

1. What letters/ communication do you send to tenants leaving properties to try to avoid additional work being needed to bring the property up to the lettable standard? Would we be able to see a copy of this letter/communication?

Where possible we discuss terminating a tenancy over the phone with a tenant and also send out a termination letter. (Attached)
- 2) Would we be able to see a copy of your lettable standard?

Yes, see attached
- 3) Do you have a different lettable standard for homes where the prospective tenant has accessibility requirements?

No
- 4) How do you let tenants know what to expect from the lettable standard and how do you not raise their expectations too high? Is this available in different formats for people with accessibility needs?

At sign up tenants are provided with a copy of the lettable standard and repairs leaflet so they know what is our and their responsibility. (see attached). The leaflets are only available in PDF or physical printed format. The council is looking at adding them to add the repairs page on its web page soon. If needed they can be requested in different formats.
- 5) How is the standard communicated to the contractors and cleaners carrying out the work?

The lettable standard was written in conjunction with tenants, contractors, council colleagues and was approved by our housing advisory panel.
- 6) Are there any special arrangements made for cleaning staff e.g. water supply/ electricity/lighting?

The cleaning staff are employed by our in house contractor and comply to CDM regulations. Water supply, lighting and welfare are provided.
- 7) Do you have a performance indicator on how long repairs take and how long cleaning should take? Checks/ improvements

We have a KPI on how long repairs take, cleaning is part of the works ticket and falls under this KPI.
- 8) What audits do you carry out on void properties during the void period and prior to re-letting e.g. do you check on repairs and cleaning standards before every re-let?

Each void is inspected throughout the works and handed over by our property inspector at the end of the works.
- 9) Do you carry out any new tenant surveys/ review complaints to improve re-let standards and services? If so, would you be able to share your results?

At present we do not carry out any form of survey but this is something we are looking to implement. Complaints are dealt with on a case by case basis and are discussed between teams.

Former Tenants Improvements or Alterations

- Any alterations will be checked and if in good condition and free from defect will be left in place. Repairs will be carried out on these items, however should this be uneconomical or they will require replacement at some future time, the item will be removed.
- On sign up you will be informed of what items are being left in the property. Curtains and carpets may also be left in the property if they are in good condition and you wish to keep them.

Please note:

Some works, which are considered not to be detrimental to you moving into your new home, will be completed by appointment when the tenancy commences. Examples of this type of work are garden clearance and external repairs.

Some works may only be identified when you have moved into your new home. An example of this is plastering identified when you commence decorating your home. These works will be undertaken by appointment following the commencement of the tenancy.

Your Part

- You will arrange utility suppliers and pre-paid meter cards, if appropriate, when you move into your new home. You will be informed when you sign up for the tenancy the type of meters in the property and who to contact.
- You will maintain your home to this lettable standard – see the repairs customer offer for details of the types of repairs that are the council's responsibility and those that are your responsibility.
- If you want to make any improvements or alterations to your home, then you will need to get consent from us before you carry out any works.
- If you end your tenancy, the property will be returned to us in a condition that meets the lettable standard. We have a recharge policy and if it is not this standard and a repair is needed because you, your family or a visitor to your home has caused damage or if you have neglected your home, we will charge you for the cost of the repair, plus VAT at the current rate and an administration fee.



Last year we let 1,589 properties and received an average of 50 bids on each one.



Wigan Council Our Lettable Standard



Our promise to you is to ensure that your new council home is a high standard that is safe, functional and clean, ready for you to move in.

This is our 'Void Lettable Standard' and we have developed this in consultation with our tenants. It explains the standard of accommodation that you can expect when taking a new tenancy with us. It also highlights the condition that we expect the property to be in when it is handed back at the end of the tenancy.

General Work

We will:

- Carry out a gas check to ensure compliance with the Gas Installation and Use regulations, and then issue a Landlords Safety Certificate to you as the new tenant.
- Carry out an electrical safety test in accordance with the current edition of the IEE regulations and then issue a safety certificate to you.
- Remove all loose cables and wires, including alarm, phone extensions and former tenant's fittings.
- Check all stop taps to ensure they are accessible and operational.
- Take meter readings for gas, electricity and water.
- Check that a smoke detector is fitted and working.
- Undertake an asbestos survey.
- Undertake an EPC (Energy Performance Certificate) survey and then issue a copy of the certificate to you.

