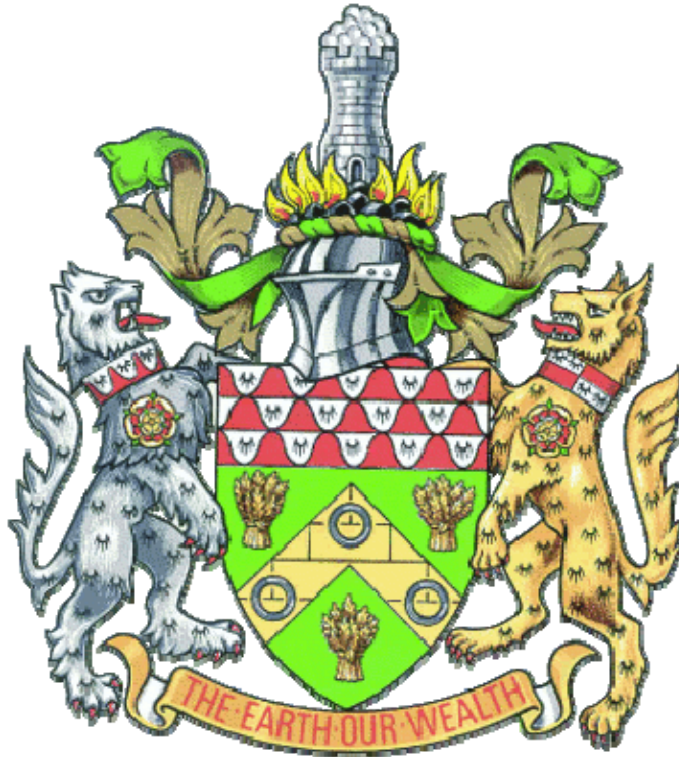


HOUSING SERVICES



South Derbyshire District Council

Fit to Let Standard

October 2008

Fit to Let Standard Summary

This is a summary of South Derbyshire District Council's standard for letting of properties. If you would like a copy of the complete standard please ask your Housing Officer.

Cleanliness	All properties will be thoroughly cleaned.
Appliances	All appliances will be tested as necessary and checked for good condition.
Services	All properties will have a full electrical inspection. A copy of the certificate will be passed to the incoming tenant at sign up. All properties with gas will have a gas soundness test carried out. The resultant certificate, along with the current existing landlord's gas safety certificate, will be passed to the incoming tenant at sign up. Suitable meter box keys will be provided.
Decoration	All walls and ceilings will be in a good state of repair and decoration, or a decoration allowance will be issued (B&Q vouchers).
Heating	All properties will either have full central heating or an alternative space heating system. The systems will be checked for effective operation. An instruction leaflet explaining method of operation will be passed to the incoming tenant at sign up.
Kitchens	All properties will have kitchens that are clean and serviceable, worktops should permit the safe preparation of food.
Fire Protection	All properties will comply with all current fire regulations and be fitted with one mains wired smoke detector per floor.
Bathrooms	All properties will have bathrooms that are clean and serviceable.
Floor Covering	All properties will have floors that are sound and cleanable.
Security	All properties will be secure and 3 keys per lock type will be provided. If window locks are fitted, keys will be provided.
Windows	All windows will be secure and checked for operation.
Insulation	All roof spaces will be insulated.
Damp	All properties will be free from damp and mould growth.
Roofs	All roofs will be structurally sound and weather tight.
Drains/Gutters	All drains/gutters will be free from obstruction and leaks.
Garages and Outhouses	All garages and outhouses will be checked for condition and be free from rubbish.
Fences/Boundaries	All fences and walls, that are the Council's responsibility, forming a boundary should be safe and in reasonable condition. All boundaries will be clearly marked in accordance with Property Inspectors instructions.
Garden Rubbish	All gardens will be left in a manageable condition for the incoming tenant.
Paths/Driveway	Paths or part of driveways that form access to the front and rear doors of the property will be sound and free from trip hazards.

