

TENANT REFERENCING FORM

INTRODUCTION

As an accredited landlord, Durham County Council recommends that you carry out a reference check on all prospective tenants who are being considered for a tenancy. This will ensure a sharp focused approach on the key strategic outcomes outlined within the Private Sector Housing Strategy and enable landlords to make an informed decision when letting their property.

A reference check is a system to check how a prospective tenant has conducted their previous tenancies and highlight any concerns which the landlord should be aware of. If this is the applicant's first tenancy, the Council may be unable to carry out a full reference check due to the lack of housing history.

The Private Sector Housing Team are responsible for processing the reference checks and the result is decided using the attached Traffic Light criteria. The decision is verified by two officers to ensure that the result is fair and consistent. The Private Sector Housing Team must be notified within 7 days of which tenant has taken the tenancy.

APPLYING FOR A REFERENCE CHECK

- The landlord will be required to submit a reference request and informed consent form in respect of the prospective tenant(s). Any member of the household who is over 16 will need to apply for a police disclosure.
- The reference request form must be signed by the tenant(s) and the landlord.
- The prospective tenants should provide as much information as possible about their previous housing history - for the past five years if possible. Most importantly full addresses and dates of where they previously lived should be provided, as well as full contact details of the landlords.

Please note: The council will not process any applications that are incomplete and signed in accordance with these instructions.

INFORMING THE LANDLORD AND THE APPLICANT

Once a decision has been made the landlord will be notified in writing within 48 hours. The landlord may initially be informed of the outcome by telephone. It is their responsibility to inform the tenant of the decision as well as informing the Local Authority who they are letting the property to.

The Council supply the reference result but it is the landlord's decision whether they are prepared to accept any applicant as a tenant for their property. However, in particular circumstances the Council may advise the landlord where an applicant is likely to sustain a successful tenancy.

The applicant may request full details of the result and an explanation of the grounds on which the decision was made by contacting the Private Sector Housing Team or via a written Freedom of Information request. The applicant may also appeal against the decision and should contact the Private Sector Housing Team for further information on the appeals process.

TIMESCALES

The Private Sector Housing Team will attempt to complete the referencing process within 10 working days. However, achieving this target depends in each case on the speed with which partners can respond to us with the information required of them.

TRAFFIC LIGHT SYSTEM

The aim of the traffic light system is to help make tenancies more sustainable 'by identifying where there are issues which may affect the suitability of certain accommodation for particular clients, or indicating where there is a need for support packages to be offered to the client. This system will allow landlords to be consistent when allocating their properties. Reference result decisions are made on merit for each individual case, taking into account the criteria set under the categories below: -

RED

History of criminal and/or serious anti-social behaviour, examples include drug dealing, problematic drug or alcohol use, prostitution, burglary, serious anti-social behaviour, wilful damage to property and housing benefit fraud, substantial rent arrears, a history of continuous rent arrears (substantial rent arrears would equate to the sum of 8 weeks Local Housing Allowance for the property type), and unsatisfied County Court Judgement(s). Extra management may be required to support these tenancies.

AMBER

History of tenancy breaches however would indicate types of behaviour that would not impact on the local community. Examples would include rent arrears, abandonment, damage to the property through negligence rather than wilful damage and rent arrears. Extra management may be required to support these tenancies

GREEN

The checks undertaken have not revealed any concerns that would affect allocation to this tenant.

INSUFFICIENT TO CLASSIFY

There is not enough information provided to carry out the necessary checks, examples of this may be people who own their own property, first time applicants.

PRIVACY NOTICE: To find out how we collect, use, share and retain your personal data, ask a member of staff or please visit <http://www.durham.gov.uk/dataprivacy>

TENANT REFERENCING FORM

PLEASE NOTE: This reference check can only commence once a fully completed request is received. **All mandatory fields must be completed or this form will be returned to you, resulting in potential delay.** The outcome of the reference check will be given in writing.

