

Private Sector Housing Standards

The Private Sector Housing Standards are designed to improve the health, safety and wellbeing of residents and to raise the professional standards of accommodation within the private sector.

Some properties may require additional measures – e.g for a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO), flats over shops or unusual layouts. Please check with us if you think this applies to you. **Please note that HMOs have specific fire safety standards which should be referred to in addition to the general housing standards. These fire standards apply whether the property is 3 storey and licensable or a smaller non licensable HMO. If you are in any doubt what fire safety is required in your property please contact the Housing Enforcement team for advice.**

Properties should generally be in reasonable repair with internal layouts that allow for the safe use of the property and reasonable fire detection and escape routes in case of fire.

Property Requirements:

Landlords must ensure that properties (including access routes and gardens/yards) comply with all legal requirements including having no category 1 hazards or significant /multiple category 2 hazards*. In particular:

General

1. Access to gas and electric meters, fuse boards, gas and water stop taps should be accessible to all occupants at all times without having to pass through other accommodation or through a shop.
2. Any gas or electric supply that requires frequent checking or feeding of the meter must be readily accessible. Hatch access to a cellar area is not allowed in these circumstances.
3. The cold water supply pipe must be fitted with a stop tap as close to the water entry point into the premises as is reasonably practical. This must be checked to make sure it is working at the start of any new tenancy to make sure that it operates correctly, and any necessary repairs carried out.
4. Appliance operating instructions are required for all cookers, boilers, electric heating systems and fridges, freezers and washing machines supplied with a new tenancy and upon request. Appliance use must be demonstrated to new tenants.

5. Any new appliances included in the tenancy must have an energy efficiency rating of 'A' or 'A+'.
6. Free standing cookers must be fitted with a safety chain and secured to the wall.
7. Where furniture, curtains, blinds and soft furnishings are provided, they must be compliant with the current Furniture & furnishings (Fire Safety) Regulations 1988 as amended in 1989 and 1993
8. The hot water system of the property must provide a constant controllable supply of hot water to each bath, sink, shower and wash hand basin. Cold water must be available to these facilities and to each water closet (WC).
9. The property should be in a good state of repair both inside and outside and free from hazards to health.
10. The house must be free from damp.
11. All habitable rooms must have adequate natural lighting to allow the tenants to carry out domestic duties easily and safely.
12. There must be adequate space for occupants to move safely around the accommodation, and it must not be overcrowded. The space standards must be adhered to. These are detailed under Condition 9 of your licence conditions
13. The property should be free from all tripping hazards
14. The property should be free from any falling hazards and in particular any openable windows above ground level where the window sill is less than 1100mm above floor level in which case the window opening should be fitted with a restrictor to limit the opening to no more than 100mm. Any windows with glazing within 800mm of the floor or any doors with glazing within 1500mm of the floor will require safety glass to BS 6206 or the whole pane of glass coated with a proprietary safety film.

Heating

15. The home must have a whole house heating system (e.g. gas central heating) that is economical to run and capable of maintaining an adequate temperature throughout the property. Heating must be controllable by the tenants and of 18°C when the external average temperature is -1°C having due regard to the thermal efficiency of the structure of the dwelling. Any electrical heating appliance must be suitably approved for use as a fixed heating appliance (not a portable appliance) and must be securely fixed to the wall structure and fitted with its own dedicated switched fuse spur independent of any power outlets required in the room for normal household use. No bottled gas, paraffin or halogen heaters are permitted

in the property. Should night storage heaters be provided there must be an “off-peak” electric meter installed.

Ventilation

16. All rooms must have adequate ventilation to keep them fresh, free from excess moisture (condensation), cooking smells etc
17. All windows must be sound and well fitting with opening lights being capable of being opened and closed when not in use. Background ventilation is required to all rooms by means of night vent catches and/or trickle vents. Humidity controlled extractor fans must be provided in each kitchen and bathroom/shower room complete with a manual override. Cooker hoods in kitchens that extract to external air are acceptable.

