

Tenants' Responsibilities



Tenants assisted under the Home Choice Scheme are liable for rent payments and **must** pay their rent promptly and in full. They must also look after the property, keep it clean and tidy, and tell the landlord as soon as possible of any repairs that are needed. Within a few days of moving into the property, the tenants must check the accuracy of the inventory, informing the landlord or letting agent of any amendments required. Tenants must allow the landlord reasonable access to the property, by appointment, and provide the appropriate amount of notice when they wish to bring their tenancy to an end.

If tenants have concerns about the conditions at the property or if the landlord is not carrying out necessary repairs, they can contact the Council's Environmental Health Service for advice and assistance on T: 01865 252887

Tenants can also contact the Council's Tenancy Relations Service on 01865 252267 for help and advice regarding their tenancy rights.

Discharge of Homelessness Duty



By providing a family with suitable rented accommodation under the Home Choice Scheme, Oxford City Council ceases to have a duty to house the family under the homeless legislation.

However, throughout the tenancy, the Private Rented Sector team will be available to help resolve any problems that occur and provide the tenant and landlord with advice and support. Everyone assisted under the Home Choice Scheme must sign an agreement, confirming their acceptance of the offer of private rented accommodation. Oxford City Council may then discharge duty towards them under the homeless legislation.

It is the tenant's responsibility to ensure that their Application for Inclusion on the General Housing Register is updated every time they change address.

Further Information and Useful Contacts



Oxford City Council

- Housing Needs Team, St. Aldate's Chambers
T: **01865 252859**
E: housingneeds@oxford.gov.uk
Emergency out of hours: T: **0800 833408**
- Environmental Health & Tenancy Relations Officers T: 01865 **252887/252267**

Customer Services Centres

Please phone 01865 **252849** or **252870** to book an appointment

- Templars Square Customer Service Centre
2-3 Bank Court, Templars Square Shopping Centre Cowley, Oxford OX4 3UZ



- St Aldate's Customer Service Centre
109-113 St Aldate's, Oxford OX1 1DS

Advice Centres

- Agnes Smith Advice Centre, Blackbird Leys:
T: 01865 **770206**
- Barton Information Centre: T: 01865 744152
- Citizens Advice Bureau, 95/96 St. Aldate's,
Oxford T: **0870 220 0608**
E: oxfordcab@cabnet.org.uk
- Rose Hill and Donnington Advice Centre:
T: 01865 438634

Useful Websites

- www.oxford.gov.uk for Council services and advice
- www.shelternet.org.uk for advice
- www.oxford-estateagents.co.uk list of estate agents
- www.dailyinfo.co.uk local information



Contact Us

Housing Needs Team
109-113 St Aldate's
Oxford OX1 1DS

T: freephone 01865 252858
E: housingneeds@oxford.gov.uk
www.oxford.gov.uk

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提供有翻譯本
तरजमे उपलब्ध हैं
उपलब्ध मिला सकते हैं
ترجمہ دستیاب ہے

Home Choice Scheme

হোম চয়েস স্কিম (বাড়ি পছন্দ করার প্রকল্প)
निवास का चुनाव करने की स्कीम
ਘਰਾਂ ਦਾ ਚੁਣਾਉ ਵਰਨ ਦੀ ਸਕੀਮ
ہوم چوائس سکیم (گھر کے انتخاب کی سکیم)
住所選擇計畫



1 Home Choice Scheme



Tackling Homelessness



In Oxford, high house prices and a shortage of affordable homes for rent can make it difficult to obtain suitable housing.

Faced with a serious homeless problem, Oxford City Council has set up a number of schemes to prevent homelessness and make it easier for people to obtain privately rented housing.

Families with children will normally be given priority for housing if they become homeless through no fault of their own.

Home Choice Scheme



The Home Choice Scheme provides people who may be homeless with the opportunity to move into a home of their choice and to avoid homelessness and a lengthy stay in temporary accommodation.

By providing the advice, support and financial help required, Oxford City Council has increased the housing options available to people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

Managed by Oxford City Council's Options Service, the Home Choice Scheme is very flexible. It can be used, for example, to prevent private tenants from becoming homeless by enabling them to remain in their current accommodation or by helping them find alternative accommodation when their current tenancy comes to an end.

