



Private Sector Let Acceptance Standards

Additional Information

Introduction

The following guidance outlines the key standards, which your property must meet to be acceptable for the council's Private Sector Leasing scheme. Our main concern is that the property is safe, in good repair and has basic amenities. You can use this section as a checklist to work out if your property is suitable or what you may have to do to bring it up to this standard.

External

Structure

The roof, chimney stacks, stairs, windows, doors, rain water goods, waste goods, drainage and external decoration must be in good repair and condition. Any common parts or shared access must be in good repair and condition, including structure, access-ways, security doors and lifts.

Noise

Where there are excessive noise levels (e.g. by main road, rail lines, and adjacent noise producing commercial premises) noise insulation measures shall be provided e.g. double-glazing.

Security

Adequate external lighting must be provided. Access doors to premises must have adequate locks, door chains (where possible) and viewers. Windows in accessible locations must be provided with suitable window locks.

Refuse

Adequate and suitable facilities must be provided for the storage and disposal of refuse (e.g. a dustbin and storage area for the same).

Asbestos

All properties offered to the council are required to have an asbestos survey completed by a competent contractor at the cost to the owner. Steps should be taken to check that potential contractors have the relevant asbestos awareness training, as outlined in the Approved Code of Practice to the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2006. The survey must be free of asbestos and a copy presented to the council before being considered to joining the scheme.

Internal arrangement

Adequate circulation space shall be present in all escape areas and adjacent to all cooking appliances. Bathrooms must not be accessed through bedrooms except for studio and one-bedroom flats where the bathroom is en-suite. Internal means of escape must progress to areas of lower fire risk.

Contents & furnishings

We do not require furniture to be left in the property. If your property is accepted for the scheme then you must arrange to have all furniture removed. We do require the following:

- Curtains or suitable blinds provided to all bedrooms and living rooms.
- Suitable light shades fitted in all habitable rooms, single hanging pendants, no spotlights or other light fittings and enclosed light fittings in bathrooms.
- Good quality carpet with suitable underlay fitted in living rooms, bedrooms and circulation areas (hall and stairways). Carpets must be properly laid and secured.
- Good quality vinyl flooring properly fitted in kitchen and bathroom areas. Finish to be non-slip. No laminate flooring in upper flats.

Internal

Decoration & finishes

Internal decoration must be in good condition, clean and free from soiling, staining and torn covering. In addition:

- Wall surfaces must be painted and/or papered.
- Painted surfaces must be clean and free from obvious marking, dirt etc.
- Wallpaper must be in good condition and free from defects. Ceilings, walls, floors must be in good condition
- Wood must be free from rot and painted to a reasonable standard with gloss paint.
- Floor finishes must be sound, clean and free from trip hazards, i.e. well secured and free from rips and tears.

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Staircases & balconies

- Stairs must not be too steep or excessively long.
- Steps must have level, even treads and provide adequate friction.
- Open risers are not permitted.
- Staircases must have suitable handrails properly constructed and fully supported. Handrail heights shall be between 900-1000mm.
- Stairs and landings where the drop is in excess of 600mm must be guarded. The guarding must be of adequate construction with maximum openings of 100mm and designed to prevent climbing. The height of the guarding shall be 900mm.
- Balconies must be properly constructed and guarded. The guarding must be of adequate construction with maximum openings of 100mm and designed to prevent climbing. The height of the guarding shall be 1100mm.

Lighting

Adequate natural and artificial lighting must be provided to all habitable rooms, stairways, circulation spaces and common parts.

Kitchen facilities

Kitchen units and appliances must be free from defects and in good working order. In general kitchen facilities shall be less than 10 years old. Kitchen facilities shall comprise:

- An inter-grated cooker, an adequate splash back adjacent to the cooker, oven and grill (suitably restrained and located).
- A sink with integral drainer set on a 1000mm base unit.
- Constant hot and cold water supplies over the sink.
- A fixed impervious and readily cleansable work surface (minimum 1000 x 500mm).
- An adequate tiled splash back adjacent to the sink unit and work surfaces.
- Sinks and worktops to be sealed around joints with silicone sealant.
- A direct drainage connection to the sink with suitable water trap. Cut off water valve.
- Waste pipes and taps to be defect free, no leaks or drips. Taps to be easy to operate.
- Adequate storage cupboard units (minimum 0.3 m³).
- A minimum of two double electrical sockets provided above work surfaces (excluding appliance sockets).
- Vinyl type floor covering free from defects. Plumbing/fittings must be provided to allow the installation of a washing machine, including a non-return valve fitted to the waste pipe.

Windows Double Glazed

- Windows must be in good working condition and open and shut properly.

- Fixed stays (restrictors) must be provided to all windows above ground floor level to restrict opening to 100mm maximum.
- Low-level window glazing (less than 800mm above finished floor level) must be impact resistant. You can achieve this by replacing noncompliant glass with safety glass, applying safety film or fixing permanent screen protection.
- Ease of window cleaning shall be considered and steps taken to remove any potentially hazardous arrangement.
- All WC and bathroom windows must be provided with obscure glass.

