

# The landlord grant system

## A guide for landlords

Residential team

**Housing Services**  
Civic Centre  
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CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



LONDON BOROUGH OF  
RICHMOND UPON THAMES

HOUSING

## Translation advice

If you have difficulty understanding this booklet, please visit Housing Services at the address below where we can arrange a telephone interpreting service.

Albanian

Nese keni veshtersi per te kuptuar kete botim, ju lutemi ejani ne recepcionin ne adresen e shenuar me poshte ku ne mund te organizojme perkthime nepermjet telefonit.

Arabic

إذا كانت لديك صعوبة في فهم هذا المنشور، فنرجو زيارة الإستقبال في العنوان المعطى أدناه حيث بإمكاننا أن نرتب لخدمة ترجمة شفوية هاتفية.

Bengali

এই প্রকাশনার অর্থ বুঝতে পারায় যদি আপনার কোন সমস্যা হয়, নিচে দেওয়া ঠিকানায় রিসেপশন-এ চলে আসুন যেখানে আমরা আপনাকে টেলিফোনে দোভাষীর সেবা প্রদানের ব্যবস্থা করতে পারবো।

Farsi

اگر در فهمیدن این نشریه مشکل دارید، لطفاً به میز پذیرش در آدرس قید شده در زیر رجوع فرمایید تا سرویس ترجمه تلفنی برایتان فراهم آورده شود.

Gujarati

જો તમને આ પુસ્તિકાની વિગતો સમજવામાં મુશ્કેલી પડતી હોય તો, કૃપયા નીચે જણાવેલ સ્થળના રિસેપ્શન પર આવો, જ્યાં અમે ટેલિફોન પર ગુજરાતીમાં ઇન્ટરપ્રિટીંગ સેવાની ગોઠવણ કરી આપીશું.

Punjabi

ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਪਰਚੇ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਣ ਵਿਚ ਮੁਸ਼ਕਲ ਪੇਸ਼ ਆਉਂਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਪਤੇ ਉੱਪਰ ਰਿਸੈਪਸ਼ਨ 'ਤੇ ਆਓ ਜਿੱਥੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਤੇ ਗੱਲਬਾਤ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਇੰਟਰਪ੍ਰਿਟਰ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਾਂ।

Urdu

اگر آپ کو اس اشاعت کو سمجھنے میں کوئی مشکل ہے تو، براہ کرم نیچے دیئے ہوئے ایڈریس کے استقبال پر جا کر ملیئے، جہاں ہم آپ کیلئے ٹیلیفون انٹرپرائیٹنگ سروس (ٹیلیفون پر ترجمانی کی سروس) کا انتظام کر سکتے ہیں۔

**If you would like a copy of this document in Braille, in large print, on audio tape or in a community language, please contact us on 020 8831 6017 (Minicom number 020 8891 7404).**

## 1 Introduction

The landlord grant system was introduced in May 2002 and based on the proposals of a working party of private landlords and council officers. The working party was set up at the Private Sector Forum where members were invited to take part.

The working party believes that the procedure is fair and open. It also allows us to use limited funding in the most appropriate way. The grant system was agreed by the Cabinet, which is the decision-making part of the council.

Some of the wording in the guidance was revised when the Housing Act 2004 became law on 6/4/2006, but the procedure has not changed.

## 2 What grant is available for landlords?

Landlords may apply for a discretionary grant if:

- a preliminary notice has been served ordering work to be done to make the property suitable for people to live in;
- a property has been empty for at least 6 months and the landlord agrees to lease the property to us for three to five years; or
- a landlord has applied for a licence for a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) and work is needed to meet the conditions of the licence.

**Note:** A preliminary notice is a notice which is served when an Environmental Health Officer (EHO) decides that work needs to be done to a tenanted property to deal with hazards found under the Housing, Health and Safety Rating System of the Housing Act 2004. The notice is usually served on the landlord and gives them an opportunity to discuss the work that is needed.

It is usually served before a formal notice.

