

Accommodation Maintenance Standards

This summary of response times for reactive maintenance is intended to support people in asylum accommodation and their advocates to hold Providers to account in line with their contractual obligations. Standards taken from Annex B of the Statement of Requirements of the Asylum Accommodation and Support Contracts (AASC).

asylum matters

UNSAFE (Category 1 maintenance issue)¹

4 hours 

Immediate vacation by the Service User if the issue cannot be made safe **within 4 hours**, where the criteria mean there has been, or is likely to be, an imminent risk to a Service User's health, safety or security, or the disruption or loss of a fundamental service or facility in the accommodation.

The Accommodation Providers are under an obligation to provide a continuous call out facility to restore/rectify within 4 hours of becoming aware, or provide temporary alternative accommodation.²

- B.2.1.1 **gas leak**;
- B.2.1.2 **structural instability**;
- B.2.1.3 **flooding** or free standing water within the Accommodation;
- B.2.1.4 water penetration through the structure of the accommodation resulting in **pooling**;
- B.2.1.5 damaged or friable **asbestos** linings or insulation products;
- B.2.1.6 following a Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) inspection, the Accommodation receives a **health and safety assessment of Category A, B or C**;
- B.2.1.7 **electrical damage** that could lead to fire or other injury;
- B.2.1.8 **broken glazing** and/or windows or external doors which prevent the property being secured;
- B.2.1.9 **no mains water** supplied;
- B.2.1.10 **lack of operational smoke detectors** in House in Multiple Occupation;
- B.2.1.11 exposure to **toxic or hazardous chemicals** or gas;
- B.2.1.12 **fire damage** affecting the structural integrity of the property or resulting in any of the above circumstances (B.2.1.1-11).



UNINHABITABLE

(Category 2 maintenance issue)³

24 hours/5 working days 

Implementation of an interim solution by the Provider **within 24 hours**. **Permanent rectification within 5 working days**, where such criteria mean there may be an adverse effect on a Service User's health, safety or security or which have a significant detrimental impact on the property or the quality of life of the Service User.

If the Provider cannot implement an effective interim solution within 24 hours, they must provide temporary alternative accommodation.⁴

- B.3.1.1 **no gas** supplied where gas is normally supplied;
- B.3.1.2 **no electrical** power supplied;
- B.3.1.3 **falling or unstable ceiling fabric**;
- B.3.1.4 **hole in or weakened floor**;
- B.3.1.5 bare or **exposed electrical wiring**;
- B.3.1.6 **no operational smoke or fire alarms**;
- B.3.1.7 failure to comply with Local Authority licensing requirements with regard to **fire safety** and/or fire safety standards (see also paragraph B.9 Annex B SOR);
- B.3.1.8 **no operational Carbon Monoxide (CO) detector**, where a property has a solid fuel or gas appliance;
- B.3.1.9 **no operational hot water** supply;
- B.3.1.10 **no operational space heating system** which is capable of heating the whole of the dwelling;
- B.3.1.11 **blocked foul and/or surface water drainage** either inside or outside the Accommodation, which affects the Accommodation or poses a health risk to occupants;
- B.3.1.12 **leaks which give rise to potential flooding** either inside or outside the Accommodation;
- B.3.1.13 **no valid gas and/or electrical certification** for electrical wiring and associated components and fittings, including failure to obtain valid electrical certification upon the completion of any work to electrical wiring and associated components and fittings. Gas appliances require certification every twelve (12) months by a Gas Safe registered engineer (or upon reinstallation) and electrical appliances to be inspected every five (5) years by a suitably qualified electrician (or upon reinstallation);
- B.3.1.14 **windows and balconies which do not have any protection against falling**, in Accommodation for children or adults with specific needs;
- B.3.1.15 **broken glazing and/or window or door frames** which represent a hazard to the health and safety of Service Users;
- B.3.1.16 **pest infestation** of a type or scale which represents a serious hazard to the health and safety of Service Users;
- B.3.1.17 **inadequate or a lack of necessary adaptations** to meet the specific needs of disabled or at risk Service Users;
- B.3.1.18 **mould on the walls or ceilings** of a type or scale which represents a serious hazard to the health and safety of Service Users; or
- B.3.1.19 ground floor **windows**, and other accessible windows, and any entrance **doors** that are **not capable of being closed and locked**, or which are in a condition which compromises the security of the property.



