

Private Sector Housing:

Guidance on Property Licensing Standards

For Selective Licensable Properties

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this document is to provide guidance on the minimum requirements for privately rented homes that require a selective licence by Southend on Sea Borough Council. It is not intended to be a fully comprehensive list of requirements and regard should be made to national standards, lease terms/conditions and other legal requirements when assessing standards.
- 1.2 This document is concerned with self-contained residential accommodation, which has exclusive use of amenities for a single household and not multiple occupied residential accommodation where amenities and facilities are shared by more than 1 household.
- 1.3 As a minimum, properties should always:

- meet the Decent Homes Standard;
 - be free from Category 1 and significant Category 2 hazards with regard to the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) introduced by the Housing Act 2004;
 - be expected to be free from such Category 1 and significant Category 2 hazards for a period of at least 5 years from inspection;
 - comply with all other legislation relating to the health and safety of residential occupants;
 - be in such a condition so as not to cause nuisance to any neighbouring properties.
- 1.4 Any furniture supplied by anyone other than the occupier shall comply with The Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 (as amended in 1989 and 1993).
- 1.5 All gas appliances and services shall comply with the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998.
- 1.6 Any work carried out at the property, which requires either Building Regulation approval or Development Control consent should have such approval.
- 1.7 This guidance does not cover types and numbers of furniture, kitchen or electrical appliances or internal decorative repair.
- 1.8 Properties should be energy efficient with consideration given to total energy use, carbon dioxide emissions and likely energy performance particularly in relation to 3.16 – “Heating & Thermal Comfort” below.
- 1.9 This guidance is not intended to cover matters that would fall within an **Inventory**. Furnishings, fixtures and non-permanent fittings should be subject to a separate assessment procedure.
- 1.10 This guidance is laid out in the same order as a surveyor might inspect a property – external items, internal items, general items and finally fire safety and means of escape – in order for ease of referral.

2. External Standards

- 2.1 The exterior and structural elements of the building include load-bearing elements as well as all the elements which give the dwelling its appearance, shape and stability as well as weather-proofing capacity. These can include means of access, amenity space, foundations, walls, roof, chimneys and doors. Services, such as drainage and space for refuse storage should also be considered.

2.2 BUILDING ELEMENTS

- 2.2.1 The roof coverings, flashings, chimney stacks, chimney flaunching, brickwork, pointing, render, windows, doors, rainwater goods, wastewater goods and drainage shall be in good condition and repair.
- 2.2.2 The dwelling should be free from any threat to the occupants relating to the collapse of an element of part of the fabric of the building being displaced because of inadequate fixing, disrepair or adverse weather conditions.
- 2.2.3 External decoration should be in good condition and should not require redecoration for a further five years.
- 2.2.4 Flues serving gas appliances (including fires and stoves) should terminate in accordance with 1.6 above.
- 2.2.5 Building elements should be watertight and free from significant cracking.
- 2.2.6 The property should show no visible signs of damp, wet or dry rot. The damp proof course should not be bridged by external render, paving or earth. Air bricks should be free from obstruction and should have grilles to prevent access by rodents.

2.3 SURFACE AND FOUL WATER DRAINAGE

- 2.3.1 There should be adequate provision for surface and foul water drainage.
- 2.3.2 All rainwater pipes should discharge properly into the drainage system.
- 2.3.3 All access covers to drainage and other services should be fitted with suitable flush mounted covers adequately marked to indicate purpose.

2.4 REFUSE STORAGE

- 2.4.1 There should be adequate, hygienic and suitable number of bins for the storage and disposal of refuse for each household.

2.5 EXTERNAL STAIRCASES AND STEPS

- 2.5.1 Staircases and steps should be constructed and be in such a condition to prevent occupants tripping or falling. Staircases should have adequate handrails, guarding and lighting. There should be no projections into or obstruction on a staircase.
- 2.5.2 Staircases should be protected from adverse weather conditions and should be of a non-slip nature.

- 2.5.3 There should be no open risers on staircases.
- 2.5.4 See additional information in 3.10 – Internal Staircases and Steps.

2.6 YARDS AND AMENITY SPACE

- 2.6.1 Common parts (if any) should be in good repair and condition. This should include structure, access ways, security doors and lifts.
- 2.6.2 External yards, paths, steps and access ways and surrounds should be in good order, even and well drained.
- 2.6.3 Paths should have adequate friction, should not have excessive slopes and have adequate lighting.
- 2.6.4 There should be no tripping or falling hazards from paths, ramps or thresholds.
- 2.6.5 There should be no unguarded drops from paths, patios, steps, staircases, terraces, balconies, flat roofs or garden areas.

