



London Borough
of Hounslow

Private Sector Lease

A Guide to PSL in the London Borough of Hounslow



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Background

Thank you for the interest in the Hounslow Council PSL scheme

The council needs a range of properties to provide accommodation for homeless families in the borough. Private Sector Leasing (PSL) is a scheme where the council takes out a lease, normally of 3 years in duration, from a landlord on their property. The main difference to other schemes on offer is that at all times during the lease, the council is responsible for the tenants and management of their tenancies.

People become homeless for a variety of reasons such as:

- the loss of a job
- business failure
- sickness
- a new baby
- relationship breakdown

What is a Private Sector Lease? (PSL)

A Private Sector Lease is a legal agreement between a property owner and the Council. The PSL allows us to sub-let the property to people in need of housing. The Council is responsible for paying the rent to you as the owner. The rent is guaranteed so even if the property is vacant you will still receive a regular income. We are also responsible for managing the property and you need have no direct contact with the occupier.

We will:

- pay you rent monthly in advance; take care of some internal repairs;
- make good any damage that may be caused by occupants, (except fair wear and tear)
- manage the property on a day-to-day basis
- return the property to you with full vacant possession

For your property to be eligible on the Hounslow PSL scheme the property must

- be located in the London Borough of Hounslow
- be a self contained, family sized property with at least 1 bedroom or more;
- be unfurnished with no white goods but with a cooker in the kitchen. (If the hob or cooker is gas this must be included on the gas safety certificate.)
- with or without a garden. If there is a garden, you must be prepared to maintain it when necessary

We are NOT looking for studio apartments or properties above restaurants or takeaways and certain types of commercial property.

Landlord Benefits

We offer two or three year leases, pay a competitive rent, with free management and a dedicated Officer managing your property.

You will receive:

- a free comprehensive letting service with full vacant possession at the end of the lease;
- rent paid monthly in advance direct into your bank;
- a dedicated Officer to manage your property
- Day to day repairs carried out by the Council
- compensation paid for any damage beyond fair wear and tear when the property is returned

When you lease your property to us you are guaranteed rental income, whether it is tenanted or not. The rent that you receive may be lower than open market value, but this is offset by

- no agency fees to pay
- no void periods to allow for
- At the end of the lease The council will continue to pay the agreed rent until your property can be handed back with full vacant possession and bear the cost of any legal action needed to achieve this.

How to Apply

How can we help?

Hounslow Council can often offer grants to help owners of empty properties to bring them back into habitable use, so that they can be rented out under the scheme.

Please contact the empty property officer
020 8583 3863

It is an ethical investment because you are providing housing to people in dire need.

PSL rents houses and flats from private landlords and re-lets them to our tenants. We take all the hassle out of renting, guaranteeing rental income and giving landlords confidence that their property is being managed by a professional housing management team.

PSL works because it benefits all parties.

Please email the Acquisitions Team (see page 8) or return this application form to:

Acquisitions Officer, Temporary Accommodation Team,
Civic Centre, Lampton Road, TW3 4DN

Name:

Address:

Post code:

Home Telephone Number:

Work Telephone Number:

Mobile Telephone Number:

Email:

Full Address of Property offered for lease:

Post code:

(property details please circle): House Flat Maisonette

Number of Bedrooms (please write number): Number of Living Rooms (please write number):

(Please contact me with a view to leasing my property)

Signed: Date:

Schedule of requirements for renting your property to the council

Type & Size of Property: We will consider all property sizes except studios and all styles of flats, maisonettes or houses, with or without gardens. These must be unfurnished, and in the Borough of Hounslow. Ex council properties are acceptable which have been in private ownership for five years or more.

An NICEIC electrical certificate: You must provide us with an NICEIC Periodic Inspection Report, and the certificate must cover the full term of the lease. There should not be any observations or recommendations on the certificate.

A Gas Safe certificate: You must provide us with a Landlord's Gas Safety Record issued by a Gas Safe registered engineer to cover all gas installations, including any appliances. This must be renewed every 12 months.

A Homecare 300 Care Agreement (minimum): You will need to obtain a British Gas Homecare 300 Agreement to cover the heating and hot water system, or equivalent cover should you have electric storage heaters.

An Energy Performance Certificate: This is now a requirement for any letting and can be obtained from a registered Domestic energy Assessor or Home Inspector.

Buildings Insurance: You must provide us with a copy of your buildings insurance policy, specifying that you have authority to let your property to the Council. You must renew the policy annually throughout the terms of the lease.

