

## Private Sector Leasing - Property Standards Introduction

The standards are based on the Decent Homes standard, Building Regulations and local accommodation standards, these have been developed with the aim of providing good quality accommodation which is sustainable in the long term and minimises potential nuisance and management problems.

These standards are **not** comprehensive and are subject to alterations, which depend on building regulations, planning, housing and public health legislation. Building Control, Planning and Environmental Health should be consulted separately by landlords to ensure compliance of their properties. Landlords **must** ensure properties comply with **all current** relevant regulations and legislation prior to taking up property leasing arrangements with Barnet Homes. Barnet Homes will **not** be responsible for any issues arising due to landlord's non compliance.

Each self contained unit should be let to a single household **only**. This guidance does not include standards for dwellings let as a house in multiple occupations (HMO).

### Flats over shops

Flats over shops must have safe, clear and well lit access. Each flat must also have a secure receptacle or installation to receive postal packets. We cannot consider flats situated over pubs, restaurants, fast food outlets, convenience stores, dry cleaners or other similar operations where the premises are open later than ten o'clock at night or where fumes or smells from the shop may cause a problem to future occupants.

### The Decent Homes Standard

In order for accommodation to meet the Government's Decent Homes Standard, it must meet the following criteria:

- 1) Meet the current statutory minimum standards for housing. Dwellings which fail to meet this criterion are those containing one or more hazards assessed as serious (Category 1) under the **Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)**
- 2) Be in a reasonable state of repair so that that the accommodation's key building components are not old, in need of replacement or major repair and no more than one of the other building components are old or need replacing or major work.
- 3) Have modern facilities and services and therefore lacking in none of the following which must be in good working order

a modern kitchen (20 years old or less)

a kitchen with adequate space and layout which satisfies health and safety requirements.

a modern bathroom (30 years old or less)

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) Provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort – the accommodation must have effective insulation and efficient heating with an EPC rating of A- D.

## **External**

### **Structure**

The building envelope and structure must be structurally sound, completely water tight and in good repair and condition. Landlords are to ensure the grounds buildings are located on are suitably free of any material which may damage the building or affect its stability such as trees, vegetation, topsoil and pre existing foundations.

### **External walls and windows**

External walls must be of sufficient thickness and be of a suitable impervious weather resisting cladding which will afford the property protection from moisture from the ground and precipitation. Damp proof course must be adequate and present as and where appropriate.

External decoration must be sound and of sufficient quality to last at least 3 years. Any defective joinery needs to be properly repaired and decorated.

Rendered surfaces and parapet walls must be in good condition with copings and flashings secure and complete.

All brickwork must be sound and vertical with continuous pointing. Chimney stacks must be in good repair with chimney pots securely fixed.

### **Roofs and rainwater goods**

Roofs and rainwater goods must be in a good and serviceable condition. Any loose slates, tiles or aerials, which either presents a possible hazard or may cause defects to the property, should be made safe. Gutters and down pipes should be fitted, in good condition, clear of blockages and empty into a gully, adequate soak-away, watercourse or sewer as practicable which in turn should be readily accessible for clearing blockages.

### **Balconies and roof terraces**

You must provide railings to external roofs onto which the occupiers may have access. The railings must be galvanised steel (or equivalent) conforming to BS standards with a minimum height of 1.1m and must not be “ranch style”. Railings are required to protect flat roofs or external decking if there is any danger at all of someone going onto the flat roof or access to these areas is sealed off and bars installed on the access routes to such areas.

### **Gardens**

Gardens must be debris and weed free. Anything that presents a hazard must be removed. Patios, paths and other concrete areas should be level and in good repair. Ponds must be filled in and manhole covers should be easily removable for access. Large trees and vegetation should be pruned or lopped. Any drops in the garden greater than half a metre (0.5m) must be protected by secure fencing.

### **Ancillary Buildings**

Sheds, ancillary buildings and garages if they are included in the lease should be structurally sound and cleared of all contents. Greenhouses must be removed.

## **Boundary walls**

All boundaries must be continuous with a minimum height of one metre. They should be sound and free from defects, with any poorly secured panels or posts repaired. They cannot be topped with broken glass, spikes or barbed wire. Side access gates must be in good condition and fitted with a latching device and bolts at the top and bottom.

Boundaries to railway tracks, roads or other potential dangers must have secure fencing a minimum of two metres in height.

