



Referencing Service Guidelines

Expert support for your business



Working with HomeLet

This booklet contains the following two sections:

1. Referencing Service Guidelines (RSG)

The RSG includes information on how the referencing application process works and outlines the best ways to make sure we can process referencing applications as quickly as possible.

2. Referencing Service Level Agreement (RSLA)

The RSLA outlines the targets and timelines we work to so we can continually deliver you exceptional service. It also describes how we must work together to ensure all references are carried out most efficiently.

Contents

Section 1: Referencing Service Guidelines

| | |
|--|----|
| Let's get started..... | 4 |
| Take control with Connect..... | 5 |
| Referencing applications..... | 6 |
| Types of applicant and income..... | 10 |
| Renewing your HomeLet rent protection..... | 14 |
| HomeLet rent protection..... | 15 |
| Any questions?..... | 16 |
| Affordability calculator..... | 17 |

Section 2: Referencing Service Level Agreement

| | |
|---|----|
| Our referencing products..... | 19 |
| Referencing application process..... | 20 |
| Data Protection Act and compliance..... | 22 |
| Complaints..... | 22 |



Referencing Service Guidelines.

Let's get started

Welcome to HomeLet

Now that you're a HomeLet customer, our team is an extension of yours, and we're here to support you at every step. You can contact our Referencing department directly if you need support with a particular reference or our criteria. Our Customer Development Team are also here to help you make the most of our proposition and maximise your opportunities.

Your Agent Scheme Number

Your unique customer scheme number can be found in the 'Welcome to HomeLet' letter and email you'll have received after joining us. Please quote the number in all correspondence with us. You'll also need this number when logging into Connect (see page 5).

Take control with Connect

Connect is an online system specifically designed for our letting agent customers.

It allows you to manage your referencing and insurance activities (where applicable) at the click of a button and is very easy to use.

All you need to get started with Connect is your username and password, which you should have received via email. Please get in touch with the Customer Development Team if you haven't received these details. Once you're logged in, you can:

Enter new referencing applications

Simplify the referencing application process by emailing a link to your applicant for them to complete their own details.

How to send the applicant link:

- Enter basic information about the applicant.
- Send the link to the applicant for them to enter more information.
- Review the application online once the applicant's details have been entered.
- Confirm the applicant's signed the declaration and that you're happy for us to start the reference.
- Upload all declarations via the email assessor function on Connect for every application, particularly larger employers.
- Keep a paper copy of the declaration on file.

...and we'll take care of everything from there.

View case notes

Review the entire case log to get real-time updates on the progress we've made on your applications.

View referencing reports

An email notification will be sent when your referencing reports are ready to download. You can also view your three most recent reports.

Process rent protection

Arrange and renew your rent protection policies quickly and easily (depending on your HomeLet status).

View invoices

Keep track of your finances at the click of a button, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Personalise your own space

Make Connect your own by branding it with your company logo.

View your business reports

Keep up to date with all your HomeLet products by viewing a summary of your reports and invoices.

Download documents

View, download, and print documents such as referencing application forms, referencing information and policy documents.

Referencing applications

Everything you need to know about making an application.

Tenancy Application Score (TAS)

Each individual receives a Tenancy Application Score (TAS) as part of the referencing process. All applicants start with the same score, and points are added or deducted according to the information on the person's credit file and the Electoral Roll.

This score can't be changed by our employees and has been devised specifically for the lettings industry. You can reassure applicants that previous credit searches (such as credit card applications) will not impact their Tenancy Application Score.

| | Acceptable | Acceptable with guarantor | Decline |
|-----|--|--|---------------|
| TAS | 710+ (rent protection products) 618+ (non rent protection products) | 545 – 709 (rent protection products) 545 – 617 (non rent protection products) | Less than 545 |

No score

Where a score hasn't been issued, we've been unable to check for any credit history. Once we complete the final report, it will be sent with the condition that you obtain proof of residency and keep a copy of this on file.

A No Score for an applicant currently residing in the UK can occasionally indicate that they are trying to mask adverse credit history or have made a spelling mistake in their name. Please ask all applicants to fill in their application form carefully, ensuring all data provided is accurate, as this can impact the findings of the referencing report otherwise.

Please always request proof of residency and identity from applicants to protect yourselves.

Proof of residency

This isn't always required, but sometimes we'll need you to obtain proof of residency for applicants or guarantors, and we'll tell you this in the final report.

If we ask for proof of residency, please keep this information safe as you'll need it in case of a rent protection claim. The claim may be declined if we've specifically asked you to obtain proof of residency, and you don't have the information.

Acceptable forms of proof of address

- Driving licence showing current address.
- Utility bill (no older than three months).

- Council Tax bill (we'll only accept statements dated within the current council tax year).
- Home services provider bill, such as broadband or digital TV (no older than three months).
- Current TV licence.
- Homeowner's current home insurance policy schedule.
- Current mortgage statement (correspondence address and address the mortgage applies to must be the same).
- Tenancy agreement signed and dated within the last six months (the applicant being referenced must be a named tenant on the tenancy agreement).
- Letter from the applicant's employer, on company-headed paper, signed and dated.
- Recent documentation confirming the applicant will be/is receiving local housing allowance or housing benefit.
- Bank/credit card statements (for the last three months).

This list isn't exhaustive, and we will review any documents, not on this list.

