

FIRST CHOICE HOMES OLDHAM

TENANCY RELATIONS SERVICE

Advice and Information for Tenants

FINDING ACCOMMODATION

A Privately Rented Home is becoming a popular choice for many people.

Private Renting can offer you a home, which is

- Easy to move into
- In an area you want to live
- At a price you want to pay.

You will find Private Rented Accommodation advertised in

- Local newspapers/magazines/newsletters – copies are available to view in local libraries and at **First Choice Homes Oldham Housing Options Centre**
- Shop windows/noticeboards
- Estate Agents
- Letting Agents. Please note it is illegal for a Letting Agent to charge you a fee for
 - registering your details, or
 - providing you with an address list
- Internet sites
- Word of mouth. Ask around family/friends/work colleagues.

First Choice Homes Oldham provides a Rent Bond Scheme. This offers a non-cash deposit guarantee or paper-bond to the Landlord. This scheme is available to all Benefit or Low-Income Households where there is a perceived threat of homelessness. Contact **First Choice Homes Oldham Bond Scheme Administrator** for further details.

Letting Fees

Sometimes, Letting, Property Management and Estate Agents may charge an administration fee for drawing up a Tenancy Agreement. Such fees are legal and must be paid by the tenant prior to taking up the tenancy of a property.

You should consider the affordability of these fees before signing the Tenancy Agreement.

It is illegal for any agencies, however, to:

- charge merely for registering you
- charge for providing you with a property list
- demand a non-returnable payment as a condition of granting a tenancy
- demand a payment to offset any future charges, even if this is said to be refundable.

Prospective Tenants should:

- always get a receipt for any money handed over
- not hand any money over if in any doubt
- contact **First Choice Homes Oldham's Tenancy Relations Service** for further advice regarding letting fees.

Following up an Advert

You should follow up adverts for accommodation as soon as possible. In certain areas, privately rented property is let the same day.

Never

- Promise anything until you've seen it

It is useful when considering a property to

- Ask as much about the property over the phone as possible
- Take references with you if you have them
- Check the location of the property on a map

Contacting the Landlord

- Most landlords will have a contact number
- They may want to know your name, age and household details
- Landlords will usually arrange a suitable day and time to meet and view the accommodation and discuss the details further
- If you are anxious or unsure, take a friend with you for support and guidance
- Use the Property Checklist on this website to select suitable accommodation.

Before Agreeing to Rent

Consider the following:

The Costs

- Confirm amount of rent deposit
- Establish rent details – date due and amount
- Cost of and responsibility for utility bills (gas, electricity, water, telephone)
- Cost of and responsibility for Council Tax
- Cost of and responsibility for building and contents insurance
- Administration fees
- Affordability of rent and other costs
- Eligibility for housing benefit

Make sure you obtain:

- Written Tenancy Agreement
- Receipt for Rent Deposit (for tenancies after 6th April 2007, the name of the Tenancy Deposit Protection Scheme holding the Rent Deposit)
- Written record of gas, electric and water meter readings
- Complete inventory of furniture and equipment, signed and dated by yourself and the landlord
- If possible, photographic evidence of the condition of the property, signed and dated by yourself and the landlord.

When you move into the property, make sure you inform the following of your new address:

- Utility providers
- Council Tax Office
- Housing Benefit Office
- Electoral Register
- Doctors, Schools
- Friends, Family

For further assistance, support and advice please contact

First Choice Homes Oldham's Tenancy Relations Service

1 Media Square
Phoenix Street
Oldham
OL1 1AN

Telephone: 0161 770 4463 Answer Phone available

Fax: 0161 770 3557

E-mail: fcho.tenancy.relations@oldham.gov.uk

Web -address http://www.oldham.gov.uk/fcho-tenancy_relations_service.htm

Opening hours:

Monday – Friday (excluding Wednesday) :	9.00am – 5.00pm
Wednesday :	11.00am – 5.00pm
Weekends and Bank Holidays :	Closed

First Choice Homes Oldham's Tenancy Relations Service is committed to the highest standards of quality information and every attempt has been made to present up to date and accurate information. However we give no warranty as to the accuracy of the information on this web site and accept no liability for

any loss, damage or inconvenience caused as a result of reliance on such information

The above information is **NOT** an exhaustive guide to the law, nor does it cover every situation that may arise. For more detailed interpretation of the law, seek legal advice.