The ‘Empty Homes Standard’ is the standard of safety, comfort and cleanliness that properties must meet for new tenants.
Welcome to Dacorum Borough Council’s housing service.

As your landlord, we want you to enjoy living in your new home. This leaflet tells you what work we will do to your home to make sure it is safe, comfortable, clean and attractive.

We will complete as much work as possible before you move in. However, so that you are not waiting too long to move in, we may do some work after you move in. We explain more about this in the section ‘Work that may be carried out within 28 days of you moving in’ (see page 9).

If you have any questions or don’t think your home meets the Empty Homes Standard, please send an email to emptyhomes@dacorum.gov.uk or phone 01442 228000 and ask for Empty Homes.

We will be looking at updating our lettable standard during 2020. If you would like to be part of a tenant focus group working with us to develop the new standard, please email us at tenant.involvement@dacorum.gov.uk or call 01442 228000 and ask for Housing Engagement.
Condition of the property when you move in

Hall, stairs and landing

- Handrails will be secure and gaps in the banisters will be no more than 100mm wide.
- The treads and risers of the stairs will be safe and secure.

- Smoke alarms provided in the property will be secure and working properly.

Doors and windows

- All windows will open and close, and will fasten securely.
- All windows above the ground floor will have restrictors fitted to limit how far they can open.
- There will be new locks on the front and back doors.
- No doors inside the property will have glass panels.
- The glass in bathroom windows will be frosted.
- Any fire doors will meet fire-safety regulations. (In flats, the front door of the property will also meet fire-safety regulations).

If your new home is in a block with security doors or a parking barrier, you will be given a key or fob to use it.
Kitchen

- Cupboard doors and drawers will open and close correctly.
- There will be at least one base unit, one wall unit and one sink unit in the kitchen, and worktop over all the base units.
- The kitchen worktop will not be damaged.
- There will be an electricity or gas supply for the cooker.
- The space for the cooker will be at least 620mm wide.
- The wall behind the cooker will have three rows of tiles above worktop height.
- There will be three rows of tiles above the worktop.
- Flooring will be non slip.
- The stopcock will work properly and be easy to get to. (We will leave you details of where the stopcock is in your home.)
- There will be space for either a fridge-freezer or a washing machine, or both if there is enough room in the kitchen.
- If there is space for a washing machine, there will be connections to the water and waste pipes.
- There will be hot and cold running water and the taps will work properly.
- A plug and chain will be fitted to the sink.
- There will be no rust in the sink or on the kitchen taps.
- Sinks in sheltered housing will have lever taps with thermostatic controls (which do not get too hot).
- We will let you know whether your kitchen has been added to any programme of works.
**Bathroom and toilet**

- The bathroom will be fitted with a basin, toilet and bath or shower.
- The toilet will have a new seat.
- Taps will be in working order and will not drip.
- The basin will be fitted with a plug and chain.
- Sanitary fittings will not have cracks. Chips in the bath will have been repaired or the bath will have been replaced.
- At least two items in the bathroom suite will match. The third may be plain white.
- Any over-the-bath shower left by the previous tenant will be working properly. However, you will be responsible for any future repairs.
- There will be three rows of tiles above the bath and sink (unless the position of the window makes this impossible).
- If there is a shower over the bath, the area around it will be tiled.
- Homes in sheltered housing will have lever taps with thermostatic controls (which do not get too hot).

**Floors**

- Any floorboards will be even and secure. No nails will stick out.
- Any gripper rods left by the previous tenant will be in good condition and broken rods will have been removed.
- Any carpet or laminate flooring left in the property will be in a very good condition. (You will be responsible for replacing any floor coverings left in the property.)
- Bathroom, toilet and kitchen floors will be non slip.
- Homes in sheltered housing will have carpets fitted, which you are responsible for cleaning.
Ceilings and walls

- Ceilings and walls will be safe and plaster will not be cracked. (If you strip the wallpaper in your property after you move in, and find that the plasterwork is damaged, we will inspect and repair it.)
- There will be no large tears in the wallpaper left in the property. (Small tears in the wallpaper will have been repaired and left ready for you to decorate.)
- There will be no polystyrene (‘poly’) tiles in the property.
- There will be no graffiti inside or outside the property.
- Any Artex on the ceiling will be in a good condition. (Any Artex that was in a poor condition will have been removed and the ceiling will have been skimmed and painted with two coats of emulsion.)
- Homes in sheltered housing will have been decorated.

