

# Swindon Borough Council

## Private Sector Leasing Scheme

### Property Standards

#### Introduction

All properties offered must meet the Government's "Decent Homes Standard" and be free from any Category 1 hazards as assessed using the "Housing Health & Safety Rating System" (Part 1, Housing Act 2004)

Specifically you should ensure that the property is:

- (a) Structurally stable
- (b) Free from serious disrepair
- (c) Free from dampness or associated mould growth, which is prejudicial to health of occupiers.
- (d) Has adequate provision for lighting, heating and ventilation
- (e) Has an adequate piped supply of wholesome water
- (f) Has satisfactory facilities for the safe preparation and cooking of food including hot and cold water supplies to a sink
- (g) Has a suitably located water closet for the exclusive use of the occupants
- (h) Has a suitably located bath or shower and a wash hand basin each with satisfactory supplies of hot and cold water
- (i) Has an effective system for the draining of foul, waste and surface water.

**The electrical installation must comply with the requirements of the current edition of the "Requirements for Electrical Installations" (BS 7671: 1992). An acceptable certificate must be provided.**

**The gas installation(s) must comply with the requirements of the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998. Annual inspections and any consequential works must be carried out by a CORGI registered contractor/engineer and reports be made available for inspection/verification and provided to tenants within 28 days of the check being carried out.**

Any unforeseen defects/deficiencies to the property must be corrected as soon as is reasonably possible and certainly within any period stipulated by statutory action.

#### Space Requirements

##### Bedroom Standard

Single bedroom - not less than 6.5m<sup>2</sup> (70 ft<sup>2</sup>)

Double bedroom - not less than 10.2m<sup>2</sup> (110 ft<sup>2</sup>)

### **Separate Living Room**

- Up to 4 persons - not less than 10.2m<sup>2</sup> (110 ft<sup>2</sup>)
- Up to 7 persons - not less than 12.0m<sup>2</sup> (130 ft<sup>2</sup>)
- Over 7 persons - not less than 15.0m<sup>2</sup> (161 ft<sup>2</sup>)

### **Combined Living/Dining Room**

- Up to 4 persons - not less than 12.0m<sup>2</sup> (130 ft<sup>2</sup>)
- Up to 7 persons - not less than 14.0m<sup>2</sup> (150 ft<sup>2</sup>)
- Over 7 persons - not less than 17.0m<sup>2</sup> (184 ft<sup>2</sup>)

### **Kitchens**

The layout and size of the kitchen must enable the safe and hygienic preparation of food.

Adequate food storage and work/preparation surfaces should be provided having regard to the following minimum requirements.

<b>Property size</b>	<b>Double base unit Including sink</b>	<b>Double wall Unit</b>
1 bed 1 person	2	1
1 bed 2 person	2	1
1 bed 3 person	2	1
2 bed 3 person	2	1
2 bed 4 person	2	2
3 bed 5 person	3	2
3 bed 6 person	3	2
4 bed 7 person	4	3
4 bed 8 person	4	3
5 bed 9 person	4/5	3/ 4
5 bed 10 person	4/5	3/ 4
6 bed 10 person	5	4

Base and wall units must be modular and securely fixed, and in good working order.

We will consider any suggestions from you on alternative places to put kitchen units. For example, a kitchen unit could be put in the dining room, but there must be enough worktop surfaces in the kitchen.

Worktop surfaces must be a minimum of 30mm thick Formica faced constitution board with a rolled top edge. They should be lipped with aluminium or PVC trims to exposed edges and corners. Where two worktops join or the worktop changes direction you need to fit metal 'T' division inserts.

The worktop area for preparation of food must cover all the low kitchen units.

You must not put worktops or cupboards directly over cookers or hob burners for fire safety reasons.

A space and plumbing must be provided for a washing machine.

### **Wall Tiling**

Tiled splash backs, minimum height of 300 mm, must be provided to all walls abutting the worktops and sink unit. The tiles to be fixed with waterproof adhesive and finished with water-resistant grouting.

All worktop/sink abutments should be properly struck with an approved waterproof silicone sealant.

### **Flooring**

All kitchens and bathrooms must be provided with a durable and impervious floor covering, which is also easily cleansable; e.g. properly fitted heavy gauge sheet vinyl, vinyl floor tiles or ceramic floor tiles.

### **Electrical Power Supply**

At least two unengaged double-switched sockets must be provided over the worktop area. Such sockets must be safely located at least one metre from the taps of the sink unit or any other source of water.

An adequate number of low-level sockets must be provided for appliances such as the fridge and washing machine/dryer.

### **Cooker**

The cooker must be positioned so that the gas burner or electric radiants are in line with or above the upper surfaces of the worktop.

All cookers must be serviced and maintained in accordance with statutory requirements.

### **Ventilation**

The property must be kept free of dampness, which could be prejudicial to the health of occupants.

Kitchens should preferably have open able windows that provide at least one air change/hour.

N.B. The current Building Regulations require mechanical extract ventilation irrespective of open able windows.

Kitchens with no open able windows must be provided with a powered extract fan capable of providing at least four-air changes/ hour. This unit must also be wired to the lighting circuit of the kitchen and be provided with an over-run of fifteen minutes.

Permanent ventilation should be provided to all habitable rooms in the form of airbricks or trickle vents.

Where fireplaces have been removed, adequate ventilation should be provided to the chimneystack.

### **Doors**

***The kitchen represents the area of greatest fire risk. It should, at the very least, be fitted with a notional 30-minute self-closing fire resistant door.***

***Glazed panels above fire resistant internal doors should be of 6mm wired glass.***

### **Location of Kitchens**

1. No bedroom should open directly into a kitchen or kitchen/diner.
2. The main entrance to the house/flat must not be through the kitchen.
3. No W/C should open directly into a kitchen or kitchen diner

### **Bathrooms and Water Closet Compartments**

A bath must be provided in all properties. Shower units should be capped off or provided with adequate shower screens/curtains.

Bathrooms should be preferably fully tiled or be provided with a minimum of 450 mm tiled splash back to the bath and wash hand basin. All abutments between the walls and bath/wash hand basin to be sealed and properly struck with waterproof silicone sealant.

All grouting and sealants must be free of mould growths. Any incidental fungal growths must be treated with an approved fungicide to kill the vegetative parts of the mould growths.

The bath/shower tray/water closet pan must be sound, clean, free of hard water scale and in proper working order with easily operable taps and flush mechanisms.

All water supply and drainage pipe-work and joints must be watertight and accessible.

Bath panels should be removable but securely fixed at all other times.

The floor of the bathroom and the water closet compartment must be provided with a properly fitted impervious and easily cleansable floor covering such as heavy-duty sheet vinyl.

All bathrooms and water closet compartments must have a ventilation rate of at least three-air changes/hour. The Building Regulations require the provision of an extract system to meet this rate of ventilation, which is additional to open able windows.

If boilers are installed in bathrooms, they must be housed in protective fire resistant enclosures and positioned so as not to interfere with the safe use of the bath or water closet. Excepting for the boiler thermostat, all other heating/hot water controlling switches, programmers etc should be located outside the bathroom.

Any separate W/C should have a wash hand basin in situ.

N.B. Small-bore waste macerators such as the "SANIFLOW" system are not generally acceptable.

