

# Our Home Standard



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# 1. Introduction

We have developed Our Home Standard to ensure that our homes meet a consistent quality standard.

Good design promotes quality of life for the residents of the building. This includes function– buildings should be easy to use. It also includes comfort, safety, security, amenity, accessibility and adaptability. Well designed homes and buildings are efficient and cost effective to run. They help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by incorporating features that encourage sustainable lifestyles.

Our Homes will be clean, safe and in a good state of repair when our customers move in. Our Home Standard sets out what our customers can expect, and was agreed in consultation. Equally we expect customers to keep their home in good condition. The tenancy agreement requires customers to help us by allowing access and reporting repairs which need doing promptly.

We will take photos of the property at sign up and ask customers to sign off that the property is in good condition at the point of letting.

## 2. Our Principles

We have based Our Property Standard around the following principles:

- Our home should be safe and secure.
- Our homes should be let without the need to carry out immediate maintenance. Customers will however need to decorate, install flooring and provide any furniture needed.
- Our homes should as far as practicable, conform to good design standards.
- Our homes will meet the standards required by our funding partners.
- Our homes will not require any major component replacements for a period of at least 5 years.
- Our properties will meet government [Decent Homes Standard](#).



# 3. Safety and Security

- At sign up we will give a valid Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) which shows how energy efficient our home is. All our homes will have an EPC rating of 'D' or above where possible.
- Our Homes electrical fixtures and fittings will be tested and approved by a NICEIC (National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contracting) registered contractor and a certificate given to the customer at sign up.
- The gas system will be tested and safety certificates will be provided at sign up.
- We will check our homes for asbestos and ensure that it is either removed or left in a safe condition. We will ensure customers have access to asbestos survey results.
- We will provide two smoke alarms which will be clean, secure and tested. Where appropriate we will use combined Carbon Monoxide and Smoke Detectors. It is the customers responsibility to replace the batteries.
- We will change the locks on any external doors to make sure no one else has a key. Where appropriate we will fit a 5 lever mortice dead lock that complies with Police and Insurance Company security recommendations to external doors.
- Any controlled entry systems on communal doors will operate correctly.
- Polystyrene coving or tiles will be removed and the surfaces made good.
- We will ensure that our homes free from damp and mould, and provide appropriate advice on condensation management to customers.

## 4. Property Clearance

- We will ensure all rubbish and furniture has been removed.
- We will also remove any carpets, laminate flooring or ceramic flooring if they are in poor condition. In some situations, if floor coverings are in reasonable condition and have been properly fitted these items may be retained and customers will be asked to sign a declaration acknowledging their responsibility for these items if they wish to retain them.
- We will treat any vermin or flea infestation inside the property. Customers are responsible for treating any infestations that occur during the course of the tenancy.
- Our homes will have been cleaned throughout with particular attention to the bathroom, kitchen and floor coverings.
- We are not responsible for previous installations of telephone, satellite and TV media packages. Any additional fittings are customers responsibility and must be fitted and paid for without causing damage.
- If customers make an arrangement to purchase any item from the outgoing tenant, we take no responsibility for these items.

## 5. External Doors

- We will replace the locks to front and rear doors when the tenancy changes. Single point locks will be certified to BS 3621, and multi point locks to PAS 024.
- We will ensure that windows and external doors are secure and fully glazed.
- We will provide customers with two sets of external door keys together with window lock keys. Where there are communal doors we will issue one key per adult living in the property. Any additional communal door keys or access fobs request will be issued, but will be recharged at a cost to the customer.
- Where applicable we will provide an equivalent number of electronic fobs.
- Where a door requires replacement, we will do this on a like for like basis, except where a fire door is required.
- We will ensure doors are hung so as not to obscure access to light switches.
- Except where it is necessary to install a fire door, we will assess whether the property will benefit from having glazing in the external doors to improve lighting.
- Where we install a new door we will ensure that any glazing is double glazing.

## 6. Hallways

- We will give consideration to the installation of a radiator where there is not one in existence, to eliminate cold spots.



