



Hull Accredited Landlord Scheme (HALS)



Hull
City Council

4.8 Kitchen Facilities

Each kitchen contains facilities for the storage, preparation and cooking of food which are suitable for the number of occupants using the kitchen, unless provided by the tenant. Further guidance on these facilities can be obtained from the Council's 'Fit Homes Standards' guide as detailed in Section 2 of this handbook.



4.9 Toilet and Personal Washing Facilities

An adequate number of suitably located W.C.'s, baths and/or showers and washbasins are provided with constant hot and cold water supplies as appropriate, which are suitable for the number of occupants. Further guidance on these facilities can be obtained from the Council's 'Fit Homes Standards' guide.

4.10 Overcrowding

Dwellings are not knowingly overcrowded. Further guidance on space standards can be obtained from the Council's 'Fit Homes Standards' guide.

Health and safety

Landlords will ensure that:

4.11 Gas Appliances and Supply

All means of use and supply of mains gas and alterations and repairs to gas installations shall comply with current Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations.

Documentation giving verification of annual gas safety checks by a CORGI registered gas installer will be provided to tenants (or put on display in the dwelling), made available to the scheme operator upon request and given to new tenants on moving in. A copy must be kept in the property file.

Clear written instructions in the safe use of all central heating and hot water systems are available on request

4.12 Liquefied Gas, Paraffin Heaters and Appliances

Portable bottled gas or paraffin heaters will not be provided as a heating source.

Oil fired heating systems are serviced in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations.

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4.13 Electrical Installations and Appliances.

All electrical installations provided by the landlord are certified as safe by a competent electrician in accordance with the current relevant legislation. It is recommended that a document of verification is obtained showing that the electrical wiring of the dwellings is in a safe and satisfactory condition and stipulating the timescale within which the next safety check should be carried out. This must be kept in the file.

All components used in electrical wiring installations and repairs comply with the relevant International Standards and all appliances will be installed in accordance with Manufacturers instructions.

Reasonable steps are taken to ensure that all electrical appliances provided by them under the terms of the tenancy are functioning effectively, in accordance with manufacturers' operational limits, and in a safe manner. Portable Appliance Testing (PAT), would be one satisfactory method of ensuring this.

Appliances are regularly visually inspected for wear and tear and any defects remedied.

Instructions in the safe use of all electrical appliances (including cookers, space and water heaters) will be given upon request.

4.14 Lighting and Ventilation

All dwellings are provided with adequate natural/artificial lighting and ventilation. Further guidance on appropriate provision of lighting and ventilation can be obtained from the Council's 'Fit Homes Standards' guide.

4.15 Energy Efficiency

All dwellings are provided with a reasonable level of energy efficiency measures and to include as a minimum hot water tank and exposed pipe lagging and adequate insulation to roof void areas where appropriate.

Energy efficiency improvements are incorporated, where practicable, into refurbishment schemes.

Tenants are given advice upon request, or signposted to an appropriate advisory agency, on how best to heat their accommodation and use hot water in an energy efficient way using the facilities provided. The scheme operator will assist with the provision of such information.

Further guidance on insulation and energy efficiency measures can be obtained from the Council's 'Fit Homes Standards' guide.

4.16 Space Heating

All dwellings are provided with adequate and suitable space heating. Efficient and economic fixed heating appliances, or a controllable central heating system, are required to be provided in principal rooms or bedsits, with suitable provision for other rooms. Heating using only peak rate electricity, other than in an exceptionally well insulated dwelling, is not acceptable.

4.17 Internal Layout

Dwellings, or parts of it, will not be let if the internal layout is likely to be prejudicial to the health, safety or well being of the tenants or they are otherwise not reasonably suitable for occupation.

Rooms have an adequate floor to ceiling height. There is no prescribed minimum height, but seven feet (2.1 metres) would normally be considered to be satisfactory. Each case will be looked at on its own merits depending upon all the circumstances.

4.18 Fire Safety



As a minimum all dwellings are provided with long life tamperproof battery operated smoke alarms, suitably sited, and a fire blanket in the kitchen.

When refurbishment is carried out singly occupied dwellings will be provided with a mains wired smoke alarm system with detectors that comply with BS 5839 part 6 Grade D LD3 Standards and sited to warn occupants of fire affecting the escape route.

Where such dwellings comprise of more than one storey, smoke alarms shall be interlinked, with one detector at each level within the route of escape.

Smoke alarms shall be properly maintained in accordance with the manufacturers instructions.

Tenants are informed of their responsibilities to treat the alarm system with respect.

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) are provided with fire safety measures in accordance with standards adopted by Hull City Council and which may include by way of example:

- > a fire escape route with a minimum of 30 minutes fire resistance
- > an automatic fire alarm system
- > an emergency lighting system sited to protect the route of escape

The design and detail of the measures are determined in accordance with a fire safety risk assessment and in consideration of the local authority's HMO standards.

Fire alarm and emergency lighting systems installed in Houses in Multiple Occupation are properly checked and maintained by a competent approved electrician, not less than every 12 months, and that inspection certificates are provided and retained in the property file. A method for ensuring fire alarm systems are operational on a weekly basis is adopted.

All exit routes within a dwelling such as hallways, landings and staircases, so far as they are under the control of the landlord and as far as reasonably practical, will be maintained safely, unobstructed and free of fixtures and fittings to enable evacuation of the dwelling in the event of fire.

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4.19 Fire Safety Guidance

Clear guidance on fire safety will be provided to residents at the commencement of the tenancy or the tenants signposted to a suitable advisory agency. The necessary information will be provided to the landlord by the scheme operator.

4.20 Security Measures

They consider and implement where appropriate, measures recommended by local Police Authority backed Crime Prevention Initiatives.

Security grilles on doors and windows are used responsibly and in consideration of fire safety, appearance and the need for their use at all.

External doors and frames are secure and fitted with a secure locking system.

In Houses in Multiple Occupation, to help avoid delay in escaping in case of fire, final exit doors and any other doors through which a person may have to pass should be so fastened and maintained so that they can be easily and immediately opened from the inside without the use of a key.

Ground floor and upper storey windows accessible from ground level are of sound construction and resistant against unauthorised entry.

If present, burglar alarm systems have a 20 minute cut out and a key holder nominated.

4.21 Hygiene and Waste Disposal

All facilities for the storage, preparation and cooking of food will be capable of being readily cleaned and being maintained in a clean and hygienic state by the tenants.

All floor coverings in kitchens, bathrooms and W.C's are capable of being readily cleaned with suitable domestic disinfectant products. Carpets may be used for floor coverings in bathrooms in self contained accommodation but are recommended to be of a type that can be readily cleaned.

All dwellings will be provided with suitable refuse disposal facilities sufficient for the number of occupants, as advised by the local authority's waste collection service.

They inform tenants of the need for proper refuse management. All appropriate steps are taken to ensure all tenancy agreement clauses relating to proper refuse disposal are adhered to.



4.22 Structural Safety

All staircases are in a safe condition with suitable handrails, adequate headroom, sufficient lighting and not dangerously steep. Loft ladders and other non conventional stairs/steps are not acceptable for accessing rooms in roof spaces. No rooms in roof spaces can be let for use as habitable rooms unless converted in accordance with the building regulations or constructed at the same time that the house was built.

Ensure glazing in doors and within 300mm to either side of the doors or below 800mm in windows or glass screens is safety glass or made safe using plastic film.

Ensure access paths and yards are maintained in good condition so as to prevent the risk of tripping and are laid so as afford proper drainage and avoid flooding.



5.0 At the end of the tenancy

Landlords will ensure that:

Deposits

Deposits are administered efficiently and reasonably by the landlord or their nominee, and are not withheld for any purpose other than that for which they were levied.

The tenancy agreement specifies:

- > how the deposit is held
- > by whom
- > what the deposit is held for
- > the maximum period after the end of the tenancy by which the deposit will have been returned, subject to the resolution of any dispute
- > how any disputes over the deposit will be resolved.

Tenants are issued with clear written guidelines regarding the standard of cleanliness and condition of the dwelling expected at the end of the tenancy, so as to avoid misunderstandings.

Once fully receipted invoice accounts have been provided by tenants, all deposits (or balances on deposits) shall be returned to tenants within the timescale agreed in the tenancy or an explanation provided as to why a variation may need to be the case.

