

Landlord Guide

Rossendale Borough Council

Housing Standards for Rented Homes

Renewed January 2011

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1. Structure

- 1.1 Buildings should be watertight, in good repair and structurally sound.
- 1.2 The roof shall provide a waterproof covering over the entire building and be free of defective or loose material.
- 1.3 Gutter and drainpipes shall be in good condition, securely fixed, watertight and free flowing.
- 1.4 The dwelling should be free from rising dampness.
- 1.5 Stairs and steps shall be in good condition and structurally sound. The surface should not be loose or slippery especially when wet.

A handrail must be provided on one side where the stairs/steps are less than 1000mm wide and over two risers high; where the stair width exceeds 1000mm or the stairs are particularly steep a handrail should be provided on each side.
- 1.6 External doors should be close fitting, effectively draught and weather proofed and fitted with secure locks.
- 1.7 Internal doors must be provided throughout the property. They should be close fitting and latch securely with suitable door furniture.
- 1.8 The roof space should be provided with a minimum of 250mm of loft insulation with all water storage cisterns, tanks and pipe work adequately insulated.

2. Natural Lighting and Ventilation

- 2.1 Windows should be in good repair to allow easy operation of opening lights and sliding sashes and be provided with effective draught proofing. Windows on the ground floor or first floor windows above a flat roof should be fitted with adequate security locks.
- 2.2 Every habitable room must have a window or windows opening directly to the external air with glazed area not less than one tenth of the floor area.
- 2.3 Rooms below ground level must provide sufficient natural light on an average day for living in the lounge/bedroom without assistance of electric light.
- 2.4 Safety glass should be fitted in the following locations: -
 - a) glazing in a door and adjacent partition between floor level and a height of 1500mm above floor level;
 - b) glazing in a window or partition between floor level and a height of 800mm above floor level.

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3. Kitchen and Cooking Areas

- 3.1 Adequate storage, preparation and cooking facilities should be provided. Generally the following minimum standard will apply:
- A sink with hot and cold water supplies with a drainer on one side and a fixed work top (minimum length 500mm) on the other with a sealed watertight joint to an impervious splash back.
 - A cooker space with a gas and/or electricity supply in a suitable position at least 500mm away from a doorway or thoroughfare with an adjacent fixed worktop.
 - A space for a refrigerator with an adjacent electric socket outlet.
 - A space for a washing machine with an adjacent electric socket outlet and plumbing / waste connections.
 - A minimum of 1 metre of suitably located fixed work surface with a smooth impervious surface and a sealed watertight joint to an impervious splash back.
 - For single occupancies a minimum of 0.3m³ of properly constructed fixed floor and / or wall mounted storage cupboards with smooth impervious internal and external surfaces. A cupboard space under a sink will not count towards this requirement.
 - A minimum of 3 no. electric socket outlets positioned above a fixed work surface.

Note: The cupboard space/worktop provision/socket outlets will need to be increased for a couple or family occupancies.

4. Bathrooms

- 4.1 Each letting must be provided with a water closet together with a bath or shower and a wash basin with adequate hot and cold water supplies. The facilities should be in good order and capable of being effectively cleaned.
- 4.2 The bath/shower and the wash basin must be provided with a sealed watertight joint to an impervious splash back.
- 4.3 Bathrooms and WC compartments must be adequately ventilated either by an opening window or mechanical ventilation with a capacity to provide three air changes per hour.
- 4.4 Bathroom and WC compartment doors should be fitted with a privacy latch capable of being opened from the outside in an emergency.

5. Floors, floor coverings and decorations

- 5.1 Floors to be level and even with boarding securely fixed to the joists.
- 5.2 Aluminium joining strip (or similar) to be fixed on changes in floor finish to avoid tripping hazards.
- 5.3 Polystyrene tiles should be removed from all ceilings and walls if possible; otherwise the tiles should be painted with flame retardant paint.

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6. Heating and Hot Water Supplies

- 6.1 A whole house programmable heating system with adequate controls which is capable of heating the whole of the dwelling at a reasonable cost should be provided. The system should be capable of achieving a temperature of 19°C in living rooms/bathrooms and 18°C in the remainder of the house with an external temperature of -1°C.
- 6.2 The water heating system must be capable of providing an adequate and continuous supply of hot water.

7. Furniture

- 7.1 All furniture provided by the landlord must be kept in a good and safe condition and comply with the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire Safety) Regulations 1988.

8. Electricity and Gas Installations

- 8.1 The electrical installation should be inspected by a competent person in accordance with BS 7671 at intervals of no more than 10 years with a test certificate provided. It is recommended that the electrical installation is re-inspected after every change of tenancy.
- 8.2 The installation should be maintained in good condition and any alterations to the electrical wiring should be completed in accordance with Part P of the Building Regulations.
- 8.3 All portable electrical appliances provided by the landlord should be tested annually in accordance with the Institute of Electrical Engineers Code of Practice for In-service Inspection and Testing of Electrical Equipment.
- 8.4 A gas safety certificate must be provided in accordance with the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998. The certificate must be renewed annually and a copy provided for the tenant.
- 8.5 Approved carbon monoxide detectors are strongly recommended, although these must not be used as a substitute for regular checks and servicing by a CORGI-registered installer.