Gas Safety

18. All gas installations must be covered by a current Landlord Gas Safety Certificate (e.g. a CP12) issued by a Gas Safe registered engineer. All works to gas installations must comply with Gas Safety (Installation & Use) (as amended) Regulations 1998 and be carried out by a Gas safe registered installer qualified to carry out that category of work
19. Gas supplies must be safe to use and regularly serviced. Appliances must be safe and serviced in line with the manufacturer’s requirements or renewed as necessary. A copy of the current landlord’s gas safety record for the supply and appliances must be given to tenants or displayed inside the property or in the tenant information pack, at the start of each tenancy and at each annual check. The landlord must supply the council with a copy of the gas safety certificate with the licence application and on demand.
20. Any redundant gas appliance must be removed from the property and the pipework removed and the area it is removed from made good.
21. Any second hand gas cookers installed must comply with the safety requirements of the Gas Cooking Appliances (Safety) Regulations 1989

Solid Fuel

A carbon monoxide (CO) detector is required for any property with a solid fuel heating appliance. This must be in accordance with BS 50291: 2001. The CO detector must be fitted in a suitable location in accordance with the manufacturer’s written instructions, usually at least 3m away from the appliance. Where there are multiple appliances then additional detectors must also be provided in the same way as stated above. The whole detector (not just the battery) must be tested quarterly in accordance with manufacturer written instructions. Full details of the landlords legal obligations can be found at

Electrical Safety

22. Electrical installations and appliances must be appropriately installed and maintained in a safe condition. There must be adequate socket outlets to prevent overloading.
23. Any alterations, additions or testing of the electrical installations must be carried out by an electrician registered under an approved contractor's scheme in accordance with Building Regulations Part P and the installation left in a safe condition and proper working order.
24. The electric supply and appliances provided by the landlord must be in a safe working condition. All appliances provided must have operating guidance supplied.
25. The fixed electrical wiring and installations must be certified as safe by an electrician qualified to undertake the test at a maximum of every five years, unless otherwise indicated on the previous inspection to be sooner, and must be to a 'Satisfactory' standard. This will usually be a Domestic Electrical Installation Condition Report, but it may be an Installation Certificate or an existing Periodic Inspection Report.
26. Electrical sockets must be suitably located throughout the property without cabling causing trip hazards and with the minimum number of outlets (either single or double) as set out below:

Living Rooms – at least 4 no 13 amp switched outlets

Bedrooms, utility rooms and dining rooms – at least 2 no 13 amp switched outlets

Kitchens – at least 6 no 13 amp switched (4 above the worktops and 2 below)

The larger the premises the number of socket outlets should be increased proportionately.

Fire Safety

27. The property must have a suitable working fire detection and alarm system as identified by a risk assessment of the property.

From October 2015 it is a legal requirement for all rented properties to have smoke alarms fitted and maintained by the owner. In single family dwellings a the minimum requirement is for a battery operated alarm to be installed in the circulation area of each floor with a carbon monoxide detector in each room where there is an wood burner, open fire or solid fuel burning appliance. Full details of the owner/managers obligations can be found at

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/464717/150929_SC_Explan_book_Annex_A_LandlordsTenants_REVISED.pdf

Fire Safety continued

For HMO's a higher standard applies, details can be found at this internet web page link:-

http://www.cieh.org/library/Knowledge/Housing/National_fire_safety_guidance_08.pdf

If the property is a house in multiple occupation (HMO) the required standards as set out in the HMO Management Regulations must be complied with. Details of the regulations can be found at this link:-

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/372/pdfs/uksi_20060372_en.pdf.

Security

28. Windows and doors and any other access points should be constructed and designed to be reasonably secure from unauthorised entry. Window locks and keys must be provided to openable ground floor windows and any other windows accessible without the use of a ladder. All final exit doors must be fitted with a minimum 5 lever mortice lock/latch set or a multipoint locking system for modern upvc double glazed doors compliant with BS3621:2004.

Energy Efficiency

29. The property should be adequately insulated including double glazing (where authorised), loft and cavity wall insulation (where applicable) and draught proofed.

30. If required the property must have a valid energy performance certificate (EPC) has been required by law since October 2008 for all new tenancies since this date it also covers properties being marketed and advertised for rent.

31. Roof/loft spaces must be insulated where they are accessible from the house. A minimum of 270mm loft insulation, or equivalent including any upright stud walls in attic loft spaces, where accessible. Cheeks and ceilings of dormer windows and roof slopes can be over-boarded with insulated plasterboard to obtain greater energy efficiency if no insulation is evident

32. Loft hatches must be insulated and draught proofed.

33. Hot water tanks and exposed hot water supply pipes must be insulated if passing through unheated areas.

Stairs and Steps

34. Handrails or grab rails are required to all stairs including cellar steps. These must be positioned to allow the safe use of the stairs and this is usually 900mm above the stairs. There must be adequate guard rails around stair wells. New guard rails must be 1.1m in height and there should not be any horizontal balustrade rails and no gaps wider than 100mm between spindles.
35. Stairs must have consistent goings and risers through any straight flight and also within a winding section. Treads must be firm, even and in sound condition. Any carpets shall be well fitting in sound condition and properly secured. Multiple layers of carpet are not acceptable.
36. Cellar stairs must have reasonably consistent goings and risers throughout the flight and the treads must be reasonably consistent.
37. Staircases are to be well lit to allow their safe use. Light switches must be in a suitable location. Lighting to staircases and rooms entered by more than one door shall be two-way/three-way as appropriate.