There should be no iron-spiked railings or other sharp residual projections.

- 2.6.6 All boundaries should be clearly defined and enclosed by well-maintained and suitable walls or fences.

3.1 Internal Standards

- 3.1 The design and construction of internal parts of the dwelling should not place an occupant at risk from physical injury from either collision or entrapment.
- 3.2 The design, layout and construction of the dwelling shall allow good standards of cleanliness and shall prevent the harbourage and access into the premises of pests.
- 3.3 The design of the dwelling and functional space within it shall not place occupants at risk of physical strain.
- 3.4 Occupants should not be exposed to the health risks from ingestion of lead from any of the dwelling elements and finishes.

3.5 WALLS AND CEILINGS

- 3.5.1 Walls and ceilings should be sound, free from cracks and bowing and should not show any signs of movement.
- 3.5.2 Any timber or Formica cladding, polystyrene tiles and covings should be removed.
- 3.5.3 Any Artex or similar coatings should be tested for asbestos content. If necessary, following testing, coatings should be removed in accordance with relevant codes of practice.

3.6 FLOORS

- 3.6.1 Floors should be sound, free from damp or rot, level and free from signs of deflection. There should be no loose or damaged floorboards.
- 3.6.2 Where carpet is fitted it should be properly laid and well secured, including threshold strips.
- 3.6.3 Old thermoplastic tiles should be tested for asbestos content. If necessary, following testing, coverings should be removed in accordance with relevant codes of practice.

3.7 DOORS AND WINDOWS

- 3.7.1 Doors and windows should be well-fitting and should open and shut properly. Windows should not be painted shut.
- 3.7.2 Doors should be of suitable size with sufficient headroom. Where possible doors should open in the direction of travel into the room.
- 3.7.3 Low level glazing (windows less than 800mm above finished floor level, doors and adjacent panels less than 1500mm above finished floor level) should be impact resistant or have permanent screen protection. Non-compliant glass may be re-glazed with safety glass (complying with BS 6206) or upgraded using safety film but must satisfy current regulations.
- 3.7.4 All large areas of glazing e.g. patio doors, should comply with Part N of the Building Regulations.
- 3.7.5 Fixed stays or stops should be provided to all windows above ground floor level that restrict opening to 100mm maximum, except those windows required to be escape windows under the Building Regulations.
- 3.7.6 Window sills should be a minimum of 1.2m above finished floor level. If lower than 1.2m, protection and restricted opening controls should be provided to the window.

3.7.7 All WC and bathroom windows should be provided with obscure glazing.

3.7.8 Fixed window panes with louvres above are not acceptable.

3.8 KITCHEN FACILITIES

3.8.1 The kitchen should be of satisfactory layout and have adequate provision for hygienic storage, preparation and cooking of food, so preventing the risk of infection to occupants.

3.8.2 The occupants should not be exposed by reason of layout, size, design or other feature to risk from hot surfaces or risk from burns or scalds caused by contact with flames or hot liquids.

3.8.3 Kitchen units and appliances should be free from defects and in good working order. In general, kitchen facilities should be less than 20 years old.

3.8.4 Kitchen facilities used by a **single household** should comprise:

- a cooker (4 cooking rings), oven and grill (suitably restrained and located);
- a sink with integral drainer set on a 1000mm base unit;
- constant hot and cold water supplies to the sink;
- a fixed impervious and readily cleansable work surface, minimum 2000 x 500mm;
- an adequate tiled splash-back to a height of at least 300mm above any sink or work surface;
- a direct drainage connection to the sink with a suitable water trap;
- adequate storage cupboard units, minimum 0.3 cubic metres;
- a suitable sized refrigerator;
- a minimum of 2 double electrical sockets above work surfaces (excluding appliance sockets).

3.8.5 Joints around sinks and worktops should be sealed with silicone sealant.

3.8.6 Waste pipes and taps should be defect free with no leaks or drips. Taps should be easy to operate.

3.8.7 A kitchen must not be the sole access to a room used for sleeping.

3.8.8 Kitchen facilities must not be installed in a hallway.

3.8.9 A humidistat-controlled mechanical extractor must be provided where there is inadequate ventilation by means of a window. Newly converted kitchens must have a mechanical extractor regardless of whether there is an openable window.