### **Hall and Landing – Fire Safety**

***For two storey properties, provide two mains powered (with battery back-up) smoke alarms fixed to the ceilings of (a) the ground floor hallway and (b) the first floor landing.***

***For properties over two storeys, a proportionate number of mains powered (with battery back-up) smoke alarms must be provided.***

***(Advices on this should be sought from the Council's "Residential Services Team" –tel. 01793 466063)***

***For single storey properties, two mains powered (with battery back-up) smoke alarms must be provided.***

***Houses converted into flats should comply fully with the appropriate standard imposed by current Building Regulations in terms of construction, fire separation and means of escape in case of fire. It is likely that this will include the provision of self-closing fire doors to each flat entrance as well as a comprehensive fire alarm system with emergency lighting to the stairwell and other escape routes.***

### **Doors**

You must provide a letterbox and street and flat numbers on communal entrance doors and on main doors. Doorknockers, doorbells or entry phone systems must be provided for all dwellings. Do not connect them to a power supply, which cannot be controlled by the flat occupier or landlord. All properties above the ground floor must be fitted with a doorbell or entry phone. All properties above the first floor must be fitted with an intercom or entry phone system.

External entrance doors must be fitted with a Yale or similar approved night latch and a Chubb or similar approved five level mortice deadlock.

The back door must be fitted with a morticed latched lock together with a 150mm tower bolt fitted to both the top and bottom of the door. This is a minimum requirement. All external entrance or exit doors must be fitted with a thumb turn release so that people can easily escape if there is a fire.

Doorframes must be continuous and undamaged.

All external and internal doors must have secure hinges and operate freely and easily.

Internal doors, which have single panels of clear glazing, must be glazed either with 6mm Georgian wired glass or safety glass. All fully glazed, half glazed or multi-panel internal doors must be provided with safety glass.

Patio doors and French doors in bedrooms are not acceptable unless there is an extra window that can be opened for ventilation. You must fit patio doors with a mortice locking mechanism in the middle of the door on the closing edge and a minimum of one security deadbolt to either the top or bottom of the door. French doors and windows must have integral security deadbolts to the top and bottom of each door or window leaf with a rebated mortice latch. If there is no mortice latch then you must fix hinge bolts to each door or window leaf.

## **Windows**

All windows must be in good working order and free from decay. They must also be in good decorative repair. The glazed area of the windows to habitable rooms must equate to a minimum of 1/10 of the allowable floor area for that room.

The open able areas of the window must equate to a minimum of 1/20 of the floor area of the room to provide for adequate natural ventilation.

***The effective sill height of all open able windows at first level and above must be at least 1100mm. See section on "Child Safety".***

You must provide locks to all windows on the ground floor or lower ground floor.

If louvre windows have more than four louvre blades they are not acceptable and you should replace them with a conventional sash or casement window. Louvre windows should have horizontal security bars and you must still be able to open them.

## **Stairways**

All staircases must be provided with securely fixed handrails for their entire length.

Balusters on the staircase or on landings should have a maximum spacing of 100mm.

***Staircase glazing is not acceptable.***

Any uncarpeted stair treads must be fitted with non-slip nosings or anti-slip treads.

Staircase risers must be in filled.

**Walls and Ceilings**

All walls and ceilings must be structurally sound and free of cracking and unkeyed plaster. The surfaces must be even and all decorative finishes must be in good order.

Any incidental mould growth must be properly treated with an approved fungicide to kill the vegetative parts of the mould growths prior to final decoration.

***Polystyrene ceiling tiles or covings are not acceptable.***

Suspended ceilings are not acceptable.

Any unprotected or damaged internal asbestos cement panels must be properly removed double-wrapped and be disposed of as special wastes and in accordance with the relevant legislation and Code of Practice.

**Floors**

All floors should be level, even and free from trip hazards and dampness. All floor coverings should be of reasonable quality and in good condition. They must last the length of the lease. If floors are uneven they must be boarded over with hardboard or 4mm plywood before floor coverings (e.g. carpets) are put down. Kitchen floors must have 4mm plywood.

Carpets and vinyl floor coverings must be properly fitted and secured without rucks or gaps. All vinyl coverings must be laid directly onto 4mm plywood boarding before they are fitted.

Carpets in basements must have underlay or 4mm plywood overboarding underneath the carpet.

You must protect the edges of carpets by using a threshold strip when carpets run up to doorways, when there are changes in different floor coverings and where levels change.