The Council Tax Office is notified when a new tenant moves in.

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6.0 Landlord/tenant disputes

Landlords undertake to:

Have a written procedure for dealing with complaints, which is given to each tenant at the start of the tenancy that makes clear:

- > the purpose of the complaints procedure
- > how the complaint should be made
- > how and by whom it will be considered
- > how long it will take

The procedure should aim to resolve complaints quickly and fairly so that a line can be drawn under them and the parties can move onto a more constructive relationship for the remainder of the tenancy.

The Council will provide a model complaints procedure which may be adopted by landlords.

The procedure should have the following stages. The intention is to resolve complaints as early as possible, ideally at stage 1, however landlords should ensure that stages 2 and 3 are included in their complaints procedure.

Stage 1

Internal. Discussion between landlord and tenant using the landlord's complaints procedure. Where a landlord has a few dwellings that they look after themselves, the complaints procedure can be very short and straightforward. Larger organisations and landlords with more dwellings may need to have more stages in a more formal process.

Stage 2

Scheme Operator. If the complaint is not resolved at Stage 1, it will be referred to Hull City Council, Housing Standards. Both parties will have the opportunity to present their case in person.

Stage 3

Review Panel. If the complaint is not resolved at Stage 2 it will be referred to the Review Panel who's decision will be final although it is recognised that both parties will have the opportunity to present their case in person.

Good practice:

- > complaints may be made orally or in writing to the landlord, but if they cannot be resolved by the landlord they must be put in writing so that they can be considered externally.
- > however made, a record of complaints should be kept by the landlord so their progress can be tracked.
- > the complaints procedure should be completed as quickly as possible to minimise the damage to the landlord-tenant relationship.

7.0 Important notes

Hull City Council reserves the right at any time to amend the content of the scheme or its operation subject to consultation with the relevant parties.

Adoption of the landlord accreditation scheme and compliance or non-compliance with the provisions of the scheme do not affect the statutory rights of people seeking housing.

Members of the scheme agree to comply with and accept that amendments to the content and or operation of the scheme can be made by the scheme operator, Hull City Council, subject to consultation with the relevant parties, where upon members of the scheme will be notified of any changes.

Hull City Council does not have control over the management or condition of the dwellings covered by the scheme and therefore cannot be held responsible or liable for them. Landlords retain full responsibility for the health and safety of their tenants whilst residing in their properties.

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Acknowledgement is given to Accreditation Network UK (ANUK) for the use of the model accreditation scheme in the production of this document.

9.0 Scheme operators commitments

9.1 Publicity

Hull City Council will promote/advertise accredited landlords on its website.

The Council will give persons seeking accommodation either through Council activity in making clearance areas, homelessness or simply through looking for alternative suitable accommodation, information regarding accredited landlords. Consideration is being given to operating a website with landlords properties advertised.

The council will issue promotional certificates for accredited landlords for their offices and property. The Council will provide logo stickers and other promotional literature to support the scheme.

9.2 Training

Hull City Council will host two Landlord forums per year.

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Hull City Council will facilitate training for landlords to cover a range of issues such as: the Landlord and Tenant Act; Anti-Social Behaviour; Property Management; Health and Safety in Dwellings; Inspecting your Property; etc. The Council or provider of training will issue a certificate on satisfactory completion of the course.

9.3 Rent Assessment/ The Rent Service/ Housing benefits

The rent service will generally provide higher rent assessment levels for properties of accredited landlords.

9.4 Financial Assistance

In pro-active housing action areas, whether formal or informally declared, grant assistance may be made available to help landlords contribute to the strategic aims and objectives for the area. These are likely to cover issues such as improving energy efficiency, painting the frontage of houses, carrying out boundary treatments, safety issues such as the provision of smoke alarms in non HMOs, making staircases and glazing safe, security and may also include the renovation or repair of individual properties. Grant assistance may also be paid in specific areas to landlords participating in group repair or enveloping schemes. Accredited landlords may also benefit from a higher rate of assistance which will be determined when a formal or informal renewal area is declared.

9.5 Empty properties

Accredited landlords will be given the opportunity to purchase empty properties acquired by the Council using its compulsory purchase powers where renovation is deemed to be the most satisfactory course of action. Where the Council does not acquire empty properties by compulsory purchase, accredited landlords may have their names given to owners of vacant properties if the owner so wishes.

Accredited landlords are expected to ensure their properties are not left vacant. Landlords not marketing empty properties for sale or to let, unless in the process of renovation, may lose their accreditation status.

9.6 Anti-social behaviour

The Hull Anti-Social Behaviour Team and the Hull Landlord Accreditation Scheme will support each other and work together to achieve the aim of tackling Anti-Social Behaviour across Hull.

Both the Anti-Social Behaviour Team and accredited landlords will address Anti-Social Behaviour, racial and homophobic incidents for the benefit of Landlords, tenants and the community at large.

The statutory definition of Anti-Social Behaviour is "Behaviour that causes or is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household as the perpetrators".

The Anti-Social Behaviour Team and accredited landlords will adopt the strategy of working together towards:

- > achieving efficient and effective referral and investigation processes,
- > dealing confidently and sensitively with evidence and information and in accordance with statutory requirements,
- > developing joint problem solving in the overall interests of both parties.

Accredited landlords will be encouraged to refer cases to the Anti-Social Behaviour Team where local attempts to resolve the issue have failed. Those attempts could include verbal warning, written warning under tenancy agreements, an undertaking to change behaviour, caution, or issuing tenants with a notice to quit.

If a case is persistent in nature or cannot be resolved after local attempts have been exhausted, this can be referred to the Anti-Social Behaviour Team, together with the relevant documentation.

9.7 Refuse disposal

The Council will provide one permit per registered property per year for the free disposal of waste from that property at the Wilmington Transfer Station. Landlords will have to provide proof of the number and details of properties they manage prior to the issue of permits.

Landlords wishing to use this scheme will either have to be a registered waste carrier themselves (this is administered by the Environment Agency and currently costs £133 for three years - contact 08708 506506 for details) or use a registered waste carrier and complete and retain the required transfer note. Landlords and other registered carriers employed by them must present their waste carrier licence as well as the permit to be allowed onto the transfer station.

Alternatively registered landlords will also be able to use the Council's free bulky item collection service once a year for each property. Again, landlords will be required to provide proof of the properties they manage, and will be given a code to quote when arranging collections through the call centre (tel (01482) 300300).

These schemes are designed to ensure landlords comply with their Duty of Care under the Environmental Protection Act 1990. Practical guidance as to how to discharge this duty can be found in the statutory codes of practice 'Waste Management - The Duty of Care.' **Copies can be obtained through HMSO Publications 01603 723011, or electronically from:**

http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/waste/management/doc/pdf/waste_man_duty_code.pdf

These services will be reviewed and monitored and will be withdrawn if they are abused or the Duty of Care is not followed.

9.8 Discounted Goods

The Council will negotiate with local companies reductions in prices for goods and services to be made available to accredited landlords.

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9.9 Accredited Trades Person Scheme - (Trading Standards)

This is a scheme being developed by Trading Standards to assist persons seeking tradespersons who have been endorsed by the Council.

9.10 Enforcement

Notification of disrepair received by Hull City Council from tenants will be referred directly to the landlord to be dealt with in accordance with the complaints procedure. Tenants will be notified that their complaint has been referred to the landlord. If the complaint is not dealt with in the agreed time period or to an acceptable standard the tenant will have been advised to notify Hull City Council who will then investigate the alleged defects. Hull City Council will inform the landlord in writing of the defects and request that these are carried out in accordance with the procedure detailed at 4.5 of the Scheme for prioritising dealing with repairs. Failure to comply with works required by the Council will result in formal enforcement action being taken by Hull City Council and the matter being referred to the Review Panel.

9.11 Tenant References

Hull City Council will provide references for former council house tenants where prospective tenants indicate that they consent to this. Accredited landlords will provide references for tenants moving into alternative accommodation if requested to do so.