External Work

- All external walls will be free of major defects, graffiti or holes. If there are areas of walls which require pointing this will generally be undertaken on the cyclical maintenance programme.
- Doors will be operational, correctly fitting and have a minimum of two keys per lock.
- Windows will be operational, opening sashes will operate correctly and have locking window handles where required.
- The roof will be wind and watertight. Fascias, gutters, rain water pipes will be clean and free from obvious defects.
- Manhole covers will be level and securely fixed. Gullies will have grid covers fitted.
- Gates and fences will be provided to the front gardens if required. Rear fencing is not provided or maintained unless the garden adjoins open land, road, waterway or footpath.
- Gardens will be cut down to a manageable level and any overgrown trees or bushes pruned. Some trees may be subject to a Tree Preservation Order. In these circumstances advice will be sought and permission obtained before any works are undertaken.
- All ponds will be filled in.
- Former tenants' sheds and features may be left if they are sound and free from defect. It will become your responsibility, as the new tenant, to maintain them.
- Debris and rubbish will be removed, including builder's rubble and surplus soil.

Internal Work

- The loft space will be clear of rubbish and fire breaks between adjoining properties will be intact.
- The loft space will have the correct amount of insulation fitted across the whole of the loft area.
- All water tanks, cylinders and pipework in the loft will be insulated.
- Ceilings and walls will be free from visible major defects and will be free from graffiti.
- Wall and ceiling coverings (wallpaper) will only be removed if extensive plastering works are required.
- Internal doors and the door furniture will be operational.
- Architraves and skirtings will be complete.
- Floors will be sound and secure; floorboards will be free of major defect.
- Staircases and handrails will be securely fitted; treads will be free of splits and cracks.
- Sanitary ware will be clean and fit for purpose. Taps and plugs will be checked for function.
- Kitchen worktops and units will be functional with inset sinks and pillar taps. Gas and or electric points will be provided to the cooker space where possible.
- Washing machine points will be provided where possible.
- It is the tenant's responsibility to connect cookers and washing machines to the supply provided. Gas connections must be undertaken by a registered Gas Safe engineer.
- The property will be inspected for dampness and condensation related mould growth. Areas of mould growth will be treated.
- Polystyrene ceiling tiles and covings will be removed.
- Adaptations will be checked to ensure they are operational.

We carry out repairs to around 2,300 empty properties every year



Cleaning

- On completion of the re-let repairs, the property will be cleaned by the builder to remove any obvious stains or residue caused by the works.
- The cleaning will include:
 - o Sweep or mop all floors as appropriate
 - o Wipe down all internal woodwork
 - o Clean the glazing internally including the window frames
 - o Wash down all kitchen surfaces and units
 - o Clean and disinfect all sanitary ware – baths, showers, wash hand basins and toilets
 - o Clean all electrical sockets, switches and fittings
 - o Wipe down and clean behind radiators
 - o Remove any mail, packaging or rubbish and check the refuse bin is empty
 - o Sweep the front path or communal entrance

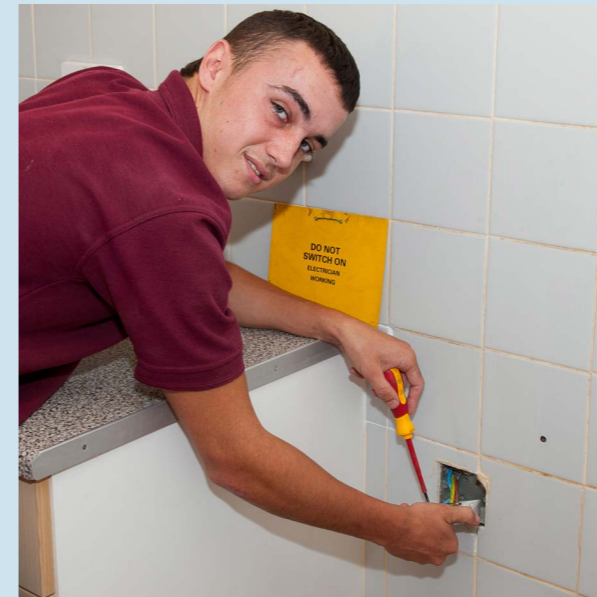
Full guide to who is responsible for specific types of repairs