# 7. Lounges and Reception Rooms

- We will ensure that door opening directions do not obscure light switches.
- We will retain dado and picture rails where these are intact.
- We will assess the radiator size to ensure that this is adequate for the room. We will ensure that the room has adequate heating and ventilation.
- We will remove gas fires.
- We will ensure that the level of insulation around bay windows is sufficient to reduce the impact of condensation.

## 8. Kitchens

- The number of kitchen units will depend on the size and layout of the kitchen. As a minimum, we will fit one unit with a stainless steel sink, one double base unit and one double wall unit.
- Kitchen will be able to be ventilated either by means of windows or extractor fan.
- We will ensure all drawers and doors open and close without catching, and that they are sound and useable.
- Where possible we will leave space to install a washing machine and double height fridge freezer space.
- We will ensure worktops are clean and sealed where the work top meets the wall, and around sink.
- Sinks will be clean and free of rust and stains, and supplied with a plug and chain.
- Taps will be clean, easy to operate, marked hot and cold, and drip-free. We will fit lever taps as standard.
- Tiling will be clean, not loose or cracked. We will make sure there is a minimum of 300mm of tiles on the walls above the work surface and sink, except where windows prohibit this.
- Gas cooker points will be clean and capped off with bayonet fittings, ready for a cooker to be put in.
- We will relocate gas hobs away from windows where necessary.
- Electric cooker points will be clean and ready a for cooker to be put in.
- Where there is sufficient room, we will leave a 620mm space with a water supply, with a waste pipe ready for a washing machine to be fitted. Washing Machines valves will be clean and easy to open and close. Valves will be drip-free and marked hot and cold. Waste pipes will be secure and drip-free.
- Sockets will be located at least 100mm from cookers.
- Sockets will be located at least 300mm from sinks.

## 8. Kitchens

- Where built in appliances, such as ovens and hobs, are in situ these are to be tested and if safe to use they will be retained. These are then gifted to the customer.
- We can install Gas or Electric Cookers using a suitably qualified Gas and/ or Electric engineer.

# 9. Staircases

We will ensure that new staircases, where building design allows, conforms to the recommended requirements for accident reductions. This means:

- Stair width should be a minimum of 900mm-1000mm;
- Tread dimensions to be between 280mm and 360mm;
- Rise dimensions to be between 100mm – 180mm;
- Pitch (angle of stairs) to be less than 42°;
- Nosing should not project more than 18mm beyond any riser;
- Handrails to be sited between 900mm and 1000mm measured from the top of the handrail to the pitch line or floor/easy to grasp/extend the full length of the flight;

In all cases we will ensure that;

- There is adequate lighting over stairs.
- Handrails fitted to stairs, treads and risers are safely secured and nosings are in place.
- The spacing between spindles on bannisters is safe.

# 10. Bathrooms

- Bathroom and WCs can be separate or combined, and ventilated either by window or extractor fan.
- Your bath will be clean and sealed where bath edges meet the tiling. Your bath will be secure and free from major chips with a plug and chain installed. The bath panel will be secure and clean.
- All toilets, including seats, will be secure, clean and easy to flush. New toilet installations will have low-flow flush.
- Bathroom basins will be secure, clean and supplied with a plug and chain.
- Taps will be clean, easy to operate, marked hot and cold, and drip-free. We will fit lever taps as standard.
- Tiling will be clean, intact and not loose or cracked. We will make sure there are 400mm of tiles above the wash hand basin and 600mm of tiles above the bath.
- We will install mixer showers in our properties where possible and install full height tiling where required.
- We will ensure a steam-proof light is installed.
- All light switches will be independently fused and pull cord in style.
- We will install a privacy handle on the internal door.
- We will install a shower curtain rail.

# 11. Plumbing and Heating Systems

- We will ensure our homes have an adequate and safe form of heating.
- If there is an existing gas fire, this will be removed, the gas supply safely capped and the opening made good with appropriate chimney ventilation. When a gas fire is removed the radiator to that room should be checked for size and replaced if necessary.
- Where a gas fire is removed the surround may be retained on a case by case basis where this prevents the need for further remedial works.
- We will not locate boilers in bedrooms.
- Wherever possible boilers will be placed in cupboards.
- We will check the plumbing and water system to ensure it is in working order and free of leaks.
- Stopcocks will be accessible and easy to open and close. We will make sure customers know at the start of your tenancy where the stopcock is.
- Water pipework and storage facilities will be maintained according to the requirements of BS 6700.