## 3 What happens when a preliminary notice has been served?

The preliminary notice lists the work that needs to be done to the property, and also outlines the timescales involved. To become eligible for a grant you must sign an undertaking agreeing to carry out the work on the notice and return it in 21 days.

A grant application form is included with the notice details. The notice, which is in the form of a letter, tells you that you **must apply for a grant within 12 weeks** of the date of the notice.

We will not approve grant applications received after the 12 week period, unless you appeal against the notice, or if the circumstances are exceptional. If this is the case you must let us know why the application is late or incomplete as soon as possible and provide as many documents as you can. Then we will consider the matter fully.

If you do not sign an undertaking agreeing to the work on the preliminary notice, you will not be eligible for a grant. The undertaking must be signed and returned within 21 days of the preliminary notice.

## 4 What grant is available for empty properties?

If a property has been empty for 6 months, you may want to consider an empty property grant. To apply for this, you must agree to let the property to the council for a period of three to five years. The short-term leasing team would manage the property for you and return it to you in the same condition as when they started managing it.

An EHO and a property officer from the short-term leasing team will inspect the property and provide you with details of the work that they think needs to be done before we can let the property. The property officer will tell you the amount of rent that we would be willing to pay, whether someone lives in the property or not.

The EHO will give you a list of the work that is eligible for a grant and the documents you need to send us to make a full grant application. Generally, the grant would be:

- 50% of the cost of work, as assessed by the EHO, for three years' nomination rights;
- 60% for four years; or
- 70% for five years.

The grant budget is limited so we will consider each scheme individually.

## 5 What grant is available to help with licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)?

Some grant funding is available to landlords to help towards the cost of the following:

- provision of a means of escape in case of fire
- provision of a fire alarm and detection system;
- substantial repairs (but not if they are the result of poor maintenance);
- provision of additional bathroom or kitchen facilities (not appliances);
- provision or upgrading of an inefficient heating system;
- provision or upgrading of inadequate insulation and
- provision of security measures.

Please see our HMO Licensing Policy for more details.

## 6 How to apply for a landlord grant?

To apply for a grant, you must complete some formal documents. They are listed below for each type of grant.

Document check list for grants associated with **preliminary notices**

- A grant application form
- A certificate of intended letting (an agreement to let the property for five years)
- An agreement to follow the grant conditions for five years

- An application for, or membership of the London Landlord Accreditation Scheme (if this applies)

Document check list for grants under the **empty property scheme**

- A grant application form
- A certificate of intended letting (an agreement to let the property for five years)
- An agreement to follow the grant conditions for five years
- An agreement to nomination rights for three to five years

Document check list for grants under **HMO Licensing**

- A grant application form
- A certificate of intended letting (an agreement to let the property for five years)
- An agreement to follow the grant conditions for five years
- An application for, or membership of the London Landlord Accreditation Scheme (if this applies)

We will provide all these forms when we serve a preliminary notice or when you contact us about grants under the empty property or HMO Licensing schemes. If you do not receive the forms, or if you have difficulty filling them in, please contact the EHO dealing with your case.

You must also give us **two estimates** for the work on headed paper. The estimates must be fully itemised with a cost against every item on the schedule of works.

## 7 What are the grant conditions?

A summary of the conditions is set out below. For more details, please ask the EHO dealing with your case or see the conditions included with the application form.

- The work must be completed within 12 months of the date the grant is approved.
- We must be satisfied with the work that has been done.
- The work must be carried out by one of the contractors who provided an estimate for the work.

- The property must be available for letting for the entire grant condition period (five years from the work being completed).
- You must repay the grant if you get rid of the property (usually if you sell it), within the five year grant condition period.
- The property must be suitably insured for the five-year condition period.
- Any later owner must follow these conditions.
- The property must be suitable for people to live in throughout the grant condition period, and free from hazards

## **8 In what circumstances will a grant application be refused?**

### **a If you have been successfully prosecuted for not following Housing Act Notices**

This condition relates to a five-year period before the date you applied. It includes any property you own in the borough and not just the property that you want a grant for.