The following documents definitely can't be accepted:

- Other financial statements.
- HM Revenue & Customs documents.
- NHS medical card.
- Letters from accountants or solicitors.

How we make a decision

We review each application carefully, considering many factors, which we'll discuss over the following few pages. Once we've made a decision, we'll produce a referencing report for you.

You must not show this report to the applicant, as the report contains third party data along with confidential references obtained to support our decision making process. As mentioned in your Terms of Business Agreement, the overall tenancy decision rests with you, and our referencing service is only one factor in that decision-making process. If you provide a copy of the report to the prospective landlord, you must give it to them entirely and without alteration and they must not share the report with the applicant. You must also include a statement that we do not accept any liability to the prospective landlord.

It's important to note that the possibility of an 'acceptable' decision is also affected by CCJs, Bankruptcies and

IVAs. If disclosed CCJs are identified, but the score's still within the 'acceptable' range, an application may still be acceptable, but a guarantor may be required. Any application with undisclosed and unsatisfied CCJs will be returned as not acceptable.

Tenant Application Tracker

Applicants can track their references and view their applications online by using the Tenant Application Tracker. It's available for applicants referenced through our Enhance, Optimum and Inspire products (excluding guarantors).

Keeping up-to-date

Through Connect, you can track the status and get updates on all your referencing applications.

Fast turnaround times

We understand how important it is to do things as swiftly as possible, so we aim to complete the majority of Enhance and Optimum reports within 24 hours.

Of course, this turnaround's subject to all referees responding immediately. If for whatever reason, responses are delayed, we'll let you know in your daily progress report, which can be viewed on Connect. You can also keep track of your references by viewing our case notes at any time.

Below is a list of average response times based on common job types that you can expect to take longer than usual:

| Company | Average turnaround (working days) |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Leading broadcasting company | 5 |
| Airports | 5 |
| Leading insurance provider | 5 |
| Local authorities | 5–7 |
| Department of Work & Pensions | 5–7 |
| Leading telephone company | 7 |
| Emergency services | 7 |
| Leading pharmaceutical company | 7 |
| Leading IT company | 7 |
| Airforce, Army and Navy | 7 |
| Leading energy supplier | 7 |
| NHS | 7 |
| Leading supermarket | 7 |
| Leading bank | 7–14 |

Response times

These response times are based on the assumption that the applicant has supplied us with all the information asked for on the application. Wherever possible, it's best to include more than one contact number and an email address – these extra contact details could speed up your references.

We find that, in over 60% of cases, larger employers will require the applicant's signed permission before releasing any sensitive personal information, such as their salary – so it's important to make sure you always have a signed declaration on file.

If we contact you for the declaration, and you don't hold a copy of it, the application will be placed on hold until we receive it.

i We need a signature – even if you're making the application electronically – because we have to meet the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018. This signature can be an electronic or 'wet' signature, however please be advised that some referee's require 'wet' signatures specifically (we will notify the applicant of this if this is the case).

Top tips on getting it right the first time

We want to provide the best possible service to our customers, and we want you to be able to provide an equally exceptional service to your customers. That's why we've put together a few top tips to help ensure your applications can be processed as smoothly as possible:

- ✓ Make sure you have all the following employer and landlord information before logging an application on Connect:
 - Names
 - email addresses
 - phone numbers (landline only for employers, please)
- ✓ Include the full postcode of the applicant's current property. If you can't locate the applicant's current or previous address on our database, please look the address up on www.royalmail.com (link on Connect), so we can update our records.
- ✓ Give the applicant a copy of the Tenant Notification Letter, which can be downloaded from Connect (by clicking the 'Referencing' tab and selecting 'Useful information and documents'). This is a reminder for the applicant to authorise their employer and landlord to reply to our enquiries.
- ✓ Send us the signed declaration with the application form as part of your process.
- ✓ Use the application link (see page 5).

Haven't got all the information?

Please see the Referencing Service Level Agreement section at the back of this booklet (see page 18) that gives details on what to do if you don't have all the information needed to process an application.

Applicants who've been declared bankrupt or have county court judgements

County court judgements (CCJ), court decrees (CCD), bankruptcies and individual voluntary arrangements (IVA) will affect the outcome of an application. They'll be declined if the applicant fails to declare any adverse credit history.

We may ask for proof that a CCJ or IVA has been cleared and will accept a certificate of satisfaction. This must include the CCJ amount, date or number to prove the debt's been paid back.

The table below shows the outcome of an application depending on the applicant's adverse credit history:

| Scenario | The outcome of the application (subject to other information being satisfactory) |
|---|---|
| One declared CCJ/CCD under £300 | Subject to final TAS and all other references, the applicant may be acceptable, or acceptable with a suitable guarantor |
| One declared CCJ/CCD over £300 or more than one CCJ/CCD of any amount | Subject to the final TAS and all other references, the applicant may be acceptable with a suitable guarantor. The applicant will always be classed as not acceptable if the CCJ's over £5,000 |
| Non-declared CCJ/CCD | The applicant will be declined. There may be scope to appeal this decision where the CCJ/CCD has been satisfied, and the applicant can produce a certificate of satisfaction |
| Declared bankrupt or declared IVA | The applicant will be accepted with a guarantor, subject to all other references and TAS being satisfactory |
| Non-declared bankrupt/IVA | The applicant will be declined |
| No score | Where a score hasn't been issued, we've been unable to check for any credit history. We will request confirmation of the applicant's address history and re-run the checks if any changes occur. If there is still no score after this, we will ask that you obtain proof of residency and keep a copy of this on file. We may also request further documentation to support the applicant's reference. |

Please note: as cases differ depending on the individual, it's impossible to know a TAS's outcome before an application is submitted.