This does not constitute a 'Right to Rent' check

1. Property being applied for:

Property applied for:

Landlord/ Agent:

Landlord/ Agent contact details:

2. Applying applicant details:

| | Applicant 1 | Applicant 2 |
|--|-------------|-------------|
| Title (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Other) | | |
| Full Name: | | |
| Previous names: | | |
| DOB: | | |
| Contact number | | |
| Current address: | | |
| Receiving Housing Benefit? | | |
| Landlord details: <i>(incl contact details)</i> | | |
| Reason for leaving: | | |
| Any arrears left/ other issues? | | |

3. Additional Household members:

Please detail all persons who will be living in the property, including anyone that doesn't live with you now.

| Title (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Master/Other) | Full name | DOB | Relationship to you |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|-----|---------------------|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

5. Additional information

| | Applicant 1 | | Applicant 2 | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Are you subject to immigration control or have you come to live in the UK in the last 5 years? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do you have any unspent criminal convictions? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do you have any pending criminal convictions? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Please give details below: | | | | |
| | Applicant 1 | | Applicant 2 | |
| | | | | |

6. Data Protection Legislation

Durham County Council is registered as a Data Controllers of personal data, under Data Protection law (including the General Data Protection Regulations) with the UK Information Commissioner's Office.

Your information will be used for the purposes of completing a housing reference and assisting you with your housing circumstance. We will share your information with credit reference agencies and relevant financial institutions to help us determine your reference result.

To read our Privacy Notice (how we use, share and retain your personal data) ask a member of staff at Housing Solutions or please click on '*other council services*', then '*Housing Solutions*' at: www.durham.gov.uk/dataprivacy

7. Declaration

I/we certify that the information given in relation to my/our application is true, and understand that if I/we knowingly or recklessly give any false information then my/our application may be cancelled.

I/we understand that my/our previous landlords will be contacted in order to provide information relevant to re-housing. I/we understand that the reference information will relate to rent arrears, nuisance, noise and any other breach of tenancy.

I/we understand that the information will be stored under the conditions of the Data Protection Act 2018 and used for the purpose listed in the Data Protection Legislation section above.

| | Applicant 1 | Applicant 2 | Landlord/Agent |
|---------------|-------------|-------------|----------------|
| Signed | _____ | | |
| Date | _____ | | |

Proof of Identification for the Applicant(s) *must be* provided when this form is submitted, including:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Passport | <input type="checkbox"/> Bank Statement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Birth Certificate | <input type="checkbox"/> Welfare or Benefit document |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Driving Licence | <input type="checkbox"/> Current Tenancy Agreement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Utility Bill / Mobile Phone Bill | |

Please tick the type of identification enclosed.

Verifying Identification

Alternatively if you do not wish to enclose original documents, identification can be verified by a Council employee, landlord or agent who must complete the declaration below that they have sighted these documents. Please tick to indicate the identification shown above.

Witnessed by: _____

Position: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Landlords Checklist - Referencing

If you are intending for Durham County Council to carry out a reference check on prospective tenants on your behalf, you must ensure that all documents are completed and enclosed. The documents required are:

- A fully completed Housing History Form detailing;
- A full five year address history for each applicant, including full addresses
- Dates at previous addresses
- Full details of the previous landlord
- A disclosure for each person who will be living in the property aged 16 and over
- Proof of ID must be provided for each person applying for the reference, this can include:
 - A passport
 - Utility Bill
 - Welfare of benefit document
 - Driving licence
 - Current Local Authority or Housing Association tenancy Agreement
- Are all required areas signed and witnessed

When all documentation is completed, please return it to:

Private Sector Housing, Durham County Council, Customer Access Point, St Johns Square,
Sophia Street, Seaham, SR7 7JE

☎ 03000 268 000

✉ privatesectorhousing@durham.gov.uk

Website: <http://www.durham.gov.uk/privatelandlords>