

# Amenity Standards for Private Owner Occupied and Rented Dwellings

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**A Guide for the Owners, Landlords, Managing Agents and  
Tenants on Housing Standards.**

## 1.0 Introduction

Dwellings that are owner occupied or rented out to provide accommodation for tenants should provide a safe and healthy environment and achieve a minimum standard. Health and safety is covered by the Housing Health and Safety Rating System ( HHSRS ) and the minimum acceptable standard is the Decent Homes Standard. Both of these are described in greater detail below. This guide is primarily aimed at the owners, landlords, managing agents and tenants of privately rented dwellings but can also serve as a guide for owner occupiers.

In the context of this publication amenity standards describe the facilities, fixtures, fittings, management and other tangible benefits of a privately rented property which contribute to its safety, comfort and convenience. This sector makes a large contribution to the overall housing stock and is an important alternative to the social rented sector.

Breckland District Council, ( the Council ), is committed to working with landlords, managing agents and tenants to achieve the standards required in the private rented sector. The Council will provide advice and guidance on meeting these standards and will take enforcement action, where necessary, to ensure properties achieve and maintain those standards. This document can only be a guide to the standards and an assessment will be required to ensure compliance in any individual case. The information in this document has been drawn from legislation, Government guidance, the Decent Homes Standard, and what is regarded by Local Authorities as best practice. Definitive interpretation of the legislative requirements can only be made by the relevant court of law or Residential Property Tribunal.

It is advised that this guidance is used in conjunction with the Council's publication "*Fire Precautions in Dwellings*".

### 1.1 Definitions:

**Dwelling** – a building, or part of a building, designed, or intended, to be occupied as a separate dwelling i.e. with exclusive use of it's living space ( living rooms and bedrooms and kitchens). A dwelling need not contain it's own bathroom/wc.

**House in Multiple Occupation ( HMO )** – a building where the living accommodation is shared by persons not forming a single household and there is sharing of facilities and may also cover a self contained flat with shared access.

**Household** – relation by marriage, equivalent partnership or blood; ( spouse, cohabite, parent, child, grandparent, grandchild, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece and cousin ). May also include other relationship in very specific circumstances.

## **1.2 The Housing Health & Safety Rating System (HHSRS):**

The HHSRS was introduced by the Housing Act 2004 as a methodology to assess the health and safety of dwellings. The underlying principle of the HHSRS is that any residential premises should provide a safe and healthy environment for any potential occupier or visitor. In order to satisfy this basic principle, a dwelling should be designed, constructed and maintained with non-hazardous materials and should be free from both unnecessary and avoidable hazards.

Environmental Health Officers and Technical Officers will inspect a dwelling with the aim of identifying all the deficiencies within the dwelling. A deficiency is defined as being the failure of a particular element to meet the ideal or optimum standard as best to prevent or minimise a hazard. Such a failure could be inherent, e.g. as a result of the original design, construction or manufacture, or it could be a result of deterioration, disrepair or a lack of repair or maintenance.

Once the deficiencies within a dwelling have been identified a health and safety risk assessment will be made. This is based on the risk to the most vulnerable potential occupant of that dwelling irrespective of the current occupants, if any, in the premises at the time of the inspection. The assessment will result in the hazards being given a score. The scores reflect both the likelihood of harm being caused to occupiers by the deficiency and the severity of the health impact. Those scores will determine the band into which the hazards will fall. The regulations prescribe that hazards falling within bands A to C are Category 1 Hazards, ( the greatest risk and/or worst health effects ), while those within bands D to J are Category 2 Hazards.

The Housing Act 2004 places a general duty on the Local Authority to take action against all Category 1 Hazards. The Council will, therefore, actively seek to have the necessary works to remove or reduce all Category 1 Hazards carried out within a suitable time frame. This will be done either by obtaining acceptable assurances from the owner that the work will be done or by the service of a formal enforcement notice. Action may also be taken against Category 2 Hazards.

