

Minimum Lettable Standard

1. Introduction

Clyde Valley Housing Association seeks to ensure that all empty houses that we allocate are in reasonable condition – this is called our ‘Minimum Lettable Standard’.

We seek to minimise the time that our properties are empty and we therefore ensure moving tenants leave their homes in good condition. However empty houses – sometimes referred to as ‘voids’ – need to be inspected and potentially have a number of repairs carried out before a new tenant can move in.

Our starting point is to ensure that all of our houses are safe, wind and watertight. We will also carry out those additional works that are essential for empty houses to reach our Minimum Lettable Standard as well as identify works that will need to be programmed at a later date to achieve the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS).

Once notified that an empty house is becoming available, our aim is for new tenants to be able to move quickly and enjoy living in their new Clyde Valley Housing Association property.

Details of our Minimum Lettable Standard are listed below. If you have any queries you should contact Clyde Valley Housing Association.

2. General

All houses will be wind and watertight, safe and secure. Any additional works required to meet our Minimum Lettable Standard and / or Scottish Housing Quality Standard will be logged and work will be programmed accordingly.

3. Cleanliness

Any rubbish, furniture, light shades, etc. left behind by the previous tenant will be removed. Loft areas will also be cleared. Outgoing tenants will be recharged for this work where appropriate.

All cupboards, kitchen units and fitments will be cleared and washed down with disinfectant.

All skirting, door facings, doors, windowsills and frames will be washed down with disinfectant.

All sanitary ware will be washed down with disinfectant.

All floor-coverings will be cleared and floorboards will be washed down with disinfectant (heavily soiled floorboards may be sheeted if required).

A 'deep clean' will be authorised if a house is in extremely poor condition – this will be instructed after the void post inspection.

'Deep Clean' specification includes:

- sweep all floors;
- wash all floors;
- wash down doors, cupboards, electrical outlets and fittings;
- wash all kitchen units inside and out, worktops and sink units;
- clean expel air vents;
- clean wash hand basin, de-scale bath and toilet;
- wash down shower area;
- wash windows inside;
- disinfect all rooms; and
- Leave air fresheners.

4. Decoration and plasterwork

Obvious defects with plasterwork will be repaired.

Wallpaper that has been graffitied, is badly damaged or highly soiled will be removed.

Walls and ceiling that have been graffitied, are badly damaged or highly soiled, will be emulsioned

Where none of the above applies but the decoration is not of an acceptable standard to allow the property to be let timeously, an appropriate decoration allowance will be awarded in line with the Tenants Allowance Policy.

5. Safe and secure

5.1. Electrical

An electrical safety check will be carried out so that all switches, sockets and light fittings will be safe and fully operational, and all electric heating will be safe, functioning and meet the relevant legislation.

A hard-wired smoke detector will be fitted where there is none and this is appropriate.

Energy efficient light bulbs will be supplied and fitted to every light pendant as appropriate – after a void property has been allocated the replacement of light bulbs internally or externally will be the tenant's responsibility.

Any obsolete wiring or electrical equipment will be removed and any resulting damage to walls or ceilings repaired and made good.

Where white goods are incorporated as part of the tenancy we will instruct our electrical contractor to carry out a portable appliance test to ensure the appliance is in safe working order. We will also carry out a PAT test where an appliance has been left from the previous tenant is in good condition and can be left for a new tenant. However where this is the case the housing allocations officer will arrange a disclaimer to be signed by the new tenant detailing that the Association is not responsible for the appliance or any future repairs and replacement.

5.2. Gas

A gas safety check will be carried out, to ensure all gas heating will be safe, functioning and meet the relevant standard.

Gas installations will be supplied with a current gas service certificate where there is a functioning meter. Otherwise the gas supply will be capped at the meter until the tenancy is allocated. When the tenancy is allocated, the new tenant must make access arrangements for the gas safety check to be carried out and gas service certificate completed.

5.3. Carbon monoxide

A carbon monoxide (CO) detector will be fitted where there is none and where this is appropriate.

5.4. Asbestos

Asbestos checks will be carried out and remedial action taken as appropriate.

Details will be recorded on the asbestos register and a disclaimer signed by the incoming tenant if appropriate.

5.5. Footpaths and steps

All footpaths and steps will be safe and level.

All doorsteps will be safe and secure.

6. Kitchens

A fully functional kitchen will be provided with an appropriate number of units and worktops for the property type and size.

