

Introduction

The following guidance outlines the key standards which your property must meet to be acceptable for the council's Private Sector Leasing scheme. Our main concern is that the property is safe, in good repair and has basic amenities. You can use this section as a checklist to work out if your property is suitable or what you may have to do to bring it up to this standard.

Please note that the information given here is a summary of the council's temporary accommodation standards. If you require specific guidance or would like a full copy of the council's temporary accommodation standards, please contact the projects and procurement team on 020 8753 1241.

External

Structure

The roof, chimney stacks, ceilings, walls, floors, stairs, windows, doors, rain water goods, waste goods, drainage and external decoration must be in good repair and condition.

Any common parts or shared access must be in good repair and condition, including structure, access-ways, security doors and lifts.

Gardens, yards & access

- External yards, paths, steps and access-ways must be in good order, even and well drained.
- Paths must have adequate friction and be adequately lit.
- There shall be no unguarded drops.
- There shall be no iron-spiked railings.
- Safety (and the presence of external lighting) shall be considered where access is via a rear alleyway/external stairs.
- All boundaries must be clearly defined and enclosed by suitable walls or fences.

- Garden ponds must be emptied and filled to make them safe.
- Greenhouses must be dismantled and removed.
- Garden sheds must be safe and in good order or removed. If present, they must be clear of all rubbish, tools and any other items.

Refuse

Adequate and suitable facilities must be provided for the storage and disposal of refuse (e.g. a dustbin and storage area for the same).

Noise

Where there are excessive noise levels (e.g. by main road, rail lines, and adjacent noise producing commercial premises) noise insulation measures shall be provided e.g. double or secondary glazing.

Security

Adequate external lighting must be provided. Access doors to premises must have adequate locks, door chains and viewers. Windows in accessible locations must be provided with suitable window locks.

Internal

Decoration & finishes

Internal decoration must be in good condition, clean and free from soiling, staining and torn covering. In addition:

- Wall surfaces must be painted and/or papered.
- Painted surfaces must be clean and free from obvious marking, dirt etc.
- Wallpaper must be in good condition and free from defects.
- Wood must be free from rot and painted to a reasonable standard with gloss paint.
- Floor finishes must be sound, clean and free from trip hazards, i.e. well secured and free from rips and tears.

Contents & furnishings

We do not require furniture to be left in the property. If your property is accepted for the scheme then you must arrange to have all furniture removed.

We do require the following:

- Curtains or suitable blinds provided to all bedrooms and living rooms. Nets are usually required to all windows.
- Suitable light shades fitted in all habitable rooms and enclosed light fittings in bathrooms.
- Good quality carpet with suitable underlay fitted in living rooms, bedrooms and circulation areas (hall and stairways). Carpets must be properly laid and secured.
- Good quality vinyl flooring properly fitted in kitchen and bathroom areas. Finish to be non-slip.

Windows

- Windows must be in good working condition and open and shut properly.
- Fixed stays (restrictors) must be provided to all windows above ground floor level to restrict opening to 100mm maximum.
- Low level window glazing (less than 800mm above finished floor level) must be impact resistant. You can achieve this by replacing non-compliant glass with safety glass, applying safety film or fixing permanent screen protection.
- Ease of window cleaning shall be considered and steps taken to remove any potentially hazardous arrangement.
- All WC and bathroom windows must be provided with obscure glass.

Doors

- Doors shall be of suitable size with sufficient headroom.
- Doors shall open in the direction of travel into the room where possible.
- Low level glazing (less than 1500mm above finished floor level) must be impact resistant (using safety glass or film).
- Doorstops shall be fitted to protect walls from damage if necessary.

Dampness

The premises must be free from dampness prejudicial to the health of the occupants. This includes rising damp, penetrating damp and condensation.

Ventilation

Adequate permanent ventilation must be provided to all habitable rooms (a suitable openable window will achieve this). Adequate permanent ventilation is to be provided to kitchens and bathrooms - if there is no window, mechanical extract ventilation must be provided. We recommend humidistat controlled mechanical extractor fans are provided to kitchen and bathroom locations.

Lighting

Adequate natural and artificial lighting must be provided to all habitable rooms, stairways, circulation spaces and common parts.