## **1.3 The Decent Homes Standard:**

This definition is an intervention, rather than an enforcement, standard and reflects what is accepted as a reasonable standard for modern living. It may not be possible for all dwellings to meet this standard because of age or build type. Generally a decent home meets the following criteria:

**a) It meets the current statutory minimum standard for housing:**

Dwellings will fail to meet this criterion where there are one or more hazards assessed as Category 1 using the HHSRS.

**b) It is a reasonable state of repair:**

Dwellings will fail to meet this criterion where either:

- One or more of the key building components are old and, because of their condition, need replacing or major repair; or
- Two or more of the other building components are old and, because of their condition, need replacing or major repair.

**c) It has reasonably modern facilities and services:**

Dwellings will fail to meet this criterion where they lack three or more of the following:

- A reasonably modern kitchen (less than 20 years old);
- A kitchen with adequate space and layout;
- A reasonably modern bathroom (less than 30 years old);
- An appropriately located bathroom and WC;
- Adequate insulation against external noise (where external noise is a problem); and
- Adequate size and layout of common areas for blocks of flats.

**d) It provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort:**

Dwellings will fail this criterion where there is lack of effective insulation and efficient heating.

## **2.0 Sanitary appliances**

In the following sections sanitary appliances will be baths, showers, water closets, wash hand basins and sinks, ( see also kitchens below ). Normally appliances should be located within individual dwellings but shared use is possible, ( see HMO section below ).

In each case they will only be acceptable if provided with a supply of hot and cold water or a supply of water at a suitably controlled temperature, ( if necessary ), and if connected to a suitable waste system to remove waste water to a satisfactory disposal point. Sanitary appliances must be located within the dwelling whose occupants are to use them or, where such sanitary appliances are dedicated for shared use, must be within the building whose occupants are to use them. All access should be internal from within the dwelling or building as appropriate. The location of any individual sanitary appliance should accord with normal industry practice and not compromise the comfort and use of any dwelling or building. Shared sanitary appliances should not be located more than one floor distant from potential users.

All appliances must be fixed to the structure of the dwelling and should be of suitable construction and in such condition as to allow full functionality, safe use and adequate cleansing.

In all cases sanitary appliances should be surrounded by surfaces capable of being readily cleaned and maintained and, where there is likelihood of water escaping beyond the confines of the appliance, the surfaces should be impermeable.

A wash hand basin is considered to be for personal hygiene only. A sink within a kitchen is not considered suitable for personal hygiene use.

## **2.1 Washing & Toilet Facilities:**

### **A. Single Family Dwelling**

Each single family dwelling should contain one each of a bath or shower in a bathroom, a water closet in a bathroom or separate cubicle and a wash hand basin co-located with the water closet.

A bathroom or cubicle should be of adequate size to allow the sanitary appliance(s) to be used in a safe manner and to allow the normal associated operations of body drying. Bathrooms and cubicles should be provided with adequate heating, lighting and ventilation.

### **B. House in Multiple Occupation**

Where all or some of the individual units of living accommodation/ bedsits in a HMO or shared house do not contain bathing or toilet facilities for the exclusive use of each individual household please refer to Table 1 below

Shared baths and showers must be situated in dedicated bathrooms with a lockable door or screen to provide privacy. Suitable heating, lighting and ventilation must be provided. A bathroom should be of adequate size to allow the sanitary appliance(s) to be used in a safe manner and to allow the normal associated operations of body drying.

Shared water closets must be situated in dedicated cubicles or bathrooms. Suitable heating, lighting and ventilation must be provided. A wash hand basin should be co-located with each water closet. The cubicle or bathroom should be of adequate size to allow the sanitary appliance(s) to be used in a safe manner.

