
Lettable Standard

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V5			

Lettable Standard – Staff Guidance

1. Introduction

The Lettable Standard sets out what you should expect when you move into your new home.

Prior to the commencement of any works, the property must be considered in line with Rykneld Homes Limited/North East Derbyshire District Council (RHL/NEDDC) Acquisitions and Disposal Policy. An Option Appraisal must be undertaken and considered by RHL Senior Management Team prior to the joint RHL/NEDDC Asset Management Group for review.

Where non-standard items left by the previous tenant – that are not provided by RHL, such as carpets and curtains are in a good condition, these can be gifted to the incoming tenant. During the sign-up process, the incoming tenant must sign that they accept the responsibility for these items.

Please refer to the Tenancy Agreement and Repairs Policy for the repairing obligations of landlord and tenants for further information.

2. Kitchen

Kitchen units, worktops and sinks will be clean, free from serious chipping or deep scratches and in good working condition.

Wall tiles will be provided above all worktops and tiles will be in a reasonable condition, clean and well grouted.

If there is sufficient space, we will ensure there is room for a cooker, fridge/freezer or washing machine.

- Where possible, every kitchen will contain at least the following: single drainer sink top, four base units and three wall units, one electric cooker point, or gas cooker point where gas is supplied to the property. (Note: the number and type of units will be dependent upon the size and layout of the kitchen and whether the kitchen has a pantry)
- Where a kitchen is replaced an assessment will be made to determine whether built-in pantries should be removed if structurally viable. Refer to the RHL Kitchen Specification when installing new a kitchen
- Where a previous tenant installed kitchen is fitted, it will be assessed against the RHL Kitchen Specification for lifespan and condition. Where necessary, the kitchen will be either modified or replaced to meet this. This can include appliances if previously integral to kitchen units
- All kitchen units, work surfaces, cupboards, drawers and sinks will be thoroughly cleaned and residue will be rinsed away (this will include all cleaning to inside, outside and tops of units, cupboards, drawers and work surfaces)

- The sink will have a plug fitted
- Kitchen fittings and fixtures will be safe, functional and able to be kept clean and hygienic
- Replacement tiles will match existing or all will be renewed
- Worktops, where there are major abrasions or gouges, will be replaced with matching worktop. Where the worktop is no longer available all worktops will be replaced. Worktops where there are minor abrasions or minor gouges will be repaired
- Whenever feasible, an extractor fan will be installed to kitchen
- Door/drawer fronts which need replacement will be matched to the original, or if the original is not available all door/drawer fronts will be replaced. Minor abrasions will be repaired
- A Surestop will be fitted to isolate water supplies on installation of a new kitchen
- Kitchen floors will be screeded and covered with an anti-slip surface
- Where kitchens are to be decorated an anti-mould paint will be used.

3. Bathroom/Toilet

The bathroom suite, shower and toilet will be clean and in good working order. All tiling will be clean and sound with no cracked or broken tiles, and the waterproof sealant around the bath and basin will be in good condition and watertight. The toilet will have a new seat fitted.

Any shower units and cubicles will be in good working order and waterproof.

3.1. Bathroom

- Where a new bathroom is installed, refer to the RHL Bathroom Specification
- Dividing walls between the bathroom and toilet should be removed if it is deemed necessary to replace the bathroom at void stage. If the wall is load bearing, then further investigative work is required before the wall is removed. The doorway to fill should be based on suitability to create space which is more usable
- Bathroom will be in good order and free from any defects
- Plugs will be fitted to the bath and wash hand basin
- Shower over bath will be installed in all houses. If surface mounted pipe work is used for shower installation, this will be chrome finish
- All existing shower heads will be replaced for new
- Bathrooms will have an anti-slip floor covering. Where existing floor remains, this will be disinfected, if required
- Extractor fan will be installed

- New shower curtains will be provided and left in its packet ready to be hung by the new tenant
- Where bathrooms are to be decorated an anti-mould paint will be used.