10.0 Tenant's Code

(a) General Conduct

The tenant will ensure that:

- > They have read and understand the tenancy agreement.
- > They abide by all the terms and conditions in the tenancy agreement.
- > They conduct their relationships with their landlord, his agent and contractors and fellow-tenants courteously throughout the tenancy.
- > They behave in a 'tenant like manner' by carrying out day to day maintenance and not causing damage to the property.
- > They respond to the landlord in a timely manner.

(b) Commencement of Tenancy

The tenant will ensure that:

- > Any references that might be required by the landlord/agent are, to the best of their belief, authentic.
- > They contact all relevant utility companies to register supplies in their name.
- > They register with the local authority's Council Tax Department or, where appropriate, provide exemption certificates.
- > They carry out an inspection of the dwelling with reference to the inventory and

inform the landlord in writing of any damage, defects or inaccuracies within 3 days of taking up occupancy. Copies should be signed by all parties.

(c) During the Tenancy

The tenant will ensure that:

- > They behave in a reasonable manner and not to cause a nuisance to their neighbours.
- > They do not create excessive noise, which causes a nuisance to neighbours, having regard to the time and location of sensitive areas within neighbouring premises.
- > They allow the landlord to discharge their duty.

(d) Looking after their letting

The tenant will ensure that:

- > On receipt of reasonable notice, normally 24 hours minimum, they provide the landlord/agent or any person acting on their behalf access to the dwelling in order to carry out an inspection or make repairs, during normal working hours.
- > They maintain the dwelling in a clean and tidy condition especially the kitchen and bathroom and ensure they use the provision for ventilation properly to reduce the risk of condensation.
- > They replace spent light bulbs.
- > They keep external drainage gullies free from debris.
- > They promptly inform the landlord of defects.

(e) Visual Appearance

The tenant will ensure that:

- > They keep gardens/yards free from refuse and in a tidy condition.

(f) Health & Safety

The tenant will ensure that:

- > All gas and electrical appliances are used only in a manner for which they were designed.

(g) Fire Safety

The tenant will ensure that:

- > They follow instructions for fire safety.
- > Fire doors are kept closed and not wedged open.
- > They do not obstruct any stairways, landings and passageways which provide a route of escape in case of fire or leave any combustible material in these areas.
- > They do not interfere with or remove any appliances or equipment provided for fire safety.

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- > They take all necessary precautions with cooking equipment and naked flames e.g. candles, tealights, gas hobs and not to leave them unattended.
- > Not to use or bring onto the premises any portable gas or paraffin heaters.

(h) Alarms

The tenant will ensure that:

- > Where a burglar alarm is provided, key holder details are registered with the Police and Local Authority.

(i) Security

The tenant will ensure that:

- > They keep the dwelling secure using all the facilities provided.

(j) Refuse

The tenant will ensure that:

- > They store refuse in a proper hygienic way and put out for collection on the day and in the manner required by the waste collection service.

(k) At the end of the tenancy

The tenant will ensure that:

- > They give the required notice as required by the tenancy agreement.
- > They return all keys on termination of the tenancy.
- > They settle all outstanding accounts on termination of the tenancy.
- > They leave the dwelling in a clean condition on vacation of the dwelling and remove their belongings.
- > They leave the dwelling in no worse condition having regard to fair wear and tear as at the commencement of the tenancy.
- > They make every effort to be present at the check-out inspection unless otherwise agreed. This will help to avoid disputes after they have left.
- > They will make suitable arrangements for the forwarding of mail.

(l) Tenancy Disputes

The tenant agrees to:

- > Deal with disputes promptly and reasonably and recognise the authority of the Landlord Accreditation Scheme Operator's Review Panel.



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Section 2 - Hull Fit Homes Standards

1.0 Introduction

This guide details the physical standards that will help owners and agents ensure the properties they let meet adequate standards for the private rented sector. These standards are the ideal. For standards in houses in multiple occupation (HMO's) additional facilities may be required and the Council's 'Landlords Guide to Houses in Multiple Occupation' and 'HMO Fire Safety Guide' should be referred to although in some sections reference is made to HMOs.

The guide distinguishes between those matters which are necessary to comply with the minimum requirements of the Hull Landlord Accreditation Scheme and those matters which are advisory or optional. The guide is not meant to be prescriptive although it does use wording such as 'must' and should. In general 'must' indicates a requirement but this may be met by alternative means; it is the most obvious way of meeting the criteria detailed in the accreditation code of standards. Alternative means may be discussed with the scheme operator. Where the word 'should' is used this usually indicates best practice or a very strong recommendation.

It is based largely on current standards, government guidance, best practice and also takes into account some of the hazards in the proposed housing health and safety rating system.

The guide covers the following subject matters:

- > Repair
- > Freedom from damp
- > Facilities for the storage, preparation and cooking of food including drinking water supply
- > Toilet and bathroom facilities (WCs, baths, showers and wash basins)
- > Ventilation
- > Heating and Energy Efficiency
- > Security
- > Structural and design safety
- > Gas, electrical and fire safety
- > Overcrowding
- > Refuse disposal and drainage
- > Artificial and natural lighting
- > External amenities
- > Decent homes standard
- > Access/Disabled facilities

2.0 Repair

2.1 Structural Stability

The purpose of maintaining structural stability is not only to avoid safety hazards of a catastrophic nature, such as death and injury due to collapse, but by preventing severe settlement cracks, avoidance of health hazards such as those resulting from cracked sewers, fractured damp proof courses and water and wind penetration.

The following information should prove helpful in assessing the stability of your premises and may indicate when remedial action may be necessary.

Structural stability is concerned with the stability of the basic structure, roofs, walls, parapets, arches and lintels.

The building must be able to withstand the combined dead (weight of the building), imposed (contents and snow) and wind loads to which it is likely to be subjected in the ordinary course of events, and normal ground movement of the subsoil caused by swelling, shrinkage or freezing; and is free from ongoing movement and the probability of movement which constitutes a threat to any occupants.

Defects to look for are as follows:

- (a) The stability, distortion or spreading of roof structures, chimney or parapets.**
 - > Roof spreading or sagging (new roof coverings without additional support or restraint).
 - > Chimney distortion due to sulphate or frost attack.

- (b) The stability, distortion and cracking of walls and continuity of wall ties.**
 - > Walls cracked, distorted, displaced or bulging.
 - > Defective arches and lintels.
 - > Defective wall ties with brickwork distress.
 - > Insecure cladding or structures.

- (c) The structural adequacy and bearing of floors, stairs and ceilings.**
 - > Decayed floor/ceiling joists.
 - > Decayed/broken structural elements of stairs.

- (d) The distortion, integrity and movement of foundations/footings.**
 - > Hull is an area of stiff clay soils subject to ground movement, 'heave and shrinkage'. Consequently, structural movement in the older stock is common place and is compounded by the effects of bomb damage and trees.

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2.2 Disrepair

Disrepair is generally concerned with the deterioration of building components and to be satisfactory, the components and structure which they form should function in the way in which they were intended.

Disrepair must not be so extensive or severe as to cause serious inconvenience to any occupants or to present a risk to their health and safety. Further disrepair should not materially affect the comfort or wellbeing of the occupants.

Landlords must carry out an inspection of their property once a year.

This inspection should be done systematically and recorded on an inspection sheet. Such inspection records should be kept for a period of three years.

Externally the premises should be examined from roof to ground and the following structural elements commented on for each elevation.

- > Chimney pots;
Ensure pots are not leaning, displaced or loose, ensure flaunching is intact.
- > Chimney stack and associated flashings;
Ensure chimney stacks are free from perished and open-jointed brickwork. Severely bulging or leaning stacks should be re-built. Lead flashings should be intact and securely fixed.
Stacks that have been capped off should incorporate adequate ventilation of the remaining flues.
- > Roof coverings including flashings, ridges, hips and verges;



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Ensure there are no loose, missing, broken or displaced slates or tiles. Renew or secure as necessary. Re-point any open jointed verges, ridges or hip tiles and re-bed any that are loose or displaced. Check valley gutters for damage to lead and repair or renew as necessary ensuring detail is adequate to prevent rainwater running across valley boards and penetrating into the roof space, where decay may commence or where there is penetration to the ceiling below damage to the decorations or ceiling plaster may occur. In older properties the tilting fillets are frequently inadequate.

