

Our letting standard

This booklet explains our letting standard, which is the standard that our empty properties are brought up to before they are let. This has been agreed with members of our Tenants Panel and they help us to check that we are meeting this standard by inspecting some of our empty properties before we let them.

We also keep a photographic record of the condition of all our homes once works have been completed but before they are let.



Aims of our policy

This aims to make sure that all the properties we let meet the same standard, are free from major repairs or defects and provide a safe, serviceable and clean environment for the new tenant. If we intend to carry out any work or improvements after you move in, we will tell you about these.

The standards that you can expect inside your new home

Asbestos

Any damaged asbestos containing materials – for example door panels or floor or ceiling coverings will have been removed before you move in.



Bathroom

The bathroom will normally include a toilet, wash hand basin and either a bath or shower.

All bathroom and toilet fittings will be clean and in good working order.

The tiled surround to the bath and sink will be clean and in good condition and the joints around the bathroom fittings will be sealed with suitable waterproof mastic.

The bathroom fixtures and tiles are unlikely to be new but these will not be cracked or stained.

The floor will have a non slip floor covering installed over it.

A means of controlled ventilation will be provided.

If the property that we let to you has previously been adapted to meet the needs of a disabled person and you are not disabled, level access showers will not usually have been removed. We will not replace showers with baths or baths with showers once you have moved in unless this is required on medical grounds and supported by an Occupational Therapist's recommendation.

Cleanliness

The property will be cleared of litter, debris, excessive dust and dirt as well as any discarded or stored items left by the previous tenant.

Before the property is let, we will have swept the floors and cleaned the kitchen units and worktops as well as the bathroom and toilet and fittings.

Final cleaning to the standard you want to live in will be your responsibility.



Decoration

You are responsible for decorating the inside of your home and so all ceilings and wall surfaces will be left in a suitable condition to allow decoration but you will still have to carry out normal preparation (for example filling in of minor cracks).

However, if the decorations are found to be heavily soiled or damaged when we inspect, we will arrange for redecoration.

In all other circumstances where redecoration is assessed as being required a decoration voucher will be given to you to help with the cost of buying decorating materials.

Doors

All external and internal doors will be free from damage and will open and close easily.

Each external door will have had its locks changed before you move in and you will be provided with keys. Keys will also be provided for any window locks.

Any door entry system will have been tested to make sure that it is working properly.



Electrics

A full safety check will have been carried out before you move in and any unsafe wiring or accessories will have been removed. If this has not been possible, the supply will have been shut off and a notice fixed telling you how to get this turned on.

All lights, fittings and sockets will meet relevant regulations and be in good working order.

The number of electrical sockets provided in each room and their location will be in accordance with relevant standards.



Energy performance certificate

When you move in, we will give you a copy of the property's energy performance certificate. This will show you the Energy Efficiency Rating (estimated running costs) and the Environmental Impact Rating (carbon dioxide emissions).

Floors

All floors in the property and any fixed floor coverings will be in a good and safe condition.

If any broken tiles were present at the time of inspection, these will have been replaced but this might mean that the replacement is a slightly different colour.

If the previous tenant left any carpet grippers or underlay and this is in good condition this will be left in the property for you, as will any carpets or laminate covering provided you want this and accept responsibility for it once you move in.

Gas

If your new home is supplied with gas, we will have carried out a full gas safety inspection and test before you move in and we will give you a copy of the certificate confirming that this has been carried out.

If this has not been possible, for example the gas supply to the property is capped off, we will fix a warning notice to the boiler giving you details of how to contact us to get this tested and reconnected. You must not try to reconnect the boiler yourself.

We will make sure that adequate ventilation is provided for any gas heating appliances.

If the previous tenant of your property had installed any gas heating or hot water appliances, we may leave these in the property provided we are satisfied that they are safe and working properly. We will then be responsible for their future repair and maintenance.

Heating and hot water

All systems for heating and hot water will have been checked to make sure that they are working properly.

All hot water cylinders will have an insulation jacket fitted, unless they are a pre lagged variety.

All exposed or vulnerable pipework will be lagged to reduce the risk of this freezing.



Items left by the previous tenant

We will usually remove all items left in the property by the previous tenant.

However, there are some circumstances where certain items, such as carpets, may be left in place if they are in good condition and you have said that you would like them to stay. If this is the case, you will be asked to confirm that you take full responsibility for the future maintenance and replacement of the item (s) in question.

Kitchen

The kitchen will include a sink, worktops, storage space and space for a fridge.

It is unlikely that the kitchen will be newly fitted but the units, worktops, tiles and sink will be clean, serviceable and in good working condition.



The number of kitchen units installed will reflect the type and size of the property and will be the same as in other similar property types.

Taps will be securely mounted and fully operational.

The sink unit and all work surfaces will have a tiled splashback.

Provided there is enough space, plumbing and electrics will be fitted for a washing machine, together with waste and fittings. The connection of your washing machine will be your responsibility.

An electric cooker point will be provided as a minimum but, wherever possible, an electric and a gas point will be provided. However, if your preferred method of cooking varies from that provided, it will be your responsibility to arrange an alternative supply or cooker.

A means of controlled ventilation will be provided.

Concrete floors will have a non slip floor covering installed over them.

Loft

The loft space will be insulated to a thickness of 200mm.

Any items or belongings left by the previous tenant will have been removed from the loft.