UNFIT FOR PURPOSE (Category 3 maintenance issue)⁵

21 working days 

Investigate and implement a permanent repair or remedy within **21 working days** of becoming aware of the maintenance issue.

Accommodation is unfit for purpose if there has been, or is likely to be, an adverse effect on the comfort or convenience of a Service User, or the potential to lead to further damage to the property if not addressed. Providers must investigate and implement a permanent repair or remedy within 21 days of becoming aware of the maintenance issue.⁶

- B.4.1.1 the Accommodation is of the type **appropriate** to be allocated to the Service User;
- B.4.1.2 the **interior structure** of Accommodation and all fixtures and fittings are safe and free from defects or artefacts that may pose a hazard to Service Users;
- B.4.1.3 **stairs** have at least one handrail and are not considered hazardous;
- B.4.1.4 **roofs, walls, and external windows and doors** are in a good condition, are weatherproof and are sufficiently well-fitting so they do not cause severe draughts;
- B.4.1.5 rooms have satisfactory provision for natural and artificial **lighting**;
- B.4.1.6 **internal ventilation** is sufficient to prevent dampness and condensation, and is adequate for waste air, smoke, fumes and gas extraction, and includes adequate mechanical ventilation in the kitchen and bathroom, where necessary, to minimise condensation and prevent dampness;
- B.4.1.7 **smoke and/or heat detectors** fitted on each floor and in compliance with the relevant British Standards, Building Regulations and Local Authority licensing requirements. In houses of multiple occupation detectors are to be mains powered with battery backup and inter-linked to BS 5446 or its equivalent, and to meet local Fire and Rescue Service guidelines and requirements;
- B.4.1.8 in houses of multiple occupation, **visible notices explaining action to be taken in the event of fire** or other emergency are displayed. Notices (which shall include diagrams showing emergency exits) are to be in a language the relevant Service User(s) understands or in such diagrammatic form that the relevant Service User(s) are capable of understanding irrespective of his/her ability to read in any language;
- B.4.1.9 **glazing** is free from breakages, and free from cracks which may undermine the structural integrity of the glazing;
- B.4.1.10 **doors and windows** are capable of being secured to the minimum standards recommended by the Police and the Association of British Insurers;
- B.4.1.11 all **windows** above ground floor level have restrictors where children or vulnerable adults with specific needs may be present;
- B.4.1.12 drinking and other cold **water** supplies available at all times on demand and of sufficient pressure to operate heating installations;
- B.4.1.13 if a full space heating system is not installed then appropriate fixed **heating appliances** are fitted in the living and sleeping areas, which are capable of heating the relevant rooms to a comfortable temperature. Paraffin or bottled gas heating systems shall not be used;
- B.4.1.14 **plumbing** is operational, in a good state and leak free;
- B.4.1.15 in houses of multiple occupation all bathrooms, shower rooms, toilets, and bedrooms have **locks** capable of being locked from the inside;
- B.4.1.16 **kitchen fit-out** is in a state of good condition, with cupboard and food storage space within the constraints of the existing structure;
- B.4.1.17 **kitchen units** and worktops easy to clean and maintain;
- B.4.1.18 **bathrooms** are in a good condition and equipped with a bath and/or shower, toilet, wash hand basin, all in working order and a towel rail and waterproof covering (e.g. shower curtain or equivalent) to prevent pooling or flooding whilst the shower or bath is being used;
- B.4.1.19 **floor coverings** in kitchens and bathrooms are easy to clean, moisture resistant and suitable for use in wet areas;
- B.4.1.20 the Accommodation is free from **pest infestation**;
- B.4.1.21 the Accommodation has a **telephone line** installed or is capable of having such a line installed;
- B.4.1.22 the Accommodation has **adequate bins** for the storage of refuse, having regard to the disposal services provided by the Local Authority;
- B.4.3 On move in of a Service User, Accommodation will not be regarded as fit for purpose if the internal and external aspects of the Accommodation are not in good decorative order, which shall include:
 - B.4.3.1.1 significant holes and cracks in walls, ceilings, doors and any plastered surface;
 - B.4.3.1.2 extensive peeling, flaking or blistering;
 - B.4.3.1.3 ingrained dirt which it is not possible for the Service User to remove;
 - B.4.3.1.4 substantial discoloration or variation of colour of a wall due to, for example, partial redecoration, removal of paint surface by cleaning materials, etc; and
 - B.4.3.1.5 significant signs of dampness and mould growth.
- Wallpapered surfaces** to be free of:
 - B.4.3.2.1 significant holes and cracks in walls, ceilings and any plastered surface;
 - B.4.3.2.2 ingrained dirt which is not possible for the Service User to remove;
 - B.4.3.2.3 substantial discoloration or variation of colour of a wall due to, for example, partial redecoration, removal of paint surface by cleaning materials, etc; and
 - B.4.3.2.4 significant signs of dampness and mould growth;
- B.4.3.3 **wood surfaces** to be clean;
- B.4.3.4 **wall tiles and floor tiles** to be free of significant damage;
- B.4.3.5 **internal and external aspects of the Accommodation clean** prior to Service Users taking up occupancy, including:
 - B.4.3.5.1 loose **dust, debris** and all refuse removed;
 - B.4.3.5.2 all surfaces including walls, tiling, sills, fireplace surrounds, worktops, interiors and exteriors of cupboards and drawers to be **washed down**, cleaned of grease and other natural and unnatural deposits or coatings and disinfected;
 - B.4.3.5.3 **floors** and floor coverings to be **washed down** or cleaned of grease and other natural and unnatural deposits or coatings and disinfected;
 - B.4.3.5.4 **sinks, baths, shower units and other sanitary-ware** to be **cleaned**, and free of stains and other material deposits and disinfected;
 - B.4.3.5.5 **windows** and frames to be **washed down** and disinfected and cleaned of deposits of grease or other natural and unnatural coatings and marks.
- B.4.3.6 **Gardens**, outbuildings and boundary walls and/or fencing maintained in a safe and tidy condition.



