

1-5 YEAR LEASE PROPERTY STANDARDS

PROPERTY STANDARDS

This information is the basic requirements for properties used as temporary accommodation for households placed by local authorities.

The property will likely to be the main residence for the family placed for some considerable period of years and probably the duration of the lease period.

EXTERNAL STANDARDS

1. The Roof

To be watertight, free from defects and loose or missing tiles etc

2. Guttering

Pipes to be secured to wall, gutters free from blockages, and in good repair.

3. Garden

Garden to be clear of rubbish, building materials and animal faeces. To have vegetation cut back including shrubs and trees.

Fences to be in good order, and where practicable a minimum height of 1 metre (where security is a consideration this should be increased). A shared garden should be divided by a fence with a minimum height of 1 metre.

Gate/s to operate, gate posts/pillars to be secure.

Sheds/garages, within the boundary of the property form part of the tenancy and should not be used by any person/s not included on the tenancy. If applicable these must be in good order, or be removed.

INTERNAL STANDARDS

1.0 Walls and Ceilings

1.1 Damp

Property to be free from damp.

Walls to be free from evidence of damp, mould, condensation, peeling paper etc.

1.2 Plaster

- Plaster to be sound, not to show movement when examined.

1.3 Decoration

- Surfaces to be painted and / or papered
- Paint to be clean and free from obvious marking, dirt etc
- Wallpaper to be in good condition and free from defects
- Wood to be free from rot and painted to a reasonable standard with gloss paint

1.4 Advice on redecoration

The standards below apply to any landlord carrying out redecoration during the lease or when preparing the property for leasing.

- All walls to be painted in vinyl emulsion (magnolia)
- Ceilings to be painted in emulsion (white)
- Woodwork to be painted in gloss (white)
- Walls in kitchen and bathrooms to be eggshell (magnolia)

2.0 WINDOWS

2.1 Operation

Louvre type of windows and centre hung “swing” windows accepted at the discretion of all local authorities. Swing window to have restraining bar.

2.2 Child Safety

Windows above ground level, which open outwards and could, present a danger to a child to be fitted with a window restrictor mechanism.

2.3 Glazing

All glazing, which is under 800mm/2.8 feet from the floor (and greater than 25cm in any direction) to be reglazed with toughened glass or have safety film properly applied to prevent shattering if it breaks.

2.4 Windows in bathrooms and toilets must be glazed with obscure glass or be treated with plastic film to provide the same level of privacy.

2.5 New or replacement glazing installed after April 2002 should be energy saving sealed double-glazing and comply with building regulations. To prove compliance you should have:

(a) A certificate showing that the work has been carried out by an installer registered to the FENSA scheme

OR

(b) A certificate from the local authority confirming that the installation has approval under the current building regulations.

3. DOORS

All external doors to have 5 lever mortice deadlocks or locks of a type, which are no less secure, fitted, capable of being locked, and to be fitted with an additional “Yale type latch”.

- Doorbell to be fitted and working
- All internal locks to have keys removed save for bathroom and toilet
- All large glass panes in doors to be fitted with safety glass or film
- Kitchen doors with glazing must be fitted with clear Georgian wire cast glass

4. STAIRCASES

- Gaps between spindles to be no more than 50mm
- Gaps between the balustrades must be no greater than 50mm
- A two-way light switch to be provided in the stairwell and operable from either floor
- Where glazing with a low sill height is adjacent to the staircase it must be either guarded or fitted with safety glass
- Staircases must be free from obstruction and not be unreasonably steep or have bad or sudden changes of direction
- Staircases must have a suitable handrail

5. HEATING

Heating must be Gas Central Heating or Electric “Economy Seven” heating. The heating is to be sufficient to maintain an internal temperature of 21 degrees Celsius in the living room and 18 degrees Celsius in the bedrooms, bathrooms, kitchen and hallway when the outside temperature is minus 1 degree Celsius.

Landlord to provide safety certificate and a copy of the Corgi or NICEIC service contract. The heating system must be either gas central heating or electric night storage heating. The heating system must have a timer and / or thermostat.

The heating must operate independently from the hot water system.

Hot water heating systems must be fitted with adequate heating controls. This is to include a time clock, and/or room thermostat and/or thermostatic radiator valves.

Please note that warm air ducted heating systems, electric under floor heating and wall mounted panel heaters will not be accepted.

GAS SAFETY

Landlords have a legal duty to protect residential tenants from risks caused by poorly installed or badly maintained gas appliances and flues. Full details are contained in the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998.