You are responsible for:

- The internal decoration of your home.
- Minor cracks or holes in plaster.
- Curtain pole, track or rail replacement.
- Fitting of washing machines, tumble driers or dishwashers.
- Fitting of cookers – gas cookers must be fitted by a Gas Safe Engineer.
- Upkeep of your garden, including arranging collection of any bulky items and waste, such as mattresses and large electrical items.
- Replacement of light bulbs and fluorescent tubes.
- Replacement of fuses to your own electrical appliance and resetting of trip switches.
- Replacement of lost keys.
- Door bell.
- Internal door handles.
- Broken glazing, unless a crime has been committed – we will fix this if you give us a crime reference number.
- Door changes to accommodate carpets or new flooring, including re-fixing of any draught excluders.
- Wooden Sheds.
- Clothes poles and washing lines.
- Fencing to rear gardens – unless the garden backs on to open land, a road, waterway or footpath, when we will be responsible.
- Installing and maintaining aerials (unless it is one fitted by us for the benefit of a communal area).
- Replacement of toilet seats (unless it is fitted by us as part of the bathroom programme and still under warranty).
- Replacement of plugs and chains.
- Fixtures and fittings to the property that you have provided, such as internal doors, laminate flooring, tiling, and shelving. You need permission from us before you make any changes.
- Bleeding radiators.
- Appropriate heating and ventilation to reduce incidents of condensation.



Wigan Council Responsive Repairs Service Standards



Our promise to you is to maintain your homes to a high standard.

We will:

- Provide an efficient and effective repairs service for all our tenants.
- Ensure those undertaking work have the necessary skills, qualifications and experience.
- Aim to complete repairs within a single visit where possible. If this is not possible then we will let you know what needs to be done and when this will be.
- Arrange appointment times to suit you within our normal working schedule.
- Aim to get all repairs right first time.
- Treat you and your home with respect.
- Encourage feedback and learn from this.
- Comply with current legal responsibilities and codes of good practice.
- Complete urgent repairs within prescribed government timescales.
- Be responsible for maintaining:
 - o The structure and outside of your home.
 - o Any fixtures and fittings we have provided.
 - o The safety of your property, including wiring.
 - o Any communal areas.

You will:

- Report repairs quickly.
- Get online to report repairs at www.wigan.gov.uk/housingrepairs or use the Report It app”
- Allow access to your home when we call to complete a repair.
- Contact us in good time if an appointment is no longer convenient.
- Arrange your own contents insurance.
- Be responsible for maintaining:
 - o The internal decoration of your home.
 - o Any fixtures or fitting you have provided. You may need permission from us before you make any changes.
 - o Any damage caused by you, your family or visitors to your home.



We carry out around 80,000 repairs to your homes every year

Will you charge me for any repairs?

If a repair is needed because you, your family or a visitor to your home have caused damage or if you have neglected your home, we will charge you for the cost of the repair, plus VAT at the current rate and an administration fee.

We will tell you why we are charging you and may give you the chance to carry out repair work yourself.

At the end of your tenancy you may be charged for any damage to the property and the cost of removing any rubbish you leave in the house or garden.

Full guide to who is responsible for specific types of repairs.

We are responsible for:

- Main structure of the building, including external walls, foundations, roof and external decoration.
- External doors, locks and keys unless you have lost your keys.
- Windows and window handles – we will replace broken glazing if a crime has been committed and a crime reference number obtained.
- Drains, gutters and external pipes.
- Front fencing and gates including footpaths where these are shared or are the main walkway to your home.
- Internal structure, including ceilings, walls, floors, stairs and skirting boards but not internal decoration.
- Internal doors unless these have been replaced by you without our permission.
- Main wiring, sockets, switches and smoke alarms.
- Boiler and heating repairs unless it is a system or fire that has been fitted by you without our permission.
- Kitchen units, worktops, extractor fans and tiling unless these have been fitted by you without our permission.
- Plumbing including soil pipes, external drainage, hot and cold water supply and major blockages to sinks, wash basins, baths and showers. You are responsible for minor blockages and general cleaning to ensure water is free flowing.
- Bathroom fittings including bath, shower, wash basin, toilet and cistern and original tiling and taps unless these have been replaced by you without our permission.
- Communal areas, including door entry systems, corridor and stairway lights, and rubbish chutes.



