

## Homelessness Prevention Fund (HPF) for Private Renting

### Guide for Landlords and Letting Agents

**What is the HPF Private Renting Scheme?** This is a scheme set up by the Council to help households who consider themselves to be threatened with homelessness to secure a home in the private rented sector.

**Who can use the scheme?** Any person or family with a local connection to the Stroud District who considers themselves to be threatened with homelessness and unable to afford the deposit on a private rented home. A local connection would be if they have lived in the District for the last 6 months, 3 out of the last 5 years as an adult; have an immediate relative who has lived here for a minimum of 5 years or they are currently employed in the District.

**What does the Council provide?** We pay the deposit and any administration or holding fees charged by the landlord or agent. We do not provide rent in advance.

**What benefits are there to the landlord?** We can help to fill empty properties and reduce void periods by providing free advertising at Ebley Mill for all households who approach us for help with housing. We work closely with the Housing Benefit team to reduce delays and arrange direct payments. If required we provide support to our clients to help them to sustain their tenancy by acting as a contact point and carrying out regular tenancy checks.

**Are there any other requirements?** We ask that you assign a minimum 12 month fixed term tenancy and that the deposit is paid into a registered protection scheme within 30 days of receiving the money (as required by law). As a named interested party we require the prescribed information to be sent to us within 30 days of the tenancy start date. We also ask for a copy of the signed tenancy agreement.

**Can the tenant choose any property?** The number of bedrooms in the property must match the number of bedrooms that the tenant would qualify for e.g. a couple would qualify for a 1-bed, a family with 2 children would qualify for a 2 or 3 bed depending on the age and gender of the children.

There are also limits on the rent levels. The limits are based on current Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates (the maximum amount of housing benefit that would be paid depending on household income). LHA is now set until April 2016 and the tenant would need to find a property within these levels:

Property size	Maximum LHA per month (set until April 2016)	Rent limit for scheme
Room/studio flat	£295.45	£320.00
1 bed	£398.88	£425.00
2 bed	£530.23	£570.00
3 bed	£637.56	£690.00
4 bed	£810.94	£835.00

**What happens next?** Once you have accepted our client as a tenant we ask you to sign our Agreement, which the tenant also signs. Once this agreement is returned, we ask you to invoice us for the fees and/or deposit which is then provided by electronic banking. The invoice must be addressed to Stroud District Council and include landlord/agent name and address, tenancy address, invoice number, date, VAT amount & registration number (if applicable) and bank details.

**How long does it take?** We have 2 payment runs a week – on a Tuesday and a Thursday. Depending on when we receive the invoice and how quickly it can be processed, the monies will leave our bank account on one of these 2 days. It takes 2-3 days for the funds to be cleared.

**What happens at the end of the tenancy?** At the end of the tenancy you need to return the deposit to the Council by contacting the deposit scheme used and arranging for the monies to be returned by cheque or BACS. If you wish to make a claim against the deposit we will require photographic evidence (or other suitable evidence) and quotes or invoices for the work before deductions can be approved.

**Who do I contact for further information?** For more information on the scheme please contact the Homelessness Prevention Team on 01453 754078 or email [homelessness.prevention@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:homelessness.prevention@stroud.gov.uk).

## Checklist

### HPF scheme checks

- Property within rent level
- Landlord accepts scheme and offers 12 month tenancy

### Paperwork to send to the Homelessness Prevention Team

- Supplemental agreement signed by both letting agent/ landlord and tenant
- Invoice
- Copy of signed tenancy agreement
- Prescribed information including the deposit scheme certificate (with Stroud District Council registered as either lead tenant or third party depending on the scheme)