Disabled Persons or Service Users with specific needs⁷

Accommodation for **disabled persons** must be fit for purpose and used for its intended purpose in compliance with relevant legislation, including the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010.⁸ The Provider shall ensure that the Accommodation and its associated facilities are accessible by the Service User, and, where necessary, it has appropriate adaptations to enable the Service User to live independently, or in accordance with a Local Authority assessment under the Care Act 2014.⁹

Public areas (where owned, operated or managed by the Provider or their sub-contractor)¹⁰

Standards required to be fit for purpose

(If standards unmet: action by the Provider within **21 working days**. They must investigate and implement a permanent repair or remedy within this time.)¹¹

- B.6.1.1 **within the boundaries of buildings** (as defined by the Land Registry listing for the property) where applicable:
 - B.6.1.1.1 **floors, doors, stairs, walls, ceilings, parapets, balustrades, hand rails free from defects or artefacts** that may pose a hazard to people;
 - B.6.1.1.2 floors, doors, stairs, walls, ceilings, balustrades, stringers, panels and parapets **free from litter, fly-posters, accumulated debris, natural detritus, impacted soilage, drip marks, graffiti and other marks capable of being cleaned**;
 - B.6.1.1.3 **lifts maintained** in accordance with manufacturers' specifications and in working order;
 - B.6.1.1.4 **lighting** in all areas in working order;
 - B.6.1.1.5 **porch canopies and flat roof areas free of debris and organic matter**;
 - B.6.1.1.6 all **drainage, guttering and other water channels in working order** with no pooling of water, leaks or overflows;
 - B.6.1.1.7 all areas **free from pest infestation**;
 - B.6.1.1.8 **walls, stairway structures, ceilings and floors** free from holes, cracks, loose plaster, spalling concrete and other surface structure defects, as applicable;
 - B.6.1.1.9 **Doors, hatches and other coverings** free from holes, securable where appropriate, and in proper operating order.
- B.6.1.2 other areas:
 - B.6.1.2.1 walkways and pavements, stairways and steps, walls, balustrades, hand rails **free from defects or artefacts that may pose a significant hazard to people**;
 - B.6.1.2.2 walkways and pavements, stairways and steps, walls, ceilings, balustrades, and parapets **free from litter, fly-posters, accumulated debris, natural detritus, impacted soilage, drip marks, graffiti and other marks capable of being cleaned**.