**Table 1: Schedule of Amenity Standards in Relation to Number of Persons Sharing Washing Facilities:**

<b>Number of occupants</b>	<b>Amenity Provision</b>
<b>1 – 5</b>	Where reasonably practicable there must be a wash hand basin with appropriate splash back in each unit of living accommodation plus at least one bath/shower in a bathroom and one WC with a wash hand basin ( the WC/WHB can be located in the bathroom ).
<b>6 – 10</b>	Where reasonably practicable there must be a wash hand basin with appropriate splash back in each unit of living accommodation plus two baths/showers in separate bathrooms and two separate WCs with wash hand basins ( one of the WC/WHB combinations can be in a bathroom ).
<b>11 – 15</b>	Where reasonably practicable there must be a wash hand basin with appropriate splash back in each unit of living accommodation plus three baths/showers in separate bathrooms and three separate WCs with wash hand basins ( two of the WC/WHB combinations can be in separate bathrooms ).
<b>16 or more</b>	Consult with the Council as to provision

### **3.0 Kitchens**

Food preparation and cooking facilities should, ideally, be located within individual dwellings but shared used is possible within a multiply occupied building, (see HMO section below).

Kitchens should provide safe, hygienic provision for food storage, preparation, cooking and cleansing of utensils. Adequate heating, lighting and ventilation must be provided, and the size of the kitchen and it's layout will be an important consideration in helping to meet those aims.

A sink is considered to be for food preparation and the cleansing of utensils used in food preparation only. Each dwelling, or where there are shared kitchen facilities, each building should have a source of potable drinking water straight from the incoming mains water supply. This will normally be at the kitchen sink cold water tap.

Sinks that are only provided with water at a pre-controlled temperature should have a separate drinking water point clearly marked as such.

In all cases sinks should be surrounded by surfaces capable of being readily cleaned and maintained and, where there is likelihood of water escaping beyond the confines of the appliance, the surfaces should be impermeable

All kitchen surfaces should be capable of being easily cleaned and should be well maintained.

### **A. Single Family Dwelling**

Kitchens are considered to be high risk areas for fire escape purposes therefore the location of a kitchen or cooking area within a dwelling should not compromise the fire escape route. A fire blanket should be provided, ( see also Council publication “ *Fire Precautions in Dwellings*” )

A single family dwelling should contain a kitchen or dedicated cooking area with a sink and drainer, space for a cooker with a dedicated electricity or gas supply, work surfaces and food storage provision, ( both sized relative to the size of the dwelling ).

### **B. House in Multiple Occupation**

**Shared Kitchens:** This is where all or some of the individual units of living accommodation/ bedsits in a HMO or shared house do not contain facilities for the cooking of food. ( See Table 2 )

Shared kitchens should not be located more than one floor distant from potential users. Kitchens are considered to be high risk areas for fire escape purposes and must, therefore, be fully separated from any means of escape from individual dwellings to the final exit point. The minimum separation standard required is 30 minutes and shared kitchens should be provided with interlinked heat detectors, fire blankets and a dry powder or CO<sub>2</sub> extinguisher (see also Council publication “*Fire Precautions in Dwellings*”).

**Table 2: Kitchen facilities for shared kitchens.**

<b>Facility</b>	<b>Minimum standard</b>	<b>1 – 5 persons</b>	<b>6 or more persons</b>
<b>Sinks</b>	A fixed impervious sink with a drainer, provision of a potable cold water supply and a supply of constant hot water.	One	One extra sink per 4 persons or part thereof

**Table 2 contd.**

<p><b>Cookers</b></p>	<p>A cooker will comprise of an electric or gas hob with 4 rings, an oven and a grill either combined in a single appliance or provided separately as a separate hob and oven/grill. Each cooker or separate element must be provided with a dedicated electric or gas supply.</p> <p>Microwave ovens are only acceptable in addition to, not instead of, the above.</p>	<p>One</p>	<p>One extra cooker per 4 persons or part there of</p>
<p><b>Electric sockets</b></p>	<p>30 amp dedicated supply for electric cooker</p> <p>Numerical provision of sockets as per columns on right</p> <p>Sockets to be set at convenient height and in safe positions conforming to IEE Regulations</p>	<p>Six sockets which can be supplied singly or as double sockets</p> <p>Additional sockets will be required for cooker,( see left ), refrigerator and washing machine.</p>	<p>Two additional sockets for per 2 persons or part there of.</p> <p>Additional sockets will be required for each extra cooker, refrigerator or washing machine.</p>
<p><b>Work tops</b></p>	<p>Work tops must be in good repair, impervious and securely fixed.</p>	<p>500mm length x 600mm width per user to a maximum of 2.5m length</p>	<p>Additional 500mm length per person</p>