- > Rainwater goods (eaves gutters, fascia boards, soffits, fall-pipes, hopper heads and lead lined gutters);

Gutters should be cleaned once a year and occasionally more frequently when there are deciduous trees nearby. Gutters should be checked for signs of decay, corrosion, misalignment or physical damage. Where gutters are prone to overflowing the capacity of the gutter and adequacy of the falls should be checked. Fall-pipes should be checked for displacement, holes and corrosion. Fall-pipes should discharge directly into a gully or run across paving laid to a fall, to a suitable outlet such as a street gully. Fascias and soffits should be checked for decay.

- > Walls;

Check for open-jointed and perished brickwork, holes around waste pipes, missing brickwork and fractured bricks or joints. Replace badly perished bricks before they allow water to penetrate to the inside of the dwelling and re-point open-jointed brickwork. Fractured joints can be raked out and repointed and cracked bricks taken out and replaced but remember to investigate the cause of the cracking and rectify first. Holes can be either pointed or if large filled with full or part bricks.

- > Lintels;

Lintels are usually made of stone, timber or brick arches in older properties. More modern dwellings have steel or reinforced concrete lintels. Brick arches suffer from settlement and displacement or spreading of the arch components. Timber lintels may suffer from decay and stone lintels may become perished or cracked as a result of settlement. Wherever stability or weather resistance is compromised lintels should be replaced or repaired.

- > Cills;

Cills may be made from timber, stone, brick, concrete or rendered brick. Cills should always be present below any opening in the external wall structure and should be constructed and maintained so as to allow water to run away from the building and drip away from the wall. Cills that are too narrow may allow water to run off onto the wall and cause penetrating damp. Cills that are decayed, cracked or have missing render may allow water to penetrate through into the top of the wall and appear as a damp patch below the window. Particular attention should be paid to the ends of the cill where they contact the wall and this junction should be sealed with a suitable flexible mastic sealant to prevent penetration into the structure. Cills should have a sloping surface to aid the run off of water.

- > Doors;

External doors should normally open inwards. They must be robust enough to deter burglars and be wind and watertight. Doors are usually constructed of timber, aluminium or UPVC. Timber doors may warp and leave gaps through which wind

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and rain may penetrate. In severe cases the doors should be replaced. In less severe cases the gap may be reduced by re-hanging the door, adding laths to the frame or by the addition of draught strips. If the head of the door is sloping as a result of structural movement the top of the door can be planed so as to be parallel with the head of the frame. The door can be lifted and a batten fixed to bottom of the door to take up any gap created by lifting the door. Door furniture should be maintained and doors should open and close freely. External doors should have a weatherboard and the threshold should have a weather bar to ensure water does not penetrate into the dwelling. Five lever mortice locks are required to meet accreditation standards.

> Woodwork;

Windows are included in this although it is accepted that many windows are now made from UPVC. Windows should function as they were originally intended. Openable portions must be sufficient for the size of the room and must open and close properly. Locks should be provided as described in the section on security. Windows must not allow water or wind to penetrate. Small draughts are acceptable but large gaps should be dealt with by either draught proofing or adjustment of the window itself. Timber windows should be kept painted externally to prevent decay and water penetration. Closing and locking mechanisms on UPVC windows should be checked annually for correct operation and repaired as necessary. All other timber to the exterior of the property such as fascias, soffits, barge boards, cladding and any decorative woodwork should be checked annually for decay and filled and painted or replaced as necessary.

> Waste pipes, soil/vent pipes;

These must be properly fixed to the wall, be of the correct size for the amenity and be free from leaks. They must discharge into suitable drainage outlets. Vent pipes must conform to current building regulations. Annual checks should be made.

> Drainage including gullies;

Drains must be kept in good repair. Blocked gullies are normally a tenants responsibility in singly occupied dwellings but any defects to gullies or drains are the landlords responsibility. Blocked drains should be attended to promptly to avoid health hazards developing.

> Paving;

Paths and paving must be level and free from trip hazards

3.0 Freedom from damp

Damp has a number of effects, mostly indirectly on the occupiers and directly on the fabric of the building. **There are four main sources of damp within buildings:**

- > Penetrating damp
- > Plumbing leaks
- > Rising damp
- > Condensation

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The effects on the fabric of a building due to damp are to cause timber to decay if in prolonged contact with moisture, to damage decorations through mould and stains, to cause wall-plaster to perish and crumble and lose its key, to cause brickwork and masonry to perish through freeze/thaw action, to cause particle boards commonly used in construction to swell and lose their strength, to disrupt electrical systems and to corrode metal fixings such as wall ties and reinforcement.

The effects of dampness on health result from a proliferation of moulds and dust mites both of which produce allergens that can affect the respiratory system. Damp walls reduce the temperature of the room as heat is used in the process of evaporation and more heat is required to warm a damp wall than a dry wall. This frequently results in low temperatures, particularly if the heating system is inefficient and/or the occupiers suffer from fuel poverty. Low temperatures increase the risk of stroke, heart disease, bronchitis, pneumonia and accidents. The mortality rates for these diseases rise when the ambient temperature falls.

Landlords must ensure that complaints of penetrating damp and plumbing defects are remedied as urgent defects.

3.1 Penetrating damp can originate from:

- > missing or defective roof coverings
- > defective windows and cills
- > leaking and/or blocked rainwater goods
- > perished, open-jointed or missing brickwork
- > defective or missing flashings
- > ill-fitting external doors

3.2 Plumbing leaks can be from:

- > water supply pipes
- > tanks and cisterns
- > defective ball-valves
- > soil and waste pipes
- > traps
- > boilers and heating systems

3.3 Rising damp can be seen as a line or tide mark around the walls of a ground floor room rising from skirting board level to, rarely, a meter above floor level. It results from the failure of the Damp Proof Course (DPC) or the bridging of the DPC by plaster or rendering or by earth built up against an external wall. Mould is rarely associated with rising damp as the salts brought to the surface by the water as it evaporates inhibit the growth of moulds. The salts, however, may be hygroscopic and attract moisture from within the room to the wall surface and this increases the problem. Salt concentrations may build up to levels that cause plaster to blow and lose its key. An injected damp proof course or new physical membrane followed by re-plastering are the common solutions to a failed damp proof course. Bridging of the damp proof course can be remedied by removing render or plaster as appropriate or by removing earth from an outside wall.

- 3.4 Condensation results from an imbalance between heating, ventilation, insulation and moisture production. Leaflets are available from the Housing Standards section of Housing Strategy which gives advice to occupiers about controlling condensation. Landlords should ensure their properties meet the criteria in this document for the provision of heating, insulation and means of ventilation. Once landlords have made this provision it is up to the tenants to make proper use of it, as condensation problems can also be significantly contributed to by the use or occupation of the property. Drying of clothes inside the house, use of portable heating appliance such as paraffin or liquid petroleum gas (LPG) or frequent boiling of water for cooking purposes will significantly increase the amount of water vapour in the air. A common fault is poor insulation to parts of the structure where heat losses are greater than elsewhere such as at wall, floor and ceiling junctions, door and window reveals and elements penetrating the width of the wall such as metal lintels which are known as heat bridges.

4.0 Facilities for the storage, preparation and cooking of food including drinking water supply

4.1 Kitchens

- > Kitchens must be laid out safely so as not to put users and others at risk.
- > There must be a cooker or space for a cooker having four rings, a grill and an oven. The cooker should be sited safely so that all rings can be safely accessed. There should be work surfaces of at least 300mm to either side of the cooker to enable hot pans etc to be safely removed from the hob and placed on the surface. There should be sufficient retrieval space to remove cookware safely from the oven. For low level side hung oven doors this is usually about 1000mm between the front of the cooker and any object/work surface opposite and 1100mm in the case of drop down (bottom hung) oven doors. For high level ovens these dimensions can be reduced to 900mm and 1000mm. Cookers should not be sited next to door openings so that anybody entering the kitchen could knock into somebody using the cooker. In one person bedsits small cookers may be acceptable providing they have at least two rings, a grill and hob and are sited at a safe height. The top of the cooker should be level with the work-surfaces.
- > Wall and floor surfaces must be readily cleanable.
- > There must be adequate natural or mechanical ventilation.
- > Shared kitchens in student houses with 7 or more occupiers or in houses in multiple occupation should be provided with mechanical extract ventilation.
- > There must be adequate artificial lighting in all cases and natural lighting wherever possible.
- > There must be sufficient electric power points for the safe operation of all appliances.
- > There must be a sufficient number of cookers, refrigerators, dry food storage cupboards and sinks for the number of persons using them.
- > There must be sufficient smooth and impervious work surfaces.