3.2. Bathroom Adaptations

- Where a new Level Access Shower (LAS) is installed, refer to the RHL LAS Specification
- Adaptations will be safe, secure and ready to be used
- If a property has an adaptation that is no longer fit for purpose, the Voids team will consult with the Choice Based Lettings/Adaptations teams to decide whether to reinstate, adapt or revert to standard fitting
- Bathrooms and toilets will have an anti-slip floor covering
- Where an existing floor covering remains, this will be disinfected
- Quarter turn lever taps will be fitted to all bungalows and ground floor flats
- Where there is more than one step to the front door of a property and the existing LAS is not fit for purpose, this will be reverted to a standard bathroom – unless the only applicants for the property require an LAS. Decision to be made in liaison with RHL's Adaptations team
- Any raised or 'cattle grid' type shower trays will be removed as part of the void works and either a level access tray or bath fitted, as appropriate.

3.3. Toilet

- All areas of the toilet will be cleaned, including floor areas
- Toilet strip confirming that the toilet has been sanitised will be fitted to all toilets
- New toilet seats will be fitted
- Boxed in areas behind toilets will be made good and any unsightly pipe work or boxing renewed
- Internal condition of a toilet will be clean and show no signs of discolouration
- Toilets in outbuildings will be removed and floor made good to reduce future maintenance burden
- Toilet floor will be disinfected.

3.4. **Wall Tiles, Grout and Sealant**

- One row of wall tiles will be in place for splashback on wash hand basins. Walls above baths will have tiling from the rim of the bath up to the ceiling to accommodate a shower. Three rows of tiles will be fitted to worktops
- Tiles currently fitted to sink, worktop, washbasin, shower and bath must be in a good condition to be able to be kept clean – no broken tiles. Patch tiles can be used where a good decorative match can be achieved but should be replaced where not possible
- All tiled areas will be cleaned with no residue left
- Grout and sealant around cooker/sink/shower/bath/wash hand basin areas will be cleaned
- Grout or sealant in any areas of bathrooms, toilets, kitchen, windows or doors, which is badly applied, discoloured or showing wear and tear will be either removed and re-applied or made good with a grouting pen.

4. **Floors**

All floors will be free from damp and have no holes, no objects protruding or serious damage to the boards. They will be in a good enough condition to lay a covering.

- Floors will be in good condition, secure and free from major defects
- Timber will be checked for rot/woodworm and made sound and secure
- Floorboards will be installed correctly and replaced where damaged
- Any loose, brittle or damaged floor tiles will be removed and made good leaving the floor ready to accept floor covering
- Any damaged floor covering in kitchens or bathrooms will be renewed
- All floors will be swept
- All carpet grippers will be removed. Any damaged floor tiling or screed will be made good leaving a smooth and level surface
- Carpets may be left in situ (except to kitchens and bathrooms), provided the carpets are in a good condition and clean. The decision to leave floor coverings will be made during the pre-termination inspection, the information will be passed to the Voids delivery team. All relevant staff will be made aware of the decision
- Upper floor flats – hard flooring will be removed; anti-vibration mats will be provided for washers/dryers.

5. Walls and Ceilings

5.1. Walls

- Any drawing pins, sellotape, blue tac, picture hooks and nails will be removed from walls and walls made good
- Damaged or poor-quality wallpaper will be removed, the plaster made good and redecorated. If found to be in good condition and in a neutral colour, the wallpaper will be left as they are. Wallpaper will not be painted
- Wallpaper must be removed if the property undergoes a rewire of any sort ensuring wires are chased into the wall
- Walls to be painted in a neutral colour
- All wall cladding will be made good.

5.2. Ceilings

- Polystyrene ceiling tiles and coving will be removed and the ceiling bonded and skimmed or over-boarded where required.

5.3. Architraves and Skirting Boards

- All architraves and skirting boards will be intact and matched up where possible – where unable to obtain an exact match they will be as near as possible. Unmatched skirting will not be joined mid-length on one wall
- All skirting boards will be painted, where necessary, and left clean.

6. Doors and Windows

All doors and windows will be secure and in working order. External doors will have new locks and keys, and door entry keys or fobs will be supplied.

6.1. Doors – External

- All external doors, door frames, fittings, architraves and door casings will be thoroughly cleaned
- All doors will open and close with ease and fit satisfactorily.