**Table 2 contd.**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Storage cupboards for food and cooking utensils</b></p>	<p>Storage space to the following dimensions is required for the storage of foodstuffs and cooking utensils. Under sink storage is not suitable for this purpose</p> <p>Floor mounted: 870mm high x 570mm deep x 500mm wide</p> <p>Wall mounted 575mm high x 300mm deep x 750mm wide</p>	<p>Floor mounted: 870mm high x 570mm deep x 500mm wide</p> <p>Wall mounted 575mm high x 300mm deep x 750mm wide</p> <p>Equivalent of 50 litres, ( 0.05m<sup>3</sup> ) per person</p>	<p>Extra 50 litres, ( 0.05m<sup>3</sup> ) per person.</p>
<p><b>Refrigerators</b></p>	<p>A standard refrigerator of minimum 150 litres ( 0.15m<sup>3</sup> ) with a freezer compartment of minimum 30 litres ( 0.03m<sup>3</sup> )</p>	<p>A standard refrigerator of minimum 150 litres ( 0.15m<sup>3</sup> ) and freezer capacity minimum 110 litres ( 0.11m<sup>3</sup> )</p>	<p>Extra 30 litres ( 0.03m<sup>3</sup> ) refrigerated capacity and 22 litres ( 0.02m<sup>3</sup> ) freezer capacity per person</p>

**Kitchens in individual lettings:** Where individual bedsit rooms are large enough to accommodate a kitchen(ette) or where multi-room bedsits have one of the rooms of adequate size to accommodate a separate kitchen for the exclusive use of the occupant(s) of that bedsit. See Table 3:

Kitchens are considered to be high risk areas for fire escape purposes therefore the location of a kitchen or cooking area within a dwelling should not compromise the fire escape route. A fire blanket should be provided, ( see also Council publication “ *Fire Precautions in Dwellings*” )

**Table 3: Kitchen facilities for individual units of accommodation:**

Facility	Minimum Standard	Each Unit
<b>Sinks</b>	A fixed impervious sink with a drainer, provision of a potable cold water supply and a supply of constant hot water.	One
<b>Cookers</b>	A cooker will comprise of an electric or gas hob with 4 rings, an oven and a grill either combined in a single appliance or provided separately as a separate hob and oven/grill. Each cooker or separate element must be provided with a dedicated electric or gas supply.  Microwave ovens are only acceptable in addition to, not instead of, the above.	One
<b>Electric sockets</b>	30 amp dedicated supply for electric cooker  Numerical provision of sockets as per the column on right	4 sockets (2 doubles) & additional dedicated sockets are required for cooker, refrigerator and washing machine

**Table 3 contd.**

<b>Electric sockets contd.</b>	Sockets to be set at convenient height and in safe positions conforming to IEE Regulations	
<b>Work tops</b>	Work tops must be in good repair, impervious and securely fixed.	500mm length x 600mm width
<b>Storage cupboards for food and cooking utensils</b>	Storage space to the level specified in the column on the right to be provided. This can be floor or wall mounted. Under sink storage is not suitable for this purpose.	Equivalent of 50 litres, ( 0.05m <sup>3</sup> ) per person
<b>Refrigerators</b>	A refrigerator with integral freezer compartment to provide space to the level specified in the column on the right.	30 litres ( 0.03m <sup>3</sup> ) refrigerated capacity and 22 litres ( 0.02m <sup>3</sup> ) freezer capacity per person

## **4.0 Gas safety**

It is a requirement for the landlords of all private rented property to have any gas boiler and appliance connected to the mains tested on an annual basis. The gas safety check and all repair works to any gas appliance must be conducted by a recognised engineer approved under Regulation 3 of the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998. From the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2009 the registration scheme is the "Gas Safe Register". The test certificates issued must be retained by the landlord for a minimum period of two years and a copy must be given to the occupier. A landlord of an HMO must make the latest gas appliance test certificate available to the Council within 7-days on receipt of a written request from the Council.