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- > There must be a sink with a draining board, properly connected to the drainage system by a trapped waste outlet and have constant supplies of hot and potable cold water.
- > Ensure any cookers provided are fitted with safety chains to prevent tipping forward.
- > Proper facilities for the disabled must be provided where appropriate.

4.2 Drinking water

- > Drinking water supplies should not be from a tank but from the rising main only. Water to sinks and wash basins must be potable. Water closets, baths and showers may have cold water supplies from a storage tank but this should be notified to the tenants.

5.0 Toilet and bathroom facilities (WCs, baths, showers and wash basins)

- > There must be at least 1 water closet for every 5 occupants.
- > Sanitary conveniences compartments must have a readily cleanable, impervious floor covering and reasonably smooth, non-absorbent walls capable of being readily cleansed.
- > Adequate lighting and ventilation must be provided to each water closet compartment. Water closet compartments should not ideally open directly into kitchens. Any existing water closet compartments that open directly into kitchens should be provided with a means of mechanical ventilation. Any new premises/conversions should be designed to avoid this arrangement particularly in the case of shared kitchens.
- > Every water closet must be situated in a separate room within the building and where shared by two or more households, be entered from a common passageway or hallway and shall not be more than one floor distant from any individual letting.
- > Water closets must be situated, and be accessible from within the building. There must be a wash hand basin in the water closet compartment or in an adjacent bathroom or washroom.
- > There must be sufficient wash basins for the number of persons in occupation. For a family house one is usually sufficient for up to five persons. Wash basins should be 560 mm by 430 mm in size. Smaller basins may be acceptable where space is



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very limited but should be large enough to enable somebody to wash their hands and face properly. Hand rinse basins are only suitable for water closet compartments where there is another wash basin of adequate size elsewhere.

- > There must be sufficient baths and/or showers for the number of persons in occupation. Baths and showers must be in properly constructed bath or shower rooms. Baths should be of minimum dimensions, 1700 mm by 760 mm. Showers should be of minimum size of 800 mm by 800 mm. Baths and showers must be provided with supplies of hot and cold water or hot water at a suitably controlled temperature.
- > One bath per five persons is acceptable or one shower between six. Where there are more than four persons in the household the bath or shower should preferably be in a separate compartment to the water closet.
- > Amenities shared by two or more households must be accessible from a common area.
- > Baths and wash hand basins must have a two course tiled splash-back. Showers must have an impervious surround, either a cubicle or tiled walls and a screen.
- > The walls and floor covering of any bathroom or shower room must be reasonably smooth and non-absorbent and capable of being readily cleansed. Carpets may be used for floor coverings in bathrooms in self contained accommodation but are recommended to be of a type that can be readily cleaned
- > Lights must be operated by pull cord switches within bathrooms and shower rooms.

6.0 Ventilation

- > Ventilation is important to ensure healthy indoor air quality. During normal occupation of the dwelling, the human body produces waste products from metabolic processes which become airborne and need to be removed to avoid a build up of stale/polluted air. Water vapour and carbon dioxide are the two main contaminants and although not toxic at normal concentrations they can affect the air quality if the concentration becomes too high. Other contaminants include carbon monoxide from incomplete

combustion which is highly toxic, formaldehyde from particle boards which is an irritant and sulphur and nitrous oxides from combustion processes. Excess water vapour which is produced, not just through metabolic processes, but by every day activities such as washing and cooking can result in condensation followed by mould growth and an excess of house dust mites both of which are hazardous to health. Moisture production should therefore be kept to a minimum and there are advice sheets available providing more information on this subject. Moisture



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should, when produced in large quantities such as when bathing or cooking, be removed rapidly at source by the provision of mechanical extraction or an openable window. Background ventilation is also important and can be provided by presence of air bricks and trickle ventilators.

- > All habitable rooms, kitchens, bathrooms and WC compartments should have a minimum floor to ceiling height of 2.14m, except in the case of existing attic rooms, which should have a minimum height of 2.14m. over an area of the floor equal to not less than three-quarters of the area of the room, measured over a plane 1.5m above the floor. Any floor area where the ceiling height is less than 1.5m shall be disregarded.
- > All habitable rooms must be ventilated to the external air by a window, which has an openable area not less than one twentieth of the floor area and with a portion of the openable area above 1.75m above floor level.
- > All kitchens, bathrooms and WC compartments must be ventilated directly to the external air, either by a window as described above or by suitably sited mechanical ventilation at the rate of 30 litres/second for kitchens, 15 litres/second for bathrooms and 6 litres/second for WC compartments. Extraction units incorporating a humidistat control are recommended.
- > Suitable and sufficient permanent ventilation must be provided and maintained in any room containing an open flued gas, space or water heating appliance.
- > It is recommended that suitable and sufficient permanent means of ventilation are provided in all kitchens, dining/kitchens, bathrooms, WC compartments, other rooms containing cooking or washing facilities and sleeping rooms. Air-bricks or trickle vents with hit and miss grills are suitable. Background ventilation is important to avoid stale air and to get rid of metabolic products and other air contaminants that build up in an enclosed space within dwellings.

7.0 Heating and energy efficiency

- 7.1 Heating is important to ensure the health of occupiers, to reduce the incidence of condensation and resultant mould growth, to ensure comfort and to protect the fabric of the building. For reasonable comfort a temperature of 21°C should be capable of being maintained in living rooms, study bedrooms and bedsitting rooms without incurring excessive cost. Excessive cost is very difficult to establish but should not be more than 10% of the occupiers disposable income.
- 7.2 The principal living room of each occupancy must be provided with a fixed heating appliance capable of heating the room to a temperature of 21°C when the external temperature is -1°C. This provision should be efficient, safely designed and be sited and guarded so as to minimize risks to health and safety.
- 7.3 All other parts of the dwelling must be provided with a fixed heating appliance capable of heating the room to 18°C, or 21°C in the case of the elderly, when the external temperature is -1°C. This provision should be efficient, safely designed and be sited so as to minimize the risks to health and safety.

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- 7.4 Alternatively, other than in the main living room, either an electric socket which could reasonably be dedicated for a fixed heating appliance or a suitable gas point, where it is possible to properly site a gas appliance in the room, must be provided.
- 7.5 The following notes detail the 3 different levels of heating provision;
- > The basic standard should be an electric socket in each room that can be dedicated for a heating appliance. This is not sufficient to meet the accreditation full standard but meets minimum legal fitness standard.
 - > The minimum standard for accreditation should be as described in 7.2 and 7.3.
 - > The ideal or target standard for higher level accreditation (to be developed) is a central heating system covering all rooms and circulation spaces, controlled by a programmer which allows the independent control of heating and hot water, a room thermostat and where appropriate a hot water cylinder thermostat.
- 7.6 The minimum levels of insulation for the purposes of accreditation are 100mm of loft insulation although 200mm are recommended; hot water cylinder insulation which should be either a foam sprayed or a well fitting jacket at least 50mm thick; primary pipework from the boiler to the hot water cylinder must be insulated.
- 7.7 Additional energy efficiency measures that can be considered and would contribute to assessment for higher level accreditation include double glazing, (although this is not advocated unless windows need replacing or can be upgraded without renewing the frames); insulation of all heating or hot water pipes within roof spaces and under ground floors (insulation is not critical where pipes run through heated spaces); thermostatic radiator valves, zoned heating systems, low energy light bulbs/fluorescent tubes, insulation and dry lining of external walls, cavity wall insulation, draft proofing of all doors and windows, heat recovery systems linked to air extraction, condensing boilers and 'A' rated appliances such as refrigerators, freezers and washing machines where provided.
- 7.8 Tenants must be given advice on how to use the provisions for space and water heating efficiently and given instructions on safe and efficient operation of other appliance supplied with the property.

8.0 Security

- 8.1 Entrance doors to houses and flats must have five lever mortice locks fitted or have other equally secure locking mechanisms. Frames must be securely fixed.
- 8.2 Ground floor windows must be of sound construction fitted with suitable locking mechanisms so as to resist unauthorized entry. First floor windows that are readily accessible from the



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ground via an external staircase or adjacent flat roof should be made similarly resistant to unauthorized entry.