6.2. Doors – Internal

- All internal doors, door frames, fittings, architraves and door casings will be cleaned and painted, where necessary
- Internal doors and fittings will be correctly fitted and serviceable
- Where doors are to be replaced, either six-panel prefinished or ply flush doors will be used
- Doors will open and close, and handles and locks will be operable

- Internal doors and door handles on each floor will match.

6.3. Windows and Frames

- Ground floor windows are to be cleaned internally and externally and the upstairs windows cleaned internally. All opening sashes will have the recess in which the sash fits cleaned
- If required, window boards will be renewed in UPVC
- A minimum of one window key per room will be provided and one key to suit any replacement handles that have been fitted
- Windows will be secure and fully serviceable with glazing intact
- Misted glazing will be replaced
- Windows will be checked to ensure they open/close and handles work
- Restrictors will be fitted on first floor windows and above, where possible
- Windows on the second floor and above will be fitted with restrictors that can only be overridden by the use of a tool or key
- In cases where there is any missing or damaged silicone to the window, this will be replaced
- All bungalows and ground floor flats will have curtain batons fitted to each window.

7. Decoration

Walls will be free from damp, mould or major defects. The rooms will be decorated to a good standard.

- Refer to RHL Void Decoration Specification.

7.1. Dampness and Mould

- All void properties will be checked for damp. If high damp readings (wood-moisture equivalent (WME) reading of 20 or above), the property will receive a damp survey and necessary remedial work
- If a property has signs of damp (ingress, rising or rain penetration) action will be taken to eradicate following a survey
- All mould discovered in properties will be cleaned and treated with a mould cleaning product. Investigations will be undertaken to identify the cause of the mould with appropriate remedial work completed
- Dehumidifiers will be used to dry properties where the fabric of the building has been affected by damp.

7.2. Storage Cupboards

- All storage cupboards will be left clean and tidy, internal walls of cupboards may be painted if in poor condition
- Doors will fit and close with ease
- Door handles will be clean and fit for purpose.

8. Heating, Electricity and Gas

Heating systems will be tested in line with current safety regulations and safety certificates provided where needed.

Sockets, switches and electrical fittings will be tested and safe to use. Customers will be shown the location of meters and isolation valves and given a current Energy Performance Certificate.

It is the customer's responsibility to arrange for the connection and maintenance of a cooker by a suitably qualified person.

8.1. Electrical Sockets, Light Fittings and Switches

- A Domestic Electrical Condition Report will be completed and any identified necessary works completed
- All electrical sockets, light fittings and switches will be clean and free from paint or renewed
- Existing electrical systems will be tested and repaired/upgraded to current electrical standards and RHL's Electrical Void Remedial Work Specification. Where a rewire is more cost effective, this will be completed
- During rewires the plaster will be made good for redundant sockets and cabling will be chased into the wall.

8.2. Heating

- A Domestic Services Condition Report will be completed and any identified necessary works completed
- All gas installations will be serviced immediately when the gas is uncapped for the new tenant after letting
- Solid fuel heating will be removed and replaced with a suitable heating system
- All gas fires and independent gas wall heaters will be removed and fused spurs removed
- All back boiler units complete with fire, non-room sealed appliances and Sime Combis are to be removed and replaced with a combi boiler and new heating system
- All electrical fire suites and fused spurs will be removed
- All gas and electric appliances will be tested and certificates issued

- Any dead legs found on gas pipe work will be removed as close to the original pipe work as possible.

8.3. Radiators

- Radiators will be cleaned at the front and as much as possible behind
- All radiators will be inspected and individually replaced if they have any of the following:
 - Rusting on seams or leaking due to corrosion
 - Radiator is inadequate to meet the heating needs of the room
 - Radiator has defective decoration that would prevent it being re-painted without an unreasonable amount of preparation
- Radiators will have working valves.

8.4. Internal Gas and Electric Meters

- A Landlords Gas Safety Record (formally CP12) will be completed. Any identified non-compliant installations will be rectified
- All gas or electric meters below one metre from the floor (except where they are in a dedicated meter room or cupboard) will be enclosed in a suitably ventilated box
- New kitchen layouts will be designed to accommodate accessibility to gas and electric meters and stop taps.

