefully more successful.

Stop and think before you leave your current accommodation, especially if you are still living at home with your family. It may be easier to get along with your family than to leave and live alone. It will certainly be cheaper to stay at home.

If you have to leave, come and talk to our Housing Options Team. They may be able to help you.

Rent deposit eligibility

People who are homeless or potentially homeless; on a low income or benefits and entitled to Housing Benefit; who are capable of living independently and unable to afford a deposit.

This includes:

- Families who have been found intentionally homeless by the Council
- Single people and couples without children
- Other households who may not qualify for the homeless priority on the Council's housing register

Where do I look?

- Landlords often advertise in shop windows or notice boards, in local newspapers, on the internet and with estate agents
- You may also find out about them from people who already live in the area
- When you see or hear about a suitable property being advertised, respond quickly to the advert to arrange an appointment to view the property

Tips for contacting the landlord

- Explain how you found out about this property
- Give your name and ask for the Landlord's
- Ask the landlord to confirm the rent charge and any deposit. (At this point do not mention that you may apply for Housing Benefit or access our Rent Deposit Scheme)
- Ask when the property will be available
- Ask the Landlord if this is a long term let (2 years or more) if known
- Make an appointment to view the property. Make sure you know where it is and get clear directions if not
- If possible, take a friend or relative with you when you view the property. If this is not possible, for your own safety, tell someone where you are going and what time you expect to be back. If you have a mobile phone keep it with you

First impressions count and will influence their decision

- Be on time!
- Be clean and smart
- Be polite and respectful but don't be afraid to ask questions
- Prepare questions before you go
- Be prepared to be asked some questions

First impressions should also influence your decision!

- You need to find out as much as you can so you can make an informed decision if the landlord offers to rent the property to you
- Remember you do not have to take the property if you are not sure!

What might the landlord ask?

- The landlord may want to know where you have lived before
- Can you get a reference?
- Are you working? If you are unemployed but looking for work you might want to tell the landlord about any interviews you have arranged. This would be a good time to discuss Housing Benefit and to complete the 'Pre-Tenancy Determination'
- How old are you?
- How long do you intend to stay?
- Landlords often want someone for a long term let. If they don't they usually advertise the property as short term.

What should you ask the landlord?

- How much is the rent?
- What does the rent include? Gas, electric, water rates, council tax?
- If you are responsible for gas, electric and water, how do you pay?
- Are there any meters?
- Does the landlord want a deposit?
- Will the landlord give you a written tenancy agreement?

Your tenancy agreement should contain the following:

- Date which your tenancy started
- The amount of rent payment
- Date which rent is due
- Any rent review arrangements
- Fix term agreement period - usually a minimum of 6 months

The landlord has no right to request possession within the first 6 months of the tenancy.

By using a Section 21 Notice, but they can take you to court if you fail to pay rent or behave in an antisocial manner.

A tenancy agreement may also outline you and your landlord's responsibilities.

A standard tenancy agreement is available from South Derbyshire District Council, along with further advice regarding private letting including a Government Guidance booklet.

If you are looking at a shared house you may also want to ask the following questions:

- How many other people live in the house? Try to talk to them or find out who they are
- Does the landlord live on the premises? You may have fewer rights if they do
- Are there any house rules?
- What facilities are there? Shared kitchen, bathroom, washing machine, etc.
- Are there any other costs you will be expected to pay towards? ie. Phone bills

Condition of the property

Furniture

- Is the property furnished? If not and you are on a low income the YMCA Furniture Project sells secondhand furniture at reasonable rates (ask the Housing Options Team for more information)
- Is the furniture in good condition?
- Does it meet current Fire Regulations?

Decoration and repair

- Does the property need decorating? If so is this the landlord's responsibility or yours?
- Is any woodwork rotting or unsafe?
- Are there any draughts near doors or windows? It may prove difficult and expensive to keep the property warm in winter if there are?
- Is there any evidence of mould, damp or dry rot?
- Are there any signs of pests in the house? ie. mouse droppings, slug trails or fleas
- Is the roof sound?
- Does the guttering have plants growing from it?
- If any repairs need doing, has the landlord agreed to do them?

Utilities

- Does the electric and/or gas fire work?
- Does the central heating work?
- Does the landlord have an up to date gas safety certificate?
- Are there any stains, soot or discolouration around the gas fire?
- Does the gas fire burn with a yellow or orange flame? If so there may be a problem
- Are there any bare or worn wires, broken or damaged sockets/light switches, old style round plug pins?
- Do the lights work properly? ie. no flickering or sparking
- Do all the water taps work properly?
- Is there hot and cold water available?
- Does the toilet flush properly?
- Are there any leaks?

Would you feel safe and secure?

- Are there smoke detectors fitted and in working order?
- Are there fire extinguishers/fire blankets?
- In the event of a fire, could you escape easily?
- Is the heating safe and working?
- Are any fire doors well fitted, with self closing devices that pull them tightly shut?
- How secure are the front door, back door and windows?
- If it's a shared house, how secure is your room/door?
- Do all the ground floor windows have security locks?
- Are any handrails/banisters loose or unsafe?
- Are any carpets worn or torn?
- What is the location or area like?

Make sure that you:

- like the property
- will be safe and secure
- can afford to live in the property
- all your questions have been answered before you sign the tenancy agreement.

If you have any concerns, don't sign anything or hand over any money!

If you need any advice contact the Housing Options Team on 01283 595778.

Obtaining alternative versions of this document

If you would like this document in another language, or if you require the services of an interpreter, please contact us. This information is also available in large print, Braille or audio format upon request.

Phone: 01283 595795 email: customer.services@south-derbys.gov.uk

Jeśli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać ten dokument w innym języku lub potrzebują Państwo usług tłumacza, prosimy o kontakt. Informacje te są również dostępne na życzenie w wydaniu dużym drukiem, w alfabecie brajla lub w wersji audio.

如果你需要这份文件的中文翻译，或者需要传译员的帮助，请联系我们。这些数据也备有大字体印本、盲人点字和录音带，欢迎索取。

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ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੂਸਰੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਏ ਦੀਆਂ ਸੇਵਾਵਾਂ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਕਰੋ ਜੀ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਮੰਗ ਕਰਨ ਤੇ ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ, ਬ੍ਰੇਅਲ ਜਾਂ ਆਡਿਉ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਉਪਲੱਬਧ ਕਰਵਾਈ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ।

اگر آپ یہ ڈاکیومنٹ کسی اور زبان میں چاہتے ہیں، یا اگر آپ کو کسی ترجمان کی خدمات درکار ہوں، تو براہ کرم ہم سے رابطہ کریں۔ درخواست کرنے پر یہ معلومات بڑے پرنٹ، بریل یا آڈیو فارمیٹ میں بھی دستیاب ہیں۔



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