- 8.3 Any burglar alarms fitted should have a 20 minute cut out and a key holder nominated.
- 8.4 Security grills and bars must only be used where they do not compromise means of escape or impede ventilation through obstruction of an opening window. In general they should only be used in exceptional circumstances.
- 8.5 Security and means of escape from fire sometimes result in an apparent conflict in requirements in respect of houses in multiple occupation. However this need not be the case. Final exit doors for means of escape from fire should have a locking mechanism that can be easily and immediately opened in the event of a fire. Keys in glass cases are not acceptable. Escape mortice locks have the security of a mortice lock provided that any glass associated with the door, which, if broken would enable a potential intruder to unlock the door, is laminated. This can be achieved by fixing adhesive plastic film to the glass providing the glass is securely fixed into the frame. However, new laminated glass is recommended.
- 8.6 Entrance doors to individual units of accommodation within houses in multiple occupation must be provided with secure locking mechanisms to the standard described for house external doors. Doors to individual units of accommodation within houses in multiple occupation should ideally be fitted with locks that can be easily and immediately opened without the use of a key. However key operated locks may be used if the building is constructed/adapted or converted in full accordance with relevant Building Regulations and tenants are advised of the need to keep keys readily accessible at all times.

9.0 Structural and design safety

9.1 Stairs

Staircases must be maintained in a safe condition with suitable handrails, adequate headroom, sufficient lighting and not dangerously steep. Loft ladders and other non conventional stairs/steps are not acceptable for accessing rooms in roof spaces. No rooms in roof spaces can be let for use as habitable rooms unless converted in accordance with the building regulations or constructed at the same time that the house was built. Further advice on this issue can be obtained from the Housing Standards division of Housing Strategy.

Staircase safety relates very much to the uniformity of the construction and the familiarity of the occupiers. The height or rise of each step should be same as every other within the flight and the depth or going of each tread should be the same within any flight. Any winders in a flight should be the same width as each other at the centre of the tread. Staircase safety can be improved by the presence of half and quarter landings which break up flights into smaller sections so that in the case of somebody falling the distance to fall is reduced. Winders, particularly at the head of stairs, should be avoided. Ideally stairs should be no steeper than 42°. Internal staircases with open treads should be

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avoided. Steep or winding staircases are recommended to be replaced. There should be adequate headroom for safe use of the staircase. Where this is not possible low beams etc must be cushioned. If you are not sure whether your staircase is acceptable further advice may be obtained from the Housing Standards section of Housing Strategy.

Treads must be secure, worn or damaged treads should be replaced. Handrails must be securely fixed and be of a suitable shape to enable a person to grip it securely. Wide flat handrails are not suitable. Balustrades must be complete, and with gaps no greater than 100mm between balusters. They should be at least 900mm high. Horizontal rails can present a hazard where children are accommodated as they can easily be climbed up. Where stairs exceed 1.0 m in width, handrails should be provided on both sides. External staircases must have handrails 1.1 m high and balustrades as described above.

All landings must be adequately guarded, again ideally by vertical balusters not more than 100 mm apart, and not less than 1.1 m high.

Carpets and other coverings must be secure and properly fixed. There should be no holes or wear likely to cause tripping.

All balconies and flat roofs to which access is afforded must be guarded with a barrier at least 1.1 m high and which cannot be easily climbed by children. Guarding must be well maintained.

Where there are windows within stairwells they should have a cill 1100mm above floor level or alternatively must be guarded so as to prevent persons falling through.

9.2 Glazing

Glazing in doors and within 300mm to either side of the doors or below 800mm in windows or glass screens must be of safety glass or made safe using adhesive plastic film.

All internal glazing including bath and shower screens must be safety glass.

9.3 External

Access paths and yards must be maintained in good condition so as to prevent the risk of tripping and laid so as to afford proper drainage and avoid flooding.

Steps must be in good repair and if more than 3 steps above ground level must have adequate guarding and handrails as described above.

9.4 Heating and Hot Water

All fires must be adequately guarded.

Where children or the elderly are concerned, hot water must be thermostatically controlled and delivered to taps at a temperature of not more than 54°C (130°F).



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Where the surface temperature of heaters and hot water pipes exceeds 43°C (110°F) adequate guarding or ducting must be provided.

9.5 Windows

These should be fitted with safety locks or opening limiters which restrict the opening of a window to no more than 100mm if children are accommodated. These should prevent a child opening them easily, but should be capable of being opened easily by an adult in case of fire. Opening windows should generally be large enough for a person to escape out of in an emergency, i.e. 450 mm minimum width or height and 0.33m² overall opening area.

Windows on floors above ground level should ideally have an internal cill at least 1100mm above floor level.

10.0 Gas, electrical and fire safety

10.1 Gas safety

There is a general duty, under Section 3 of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, on landlords to do all that is reasonably practicable to protect the health and safety of their tenants.

In addition, there are specific duties on landlords under The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 detailed below.

- > Ensure gas fittings and flues are MAINTAINED in a safe condition.
- > Ensure an ANNUAL SAFETY CHECK is carried out on each gas appliance/flue. Before any new lease starts, you must make sure that these checks have been carried out within one year before the start of the lease date, unless the appliances in the property have been installed for less than 12 months, in which case they should be checked within 12 months of their installation date.
- > Have all installation, maintenance and safety checks carried out by a CORGI-registered gas installer.
- > Keep a record of each safety check for two years.
- > Issue a copy of the safety check record to each existing tenant within 28 days of the check being completed, or to any new tenant before they move in (in certain cases there is an option to display the record).



The Regulations specify the gas safety matters to be covered. You should not assume that an annual service inspection meets the safety check requirement, or that a safety check will be sufficient to provide effective maintenance. Ask the advice of a CORGI-registered gas installer where necessary.

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Which gas equipment is covered?

The safety check and maintenance requirements generally apply to any gas appliance or flue installed in the 'relevant premises' except that:

- > Appliances owned by the tenant are not covered.
- > Flues/chimneys SOLELY connected to an appliance owned by the tenant are not covered although there are obligations under the Landlord and Tenant Act which require landlords to maintain the structure of the building which includes the structural integrity of the flue. If a tenant has a test carried out on a gas appliance that they own and this identifies a defect in the flue then it is the landlords responsibility to repair it.
- > Any appliances and flues serving 'relevant premises' (such as central heating boilers not installed in tenants' accommodation, but used to heat them) are covered.

The safety check does not apply to any gas appliance (such as gas fires provided for customers in non-residential areas of public houses) that are exclusively used in a part of premises occupied for NON-RESIDENTIAL purposes.

It is your duty to maintain and carry out safety checks applies to fixed as well as portable appliances, such as Liquid Petroleum Gas cabinet heaters.

Sleeping rooms must not be fitted with gas fires or gas water heaters unless the appliances are room sealed or fitted with a device to shut down the appliance before a dangerous level of carbon monoxide builds up in the room or oxygen is depleted.

Landlords must prevent the use of appliances reported to them as faulty by CORGI registered installers.

These regulations are currently enforced by the Health and Safety Executive and apply to all rented property. The Housing (Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation) Regulations 1990 also places a duty on managers of houses in multiple occupation to maintain and keep clean, where appropriate, installations for the supply and use of gas. These Regulations are enforced by the Local Housing Authority.

Complaints should be responded to promptly and you should seek further specialist advice to ensure that you have complied with your duties.

10.2 Electrical safety

Installation

- > This should be checked by a competent electrical engineer at least once every five years, or on change of tenancy.
- > To ensure the safety of tenants, it is recommended that all circuits should be fitted with Residual Current Devices (RCD's).
- > Consumer units should have a cover and be out of the reach of children.



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- > The number of sockets should be adequate for normal use, without the need for adaptors. Sockets should all be individually switched.