It's only natural that your applicant might have some questions about their credit information. If so, they'll need to contact our credit supplier to obtain their Statutory Credit Report – this can be done online at creditkarma.co.uk.

Income-to-rent ratio

Our final report provides an income-to-rent ratio on the applicant's ability to cover the rent. This must equal:

- 2.5 x the annual rent (or the individual's proportion of the annual rent), or
- 3 x the rent amount x the tenancy duration if the applicant is being referenced on independent means, or
- 3 x the annual rent if being assessed as a guarantor.

The table below shows the different income-to-rent ratios for standard referencing applications:

| Income to rent ratio | Outcome of application (subject to other information being satisfactory) | |
|----------------------|---|----------------|
| | Tenant | Guarantor |
| 0 – 2.47 | Acceptable with a guarantor | Not Acceptable |
| 2.48 – 2.99 | Acceptable | Not Acceptable |
| 3 or above | Acceptable | Acceptable |

The table below shows the different income-to-rent ratios for applicants being assessed on independent means:

| Income to rent ratio | Outcome of application (subject to other information being satisfactory) | |
|----------------------|---|----------------|
| | Tenant | Guarantor |
| 0 – 1.49 | Not Acceptable | Not Acceptable |
| 1.5 – 2.99 | Acceptable with a guarantor | Not Acceptable |
| 3 or above | Acceptable | Acceptable |

Employment

To accept applicants without a guarantor, they must be employed (or starting a job within 31 days) or have sufficient savings or benefits.

If the applicant isn't due to start a job until at least 32 days after the tenancy start date, they'll likely need a guarantor (unless they are paying the rent in advance*). However, if they're going to start work in a professional position (see following table), they can begin within 62 days after the tenancy starts without needing a guarantor.

*Where an applicant pays rent in advance, rent protection will not be available.

What do we need?

To verify employment, we'll attempt to take current and/or future employer references. If the applicant knows they're leaving their job within the next six months, they should provide forthcoming employment details.

Below is a list of jobs we class as professional. It's not exhaustive, and other professions may be considered:

| Professional jobs | |
|--|--|
| Accountant (including trainee accountants) | Doctor |
| Optician | Research Fellow |
| Actuary | Environmental Consultant |
| Paramedic | RGN Nurse |
| Architect | Environmental Health Officer |
| Pastor | Scientist |
| Armed Services | Financial Analyst |
| Pharmacist (including pre registration pharmacists) | Solicitor |
| Barrister | Fireman |
| Physiotherapist | Speech & Language Therapist |
| Business Analyst | High Court Judge |
| Pilot | Statistician |
| Chief Executive | Hydrologist |
| Podiatrist | Surgeon |
| Chiropractor | Journalist |
| Police | Surveyor |
| Chartered Engineer (has completed the necessary training and examinations) | Lawyer |
| Psychiatrist | Teacher/University Lecturer |
| Dentist | Medical Writer/ Associate Medical Writer |
| Radiographer | |

- An acceptable TAS - refer to the table below.
- A good credit history with no more than one small declared CCJ/CCD (up to £300).
- An annual income of at least 3 x the annual rent.

If rent protection isn't required, a guarantor can be an overseas resident but must be employed (all other

financial statuses are not acceptable).

Please be aware that guarantors will be charged at the same price as the applicant reference they are attached to. If you have any questions about this, contact your Customer Development Manager.

The table below shows the acceptable TAS score for guarantors:

| | Acceptable | Decline |
|-----|--|-------------|
| TAS | 710+ (rent protection products) 618+ (non-rent protection products) | 617 or Less |

Deed of Guarantee

It'll be a condition of the rent protection cover if a guarantor was required for the referencing that there's a legally binding and enforceable guarantee in place – it's all about protecting landlords, your business and ours.

This is a condition of our rent protection policies. Please refer to the policy wording for full detail.

Types of applicant and income

In this section, we'll look at the different applicants you'll meet and everything you need to consider when making an application.

It's best practice to name all parties on the tenancy agreement and to assess each person individually. If you'd like to arrange a rent protection policy, you'll need to ensure you reference all tenants. Permitted occupiers won't be covered.

i If you accept tenancy agreements that have been signed electronically, you'll also need to ask your applicants for additional photo ID.

This photo ID must include a copy of all applicants' signatures – such as a passport or photocard driving licence. You need to keep copies of these on file as you may need them if you make a claim.

The following should help you determine how many application forms will be needed:

Types of applicant

Every applicant needs to have their own referencing application. Even if they do not have their own income, they will only be a permitted occupier, or there are no references to obtain. They can be linked by property using our system.

A couple of things to note:

- Applicants who have lived in the UK for less than six months can't be referenced through our insight service.
- Applicants who have declared adverse credit history are unable to be on a £0 rent share (permitted occupier); they must be placed on an equal share of the total rent.
- Applicants who have an undeclared adverse credit history or a not acceptable TAS (see page 8) are able to be on a £0 rent share; however, the report will be sent as not acceptable.
- Rent protection can't be provided where the rent is paid in advance.
- Where rent protection is required, each applicant must be referenced, and each applicant must be acceptable in their own right and the total rental shares across all acceptable references must be equal to or more than the rental amount on the tenancy.