## **Refuse disposal**

Dependent upon the areas waste disposal method you will need to supply a heavy-duty plastic refuse bin, a wheelie bin, recycling bins or as required by the local authority (LA). At least one receptacle should be provided for each household. Further information can be obtained from 0208 359 4600.

## **Services**

### **Meters and supply**

Meters should be out of the reach of children, but the gas and electric meters must be accessible to all occupants so they can use key or card meters. All gas, electricity and water services must be separately metered and supplied individually. There should be isolation points with stop cocks clearly labelled, easy to reach and accessibly located within each property. Any supply to communal stairs, external lights etc. must be separately metered and paid for by the landlord.

### **Gas**

A Gas Safe registered engineer must inspect the gas supply and all appliances at the start of the let/lease and on an annual basis.

A copy of the Landlord Gas Safety Inspection Certificate (CP12) certifying the installation free of defects must be provided prior to letting and every 12 months after this you must send the appropriate person at Barnet Homes a new certificate indicating appropriate checks have been done and passed.

You must provide permanent vents in any room that contains a gas fired open flue boiler. It would be advisable to remove any open flue boiler and replace with energy efficient boilers. Gas fires must be removed or disabled.

### **Heating systems**

All properties must have adequate space heating and hot water systems with an adequate radiator or night storage heater in every room (not in circulation spaces). All works and installations must satisfy the Gas Safety (installation and use) Regulations 1994.

All boilers, radiators and radiator pipe work must be in good condition with radiator valves in full working order. You need to provide a room thermostat in the coldest part of the property if thermostatic radiator valves are not fitted. It is advised a room thermostat should be fitted as an interlock to save fuel. The room where the room thermostat is fitted should not have a thermostatic radiator valve fitted.

Boilers in bathrooms cannot be put over the bath; it must be in an enclosed fire protected cupboard, which has air vents at the top and the bottom. Any electrical connections in boiler cupboards in bathrooms must be protected but it is preferable for programmers, controls and isolator switches to be located outside the bathroom if possible. Boilers in bathrooms must be

installed to manufacturer instructions and Gas Safe Regulations for particular appliances.

Economy 7 or night storage heaters must be connected to off-peak electricity with the correct meter installed and the heaters wall mounted with fused spurs.

Cylinder immersions must be provided on all hot water and storage cylinders. Hot water cylinders should be fitted with insulation jackets and hot tanks and pipes located in loft spaces and roof voids should be properly insulated and have adequate flooring hand rails and lighting within the loft for maintenance purposes.

### **Electrical**

Existing circuits, installations and equipment should be in safe working condition. All installations must be earth-bonded. All new installations must comply with current Regulations. Isolator switch and consumer unit is to be readily available.

An NIC EIC approved electrician must inspect the electrical installation in the property prior to letting and any defects rectified. A copy of the NIC EIC (latest edition) Periodic Inspection Report (or an Installation Certificate for a new or renewed installation) be provided to the appropriate person (to be agreed) which must last for at least 3 years.

All bedrooms to be provided with at least 2 double sockets.

All living rooms to be provided with at least 3 double sockets

Kitchens – see below standards

### **Domestic Energy Certificates**

From 1 October 2008 all rented properties with new tenancies require a Domestic Energy Performance Certificate, a copy of this certificate will be required after this date before final payment can be made. Only properties with a SAP rating of more than 35 will be accepted.

## **INTERNAL**

### **The Space Standard Bedroom sizes**

The bedroom should have space for the bed(s), a wardrobe and a chest of drawers and allow for circulation.

<b>Room Standard</b>	<b>Room Size</b>
Single Bedrooms	Not less than 6.5 m <sup>2</sup>
Double Bedrooms	Not less than 10.5 m <sup>2</sup>

All bedrooms must have a minimum floor to ceiling height of 2.15m over not less than 3/4 of the room area. Any floor area where the ceiling height is less than 1.53m shall be disregarded.

### **Combined living and dining room**

A combined living and dining room should be large enough to accommodate the dining table and chairs and a 3 piece suite suitable for the number of occupants.

<b>Number of People</b>	<b>Size</b>
Up to 4 people	11m <sup>2</sup>
Up to 6 people	14m <sup>2</sup>
Over 6 people	Separate living room required

Landlords should seek advice on any other variations e.g. separate living rooms.

## **Floors**

Floors are to be sound and substantially free from spring and deflection. Loose floorboards are to be re-fixed. All floors should be level, even and free from trip hazards as well as dampness and moisture.