Appliances

- > It is recommended that all portable electrical appliances provided in connection with accommodation are checked and serviced at least annually. This includes portable electric cookers and fires, kettles, refrigerators, microwave ovens, washing machines, vacuum cleaners and any other electrical domestic appliances. Only competent electricians should carry out this work. Portable means 'able to be plugged in'.
- > Where Residual Current Devices are fitted to power circuits, appliances need not be tested annually. However, the condition of leads, and plug guards should be checked visually for defects by a competent person and it is recommended that the Residual Current Device test switch is operated monthly and a full electrical test carried out annually on the Residual Current Devices.
- > Fixed electrical appliances such as cookers, electric fires connected to a fused spur or permanently wired in refrigerators, should be checked at least every five years.
- > Light fittings to all common parts must be fitted with bulbs at all times and maintained in good condition. This should be checked at least monthly.
- > Check that light switches and power points are in good condition and not cracked or loose (twice a year).
- > Note that these times are the recommended minima and certain situations may require more regular checks.

10.3 Fire Safety

Houses in Multiple Occupation

In the case of houses in multiple occupation the property must be provided with an adequate means of escape from fire and other fire precautions including a detection and warning system to the satisfaction of the Council and as detailed in the Council's Guide to Fire Safety in Houses in Multiple Occupation which is available on the Council's website.

The means of escape from fire will generally consist of a protected escape route, the level of protection depending on the size and layout of the building and type of occupancy, fire resistance between units of accommodation, a restriction of storage within the escape route, walls and ceiling linings to be of low combustibility and restrictions on travel distances within escape routes and lettings.

Flat entrance doors opening onto common escape routes must be self-closing, with 30 minute fire resistant doors, fitted with combined intumescent heat and cold smoke seals. The walls separating each letting from the common escape route and from other lettings must be also 30 minute fire resistant. Ceiling/floor structures separating each storey



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must be 30minute fire resistant. Note that lath and plaster ceilings are not regarded as having half-hour fire resistance. These ceilings must be upgraded to full 30 minute fire resistance.

Advice on methods of upgrading ceilings may be obtained from the Housing Standards section of Housing Strategy.

Flat layouts need to be such that escape is possible without having to pass through a room of higher risk. This usually means egress from any room within a flat, other than a bathroom and kitchen, should be directly to a flat entrance lobby or protected escape route.

The common protected escape route should be adequately lit and it is recommended that light fittings be of the bulkhead, fluorescent or Eddison Screw type to reduce the incidence of theft of light bulbs.

In certain types of house in multiple occupation, emergency lighting is required to the escape route.

Automatic fire detection systems must be provided with smoke/heat detectors within each letting and throughout the escape route. Detectors must be inter-linked (BS5839 Part 6 grade D, which is suitable for most Houses in Multiple Occupations of less than 200m² with three or less storeys and not more than 3 persons or one flat on the second floor) or monitored (BS5839 Part 1, L2 type, which is suitable for all other HMO's) and with sounders capable of reaching 75dB(A) at each bed-head. Category A (bedsits) HMO's of three storeys without shared cooking facilities must have a system to BS 5839 Part 1 L2.

Break glass call points must be provided in all premises of 3 storeys or more adjacent to each final exit and on each floor level in hostels and halls of residence.

The appropriate system is described in the Guide to Fire Safety in Houses in Multiple Occupation's available from the Council's website www.hullcc.gov.uk.

The level of protection required varies depending on the size and category of house in multiple occupation. Advice may be obtained from the Housing Standards section of Housing Strategy as to the type and extent of any fire alarm system.

Fire blankets should be provided in shared kitchens and fire extinguishers provided in category D (Hostels) HMO's where there are members of staff trained to use them. Managers of category C (Halls of Residence) HMO's may also wish to provide extinguishers.

Singly Occupied Dwellings

Houses which are not houses in multiple occupation must have an adequate means of escape and an adequate fire alarm system. Means of escape from living rooms, dining rooms, bedrooms and studies should be either directly onto an internal or external staircase, or if on the ground and first floors via an escape window of adequate size. Exit through an escape window in another room from a first floor may be acceptable provided the stairway is not open plan and an adequate fire alarm system is installed.



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To qualify for accreditation, houses should be fitted with smoke alarms with tamper proof batteries on each floor level in the stairway. At the end of year one all smoke alarms must be mains operated and interlinked to BS5839 part 6 grade D.

When doors need replacing consideration should be given to the fire resistance of the new door. Glass doors and sliding doors should be avoided. All doors should be well-fitting.

Houses subject to the Student accommodation accreditation scheme should meet the following standards:

On Joining Scheme

On joining the scheme at its' commencement or during the first year of the scheme, as a minimum, all dwellings are provided with long life tamperproof battery operated smoke alarms, suitably sited, and a fire blanket provided in the kitchen.

End of year 1

At the end of year one all dwellings not in multiple occupation must be provided with a mains wired smoke alarm system that complies with BS 5839 part 6 Grade D LD3 and sited to warn occupants of fire affecting the escape route and in high risk rooms.

Where such dwellings comprise more than one storey, smoke alarms must be interlinked, with one detector at each level within the route of escape and a heat detector in the kitchen and/or smoke detector in the living room.

Any high risk rooms such as the kitchen and living room, that open onto a hallway which forms part of the escape route in case of fire, must have half hour fire doors fitted with overhead self closing devices and intumescent heat and cold smoke seals.

End of year 2

All houses with more than four occupants must be provided with a fire alarm system as described above but with smoke detection in all rooms other than the kitchen which should be fitted with a heat detector.

All properties of three or more storeys must be fitted with 30 minute fire doors to all rooms, other than bathrooms and toilets containing no fire risk, opening onto the escape route.

General

Smoke alarms must be properly maintained in accordance with the manufacturers instructions.

Student houses which are houses in multiple occupation must comply with fire safety standards for HMO's as detailed above and the guidance in the Guide to Fire Safety in Houses in Multiple Occupation published by Hull City Council with reference to categories B (shared house), C (halls of residence) or F (conversion of building to self contained flats) whichever is most appropriate.

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Fire Safety Advice

It is important that managers of houses, and in particular houses in multiple occupation, understand the purpose and importance of fire safety measures and that they give proper advice to tenants on the use of the fire safety provisions installed.

The following information may be used to form the basis of advice:

- > Give clear instructions to occupants on matters that should be immediately reported to the manager.
- > Give clear instructions to occupants on how to operate all equipment provided such as fire alarm systems and fire fighting equipment.
- > Give clear instructions to occupants as to what to do in the event of fire.
- > Give all occupants advice on fire prevention.

Some or all of the following advice may be appropriate:

- > Make sure that all members of their families (age permitting) are familiar with the escape route or routes which have been approved by the local authority and know how to call the fire brigade.

The evacuation procedures should be discussed with yourself or your representative to ensure that their information is correct and where possible all residents should participate in fire drills.

- > Buildings which have been inspected under housing legislation in relation to means of escape in case of fire, will be required to maintain specific escape routes.

These will normally involve the internal stairway down to the street, and every resident will be required to ensure that their front entrance door or other doors between their accommodation and the stairway are maintained self-closing and also that the stairway is not obstructed or used for storage purposes of any kind.

- > Do not leave children alone, especially in rooms where heating or cooking appliances are in use, and keep matches and lighters out of their reach.
- > Do not fill chip pans more than half full of oil or fat and never leave the pan unattended with the heat turned on. If a chip pan fire occurs, do not move it or throw water at it. Turn off the heat if it is safe to do so, smother the flames with a damp cloth, fire blanket or the chip pan lid and leave the pan to cool for at least 30 minutes.
- > Keep an eye on the elderly, make sure they take sensible fire precautions, especially with cigarettes and pipes. Remind them to follow the manufacturers' instructions when using electric blankets.
- > Do not smoke in bed as it is a major cause of fires in the home. Always finish last cigarettes or pipes before going into the bedroom and make sure that it is put out properly.
- > Wherever possible, portable heaters should not be used but when this cannot be avoided they should be kept well away from furniture and furnishings. Ensure that nothing can fall onto them and that they are in a place where they cannot be knocked over.

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- > **Routine precautions to be followed at bedtime should include the following:**
 - a) Switch off all electrical appliances (except those which are designed to be left on all the time) and remove the plugs carefully, not by pulling the flex.
 - b) Check for burning cigarettes or pipes.
 - c) Put a guard on any open fire.
 - d) Close the doors of unoccupied rooms.
- > Give tenants advice regarding the use of foam filled furniture which complies with tests carried out under BS5852 Parts 1 and 2 and BS6807. Refer to the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 as amended 1989.
(Information on these can be obtained from the Trading Standards Section).