If you have multiple applicants applying to rent a property, please make sure to:

- Specify the total rent for the property and each applicant's share (this can be done when logging the initial application on Connect).

- Make certain individual shares add up to the total rent.

Students

Students need a guarantor to support them unless they have Government funding for living expenses which is at least 2.5 x higher than the annual rent.

Other things to consider:

- Each student and guarantor must be assessed individually on their share of the rent.
- If the student can't provide a guarantor, they must pay the rent for the full term of the tenancy in advance (rent protection can't be provided where the rent is paid in advance), or provide proof of Government funding for living expenses, as mentioned above.
- If the student receives non-taxable income, we can add 25% onto the figure of their bursary/scholarship/stipend income.

For all students, please use the student and guarantor application form.

Types of income

Individuals on housing benefits or local housing allowance

Most unemployed applicants will require a suitable guarantor. However, if the applicant meets affordability using their benefits income, they may not need a guarantor (dependent on their TAS). Please use the unemployed/housing benefit application form for these applicants.

Self-employed

All self-employed applicants must have been self-employed for at least one year and be able to provide their most recent fully submitted tax return or a satisfactory reference from their accountant.

If they've been self-employed for less than a year, they'll either need a guarantor or have to pay the full tenancy rental amount in advance. Please note, where the total rental amount's paid in advance rent protection isn't available.

Other things to consider:

- If the applicant is on the Pay As You Earn (PAYE) scheme, their application will be treated the same way as someone employed. Please mark their application as 'employed' and provide complete

employment information.

- Applicants must state how long their accountant's acted for them and supply the accountant's:
 - Name
 - Company name
 - Address
 - Phone number
 - Email address
- Applicants should let their accountant know they've permitted us to contact them.
- If the applicant doesn't use an accountant, we can accept one year's authenticated self-assessment tax return forms.
- Directors of limited companies are classified by us as employed; stating otherwise may cause delays in the application process.
- Applicants who are on the Construction Industry Scheme (CIS) are classed as self-employed, and we will require either their most recent fully submitted tax return or a satisfactory reference from their accountant – we cannot accept invoices showing tax being deducted in place of a tax return.

Volunteers

Those who volunteer, and are unpaid, should be assessed in the same way as unemployed or housing benefit applicants. They may need a guarantor or pay the total tenancy rental amount in advance. Rent protection can't be provided where the rent is paid in advance.


Individuals employed by a relative

Some of your applicants may be employed by a relative. In these cases, applicants must provide independent evidence of a salary from a source within the company – not from a family member or details of their company accountant.

If they can't do this, we need to see their last three months' payslips.

Applicants moving from overseas

These applicants cannot be referenced on an Insight application unless they have been living in the UK for at least six months. Six months is necessary to provide a meaningful view of credit history.

 Need help with right-to-rent checks? Speak to your Customer Development Manager about HomeLet Verify – Available now!

Pensioners and the retired

Pensioners and those who are retired should provide a copy of either:

- Annual pension statement
- State pension letter
- Monthly pension slip

- Bank statements for the last three months that verify their income
- Most recent P60 showing their pension income

These can be submitted with the application. If you can obtain the pension statement, it could speed up the reference.

A pension income must be 2.5 x the annual rent to be acceptable. Please be advised that we can accept a pension document dated any year – as pension amounts only ever increase.

Companies

We are only able to reference companies that are UK-Registered. If you're dealing with a Public Limited Company (PLC), Private Limited Company (Ltd), or Limited Liability Partnership (LLP) company, remember we can only reference them when the property is for residential purposes. Don't forget to use the company application form on Connect.

Other things to consider:

If an employee is paying part of the rent, they also need to be referenced. If two references are required, two applications will need to be logged, one for the employee as an individual in the usual format and one for the company using a company application form

- If rent protection is required, you'll need to send us a copy of the tenancy agreement for review.
- If the employer isn't a PLC, Ltd or LLP company, we'll need to reference the individual and receive written confirmation from the employer that they'll be paying the rent.
- Companies that are less than three years old, or with no filed accounts, will need to provide a guarantor and a guarantor application will need to be completed (if the guarantor is employed by the company being referenced, they will need to provide secondary income).
- Where a company has been referenced, rent protection can only be provided if the occupant is an employee or director of the referenced company.
- Companies can act as a guarantor for an individual or another company if they have been incorporated for more than 3 years and their credit limit is at or above the rental amount required.
- Companies cannot act as guarantors for their own directors.

If you have any queries relating to the above, please email companyqueries@homelet.co.uk – enquiries to this address have a turnaround time of 24 hours.

Living on independent means

We can consider the following as proof of income:

- Their most recent statements show at least 3x the sum of the total rent for the tenancy term. We'll take the lowest figure from those supplied. Statements must be:
 - Dated in the last 30 days
 - Applicant's/guarantor's name is visible
 - Non-editable format
 - Outstanding balance accepted (50% considered if a joint account)
- Investment income – considered on a case-by-case basis, it will need to show:
 - £30,000 or more (we will consider 50% of the value of the investment income towards affordability due to the fluctuation in the market)
 - Be the most recent portfolio
 - Show the name
 - Non-editable format
- A solicitor's letter dated within the last 30 days showing sufficient equity from a house sale that has been fully completed and confirms the funds are available:
 - If the house sale was over 30 days ago, we would require a bank statement confirming the funds are still available.
 - Or proof that the exchange has taken place and that completion will take place within 30 days of the exchange date.