## **5.0 Electrical safety**

Most dwellings are supplied with electricity from a mains supply via a consumer unit. There may be one or more ring mains within the dwelling powering lighting, power and heating circuits.

It is the landlord's responsibility to ensure that these circuits are safe for use and do not present a fire risk. The Council may request from a landlord proof that the fixed electrical system is safe for purpose. If such a request is made by the Council then the landlord can prove this by producing an inspection and test certificate that is not

more than 5-years old and that has been issued by a person qualified to undertake such inspection and testing.

The landlord of a HMO must ensure that the fixed electrical system is inspected and tested every 5-years by a person qualified to undertake such inspection and testing. The inspection and test certificates must be retained by the landlord and the landlord must make the latest electrical test certificate available to the Council within 7-days on receipt of a written request from the Council.

**5.1 Portable appliance testing (PAT)** - It is advisable that landlords ensure the safety of electrical appliances in their properties. If any electrical equipment has been supplied by the landlord of a privately rented dwelling it is advisable that it has been portable appliance tested. This applies to refrigerators, freezers, cookers, vacuum cleaners and any other portable electrical items or electrical appliances supplied as part of the fixtures and fittings of the property. It also includes those electrical appliances that have been left in the property by previous tenants for the use of the current or future tenants.

**5.2 Minor Domestic Electrical Installation Works Certificate** - It became a requirement of the Housing Act 2004 that any electrical installation fitted in a room where water is present, such as a kitchen or bathroom, requires a minor domestic electrical installation works certificate.

**5.3 Plug sockets** – Modern day living has a heavy reliance on electrical appliances. This can lead to the extensive use of multi-plug adaptors and extension leads in rooms where there is an insufficient number of plug outlets. Trailing extension leads can be dangerous and overloaded sockets, and cause fires, damage to property, injury, or even death. It is therefore recommended that all rooms are furnished with an adequate number of plug sockets.

## **6.0 Heating and insulation**

Each dwelling and, in the case of an HMO, the common areas of the building, should be provided with adequate thermal insulation and a suitable and effective means of space heating so that a reasonable temperature can be achieved and maintained.

High levels of insulation and draught proofing can significantly reduce energy use, and therefore cost, and improve occupier's comfort.

Space heating systems should be as energy efficient as possible, appropriate for the building type and controllable by the occupiers. Whilst the expenditure on heating costs is at the occupier's discretion they should have access to the cheapest form of tariff. For example if electric storage heaters are provided they should be capable of being operated on Economy 7 or 10 tariffs. Installation of new heating systems may

require Building Regulation permission unless installed by an appropriate qualified and registered contractor.

Where heating is provided from a single source in an HMO occupiers should be able to control the temperature within their own living accommodation by means of a room thermostat or TRVs on radiators

Renewable forms of energy production are available at domestic scale e.g. wind turbines or solar panels. Planning Permission may be required for these installations.

Tax relief is available to landlords who are carrying out energy efficiency works.

Energy Performance Certificates (EPC) became a legal requirement for dwellings being rented in the private sector on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2008. The EPC rates the energy performance of a building and a copy must be available for all prospective tenants to view before taking a tenancy and a copy must be given to any tenant in occupation. For more information please see [www.communities.gov.uk/epbd](http://www.communities.gov.uk/epbd).