NAME
ADDRESS
ADDRESS
TOWN
POSTCODE

Our Reference Termination of Tenancy
Your Reference
Please ask for Home Finder Team
Extension
Direct Line 01942 489005
Date

Dear NAME,

TERMINATION OF YOUR TENANCY

I write to confirm that on the (DATE) I received notice of your intention to terminate your tenancy. **As a result, your tenancy (ADDRESS) will end on Sunday (DATE) which is rent week (NUMBER).**

Please read this letter carefully, it contains important information about ending your tenancy.

Keys

- When your tenancy ends you have an obligation under the terms of your tenancy agreement to return keys as well as any security fob(s) and/or parking permits (if applicable).
- All keys and fobs should be returned to either Wigan Life Centre or Leigh Life Centre. This should be done no later than 12pm on the Monday following your termination date.
- Opening times for both Life Centres are Monday - Friday 10am - 2pm.
- If you have a Scheme Manager for your property your keys can be handed in to them.

Failure to return keys to will result in rent accruing and termination date being delayed.

If your property has a communal door entry key or fob, then 2 of these must also be returned. A charge of £50.00 will be made for each door entry key or fob not handed in. This amount is due to administration cost for raising a rechargeable account and the cost of raising an emergency access order. You will be able to reduce the costs of any lost keys and fobs by contacting our Contact Centre on 01942 489005 to arrange replacements in advance of you handing the keys in.

Gas and Electric

Please note that my team have now instructed British Gas to take over the energy supply to your property and this will commence on the day after your termination date. Should your tenancy need to be extended please contact a member of my team.

Should your meters be operated by card, key or token we would be grateful if these could be returned with the keys to your property.

Security

Sometimes we arrange for properties to be protected with alarms linked to a Central Monitoring Station. My staff may have already made arrangements with you about this. If they have, it is important that you notify them immediately of any changes, which might affect this.

If the property is fitted with a standard security alarm please remember to let my staff know what the security code is when you hand the keys in.

Rent

The week your tenancy is due to end is shown above and your rent is payable up to and including that week. When you hand in your keys the amount of rent due will depend on payments you have made, any Housing Benefit and Supporting People grant you are entitled to, any arrears that you may have and any amounts outstanding on other accounts such as Court Costs or the Week in Arrears account. My staff will tell you the final balance due on your rent account and any other accounts you may have when you hand in your keys. If you don't clear all balances on your accounts when you leave your tenancy, we will recover any debts when you are a former tenant.

Housing Benefit

If you are in receipt of Housing benefit, it is likely that **this will be cancelled when you move out**, so if you leave before the date your tenancy ends, you may have to pay full rent from that date.

Pre-termination Inspection and Rechargeable Repairs

Your home will be inspected before you leave and before a new tenant moves in. If any work is needed, you will be sent a bill for the cost of any work that we would not do as a normal repair. The kind of work you could be charged for includes: -

1. The removal of furniture, carpets or other floor coverings, and rubbish left either in the property or in the garden.
2. Cleaning the property if it is left in a poor state.
3. Putting back any cupboards, doors, gas fires, etc. you have removed.
4. Repairing any damage or putting right any unsatisfactory alterations made without permission.
5. Renewing locks (If less than 2 keys per lock are handed in).

Meter Readings

For your own benefit, please make arrangements for final readings to be taken by the companies who supply your Gas and Electricity. Their telephone numbers will be on any bills that they have sent to you.

Advertisement

Please note that your property will be advertised in the Property Weekly list of homes available once notice has been given.

Further Help

If you are unable to clear all balances on your accounts when you leave your tenancy can you please contact my Rents Team who will be able to offer appropriate advise as we will recover any debts when you are a former tenant.

Yours Sincerely,

Allocations and Accommodations Manager