Public areas (where owned, operated or managed by a third party)¹²

Provider to make "best endeavours" to ensure that the party responsible for maintenance and management maintains public areas in accordance with the standards, including, but not limited to:

- Notifying the Party responsible and the Home Office of maintenance issues as soon as made aware;
- Requesting remedy plan and/or other relevant information on the action the party responsible intends to take and when;
- Initiating further communication if the party responsible fails to take action;
- Keeping accurate records and notifying the Home Office if the party responsible fails to act in a timely or satisfactory manner.

(The Home Office can instruct the Provider to relocate Service Users if the public areas do not meet its requirements.)

Same standards apply as above (B.6.1.1 – B.6.1.2)



Delivery of material to Service User Accommodation¹³

Standards required to be fit for purpose

(If standards unmet: action by the Provider within **21 working days**. They must investigate and implement a permanent repair or remedy within this time.)¹⁴

- B.8.1.1 **access to all properties is clearly marked**;
- B.8.1.2 all **external door furniture** is in good working order;
- B.8.1.3 in **Houses of Multiple Occupation, there is the provision of named and working bells or intercoms for each individual Service User unit**;
- B.8.1.4 there is **provision for the secure receipt of post and deposit of calling cards**.



Fire Safety¹⁵

B.9.1 Accommodation to be compliant with relevant UK fire safety laws and regulations, including, but not limited to, the Housing Act 2004, the Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations 2015 or equivalent in devolved nations, the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and the Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006 or equivalent in devolved nations.

B.9.2 Periodic fire safety assessments to be undertaken, in accordance with LACORS Housing – Fire Safety guidance 2008, or more recent guidance if available.

B.9.3 Provider to ensure that they have licensed Service User Accommodation where it is required to be licensed and that the Accommodation is compliant, including on conditions concerning fire safety.

B.9.4 Where no requirements are stipulated by the Local Authority, the Provider is expected to follow relevant good industry practice on fire safety depending on the type of property and composition of occupants.

B.9.5 Compliant with Home Office requirements concerning smoke / heat detectors and CO detectors (see above).

Self-contained family accommodation¹⁶

- Must provide, where necessary, childcare equipment (including cots and high chairs) and ensure that sterilisation equipment available for children under one year.
- Child safety gates on each staircase (where appropriate).
- New personal linen for each Service User as a minimum.¹⁷

Self-catering accommodation occupied by a number of Service Users¹⁸

- Shared rooms appropriately sized for the number of occupants.
- Room sharing in accordance with Home Office requirements (see Annex C Statement of Requirements).
- Facilities (where not provided individually) to be provided communally and each Service User to have equal access.
- Common and communal areas to be kept clean, and instructions to be provided to Service Users on how to keep property clean and tidy.
- Where applicable, childcare equipment including cots and high chairs and ensure that sterilisation equipment is available for children under the age of one year.



References:

- 1 Annex B AASC Statement of Requirements para B.2.1
- 2 Annex B para B.14.1
- 3 Annex B para B.3
- 4 Annex B para B.14.1
- 5 Annex B para B.4
- 6 Annex B para B.14.1
- 7 Annex B para B.5
- 8 Annex B para B.5.1
- 9 Annex B para B.5
- 10 Annex B para B.6
- 11 Annex B para B.14.1
- 12 Annex B para B.7
- 13 Annex B para B.8
- 14 Annex B para B.14.1
- 15 Annex B para B.9
- 16 Annex B para B.10
- 17 Annex B para B.10
- 18 Annex B para B.11