Ownership Details: You will need to provide us with proof of ownership. We will also require where appropriate, an up to date statement of mortgage payments, including the mortgage lenders permission to let the property. If the property is leasehold, we will also need to see permission to let to us from the leaseholder. If the leaseholder is the Council, you must also seek their permission – contact Home Ownership, Leaseholder Services section: 020 8583 3417/8.

Three Sets of Keys: You will need to provide three sets of keys for all communal and external doors, and window locks where you have them.

Smoke detectors: 10 year battery or–wired in smoke detectors must be fitted in all properties, in accordance with manufacturers instructions. To be fitted in the hallway adjacent to the kitchen, and in the case of a two storey property one on the upper landing.

Garages & Sheds: Will not normally be part of the lease. If there is an electricity supply this must be disconnected from the leased property.

Condition of Property

Exterior: roof and walls should be in good repair, structurally sound and weatherproof. Slates, coping, rendering, gutters and downpipes etc. should all be secure and intact without leaks. The property should be free from any form of damp or water penetration.

Structure: Windows must open and close easily for both ventilation and security purposes. All joints between the structure and the doors and window frames should be adequately sealed, and draught proof. Staircases must be structurally sound, having balustrades, and hand rail fitted to ensure the safety of small children. The space between open risers and stair balustrades need to be less than 100mm.

Services: All flue terminals should be adequately ventilated. All electrical circuits, gas appliances, central heating system, hot and cold water, and water drainage should perform satisfactorily and comply with the requirements of the relevant statutory bodies and legislation.

Any gas or electrical appliances such as fires or ovens, left on the premises at the start of the lease must have been included in the appropriate safety certificates.

Heating: The preferred form of heating is a gas boiler, timer, individual or main thermostat. Off Peak "Economy 7" is an acceptable alternative for smaller units and flats. Radiators must be located in all bedrooms, reception rooms and bathrooms, and be adequate for the size of the room.

Properties must have their own individually metered utility supplies. Heating systems and appliances must have the users instructions supplied at the time the lease commences. Water storage tanks and cistern to be covered, secured and properly protected against frost.

Light, Ventilation & Openings: Every living room and bedroom should have a window opening directly to the

outside. Glazing should be free of breaks and missing or perished putty to be replaced. Windows and doors should be sound with only standard furniture present. No locks or bolts to be fitted to bedrooms and living rooms. Curtain tracks/poles must be provided in the living rooms and bedrooms. Low level glazing where potentially dangerous to children to be sandwiched between clear plastic adhesive sheeting or removed and panelled.

Where window openings are at a low level, a child proof lock must be fitted to ensure a child can't fall out, but still provide access to open the window by hand. WC's, bathrooms and kitchens must have opening windows or else an adequate system of mechanical ventilation. Yale type and deadlock to be provided to the main front door, and mortice to the rear.

Kitchen & Cooking Areas: All plumbing should comply with current water utilities byelaws. Stop valves and services to be readily accessible. Must be an adequate supply of cupboards and work surfaces, being clean and undamaged. Work surfaces must be free from cracks – suitable for the preparation of food.

A 600mm cooker space should be provided, located with adjacent worktops, and not next to a doorway. Power sockets and 600mm spaces should be available for a refrigerator and washing machine.

Waste disposal units should be removed and standard traps fitted.

Ceramic tiles or vinyl flooring in one sheet to be fitted – not vinyl tiles. Wall tiles to be fitted behind sink and cooker space, at least 3 tiles high. These should be clean and well grouted to ensure a waterproof finish.

Bathrooms: Plugs should be fitted to bath and wash hand basin. Showers may be acceptable, but not always suitable for family occupation. Where a shower is fitted above the bath wall tiling must be to a minimum of 1.8 metres around the bath. A shower screen or curtain should be provided. Bath panels should be securely fixed but accessible. All fixtures should be free from staining and fixed securely to the floor. WC's should have seat and lid attached and be unstained, Cistern to fill at a reasonable rate. Ceramic tiles or vinyl flooring to be fitted – not vinyl

tiles. Bathrooms must have fully enclosed light fitting.

Flooring & Decorations: Floors should be level and even. Where carpet remains this must be clean, safe and fitted. Where carpets have been removed, the carpet grippers must also be removed. Any polystyrene tiles on walls or ceilings present a fire hazard, and must therefore be removed and the décor made good. Decorations to all rooms, gloss and emulsion should be in good condition, suitable for the term of the lease.

Gardens & Boundaries: Boundaries of the property should be adequately enclosed to ensure privacy and security. Gardens should be tidy, free of rubbish, and easy to maintain – the garden remains the responsibility of the Landlord under the terms of the lease. Ponds should be drained and filled in.

Any unsafe or dilapidated buildings must be demolished and cleared. Unless integral, garages cannot be included in the lease.