3.9 BATHROOM AND WC FACILITIES

- 3.9.1 There should be adequate provision for personal hygiene.
- 3.9.2 Bathroom facilities should be in good working order and free from defects and, in general, should be less than 30 years old.
- 3.9.3 The bath and shower should be positioned to prevent falls and where necessary handles and grab rails should be provided. Sharp edges or projections should be removed and non-slip surfaces should be provided where necessary.
- 3.9.4 Sanitary facilities (in total throughout a dwelling) should include:
- a fixed bath or shower and wash hand basin with a constant supply of hot and cold water and a direct drainage connection with suitable trap (minimum sizes: wash hand basin 500 x 400mm, bath 1700 x 700mm and shower 800 x 800mm);
 - a WC properly connected to the drainage. The WC cistern overflow should discharge externally;
 - adequate tiled splash-back should be provided to the bath and wash hand basin (300mm high);
 - showers should have tiling of sufficient height to protect the decoration of the wall (minimum of 1.80m) which is properly sealed and a shower screen or curtain of a sufficient standard to prevent water damage to floor;
 - a towel rail and toilet paper holder
- 3.9.5 Joints around baths and wash hand basins should be sealed with silicone sealant.
- 3.9.6 Facilities should be provided with adequate lighting.
- 3.9.7 Bath/shower rooms must be adequately ventilated and heated (electric bar heaters are not permitted).
- 3.9.8 There should be adequate space for access adjacent to the facilities. Bathrooms located off a kitchen should have a wash hand basin. Bathrooms should not be accessed through a bedroom except for one bedroom flats.

3.10 STAIRCASES AND STEPS

- 3.10.1 Staircases should be of such construction and in such a condition to prevent occupants tripping or falling.
- 3.10.2 Stairs or steps shall not be overly steep nor staircases excessively long.

- 3.10.3 Steps should have level, even treads and should provide adequate friction.
- 3.10.4 The stairs should be sound and show no sign of deflection.
- 3.10.5 There should be no open risers on staircases.
- 3.10.6 Minimum headroom on a staircase should be 1900mm and minimum stair width should be 750mm.
- 3.10.7 There should be landings at the top and bottom of all flights. Landings should have a minimum width of 750mm and length of 500mm.
- 3.10.8 Stair nosings should not be overly long. All nosings should be adequately secured to treads.
- 3.10.9 There should be no projections on the staircase (e.g. coat hooks), no accessible glass, sharp edges or hard surfaces.
- 3.10.10 Stair coverings should be securely and safely fastened.
- 3.10.11 There should be handrails to all staircases (both internal and external) which are of sufficient size, suitably constructed and fully supported.
- 3.10.12 If stairs are over 1000mm wide two handrails should be provided.
- 3.10.13 Handrails should be between 900 and 1000mm high.
- 3.10.14 Stairs and landings with a drop in excess of 600mm should be guarded. The guarding should be of adequate construction with maximum openings of 100mm, height between 900 and 1000mm and designed to prevent climbing.

3.11 BALCONIES and FLAT ROOFS WITH ACCESS

- 3.11.1 Balconies and flat roofs with access should be properly constructed and guarded so as to prevent occupants falling between levels.
- 3.11.2 All guarding should be of adequate construction with maximum openings of 100mm, height of 1100mm and designed to prevent climbing.

3.12 WATER SUPPLY

- 3.12.1 The water supply to the premises should be separately supplied, of potable quality and satisfactory for drinking and domestic purposes such as cooking and washing.

- 3.12.2 A mains supply of drinking water should be provided to the kitchen sink.
- 3.12.3 An easily accessible and properly functioning stop cock should be provided to the mains water supply within the dwelling.
- 3.12.4 Water storage tanks should be properly housed, secured, insulated and covered.
- 3.12.5 The hot water supply system should be such that heated water can be delivered at a temperature below 46°C.

3.13 DAMPNES INCLUDING CONDENSATION

- 3.13.1 The dwelling should be free from dampness prejudicial to the health of the occupants. This includes rising damp, penetrating damp and condensation.
- 3.13.2 When considering dampness due to condensation regard shall be had to the thermal performance of the structure, the heating installation and the ventilation arrangements. Particular attention should be paid to exposed elements and non-traditional construction.

3.14 VENTILATION

- 3.14.1 The dwelling should be adequately ventilated, insulated and screened so that the occupants do not suffer from excessive heat.
- 3.14.2 Adequate permanent ventilation should be provided to all habitable rooms, kitchens, bathrooms and WCs. An openable window equivalent to one twentieth of the floor area will achieve this.
- 3.14.3 Where there is no window to a kitchen, bathroom or WC there should be mechanical extract ventilation installed. Humidistat controlled mechanical extractor fans should be provided to kitchens (min. output 60 l/s) and bathrooms (min. output 15 l/s). There should be a 15-minute over-run where there is no openable window.
- 3.14.4 The flues of all permanently closed fireplaces should be fitted with adequate ventilation to stop condensation.

3.15 LIGHTING

- 3.15.1 There should be adequate natural and artificial lighting to all habitable rooms, kitchens, bathrooms, WCs, stairways, circulation spaces and common parts. (External obstructions to natural light must be taken into consideration).
- 3.15.2 Habitable rooms should have an area of glazing equivalent to at least one tenth of the floor area.

- 3.15.3 Adequate external lighting should be provided to all means of access and egress.

3.16 HEATING AND THERMAL COMFORT

- 3.16.1 All premises should have effective insulation and efficient heating. The premises will be expected to achieve a min. SAP (Standard Assessment Procedure) rating of 65.
- 3.16.2 Heating should be matched to the thermal capacity and performance of the structure. The heating system should comprise of either full gas central heating or electric storage heaters at off peak or low cost rates.
- 3.16.3 The premises should be capable of being heated to a temperature of 21°C in living areas and 18°C in bedrooms when the outside temperature is - 1°C.
- 3.16.4 The heating should be controllable by the occupants i.e. have a timer and/or thermostat and should operate independently from the hot water system.
- 3.16.5 The heating should be properly installed and regularly maintained by a Gas Safe or NICEIC registered engineer. Copies of their certificates should be provided.
- 3.16.6 There should be a fixed heating appliance or radiator in every room. Portable gas or electric heaters are not acceptable. If the heating appliance is an electric fire it can only be a wall-mounted convector heater and it must be connected to a fused spur. Where a new boiler is required the installation should meet the latest SEDBUK Band "A" rating (high efficiency boilers).
- 3.16.7 Effective insulation should consist of a minimum 250mm loft insulation or equivalent to achieve the performance above. All hot water cylinders should be properly insulated.

3.17 INTERNAL ARRANGEMENT

- 3.16.8 Bathrooms should not be accessed through bedrooms except for in one bedroom flats if necessary.
- 3.16.9 Internal means of escape should allow travel from areas of higher risk to area of lower fire risk.
- 3.16.10 Adequate circulation space should be provided in all escape areas and adjacent to all cooking appliances.

3.18 ELECTRICAL INSTALLATION

- 3.16.11 The electrical systems should be free of all hazards which could cause electrical shock or burns to an occupant.

- 3.16.12 An electrical test certificate (16th edition) should be provided (NICEIC). The certificate must demonstrate that there are no electrical defects that affect the occupant's safety.
- 3.16.13 There should be sufficient electrical sockets throughout the dwelling. This guide provides a minimum standard:

Living Room	3 double sockets
Double Bedrooms	3 double sockets
Single Bedrooms	2 double socket
Kitchen	2 double at worktop height, plus separate socket for fridge. Boiler to be on spur. Cooker to be on a separate 30amp circuit.
Landing or hall	1 socket

- 3.16.14 Separate electricity meters and fuse boxes shall be provided for each letting. Meters shall be readily accessible. Landlords' electrical supply (where necessary) should be separately metered.
- 3.16.15 Electrical cables and wiring will be properly protected and clipped to surfaces.

3.19 GAS INSTALLATION

- 3.16.16 All gas appliances should be properly fixed and ventilated, Gas Safe approved and should be certified as safe by a Gas Safe registered engineer on an annual basis. There should be no evidence of the production of Carbon Monoxide, Nitrogen Dioxide, Sulphur Dioxide or un-combusted fuel gas.
- 3.16.17 Occupants should not be exposed to the risk of explosion from gas appliances and installations or other heating systems
- 3.16.18 A gas safety test certificate (Gas Safe Register) and a copy of a service contract should be provided from a Gas Safe registered engineer.
- 3.16.19 Separate gas meters should be provided for each letting. Meters should be readily accessible.

4. General Items

3.20 SECURITY

- 4.2.1 The dwelling should provide an adequate level of security to prevent unauthorised entry by intruders and should allow the occupiers to maintain a satisfactory level of defensible space.
- 4.2.2 Adequate external lighting should be provided to all means of access.
- 4.2.3 Access doors to premises should have adequate locks, door chains and viewers. The primary entrance door should be fitted with a minimum of a mortice deadlock to BS 3621 openable from the inside without a key and contain a “peephole” viewer.
- 4.2.4 All rear doors should be fitted with a mortice dead lock to BS 3621 or 2 no. bolts.
- 4.2.5 Windows in accessible locations should be provided with suitable window locks.
- 4.2.6 All door and window frames and furniture should operate properly and should be in a good state of repair.

3.21 ASBESTOS AND MMF (Manufactured Mineral Fibres)

- 4.2.7 Occupants should not be exposed to the presence of airborne asbestos or MMF.
- 4.2.8 The presence, position and condition of any asbestos or MMF building materials should be determined and recorded by a qualified asbestos auditor. Any necessary action to remove or encapsulate shall be undertaken by an approved UKAS (NAMAS) contractor (i.e. a contractor licensed by the HSE).

4.3 PEST CONTROL

- 4.3.1 The dwelling should be free from pests and pest infestations (including, but not limited to rats, mice, pigeons, cockroaches, fleas, bed bugs) so that the occupants are not subjected to threats to their physical or mental health.
- 4.3.2 Where pests or pest infestations are found during occupation, a suitably qualified pest control contractor should be engaged to carry out all necessary treatments and other works to ensure the eradication of the pests.

- 4.3.3 Where pest control works are carried out within occupied dwellings, the occupier must be made aware of the location of any baits or other chemical treatments.
- 4.3.4 Any soft furnishings found to be infested with pests must be appropriately destroyed and replaced.

4.4 NOISE

- 4.4.1 The dwelling should be sited and maintained so that the occupants are not subjected to noise which would result in a threat to their physical or mental health.
- 4.4.2 All new flats/flat conversions should comply fully with current Building Regulations in respect of sound insulation. Older flats/flat conversions should comply as fully as possible with current Building Regulations.
- 4.4.3 Where there are excessive noise levels (e.g. from main road, rail lines, and adjacent noise producing commercial premises) noise mitigation measures (e.g. secondary glazing) should be installed to habitable room i.e. bedrooms, living rooms. Where noise mitigation measures are necessary, consideration should also be given to the presence of existing airbricks which must be replaced with acoustic vents.

4.5 SPACE STANDARDS

- 4.5.1 Occupants should not be exposed to health risks caused by lack of space within the dwelling for living, sleeping and normal family life.
- 4.5.2 In assessing space standards all persons and households occupying the property irrespective of age should be counted.
- 4.5.3 The following four tables should be used to calculate the permitted number of occupants for the dwelling.

Maximum number of occupiers per dwelling based on number of bedrooms in single household dwelling units	
Number of Bedrooms	Max. No. of Persons
1 bedroom	2 persons (1 household)
2 bedrooms	4 persons (1 household)
3 bedrooms	6 persons (1 household)
4 bedrooms	7 persons (1 household)

Table 1

Maximum number of occupiers per room based on floor space in single household dwellings	
10.2 sq m or more (110 sq ft or more)	2 persons (see tables above for permitted occupation)
6.5 to 10.2 sq m (70 to 110 sq m)	1 person (of any age)
4.65 sq m	Under 10 years

Table 2

Bedroom requirements based on age and sex of occupiers in single household dwelling units	
Age and sex of household members	Number of bedrooms
An adult couple	1 bedroom (1 household)
A person over 21	1 bedroom (1 household)
2 young persons 10 -20 years of the same sex	1 bedroom (1 household)
1 child under 10 yrs & 1 young person under 20 of the same sex	1 bedroom (1 household)
1 or 2 children under 10yrs (not necessarily of the same sex)	1 bedroom (1 household)
Any unpaired young persons 10 – 20 yrs or unpaired children under 10	1 bedroom (1 household)

5. Fire Safety and Means of Escape

5.1 Occupants must not be exposed to threat from uncontrolled fire and associated smoke, and adequate means of escape from fire shall be provided to all properties.

5.2 FIRE SAFETY REQUIREMENT (ALL PROPERTY TYPES)

5.2.1 Internal escape routes shall progress to areas of lower fire risk (i.e. occupants shall not pass through a kitchen or living room to escape from a bedroom). Particular attention should be paid when staircases are not separated from the kitchen or living room, and corridors must be formed to separate the staircase from the kitchen or living room.

5.2.2 All kitchens shall have a door that closes onto the hallway.

- 5.2.3 Polystyrene tiles will not be acceptable on any surfaces.
- 5.2.4 If heating is provided by a district system all distribution pipe work should be boxed-in or suitably protected.
- 5.2.5 Any exposed hot surfaces should be adequately protected.