### **6.1 Efficient heating is defined as:**

- Any programmable gas, oil or electric central heating system delivered by radiators or warm air; or
- Electric storage heaters; or
- Under floor heating systems; or
- Programmable LPG/ solid-fuel central heating system.

### **6.2 Heating Guidance:**

- All independent heaters must be securely fixed in position and fully controllable by the occupiers;
- Boilers should be accessible to and controllable by the occupiers;
- Where applicable there must be adequate storage facilities for fuel;
- Electric storage heaters must be hard-wired into a dedicated and adequately rated fused control switch;
- All habitable rooms and bathrooms should have a heating provision capable of raising the temperature of the room to 21<sup>oC</sup> and maintaining that temperature when the outside temperature is -1<sup>oC</sup>;
- Communal areas should have a heating provision capable of raising the temperature of the areas to 18<sup>oC</sup> and maintaining that temperature when the outside temperature is -1<sup>oC</sup>;
- Portable heating appliances such as electric fires, convector or fan heaters, paraffin oil and LPG (bottled gas) should not be provided by the landlord or used by occupiers;

### **6.3 Insulation Guidance:**

- Loft spaces should be insulated with at least 280mm depth of glass fibre insulation or equivalent;
- Where loft insulation is carried out any water pipes or tanks should also be insulated to prevent freezing in winter; it may be necessary to ventilate loft spaces to prevent condensation;
- Hot water tanks, pipes and immersion heaters should be insulated;
- Windows and doors should be of sound construction and well-maintained as to be draught-proof and water-tight;
- Where the building is constructed with cavity walls these should be insulated;
- Solid walls can be internally, or externally insulated;
- Ground floors can be insulated

## **7.0 Overcrowding**

The number of occupiers in any dwelling or HMO should be such that normal day to day activities can be carried out safely, without stress and in comfort. The numbers that can be accommodated in any given circumstance will predominantly depend upon the numbers, locations and spatial provision of any sanitary appliances, kitchens and bedrooms, ( see individual sections for further guidance ).

Limits on the numbers of people allowed to sleep in any dwelling are set by legislation contained in the Housing Act 1985. This relates to numbers, and sizes of rooms available for sleeping and will need to be determined on an individual basis. The age and sex of individual occupiers will also be taken into account.

A hazard of crowding and space is assessed by HHSRS and relates to the whole dwelling's use for normal activities and is not specifically related to numbers of people sleeping.

### **A. Single Family Dwelling**

The numbers that can safely be accommodated will largely be determined by HHSRS although sleeping accommodation may be relevant with larger families.

In normal circumstances a single family household, ( see definition above ) of up to 6 people can be accommodated in a three bedroomed house. Lower numbers may be applicable with fewer bedrooms.

## **B. Houses in Multiple Occupation**

In order that accommodation in multiply occupied buildings can provide a safe environment and a reasonable degree of comfort for occupiers there is a numerical relationship between numbers of occupiers and levels of provision of sanitary appliances, ( see above ), and also the spatial provision for living accommodation.

For shared houses with no more than five occupants the provisions will be no different from single dwellings. For other circumstances please see the tables below.

**Table 4: Minimum Room Sizes for One-Room Units of Accommodation:**

**Where the one room has the following uses:**

Room use	Room size	
	1 person	2 people ( as a couple )
<b>Bedroom Only</b> (where a separate kitchen and living room are provided elsewhere in the HMO).	6.5m <sup>2</sup>	10.0m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Combined Bedroom and Living Room</b> (where a separate kitchen is provided elsewhere in the HMO).	9.0m <sup>2</sup>	14.0m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Combined Bedroom, Living Room &amp; Kitchen</b>	13.0m <sup>2</sup>	19.0m <sup>2</sup>

**Table 5: Minimum Room Sizes For Accommodation Units of Two or More-Rooms:**

**Where the rooms are for the exclusive use of the tenants that occupy them and are living as a single related family/ related household:**