External buildings and sheds for the exclusive use of the tenant to be free of stored items. Doors to fitted with a lock or bolt. Greenhouses and conservatories with unprotected areas of glazing to be protected/removed to prevent accidental injury to children.

A front gate with a suitable closing device must be provided. Gates to be in a good condition and secured when closed, side and rear gates to have a locking device

Rubbish Bin: must be provided, with close fitting lid.

Frequently Asked Questions

What sort of properties do you want?

We need family sized accommodation including one bedroom. In particular we have a high demand for two bedroom properties. We take on houses, flats and maisonettes, with or without gardens. Properties have to be self contained, unfurnished, in the Borough of Hounslow and in a good state or repair.

How long will you lease the property for and who is responsible for the repairs?

We lease properties for two to three years and can renew the lease again. The Temporary Accommodation Unit will carry out day to day minor repairs. We ask all Landlords to have a Homecare 300 agreement with British Gas or Southern Electric, that way we do not need to bother you with heating disrepair issues.

Repairs to the Structure, fencing and walls, out buildings and means of sanitation (such as pipes) are the Landlords' responsibility. However we could carry out the works and deduct the cost from your rent.

Are there any other documents required by the Council?

You must provide proof of your ownership of the property (land charges certificate).

We need Gas, Electric and Energy Performance Certificates, together with Building Insurance Certificate and the Gas Homecare Agreement, we would also ask you to sign a consent letter to act on your behalf were an emergency to arise.

Who else must I tell?

You must tell your mortgage lender and get their consent. If your property is leasehold you must also get permission from the freeholder/managing agent. We will need to see proof that you have done this.

What about the utilities at my property?

The tenant is responsible for the utilities and can choose their own supplier. When the property is returned to you we recommend that you check with the supplier to ensure there is no outstanding debts. (see Useful Contact numbers list).

How will my rent be paid?

Rent is paid directly into your bank or building society account by BACS. Rent can only be paid into the property owners account.

What type of tenant will live in my property?

The tenants will be one of Hounslow's Homeless Households

What happens if I am moving abroad?

If you are a non resident landlord you must appoint a legal Power of Attorney so that we know who to contact in this country concerning your property. You must also provide evidence that you have complied with the Inland Revenues requirements (See HM Revenue and Customs Form NRL 1)

What if I want my property back?

We do not normally return a property until the end of the lease so you should plan to lease it to us for the full term. We recognise that circumstances can change unexpectedly, so if you need your property urgently we are available to discuss your needs. We will endeavour to return the property to you by the end of the lease, however sometimes it can take a little longer for the tenants to move. Under these circumstances we would continue to pay the rent until the property is returned to you.

What happens if my property is damaged?

When the property is handed back to you an Acquisition Officer will meet you at the property for a joint inspection. Were there to be any damage to the property we would request a number of quotes so we can reach a level of agreement on compensation. Please do remember that we do not pay for fair wear and tear.

Contact telephone numbers:

Judy Greenwood: Acquisitions Officer	020 8583 4421
Allan Bray: Acquisitions Officer	020 8583 3861
Jackie Cuthew: Acquisitions Officer	020 8583 3857
Nicky Pooni: Team Leader PSL	020 8583 3822
Gifty Obeng: Senior TAO	020 8583 4397
Lynn Tregunna: Team Leader DL	020 8583 4398
Natasha Semence: Payments Officer	020 8583 5521
David Bowes: Tenancy Relations	020 8583 3828
Keith Dickens: Empty Homes Officer	020 8583 4657
Hounslow Homes: Leaseholder Services	020 8583 3417/8

Contact email addresses:

landlords@hounslow.gov.uk

If you would like a copy of the lease agreement please contact us, this can be sent via email or post.

Useful contact numbers:

Gas

British Gas: Gas/Electricity supply/ Repairs/ Homecare Agreement 0845 950 0400

Gas Safe: Gas Contractor register
0800 408 5500

Gas Suppliers: Meter Enquiry line
0870 608 1524

Southern Electric: Gas Supply
0845 758 5401

Electricity

Southern Electric: Electricity supply
0845 744 4555

UK Power Network
Supplier Enquiry Line
0845 601 5467

NICEIC Electrical Contractors
0870 013 0382

Water Suppliers

Veolia: Postcodes TW6, part TW13/14
0845 769 7982

Thames Water: remainder of Hounslow Borough
0845 920 0888

Community Services
London Borough of Hounslow
Civic Centre, Lampton Road
Hounslow TW3 4DN.
Email: landlords@hounslow.gov.uk
Telephone: 020 8583 3855
www.hounslow.gov.uk

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020 8583 2299