There are other types of income, and in some circumstances, we can consider these. Here are a few examples:

| Income | Considerations |
|---|--|
| Disability Living Allowance | Can be considered when supplied with a copy of the statement or other form of notification from the Benefits Agency confirming the applicant's entitlement |
| Employment and Support Allowance (long-term incapacity benefit) | It can be considered when supplied with a copy of the statement or other form of notification from the Benefits Agency confirming the applicant's entitlement. The benefit received must cover the term of the tenancy to be considered |
| Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit | Can be considered when supplied with a copy of the Tax Credits Award from HM Revenue & Customs. We'll always need to see the most recent award letter in case there's been a change in circumstances |
| Bursaries | It can be considered if the bursary's a living allowance. The applicant should provide written confirmation from the bursary provider. If the bursaries for tuition fees, it can't be considered. If the applicant's an international student, we can accept a letter from the relevant Government office confirming their income |
| Maintenance | It can be considered if the maintenance has been fixed as a result of a court order, and the applicant can provide the relevant official documentation. If the maintenance has been decided amicably between the two parties, we'll require six months' worth of bank statements showing a regular amount being paid |
| Dividends | It can be considered if a reference from an accountant can be supplied, or the applicant can show proof of receipt of dividends in the form of their most recent fully submitted tax return. |
| Universal Credit | It can be considered when supplied with the last three months' bank statements or the previous three months' screenshots from their online universal credit account, as long as this shows the name and the amount paid. |

This list isn't exhaustive, and other benefits/income may be considered. If the benefit/payment can be legally withdrawn at any time, then, unfortunately, we won't be able to take it into account.

Renewing your HomeLet rent protection

Rent protection can only be renewed in certain circumstances, so it's essential to check the applicant, rent and property before doing so.

The table below shows the different scenarios of when a HomeLet rent protection can and can't be renewed:

| Scenario | Can the rent protection be renewed? |
|---|---|
| Same tenant, same property, same rent | Yes, this can be renewed. |
| Same tenant, same property, rent increase | Yes, provided the rent hasn't increased by more than 10% of the original assessment figure 'referenced amount'. |
| Different tenant, same property, same rent | This can't be renewed for combined rent protection products (including Xpress, Extra and Advantage) but can be renewed when the rent's protected by a Rent Recovery Plus or Inspire policy, subject to an acceptable HomeLet reference for new tenants. |
| Same tenant, same property, same rent, different landlord | The requirements in this scenario may vary depending on circumstance and location. Please speak to your Customer Development Manager for more information. |
| Same tenant, same property, same rent, a different letting agent | No, a change to the letting agent will result in a change of policyholder; therefore, a new rent protection will be required, and the tenants potentially re-referenced to ensure there has been no change in circumstances. This may only differ if the previous letting agent has been acquired. |
| The same tenant paying a partial share of the rent now wants to pay all of the rent | Yes, provided the income-to-rent ratio is still met. Upon referral we can review the details of the tenant's original application for suitability under the new circumstance. Please speak to your Customer Development Manager for more detail. |
| The tenant's stayed in the same property but has changed room/flat numbers | Yes, provided the postcode, landlord, and rent are the same. |
| There's been a break in tenancy | No, the tenant must be re-assessed. |
| The individuals sharing the property have changed, but one or more remain the same | Yes, where a Rent Recovery Plus or Inspire policy is in place. Tenants will need to be assessed on the new tenancy agreement and re-referenced with acceptable outcomes if their rental shares are changed, making sure the full rental amount is referenced. Both the old and new tenancy agreements would need to be produced at the claim stage. |
| The landlord asks us to renew directly with them | No, we do not offer letting agent rent protection products directly to landlords. |
| The combined rent protection renewal date's passed | You can apply for a new rent protection policy. |
| The tenant hasn't paid the rent that's due before or on the renewal date | No – you need to make sure that, at the renewal date, the tenant's entirely up to date with their rental payments so that there are no current arrears and that you disclose any cleared arrears at renewal. You must also make us aware of any arrears or tenancy disputes that have occurred during the policy term. |

HomeLet rent protection

Even the best tenants fall on hard times.

Most rent defaults are due to an inability to pay when circumstances change rather than a refusal. Reasons can include unavoidable things like job loss, relationship breakdown, or long-term sickness. While you may be sympathetic, your landlord still needs you to provide the service you have agreed with them.

How can we help?

Here at HomeLet, we offer carefully designed rent protection products that could help secure possession and rental payments for your landlord should the tenant be unable to pay.

Rent Recovery Plus – rent protection

Our Rent Recovery Plus rent protection product includes cover for professional costs and rental arrears.

Inspire – reference and rent protection combined

Our Inspire rent protection product includes referencing, plus cover for professional costs and rental arrears.

If you provide a guarantee to your landlord as part of the service you offer them, our Inspire products will provide you with a rent protection insurance policy in your name.

Offer it as a Contract of Guarantee

If you provide a guarantee to your landlord as part of the service you offer them, our rent protection products can provide you with a rent protection insurance policy in your name to offset the liabilities arising from the contract of guarantee you've included in your service to the landlord.

Our rent protection products include cover for rental payments and tenant eviction in the event of non-payment of the rent by the tenant. This enhances your offering and gives you expert help to deal with any tenancy default.