Heating & thermal comfort

An efficient heating system matched to the thermal capacity of the structure must be provided. This system may comprise either full central heating, programmable heating or electric storage heaters. This system must be capable of maintaining 21°C in living areas and 18°C in bedrooms when the external temperature is -10°C. The system shall be controllable and have a full service contract.

There must be a fixed heating appliance or radiator in every room. Portable gas or electric heaters are not acceptable. If the heating appliance is an electric fire it can only be a wall-mounted convector heater and it must be connected to a fused spur. Where a new boiler is required, the installation shall meet the latest SEDBUK Band 'A' rating (high efficiency boilers).

Efficient insulation means cavities insulated where present, a minimum of 50mm loft insulation if gas programmable central heating and 200mm loft insulation if electric storage heating. Where there is

no loft insulation present, new insulation shall be fitted to comply with the Building Regulations, which currently require a thickness of approximately 250mm. All hot water cylinders must be properly insulated.

Kitchen facilities

Kitchen units and appliances must be free from defects and in good working order. In general kitchen facilities shall be less than twenty years old. Kitchen facilities shall comprise:

- A cooker, oven and grill (suitably restrained and located).
- A sink with integral drainer set on a 1000mm base unit.
- Constant hot and cold water supplies over the sink.
- A fixed impervious and readily cleansable work surface (minimum 1000 x 500mm).
- An adequate tiled splashback adjacent to the sink unit and work surfaces.
- Sinks and worktops to be sealed around joints with silicone sealant.
- A direct drainage connection to the sink with suitable water trap.
- Waste pipes and taps to be defect free, no leaks or drips. Taps to be easy to operate.
- Adequate storage cupboard units (minimum 0.3 m³).
- A suitable sized refrigerator (with freezer compartment and appropriate to the size of the property).
- A minimum of two double electrical sockets provided above work surfaces (excluding appliance sockets).
- Vinyl type floor covering free from defects.

NB Hammersmith & Fulham do not require washing machines. However, plumbing/fittings must be provided to allow the installation of a washing machine, including a non-return valve fitted to the waste pipe.

Bathroom & WC facilities

Bathroom facilities must be free from defects and in good working order and in general be less than thirty years old. Sanitary facilities shall comprise:

- A fixed bath or shower and wash hand basin with a constant supply of hot and cold water and a direct drainage connection with suitable trap. Minimum sizes: wash hand basin 500 x 400mm, bath 1700 x 700mm and shower 800 x 800mm.
- A water closet properly connected to the drainage.
- Shower tiling of sufficient height to protect the decoration of the wall (1.8m plus) properly sealed, and a shower screen or curtain to be supplied of a sufficient standard to prevent water damage to floor.
- Tiled and sealed splashbacks (300 mm high) to baths and wash hand basins.
- A towel rail and toilet paper holder.

There must be adequate activity space adjacent to facilities. Water closets must have an available wash hand basin located on the same floor. Bathrooms/WCs located off a kitchen must have a wash hand basin. Bathrooms shall not be accessed through bedrooms except for studio and one bedroom flats where the bathroom is en suite.

Staircases & balconies

- Stairs must not be too steep or excessively long.
- Steps must have level, even treads and provide adequate friction.
- Open risers are not permitted.
- Staircases must have suitable handrails properly constructed and fully supported. Handrail heights shall be between 900-1000mm.
- Stairs and landings where the drop is in excess of 600mm must be guarded. The guarding must be of adequate construction with maximum openings of 100mm and designed to prevent climbing. The height of the guarding shall be 900mm.
- Balconies must be properly constructed and guarded. The guarding must be of adequate construction with maximum openings of 100mm and designed to prevent climbing. The height of the guarding shall be 1100mm.

Installations

- Installations for the supply of gas, electricity and water must be in good repair and proper working order.
- A gas safety test certificate must be provided (CORGI).
- An electrical test certificate must be provided (NICEIC).
- Sufficient electrical sockets must be provided. As a guide, the minimum number of sockets per room shall be:

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Living room | three double sockets |
| Double bedrooms | two double sockets |
| Single bedrooms | one double socket |
| Kitchen | two double above worktop height, plus low level socket for fridge. Boiler to be on spur |
| Landing or hall | one socket |

- Landlords electrical supply (where necessary) shall be separately metered.
- Prepayment gas and electricity meters must be provided for each letting. Meters must be accessible at all times.
- A mains supply of drinking water must be provided to the kitchen sink.
- Water storage tanks must be properly housed, insulated and covered.

