



Renew standard

This document sets out clear expectations for both staff and residents when renting a home from NHG. It is not intended to be a detailed specification; this is covered in a separate document. For NHG staff, it should be read alongside the empty homes Refurbishment Specification and other empty homes related procedures.

We want all our residents to have a safe, warm, comfortable home where they can enjoy life and for every property we let to feel like home from the very first day our residents move in.

We aim to ensure all our homes have a minimum EPC rating of C. Where this cannot be achieved through empty homes refurbishment works, the required improvements will be delivered through our planned investment and retrofit programmes to meet the EPC C target by 2030 or an exemption registered.

The renew standard aims to bring forward planned internal works such as kitchen and bathroom replacements and other key components that would be undertaken in the next 5 years. Where no such works are planned we will renew or refurbish to ensure they are in a condition that is expected to remain in *good* and *serviceable* order for at least the next five years. This does not constitute a fixed replacement cycle, but reflects the reasonable period during which a component renewed to the required standard should remain in good condition before further major works are anticipated.

Full decoration and floor coverings will also be provided ensuring we take care of the home for our residents, now and in the future.

The previous repair history including known history of damp and mould will be used to inform any additional works that may be required to prevent previous issues from reoccurring. The home will be free from health and safety hazards at the most dangerous 'category 1' level, assessed using the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). Pest infestations, and pest proofing works will be completed prior to the installation of any new kitchen / bathroom suites.

The water supply will be isolated to prevent leaks occurring during the time the home is empty.

We will consider any internal or external communal improvements that could support faster letting times and enhance the overall experience for residents from day one. This may include tidying up communal front gardens, cleaning internal areas, repairing gates and replacing stair nosing's.

When adaptations are required, NHG will consider installing these alongside the occupational therapist assessment once a resident has moved in in accordance with [Adaptations procedure - Milo \(nhg.org.uk\)](https://www.nhg.org.uk) they will **not be** included within the scope of void works.

Bathroom and toilet

When a home is empty, we will ensure it is accessible without passing through an unsafe or obstructed route or an unsuitable room (e.g. a bedroom, unless there is a second bathroom in the home).

We will enhance or replace the bathroom ensuring all fittings are clean and in good working order. As standard wherever possible we will make sure that the bathroom has:

- A bath and a shower
- New flooring that is nonslip and easy to clean unless alternative appropriate flooring is already in place (Where the bathroom is renewed flooring will extend under the bath)
- Secure plugs and chains
- Plastic bath panels in a good condition, free from cracks or signs of damage.
- An electric shower or thermostatic mixer over the bath
- Tiling or plastic panelling installed to a height of 300mm around baths and 1.8m around showers
- Glass shower screens, as a minimum a shower curtain will be provided
- A new toilet seat and where the existing toilet is to remain in situ it will be cleaned
- Doors will have a courtesy latch
- Any units left by the previous tenant will be in a good state of repair and will be gifted to the new resident with no ongoing repairing obligations to NHG
- Vents will be in working order and a humidistat fan installed as standard.
- Energy efficient light fittings of standard design enabling residents to change lightbulbs easily
- An easily accessible & labelled isolation point to shut off mains cold water in event of an emergency
- Electrically heated towel rails may be fitted in small bathrooms in place of a radiator
- Where heat is provided via a heat network no wet towel rails will be left installed
- Water-resistant wall covering or paint

Where a home has a wet room, consideration will be given to modernise or refresh this as an inclusive space for the whole family or convert to a bathroom (where applicable). In addition to the standard as set out above, wet rooms will:

- Be watertight
- Have the correct fall to ensure water drains away appropriately
- All mechanical pumps will be tested and left in good working condition
- Have secure handrails and fittings, free from any defects

Kitchen

When a home is empty, we will look at the layout of kitchens and think about how these spaces are used, to allow for safe movement around the kitchen, storing, preparing, and cooking food easily. We will enhance or replace the kitchen ensuring all fittings are clean and in good working order, circulation space is not restricted and the sink, space for cooking appliance and worktops are logically placed ensuring the kitchen meets the decent homes standard. As standard, wherever possible, we will make sure the kitchen has:

- Minimum of eight units
- Separate electrical connection sockets for all appliances and at least three double sockets
- An easily accessible & labelled isolation point to shut off mains cold water in the event of an emergency
- Adequate ventilation in the kitchen, through a window, cooker hood, or a humidistat fan
- New flooring that is nonslip and easy to clean unless alternative appropriate flooring is already in place (Where the kitchen is renewed flooring will extend under the units)
- Sufficient space for a washing machine to be installed under a work surface in the kitchen or equivalent position. There will be appropriate fittings to allow such installation to take place, and a non-return valve fitted to the waste pipe.
- Splash backs will be tiled to a minimum of 300mm (two tiles high)
- There will be a minimum of 450mm of ceramic tiling above your worktops
- All waste pipes and traps will be free of defects with no leaks or drips and any holes around them will be sealed so as to prevent the ingress of vermin.
- Minimum space for a cooker will be 60cm

Living Room and Bedrooms

Unusual room layouts or shapes will be discussed so a decision can be made on next steps.

- Hanging rails / shelves will be fitted to all inbuilt wardrobes / cupboards.
- Single bedrooms will be a minimum of 6.51 sqm. The space will be big enough to fit a single bed and to store clothes, will have a window and heating.
- Double bedrooms will be a minimum of 10.22 sqm. The space will be big enough to fit a double bed and to store clothes, will have a window and heating.

Where a bedroom does not meet these requirements, the Bedroom Reclassification Procedure will be followed without exception.

Decoration

All properties (walls & ceilings) will be fully decorated, woodchip paper will be removed, and walls replastered if required. Good quality wallpaper may be left in situ. Woodwork will be filled and painted with wood paint. Internal window frames will also be painted.

Floors

- Timber boards will be in sound condition (i.e. not loose, broken, splintered, rotting)
- Carpets (or other suitable flooring) will be provided, including a good quality underlay, be clean, and free from all defects such as excessive wear, loose seams, tainting, bare patches and so on.
- Laminate or other wooden flooring will not be acceptable in flats above ground floor level unless the floor is of a solid concrete construction. If high quality wooden/laminate flooring is already fitted and in good condition, we will confirm with the neighbour below if there are any noise concerns and leave in situ where possible.
- Where underfloor heating is fitted appropriate underlay, carpet or hardwood surface will be fitted to ensure heating system remains effective

Windows and glazing

We will ensure that any doors or windows requiring replacement comply with Secured by Design standards and all relevant fire safety regulations.

As standard windows will:

- Be free of rot & cracks, watertight and sealed from draughts
- Be double glazed or where single glazed have secondary glazing
- Open and close with ease
- Be fitted with locks
- Be fitted with child resistant window restrictors where the change in floor level between the inside and outside is more than 600mm; the window can be opened over 100mm; and the guard height is less than 1100mm above internal floor level
- Basement and ground floor windows will have intact security catches
- Trickle vents will be easily adjustable and checked for external noise amplification
- Overlooked windows in bathrooms and toilets will be glazed with obscure glass or treated with plastic film to provide privacy
- Timber battens will be installed above all windows
- Have reflective/solar film where excess heat through large unshaded south-facing glazing is identified

External doors will:

- Meet appropriate fire safety standards as required by regulations
- Be free of rot & cracks, watertight and sealed from draughts
- Open and close with ease
- The locks on the front door will be a Yale (or appropriate type) lock and a mortice deadlock with a thumb turn
- Rear entrance doors will have a lock
- The lock on the external door and post box if there is one will have been changed.
- Handles and latches will be in working order
- Front doors and post boxes will be numbered
- Glass fronted doors will be changed to a secure wooden or UPVC door
- UPVC back doors will have frosted glass
- Doorbells and intercom systems will be tested and left working
- Where there is no existing intercom system or doorbell than a doorbell will be fitted
- Three sets of keys to the main entrance door will be supplied

Internal doors will:

- Meet appropriate fire safety standards as required by regulations
- Open and close with ease
- There will be no locks on internal bedroom doors.

Internal staircases where applicable will have:

- Gaps between their spindles and gaps between their balustrades which are no more than 100mm.
- All gaps between treads and risers filled in
- A two way light switch provided in all stairwells/hallways with more than one floor so that the light can be switched off/on from either floor or floors
- Be free from obstruction and not unreasonably steep;

- A suitable handrail.

Heating and hot water will be provided and will meet the following standards:

- For heating systems operated by gas, a check will be undertaken to ensure the Heating system is fully operational and in good working order, radiators are heating through and all have TRV's, controllers/programmers are working. Boilers will be less than 15 years old.
- All works will be undertaken to the heating installation specification in our empty home's specification.
- Where the property is a house with its own garden we will consider upgrading to a Monoblock Air source heat pump and cylinder.
- All radiators will have TRV's apart from radiators in the same room as a room thermostat, unless connected to an ASHP and will have a drain cock fitted, or each system will have a drain at the lowest point of the system.
- At handover the LGSR will not have any items requiring attention.
- Key cards will be left in the home where prepayment meters are in place.
- Operating instructions for heating/hot water system will be provided to residents during the turn on and test by the heating contractor.
- Electrical heating will be checked as part of the electrical installation condition report and any defects remedied

** Where voids are connected to a heat network. No works or checks will be undertaken**

Electrics

- An electrical safety check will be conducted and a satisfactory certificate provided
- Kitchen will have a minimum of four double outlet sockets
- Living rooms will have a minimum of four sockets including two double outlet sockets mounted together in a sensible location for a television
- Bedrooms will have a minimum of three double outlet sockets
- Cooker extractor hoods left in the home will have been clean and tested
- Pull cords will be clean
- Meters will be in sound condition and securely covered
- All sockets will be cleaned and secure to the wall
- No telecoms or aerials will be left trailing
- Energy efficient light bulbs will be put in all rooms
- Electrical heating where installed will be fully operational and in good working order

Fire safety

- All care & support properties or HMO's shall be LD1 compliant high protection which includes smoke alarms in all habitable rooms and escape routes with heat alarms installed in kitchens
- All general needs properties or non HMO's shall be LD2 compliant
- Any smoke head date with less than 5 years remaining will be replaced
- A working carbon monoxide alarm will be installed in any room used as living accommodation which contains a fixed combustion appliance or working flue

Loft

- Lofts will be clear of items
- Loft insulation will be 400mm thick, soffit ventilation or roof vent tiles fitted where required
- All hot water tanks will be foam lagged or be unvented
- All water tanks and pipes will be protected by 13mm pipe lagging or tank jackets
- Redundant water tanks will be removed and have all dead legs removed

- Boilers in loft spaces will have a permanent fixed loft ladder, working platform at least 2m in each direct from the boiler, permanent light fixing and handrail around the loft hatch

MVHR

- Where MVHR is installed MVHR units shall be less than 15 year old.
- Checked to ensure full functionality of the system
- All vents, ducts and controls shall be tested and cleaned
- Condense discharge shall be checked and cleaned
- Existing MVHR filters shall be changed prior to handover

Drainage

- Where the underground drainage system is accessed via internal or external manholes within the home or garden, jetting will be carried out as standard to ensure the system is clear and functioning properly.
- CCTV surveys will be carried out if repair history indicates repeated problems.
- These actions aim to proactively address underlying drainage issues before letting

Gardens

Gardens provide a great space for our residents to relax in and share time with families and friends. As standard rear gardens:

- Will be clear of rubbish
- Boundaries, fences, and walls that are part of the demise will be continuous and meet health and safety requirements
- Side access gates will be secure
- Grass will be cut, and shrubbery will be trimmed back
- Any young trees that have seeded naturally will be removed
- Any established trees will not pose a health and safety risk or be likely to cause structural damage
- Treatment will have been arranged for any knotweed found in the garden
- Any sheds will be emptied, left secure and in a good condition. These will be gifted to incoming residents with no ongoing repairing responsibility
- Defective paths, patios or hard standings will be in a good state of repair and free from trip hazards.
- Pointing works to walls and brickwork will have been carried out.
- For flood risk properties, drains are jetted and no return valves fitted to water outlet pipes

Communal Areas where applicable will be safe and welcoming. As part of this:

- Communal door entry systems will be in working order and keys/fobs provided
- Loose components such as balustrades or handrails will be reattached/replaced
- Stair treads/nosing's that are worn, broken, split, or showing signs of rot (in timber) or instability (in concrete/steel) will be replaced

All external communal areas will be checked to ensure:

- If they have paths and yards, they do not present a trip hazard
- If they have stairways, they have a securely fixed handrail;
- If they have access covers over manholes and service ducts that they are flush with the pavement and of no danger to pedestrians.
- If they have front entrance gates that these are functional and can open and close