



standards & feedback

# Empty homes

*The standards you can expect*

Available in large print, Braille and on CD

# What we do:

- **Before a home becomes empty**
- **When a home is empty**
- **To prepare an empty home for a new tenant**
- **After a new tenant has moved in**

This leaflet is for you to check that we have met our standards – and how to tell us if we haven't!

With around 12,500 homes to manage, and many people moving in and out each week, we will always have some empty homes. Our aim is to have as few empty homes as possible, and to get properties ready for new tenants as quickly as possible.

This leaflet sets out the standards you can expect from us.

# Before a home becomes empty:

When one tenant tells us they are leaving their home, we need to find a new tenant straight away. We start this process even before the home is empty. That's why it's really important that tenants give us four weeks notice if they are moving out. We will if they

are moving out. We will ask the outgoing tenant if we can show a new prospective tenant round by appointment and allow our workers to carry out repairs. It's the former tenants responsibility to leave the property empty and in a good state of repair.

We will ask the tenant that is leaving why they are moving on. We will use the information they give us to improve our services further.

# When a home is empty we will:

- Secure and clear the property of any rubbish within 48 hours of it becoming empty.
- Visit within 24 hours of receiving the keys to check what needs doing and order any repairs.
- We arrange for the water supply to be isolated and drained down.
- Start trying to find a new tenant if we haven't done so already. If we offer you a home, we give you three days to respond to us. If you refuse the home, we will offer it to someone else on the same day.

If you wish to have a look round the property before you accept it, we will arrange for someone to accompany you on the viewing. If you accept, the tenancy will start on the Monday following the letting appointment.

## Preparing a home for new tenants:

We will make sure that all properties that we are letting meet the following standard so that you are happy with your new home. This standard has been reviewed with tenants through our area panels. We always repair rather than replace if possible to keep down costs. We won't replace a working item for minor cosmetic reasons.

Our tenants safety and security is very important to us and features in our properties such as smoke alarms, window locks, security lights and the gas and electric installations are all checked.

## The Empty Homes standard includes the following items:

### OUTSIDE THE HOME WE WILL:

**Roofs & gutters** – Repair visibly damaged tiles and slates, replace missing soffits and fascias or repair holes. Replace gutter sections with holes, leaks or blockages.

**Waste pipes & overflows** – Replace missing or damaged sections and repair leaks.

**Paths** – Check for pools of water at the front and back doors. Repair trip hazards of more than 25mm (one inch). Repair gully problems.

**Gardens** – Cut back overgrown grass, hedges and other vegetation where necessary. Remove damaged outhouses and sheds. Remove all rubbish. Provide rotary clothes dryer or other drying facility.

**Front & back doors** – Replace if missing, badly damaged or badly rotten. We will repair minor

defects. Ensure the doors open and close properly and lock securely. We also change locks to front and back doors to give you piece of mind that no one else has access to the property. And we will ensure that you receive a full set of keys which will have a Northwards keyring.

We will fit a chain and spy hole to the front door if missing, Plus, fit door numbers if missing, and an external security light if appropriate.

### **INSIDE THE HOME WE WILL:**

**Internal doors** – Fill small holes and dents. Make sure they open and close properly and catches, handles, stops etc work. Replace if missing or badly damaged.

**Window frames** – Repair minor damage or replace if missing or badly damaged. Ensure that all window handles, hinges and locks are in working order.

**Floors** – Renew damaged floorboards where necessary. Repair small gaps to floorboards or chipboards on landings or in the centre of rooms. Ensure solid floors are free from large holes and cracks. Remove all carpet grips.

**Staircases** – Ensure handrail is secure and replace if missing. Where fitted, spindles to balustrades not to be more than 100mm apart. Edges to stairs to be free from splits and excessive wear.

**Walls and ceilings** – Replace missing or moving plaster. Remove all nails and screws from walls, and fill small holes, dents and cracks with decorating filler. Replace skirting boards if missing or badly damaged. Remove all polystyrene tiles and repair any damage to ceilings. Polystyrene coving and ceiling roses not fitted in conjunction with ceiling tiles, will not be removed if they are in a good state of repair. Except on staircases and escape routes.

**Boxed in pipe work** – Repair any damage. Replace or remove if cheaper, but we don't box in. You are of course free to ask permission to do this yourself.

**Electrics** – Replace visibly broken fittings. Energy efficient light bulbs will be fitted in every room with a suitable light fitting.

A partial test of the system will be carried out. A full test can only be carried out when the supply is on, so we will do this when you have arranged for the electricity to be connected once you have the keys to your new home. We will agree a time with you to carry out this test.

**Gas installation** – Ensure the system is partially tested while the property is empty. As with the electrics, a full test can only be done when the supply is on, so we will do this at a suitable time for you when you have had the gas connected.

**Decoration** – We do not normally decorate but will remove badly hanging paper from walls and ceilings. We will emulsion over or strip wallpaper if there is racist or offensive graffiti. Where we believe it is needed we will offer you a choice of decorating materials or Johnstones vouchers.

**Cleaning** – Remove all the previous tenants' belongings including those from the loft, unless there is an agreement not to do so. We will clean the property to a good standard and leave an air freshener.

## **KITCHEN – WE WILL:**

Before replacing any kitchen units we will first check to see when the property is due to have a new kitchen fitted under the major improvement programme. We will be able to tell you when this will be. We will ensure that you have a minimum number of units in the meantime.

For a one bedroom property due to be improved in the immediate future, this would consist of one base unit, one sink unit and one double wall unit but this would be increased dependant on the size of the property and the period before the new kitchen is to be installed.

We will ensure all of these are working. You will then be able to have your own choice of units from the available ranges when your new kitchen is fitted.

