

# Landlord Guide

**Rossendale Borough Council**

Housing Standards for Rented Homes

# Landlord Guide

## 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 270mm 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 0.3m<sup>3</sup> 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 British Standard 7671 at intervals of no more than 5 years with a test certificate provided. It is recommended that the electrical installation is re-inspected after every change of tenancy.
- 8.2 From the 1st July 2020 all new tenancies in private rented sector are required to have an Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR). From the 1st April 2021 this requirement extended to all existing tenancies.

Following the inspection and testing the landlord must obtain a report from the person conducting that inspection which gives the results of the inspection and the date of the next inspection. They are also required to:

- a) Supply a copy of that report to each existing tenant of the house within 28 days of the inspection
  - b) Supply a copy of that report to the Council within 7 days of receiving a request in writing for it from that authority
  - c) Retain a copy of that report until the next inspection and supply a copy to the person carrying out the next inspection
  - d) Supply a copy of the most recent report to any new tenant of the house before that tenant occupies that house and any prospective tenant within 28 days of receiving a request in writing for it from that prospective tenant.
- 8.3 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.
  - 8.4 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.

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- 8.5 Landlords have a legal duty to arrange gas safety checks in rented properties. 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. Checks can include:
- a) Making sure products of combustion (fumes) are being safely removed outside via the flue or chimney
  - b) Ensuring an appliance is burning the gas properly, and that there's an adequate supply of fresh air for it to do so
  - c) Making sure all safety devices are working properly and shutting off an appliance if a fault is found
- 8.6 The Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations 2015 require private sector landlords from 1 October 2015 to have at least one smoke alarm installed on every storey of their properties and a carbon monoxide alarm in any room containing a solid fuel burning appliance (e.g. a coal fire, wood burning stove). After that, the landlord must make sure the alarms are in working order at the start of each new tenancy.

The requirements will be enforced by local authorities who can impose a fine of up to £5,000 where a landlord fails to comply with a remedial notice.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/smoke-and-carbon-monoxide-alarms-explanatory-booklet-for-landlords/the-smoke-and-carbon-monoxide-alarm-england-regulations-2015-qa-booklet-for-the-private-rented-sector-landlords-and-tenants>

## 9. Fire Precautions

- 9.1 In privately rented accommodation, landlords have to meet certain safety obligations under the law. The landlord must:
- a) Ensure furnishings are fire resistant and meet safety regulations.
  - b) Make sure any appliances and furniture they have provided are kept in a safe condition.
  - c) Ensure there are adequate escape routes from the property.
- 9.2 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
- [https://www.cieh.org/library/Knowledge/Housing/National\\_fire\\_safety\\_guidance\\_08.pdf](https://www.cieh.org/library/Knowledge/Housing/National_fire_safety_guidance_08.pdf)
- 9.3 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.

Where the stairs descend into a passage way which leads directly to outside:  
Doors must be provided to all rooms which lead off the hallway/landing space 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.

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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.

- a) 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.

- b) 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 houses in multiple occupation (HMO), self contained flats and accommodation above commercial premises it will be necessary to seek further advice on the fire safety requirements for individual properties.

- 9.4 The Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations 2015 require private sector landlords from 1 October 2015 state that Every privately rented property must have at least one smoke alarm installed on every level of the property (mezzanines do not count) and a carbon monoxide alarm in any room containing a working fireplace that uses coal, wood or another type of solid fuel.

You must make sure the alarms are working at the start of each new tenancy. Even if an agent manages your property, legally it is your responsibility to make sure your property meets the legal requirements.

After the start of the tenancy, tenants should test the alarms regularly themselves to make sure they are still working - ideally at least once a month. The requirements will be enforced by local authorities who can impose a fine of up to £5,000 where a landlord fails to comply with a remedial notice.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/smoke-and-carbon-monoxide-alarms-explanatory-booklet-for-landlords/the-smoke-and-carbon-monoxide-alarm-england-regulations-2015-qa-booklet-for-the-private-rented-sector-landlords-and-tenants>

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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 Since 01 April 2020 all domestic private rented properties must have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) with a minimum rating of an E to be lawfully let out.

Landlords with properties that have an EPC rating of F or G (as shown on a valid EPC for the property) must not continue letting the property until it is improved to an EPC rating of E or above. If a landlord is not able to improve the property, a valid exemption must be registered on the PRS national exemptions register.

Non-compliance with the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards may lead to a penalty of up to £5,000. Information about the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards can be found by following this link:

[www.gov.uk/guidance/domestic-private-rented-property-minimum-energy-efficiency-standard-landlord-guidance](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/domestic-private-rented-property-minimum-energy-efficiency-standard-landlord-guidance)

- 11.2 Landlords must ensure there is a valid EPC when marketing a property for sale or rent. Tenants should receive a copy of the EPC before they move into the property. Lancashire County Council Trading Standards are responsible for enforcing the need to have an EPC.

The governments EPC register can be searched to find the most recent EPC that has been lodged for a property: [Find an energy certificate – GOV.UK \(communities.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/find-an-energy-certificate)

## 12. Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO's)

- 12.1 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.
- 12.2 The requirements will vary depending on the size of the property and the number of people living there. Further advice is available:  
<https://www.gov.uk/private-renting/houses-in-multiple-occupation>

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## **13. Housing Act 2004 – Health & Safety Rating System**

- 13.1** The information provided above is for guidance as to the expected standards to be achieved in rented houses.
- 13.2** 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.

Further guidance is available: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/housing-health-and-safety-rating-system-hhsrs-guidance>

## **14. Contact Details**

Further information regarding the above is available from Environmental Health  
Telephone: 01706 217777 Option 5  
Email: [envhealth@rossendalebc.gov.uk](mailto:envhealth@rossendalebc.gov.uk)

Letter:  
Environmental Health  
Public Protection Unit  
Rossendale Borough Council  
The Business Centre  
Futures Park  
Newchurch Road  
Bacup, OL13 0BB