All kitchens will include a cooker connection point.

All kitchens will have adequate ventilation.

All kitchens will include a washing machine connection point.

Plugs and chains will be replaced if required.

7. Joinery – doors, facings, skirting boards, handrails, etc.

All internal pass doors will be functioning and undamaged.

Any new pass doors fitted within the void will be solid core.

All external entrance doors will be secure, functioning and undamaged.

All door-facings and skirting boards will be serviceable.

A secure handrail will be fitted where there is an internal flight of stairs with more than three steps.

8. Windows

All windows will be checked and repaired if necessary to ensure that they are secure, functioning properly, serviceable and have window catches.

9. Plumbing

All plumbing will be functioning.

All disused pipes will be removed and any resulting damage to walls / floors repaired.

Water systems will be drained down during the winter months (usually 1 November to 31 March) when there is a risk of severe frost. Water supplies will be reinstated when new tenant moves in.

10. Sanitary ware and bathing facilities

All sanitary ware will be fully functioning.

All sanitary ware will be free from holes or cracks that may cause water leakage or injury.

Plugs and chains will be replaced if required.

Where wet floor installations or level access showers have been previously installed for vulnerable tenants, we will endeavour to allocate the house to a suitable tenant that would benefit from such installations. Where this has been exhausted by the allocations officer and there are no suitable tenants on the waiting list. The Housing Maintenance Manager will access the condition and age of the installation on its merits and determine whether it would be feasible and more cost effective to install a replacement bathroom suite as an alternative option in order to let the property or allow the incoming tenant an option to change the installation subject to an alteration approval .

11. Rainwater goods

Rainwater goods will be free of obvious blockages or growth such as weeds, grass, etc.

12. Rot, dampness, condensation, etc.

All reasonable steps will be taken to identify and remedy dry rot, wet rot, rising or penetrating damp, condensation, etc.

13. Locks and keys

Cylinder barrels will be changed to properties where the Housing Officer and or Technical Inspector believe the previous tenant to be necessary.

At least two sets of keys will be provided for each external entrance door (including common entrances).

At least one key will be provided for cellars, meter cupboards, etc.

14. Gardens, drying areas, etc.

Any debris and rubbish in garden areas will be removed. Outgoing tenants will be recharged for this work where appropriate.

Drying facilities will be provided (e.g. clothes poles or rotary driers) and will be functioning.

Grassed areas and hedges will receive a first cut if necessary.
Fencing will be inspected and repaired or replaced as appropriate.

Any huts, garages, outhouses removed and the ground levelled where necessary. Outgoing tenants will be recharged for this work where appropriate.

Every property will have a bin for refuse collection.

15. Capital and cyclical investment work

Capital and cyclical investment work is generally carried out in properties when they are occupied. New tenants will be advised of forthcoming capital or cyclical works, and where possible the estimated date for the work to be carried out.

By exception there may be justification for carrying out capital or cyclical work while a property is empty, but this will depend upon consideration of the following factors:

- level of rent loss while works carried out in empty property;
- availability of budget to carry out capital or cyclical works;
- consistency of approach in terms of capital or cyclical works programmed for neighbouring occupied properties;
- extent of capital or cyclical works required and anticipated level of upheaval; and
- Potential to enhance lettable of a void property.

16. New build properties

Snagging work will be completed in advance of the new tenant moving in to a new build property. However where minor snagging work is incomplete, the new tenant will be notified and arrangements made for access so that the contractor can complete works as part of their defects liability.

17. Minor outstanding repairs

Properties may be allocated with minor repairs outstanding, provided that they do not prevent the new tenant from moving in and occupying the property safely. Where this happens, the new tenant will be provided with a list of outstanding repairs and agreement will be reached with the tenant on a convenient time for these minor repairs to be carried out.

18. Void turnaround time

The target void turnaround time is set out within the Void Policy. This target is reviewed periodically.

Our expectation is for the majority of empty houses to be brought up to our Minimum Lettable Standard and allocated within the target response time.

By exception, where we have an empty property in poor condition or that requires major works and where it is a property with only limited housing demand, we may set a longer void turnaround target. These are known as 'long voids'.

19. Review of the Minimum Lettable Standard

The Minimum Lettable Standard will be reviewed within one year of implementation and thereafter in parallel with any reviews of the Void Policy and Procedures set out within the Estate Management Guide.