If we approve the grant and you are later prosecuted, we will cancel the grant and reclaim any payments.

### **b If you have been successfully prosecuted for not following management regulations**

Details as above (8a)

### **c If you have been successfully prosecuted for tenant harassment or illegal eviction**

Details as above (8a)

### **d If you breach HMO Licence conditions**

### **e If work in default was carried out at the property**

If we serve a statutory notice and the work is not done, we have the power to do the work and charge the landlord. This condition applies if we have had to do work within a five-year period before the date of the application. It only relates to the property in question.

### **f If the application for a grant was not made within 12 weeks of the date on a preliminary notice**

See point 3 above.

### **g If previous grants have been awarded**

A grant will not be available if the same or similar work has been carried out to the property using a previous grant.

### **h If the property is in a poor condition and has been badly maintained in the past**

This relates to properties that have suffered from long-term neglect due to the current landlord. You should be able to provide evidence of regular maintenance at the property.

## **9 When would a grant have to be repaid?**

If you have provided false information or you do not follow any of the conditions of the grant, we can demand that you repay the grant.

## **10 How do you work out a landlord grant when a preliminary notice has been served?**

The EHO will base the grant on the costs of the lower of two estimates. However, each individual cost will be assessed against the residential team's in-house schedule of costs. We will tell you if your estimates are too high and will invite you to send us a third estimate. Our assessment of the costs is known as the 'eligible expense'.

Once we have worked out the eligible expense, we will use the following conditions to assess how much grant will be available. If you meet any one condition, you will be entitled to a certain percentage of the grant. This will be up to 80% of the eligible expense. The grant covers costs up to **£20,000** for properties that only one person lives in and **£5,000** for each unit in a HMO.

<b>Condition</b>	<b>Percentage of the grant that is available if condition is met</b>
<p><b>Are rents lower than the average in the area?</b></p> <p>Properties let to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● protected tenants;</li> <li>● housing association tenants;</li> <li>● people claiming Housing Benefit; and</li> <li>● us through short-term lease arrangements;</li> </ul> <p>will automatically qualify but the landlord must agree to continue letting to these categories of tenants for the five-year condition period.</p> <p>Otherwise, you would have to prove that your rent is lower than the average for the area. We will ask the Rent Officer to advise us on this.</p>	<p><b>10%</b></p>
<p><b>Is the work unlikely to result in an increase in rent?</b></p> <p>Properties let to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● protected tenants;</li> <li>● housing association tenants;</li> <li>● people claiming Housing Benefit; and</li> <li>● us through short-term lease arrangements;</li> </ul> <p>will automatically qualify but the landlord must agree to continue letting to these categories of tenants for the five-year condition period.</p> <p>Work to provide fire protection in HMOs will also qualify.</p>	<p><b>10%</b></p>
<p><b>Will we receive nomination rights for three to five years?</b></p> <p>This operates on a sliding scale, and would include situations where nomination rights are offered immediately or when existing tenants move out. It usually only applies to assured shorthold tenancies.</p> <p>This could be achieved by offering us single occupancy properties for short-term lease agreements.</p> <p>It could also be used in HMOs if we can nominate tenants when units become available, but this would have to be agreed for most of the units in the property.</p> <p>Housing associations receive the maximum amount available for this condition.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Up to 20%</p> <p>Three years - 10% Four years - 15% Five years - 20%</p>

<b>Condition</b>	<b>Percentage of the grant that is available if condition is met</b>
<p><b>Will we set the maximum rent?</b></p> <p>This would only be considered with the nomination rights outlined above. Housing associations receive the maximum amount available for this condition.</p>	<b>10%</b>
<p><b>Is the landlord meeting his or her duties in managing the property?</b></p> <p>The landlord must prove that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● the property is properly insured;</li> <li>● they use suitable tenancy agreements; and</li> <li>● regular repair and maintenance work is carried out.</li> </ul> <p>We will need to see supporting documents to meet this condition.</p> <p>Please see ‘The Good Landlord Guide’.</p>	<b>10%</b>
<p><b>Is the work in line with our aims?</b></p> <p>This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● keeping HMOs;</li> <li>● bringing empty properties back into use;</li> <li>● making properties suitable for people to live in and free from hazards;</li> <li>● dealing with major repairs;</li> <li>● taking part in the rent deposit scheme;</li> <li>● taking part in the short-term lease scheme; and</li> <li>● improving energy efficiency in the private sector.</li> </ul> <p>Please see ‘Housing Strategy 2001-2005’.</p>	<b>10%</b>
<p><b>Is the property part of the London Landlord Accreditation Scheme?</b></p> <p>If the landlord is not in the scheme but s/he agrees to apply for membership and is willing to meet the requirements of the scheme, this condition will be met.</p> <p>Please see ‘The London Landlord Accreditation Scheme’.</p>	<b>10%</b>

## 11 How does this work in practice?

The following examples show how the system would work in two particular situations.

### Example A

An HMO property does not have any fire protection. We serve a preliminary notice ordering major fire protection work to be done. The property contains six units, four let to people who receive Housing Benefit and two let to statutory tenants. We assess the costs at £15,000 (eligible expense).

The landlord agrees that the four units let to people who receive Housing Benefit can be used for nomination rights when the current tenancies end in 12 months.

Meets first condition - allow 10%	(Housing Benefit and statutory tenants)
Meets second condition - allow 10%	(Housing Benefit and statutory tenants)
Meets third condition - allow 15%	(nomination rights for four years for four units)
Meets fourth condition - 0%	(rents controlled by the landlord)
Meets fifth condition - allow 10%	(meets duties and obligations)
Meets sixth condition - allow 10%	(property is HMO)
Meets seventh condition - allow 10%	(agrees to apply and meet conditions)

Total: 65% of £15,000 = **£9,750 grant**

### Example B

A single-occupancy property has one statutory tenant. We serve a notice ordering major repairs to be done. We assess the cost of the work as £10,000.

Meets first condition - allow 10%	(statutory tenant)
Meets second condition - allow 10%	(statutory tenant)
Meets fifth condition - allow 10%	(meets duties and obligations)
Meets sixth condition - allow 10%	(property needs major repairs)
Meets seventh condition - allow 10%	(agrees to apply and meet conditions)

Total: 50% of £10,000 = **£5,000 grant**

## 12 How do you work out a landlord grant for an empty property grant?

The EHO will base the grant on their schedule of works and the lower of your two estimates. We will work out the eligible expense in the same way that we work out the grants linked to preliminary notices.

Once we have decided the eligible expense, we will tell you how much grant would be available if you agree to nomination rights for three (50% of the eligible expense), four (60%) or five (70%) years. You should then tell us, in writing, what you would prefer.

### **13 How do you work out a landlord grant for an HMO licence?**

This grant is assessed in the same way as grants linked to preliminary notices. The amount of grant is based on the conditions set out in point 10.

### **14 When can the work start?**

Work can begin once your grant is approved. You will receive a letter from us giving formal approval and setting out how much grant will be paid to you.

### **15 Standard of work**

The case EHO must be satisfied with all grant-aided work and it must be done in line with building regulations and planning requirements. The following standards of good practice must be followed.

- Work in tenanted properties must be carried out so that services can be maintained, taking account of the tenant's welfare, health and safety.
- All disturbed or damaged surfaces must be made good.
- All incidental and associated work must be carried out.
- All fixtures and fittings must be removed and then refitted as necessary.
- All work must be carried out to a good standard.
- Good-quality materials must be used.
- When the work has been completed, the building must be left in a clean and tidy condition.
- Any unforeseen/additional works must be agreed with the EHO before they begin.

### **16 How to contact the EHOs in the residential team**

#### **A In person**

We are based in the Civic Centre, York Street, Twickenham TW1 3BZ. You can visit us by calling in to the atrium of the Civic Centre and asking for us at the main reception. However, as

we are often out of the office, you may want to phone us before you visit to arrange an appointment.

The Civic Centre is accessible for people who are in wheelchairs.

If you cannot visit the Civic Centre, but live near one of our area offices, you can ask the receptionist there to phone us and we will talk to you directly.

#### **B By phone**

You can phone us through the main switchboard on **020 8891 1411** or on our direct lines which are listed on the following page.

A minicom system is available for people with hearing difficulties and you can contact us on **020 8891 7404**.

#### **C By email**

You can contact us by email at [residentialeh@richmond.gov.uk](mailto:residentialeh@richmond.gov.uk) (or at our individual email addresses which are listed on the following page).

#### **D By post**

Our address is:

The London Borough of Richmond upon Thames  
Residential Team  
Room 118  
Civic Centre  
44 York Street  
Twickenham  
Middlesex  
TW1 3BZ.

### **17 When to contact us**

The office is open from 9 am to 5.15 pm, Monday to Thursday, and from 9 am to 5 pm on Fridays.

## 18 EHO contact details

Environmental Health Officers	Phone number	Email address
Lola Adepoju	020 8891 7896	<a href="mailto:l.adepoju@richmond.gov.uk">l.adepoju@richmond.gov.uk</a>
Donna Hamilton (Wednesday pm Thursday & Friday only)	020 8891 7893	<a href="mailto:donna.hamilton@richmond.gov.uk">donna.hamilton@richmond.gov.uk</a>
Nick Hancock	020 8891 7857	<a href="mailto:n.hancock@richmond.gov.uk">n.hancock@richmond.gov.uk</a>
Rebecca Wilson	020 8891 7894	<a href="mailto:r.wilson@richmond.gov.uk">r.wilson@richmond.gov.uk</a>

## 19 The managers

**Rod Birtles** is the Joint Assistant Director of Housing with overall responsibility for the service. His phone number is: **020 8891 7881**. His email address is [r.birtles@richmond.gov.uk](mailto:r.birtles@richmond.gov.uk)

**Eleanor Dowling** is the Private Sector Housing Manager with day-to-day responsibility for the service. Her phone number is: **020 8891 7892**. Her email address is: [e.dowling@richmond.gov.uk](mailto:e.dowling@richmond.gov.uk)

## 20 How to complain

If you have a complaint about our service, you should first contact the officer dealing with your case. If you are still not satisfied, please contact the Private Sector Housing Manager. If you still feel that your complaint has not been sorted out appropriately, you may then complain to the Joint Assistant Director of Housing. Details of both managers are set out above.

If you still feel that you want to take your complaint further, you should fill in an official complaint form. You can get this from area offices, libraries and the Civic Centre. It is also available on our website at [www.richmond.gov.uk](http://www.richmond.gov.uk)

If you have gone through our complaint procedure but still feel that we have not sorted out your complaint, you can contact the **Local Government Ombudsman** at:

10th Floor  
Millbank Tower  
Millbank  
London SW1P 4QP

Phone: **020 7217 4620**

Fax: **020 7217 4621**

Website: [www.lgo.org.uk/contact.htm](http://www.lgo.org.uk/contact.htm)

## 21 Other useful leaflets

You may find the following leaflets useful. You can get them from the EHOs. Some are also available on our website at: [www.richmond.gov.uk/housing](http://www.richmond.gov.uk/housing)

- 1 Advice for landlords of HMOs
- 2 Advice for tenants of HMOs
- 3 Fire precaution information for landlords
- 4 The empty property schemes
- 5 Short-term leasing
- 6 The London Landlord Accreditation Scheme
- 7 The good landlord guide
- 8 HMO Licensing Policy



# Feedback form

**So that we can improve our service, we would be grateful to receive your feedback about this leaflet or about the landlord grant system (or both).**

Name:

Organisation:

Address:

Phone number:

Email address:

Comments and suggestions

**Thank you for taking the time to fill in this form.  
Please return it to FREEPOST SEA4735.**

London Borough of Richmond upon Thames 2007

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