The preferred floor finishes are; sheet vinyl or tiles in the kitchen, bathroom and WC and carpets in the remainder of the property, including any stairs. Advice should be sought for any alternative finishes.

Floor coverings must be properly fitted and secure without rucks or gaps with threshold strips by doorways, when there are changes in floor coverings and where levels change.

Vinyl floor coverings in bathrooms and kitchens must be laid on 4mm plywood boarding and the floor must be well sealed with waterproof silicone sealant around all edges.

## **Wall and ceiling finishes**

Any areas of live plaster, damp penetration, cracks, condensation, mould growth or structural movement must be attended to.

Polystyrene tiles must be removed from all the rooms and the surface underneath made good and decorated to a suitable standard.

In dwellings built pre 2000, a rough artex finish to walls where it may be a danger to the occupants should be plastered over to a level and even finish sufficiently for the artex to bond with the plaster and be encapsulated or sealed. If the artex is damaged, in poor condition and in an area where it is likely to be disturbed, it must be removed by a HSE (Health and Safety Executive) approved asbestos removal contractor. If the presence of asbestos is suspected before or after the commencement of a leasing arrangement, Barnet Homes reserves the right to request landlords produce a report from a qualified asbestos removal firm indicating the presence or lack of asbestos in their property and remedial works carried out to remove, enclose or seal identified asbestos in accordance with current legislation.

PVC or plastic suspended ceilings need to be replaced with fire resistant mineral fibre tiles or the suspended ceiling removed entirely and made good.

All sealed breast/flues to be fitted with adequate ventilation to stop condensation.

## **Stairs**

Stairs, banisters and handrails must be strong and well fixed. Handrails must be provided to all internal and external stairs and landings. Balustrades should have a maximum 100mm space between them and any open risers should be infilled.

Plastic or glazed stair panels or ranch style banisters will need to be replaced with conventional balustrades or boarded over on both sides with plywood.

Spiral staircases which are the only stairs are not acceptable. Any paddle/Dutch stairs would not normally be acceptable.

## **Sound Insulation**

Any conversion into flats or flats above commercial premises must be adequately insulated against the transmission of sound. Part E of the Building Regulations should be consulted for standards and construction techniques to achieve an adequate level of sound insulation.

## Fireplaces

Gas fires with back boilers behind them must be capped off and all other gas fires or wall heaters capped off below floor level and removed. Unused fireplaces should be properly blocked up and provided with a non-closing vent and fly screen.

Chimney breasts should not be removed unless proper approval is sought from Building Control and any remaining chimney stack is properly supported.

## Internal decoration

The property must give the impression of good decorative order. Paintwork is to be clean and generally clear of major chipping. Wallpaper to be clean and free from peeling or ripping. Curtain battens and tracks to be provided in all rooms.

## Kitchens

The following list sets out the minimum number of units (or equivalent kitchen storage areas) you should provide in the property.

Property Size	Double base unit (including sink)	Double Wall unit
1 bed 1/2 person	2	1
2 bed 3/4 person	2	1
3 bed 5/6 person	3	2
4 bed 7/8 person	4	3
5 bed 9/10 person	5	3
6 bed 10 person	5	4

Kitchen units should be in a good, serviceable condition and the worktops must cover all the base units and be minimum 1000mm.

There should be at least 3 double electrical sockets provided in the kitchen with 2 double sockets above the worktop. Sockets should be 100 mm above worktop height and no closer than 1.0 m to any water.

Kitchens must have adequate space for the installation of fridge and cooker and for family sized dwellings, a washing machine. Landlords are to consult the Housing Supply Team on the need for a washing machine before installing one. Hot and cold feeds, a low level socket and the waste should be provided in the space and capped off.

Tiled splash backs with a minimum height of 300mm must be fitted to all walls adjoining worktops and sinks. All tiling should be well fitted and have no cracks, chips or mould. All joints between the worktop and tiles must be sealed with a waterproof silicone sealant.

**Cookers** -Cookers should be in a good condition, securely fitted, at least 900mm in height and they must have a safety chain or anti-tilt bracket installed. Cookers at the end of units, **under windows** or next to doors are **not** acceptable. Electric cookers are preferred. Walls behind cooker spaces should be tiled to current regulations where appropriate

**Ventilation** -The kitchen needs to be well ventilated with a window that opens or be fitted with an extractor fan. Kitchens with no windows must be fitted with a mechanical humidifier extractor fan that is linked to the light switch and be capable of providing a minimum of four air

changes per hour and stays on for 15 minutes after the light has been turned off.

