



# Rent Express Scheme

## Information for Tenants



## What is the Rent Express Scheme?

This is a Scheme to help people to access privately rented accommodation who cannot afford to pay the rent in advance and cash deposit.

## Who is eligible to apply for the Rent Express Scheme?

You are eligible to apply if you are:

- Resident in or have strong 'local connection' to Stratford-on-Avon District area (normally at least 6 months residence) and
- On a low income or in receipt of benefits and
- Homeless or threatened with homelessness.

## Are there any other conditions?

YES – Please read the following points carefully and discuss them with a Housing Advisor.

- In order to qualify for help with the Rent in Advance payment you would need to be eligible for full Housing Benefit.
- In order to qualify for help towards the Deposit Guarantee and Rent Guarantee you would need to be eligible for some Housing Benefit.
- If you have a history of failed tenancies, have got into rent arrears before or have behaved badly at a previous address we will not normally be able to help you through this scheme.
- The property must be affordable for you. The rent must not be much more than the Local Housing Allowance rate. Local Housing Allowance Rates can affect how much Housing Benefit can be paid in privately rented accommodation.
- The property must be in a reasonable condition and there must be a valid Gas Safety Certificate and Energy Performance Certificate. We also require landlords to fit smoke alarms and provide secure rubbish bins.
- You will not be eligible for the scheme if you sign the tenancy agreement or move into the property **before** the Housing Advice Team have agreed that you can proceed.
- You will be required to repay the Rent in Advance payment.
- If a claim is made by the landlord on the Deposit Guarantee or Rent Guarantee you will be required to pay back any money the Council pays out.

## What if I have any support needs?

If you have any support needs you will need to discuss these with a Housing Advisor so we can make sure you have enough support in place when any tenancy starts.

## What is a Deposit Guarantee?

- A guarantee can be offered in place of the usual cash deposit required by most landlords and letting agents.
- The amount guaranteed will normally be up to the value of one month's rent.
- The Deposit Guarantee protects landlords or agent if you or any visitors cause any damage or loss to the property or it's contents, which is not 'fair wear and tear'.
- If the landlord makes a claim on the Deposit Guarantee you will be asked to pay back any money the Council pays out.

## What is a Rent Guarantee?

- A rent guarantee is offered to landlords or agents using the Rent Express Scheme.
- The amount guaranteed will be up to the value of one month's rent which remains outstanding at the end of the tenancy.
- If you have any rent arrears outstanding at the end of the tenancy and a claim is made by your landlord under the Rent Guarantee, you will be required to pay back any money the Council pays out.

## How much can the Council pay towards the Rent in Advance?

- Up to one month's Rent in Advance can be paid direct to the landlord.
- Some people who are unlikely to be in 'priority need' under homelessness legislation will only be able to receive a maximum of £300 towards the Rent in Advance payment.

## Do I need to pay back the Rent in Advance?

- You will be asked to repay the Rent in Advance depending on your circumstances this may be from the start of your tenancy.
- If you move out before the Rent in Advance payment is repaid this will be recovered from the last Housing Benefit payment.
- If money is still outstanding you will be required to continue to make repayments.

## How do I apply?

- Make an appointment to see a Housing Advisor.
- Complete the Rent Express Scheme application form and get the landlord or agent to fill in part of the form.

## What happens next?

A member of the Housing Advice Team (HAT) will review the application and assess whether you are eligible to apply to the scheme.

- You may be asked to attend an appointment with the Council in order to estimate your Housing Benefit entitlement.
- You may be asked to provide additional information, for example if it is not clear whether the accommodation is affordable for you.
- Before any application can be approved the Housing Advisor will need to inspect the property to check it is being let in a reasonable condition, has smoke alarms and secure rubbish bins.
- We ask landlords to give us a copy of the Gas Safety Certificate, Energy Performance Certificate and an inventory of the property and its contents (agreed by you and the landlord).
- We require tenants and landlords to sign a Rent Express Agreement.
- We require a copy of the tenancy agreement and normally ask for this to be a 12 month term.

## What happens if you are unhappy with a decision that we have made?

- Contact the Housing Advisor who has been dealing with your application for more information about our decision.
- If you are still unhappy you can request a review by writing to the Housing Advice Manager within 21 days of being told of the decision.
- You will be notified in writing to explain any decision that is made following the review.

**For more information about the Rent Express Scheme contact  
the Housing Advice Team at**



Stratford-on-Avon District Council  
Elizabeth House, Church Street  
Stratford-upon-Avon  
Warwickshire CV37 2HX

Telephone number:

01789 260 844/5/6

Fax number

01789 260895

Email:

housingadviceteam@stratford-dc.gov.uk

**You can read more about the Rent Express Scheme at [www.stratford.gov.uk](http://www.stratford.gov.uk)**

If you find the text in this publication difficult to read we can supply it in a format better suited to your needs



Elizabeth House, Church Street  
Stratford-upon-Avon CV37 6HX

Telephone 01789 267575

Facsimile 01789 260895

Minicom 01789 260747

DX700737 STRATFORD-ON-AVON 2

e-mail [housingadviceteam@stratford-dc.gov.uk](mailto:housingadviceteam@stratford-dc.gov.uk)

website [www.stratford.gov.uk](http://www.stratford.gov.uk)