When you buy a HomeLet rent protection insurance policy, it is in your name.

Important Information

Where you provide a managed service, any contractual guarantee must be either free of charge or included in your management fees.

Rent Protection Criteria

The following needs to be considered before purchasing rent protection:

- Rent protection can only be purchased if the property's being let on an Assured Shorthold Tenancy in England, a Private Residential Tenancy in Scotland, a Standard Occupation Contract in Wales (but not Introductory Standard Contracts, Prohibited Conduct Standard Contracts or Secure Contracts), a Private Tenancy in Northern Ireland, or any other written agreement if reviewed and expressly agreed by us in writing.
- We can accept Company Lets as long as the property is occupied by a Director, Partner or employee of the company. However, these agreements still need to be referred to HomeLet before a policy's taken out.
- The reference completed is an Enhance, Optimum or Innovate, and the report is 'acceptable' or 'acceptable with condition' and the condition is met and meets affordability criteria for their share of the rent, per HomeLet conditions.

You can learn more about all HomeLet rent protection products by either logging into Connect or speaking to your Customer Development Manager.

Any questions?

Below are a few questions we often get asked.

If there's something else you'd like to know, please email us at referencing.enquiries@homelet.co.uk

Final reports

Q. Can I show the final report to the landlord?

- A. Yes, but please don't show it to the applicant due to Data Protection Act 2018.

Q. Can I show the report to the applicant?

- A. Sorry, no – see the previous answer. However, if the applicant has detrimental credit information, they can request further information by visiting transunion.co.uk or other credit agencies.

Payment/invoicing

Q. Why have I been charged for a reference I cancelled?

- A. We like to work quickly and efficiently, which means we may have already completed much of the work by the time you cancel the reference. If you cancel an application when we've completed a TAS, we'll charge you for the work we've done. If you cancel the application after we've already approached referees by email, letter or phone, you'll be charged the current rate for an Enhance product. If the application's an Optimum, we'll downgrade.

Q. Why have I been debited various amounts at different times of the month?

- A. If the payment was taken on or around the 1st of the month, this is your Premier agency subscription fee. The money coming out on or around the 22nd is your referencing invoice and/or rent protection renewals for all services during the previous month.

Special case employment types

Q. How do you handle teachers applying during school holidays?

- A. As you can imagine, getting a reference from a school outside of term time is difficult. Therefore, please ask the applicant to supply their local education authority's name, address and number plus their last three months' payslips.

Q. Are all graduate applicants automatically treated as professionals?

- A. No, because they may not yet have a job or the necessary qualifications. There's a complete list of what we consider a professional role on page 9. We will still obtain a reference and send the relevant report if they are employed.

Q. How do you handle police officers or those in the military?

- A. If the applicant supplies employment details, we'll do our best to get a reference or obtain a copy of the applicant's payslips. This usually takes around seven to ten days. Please note that you can't keep a photocopy of the warrant card. However, if you can confirm you've seen their warrant card or military ID card and the officer's rank, we'll accept those as proof and use public pay scales to verify their salary.

Rent Protection

Q. The tenant's already moved into the property. Can I still get rent protection?

- A. Unless there's a change in the Tenancy Agreement (such as a new tenant moving in or an existing tenant leaving), you won't be able to purchase a combined rent protection product. However, you may be able to buy our Rent Recovery Plus product which has a 60-day no-claims period applicable to existing tenancies; please get in touch with us to discuss this.

Affordability calculator

| Monthly rent | Tenant income | Guarantor income |
|--------------|---------------|------------------|
| 140 | 4200 | 5040 |
| 160 | 4800 | 5760 |
| 180 | 5400 | 6480 |
| 200 | 6000 | 7200 |
| 220 | 6600 | 7920 |
| 240 | 7200 | 8640 |
| 260 | 7800 | 9360 |
| 280 | 8400 | 10080 |
| 300 | 9000 | 10800 |
| 320 | 9600 | 11520 |
| 340 | 10200 | 12240 |
| 360 | 10800 | 12960 |
| 380 | 11400 | 13680 |
| 400 | 12000 | 14400 |
| 420 | 12600 | 15120 |
| 440 | 13200 | 15840 |
| 460 | 13800 | 16560 |
| 480 | 14400 | 17280 |
| 500 | 15000 | 18000 |
| 520 | 15600 | 18720 |
| 540 | 16200 | 19440 |
| 560 | 16800 | 20160 |
| 580 | 17400 | 20880 |
| 600 | 18000 | 21600 |
| 620 | 18600 | 22320 |
| 640 | 19200 | 23040 |
| 660 | 19800 | 23760 |
| 680 | 20400 | 24480 |
| 700 | 21000 | 25200 |
| 720 | 21600 | 25920 |
| 740 | 22200 | 26640 |
| 760 | 22800 | 27360 |
| 780 | 23400 | 28080 |
| 800 | 24000 | 28800 |
| 820 | 24600 | 29520 |
| 840 | 25200 | 30240 |
| 860 | 25800 | 30960 |
| 880 | 26400 | 31680 |
| 900 | 27000 | 32400 |
| 920 | 27600 | 33120 |
| 940 | 28200 | 33840 |
| 960 | 28800 | 34560 |
| 980 | 29400 | 35280 |
| 1000 | 30000 | 36000 |
| 1020 | 30600 | 36720 |