2 Home Choice Scheme



Who is Suitable for the Home Choice Scheme?



The Home Choice Scheme is not suitable for everyone. Experience has shown that the Scheme is most suitable for private tenants whose existing tenancy is coming to an end, and for families that want to live in a particular area, close to schools, employment or family support. The Scheme has also helped families that need accommodation for only a short time, until their situation improves or until they receive their share of a matrimonial settlement.

Qualifying for the Scheme



We realise that not everyone is able to manage in private rented accommodation. The Home Choice Scheme is therefore only offered to people we consider suitable.

To qualify for the Scheme, families must:

- have a local connection with the Oxford City area
- have become homeless through no fault of their own
- satisfy Oxford City Council that they can manage in private rented accommodation
- have been referred to The Scheme by the Council's Duty Officer.

Finding Your Own Property



Although advice and support will be provided, you will be expected to find your own property to rent. If you are unable to do this help can be provided where necessary. However, the Council must be satisfied it is suitable accommodation.

3 Home Choice Scheme



What We Can Offer



Under the Home Choice Scheme, Oxford City Council will provide the tenancy deposit that a tenant needs in order to obtain private rented accommodation. As well as offering financial assistance, Oxford City Council can offer a free tenancy agreement, comprehensive advice on all payments of Local Housing Allowance, aspects of the lettings process and prompt Housing Benefit payments direct to the landlord, where possible.

We will help arrange the tenancy, and will continue to provide the landlord and tenant with advice, support and practical help throughout the tenancy where this is appropriate.

Length of Tenancy



Most of the tenants assisted by the Home Choice Scheme will want to remain in their home for as long as possible. Under the Home Choice Scheme, tenants will normally take on an Assured Shorthold tenancy lasting 12 months and then renew the tenancy at the end of the first year.

Some landlords prefer to offer six months tenancy (even if they are looking for long-term tenants), to check that the tenant can be relied upon to look after the property and pay their rent. Many of the tenants requiring accommodation for a relatively short period of time (until a matrimonial settlement is reached, for example), will need to check that they can be released from their tenancy, without penalty, at a months notice.

4 Home Choice Scheme



Tenancy Deposit



Oxford City Council will pay a tenancy deposit direct to the landlord or letting agent. Payment is made on the condition that, at the end of the tenancy, the landlord or agent will refund the Council all or part of the money they have received, after allowing the cost of any reasonable deductions.

From 6th April 2007, when a landlord or letting agent takes a tenancy deposit, the deposit must be protected in a Government authorised Tenancy Deposit Protection Scheme.

Rent Payments



Applicants will only be considered for the Home Choice Scheme if they can show that they are able to pay their rent regularly and in full. In many cases, applicants will be eligible to apply for Local Housing Allowance to help with these payments. This is a means-tested rent allowance paid by local authorities to help people cover their rent costs.

To ensure that any Local Housing Allowance claims are processed quickly, the Private Sector team will ensure that the tenant provides all of the information needed to assess the claim.

The tenant will usually receive any benefit entitlement directly into their bank account; it is their responsibility to ensure this is paid to the landlord.

5 Home Choice Scheme



Housing Benefit/Local Housing Allowance



Many of the families assisted under the Home Choice Scheme receive Local Housing Allowance to cover all or part of their rent.

The maximum amount of rent that can be taken into account in the calculation of Housing Benefit is the Local Housing Allowance. This is a figure set monthly in advance by the Rent Officer and depends on the number of people that live in a dwelling.

The actual amount of Housing Benefit that a tenant receives depends on their age, the people living with them, and their income and savings. Advice on the Local Housing Allowance upon which your entitlement will be calculated, or Housing Benefit generally, is available from the Private Sector team or from the Council's Customer Service Officers.

Most single claimants under 25 (no partner or children living with them) count as young individuals. The Local Housing Allowance for this group will only cover the cost of a single room plus shared facilities—e.g. a room in a shared house.

The following young individuals are exempt from this restriction:

- Claimants with one or more dependant(s)
- Claimants who meet the conditions for the Severe Disability Premium
- Claimants under 22 who were previously subject to a Care Order.