Internal arrangement

Adequate circulation space shall be present in all escape areas and adjacent to all cooking appliances. Bathrooms must not be accessed through bedrooms except for studio and one bedroom flats where the bathroom is en suite. Internal means of escape must progress to areas of lower fire risk.

Health & safety

If heating is provided by a district system all distribution pipe-work must be boxed-in or suitably protected. The hot water supply system shall be such that heated water can be delivered at a temperature below 46°C.

There must be no unacceptable changes in floor level. All drops must be suitably guarded.

All access and yard surfaces must be level and provide suitable friction.

Space standards

The permitted occupancy of the premises shall be determined by the following space standard.

| Room size | Occupancy level (persons) |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| under 6.5m ² | none |
| 6.5 – 8.4m ² | one |
| 8.4 – 10.2m ² | one and one half |
| over 10.2m ² | two |

(In this standard, living rooms, bathrooms and kitchens are excluded, children under ten are counted as half a person and persons over ten are counted as one person).

Fire safety

Flats and bedsits in converted houses or other buildings must conform to certain standards of fire protection. Such premises are classified as Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) which are defined as 'premises occupied by persons who do not form a single household'. If the premises comprise an HMO there shall be adequate means of escape from fire and other fire precautions (see Hammersmith & Fulham private housing services standards for HMOs or temporary accommodation standards for further guidance. Standards available on request from Private Housing Services, 2nd Floor, Riverview House, Beavor Lane, London W6 9AR, Tel: 020 8753 1221).

As a minimum, the following requirements apply:

- A hard wired mains operated smoke detector must be fitted to the ceiling to each floor of the dwelling circulation space. (In houses converted into flats a system of electrically operated interlinked fire detection may be required).
- A hard wired mains operated carbon monoxide detector to be fitted where there is gas central heating.
- Flat entrance doors (within conversions) which lead off the communal staircase MUST be half-hour fire resistant (conforming to BS 476) and fitted with suitable self-closing devices.
- All kitchens must have suitable doors fitted.
- All kitchens must be provided with suitably fixed fire blankets conforming to BS6575:1985.
- Polystyrene tile finishes must not be provided on any surface.
- To ensure escape in case of fire, deadlocks to flat/house entrance doors are not acceptable, but deadlocks with internal thumb-turns are acceptable.

We require unfurnished properties in the London region with all of the following:

- Fridge freezer
- Cooker/oven
- Gas central heating
- Heating service contract
- Pre-payment gas/electric meters
- Curtains including nets
- Carpeted living room and bedrooms
- Vinyl flooring to kitchen and bathrooms
- Hard wired smoke and carbon monoxide detector alarms
- Close to transport links
- Including properties over shops, but not above restaurants, butchers, laundrettes nor those next to public houses or where access to the property entrance may pose a security risk to the occupier(s).

Where you are willing to maintain:

- the central heating
- hot water systems
- payment of services charges if leasehold.

If you fulfil all of these, you could lease your property to us.

We offer leases with a guaranteed payment of rent, whether the property is occupied or not. During the lease period we will carry out minor internal repairs and agree to return the property at the end of the lease with vacant possession.

Telephone 020 8753 1241 or email us at propertytolet@lbhf.gov.uk to discuss our requirements.

For more detailed information please read the following information sheets.

A guide for people wanting to lease property to the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

What is private sector leasing (PSL)?

PSL is a scheme where the council leases a privately owned property for a fixed term. The council then uses the property as temporary accommodation for homeless households. The council is responsible for all property management issues, including all contact with the occupants, for the duration of the lease.

The property will be returned to you with vacant possession.

If you or your clients would like more details then please contact us on the following number:

020 8753 1241

What are the advantages to landlords?

Guaranteed rent – we will guarantee to pay your rent even when the property is not occupied. Our rents won't drop even if the market does.

The London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham can offer you a number of significant advantages in the letting of your property.