| Monthly rent | Tenant income | Guarantor income |
|--------------|---------------|------------------|
| 1040 | 31200 | 37440 |
| 1060 | 31800 | 38160 |
| 1080 | 32400 | 38880 |
| 1100 | 33000 | 39600 |
| 1120 | 33600 | 40320 |
| 1140 | 34200 | 41040 |
| 1160 | 34800 | 41760 |
| 1180 | 35400 | 42480 |
| 1200 | 36000 | 43200 |
| 1220 | 36600 | 43920 |
| 1240 | 37200 | 44640 |
| 1260 | 37800 | 45360 |
| 1280 | 38400 | 46080 |
| 1300 | 39000 | 46800 |
| 1320 | 39600 | 47520 |
| 1340 | 40200 | 48240 |
| 1360 | 40800 | 48960 |
| 1380 | 41400 | 49680 |
| 1400 | 42000 | 50400 |
| 1420 | 42600 | 51120 |
| 1440 | 43200 | 51840 |
| 1460 | 43800 | 52560 |
| 1480 | 44400 | 53280 |
| 1500 | 45000 | 54000 |
| 1520 | 45600 | 54720 |
| 1540 | 46200 | 55440 |
| 1560 | 46800 | 56160 |
| 1580 | 47400 | 56880 |
| 1600 | 48000 | 57600 |
| 1620 | 48600 | 58320 |
| 1640 | 49200 | 59040 |
| 1660 | 49800 | 59760 |
| 1680 | 50400 | 60480 |
| 1700 | 51000 | 61200 |
| 1720 | 51600 | 61920 |
| 1740 | 52200 | 62640 |
| 1760 | 52800 | 63360 |
| 1780 | 53400 | 64080 |
| 1800 | 54000 | 64800 |
| 1820 | 54600 | 65520 |
| 1840 | 55200 | 66240 |
| 1860 | 55800 | 66960 |
| 1880 | 56400 | 67680 |
| 1900 | 57000 | 68400 |
| 2000 | 60000 | 72000 |

Referencing Service Level Agreement.

Working together to deliver an excellent service.

To make sure you enjoy an excellent experience with us, we'll:

- Let you know what we need and how long we'll take to do something.
- Tailor our advice based on the referencing needs of you and your clients.
- Contact you straight away if something happens that may affect how we deliver our products or services.
- Be proactive in problem-solving.
- Monitor our performance against HomeLet standards through audits and quality reviews.

As well as keeping in touch with us, what we need from you and your clients is for you to:

- Complete application forms containing clear and accurate information.
- Give as much information as possible in applications, especially regarding referees.
- Conduct your due diligence checks on the applicants, including, but not limited to:
 - Obtain proof of identity.
 - Obtain proof of residency and cross-check this with the information they have provided you with on their referencing application.
 - Meet all applicants moving into the property and use this opportunity to discuss the details they have provided on the application form in terms of employment.
 - Conduct your right-to-rent checks for the applicant to ensure they have the right to reside within the UK.

Our referencing products

| | INSIGHT | ENHANCE | OPTIMUM | ★ INNOVATE ★ |
|--|---------|---------|---------|--------------|
| Financial background | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Bank validation* | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Default Database | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Final report | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| CIFAS | ✗ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Landlord/Agent reference | ✗ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Employer/Pension/ Accountant reference | ✗ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Rent protection available | ✗ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Eviction service included | ✗ | ✗ | ✓ | ✓ |

What's unique about our checks?

- We check that the banking details provided by your applicant are for a genuine bank account*.
- We conduct a check against HomeLet's Default Database — this may indicate whether an applicant has not been able to pay their rent in the past.
- CIFAS checks — we directly check the national fraud database, which detects applications where an applicant has either previously committed fraud or has a confirmed case of committed fraud against them.

In some cases where employee references are unavailable, we may accept payslips from the three months before completing their reference application.

*We'll only display this on the final report if the applicant provides the bank account number and sort code.

Referencing application process

The list below outlines the referencing application process.

It highlights what you can expect from us, along with a description of your responsibilities, to ensure we can meet our commitments to you. The rest of this booklet explains what we both need to do to ensure each application's processed as quickly as possible...

1. Obtaining a Tenancy Application Score (TAS)

This will usually be obtained immediately. Occasionally, we must manually intervene and cross-match partially matching data. If we do this, we'll aim to process the application in two hours.

Sometimes gaining a TAS isn't possible as the address hasn't been provided in the correct format. We will look to update this ourselves; however, if it is due to the applicant not providing the full address, we will contact them for clarification. If we cannot obtain a score with the applicant's address history, a condition will be placed on the final report for you to keep a copy of their proof of residency (please see page 6) for a list of acceptable forms of this).

2. Missing information

If there's any missing mandatory information in the application form you send us, we'll email it back, asking for the remaining details. This won't be logged on to our system. Once you've obtained the information, you'll be required to resubmit the form – which can be done via Connect.

Please note – it is easier and quicker for the applicant to use our online application form, as the details are updated automatically on our system; sending us a paper application form has a 24-hour response time.

What we need from you...

Enter complete applications on Connect to obtain an instant TAS where possible (see 'Obtaining a Tenancy Application Score').

Complete applications with clear and accurate information. The assessment process can't proceed without this. If an application's sent back, complete it in full and re-send it to us. The email-to-tenant link is the quickest and most efficient way of doing this.

3. Information and queries regarding applications

If you have any application queries, please send them through Connect – we'll aim to get back to you within four hours.