8.5. Water System

- Where appropriate, the water system will be drained down for frost protection and refilled at re-commissioning/letting stage
- Rykneld Homes policy is to drain empty properties between 1 November and 31 March
- Property will be free from leaks
- Any dead legs found on water pipe work will be removed as close to the original pipe work as possible
- Shower heads will be replaced.

9. Health, Safety and Security

All properties will have had health and safety repairs carried out before customers move in. There will be a working smoke detector. Carbon monoxide detectors will be fitted into properties with gas.

9.1. Housing Health and Safety Rating System

- A Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) assessment will be undertaken. Hazards defined as serious risks A-C where a duty is placed on the landlord will be rectified. Hazards scored D-J will be reviewed dependent upon circumstances.

9.2. **Security**

- A minimum of two keys for each door lock will be provided
- Windows and doors will be secure and fully serviceable with glazing in a safe condition
- Windows will be checked to ensure they open/close and handles work
- New locks will be fitted to all external entrance doors
- All burglar alarms will be removed
- Telephone points and cables will be left in situ
- A time guard PIR (motion detection) light will be fitted to the front entrance and rear entrance of the property.

9.3. **Smoke/Heat/CO Alarms**

- Hardwired smoke alarms will be fitted
- The number of alarms within a property will be sufficient to protect the property – one on landing and one on the hallway, i.e. one smoke alarm per flat/bungalow, two smoke alarms per house.

9.4. **Roof Space**

- Roof space will be clear of debris and fire breaks between properties in place and intact. Remedial work will be carried out if this is not the case
- Loft insulation must be evenly distributed across the roof and the trap. Where insulation has been disturbed it is to be relayed and any bare areas topped up. The full roof insulation will be topped up to the current standard of 270mm
- The roof space access will be accessible for RHL staff to undertake maintenance.

9.5. **Staircases, Handrails, Stairways and Steps**

- Staircases and handrails will be safe and secure and, where missing, will be replaced
- All stair treads will be made secure or replaced
- Stairways and steps will be swept and cleaned
- Carpets in poor condition will be removed from stairways
- Internal metal door thresholds will be removed, where required
- Stair-lifts in houses will be removed by Derbyshire County Council and stored to allow for re-siting, where applicable

- Where stair-lift remains due to excellent condition, is less than two years old and the Allocation and Assessment/Adaptation team have a match for the void property, servicing of the stair-lift will take place and any carpets underneath the stair-lift will be removed.

9.6. Asbestos Surveys

- Property Asbestos information will be reviewed prior to any works and an Asbestos Survey will be carried out, where required
- Any Asbestos posing a risk to health and safety will be removed or encapsulated.

10. Building Exterior and Gardens

The property will be wind and watertight, safe and secure. Permanent sheds and outbuildings will be emptied and in good repair. Pathways will be free from hazards. Gardens will be tidy, with defined boundaries, free from rubbish and ready for customers to maintain.

10.1. Roof

- Roof will be watertight with no tiles/slates missing and flashings intact. Any loose tiles will be removed and the roof covering will be made good.

10.2. Gutters and Rain Water Pipes

- Gutters and rain water pipes will be functional and visually checked for evidence that no vegetation is growing in gutters, all guttering will allow for free flowing water and rainwater pipes will be clear with no blockages.

10.3. Drainage Systems and Grids

- Drainage systems will be free flowing, functional and clear of any debris
- Missing grids will be replaced
- Gullies around the property will be checked and any remedial work undertaken
- Any missing or damaged waste pipes will be replaced or repaired
- Any vegetation will be removed.

10.4. Inspection Chambers

- Inspection chambers will be safe, intact and fitted with correct chamber cover
- Inspection chambers must remain accessible for RHL or NEDDC employees.

10.5. Structural Fabric

- Structural fabrication of the buildings, including pointing and rendering, will be safe and watertight
- All former tenants' fixtures will be removed from outer walls

- Sky dishes/aerials/TV aerials located 2.1m or 7' or lower, will be removed
- If a door is fitted to an outbuilding this will be functional.