11.0 Overcrowding

There must be sufficient space within a dwelling to enable all the occupants to carry out normal domestic activities without risk to health and safety or serious inconvenience.

The following space standards should be used as a guide. The safe layout of kitchens is more important than the floor area but kitchens must be large enough to enable all usual facilities as described in section 4 to be accommodated.

> Living rooms for 2 persons	13m ²
> Living rooms for 3 persons	16m ²
> Living rooms for 4 persons	18m ²
> Living rooms for 5 persons	20m ²
> Bedrooms for 2	10m ²
> Bedrooms for 1	7m ²
> Bed studies	8m ²
> Bed studies (no shared living room)	10m ²
> Dining rooms for 1-3 persons	8.5m ²
> Dining rooms for 4-6 persons	11m ²
> Bathrooms should be large enough to enable bath/shower wash basin and water closet to be fitted and used without risk to health and safety or inconvenience to tenants.	

12.0 Refuse disposal and drainage

All houses must be provided with a waste bin consistent with the Council's arrangements for the collection of refuse disposal. Where the Council has made arrangements for the separation of waste for recycling, these arrangements must be respected and any facilities provided maintained. New tenants must be informed about any such arrangements. Refuse bins must be kept either to the rear of the property or within an enclosure and tenants made aware of collection times. Tenants should be informed of the need to return the bin at the earliest opportunity after collection to its normal storage location.

There must be adequate drainage to all amenities provided within the dwelling to ensure the proper disposal of waste and soil water. There should be eaves gutters and rainwater fall-pipes of adequate capacity to drain all roof surfaces and discharge into a drainage system of adequate capacity. Eaves gutters and fall-pipes must be maintained to prevent leaks and blockages. It is recommended that all gutters are cleaned annually and more frequently where there are tall trees in the vicinity whose leaves could cause frequent blockages in the autumn.

All access paths to front and rear of the property and yards must have an even surface and be laid so as to allow proper drainage of surface water.

13.0 Natural and artificial lighting

All habitable rooms must have an adequate level of natural lighting, provided via a clear glazed window and/or doors, with a glazed area to be equivalent to at least one-tenth of the floor area and to extend to a point 1.75m above floor level.

Basement rooms used for human habitation should, in addition to the requirement in the first paragraph, have sufficient natural lighting for their purpose.

All staircases, landings, passages, kitchens, bathrooms and water closets are to be provided, where practicable, with a window. Windows to bathrooms and water closets are to be glazed with obscured glass.

Adequate electric lighting points are to be provided to all habitable rooms, staircases, landings, passages, kitchens, bathrooms and water closets. Lighting to staircases, landings and passages may be controlled by time switches or other devices having a similar effect.

14.0 External amenities

Boundary walls and fences should be properly maintained and inspected annually or upon complaint.

Boundary hedges should be kept cut so as to prevent nuisance to the public or neighbours where this is in the control of the landlord.

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Gates should be kept in working order and in proper repair.

Access paths and yards should be kept in repair to prevent risk of tripping and to afford proper surface drainage.

Outbuildings owned by the landlord should be maintained so as not to detract from the visual amenity of the area.

The paintwork to the front of the house and other parts visible from public areas should be kept in good condition.

15.0 Decent Homes Standard

This standard will already be achieved in the case of many dwellings but as a target for accredited landlords all properties should meet this standard by 2010.

A decent home is one which is wind and weather-tight, warm and has modern facilities.

There are four criteria to be met:

- 1 It meets the current fitness standard.
- 2 It is in a reasonable state of repair.
- 3 It has reasonably modern facilities and services.

Dwellings which fail this criteria are those which lack three or more of the following;

- > A kitchen which is less than 20 years old.
- > A kitchen with adequate space and layout.
- > A bathroom which is less than 30 years old.
- > An appropriately located bathroom and WC.
- > Adequate insulation against external noise (Where external noise is a problem).
- > Adequate size and layout of common areas for blocks of flats.

4 It provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort. This requires properties to have adequate thermal insulation and efficient heating.

Efficient heating is defined as any gas or oil programmable central heating or electric storage heaters or programmable LPG/oil fuel central heating or similarly efficient heating systems which are developed in the future such as renewable efficient energy sources (wind/wave/tidal/hydro electric/district heating etc).

The level of thermal insulation differs depending on the heating source. For example gas or oil fired central heating requires cavity wall insulation if there are cavities and at least 50mm of loft insulation. Electric storage heaters require cavity wall insulation if there are cavities and at least 200mm of loft insulation.

16.0 Access and disabled facilities

This is a section of the standards to be developed further. Landlords must comply with any requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and any subsequent amendments.

Hull Accredited Landlord Scheme (HALS)

Section 2 - Hull Fit Homes Standard

Useful contacts

For advice on Accreditation and housing conditions:

Hull City Council

Housing Standards
33 Witham, Hull, HU9 1DB
Tel: (01482) 300300

For advice on Housing Benefits:

Hull City Council
Housing Services and Rights Section:
Kenworthy House, Hull, HU1 3DT
Tel: (01482) 300300

For advice on rubbish and bulky item collections:

Hull City Council
Waste Management
Dalton Street, Hull, HU8 8BB
Tel: (01482) 300300

For advice on Planning consent:

Hull City Council
Development Control
Kingston House, Hull
Tel: (01482) 300300

For advice on Building Regulations:

Hull City Council
Building Control
Kingston House, Hull
Tel: (01482) 300300

For advice on Furniture & Furnishings Regulations:

Hull City Council
Trading Standards
33 Witham, Hull, HU9 1DB
Tel: (01482) 300300

For advice on pest control and environmental nuisance:

Hull City Council
Public Protection
33 Witham, Hull, HU9 1DB
Tel: (01482) 300300

For advice on combating anti social behaviour:

Hull City Council
Anti Social Behaviour Team
Guildhall, Hull, HU1 2AA
Tel: (01482) 300300

For advice on rent assessments:

The Rent Service
Unit E, Aviator Court, Clifton Moor Business
Park, York, YO36 4UZ
Tel: (01904) 477800

For advice on landlord issues:

Hull & District Landlords Association
464 Anlaby Road, Hull, HU3 6QR
Tel: (01482) 353072

For advice on tenancy issues:

Hull Independent Housing Aid Centre
60 Beverley Road, Hull, HU3 1YE
Tel: (01482) 329591

CORGI Registration

(The Council for Registered Gas Installers)
Tel: (01256) 372300

Health & Safety Executive (HSE)

Gas Safety Advice Line
Tel: 0800 300363

NICEIC Registration

(National Inspection Council for Electrical
Installation Contracting)
Vintage House, 37 Albert Embankment,
London, SE1 7UJ
Tel: (020) 75642323

Acknowledgments

Acknowledgement and thanks are given to the following groups who assisted in the development of this scheme:

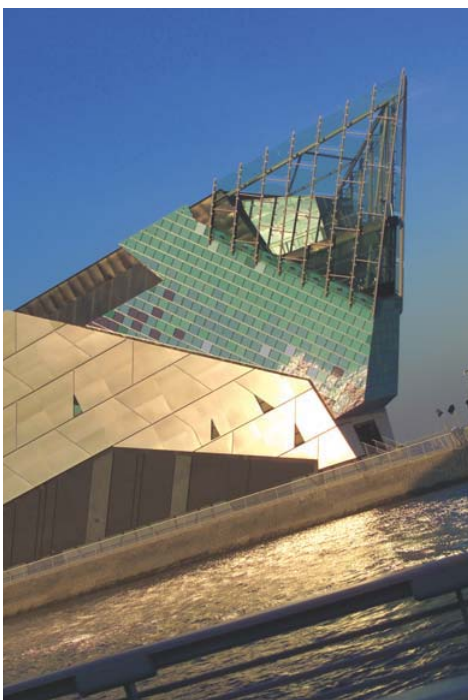
Hull and District Landlords Association

Hull Independent Housing Aid Centre

The Rent Service

Giroscope

Coltman Street and The Avenues Residents' Group



This information in this pack can be made available in other formats (large print, audio, Braille as appropriate). Telephone 01482 615596.