# 12. Electrics

- The consumer unit will be easily accessible and to a good modern standard which complies with BS EN 61439-3 and BS 7671.
- All lights, light switches and sockets will be in good working order.
- We will endeavour to avoid using surface mounted electrics where practicable.
- All new Electrical wiring installation meets the latest requirements of Institution of Electrical Engineers/British Standard (BS 7671).
- We will use sockets with integrated USB ports in bedrooms and kitchens where sockets require replacement.
- We will ensure that there are adequate socket numbers. Generally this will mean a minimum of:
  - Lounges: 3 double sockets
  - Double Bedrooms: 2 double sockets
  - Single Bedrooms: 1 double socket
  - Kitchen: 4 double sockets and 1 Hager Switch
  - Hallways/ Landings: 1 double socket

The above specification may vary depending on the style, size and characteristics of the property.

# 13. Lighting

- We will retain good quality existing light fittings.
- Where fit for purpose we will retain fluorescent lighting.
- We will ensure any replacements comply with British Standards.



# 14. Internal Doors

- All rooms will have a door fitted, unless the property is designed as open plan. Fire rated doors will be fitted where appropriate.
- Doors will be clean, secure, easy to open and close with the hinges and door furniture secure.
- We will retain doors that are fit for purpose, even if these are not uniform throughout the property.
- The bathroom and WC doors will be fitted with a suitable lock that can be opened from the outside in an emergency. We will fit new doors if necessary with a latch and handle.
- No locks will be provided on internal doors except the bathroom and WC.
- If any doors need easing after customers have had carpets fitted, this is the responsibility of the customer.

Glazing in “critical locations” will be safety glass.

- Glazing in doors – Glass which is wholly or partially within 1500mm from floor level must be safety glass and comply with BS6206
- Glazing adjacent to doors – Windows/side panels wholly or partially within 300mm of the edge of a door and which is also wholly or partially within 1500mm from floor level must be safety glass.
- Other glazing that is wholly or partially within 800mm from floor level. This means that windows that are not located within 300mm of a door must use safety glass if the bottom of the glazing is within 800mm of the floor level.

# 15. Flooring

- Where there is vinyl flooring present we will ensure this is clean, undamaged and slip resistant. Vinyl flooring or similar is provided in the kitchen, bathroom and W.C. We do not provide floor covering in other rooms as standard.
- We will ensure floors and skirting boards are clean, complete, secure, and free from rot and trip hazards.
- Carpets and carpet grippers left by the previous tenant will normally be removed, unless they are in good condition when they will be cleaned. Any carpets or floor coverings left will be offered to the customer.

# 16. Windows

- The glazing of all windows will be intact and secure.
- We will ensure all windows are easy to open and close.
- We will provide window keys where necessary and restrictors to all opening windows on first floor and above upon request.
- We will check that window vents are unobstructed and in good working order.
- We will replace any failed glazing.
- We will ensure that the window seals are in good condition.
- We will ensure that at least one window at first floor level will open wide enough to be used as an emergency escape.

# 17. Roofs and Roof Spaces

- We will ensure the property is safe, secure and watertight.
- We will ensure all roof tiles and verges are in place, and the chimney stacks, flaunching, pots and lead flashing are intact.
- We will replace any missing or damaged waste pipes, guttering and overflows and will ensure the system is in a good state of repair. Gutters will be free from blockages, weed growth and leaks.
- We will leave lofts clear of any items.
- We will top up loft insulation to 270mm as a minimum.