FIT TO LET STANDARD

- 1.1 As the benchmark for minimum standards, the fit to let standard is used as the source reference for all staff with responsibility for ensuring empty properties are fit for letting.
- 1.2 The summary of this fit to let standard is issued to all prospective tenants at the time of an offer of accommodation.
- 1.3 The fit to let standard applies in full at all times. However there may be occasions when prudent management dictates a variation in certain areas of the policy e.g. a family needs to occupy the property urgently to prevent homelessness. That decision is only taken by the Repairs and Improvement Manager in consultation with the prospective tenant and recorded appropriately. In any such exceptional cases, as a minimum, fittings must be serviceable, Health and Safety checks carried out and a clean of the property undertaken. All other work required will be documented and programmed within fifty-six days of tenancy commencement date.
- 1.4 It is important that this policy is followed so that the Council can achieve its target of having no properties refused on the grounds of condition. It is also important to give clarity to customers and staff on what work can be expected on a void property. This improves satisfaction and can help reduce re-let times and cost.

Section 1: INTERNAL WORKS

1. Cleanliness

- 1.1 All properties will be thoroughly cleaned upon completion of re-let works. All work surfaces will be disinfected with particular attention to kitchens and bathrooms. Baths, basins, sinks and toilets will be cleaned. All floors will be swept and/or mopped.

2. Condition of Appliances

- 2.1 All appliances, such as Central Heating Systems, Electric Showers, Storage Heaters and Electric Convector Heaters will be tested by the Council's specialist electrical contractor as necessary and/or checked for general condition to ensure they are safe for use. Such appliances will be serviced on existing service programmes. The testing undertaken upon relet will include an assessment of whether the appliance/installation complies with current statutory regulations.
- 2.2 If the outgoing tenant has installed fixed appliances, the Property Inspector will decide whether the appliance should be removed or retained and serviced. As a general rule any white goods/showers left by the outgoing tenant will be removed. However if they are of a high standard and tests show them to be in good condition the Property Inspector will agree to leave the items on the understanding that the new tenant signs to take responsibility for them.

3. Services

- 3.1 All electrical and gas services to the property will be checked for faults and general integrity by the Council's specialist electrical and gas contractors.
- 3.2 All properties will have a full electrical installation inspection undertaken by the Council's specialist contractor in accordance with the NICEIC periodic procedure to ensure sockets, switches and fittings are safe to use. Any work that is required to reach a "satisfactory" rating

will be carried out. Smoke detection equipment will be tested and repaired/replaced as necessary.

- 3.3 All properties must have a full NICEIC Certificate issued and a copy will be passed to the incoming tenant at sign up.
- 3.4 Properties that have been declassified from sheltered to general purpose needs will have Tunstall equipment removed during the void period.
- 3.5 All taps, wastes and overflows should be free from leaks and blockages and be in working order.
- 3.6 If any of the services are disconnected, the Property Inspector will arrange for re-connection. The integrity of the service checks will be carried out by the Council's specialist contractors after re-connection. Gas supplies will be capped if the property is anticipated to be void for over four weeks.
- 3.7 All energy supplies will be registered with the Council's nominated dual fuel supplier.
- 3.8 All gas appliances will be tested and all properties with gas must have a gas soundness test carried out and appropriate certificates issued by the Council's specialist contractor (including the existing landlord's gas safety certificate). A copy of the certificate to be given to the tenant when signing the tenancy agreement.
- 3.9 Gas Central Heating is to be checked for operation by the Property Inspector at the pre-void visit. The incoming tenant will be informed of the method of operation by an instruction leaflet within the Tenancy Pack.
- 3.10 Solid fuel heating insulations shall be checked to ensure that they are clean and in full working order. All work will be carried out in accordance with HETAS guidance. The system and appliances will have a visual check undertaken by the Property Inspector to ensure the fire; boiler and radiators are safe to use and in good working order.
- 3.11 All void property chimneys will be swept.
- 3.12 Suitable meter box keys will be provided.