- We have a landlord's assistance package that includes preparation of all legal documents free of charge.
- We provide a comprehensive pre-letting service including a survey.
- We give advice on gas and electrical test certificates and a central heating service contract.
- We may be able to arrange an empty dwellings grant if your property has been empty and in need of renovation.
- We charge no letting or management fee.
- We employ a highly experienced and professional management team.
- We guarantee regular and frequent visits to your property.
- We provide a repairs service.
- We guarantee to return the property to you with vacant possession and in a lettable condition, subject to fair wear and tear.

Do you have property in Hammersmith and Fulham? Do you want to let your property for less than three years?

The council offers a scheme we call Direct Lettings for landlords who have properties in the borough. This council-run scheme is suitable for landlords not wishing to be tied into a lease for three or more years.

What are the advantages to landlords?

Our dedicated team provides the following:

- Rent deposit guarantee equivalent to one month's rental.
- Non refundable incentive of up to £1000 paid up front to eligible landlords or agents.
- Free tenant introduction service.
- Free advice on managing and sustaining the tenancy.
- Fast tracking of in-borough housing benefit claims, paid directly to your account.
- Access to "better homes" grants.
- Option to extend the agreement at the end of the fixed period.
- No administration or letting agent's fees.

For more information about the scheme contact:

Direct Lettings Team
Housing Centre
77 Glenthorne Road
Hammersmith
London W6 0LJ

Tel: 020 8753 4166

Email: direct.lettings@lbhf.gov.uk

Is your property empty?

The empty property team is here to tackle the increasing numbers of abandoned properties going to waste in the borough. Attracting nuisance and anti-social behaviour, these empty homes can become our neighbours from hell. In spite of high demand for accommodation and our best efforts, Hammersmith & Fulham still has a large amount of privately owned empty property.

Our experienced officers can offer comprehensive advice and assistance on all aspects of dealing with empty properties. We can give empty property grants to assist with repair costs. Free management and letting services are also available together with guaranteed rental schemes.

We target all long term 'empties' and encourage owners to take action to return them to residential use. Occasionally we have to take enforcement action against owners who leave their property empty. Legislation enables us to serve an empty dwelling management order and in certain circumstances to compulsorily purchase a property.

For more information contact the empty properties team on 020 8753 1287 or email phs@lbhf.gov.uk.

The preferred landlords accreditation scheme can help by giving you:



- Free business support courses
- Free property management software
- Free one to one business consultation sessions
- Affiliation to the London-wide scheme
- Substantial local and national discounts
- Preferential grants
- Fast-track services
- Market advantage
- Self assessment
- Pass-worded access to council websites.

For an application form and more information please contact: the Landlord Services team on 020 8753 1258 or email phs@lbhf.gov.uk.

If your property remains empty you risk:

- a statutory notice
- works in default
- an empty dwelling management order
- compulsory purchase.

We offer:

- free advice and assistance
- grants for repairs if you lease the property via the council for five years
- a free lettings and management service
- guaranteed rents.

How do I qualify for grant aid?

- Your property must be vacant.
- You must be the owner of an empty property or flat.
- You must agree to lease your property to the council or an appointed housing association for up to five years.

How much grant aid is available?

This will depend on the availability of funds. Contact the empty property team for current information.

Will I have to repay the grant?

You will only be required to repay the grant if you break the lease agreement or the conditions of the grant.

How much rent might I expect to receive?

You will receive a guaranteed income in line with market rents throughout the lease.

Can I choose my tenants?

No. The council will have sole nomination rights.

What if the tenants become a nuisance or a problem?

The housing association or council will be responsible for all tenant issues. Fast track methods of dealing with anti-social behaviour are available if necessary.

Who is responsible for repairs to the property?

You will be responsible for the structure of the building and external repair and the housing association is responsible for everyday maintenance. Your property will be returned to you in good repair, minus fair wear and tear at the end of the lease.

For more information contact the empty property team on 020 8753 1287 or email phs@lbhf.gov.uk

Direct Lettings is a rent deposit guarantee service that has ensured that over 950 households have entered into private sector tenancies.

We assist local families into the private rented sector by providing:

- financial incentives
- a rent deposit guarantee
- in-borough housing benefits fast-tracking service.

We have been working hard in partnership with private landlords and lettings agents but due to the increased popularity in Direct Lettings we have a growing number of applicants who are currently outnumbering our portfolio of available properties.

This is where you come in.

What's in it for you?