Landlords' must:-

- Ensure an annual safety check is carried out on each gas appliance/flue
- Ensure gas fittings and flues are maintained in a safe condition
- Have all installations, maintenance and safety checks carried out by a Corgi registered gas installer
- Keep a record of each safety check for 2 years
- Issue a copy of the safety check record to the Management Company and each existing tenant within 28 days of the check being completed, or to any new tenant before they move in.

Further information may be obtained from the Health and Safety Executive Gas Safety Advice Line on 0800 300 363

6. ELECTRICAL

The minimum number of sockets per room:

- Living Room 2 double sockets minimum (3 is preferable)
- Double Bedrooms 2 double sockets
- Single Bedrooms 1 double socket
- Kitchen 4 sockets (2 double at work top height, plus 1 for fridge and 1 for washing machine). Boiler to be on spur.
- Landing 1 socket

The landlord must ensure that an NICEIC qualified contractor subjects all electrical installations and fittings, which they provide, to an appropriate electrical safety check every 5 years. A copy of the safety certificate must be supplied to the Management Company and each existing tenant.

The landlord is to provide a current NICEIC electrical safety report; this must have no items marked as requiring urgent attention or investigation.

7. FLOOR COVERING

Floors must be carpeted, or covered with an alternative suitable covering or treated in such a manner as to provide a safe, easily cleanable surface. All coverings must be clean and of reasonable quality, free from defects (staining, excessive wear etc).

For floor covering for kitchens and bathrooms see Page 5 & 6.

8. CURTAINS

- Curtain rails to be securely fitted above all windows except in kitchen and bathroom.
- Curtains to be clean and free from defects
- Nets are usually required to be fitted to all windows
- Light shades to be fitted to all habitual rooms

9. FURNITURE

All councils require, suitable floor covering, window dressing, cooker or oven and hob, and fridge/freezer (freezer space must be proportionate to the size of the dwelling).

Should furniture be left in the property this will be at the landlord's own risk and for which no further payment will be made. Any furniture left must comply with the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire Safety) Regulations 1988 (as amended).

10. FIRE SAFETY

10.1 Front doors to flat

Internal doors leading off communal hallway **MUST** be a half hour fire door to meet Building Standard 476 Part 22.

10.2 Fire Alarms

The preferred type of smoke alarm is an electrically operated interlinked smoke alarm installed to each floor. This must comply with Building Standard 5839 Part 6 conforming to Grade D, Type LD2.

However, the minimum standard is for single, battery-operated alarms to be installed to each floor.

10.3 Kitchen/diners that form part of the dwelling should be fitted with a heat rise detector

ROOMS

11. Bedrooms

- Telescoping rooms will not be counted as habitable rooms.
- Bedrooms must have a reasonable arrangement of space.
- Our preferred minimum size for a single bedroom is 6.5m², and for a double bedroom, 10.2 m².

In some circumstances, (because of good space arrangement or fitted wardrobes etc.) all councils may accept a lower standard but at our discretion.

11.1 KITCHEN

11.2 Sockets

- Two double sockets at work top height
- Two low level sockets (for fridge and washing machine)

11.3 Cooker

- Gas hob preferred
- All rings to operate
- Free standing cooker to be chained to the wall
- Oven can be gas or electric
- Ovens to be clean and provided with shelves
- Landlord to provide safety certificate (as part of gas safety)

11.4 Sink

- Tiling of splash backs to a minimum of 300mm (two tiles high)
- Sinks and worktops to be sealed around edges with silicone sealant
- Waste pipes and taps to be defect free, no leaks or drips
- Taps to be easy to operate

11.5 Units

- Floor units (excluding the sink unit)
A minimum of 2* 1000mm fitted units to be provided
A minimum of 2 drawers to be provided per unit
Units to be free from defects
- Wall Units

A minimum of 2* 1000mm wall units to be provided

There must be adequate work surface space for the size of the property

11.6 Fridge

- To be clean and in working order

11.7 Washing machine

- Local authorities do not require washing machines but:

Where practicable fittings to be provided to allow the installation of a washing machine

Non-return valve to be fitted to the waste pipe

11.8 Floor covering

- Floor covering to be of a vinyl type or tiled and free from defects
- Vinyl to be sealed around edge with a silicone sealant

12.0 Bathroom

12.1 The family bathroom must be accessible from an entrance hall or landing

12.2 Mirror, towel rail and toilet roll holder to be provided

12.3 Bath

- Bath to be clean and free from defects
- Bath must be secure and not flex unduly under load
- Tiles to a height of 30cm round bath, sealed at the joints
- Plastic bath panels are an item that all local authorities will not accept responsibility for, and may ask to be replaced, if and when they become defective

To prevent mastics from pulling away when the bath is filled, the mastic must be applied when the bath is half full.

