



Lettable Standard – Property Acquisitions

Valid from: 09/05/2017

Valid to: 31/03/18

Version 2

Purpose of the Standard

To help ensure the properties we offer are safe, clean, fit for purpose, legally compliant and meet the expectations of the external grant funding bodies. To provide clear guidance to staff, contractors and potential tenants about the quality of the homes we offer.

Background

Since 2012 we have been in receipt of Government and local Council funding which has partly funded the acquisition and refurbishment of homes in Stoke on Trent and Newcastle under Lyme. The programme is to continue with another 46 property acquisitions planned for 2017/18.

This guidance is intended to help ensure that the properties we acquire meet this standard before the start of the tenancy.

The Standard

We want to ensure that any property we offer to prospective tenants is;

- Safe
- Clean
- Fit for purpose
- Legal
- Meets the expectations of our grant funders.

The following paragraphs clarify what we mean by each of these words:

Safe

Inside the property

- Windows will be in good working order and glazing intact.
- External doors will be secure and in good working order. A new mortice lock will be fitted upon change of tenancy. If an additional deadlock is present and keys have been received this can remain.
- All handrails and banisters will be safe.
- The existing gas and electrical installations will be tested to ensure that they are safe and in good working order.
- Kitchen fixtures will be safe and in good working order.
- A fully functioning smoke alarm will be present. The contractor should test this before handing the keys back to EPIC.
- Internal walls and ceilings will be free from major cracks, holes and be in a suitable condition to decorate.
- Internal doors and door furniture will be in good working order.
- Floors will be sound, secure and able to be covered in a suitable covering.
- Dwellings will be visibly free from dampness and mould growth.

- Window vents and air bricks will be unobstructed and in good working order.
- Where it appears that components are non-standard or appear doubtful they should be checked by a suitably qualified person and treated in accordance with their recommendations.

The external fabric of the property

- The roof will be watertight and free from debris.
- Rain water goods, gutters and gullies will be in good working order.
- The building will be in good structural condition and watertight.
- Drainage systems will be free flowing and in good working order.
- Any sun room / conservatory may remain and will be repaired during the remedial works but not maintained post tenancy. This is to be gifted to the incoming tenant.

Outside the property

- Paths, steps and paving will be safe.
- Any existing fences, walls, hedges and gates will be safe.

Clean

Inside the property

- The interior and all fitments will be clean.
- The loft space will be free from debris.
- No furniture or belongings of previous occupants will be in the property, unless agreed between the outgoing and the incoming tenants.
- There will be no cobwebs.
- Walls will be free of pins, sellotape or other items.
- All rooms will be deodorised if required.

The external fabric

- Walls will be free from graffiti.
- Where external doors require restaining this will be completed.

Outside the property

- External garden areas will be free of rubbish and hazards.
- Any outbuildings will be clear and free of graffiti.
- Existing sheds, garages or greenhouses are to be removed or gifted to the tenant.
- The garden area will be in a 'maintainable' condition at the start of the tenancy, that is, hedges cut, grass mown and weeds killed as necessary.

Fit for purpose

- All fixtures and fitments will be in good working order.
- The heating system is capable of providing a reasonable level of thermal comfort throughout the property.
- All windows will have double glazed units.
- If there is an existing gas fire it should be removed, the gas supply safely capped and the opening made good with appropriate chimney ventilation. If a gas fire is removed the radiator to that room should be checked for size and replaced if necessary.
- Clothes drying facility is to be provided outside.

Legal

- All properties will have a valid gas safety certificate, electrical inspection and energy performance certificate at the start of the tenancy.
- A gas and electrical supply is to be provided for the cooker in the kitchen and the customer ?? incomplete
- When a property is purchased the contractor will undertake a thorough health and safety inspection. Any concerns above the approved scope of works will be raised with EPIC's Asset Management Department.

Meet the expectations of the Grant Funding Bodies

We will ensure that the property is as energy efficient as reasonably practicable, minimum measures will include;

- Draught proofing.
 - Loft and cavity insulation.
 - Assessment of the efficiency of the boiler.
- Consideration to the mobility of the customer and assess if any property alterations that can be made to make the property work better for them.
 - Window restrictors are to be fitted, if requested by the customer.
 - If it is possible that off road parking can be created then this is to be considered.

Electrical systems

A periodic electrical test is to be completed and certificate issued.

Gas systems

The central heating boiler is to be serviced, the gas system checked and a gas safety certificate issued.

Modernisations and major works

In general modernisations should only be undertaken when a property fails to meet our Lettable Property Standard or contains serious hazards (as defined in the Housing Health and Safety Rating System Operating Guidance 2004 - <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/housing/pdf/142631.pdf>). As there is generally a high level of remedial works required to bring the acquired properties to the standard we and our customers expect, any component with less than 3 years expected life left will be renewed.

A component or feature will be replaced in the following circumstances:

1. It is broken and beyond reasonable repair.
2. It is unfit for its intended purpose.
3. It is likely to have deleterious impact on the environment which outweighs the impact of its replacement.
4. There is a documented legal reason for replacement.
5. Would require replacement within 3 years.
6. To meet the requirements of the funding programme.

Customer Involvement

The standard provides guidance on the minimum standards a property should achieve before being let. Every effort will be made for prospective tenants to

view the property as soon as possible after purchase and before the scope of works is agreed with the contractor.

The Asset Management team will work with the customer, with consideration of the budget for the property in order to ensure that the property meets their demands and a sustainable tenancy is created.

Environmental

We should minimise waste and look to source components which have been produced in an environmentally responsible manner. New components or materials should outperform their predecessors and achieve excellent environmental performance.

Wherever possible we will try to recycle any waste, for example, wood, bricks, metal components.