**Fireplaces**

All gas fires with back boilers must comply with the requirements of the gas safety legislation regarding installation and maintenance.

All open fireplaces must be blocked-up and adequate perma-vents fitted to prevent internal condensation.

All gas fires should be disconnected.

### **Decoration**

All surfaces must be clean and newly decorated. Before decorating, you must rub down the walls to a smooth finish. Wall surfaces must not have any scuffs, marks or abrasions.

Wallpaper must have no tears or marks. It must not have any gaps and must match.

Painted walls and ceilings must be finished with vinyl silk or matt emulsion paint, which has been applied directly to plaster or an acceptable gauge lining paper.

Joinery and metalwork must be painted with a gloss finish or with an approved stainer.

### **External Walls and Windows**

External décor must be sound with no flaking paintwork to walls or windows. You must repair any defective external joinery.

Parapet walls must be in good condition with copings, flashings and fillets etc to prevent penetrating dampness.

All brickwork must be sound and vertical with continuous pointing. Chimney stacks must be in good repair with the chimney pots securely fixed.

### **Roofs and Rainwater Goods**

All loose slates or tiles, copings, render, aerials, or down pipes, which represent a possible hazard should be made safe. Rainwater pipes must be secure, continuous, free from leaks and should empty directly into an open or back inlet gully. When they empty in an open gully the downpipe must be fitted with a shoe. Gutters must be fitted to adequate falls and be free of blockages.

You must provide railings to external access roofs. The rails must provide a minimum height of 1,000mm where flat roofs are used for access. Balconies and staircases must be in good structural condition and must be free of obstructions and other hazards. The threshold to balconies must be made from Glass Reinforced Concrete (GRC) tiles or equivalent non-slip tiles.

### **Outbuildings**

Sheds, garages and outbuildings must be structurally sound, free of accumulation and be secured against unauthorised access.

Greenhouses, purpose built conservatories or lean-tos which are poorly constructed or unsafe because of unprotected glass must be demolished. Professionally installed UPVC conservatories are acceptable when fitted with either toughened safety glass or sealed double-glazed units.

## **Gardens**

Gardens must be free of debris and weed growths. Ponds must be in-filled. All patios, pathways or other concrete areas must be level and in good repair. They should be at the same level as the surrounding area, minimum 150mm below damp proof course (DPC) and with adequate falls away from the house.

Manhole covers must be easily removable for access. You must lift, grease and reset them. Gullies must be clear and fitted with gully grids with upstands to open gullies.

## **Boundary Walls**

Brick or stone pier, boundary and retaining walls must be sound, upright, stable and free from any defects. All boundaries must be unbroken and at a minimum height of one metre. Any unsecured or poorly secured panels or posts must be repaired. Other hazards such as glazing or corrugated asbestos infill must be removed. Side access gates must be in good condition and fitted with a latching device and bolts at the top and bottom.

***Boundaries to railway tracks must have secure fencing, minimum two metres in height.***

## **Refuse Disposal**

You must supply one heavy-duty plastic refuse bin or wheelie bin per property, or provide a similar alternative.

## **Gas, Water and Electricity**

All gas, electricity and water services must be separate and supplied individually. This includes isolation points with stop cocks located within each individual property. All gas and electricity services must be separately metered and clearly labelled. The landlord's supply must be separate.

If night storage heating is installed the circuit must be wired for Economy 7 or 9 usage and you must arrange for the installation of the correct meter.

Gas pipes which are not needed must be safely disconnected. Gas meters on escape routes, for example fire exits, stairs etc, that are below 2,100mm in height must be protected in fire resistant cupboards with vents and hinged doors. Meter cupboards under the stairs need not be encased.

You must provide flue terminal guards in accordance with the gas safety regulations.

You must put permanent vents in kitchens, toilets, bathrooms and any other rooms, which contain gas fires and boilers. The vent should be an airbrick, which has a plastic louvre vent on the inside of the property. The vent should measure 227mm x 227mm.