Room Use	Room Size per Number of Occupants				
	1	2 (living as a couple)	3 (living as a single family)	4 (living as a single family)	5 (living as a single family)
<b>Bedroom</b>	6.5m <sup>2</sup>	10.0 m <sup>2</sup>			
<b>Combined Kitchen &amp; Living Room</b>	11.0m <sup>2</sup>	15.0m <sup>2</sup>			
<b>Combined Bedroom &amp; Living Room</b>	9.0m <sup>2</sup>	14.0m <sup>2</sup>			
<b>Kitchen</b>	4.5m <sup>2</sup>	7.0m <sup>2</sup>	7.0m <sup>2</sup>	7.0m <sup>2</sup>	7.0m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Living Room</b>	8.0m <sup>2</sup>	12.0 m <sup>2</sup>	12.0 m <sup>2</sup>	12.0 m <sup>2</sup>	12.0 m <sup>2</sup>

**Table 6: Minimum Room Sizes for Communal Use Rooms:**

**For rooms shared by tenants (not living as a single family) in HMO-type accommodation:**

Shared Room	Number of Occupants				
	1 -3	4	5	6	7 - 10
<b>Kitchen</b>	5.0m <sup>2</sup>	6.0m <sup>2</sup>	7.0m <sup>2</sup>	9.0m <sup>2</sup>	11.0m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Total Communal Living Space ( includes kitchen space which must be minimum size as per column on the right above )</b>	13.5m <sup>2</sup>	17.0m <sup>2</sup>	18.0m <sup>2</sup>	20.0m <sup>2</sup>	27.5m <sup>2</sup>

## **8.0 Fire precautions and Means of Escape**

See the Council's publication *Fire Precautions in Residential Dwellings* for guidance on fire safety requirements.

## **9.0 Other facilities**

### **9.1 Gardens, yards and forecourts:**

In most circumstances the definition of a dwelling includes any garden, yards, forecourts, outbuildings or appurtenances contained within the same curtilage. Owner occupiers and, in a single family rented house normally the occupiers, will be responsible for the maintenance of the garden but limits may be placed by individual agreements. With HMOs, however, it will normally be the manager's responsibility to cleanse and maintain all external areas.

In all cases with rented dwellings it will be the landlord's responsibility to keep in good order and repair all outbuildings, boundary walls, fences, railings and hedgerows.

At the commencement of a new tenancy the landlord should ensure (where applicable):

- That all gardens are clean and tidy, free of all rubbish and items discarded by previous occupancies;
- That any lawns are recently mown and any hedges are trimmed;
- That all fencing is in a good state of repair;
- That all outbuildings, sheds and garden structures are safe for purpose;
- That all electric or petrol powered gardening equipment is safe for purpose;
- That all gates (especially to rear gardens/yards) can be closed and locked where there is a possible security risk (for example, rear gardens that back onto an alleyway);
- That the responsibility for the ongoing maintenance of any garden spaces during the period of a tenancy, is clearly defined and understood by the tenant, at the beginning of that tenancy.

### **9.2 Refuse disposal:**

All households should be provided with the wheeled bins for the storage of household waste before collection. Currently two 240 litre wheeled bins will be provided per single family dwelling or shared house with up to 5 residents – green for general waste and black for recyclable waste, ( for details on recycling please see the Council’s website [www.breckland.gov.uk](http://www.breckland.gov.uk) or call 01362 656878 ). Additionally a brown bin is available on request for garden waste for which there is an annual charge

Managers of HMOs should ensure that there are sufficient bins for the numbers of occupiers or request special arrangements from the Council or private refuse collection companies.

A chargeable service for the collection of bulky household waste is provided by the Council on request.

It is normally the occupier’s responsibility to ensure the separation of refuse into the correct bins.

### **9.3 Furniture:**

All upholstered furniture and soft furnishings (including beds, mattresses, pillows and cushions) provided by the landlord in furnished lettings, including any furniture that have been left in the property by previous tenants for the use of the current or future tenants, must comply with the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988.

