



Private Rented Sector Information

These days, the most realistic option for many people looking for a home is to find one through the private rented sector.

In Dacorum, we have more than 6,000 people on our Housing Register, so even if you source accommodation through the Council's homeless route there is no guarantee this will result in social rented housing.

The private sector, whilst it can be more expensive, could offer you the choice that you wouldn't otherwise get through an approach to the Council.

We accept that the prospect of renting privately can be daunting because of the costs, but there is help available. All the information you need for taking the private renting route is below:

Where can I find properties to rent?

You can find properties to rent privately through many different websites. Some examples are given below.

gumtree.com

spareroom.co.uk

mitula.co.uk

zoopla.co.uk

dssmove.co.uk

newsnow.co.uk

rightmove.co.uk

You can also try looking in local newspapers and shop windows.

How can I get the money required for a Deposit and Rent in Advance?

For many people, finding the money required up front to rent a property is hard. There are ways to get help with this.

Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP): If you are in receipt of Housing Benefit then you can apply for a DHP to cover a deposit. You need to meet certain criteria for this. You can find out more on our website: [Discretionary Housing Payments](#)

Homeless Prevention Fund If you are homeless or threatened with homelessness and need help with paying your rent in advance, the Council may be able to lend you the money for this. We pay the money directly to your landlord and then work out an

affordable repayment plan with you. You would also need to meet certain criteria for this. Please speak to your Homeless Advice and Prevention Officer for more information.

I can't afford the rent for a privately rented property

There's no getting away from it, privately renting can be costly, but it could be more affordable than you think. There are several ways you can try to get around this.

Income Maximization

Even if you are working, you may be entitled to some benefits assistance. There are two benefit calculators below you can try – just input all your information and it can tell you what you may be able to claim.

turn2us.org.uk

entitledto.co.uk

If you are concerned about affordability, take a look at the Money Advice Service's **Budget Planner**. It is broken down to account for everything you may be regularly spending, so can help you to work out what you can afford and possibly even the areas you could cut back on to maximize your income.

Employment

With the changes to the benefits system, the benefit cap and Universal Credit being rolled out, it is a difficult time for people who are in receipt of benefits. This could have a huge impact on what is and isn't affordable for you.

The best way to overcome this is to look at employment options.

Not everyone is able to work full time, but even getting a part time job could make things easier for you.

If you've been out of work for a while, you may feel daunted at the thought of getting back **into the system, but there are national and local services set up to help people like you** back into work. Take a look at the following links:

South Hill Centre STRIVE Hub – employment support

JobCentre Plus

Reed in Partnership

Location

If you struggling to find something affordable for you locally then you may wish to consider moving to another area.

Dacorum is an expensive place to live because it has such good transport links to London.

Why not take a look at this **House Price Calculator** to see which areas are the most and least affordable for people looking for somewhere to rent. Even if you don't want to move, it may be worth looking just to get an idea of average prices here and elsewhere.

Look at different property types

Depending on your circumstances, it may be worthwhile to look at different types of homes or rooms for rent.

If you can't afford to rent a whole property yourself, you could look at renting a room in a shared house. This won't be suitable for everyone, but it can be an affordable option for single people and couples without children.

You could also look into sharing a property with a friend so you're splitting the costs between you.

I don't want to privately rent – the landlord can just kick me out and I don't want to move every six months.

This is a common misconception. Any tenancy - whether with a private or social landlord - can be ended.

At the moment, if you are a private tenant, a landlord could end your tenancy without needing a specific reason for doing so, but there is a legal process that they need to go through before they can do this.

It's worth remembering that it's not in a landlord's interest to get new tenants in every six months. If there are no rent or tenancy issues and both parties are happy, private tenancies often last for many years.

I don't know what my rights are

It's important that as a tenant - regardless of whether you rent privately or have a social housing landlord - you know what your rights are.

You can find out more information about your rights and responsibilities as a private tenant on our website: **Private Tenants**

I've found a property I like – what do I do now?

Great! If you've found a property you like and you want to start renting it on an **Assured Shorthold Tenancy**, make sure that you read the Government's booklet: **How to Rent**