Smoke detectors

All of our properties have been fitted with either 1 or 2 mains powered smoke detectors, depending on the size of the property. These will have been tested to make sure that they are working properly.

Stairs

Stairs and balustrades will have been checked and repaired, if necessary, to make sure that they are safe.



Windows

All glazing will be in tact and all the windows that are meant to open will do so easily.

All windows will be serviceable and in good repair and capable of being fully closed and either latched or locked shut.

Not all our properties have UPVC double glazed windows, although we do have an ongoing programme to install these. If the property that you move into still has timber windows, these will normally have been identified as a priority for inclusion in our replacement programme but if the property currently benefits from single glazed UPVC windows these will be included on a servicing programme until they are scheduled for replacement.

Plumbing

All plumbing will have been checked to make sure that it is watertight and in good working order.



Outside of the property

External walls

Any external walls or other decorated items outside the property will not have been freshly painted before you move in. This is because external painting is carried out on a planned programme that includes all of the properties in a street or area and we should be able to tell you when this is next due to be done when you move in.

Fencing



Other than marking out a boundary, we generally don't have an obligation to provide boundary fencing. If a fence that we provided needs to be repaired before you move in, it will normally be repaired to match the existing fencing although this is subject to funding. Where we have insufficient funding to carry out routine repairs, only those repairs that are needed to fencing for health and safety reasons will be done.

Where a fence needs to be replaced, the following standards have been agreed with our Tenants Panel:

In back gardens, we will provide two fence panels for privacy purposes closest to the property and the remainder will be 900mm chain link fencing or, for large rural gardens, 3 line straining wire on concrete posts.

In front gardens, we will normally provide 900mm plastic coated chain link fencing unless there are safety or security issues.

Any requests for additional fencing would only be considered in exceptional circumstances (i.e. special needs or management grounds).

If you move into a property where fencing was installed by the previous tenant, we will normally leave this in place, provided it is in good condition, but we will not be able to maintain it if it exceeds the above standard.

Gardens

Gardens will be left reasonably free of rubbish and litter and ready for you to begin cultivation and maintenance.

All rubbish and litter will have been cleared from the garden.

The grass will have been strimmed and any overgrown bushes or trees cut back.

Any footpaths will have been repaired where they represent a hazard to residents or their visitors.

Outhouses, sheds or other buildings

All rubbish and litter will have been cleared from the shed or any other outhouse and any necessary repairs carried out.

Any outhouses, sheds or other buildings will be left in safe condition but, if this is not feasible, they will be demolished and removed.

Sheltered housing

In our sheltered housing schemes, the following standards will apply and these vary from those outlined above:

The property will be redecorated.

A cooker and fridge will be provided and these will have been tested to make sure that they are safe and left in a clean and serviceable condition.

Mixer valves will be installed to shower and bath taps to control the water temperature.

Where taps need replacing, lever handle type fittings will be installed.



What you are responsible for

You are responsible for furnishing your new home, fitting floor coverings and installing the kitchen appliances that you need. Where relevant, this must be carried out by a suitably qualified gas or electrical contractor.

You are responsible for internal decoration and the maintenance of any garden allocated to you.

Unless you are told that the property you are moving into benefits from a communal TV aerial, you will be responsible for providing and maintaining a television aerial.

What should I do if I think my property does not meet the Letting Standard?

If there are any repairs that we are legally responsible for that have not been carried out while the property is empty, we will tell you about this when we let the property and these will normally be completed within a month of you moving in. These will normally be minor repairs that will not cause you disruption.

If there are any other repairs that you think are needed you should:

Telephone: 01255 686477 to report a repair or 01255 222022 to report **emergencies only** outside of normal working hours

Email: HousingRepairs@tendringdc.gov.uk to report any non urgent repairs that are needed to your home

Go to www.tendringdc.gov.uk and select Housing from the menu at the bottom of the page and then click on Report a council property repair from the Top tasks menu.

Visit Housing Reception at the Town Hall in Clacton.

Have your say

After you have moved into your new home, we will send you a satisfaction survey so that you can tell us what you think about the property and the service you received before you moved in.

It is important that you complete this survey and return it to us in the pre paid envelope provided as your comments help us to identify and put right any individual problems and will be used to help improve our services in the future.



Need to contact us?

You can do this by:

Telephoning:

- 01255 686464 for rent account enquiries
- 01255 686468 for rent arrears enquiries
- 01255 686455 for right to buy enquiries
- 01255 686488 to report anti social behaviour or other complaints
- 01255 686477 to report a repair
- 01255 686466 for Housing Register or allocation enquiries
- 01255 686436 for enquiries about special needs housing or adaptations
- 01255 686490 for enquiries about tenant involvement

E-mailing

- housing.services@tendringdc.gov.uk for general enquiries.
- HousingRepairs@tendringdc.gov.uk to report any repairs that are needed to your home
- HousingASB@tendringdc.gov.uk to report any incidents of anti social behaviour
- tenant.involvement@tendringdc.gov.uk to find out more about how you can get involved in our services.

Writing to

- Life Opportunities (Housing), Tendring District Council, Town Hall, Station Road, Clacton on Sea CO15 1SE

Visiting

- Housing Reception at the Town Hall in Clacton between 9am and 5pm Monday to Thursday and 9am to 4.45pm on Friday
- Our website www.tendringdc.gov.uk