## **Bathrooms**

A bathroom must be provided containing a wash basin and either a fixed bath or a shower. If a new bath is to be installed, it must not have a shower over the bath.

A bath is required in properties with two or more bedrooms. Basins and baths must be in a good condition and well sealed to the tiled splash back with waterproof silicone sealant.

Tiled splash backs must be in good condition and be a minimum height of 300mm. Baths should be free of chips, rust or staining and adequately supported. Bath panels must be replaceable and securely fixed with cups and screws or concealed fixings. Toilet pans and seats must be clean, free from cracks or chips and should be well secured to the floor. Waste pipes to the toilet, bath and sink should be free flowing, watertight and fitted with overflow pipes. We would prefer you to fit an emergency release vanity bolt or indicator bolt with a lock to all bathroom and toilet doors. Bathrooms should have a window, which is easily opened. Where additional ventilation is required you should fit either a permanent vent through the external wall or provide an airflow ventilator in the window. Bathrooms with no windows must have a low voltage mechanical extractor fan with controls and isolation switch outside the bathroom(see kitchen section for the details). Any glass in bathroom doors should be safety glass and windows should be opaque. If the toilet and or bathroom are directly off the kitchen you need to provide a wash hand basin in the room.

Light bulbs in bathrooms must be enclosed.

## **Showers**

One-bed properties can be fitted with showers; larger properties must have a bath. Due to leaking/flooding problems showers or shower fittings over baths may not be necessary. Shower cubicles and trays must be of good quality, with full height tiles well sealed to the tray and raised off the ground level on a plinth to allow access to the u trap.

Part G of the Building Regulations 2010 may be referred to for further guidance.

## **Doors and windows**

### **Doors and entry systems**

Main entrance doors to flats need a letterbox with the street and flat numbers on the door (or in a prominent position by the main entrance) and the flat number on the flat entrance door.

Properties above the ground floor must be fitted with a door bell. Properties above the third floor must be fitted with an intercom or entry phone system and the power supply to it provided by the landlord.

Flats in large blocks need secure letterboxes for tenant's post. Front entrance doors must be fitted with a night latch and a five-lever mortise deadlock with a thumb turn release so people can escape easily if there is a fire. Back doors must be fitted with a mortise lock and should have tower bolts fitted to both the top and bottom of the door.

Door frames should be in good condition, doors must operate freely and easily.

Single glazed doors must either be re-glazed with 6mm Georgian wired glass, panelled both sides of the glass with 4mm plywood or the glass sandwiched between clear plastic adhesive sheets.

Bedrooms with patio or French doors must have an additional window that can be opened for ventilation.

French doors must have integral security deadbolts to the top and bottom of each door. Internal glass doors should be fitted with polycarbonate (or similar) or safety glass. Front entrance doors to flats with share common areas must be a fire door of at least specification FD30 or FD30s fitted to current regulations. Front entrance doors to houses may be of solid construction though a fire door of standard FD30 or FD20 is preferred.

## **Windows**

Windows should provide adequate light and ventilation to the room. They should be openable, undamaged, and free from decay and decorated. Double glazed windows are preferred.

Glazing should be securely fixed and putty sound and waterproof. Sash windows should be draught proof and correctly balanced.

All windows on the ground or lower ground floor must be fitted with window locks. Window openings on the first floor and above must be fitted with restrictors that limit the window opening to a maximum of 100mm.

Horizontal safety rails, spaced no more than 100mm apart, are required to ground floor windows with sills below a height of 1.0m and rails to windows on the first floor level or above where the sill is 1.2m from the floor level. Glazing in windows below 1.0m must either be covered with clear plastic safety film or the glass replaced with safety glass.

Louvre windows would not normally be accepted due to their poor thermal efficiency and security.

## **Lighting**

All rooms should have a lighting pendant or batten holder with light shades and bulb points with a simple on off switch.

Fluorescent lighting is only acceptable in the kitchen.

Light bulbs in bathrooms must be enclosed.

## **Fire safety**

Properties must be orientated in such a manner that will afford occupants early warning of fire, sufficient capacity in terms of numbers, routes and means of escape which are protected from the effects of fire where necessary as follows.

### **Kitchen doors**

Half hour fire check doors of specification FD30s with a self-closing device must be fitted to all kitchens to prevent the spread of fire. Where the kitchen is open plan with the dining or living room, a fire door of minimum specification FD30s must be fitted to the room doorway to provide a protected means of escape for the bedrooms and staircase if applicable.