10.6. Paths/Hardstanding

- Main paths to and from the property, and immediate perimeter of the property, will be level with no trip hazards exceeding 30mm or rocking flagstones. The minimum width will be 900mm
- Damaged paths will be patch repaired at damaged part only
- Where a property is wheelchair adapted access paths should be 1200mm wide
- All entrance/exit paths and gullies will have weeds removed, be swept and swilled down (this does not mean power washed) with overgrowing bushes cut back
- Line paths and defective non-essential paving will be removed and the garden made good. When a line path is removed, a rotary washing line will be provided
- Where a property has a car hardstanding there must be an appropriate dropped kerb. If there is no dropped kerb the incoming tenant will be informed the hardstanding cannot be used
- Poorly installed hardstandings with an appropriate dropped kerb will be removed and replaced with a new hardstanding. Please refer to the Driveways and Hardstanding Specification.

10.7. Handrails and Outdoor Steps

- Handrails and steps will be checked to ensure they are safe, intact and not loose
- External steps should have a maximum step rise of 220mm and be reasonably uniform
- Handrails will be installed to steps, where the total rise of steps is more than 600mm.

10.8. Detached Outhouses/Sheds

- Any existing detached outhouses/sheds etc within the curtilage of the property will be checked to ensure they are safe and reasonably weathertight
- Where a detached outhouse is safe it will be cleared out to bring back into service
- Where a detached outhouse/shed is unsafe it will be demolished and removed
- Where an outhouse is attached to another outhouse or constitutes a retaining wall, it will be inspected with a view to ensuring it is safe and functional
- Outhouses will be assessed individually and a decision made as a result of the findings.

10.9. **Graffiti**

- Surfaces will be clear of graffiti
- Where necessary, a specialist will be brought in for removal of offensive graffiti on external walls as soon as possible.

10.10. **External Gas and Electric Meters**

- Missing or damaged doors on external gas and electric meters will be replaced.

10.11. **Vents**

- Vents will be unobstructed allowing for the free flow of air
- Any broken vents will be replaced
- A fan to kitchens and bathrooms will be installed using the correct manufacturer supplied wall or roof kit and grille. Venting through an airbrick is not acceptable.

10.12. **Garden/Curtilage Clear and Safe Gardens/Communal Areas**

- Gardens will be tidy, reasonably weed-free and clear of rubbish. Grass should not be overgrown or unsightly (as per Tenancy Agreement)
- Gardens will be cleared and safe for use. Any potential falls from height will be assessed. Guarding will be installed where there is a drop in level greater than 300mm. The guarding should be a minimum of 1,100mm high, not be readily climbable by children and not allow 100mm diameter sphere to pass through
- Any unsafe/unauthorised structures will be removed and the area made good
- Boundaries will be defined with posts and, where necessary, reinstated to the correct position through liaison with adjoining neighbours facilitated by the Housing and Support Officer. Any land that has been created through historic boundary/fencing creep will be eliminated and incorporated into the appropriate garden in liaison with NEDDC legal advice
- Fencing will be left in a safe condition or removed
- Where neighbouring properties condition are impacting on the void property or the works to the void will impact on neighbouring properties, the Inspector will liaise with the Housing and Support Officer to ensure works are concluded equitably
- Where neighbouring property/garden condition is clearly in breach of tenancy conditions or will make the void property difficult to relet, this will be referred to the Housing and Support Officer to remedy.

10.13. **Bushes, Hedges, Shrubs and Trees**

- Overgrown bushes/hedges/shrubs (including conifers) will be cut back to 0.9m at front of property to give clear access to the path leading to the property and will be cut down to no more than 2 metres high at the rear. Refer to the Fencing/Boundary Policy for further advice

- All ivy and wall climbers will be removed from external walls and the walls made good as required and treated to prevent re-growth
- All self-set shrubs are to be removed from the perimeter of the building, drainage system and paths around the building and treated to prevent re-growth.

10.14. **Rubbish and Dustbins**

- All dustbins will be emptied.

10.15. **Building Debris**

- All building debris to be removed from site.
-