Gardens, yards & access

- External yards, paths, steps and access-ways must be in good order, even and well drained.
- Paths must have adequate friction and be adequately lit.
- There shall be no unguarded drops, no iron-spiked railings.
- Safety (and the presence of external lighting) shall be considered where access is via a rear alleyway/external stairs.
- All boundaries must be clearly defined and enclosed by suitable walls or fences, which is the owner's responsibility, for upkeep and repair.
- Garden ponds must be emptied and filled to make them safe.
- Greenhouses must be dismantled and removed.
- Garden sheds must be safe and in good order or removed. If present, they must be clear of all rubbish, tools and any other items.

Heating & thermal comfort

An efficient heating system matched to the thermal capacity of the structure must be provided. This system may comprise of either full central heating, programmable heating or electric storage heaters. This system must be capable of maintaining 21°C in living areas and 18°C in bedrooms when the external temperature is -10°C. The system shall be controllable and have a full service contract. There must be a fixed heating appliance or radiator in every room. Portable gas or electric heaters are not acceptable. If the heating appliance is an electric fire it can only be a wall-mounted convector heater and it must be connected to a fused spur. Where a new boiler is required, the installation shall meet the latest BS standards. Efficient insulation means cavities insulated where present, a minimum of 50mm loft insulation if gas programmable central heating and 200mm loft insulation if electric storage heating. Where there is no loft insulation present, new insulation shall be fitted to comply with the Building Regulations, which currently require a thickness of approximately 250mm. All hot water cylinders must be properly insulated.

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Dampness

The premises must be free from dampness prejudicial to the health of the occupants. This includes rising damp, penetrating damp and condensation

Ventilation

Adequate permanent ventilation must be provided to all habitable rooms (a suitable opening window will achieve this). Adequate permanent ventilation is to be provided to kitchens and bathrooms - if there is no window, mechanical extract ventilation must be provided. We recommend humidistat controlled mechanical extractor fans are provided to kitchen and bathroom locations.

Installations

- Installations for the supply of gas, electricity and water must be in good repair and proper working order.
- A landlord, gas safety certificate must be provided annually, by an approved (CORGI) registered contractor.
- An electrical test certificate must be provided by a (NICEIC) approved contractor.
- Sufficient electrical sockets must be provided. Landlord's electrical supply (where necessary) shall be separately metered.
- Prepayment gas and electricity meters must be provided for each letting. Meters must be accessible at all times.
- A mains supply of drinking water must be provided to the kitchen sink.
- Water storage tanks must be properly housed, insulated and covered.

Fire safety

- As a minimum, the following requirements apply:
- A hard-wired mains operated smoke detector must be fitted to the ceiling to each floor of the dwelling circulation space. (In houses converted into flats a system of electrically operated interlinked fire detection may be required).
 - A hard wired mains operated carbon monoxide detector to be fitted where there is gas central heating.
 - Flat entrance doors (within conversions), which lead off the communal staircase, MUST be fire resistant (conforming to BS 476) and fitted with suitable self-closing devices.
 - All kitchens must have suitable fire doors fitted in flatted accommodation.
 - Polystyrene tile finishes must not be provided on any surface.

- To ensure escape in case of fire, deadlocks to flat/house entrance doors are not acceptable, but deadlocks with internal thumb-turns are acceptable.

Living room three double sockets

Health & safety

If heating is provided by a district system all distribution pipe-work must be boxed-in or suitably protected. The hot water supply system shall be such that heated water can be delivered at a temperature below 460C. There must be no unacceptable changes in floor level. All drops must be suitably guarded. All access and yard surfaces must be level and provide suitable friction.

Bathroom & WC facilities (No coloured suites)

- Bathroom facilities must be free from defects and in good working order and in general be less than thirty years old. Sanitary facilities shall comprise:
- A fixed bath or shower and wash hand basin with a constant supply of hot and cold water and a direct drainage connection with suitable trap. Minimum sizes: wash hand basin 500 x 400mm, bath 1700 x 700mm and shower 800 x 800mm.
 - A water closet properly connected to the drainage.
 - Shower tiling of sufficient height to protect the decoration of the wall (1.8m plus) properly sealed, and a shower screen or curtain to be supplied of a sufficient standard to prevent water damage to floor.
 - Tiled and sealed splash backs (300 mm high) to baths and wash hand basins.

There must be adequate activity space adjacent to facilities. Water closets must have an available wash hand basin located on the same floor. Bathrooms/WCs located off a kitchen must have a wash hand basin. Bathrooms shall not be accessed through bedrooms except for studio and one-bedroom flats where the bathroom is en suite.

Doors

- Doors shall be of suitable size with sufficient headroom.
- Doors shall open in the direction of travel into the room where possible.
- Low-level glazing (less than 1500mm above finished floor level) must be impact resistant (using safety glass or film).
- Doorstops shall be fitted to protect walls from damage if necessary.