In urgent situations, our referencing team will answer your questions over the phone – Call 0330 333 7234 to speak to one of our friendly and experienced advisors.

Did you know...

Applicants can track their references through our application tracker – make sure you tell them about it!

Ask applicants to submit their email addresses so we can send them login details to access the relevant area on our website.

4. Reference requests

Once we've confirmed the applicant's income, we'll ensure they're in a position to make rental payments by securing current landlord references (where possible) for an entire tenancy history. We'll do this as soon as we receive the completed form.

Please make sure you:

- Encourage applicants to provide as much contact information as possible for their referees, including:
 - contact names
 - telephone and fax numbers
 - email addresses

5. Obtaining references

What we'll do:

- Automatically send reference requests, by email, to referees when applications are logged on to our system. We'll then chase referees over the phone to gain a reference, if the email is not responded to. An email or text message may also be sent to the applicant or referee where a response hasn't been received.
- Aim to complete all applications as soon as possible to a good standard.
- Continue to contact referees and the applicant until we reach a fourth chase, where we will place the application on hold, pending the outstanding references or supporting documents.
- Send you an email notification to let you know a temporary final report's available to view on Connect if:
 - we haven't been provided with the information we need to get references from you or the applicants.
 - the employer has a turnaround time longer than 48 hours once they've confirmed receipt of the reference request.

- Always update Connect after every call or contact.

What you need to do:

- Understand our criteria for providing and obtaining appropriate employment or residential status. This is outlined at the beginning of this guide and on Connect.
- Ensure you use Connect for instant updates on the progress of any application and submit any additional information that may assist us.
- Ensure the applicant informs their referees we'll be contacting them.

6. References received

Once we've received a reference, we'll let you know what we've been sent and what's outstanding, or we'll produce a final report within four working hours.

❗ Important...

Don't share information provided by the referee with applicants. This is part of the Data Protection Act 2018, as we cannot disclose third party data or confidential references we have obtained..

7. Information and queries about accounts

Your invoice will be available to view and download on Connect in the second week of each month – so you can see your account details at all times.

Checklist

- ✓ Ensure your account's kept up-to-date by ensuring we receive your payment when agreed. The easiest way to pay is to set up a regular Direct Debit.

8. Company applications

Once you've added your company applications on Connect, we'll email you a copy of the final referencing reports within 24 hours of receiving them. If any information's missing, we'll email it back to you, as we can't process applications without all the relevant details.

Checklist

- ✓ Check if the company's a UK – based PLC, Ltd or LLP company before sending us a company application form.
- ✓ Make sure the declaration is:
 - Signed by a Director or Company Secretary as listed on Companies House, or
 - If the declaration has been signed by anyone other than a director or company secretary, we will require a Power of Attorney letter. The Power of Attorney letter must be signed by a listed Director/Company Secretary or Head of HR.

9. Final referencing report

❗ Important...

When you receive your final referencing report, check that the applicant's prospective address and rental amount are correct. If they are not, you can update these via Connect automatically or add a note to the email assessor, and we will update these for you – please be advised using the email assessor has a four working hour turnaround time. Using Connect to amend the information yourself is instant.

Any amendments to details on an application need to be made before the applicant moves into the prospective address.

What we'll do...

- Provide detailed final referencing reports outlining our findings on applications and outcomes of our assessments.
- Aim to return 80% of all final referencing reports within 24 hours of receiving completed applications (across combined products).
- Produce final referencing reports for 85% of all applications within 72 hours (across combined products).
- Notify you by email when your final referencing report's available. This email will contain a link for you to follow and view the document on Connect. If you're already logged into Connect, the link will take you straight to the report. If you're not logged in, you'll be asked to do so, using your regular login details.
- Where the applicant has permitted us, we'll be able to offer them quotes for insurance, deals on broadband and TV packages, and more!

10. Payment by account

We'll send you an email to your dedicated email address every month to let you know your invoice is ready – you'll then be able to view it and download it through Connect.

What you need to do...

Settle your account by the 22nd of each month. If your account remains overdue for more than 14 days, we'll place it on stop. New and existing applications won't be processed until your accounts are brought up to date.

Data Protection Act and compliance

We aim to keep our referencing service compliant with all Data Protection legislation.

We regularly monitor all relevant legislative requirements to ensure our services remain compliant.

Please note that only the agent submitting the application and/or the landlord for whom they're acting is permitted to see the results of the assessments.

Reminder – the findings are sensitive and, therefore, the applicant must not be shown the reports provided to you by HomeLet.

No application will be processed without the written consent of the prospective tenant/guarantor. We will obtain this from the declaration on the application form or via the 'email to tenant' link on Connect. Our privacy notice can be found at barbon.com/about-us/privacy-notice/.

Complaints

We're committed to providing a high quality service to all of our customers – however, there may be occasions where difficulties arise and you feel you haven't received the service that you'd expect from us.

If you have any reason to feel unhappy with our service, we'd like to know so we can put things right. Please talk to your Customer Development Manager or contact our referencing contact centre on 0330 333 7234 and one of our customer service team will resolve your problem.

If they cannot resolve the issue, they can escalate it to our complaints team.

If you'd like to speak to our Customer Experience Team directly, please email customer.experience@homelet.co.uk or call our Customer Experience Team on 0330 333 7126.



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Call our Referencing team:

0330 333 7234

To make an online enquiry or
for more information, visit:

homelet.co.uk

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