Bathrooms and Toilets

38. Bathrooms and water closets (WC's) must have adequate space to ensure their safe use. Any alterations to the bathroom and water closet need to comply with Building Regulation standards
39. An internal WC with wash hand basin must be provided for up to 5 persons. A second WC with wash hand basin is required where the property is licensed for more than 5 persons.
40. A shower and or a bath, and wash hand basin are required each with a tiled, or equivalent, splash back area
41. Any shower must have a waterproof surround and a shower screen/curtain must be provided.
42. If a shower is situated in a bath, tiles or equivalent must extend 1.5m from the shower head down the length of the bath, 150mm over the top of the shower head and 150mm past the side of a shower curtain to prevent damage to plasterwork

Kitchens

43. The walls, floor, ceilings work tops and cupboards of the kitchen must be sound, clean and, as appropriate, well decorated at the commencement of any tenancy. The kitchen must be laid out in such an arrangement as to allow for its safe use and be easy to keep clean and hygienic by the tenant.

44. In furnished accommodation a refrigerator of appropriate size for the number of occupants in the property, including freezer space should be provided in the kitchen or immediately adjacent to the kitchen and in unfurnished accommodation a space for a fridge is required in the same location.
45. In furnished accommodation a four-ring cooker, including oven and grill located with a work top of at least 300mm either side must be provided. In unfurnished accommodation a space for a cooker must be provided with either a gas or electric supply and with work surface of at least 300mm to both sides of the cooker or hob. The cooker or the space for the cooker shall be positioned away from any door openings. A cooker with 2 or 3 rings and an oven and grill may be acceptable for small 1 or 2 person flats and studios, where space is limited.
46. There must be adequate and sound and hygienic cupboard space for food, crockery, pots and pans and utensil storage in the kitchen. A minimum 2 linear metre of dedicated free worktop space for food preparation is required in the kitchen, with a minimum depth of 500mm. There must be a minimum of a row of 100mm tiles or other suitable impervious up-stand is required behind the worktop and sink and the area behind the cooker must be tiled up to the same level.
47. There must be space for a washing machine, together with plumbing provision and a dedicated electrical socket.
48. Tumble driers are recommended to help reduce condensation problems. If provided they must be either the condensing type or the extract hose must be properly connected to a wall vent. Combined washer/driers complying with these conditions are acceptable.

Gardens and Yards

49. Gardens and yards must be clean and tidy, free from rubbish and safe at the commencement of the tenancy.
50. Access steps, handrails, pathways, sheds fences and gates must be maintained in good condition
51. External redundant buildings must be maintained in a safe condition, or demolished if unsafe unless the buildings act as buttress to a retaining wall.
52. External access steps and pathways must be well maintained and free from tripping hazards. Handrails must be fitted to external steps where there are 3 or more steps and to steep sloping paths.
53. Where the drop from the side of a staircase is greater than 600mm handrails shall be fitted with a vertical balustrade with no gaps wider than 100mm between spindles
54. Access to the rear of properties should be gated where practical.

55. External lighting must be provided controlled by passive PIR and dusk to dawn sensors and maintained for rear and side entrance doors and for access passageways that are in the control of the Licence Holder or Manager. Light fittings must be positioned below first floor windows and the lighting shall be directed downwards to avoid causing disturbance to neighbours

Rubbish/Dustbins

56. One standard 240 litre wheeled bin must be provided for tenancies of up to 5 people, and a 360 litre bin be provided for tenancies of 6 and above, together with any other recycling bin / bags as required in the area. Bins must be provided on a hard standing area away from ground floor windows and not within any passage.

Rainwater Good and Drains

57. Gutters, downpipes, soil and vent pipes and drains must be in a good state of repair and be securely fitted discharging to a suitable drain or gully. Soil and vent pipes and waste pipes must be adequately clipped and discharge into single or shared sewage system either mains sewer or a septic tank in accordance with building regulations.

Decoration

58. The decoration of the interior and exterior of the property must be clean and sound at the commencement of tenancy, with appropriate cleanable paintwork to the walls of the bathrooms and kitchens .

59. Walls, ceilings, floors and skirting boards must be in a sound condition throughout the tenancy.

Floor Coverings

60. Bathrooms and kitchens require impervious flooring with laminate, vinyl or tiled floor coverings, the edges must be sealed to minimise water ingress.

61. Floor coverings must be provided and be clean, level, sound, well secured and easy to clean, with no frayed areas, to minimise trip hazards (particularly to stairs and landings).