## Heating Systems

You must provide each property with a space heating and hot water system. There must be an adequately sized radiator or night storage heater in every room. The heating system must be either gas central heating or electric night storage heating.

Electric cylinder immersions must be provided on all hot water and storage cylinders.

Conventional flue gas water heaters in bathrooms must have permanent ventilation to meet gas safety regulations.

All radiators and radiator pipe work must be securely fixed to the walls. Radiator valves must be in full working order and fitted with caps.

All heating appliances which are not used must be isolated and their supply feeds disconnected.

You must fit all hot water cylinders with insulation jackets. Tanks located in loft spaces must be properly insulated and all associated pipe work lagged.

## Electrical

***An NICEIC approved electrician must inspect the property. You should give a copy of a NICEIC (16<sup>th</sup> edition) periodic inspection report to the Managing Agent. The certificate should last for the term of the agreement.***

You need to provide a landlord's electricity supply and meter for communal areas and external lights. Lighting circuits in communal areas must be separate to those within the property.

All exposed or inadequately insulated electrical connections must be replaced or repaired to the above standard. You must box-in sheathed mains electrical supplies if they are easily accessible to unauthorised persons.

All rooms should have the following minimum socket outlets:

Bedroom	-	one double
Lounge	-	two doubles
Dining	-	one double

All rooms must have a lighting pendant or batten holder and you must provide light shades and bulb points. Light bulbs should not be further than 2.4m from the door.

If electricity meters and fuse boards are at a low level within a property or common hallway you must put them in a fire resistant cupboard.

Electric service consumer units and gas stop cocks must be easy to reach and accessible to tenants and other authorised people at all times.

You must provide external lights for deck access to flats, maisonettes or alleyways from the street level to the door. The lights must be bulkhead vandal resistant and connected to the landlord's supply.

### **Child Safety**

Child safety requires awareness of the risks of falls posed by low windows, balconies and balustrades. 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 should be re-glazed with safety glass. Fixed stays or stops must be provided to all windows above ground floor level to restrict opening to 100mm maximum. These should be easily removed in the event of a fire. Window sill heights should be a minimum of 1.2m or protection must be provided. Excessive gaps in balustrades should also be closed off so that it is not possible for a sphere, 100mm in diameter, to pass through any part of the structure.

In rooms which accommodate children, sink base units and low-level storage cupboards within lettings should be fitted with childproof catches.

### **Safety of Furniture and Furnishings**

Subject to certain exemptions, as from 1 January 1997 all furniture and furnishings must comply with the requirements of the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 (as amended).

These regulations set levels of fire resistance for the following domestic upholstered furniture, furnishings and other products containing upholstery: -

- Furniture intended for use in a dwelling, including children's furniture
- Beds, headboards of beds, mattresses (of any size)
- Sofa beds, futons and other convertibles
- Nursery furniture
- Garden furniture which is available for use in a dwelling
- Scatter cushions and seat pads
- Pillows
- Loose and stretch covers for furniture

All new furniture with the exemption of

- Mattresses and bed bases
- Pillows, scatter cushions and seat pads
- Loose covers and stretch covers

must carry and display a label securely attached in a prominent position on the furniture and indicating that it meets the safety standards.

### **Energy Efficiency**

The thermal insulation and heating appliance provided for the premises should be of such a standard as to ensure that the property attains a SAP Rating of 60 or an NHER of 6 (National Home Energy Rating).

### **Asbestos**

Any unprotected or damaged asbestos must be properly removed, double – wrapped and be disposed of as special wastes in accordance with the relevant legislation and Code of Practice by a specialist contractor. Further advice is available from the Environmental Health Department at SBC or the HSE's infoline (08701 545500).

### **In Addition**

Any exceptions or anomalies to the requirements listed above should be addressed directly to the Private Sector Leasing Team.

FOI/3032