4. Decoration

- 4.1 All rooms will either be in a good state of decoration or will have decoration allowance (B&Q vouchers) issued to facilitate purchase of decoration materials sufficient to decorate to a good standard.
- 4.2 Minor blemishes, indentations and cracks to decoration will be considered acceptable.
- 4.3 Where a property is in poor decorative state or is likely to be difficult-to-let, a full or partial decoration may be ordered on the instruction of the Repairs and Improvement Manager.

5. Provision of Heating

- 5.1 All properties will either have full central heating or be on a programme for central heating installation. In the latter cases the incoming tenant will be advised on the installation date for central heating. In those properties that do not yet have central heating there will be other space heating arrangements.

6. Kitchens

6.1 All kitchens (space permitting) should have a minimum of the following units:

1 Bedroom Properties;

1 each of double wall unit, double sink base unit, double base unit

2 Bedroom Properties:

1 each of double wall unit, single wall unit, double sink base unit, double base unit, single base unit

3 Bedroom Properties;

2 double wall units, 1 double sink base unit, 2 double base units.

4 Bedroom Properties;

2 double wall units, 1 single wall unit, 1 double sink base unit, 2 double base units, 1 single base unit

6.2 All worktops should permit the safe preparation of food.

6.3 If there is a gas supply to the building and the kitchen does not have a gas cooker point, the supply should be extended provided this is reasonably possible.

6.4 The layout and design of kitchens should be sufficient to prevent accidents, ensuring there is an adequate cooker space with at least 300mm of worktop either side where possible.

6.5 Where the overall condition of the kitchen units is poor they will be made serviceable on a temporary basis and the property be placed on the planned works list for kitchen replacement. These works will be carried out within 56 days of the tenancy commencement date.

7. Fire Protection

7.1 The property will comply with all current fire regulations.

7.2 Fire doors will be fitted where appropriate, to comply with regulations.

7.3 One mains wired smoke detector per floor will be fitted in appropriate locations, which will be determined by the property type.

7.4 All electrical circuits will be earthed in accordance with current requirements.

7.5 All smoke detectors will be tested by the Property Inspector.

7.6 Where the property is linked to a fire detection system, e.g. a sheltered scheme flat, the integrity of that system will be tested by the Council's specialist electrical contractor.

7.7 Polystyrene ceiling tiles, regardless of location are an unacceptable fire risk and will be removed. The ceiling/walls will be 'made good'.

8. Bathrooms

- 8.1 All bathrooms (space permitting) will have the following: -
Bath and panel
Toilet (low level cistern) and seat.
Wash Hand Basin
- 8.2 All missing/defective wall tiles should be replaced. Where the configuration of the bathroom is changed, new splash back tiling will be provided.
- 8.3 Full height tiling must be provided where a shower is fitted (to the walls adjacent to the appliance)
- 8.4 Where a shower is fitted, provision will also be made of a suitable shower rail and curtain.
- 8.5 Any bathroom meeting the criteria for bathroom refurbishment will be placed on the planned works list and the refurbishment carried out within 56 working days of the tenancy commencement date.
- 8.6 All Toilet seats will be replaced if stained.

9. Floor coverings

- 9.1 Missing/broken vinyl tiles/floorboards will be replaced to match existing fittings (where possible).
- 9.2 Floors should be even and free from trip hazards.
- 9.3 Airbricks to suspended ground floor voids will be checked by the Property Inspector to ensure adequate air circulation.
- 9.4 Carpet grippers that are in good condition will be left in situ.
- 9.5 Laminated wooden floor finishes and carpets are to be left down only if in good condition and the new tenant signs to take responsibility for them.

10. Security

- 10.1 The types and extent of security fittings installed will be determined by the type of property: -
- Sheltered accommodation will be fitted with a Wadsworth locking system with 3 keys on all external doors. The front door will be fitted with a chain.
 - General purpose accommodation will be fitted with five lever mortice locks to both front and rear (if applicable) doors with 3 keys.
 - If window locks are fitted, keys will be provided.

