

Helping you get rented accommodation in the Private Sector



**Housing Options
Team**

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Housing Options e-mail address is:
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This leaflet explains how to secure Private Sector housing. This information is for guidance only, so if you have any queries about renting privately you should contact the Housing Options Service.

Who can I rent a property from?

You can enquire through any of the following:

- Letting Agents;
- local newspapers;
- the internet;
- shop windows.

What sort of property can I rent?

When renting accommodation in the private sector, you should bear in mind that the property must be suitable for you and your family and should not be too big or too small.

The rent must be reasonable. If you are in receipt of housing benefit, the level of rent must fall within the Local Housing Allowance guidelines.

To find out the Local Housing Allowance please contact Housing Benefit on (023) 9254 5325 or log on to www.gosport.gov.uk.

From 1st October 2008, Landlords are required to provide an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) when they rent out a home. An EPC gives information on the energy efficiency of a property you want to rent.

What happens when I've found somewhere to rent?

If you are claiming Housing Benefit you should ensure that the rent is covered by the Local Housing Allowance. If there is a shortfall you should ensure you can afford this yourself. You should be mindful that along with any shortfall in Local Housing Allowance to pay, you will also be required to pay your general household bills.

If you are working, your income must be sufficient to meet the rent which is due, together with the general household bills.

In order to secure the property you will generally be required to pay prior to moving into the property:

- one months rent in advance;
- a deposit generally equivalent to one months rent. This is generally held in a deposit scheme and can be used by your landlord to cover rent arrears or damages caused by you;
- if letting through a letting agent you may also need to pay agency fees.

Deposits note

If you have an assured shorthold tenancy (and most private tenants will have) the landlord must, within 30 days of receiving your deposit protect it with one of the three government-authorized tenancy deposit schemes.

The schemes are completely independent of the landlord, so any disputes about the return of the deposit when you leave can be settled fairly. If your landlord does not comply with her/his obligations, the courts can order her/him to give your deposit back or pay it into an appropriate scheme, and pay you one to three times its value. If the landlord does not protect your deposit s/he also cannot evict you using a 'section 21' notice.

If you do not have the funds available to secure the property you need to explore what other options you can obtain this money from.

You may be able to borrow the money from a relative or friend and repay it at the end of the tenancy if you receive the full amount back.

You could also seek to borrow the money from a bank or building society or if credit is a problem you could contact Portsmouth Savers on (023) 9282 7980.

Once you have moved in

When you move in, you should check the inventory very carefully with the agent or landlord. When you move out, this inventory will be a record of the standard of property when you moved in, and **if there has been any damage caused, you will be responsible for paying for this.**

During the tenancy you must report any maintenance problems direct to the agent or landlord, and keep a record of the date and details of the repair.

What happens at the end of the private tenancy?

It is likely that you will have been given an 'Assured Shorthold Tenancy'. Although these are often for six months, it does not mean you have to leave when they 'expire'. These tenancies are often on going, and can only be ended by the agent or landlord giving you 2 months' notice.

If you are given notice to leave, you should contact the Housing Options Team immediately when we can give you further advice and assistance in respect of your homelessness.

Before you move out, the agent or landlord will inspect the property to see if you or your family have caused any damage. **If there is damage, this amount can be deducted from the deposit you paid at the start of the tenancy.**

Consequences of failing to repay any debt owed to your Landlord

You may not be able to take up an offer of permanent housing by this Council until your debt is cleared in full.

What if I need to contact someone?

If you have any questions please contact the Housing Options Team for further help and information at the Town Hall between:

Monday: 1.30pm to 3.30pm;

Tuesday: 9.30am to 11.30am;

Thursday: 9.30am to 11.30am;

Friday: 9.30am to 11.30am.

Direct telephone numbers are listed on the inside front cover of this leaflet.

Further information

A list of estate agents and property management companies can be found in the Housing Information Leaflet titled: **Accommodation Opportunities for Customers.**

Funding Options

Charities - log onto www.turn2us.org.uk or contact (0808) 802 2000 to find out if there is a benevolent fund that could provide you with financial assistance.

Bank/Building Society - contact your local bank/building society to apply for a loan/overdraft to assist you financially.

Job Centre Plus - log onto www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk or visit your local office to find out if you are eligible to secure an interest free budgeting/crisis loan for a rent in advance.

Family members - speak to members of your family to find out if you can borrow money and repay it back at the end of your tenancy if you receive the full amount back.

Friends - speak to your friend to find out if you can borrow money and repay it back at the end of your tenancy if you receive the full amount back.

Portsmouth Savers - provide personal loans - contact (023) 9282 7980 or log onto www.portsmouthsavers.co.uk



Gosport Resource Centre



St Georges Walk - Gosport

**Free use of computers
access to the internet**

**Open Mon, Tue, Fri
10am - 4pm**

Wed, Thu 10am - 1pm

Phone/fax:

023 9252 5821

www.gosportgrc.co.uk

This leaflet has been written by Gosport Borough Council's Housing Services Unit in liaison with representatives from the Tenants and Leaseholders Consultation Forum.

This document can be provided in large print, in Braille, on tape or translated into your language by contacting the Customer Services team on (023) 9254 5441.



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