

Wrexham County Borough Council

Housing Standards – Guidelines for Private Rented Properties

FACTSHEET 1

Single Lettings

e.g. houses let to a single household (single person or members of same family living together)



Important Note – These guidelines have been developed to assist landlords in the private rented sector meet their legal obligations with regards to housing standards. They may not be appropriate or sufficient in every case.

The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) is a risk assessment tool used to assess 29 different hazards in residential premises. The principle of HHSRS is that 'Any residential premises should provide a safe and healthy environment for any potential occupier or visitor'. Further information can be found at www.communities.gov.uk/hhsrs

Before the start of the tenancy, carry out an inspection of your property and look for any obvious hazards. The following guidelines may be helpful:

Fire

IMPORTANT – *If the premises has 4 or more storeys, additional fire precautions to those listed below will be required. Contact the team for further information.*

The dwelling design, construction and condition should limit the chances of a fire, limit the spread of fire, and provide safe and ready means of escape in the event of fire.

- The escape route and general fire separation must be of sound, conventional construction.
- Doors must be sound, close fitting and well constructed.
- Sleeping rooms should not pass through another room before reaching an escape route.
- Automatic window locks should not be fitted.
- A mains-wired Category LD3 Grade D fire alarm system, as described in BS 5839: Part 6 must be installed. *[Subject to Risk*

Assessment] This system normally covers the main escape route from the dwelling (e.g. ground floor hallway and first floor landing).

- A fire blanket in the kitchen is recommended.
- Final exit doors should be fitted with locks which are openable from the inside without the use of a removable key.
- Information on fire prevention should be given to each occupier.

Electrical installations and appliances

- You must ensure that the electrical installation and any electrical appliances you provide are safe, to reduce the risk of electrocution or fire
- Electrical lighting and power installations should be checked and certified safe by an appropriately qualified person at least every **5 years**.
- Under provision of power sockets will lead to dangerous overloading.

Recommended numbers are:

Location	Number of power double sockets
Living rooms	4
Bedrooms	3
Single bedroom	2
Kitchens	3 (+ sockets required for major appliances)

- Electrical appliances should be inspected when first supplied, annually and at beginning of each new tenancy.

Heating installations and appliances

- All heating installations and appliances (gas, solid fuel or oil) **must** be checked and certified safe by an appropriately qualified person at least **annually** and as required by law.
- The installations and appliances must be serviced and have a current safety inspection certificate issued by an appropriately qualified person. (e.g. for gas installations, a Gas Safe Register engineer (www.gassaferegister.co.uk or 0800 408 5500))

Security

- The dwelling must have a reasonable level of physical security. Where it is necessary to replace doors, a door set, windows or fencing, the replacements should comply with the Police Force's 'Secured by Design' Specification. Details can be found at www.securedbydesign.com/standards/doorslocks

Adequately heated, fuel efficient and well insulated

- Heating systems should be reasonably economical to run (programmable and of suitable size for dwelling) and capable of heating whole of the dwelling.

- Heating should be controllable by the occupants
- External doors and windows must be sufficiently well fitting so that they do not cause severe draughts without reducing background ventilation.
- The hot water tank must be effectively insulated with jacket at least 75mm thick.
- Kitchens and bathrooms should have adequate mechanical ventilation.
- At least 250mm of loft insulation should be provided.
- Pipes and tanks in the roof space should be lagged with 20-25mm of pipe insulation.
- The thermal performance of external walls should be improved wherever possible e.g. cavity wall insulation
- Best practice information and information on the Landlord Energy Saving Allowance can be found at www.energysavingtrust.org.uk
- Energy performance certificates are now required for most new tenancies. Further advice can be found at www.direct.gov.uk/epc

Kitchens

- Sensibly and logically laid out to allow the safe and hygienic preparation and cooking of food.
- Have a well organised working area with adequate work surfaces that are permanent and impervious.
- Have provision for cooking including an oven and hob and space for fridge and freezer.
- Have sufficient storage for food, crockery and pots and pans.
- Sink of adequate size with drainer; connected to a supply of cold drinking water and hot water.
- Adequate lighting and ventilation.
- Power sockets should be conveniently close to main food preparation area.
- Have safe and suitable flooring that is even and easily cleanable and provides adequate slip resistance.

Bathrooms

- Slipping risks associated with wet floors should be reduced.

- The hot water temperature should be checked routinely.
- Light fittings should be fitted with a pull cord if operated from within the bathroom.
- There should be a sufficient number of baths and showers and wash hand basins.
- Bathrooms or separate WC compartments should be provided with a lockable door.
- The WC should be provided in a bathroom or compartment that is adequately ventilated and lit and should not open directly and immediately onto a space intended for storage or preparation of food.
- The washbasin should be located in or near the room containing the WC.
- Wall, ceiling and floor surfaces must be cleanable.

In a good state of repair

- The dwelling must be structurally stable and free from damp and disrepair.
- External walls, roof structure and coverings, external windows and doors, and chimneys must be in a good condition.

Stairs

- Stairs must be made as safe as possible. They must have at least one handrail that is easy to grasp and extends the full length of the flight. Good lighting must be provided on staircases.

Floors

- Floor surfaces (including paths and yards) should be properly constructed avoiding excessive slopes and uneven surfaces.
- Floors should provide adequate slip resistance especially in bathrooms and kitchens.
- Drainage should be effective to remove surface water from paths and yards.

Advice

- The Housing Standards Team can provide advice and guidance. Contact details are:

Tel: 01978 315300

Email: housing@wrexham.gov.uk

(mark for attention of housing standards team)

Landlord Associations

- Being a landlord is a huge responsibility and you will need expert advice. A wealth of information is available through landlord associations such as the National Landlords Association (www.landlords.gov.uk), the Residential Landlords Association (www.rla.org.uk) and the British Property Federation (www.bpf.org.uk).

Accreditation

- The Council strongly supports the Landlord Accreditation Wales scheme (www.welshlandlords.org.uk). The scheme seeks to assist landlords to operate a successful business.