# 18. Decoration

- Where front doors require re-staining this may be completed prior to you moving in.
- We will ensure that walls and ceilings are sound, free from damp, graffiti, large cracks, loose plaster, bulges or holes and will be structurally sound.
- We will ensure that walls and ceilings are in a suitable condition to decorate.
- We do not normally decorate, however any room which is in a very poor state of decoration, due to graffiti or mould growth for example, will be neutrally redecorated before you move in.
- We will assess the plastering and conduct remedial works where the plastering is below our standard. We will typically remove or cover heavy Aertex where this is present.
- Where walls require filling and are wallpapered, we will strip the wall of wallpaper before carrying out repairs.
- We will ensure that we remove lead paint where possible.
- Where it has been necessary to cut chases into the wall, we will strip the entire wall of wallpaper.
- We will provide paint on a discretionary basis to assist you in decorating your home.

# 19. Period Features

Where possible we will be sensitive to retain period features which add to the aesthetic of the building and are in keeping with the broader locality. Examples of this include but are not limited to:

- Period Fireplaces
- Tiled Floors
- Decorative corniches
- Dado and Picture Rails
- Decorative archways

## 20. Driveways

- Where there is an existing driveway but no dropped kerb, we will apply to the relevant Local Authority for a drop curb to be installed
- We will not typically install a driveway on a property that does not have one in existence within 5 years of acquisition.
- Where a driveway requires replacement we will typically match like-for-like although tarmac is our preferred material.
- We will not install gates at the top of driveways, but will retain these if in existence.

# 21. Outdoor Spaces

- We will ensure brickwork is clear of graffiti, with no major cracks.
- We will make sure the property is wind and watertight.
- We will ensure access pathways to the front and back door are even and free of trip hazards.
- We have an external decorations programme which ensures our blocks of flats and rendered houses are painted every 7 years.
- We will check that air bricks are unobstructed and in good working order.
- We will ensure that rear gates to your home are safe and secured with a bolt.
- We will ensure that any outbuildings, such as garages are fit for purpose.
- We will ensure that gardens are free of items left by previous residents, are tidy and not overgrown. We will remove nuisance trees.
- All paths, steps, yards and ramps will be safe, secure and free from trip hazards.
- All fencing, walls, railings, gates and hand rails will be safe, secure and in good working order.
- All ponds or pools will be filled in or removed.
- Drainage systems will be free flowing and fitted with covers.
- Where the shed allotted to any property is in poor condition it will be removed. Where a shed is in good condition this will be gifted to the customer.
- Existing sheds and outbuildings will be free from rubbish, safe, secure and watertight.
- On some occasions we may remove the shed but leave the shed base in situ.



## 22. Boundaries

- We will inspect boundary walls and fences and if repairs or replacement are required, and (subject to clarification of the ownership of the boundary) complete the repairs. This may be completed during the relet period or after you have moved in.

## 23. Green Initiatives

- Where it is viable we will seek to upgrade loft insulation to 400mm in order to significantly reduce heat escape via the ceiling and roof.
- To reduce water usage we will (where tap or shower replacements are required) use aerated technology which could save up to 25 litres of water per person per day.
- We will install only A-rated boilers in our properties. We will annually review the type of boiler we use to ensure that we are keeping up with technological advances.
- We will provide toilets with a dual flush, low-flow function.
- We will install low energy LED lighting when required.
- We will check for cavity wall insulation on acquisitions.
- We will ensure waste is disposed of in an environmentally friendly a way as possible.

## 24. Aids, Adaptations and Non-Standard Fittings

- If there are disabled adaptations in place these will be left if they do not impede normal living arrangements. Any that are left will be tested for safe operation.
- Some items may have been installed by the previous tenant; these may be items which are not standard EPIC fixtures and fittings. Some non-standard items may be retained by EPIC, if they are well fitted, fully operational and useful. If they become defective and subsequently need to be repaired or replaced, we will remove them and replace with standard EPIC fittings and fixtures only.

## 25. Customer Involvement

EPIC Housing are committed to embedding customer voice within the services which we deliver. For this reason this lettable standard has been approved by our Operations Committee, and we will work closely with the Committee to regularly the review Our Home Standard to ensure that it remains fit for purpose. We will monitor feedback from applicants and customers to ensure that the standard remains fit for purpose.

# 26. Document Control

Document Control	
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EIA Completed (Where	No
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Employee Handbook Amends (Where Appro-	No
External Consultation	Yes– Contractors