### **Front entrance doors**

Where front entrance doors to flats do not comply with current fire regulations under BS 476: Part 22;1987 and BS 8214, these must be replaced with half hour fire check doors of specification FD30 or FD30s. Exact specifications are contained in Appendix.

Front entrance doors to houses must at a minimum be of solid construction though an FD20/30 fire check door of the standard described in Appendix 1 is recommended.

Barnet Homes reserves the right to request from landlords all necessary installation certification for newly fitted fire doors.

### **Means of escape**

Means of Escape - No bedroom should lead directly off the kitchen or kitchen/diner. Open plan ground floors in houses must have a protected means of escape for bedrooms. Bedrooms must open onto a landing or hallway deemed appropriate as a means of escape. They cannot be accessed by going through another room. Upper floors of houses served by one staircase must have direct access to a protected stairway which should extend to a final exit. If the only exit from the property is directly through the kitchen, an alternative means of escape must be provided. If the Unit is a flat or a maisonette in a block where a communal staircase services more than one property, the entrance door to the flat must be a half-hour fire resistant door of a minimum specification FD30 or FD30s and be self closing.

### **Smoke detectors**

In a house with two floors, at least two smoke detectors must be fitted, one to the ceiling in the hallway outside the kitchen and the second on the landing. Houses with more floors require a minimum of one smoke detector on each landing. Flats need one smoke detector in the hall or common area of each unit and a heat detector in the kitchen fitted to current regulations.

Smoke detectors must be hard wired to the electricity mains and conform to BS EN 14604:2005. They are to be supplied with battery back up and linked together where there is more than one. Smoke detectors must be of at least a Grade D category LD3 standard. E161 professional range detectors are preferred.

A carbon monoxide tester should be provided as near the boiler as practicable.

A fire blanket is to be fitted in the kitchen.

Further information on Fire precautions and means of Escape can be found;

*Building Regulations – Approved Document B (Fire Safety)  
Lacors: Housing - Fire Safety; Guidance on fire safety provisions for certain types of existing housing.*

*British Standard - BS EN 14604:2005 - Smoke Alarm Devices*

### **Asbestos**

You must inform us if there is any asbestos anywhere in the property. If you are unsure, we may require you to get a specialist firm to confirm whether there is asbestos present or not and carry out a risk assessment. If damaged asbestos is present or identified in a location where damage can easily occur, it must be removed by a specialist HSE (Health and Safety Executive) licensed contractor complying with hazardous materials legislation. This includes textured surface coating material such as Artex. For avoidance of doubt, landlords may refer to the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 and guidance available from the Health and Safety Executive.

### **Furniture requirements**

Properties are required to be unfurnished. Landlords wishing to provide furniture may do so at their own discretion but Barnet Homes will not be responsible for any repairs, replacements or compensation for any damaged furniture. If provided by the landlord, any furnishings will be expected to last the full term of the Lease/letting Agreement. Second hand furniture is acceptable, providing it meets all approved safety standards. Owners are advised that under the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) Safety Regulations 1993, all soft furnishings such as mattresses and three piece suites etc, must be clearly labelled and conform to the current fire safety regulations.

## **White Goods**

Landlords are required to provide a fridge freezer and cooker no more than 5 years old. Electric cookers are preferred. Further guidance is contained in the section on Kitchens above. Landlords are required to carry out a yearly PAT test on all electrical appliances and fittings supplied with the property and provide documentation from an approved electrical contractor as proof that tests applied have passed.

## **APPENDIX 1**

Where front entrance doors to the property do not comply with current fire regulations under BS 476: Part 22:1987 and BS 8214, these must be replaced as follows:

Supply and hang on 3No. 100mm steel hinges complying with BS EN1935:2002 FD30 or FD30S fire check door (BS 476: Part 22:1987 and BS 8214) to suit frame with minimum 3mm around the top and side edges. The gap at the foot of the door leaf should be no more than 10mm from the floor finish. Supply and fit intumescent strip to both sides and head of the door in accordance with manufacturers instructions. Supply & fit perko door closer in accordance with manufacturers instructions. Supply and fit smoke sealed letter box cover, spy hole and chain.

## **THIS IS ONLY A GUIDE TO PROCURING YOUR PROPERTY UNDER THE PRIVATE SECTOR LEASING SCHEME.**

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