11. Windows

- 11.1 Any broken and cracked panes of glass will be replaced.
- 11.2 All glazing at low level or indoors will be inspected by the Property Inspector and to be in laminated or toughened glass.

12. Insulation

- 12.1 All roof spaces will be insulated. Tanks and pipes in the roof space (or exposed areas) will be lagged. Insulation should not prevent ventilation of roof space. Where insulation does not meet the latest standard then works to comply will be carried out within twenty working days of the tenancy commencement date.

13. Free from Damp

- 13.1 All properties should be free from damp and/or mould growth. All sources of damp should be thoroughly investigated and the appropriate remedial action taken.
- 13.2 All decorations damaged, as a result of works will be re-instated.

Section 2: EXTERNAL WORKS

External works to a property will usually be carried out as part of the planned programme. The Property Inspector will determine whether work identified can reasonably wait until the next planned contract or whether more urgent attention is required. The amount and nature of the work will be a consideration.

1. Roofs

- 1.1 The roof should be in good condition, structurally sound and weather tight.
- 1.2 Flashings should be in good condition.
- 1.3 All fascia, bargeboards, soffits should be adequately secured and free from significant rot or decay.

2. Drains/Gutters

- 2.1 All gutters/downpipes should be free from obstruction, have adequate fall and be free from leaks. Replacement guttering/downpipes will be PVCu plastic. Gully covers should be provided to all drain heads. Inspection covers should be in good condition.

3. Garages and Outhouses

- 3.1 Garages and outhouses should be checked and any general defects recorded to facilitate future planned repair works. All rubbish and items left by the outgoing tenant will be disposed of.

4. Fences/boundaries

- 4.1 Fences and walls forming a boundary to Council property should be safe and in reasonable condition. Where the ownership of the boundary is with the Council (front boundary or one which borders a public right of way only), remedial work will be carried out to rectify or replace any damaged part within 20 days of the tenancy commencement date. Where large scale replacement is required then the property will be placed on a list of planned works and work will commence within an agreed timescale dependant on need and existing programmes.

5. Garden Rubbish

- 5.1 Gardens will be inspected for environmental hazards by the Property Inspector at the initial void inspection visit. All rubbish will be removed and gardens will be de-littered prior to having the grass cut .All grass and any overgrown trees will be cut back to a manageable level for the tenant to maintain in accordance with the Tenancy Agreement.

6. Telephone Wires/Aerial Wires

- 6.1 Telephone and aerial wiring will be pinned to the brickwork using the appropriate fixings.

7. Paths/Driveways and Hardstandings

- 7.1 Unless the covering is in particularly poor condition, all remedial work will be carried out as part of the Council's planned works programme. Temporary repairs can be ordered to ensure the path or part of driveway that provides access to the front and rear door only, is sound and free from trip hazards. Work will not be carried at anytime at the Council's cost to a driveway or additional access paths that may be present at the property.

General Notes for staff

1. It should be noted that if any void works being carried out are not as a result of fair wear and tear then the rechargeable procedures should be implemented and the outgoing tenant recharged subject to the rechargeable repairs procedure.
2. All general rubbish being removed inside or outside the property that has been left by the previous tenant will be recharged to the outgoing tenant.
3. Proposed planned and improvement schemes for the area should be taken into account at the time of inspecting the void property.
4. Where repairs can reasonably be undertaken with the new tenant in occupation these should be confirmed with the tenant at the time of sign up. Any repairs that have been identified should be ordered at the commencement of the tenancy with a completion date for the work to be no more than 20 working days from this date (56 days in the case of kitchen and bathroom replacements).
5. Where non-standard items are left in the property with the agreement of the incoming tenant these will be documented and gifted to the tenant. The Council will have no repair responsibility for these items.