

# Property Condition Guidance for Single Household Properties

## All Internal Rooms

- ✓ Properties should be free from any form of damp or mould.
- ✓ Properties should be free from pest infestations.
- ✓ There should be adequate artificial lighting.
- ✓ Floor surfaces and coverings throughout the property should be even, well fitted, and in good repair.
- ✓ Walls and ceilings should be in good repair, not bulging, with no signs of cracks or dampness.
- ✓ There should be a working smoke alarm to each level of the premises, ideally near stairwells and reception rooms. Battery operated is acceptable, but ideally they should be mains wired and interlinked. They should be positioned according to manufacturers' instructions.
- ✓ Escape routes should be kept clear.
- ✓ There should be no lockable internal doors except the toilet/bathroom door.
- ✓ Ceilings should ideally be 2.4m. If there is low headroom, for example, to doors or under beams, precautions must be in place to prevent collisions.
- ✓ The property should not be overcrowded. The living area, kitchen, and bathroom should all be an adequate size for the household. Bedroom room sizes are as follows:
  - Rooms less than 4.6m<sup>2</sup> cannot be used for sleeping.
  - Rooms between 4.6 – 6.5m<sup>2</sup> are only suitable for one child under 10 years.
  - Rooms between 6.5 – 10.2m<sup>2</sup> are only suitable for one person.
  - Rooms over 10.2m<sup>2</sup> can be used for 2 people.

## Bathroom and Kitchen

- ✓ The bathroom and kitchen should be capable of being maintained in a hygienic condition. Floors should be smooth, impervious, hygienic, and cleanable, and all internal surfaces should be smooth, even, and free from cracks and crevices which may allow entry by or give harbourage to pests.
- ✓ The layout of the kitchen and bathroom should be well functioning and sufficient for more than one person, to allow for a parent to help a child, or a carer to help an elderly person.
- ✓ There should be adequate ventilation to the kitchen and bathroom, ideally mechanical ventilation.
- ✓ Bathroom and kitchen lights should have an IP rating of 44 or higher.
- ✓ There should be hot and cold water to each sink, basin, and bath/shower. Water storage tanks should store hot water between 60°C to 65°C. Hot water should be delivered at 40-44°C in baths and showers, 41°C to wash hand basins, and 60°C to kitchen sinks. Supply pipes and drains must be in good repair with no leaks. Seals between a sink, a drainer, a worktop, a basin, bath, or shower and the wall should be free from mould, watertight and in good condition.
- ✓ Kitchen facilities should be laid out so as to make safe and hygienic preparation and cooking of food easy. Cooking facilities should be in good repair, and there should be adequate food storage provision, and a sink, drainer, and worktop. Cupboards and shelves should be securely fixed.

- ✓ There should be at least one tap in the kitchen for drawing drinking water, and it should be supplied at an adequate pressure.
- ✓ There should be a heat alarm to the kitchen. It should be positioned according to manufacturers' instructions.
- ✓ Bathroom facilities should be in good repair and capable of being easily cleaned. Baths and showers should be stable and securely fitted, and strong enough to safely take the weight of the user. Baths should have good slip resistance and have a handle or grab rail. There should be sufficient toilets, wash hand basins, and baths/showers for the occupants. The wash hand basin should be sited in the room where the toilet is.
- ✓ The bathroom/WC room should have a door capable of being locked from the inside, and ideally openable from the outside in an emergency.
- ✓ There should not be electrical sockets in bathrooms other than shaver sockets.

## Stairs

- ✓ Stair tread and rise dimensions should be 280-360mm and 100-180mm respectively. The stairs should be less than 1000mm wide, and of average pitch.
- ✓ Doors should not open directly onto stairs.
- ✓ Stair coverings should have good friction quality.
- ✓ There should be guarding or a handrail between 900mm and 1000mm above the treads, which must be securely fixed. They should not be constructed so as to facilitate climbing.
- ✓ There should not be any openings on stairs, either to the stairs themselves or to balustrades or guarding, which are larger than 100mm.

## Electrics, Gas, Heating, and Insulation

- ✓ Light switches, plug sockets, gas appliances and hobs should be located in a safe position and properly fitted. There should be no switches or sockets above or around the hob. New installations of sockets or switches cannot be within 300mm of the hob or sink, and existing sockets or switches cannot be within 100mm of the hob and 300mm of the sink.
- ✓ There should be no broken electrical fixings or exposed wires. There should be a sufficient number of electrical sockets to prevent the need for trailing extension leads and to prevent an overloaded circuit.
- ✓ All landlords must hold a satisfactory Electrical Installations Condition Report known as an EICR. In addition, all external wiring must be ingress protected and installed by a qualified electrician and must be covered by the EICR.
- ✓ Gas appliances should be correctly installed and maintained. A Carbon Monoxide Alarm should be installed to all rooms containing a gas appliance. They should be positioned according to manufacturers' instructions.
- ✓ Heating should be controllable by the occupants, safely and properly installed, and capable of maintaining an indoor temperature of 21° C.
- ✓ The structure of the dwelling should have sufficient thermal and noise insulation. Windows and doors should be in good condition, thermally efficient and without blown or cracked panes or draughts (except trickle ventilation). There should be means for ensuring low level background ventilation without excessive heat loss or draughts.
- ✓ Consideration should be given to hot surfaces, and therefore central heating and hot water pipework and radiators should, where possible, be enclosed to reduce risk.

## Windows and Doors

- ✓ Windows and doors should be maintained in good repair and glass should be safety glazing.
- ✓ There should be safety catches to restrict the distance a window can be opened to 100mm on all windows less than 1.2m from floor level, above ground floor level, or upper floor windows. Any opening limiter should be easy to over-ride by an adult in the event of fire.
- ✓ There should be adequate natural lighting to the bedrooms. Window openings should provide a reasonable view of the immediate surroundings.
- ✓ There should be adequate locks to secure the property against unauthorised entry.
- ✓ Locks should be 'turn and release' locks, also called 'thumb turn' locks so that residents do not need to find a key to escape in an emergency. They should be able to be opened and closed from the inside with ease. Speak to your insurance company to ensure the locks meet their rules.

## Exterior

- ✓ The property should be structurally sound, with no risk of falling elements and the exterior should be free of cracks and unprotected holes.
- ✓ Yards and paths should not be too steep, they should be even, have inherent slip resistance and drainage, and should be well maintained.
- ✓ There should be adequate external lighting.
- ✓ There should be no accumulation of refuse and the outside space should be tidy and well maintained and not likely to encourage harbourage for rodents.
- ✓ Fences should be in good condition.
- ✓ There should be a clearly defined area for refuse.

## Hazardous Materials

- ✓ Lead pipework should not be present, and no lead-based paint should be exposed.
- ✓ Hazardous items such as gas canisters and chemicals should not be stored within the premises.
- ✓ There should not be high levels of volatile organic compounds, radiation, or biocides.
- ✓ Asbestos should not be present in dwellings, and manufactured mineral fibres should be sealed and inaccessible.