- No administration or commission fees.
- A rent deposit guarantee equivalent to one month's rental.
- In-borough Housing Benefit fast tracking with a dedicated officer to assess claims and to assist with claim related problems.
- A 'better homes grant' for eligible landlords to make improvements to your property.
- Rapid turn around. The complete lettings process - from initial inspection to signing of the contract - usually achieved within two weeks.
- Better void management. Most of our applicants are ready to move quickly, thus maximising the flow of your rental income.

What sort of properties are we looking for?

We are looking for properties that are:

- self-contained units
- have 1 to 4 bedrooms
- are in good condition.

We will consider viewing properties outside of the borough.

How about housing benefits?

Housing benefits are key to Direct Lettings. We are fully aware that agents and landlords may have anxieties about letting to low income tenants due to uncertainties about the running and administration of the housing benefits process.

To reassure you, we have put in place a dedicated officer within our team to fast-track in-borough claims and to assist you throughout the tenancy.

What about the rent?

Rents are agreed in line with figures from the Rent Service. We can then negotiate the rental level with this in mind.

For more information contact the direct lettings team on 020 8753 4166 or email direct.lettings@lbhf.gov.uk

What about property standards?

The balance that we have to achieve is an acceptable standard that does not compromise on tenants' safety, but does not act to deter you as landlords from letting through us.

The properties we accept must be in a good condition. We require a CORGI-registered gas safety certificate and prefer to have an electrical safety certificate and hard wired smoke detector.

Who will be responsible for managing your property?

You as the landlord (or your managing agent) will take care of the day-to-day management of your property. We will provide you with free advice on how to manage your property at your request.

Will we pay you for the time the property is unoccupied?

No, we will not. We do not ask you for exclusive nomination rights to your properties and have no problem with you looking for tenants in the private sector at the same time. We only ask for the opportunity to find you a potential tenant and to be kept updated with availability.

Interested?

For more information and an informal chat please telephone

Direct lettings team 020 8753 4166

Email: direct.lettings@lbhf.gov.uk

Looking forward to doing business with you!

To sum up the process:

- We will visit your property to check that health and safety standards are met and to address any queries.
- If you agree to instruct us, we will arrange for our selected clients to contact you for a viewing. Alternatively we can arrange a block viewing.
- Once a tenant is chosen we will negotiate a suitable rental level.
- If you are happy to proceed, you will sign the contract with the tenant and we will then deal with housing benefit, rent deposit guarantee and any payable incentive.

We understand reconciling housing benefit payments with a contractual rent can be difficult. The following information explains the way we make payments and why.

Housing benefit is paid directly to you by Bank Automated Credit System (BACS). Therefore we require you to provide your chosen account number, account name and sort code.

All new claims for housing benefit are paid four-weekly i.e as lunar months in arrears to landlords/agents. In other words 13 times a year every fourth week. We have no discretion over this.

When will you get regular payments?

Firstly, we will pass the benefit application to our dedicated housing benefits officer, who is only responsible for direct lettings claims.

The council aims to make a payment of benefit within 14 days of receiving a complete benefit form.

This means that you will receive a small payment to start and then a second payment shortly afterwards. These are known as 'payments on account', as the council will have received a complete benefit form.

The purpose of these interim payments is to get things moving on the application. Full benefit from the start of the tenancy soon follows in a lump sum.

Regular set payments follow, with the council always sending you a statement every time a payment is produced.

What periods they cover

If you decide to express the rent as a calendar-monthly figure on your agreement, please note the formula used for converting calendar-monthly rents into four-weekly (lunar month) payments:

For example, on a calendar monthly rent of £1000:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Full annual rent due: } & \text{£1000} \\ \text{x 12 months} & = \text{£12,000} \\ \text{£12,000 divided by 365 days,} & \\ \text{x 7} & = \text{£230.14 per week} \\ \text{£230.14 x 4} & = \text{£920.56 every four weeks} \\ & \text{i.e lunar month.} \end{aligned}$$

Consequently, you will receive the equivalent of 13 'four-weekly' instalments instead of 12 calendar-monthly instalments over the course of a year's tenancy agreement.

Fast tracking payments

If your property is within the borough we provide a fast-track benefit service to oversee payments through our dedicated housing benefits officer.

For more information contact the direct lettings team on 020 8753 4166 or email direct.lettings@lbhf.gov.uk