12.4 Showers (where provided)

Showers are not essential but where provided the landlord must ensure that their use will not do damage to the property. The provision of a shower is an advantage in letting the property

- Separate shower cubicles to be tiled to a height of 1.80 M
- Base to be adequately sealed
- Curtain / door to be provided

12.5 Shower fitted above baths

- Tiling to be of sufficient height to protect the decoration of the wall (1.80 M plus)
- Shower door or curtain to be supplied and to be of a sufficient standard to prevent water damage to floor

12.6 Sinks

- Tiling of splash backs to a minimum of 300mm (two tiles high)
- Sinks and worktops to be sealed around edges with silicone sealant
- Waste pipes and taps to be defect free, no leaks or drips
- Taps to be easy to operate

12.7 Floor covering

- Floor covering to be of a vinyl type or tiled and free from defects
- Vinyl to be sealed around the edge with a silicone sealant

Provision of a bath rather than a shower is strongly preferred. Properties with shower only may be considered but only in exceptional circumstances.

12.8 Toilet

- Toilets to be clean and secure
- Toilet seats to be secure
- Cistern to fill at a reasonable rate
- Floor covering to be of vinyl type or tiled and must be sealed around the edge with silicone sealant. Carpets may be acceptable subject to inspection

Plumbing and drainage must be in working order

All sanitary ware must be adequately sealed against water leakage / spillage

12.9 Water and Gas Stopcocks

Stopcocks should be reasonably sited, in good order, and capable of effectively isolating the whole of the water or gas supply in an emergency. (It would be sensible to have information available to maintenance contractors as to location of stopcocks as they are sometimes difficult to locate during an emergency.)

12.10 Ventilation

The general requirement for ventilation is that all main habitable rooms, (living rooms and bedrooms), should have at least one twentieth of the floor area available as openable windows. This also applies to kitchens, bathrooms and WC cubicles if they rely on natural ventilation.

If, a kitchen and/or a bathroom and/or a WC cubicle are an internal room, it/they should have mechanical extract ventilation.

If mechanical ventilation is required in a kitchen it should be capable of one air change per hour.

If mechanical ventilation is required in a bathroom and/or a WC cubicle it should be capable of three air changes per hour. A light switch should actuate it and the fan should have a twenty-minute overrun when the light is switched off.

12.11 Condensation

Condensation will occur, at some time, in all homes. Condensation problems due to structural features should not be so pervasive as to constitute a health hazard or be a statutory nuisance.

Condensation problems usually become apparent during the colder months of the year, and it is then usually dependent on the balance of a number of variables e.g. heating, ventilation, thermal insulation properties of dwelling, number of occupants and lifestyle of occupants.

Many of the occupants of the properties will have very restricted incomes. They will have little money to spend on heating, and are often reluctant to open windows, as they see this as a waste of heat, or an invitation to burglars.

Some properties have very poor thermal properties and would be very difficult to heat. An end of terrace property, with a large North facing wall, solid concrete flat roof, very large areas of

glazing etc., may be very difficult to keep adequately warm in winter. Some properties, because of one or a combination of factors, may have such poor thermal properties that they are unsuitable for acceptance into the Leasing Option, (because they would be unreasonably expensive to heat and / or would inevitably have condensation problems).

Very few condensation problems can be clearly attributed to just the inadequacies of the property, or solely to the lifestyle of the occupants. The housing provider should ensure that reasonable steps have been taken to avoid letting property that is liable to have condensation problems. When preparing a property for letting owners are strongly advised to consider the fitting of heat recovery ventilation units. These work by using outgoing stale air to pre heat incoming fresh air. They are normally fitted in a kitchen or bathroom (there is then usually no longer a requirement for a normal extractor fan in these locations). The simplest units are often no more difficult to fit than an ordinary extractor fan (and not that much more expensive). These units are designed to work continuously at very small cost. By efficiently managing a significant part of the ventilation requirement for the building, they can be very effective in the prevention of condensation and consequential mould growth.

The Boroughs reserve the right to reject a property that has very poor thermal characteristics (those that have structural elements that would give rise to unacceptably high heat loss).

If a property has been accepted onto the scheme, and is subsequently found to suffer from significant condensation problems, the boroughs reserve the right to require the freeholder to provide and fit suitable heat recovery ventilation systems if the building is assessed to have thermal characteristics that are less than average for dwellings in the borough.

12.12 Insulation

All accessible loft spaces should have a minimum of 100 mm Rock Wool insulation, (or equivalent) properly laid.

All hot water tanks should be foam lagged or have a good quality cylinder jacket, which has been properly fitted.

All water pipes considered to be liable to damage by frost should be adequately protected with lagging.