**In many properties though this work will have already been carried out and therefore the following standard will apply:**

Kitchen units and worktops will be fully operational. Missing or broken doors, worktops, drawers, drawer fronts, catches and runners

are to be colour matched and replaced. Units will have shelves, level bottoms and aligned doors. Drawers will open and close. Edgings on doors, drawers and worktops will be repaired and worktops will be replaced where damaged or stained badly.

A minimum of one course of glazed tiles will be fitted as a splash back. Tiles and grouting will be free from defects and broken or cracked tiles will be replaced with the closest available match. Wall tile grout will be patch filled as necessary and existing grout will be cleaned. New sealant will be installed to worktop tile splashbacks.

There will be a space available for a cooker with a power supply available and we will connect your cooker for you if you pay in advance for this service.

All taps, traps, wastes and pipe work will be free from defects and a plug and chain will be fitted to the sink bowl.

Floor tiles will be clean and intact and broken tiles will be replaced with the best match available. Sheet vinyl will be replaced

where necessary. All extractor fans, where fitted, will be clean and in working order.

### **BATHROOM – WE WILL:**

Replace badly stained items that cannot be cleaned. There will be no cracking, chips corrosion and staining on the bath, shower, wash hand basin or WC, all will be fitted securely and sealed correctly.

All plumbing is to be free of defects including taps, traps, wastes and all pipe work. There will be a minimum of two courses of tiles to form a splash back around the bath and tiles will be free from defects and broken or cracked tiles will be replaced with the closest match available. Wall tile grout will be patch filled as necessary and existing grout will be cleaned. New sealant will be installed to the bath, wash hand basin and tiled splashback.

The toilet seat will be renewed and plugs and chains will be fitted to both the bath and the wash hand basin. Showers, where they are fitted will be in working order and have full height tiling to shower and adjacent wall.

We will renew shower curtain rails if they are damaged or missing and we will replace the shower curtain if the one in the property is in a poor condition.

## **Tenants Improvements**

Where the previous tenant has left a fixture or fitting or carried out any alterations or installed laminate flooring, we will leave it in the property if it is in a good condition or if it is more cost effective to repair than to restore to its original condition. If it is unsafe however, we will remove and restore.

## **When you have moved in we will:**

Ask you to comment on how the whole process worked for you from your initial application for re-housing to what you think of your new home. Please take five minutes to fill this in and to share your thoughts with us.

We will use our feedback to improve our services further. We will arrange to visit you at home within the first four weeks of your tenancy. This is to ensure that you are settling in and to see if we can help you with any aspect of the beginning of your tenancy. Of course you are free to contact us in the meantime on 0161 953 2662.

## **How are we doing?**

We monitor how we are doing in letting homes on a quarterly basis. If you are interested to see how we do then you can look on our website at [www.northwardshousing.co.uk](http://www.northwardshousing.co.uk)

The website also has lots of information on it about when your new home is due to have any major works carried out to it such as a new kitchen or windows. Internet access is available in our three local offices and local libraries should you not have access at home or elsewhere.

## DECLARATION BY TENANT

I confirm that the property into which I have moved meets the standards set out in the booklet **“Empty Homes: Standards you can expect”**. It is my responsibility to ensure that the property is maintained to those standards during my tenancy and to return the property in the same condition when terminating my tenancy, subject to fair wear and tear.

Signed .....

Date .....

Address .....

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## Extra services for customers with reduced hearing or vision

To get this leaflet in Braille, large print or on CD:

**Call:** 03000 123 123 **E-mail:** info@northwardshousing.co.uk

**Fax:** 03000 124 123 **Text phone:** 0161 274 0899

Nëse këtë dokument e doni të përkthyer, ju lutemi telefononi numrin më poshtë, ky dokument gjendet edhe në gjuhën braille, në format me germa të mëdha ose në CD.

Albanian

ان كنت تريد ترجمة هذه الوثيقة، يرجى الاتصال بالرقم المذكور أدناه. تتوفر هذه الوثيقة أيضاً بطريقة برايل للمكفوفين وبالحروف الطباعية الكبيرة أو على قرص مدمج – سي دي.

Arabic

如果您想要一份中文译本，请打下列电话。  
这文件也有盲文版、大字体版和 CD 光盘备索。

Chinese

Přejete-li si překlad tohoto dokumentu zavolejte prosím na níže uvedené číslo. Tento dokument je také k dispozici ve slepeckém písmu, ve velkém formátu nebo na CD.

Czech

Si vous désirez une traduction de ce document, appelez le numéro ci-dessous. Ce document est également disponible en braille, en gros caractères ou sur CD.

French

نه گه ر پښت خوښه ته رجومه ي. نه م به لگه نامه به وه رگريت، تکايه په يوه ندي بکه به نه و ژماره ي خواره وه. نه م به لگه به هه ر وه ها به شينوازي نوسراوي کوزران، به چاپي گه زره و يان له سه ر سي دي هه په.

Kurdish

Se deseja obter este documento traduzido, por favor contacte o número abaixo, este documento também está disponível em Braille, impressão grande ou CD.

Portuguese

Haddii aad rabto in dukumeentigan lagu turjumo fadlan soo wac lambarka hoose, waxaa dukumeentigan weliba lagu heli karaa farta Braille ee dadka indhaha la', far waaweyn ama cajal (CD).

Somali

اگر آپ اس دستاویز کا ترجمہ چاہتے ہیں تو براہ کرم نیچے دئے گئے نمبر پر کال کریں، یہ دستاویز بریل، بڑی چھپائی یا سی ڈی کی شکل میں بھی دستیاب ہے۔

Urdu

03000 123 123