Gas

- Your gas supply will be safe and will have been disconnected at the mains. (The supply will be reconnected and tested when you have arranged a supplier.)

Heating

- There will be either electric, gas or solid-fuel heating.
- There will be sufficient heating in at least one living room (lounge, dining room, kitchen). The rest of the heating will be upgraded within six months if necessary.

Electricity

- The electricity supply and wiring will be safe.
- Electrical sockets will be safe to use and will be our standard fittings.
- Each room except the bathroom will have at least one electrical socket.
- The kitchen will have at least two double electrical sockets and a cooker socket.

(Note: we do not provide TV aerials or TV sockets in the kitchen or bedroom unless we tell you otherwise.)
Energy efficiency

- You will be given an energy performance certificate which explains how energy efficient your home is.

Adaptations

- Aids and adaptations left at the property will be clean and in good condition. You must not remove them.

Asbestos

- Any asbestos in the property will be safe.

Cleaning

- All hard floors will have been swept and vacuumed.
- All tiled, concrete and hard floors will have been swept and mopped and will be dry, ready for you to fit your own floor covering. You must not lay laminate flooring to any area above the ground floor.
- Any built-in storage cupboard will have been swept out and mopped.
- All fixtures, fittings, window sills and ledges, radiators, pipes, door frames, door handles, picture rails, skirting boards and fire surrounds will have been wiped clean.
- Cobwebs will have been removed from walls, ceilings and cupboards.
- Blu Tack, sticky tape, drawing pins, chewing gum and labels will have been removed.
- The inside and outside of kitchen cupboards and drawers will have been washed.
- Kitchen sinks, taps, plugs, worktops, wall tiles, grouting and sealant will have been washed.
- The shower, bath, washbasin, taps, toilet and pipes will have been cleaned.

Gas, Electricity and Water

- You must take meter readings on the day you move in and inform your supplier.
- We will pay for any services that were used during the time that your home was empty before you moved in.
Outside

- Damaged paving slabs or concrete areas that lead to the property and could cause a trip will have been repaired or replaced.
- Roofs, walls, gutters and downpipes will be safe and gutters will have been cleared.
- Any wooden garden sheds left at the property will be in a good condition. (You will be responsible for maintaining or replacing any shed left at the property.)
- Brick sheds provided by us will be in a safe condition and will have a lock fitted.
- Any greenhouse left by the previous tenant will have been removed.
- Ponds will have been filled in.
- Any conservatory will be in good condition and meet building regulations. You must take responsibility for any future maintenance or removal.

Decorating

- We do not decorate properties (except those in sheltered housing schemes. We will provide a decorating pack that contains paintbrushes, rollers, roller trays and dust sheets.)
Work that may be carried out within 28 days of you moving in (if necessary)

Windows and doors

• Replacing cracked or broken glass. (This will have been left safe when you moved in.)
• Replacing damaged uPVC windows or double glazed units.

Cleaning

• Removing rubbish left in the loft by the previous tenant.

Outside

• Making roofs, walls, gutters and downpipes safe.
• Removing rubbish the previous tenant or our repairs team left in the garden, bin store or shed.
• Repairing any path to the property to make safe any fault that could cause a trip or fall.
• Mowing the grass and cutting back hedges and shrubs where necessary to make sure the garden is tidy.

• Marking the boundary of the front garden (by single wire only) and putting a close-boarded fence at the boundary of the back garden if that backs onto a road, public footpath or garage block.

• IMPORTANT: Future mainaintance and replacement of fencing between gardens is the tenant’s responsibility.

• Replacing cracked covers over drains.
• Replacing slipped or broken tiles or slates.
• Repairing gutters and downpipes.
• Replacing locks to sheds or bin stores.

Programmed Works

• When you sign up for your new home we will let you know whether it is on our works programme for planned maintenance such as new kitchen, bathroom, doors or windows etc.
Information in other languages and alternative formats

If you would like this handbook in another format, such as in large print or on CD, or in another language, phone 01442 228000.

Textphone users should call 01442 228656.

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Phone: 01442 228000
Email: emptyhomes@dacorum.gov.uk
Website: www.dacorum.gov.uk
New tenancy visit

We will visit you within 28 days of you moving into your new home to check that you have moved in successfully. At that visit we will ask you to fill in the following details to tell us whether or not your new home meets the lettable standard.

Does the property meet the lettable standard?

Yes ☐

No ☐

If no, what work needs to be carried out for the home to meet the lettable standard?

1. 

2. 

3. 

4. 

Your name: 

Your signature: 

Address: