

Healthy Homes Checklist

FIRE SAFETY

Fires in the home can be a serious threat to life. All reasonable attempts should be made by a landlord to help reduce the risk of them occurring, or causing serious injury. Things to look out for include:

- Smoke alarms: Are there smoke alarms on each floor? If the alarm has a flashing light, it is working properly. You can also push the button to test the alarm.
- Fire Extinguishers: Can you see any fire extinguishers or blankets? Are they in date?
- Are there any fire doors?
- Have you asked the landlord to show you the fire escape route? Is it kept clear and is it easy to access?

LIGHT AND VENTILATION

Ventilation is important for removing indoor air pollutants, reducing condensation and mould, and cooling a home when it is too warm. To ensure a house has sufficient light and ventilation:

- Can you open the windows?
- Are there air vents, particularly in the kitchen or bathroom, and do they work/ can they be opened?
- Do all lights work? Check they light up spaces such as stairs and bathrooms to prevent trips and falls
- Is there enough natural light? Think about what it will be like to live in key locations like bedrooms and living areas.

ELECTRICAL HAZARDS

It is important to ensure that electrics in your house are in working order. Electric shocks can result in severe injuries, and faulty electrics have the potential to cause fires or damage property. When viewing a property, you should look out for:

- Are there any damaged power or extension cables?
- Do any cables or extension cables run under furniture or rugs, that could be easily damaged?
- Are any sockets overloaded (where lots of appliances are plugged into a single socket)?
- Are there any leaks or water sources near sockets or appliances?
- Switch on all lights as you look around the rooms to check they are working.

ENERGY

Ensuring heating systems work effectively will keep you warmer in winter and make your home cheaper to heat. There are several ways you can get the best out of your heating system:

- Check that radiators are not covered by furniture
- Turn the heating system on (or ask the landlord to), does the entire surface of the radiator feel warm?
- Turn the hot water on to check the boiler works.
- Check behind any furniture that there is no damp, mould or damage (furniture that touches walls can cause damp to form).
- If the property has a gas cooker, gas boiler, or gas fireplace, check for a carbon monoxide detector. Test the detector to check it works.



PHYSICAL HAZARDS

Fall hazards can be common in a home, but you can minimize risk by checking:

- Are carpets or large rugs properly secured to the floor? Do they move or slip underfoot?
- Are doorways and exits clear of furniture, especially doors to outside?
- Are there any trailing cables across walkways (such as extension leads or standing lamps)?
- Can you access the outside without risk of slipping or tripping due to clutter? Are there grip mats or welcome mats?
- Is there enough storage space for food, which should be cool and dry? Is there space for a fridge, if one is not provided?
- Are worktops in the kitchen secure so they don't slip or slide? Can they be cleaned easily to prevent contamination of food or attracting pests?
- Check to see if there are any leaks on sinks, showers, baths, pipes and toilets. Run taps, showers and flush the toilet to make sure everything is working.
- Check for water stains on the ceiling or walls. A bulging or flaking patch or a musty odour can indicate that water damage is occurring.
- Check that any installed gas or electric appliances work properly.

NOISE

Loud noises can contribute to stress and interfere with sleeping, concentration, and relaxation.

- Check what noise you can hear from living spaces and bedroom(s) – are you comfortable with that level of noise?
- If possible, try to visit the property at different times of the day to observe the noise.

SECURITY

A secure home can give peace of mind as well as protecting your property, the most important basics of home security include:

- Do all ground floor windows and outside doors have working locks (key operated)? Are there any additional locks on the outside doors?
- If there are motion activated lights or a burglar alarm, check that they work.
- If the property has outside storage, such as a shed or garage, ensure that there is a sturdy door and strong lock.

ASK THE LANDLORD

- If there are fire extinguishers or blankets present in the property, are they in date?
- Are there fire doors and/or a fire escape?
- To see the Gas Safety certificate.
- To see the fuse box/consumer unit and to see the electrical installation certificate
- When the gas or electric was last serviced
- What insulation measures are in place in the property e.g., cavity wall insulation, loft insulation, double glazing
- To test turning on hot water and boiler to ensure it works

LOCATION

Location can impact a property in several ways that can affect your health, before renting a property check for the nearest:

- park/green space
- bus stop
- train station
- pharmacy
- doctor/hospital
- supermarket/shop

Could you get to these locations by walking or cycling if needed? Does the area feel safe?