9. Fire Precautions

- 9.1 Each property must be individually assessed for fire safety but as a general rule the following fire safety provisions will be required to achieve a satisfactory standard under the Housing Health & Safety Rating system.
- 9.2 Where the stairs descend into a passage way which leads directly to outside:
- 9.3 Doors must be provided to all rooms which lead off the hallway/landing space at both ground floor and first floor level.

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9.4 Mains powered interlinked smoke detectors must be installed on the first floor landing and at the foot of the stairs.

a) Where the stairs descend into a kitchen:

Either:

Provision of a door at the bottom of the stairs with mains powered interlinked smoke detectors on the first floor landing and front living room with at least one means of escape window on the first floor.

Or:

If there is no door at the bottom of the stairs then a mains powered interlinked heat detector should be installed in the kitchen with interlinked smoke detectors installed on the first floor landing and the front living room. In addition at least one means of escape window must be provided on the first floor.

b) Where the stairs descend into a small lobby in the centre of a house:

Doors must be provided to all rooms which lead off the circulation space/staircase at both ground floor and first floor level.

Mains powered interlinked smoke detectors must be installed on the first floor landing and at the foot of the stairs.

c) Where the stairs descend into a ground floor living room from which access is available directly to outside:

Doors must be provided to all rooms which lead off the circulation space at first floor level and to the ground floor kitchen.

Mains powered interlinked smoke detectors must be installed on the first floor landing and in the ground floor living room. It is recommended that an interlinked heat detector is also installed in the kitchen.

In addition at least one means of escape window should be provided on the first floor.

Note:

In two storey houses with an attic room the above requirements will apply with an additional interlinked smoke detector in the attic room.

In other three storey houses, houses in multiple occupation, self contained flats and accommodation above commercial premises it will be necessary to seek further advice on the fire safety requirements for individual properties.

The LACORS (now LG Regulation) Fire Safety Guidance was developed in conjunction with the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) and the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA). The guidance applies nationally and covers certain existing residential accommodation including single family dwellings, shared houses, bedsits and flats. It is not aimed at new housing built to modern Building Regulations. The guidance adopts a risk based approach to fire safety that will satisfy both the Housing Act 2004 and the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. It includes guidance to landlords on how to carry out a fire risk assessment and is available from the following link <http://www.lacors.gov.uk/lacors/ContentDetails.aspx?id=19843>.

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10. General

- 10.1 It is recommended that wall or floor stops are provided for all doors to protect the wall/decorations.

11. Energy Efficiency

- 11.1 There is a national scheme available which may provide assistance to landlords and tenants to improve thermal insulation, provide draught proofing and help with the provision or repair of heating systems.

- 11.2 The Government has introduced some tax incentives to encourage private landlords to install energy efficiency measures in their properties:

a) Landlords Energy Saving Allowance (LESA)

This allowance can be claimed by all private landlords that pay income tax, either individual landlords or corporate landlords if the business is registered and pays corporation tax on profits from letting. The LESA means that landlords can claim a deduction for income tax purposes (up to a maximum of £1,500) against their rental profit when they install cavity wall, solid wall, loft or floor insulation and draught proofing or insulation for hot water systems in any property they let. This is in addition to the deduction that the Inland Revenue allows for wear and tear of furniture and fittings.

b) Enhanced Capital Allowance

This allowance can be claimed by landlords that pay corporation tax, larger landlords and businesses. In practice this provides the landlord with the opportunity to claim 100 per cent of the tax back on any energy saving technology that they buy. The ECA provides up front tax relief, allowing businesses to claim 100 per cent first year capital allowances against their taxable profits. This can deliver a cash flow boost and shorten the payback period on investments

12. Energy Performance Certificates

- 12.1 You will need to provide a certificate to any prospective tenant. Once obtained a certificate remains valid for up to ten years.

- 12.2 There is no need to obtain an Energy Performance Certificate for an existing tenancy.

13. Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO's)

- 13.1 HMO's are houses which are occupied by persons who are not members of the same family. This type of accommodation is subject to additional requirements for means of escape and fire precautions, the provision of bathroom/kitchen facilities and management regulations.

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- 13.2 The requirements will vary depending on the size of the property and the number of people living there. Further advice should be sought in respect of individual houses.

14. Housing Act 2004 – Health & Safety Rating System

- 14.1 The information provided above is provided for guidance as to the expected standards to be achieved in rented houses.
- 14.2 However, for enforcement purposes, each house is assessed in accordance with the Housing Health & Safety Rating System under the Housing Act 2004 in order to identify any works which are required to provide satisfactory housing conditions. This is further detailed in the Council's Policy Statement around the HHSRS Housing Act 2004.

15. Contact Details

Further information regarding the above is available from Health, Housing and Regeneration, Residential Team of Rossendale Borough Council.

Telephone: 01706 252565

Email: envhealth@rossendalebc.gov.uk

Letter:

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