

CODE OF PRACTICE

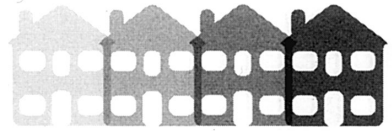
Lincoln Student Housing Accommodation Scheme

A code of practice agreed by:

Bishop Grosseteste University
City of Lincoln Council
Lincolnshire County Council, Trading standards
Lincolnshire County Council, Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue
Lincolnshire Police
University of Lincoln

CODE OF PRACTICE

The Lincoln City Student Accommodation Accreditation



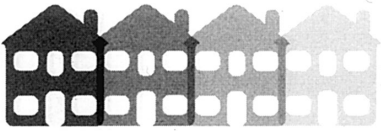
INTRODUCTION

Aim

- 1.1 The main aim of the code of practice is to provide safe, clean and well-managed accommodation for students living in Lincoln.

How the code of practice works:

- 1.2 The institutes of higher education advertise the availability of accommodation.
- 1.3 Any person who wishes to make their accommodation available to students through the institutes of higher education has to agree to comply with the code of practice.
- 1.4 The code of practice specifies physical standards for the property, and service standards for management.
- 1.5 For landlords, whether as individuals or organisations, who wish to join the scheme there is an application and a fee. The application form and fee structure are available from either university. Persons or organisations who subscribe to the scheme are referred to as “members”.
- 1.6 Members can choose to advertise with either university.
- 1.7 Users of the accreditation scheme whether as landlords or tenants, should note that whilst the statutory authorities and the universities have tried to provide guidance concerning compliance with the law, ultimately it is the landlord and his agent who must ensure that the property is safe and the law complied with.



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Compliance with the code will mean that:

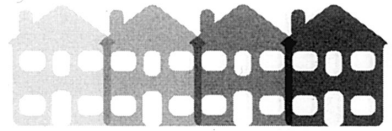
- 1.8 A high standard of repair, safety and amenity has been achieved.
- 1.9 A high level of housing management is maintained.
- 1.10 Disputes between students and members of the scheme should be few in number.

Promotion of accredited property

- 1.11 Onto being accepted on to the scheme the details of the properties will be advertised within the universities and via the internet.
- 1.12 The relevant institute will produce a notice, which may be used for display. The notice will confirm that the landlord has agreed to the terms of the accreditation scheme.

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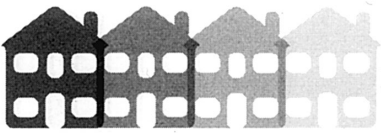
2. THE CODE OF PRACTICE

Physical attributes of an accredited house

- 2.1 It is expected that the “accredited” accommodation will achieve the standards described below. In some cases documentary evidence is required.

Repair and physical condition

- 2.2 Properties should be managed and kept in repair, in accordance with the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (England) Regulations 2005 which came into force on 6th April 2006. This legislation categorises certain hazards and enables the city council offices to prioritise works. It is not possible to give a definitive list of all the circumstances which could result in a Category 1 hazard. In practice an owner is unlikely to know the rating of any particular hazard unless a survey has been specifically undertaken for that purpose.
- 2.3 The Housing Health and Safety Rating System and the 29 prescribed hazards are described in the Government publication ‘Housing Health and Safety Rating System Guidance for Landlords and Property Related Professionals’ (£12.00) www.communities.gov.uk/hhsrs
- 2.4 **Electrical wiring.** Because of the associated risks of fire and electrocution, a condition of the code of practice is that a competent electrician provides an inspection report. The report should have been carried out within the last 5 years and shall state that the electrical installation is safe to use.
- 2.5 **Gas appliances.** All gas appliances and flues should have been subject to a service check by a CORGI registered installer within the previous 12 months. Records of the most recent inspection and the inspection immediately preceding it shall be made available. A copy of the most



recent report should be on display in the dwelling and shall state that the appliance is safe to use.

Fire Safety

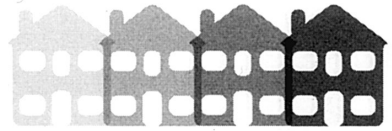
- 2.6 Prior to the introduction of the Housing Act 2004 only dwellings classified as houses in multiple occupation were specifically required to have adequate means of escape and adequate fire precautions. This requirement is now carried to all privately rented properties, and to other tenures.
- 2.7 All prospective accredited accommodation shall be subject to an initial inspection by Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue. The appropriate standard of fire precautions required for accredited accommodation is contained in the LACORS Housing - Fire Safety, the guidance on fire safety provisions for certain types of existing housing document, available to download from www.lacors.gov.uk/lacors/upload/19175.pdf. Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Service following a “satisfactory” initial or follow up inspection will provide confirmation of compliance with the published standard to the landlord or agent. That letter must be sent to the university together the the application for accreditation

Amenities

- 2.8 The Housing Act 2004 redefined the term ‘house in multiple occupation’. Since that time all student occupied houses are in all probability ‘houses in multiple occupation’. The larger student lettings (3 or more stories, 5 or more persons) will be subject to licensing and the specific requirements of licensing. The requirements of the minimum standard have been incorporated into this code of practice.

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Washing and toilet facilities for 4 or fewer occupiers sharing facilities

- 2.9 Where there are 4 or fewer occupiers sharing facilities there must be at least one bathroom with a fixed bath or shower and a toilet (which may be situated in the bathroom) and a wash hand basin. The washbasin must be next to, or in the same room as the toilet.

Washing and toilet facilities for 5 or fewer occupiers sharing facilities

- 2.10 There shall be a ratio of 1 WC with a wash hand basin for every 5 sharing occupiers

Bathroom amenities

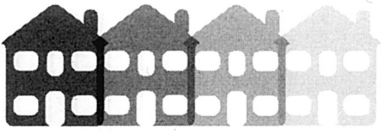
- 2.11 There shall be a ratio of 1 bathroom with a fixed bath or shower for every 5 sharing occupiers.

Affect of mixed and exclusive amenities

- 2.12 Where a letting (bedroom, or bedsit) has access to its own WC (with a wash hand basin), then the occupier is not counted as a 'sharing occupier'
- 2.13 Toilets in bathrooms will count towards the total score, but if there is only one bathroom the WC must be in a separate room.

Kitchen

- 2.14 A shared kitchen should be suitably located in relation to the living accommodation, and of such layout and size and equipped with such facilities so as to adequately enable those sharing the facilities to store, prepare and cook food.
- 2.15 The kitchen must be equipped with the following equipment, which must be fit for the purpose and supplied in a sufficient quantity for the number of those sharing the facilities:
1. sinks with draining boards
 2. adequate supply of cold and constant hot water to each sink
 3. installations or equipment for the cooking of food



4. electrical sockets
5. worktops for the preparation of food
6. cupboards for the storage of food or kitchen and cooking utensils
7. refrigerators with an adequate freezer compartment (or where the freezer compartment is not adequate, adequate freezers)
8. appropriate refuse disposal facilities
9. appropriate extractor fans, fire blankets and fire doors

- 2.16 The fridge should contain one shelf for each student
The freezer should have one drawer for each student
There should be at least one cupboard for each student to store their food

Bedrooms

- 2.17 Bedrooms will contain a bed, mattress, clothes storage space, chest of drawers, desk or desk surface, chair, shelving and curtains, and adequate circulation space. 'Adequate circulation space' includes the requirement that doors and drawers can be fully opened, that at least one length of the bed is open, and that the head height in the circulation space is not unduly restricted.

Sitting Rooms/Dining Rooms

- 2.18 There shall be a sitting room and at least the same number of easy chairs as residents. There shall be a dining table and chairs with at least the same number of places as residents.

Space

- 2.19 The following is provided as guidance:

For a shared house where there are individual bedrooms and a shared living room and kitchen:

One person bedroom	8 square metres
Kitchen 1-5 persons	7 square metres

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Kitchen, each extra person	3 square metres
Dining kitchens, 1-5 persons	11.5 square metres
Dining kitchen, 6 –10 persons	16.5 square metres
Living rooms and dining rooms, 1-5 persons	11.5 square metres
Living rooms and dining rooms, 6-10 persons	16.5 square metres

- 2.20 The law relating to overcrowding is subject to review and for that reason current overcrowding standards have not been included in this edition of the Code

Yard areas or gardens

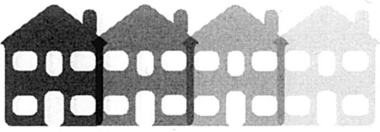
- 2.21 Provide hard standing for council supplied wheelie bin and provide a clothesline.

Furniture and appliances - safety

- 2.22 All furniture and furnishings will comply with the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire Safety) Regulations 1988.
- 2.23 All electrical appliances will have been checked to make sure that they are not chipped, broken, or otherwise showing undue wear and tear, and to make sure that the correct fuse has been used.

Appliances and Instructions

- 2.24 Within the dwelling simple instructions will be provided on the use and any necessary user maintenance of any of the following:
- Vacuum cleaner
 - Shower
 - Cooker
 - Microwave oven
 - Washing machine
 - Clothes iron
 - Hot water, and heating controls
 - Domestic smoke alarm



Heating

- 2.25 Central heating shall be installed so that there is a radiator in every room. Alternatively there should be an electrical space heating appliance within each bedroom connected to a fused spur, and a means of heating the main living room and bathrooms.
- 2.26 Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) and paraffin heaters are not acceptable.
- 2.27 Where there is a loft this should be insulated with 200mm of loft insulation. All hot water pipes should be lagged.

Security

- 2.28 The premises should be provided with adequate door and window security:

All external timber doors should be of solid construction, in good repair, of at least 44mm thickness and be secured by a 5-lever mortice deadlock. Front door security should be complimented by a door chain and viewer and rear door security should be complimented by a pair of key operated mortice door bolts.

PVCu doors should be fitted with a multi locking point system that is secured by door handle operation and a separately operated deadlocking facility.

- 2.29 At least one external door should be viewed as a potential 'fire escape' door. The security fitted should be able to be released without the internal use of a key i.e. by thumb turn release of the lock. This should not be alongside vulnerable glass panels. If this cannot be avoided the glazing should be replaced with 6.4mm laminated glass.

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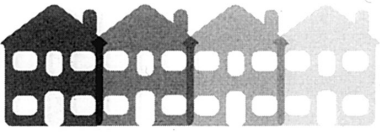
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The external door located at the end of the shortest route to open air from any point in the premises will normally be considered the main “Fire Exit” from the premises. This door must be provided with a security fastening approved by Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue. Ideally, the security device fitted should be able to be released without the internal use of a key i.e. by thumb turn release of the lock. This should not be alongside vulnerable glass panels. If this cannot be avoided the glazing should be replaced with 6.4mm laminated glass. However, other methods of providing an appropriate level of security may also be considered, provided this can be done without compromising ease of egress from the premises in an emergency.

- 2.30 All ground floor windows shall be fitted with security locks to the opening sash.

- 2.31 Any first floor windows accessible from a flat roof shall be fitted with security locks to the opening sash.



3. MANAGEMENT OF THE ACCOMMODATION

Advertising and introductions

3.1 Members will ensure that:

1. an accurate description of the property and its contents is provided to avoid misrepresentation to prospective tenants.
2. all prospective tenants will be given the opportunity to view the property, with consideration being given to any existing tenants.
3. in any year there should be no viewing by prospective tenants until after the new year launch
4. a copy of all contractual matters is provided to prospective tenants and they will be granted a minimum of 24 hours after viewing the property to seek independent advice on the contractual terms.
5. no monies for deposits or rent are demanded prior to the signing and exchange of any letting agreement.
6. any contractual documentation is presented in clear form and use understandable phraseology. It shall not include any unfair contract terms. Where legal statements are made then an explanatory sheet could be issued to clarify points of practice.

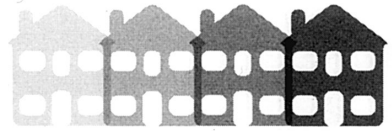
Rents and Charges

3.2 Clear and precise statements will be provided including annual rental values, dates and how payments will be made. The value and purpose of any deposits held will be clearly stated.

3.3 A clear statement will be made in respect of which party will pay water rates.

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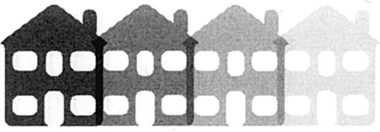
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- 3.4 Details of the responsibility for payment of other utility payments and any division of those payments will be stated.
- 3.5 Should any other charges require detailing, they will be specific and any division of those payments will be stated.
- 3.6 Receipts will be issued for all payments of rent, deposit or charges.

Standard Procedures for new tenants

- 3.7 Members will ensure:
 - 1. That a valid Energy Performance Certificate is made available to prospective tenants. Houses will require an Energy Performance Certificate on rented property from 1st October 2008. There is a national register of Domestic Energy Assessors who will issue this certificate. Further details can be found on www.homeinformationpacks.gov.uk. Full guidance will be given by the government in due course.
 - 2. That any statutory notices relevant to repossession of the property are served on existing tenants to avoid any undue delay to incoming tenants.
 - 3. The property will be complete and ready for occupation at the commencement of the tenancy.
 - 4. That prospective tenants will be allowed to view the property and room prior to being issued a contract.
 - 5. That clear details are presented or displayed within the property of how contact is to be made with the landlord/agent or his/her nominee in the case of emergency and that contingency plans are in place when the member is unavailable.



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6. That a comprehensive inventory is provided which details items present within the property and some measure of their condition to allow proper assessment of any dilapidation or damage, which will be agreed and signed by both parties as soon as possible after occupation.
7. That where access for routine inspection is required, not less than 24 hours notice is given and that access for other reasons will be in the case of repairs or emergency only.
8. Where access is required for viewing purposes, 24 hours notice shall be given or other reasonable arrangements agreed with the residents prior to the visit.
9. That they conduct themselves in a courteous, considerate and professional manner at all times.
10. That they will make student tenants aware that the Institutes of Higher Education operate a programme of house visits and that a member of the Institutes of Higher Education residential services staff may wish to monitor standards.
11. That reasonable access will be arranged on request for the following officials:

Environmental health officer

Fire Officer

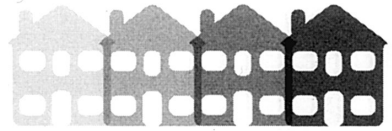
Trading standards officer

Police officer

and any person accompanying them or acting on their behalf.

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12. An ongoing commitment to safety and security by undertaking to disseminate information provided from time to time by Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue, Lincolnshire Police, Lincolnshire County Council and the City of Lincoln Council.

Maintenance , Repair and Cleanliness

3.8 The member will have made sure that the property and its contents comply with the requirements in the first part of the code. In some cases certificates will have been obtained. There is an ongoing commitment to make sure that the property and its contents are maintained in a satisfactory condition as far as is reasonably practicable.

3.9 Members shall ensure that all common parts are in good decorative order, kept clean, safe and free from obstruction. Particular regard shall be had to the repair of handrails, banisters, stair coverings, windows, and to fixtures, fittings and appliances supplied by the landlord and used in common by 2 or more households.

3.10 Out buildings, yards, and forecourts shall be kept in good repair and be clean.

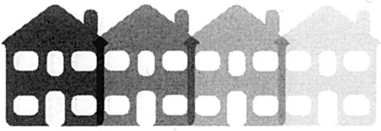
Gardens shall be kept safe and tidy.

Boundary walls shall be kept safe.

Testing, Maintenance and Record Keeping of Fire Precautions

3.11 Members must ensure that all means of escape from fire are kept free from obstruction and maintained in good order and repair. Members must ensure that any fire escape notices are visible

3.12 Alarms installed to BS5839: Part 6 should be tested weekly and the inside of smoke alarms should be cleaned using a vacuum cleaner annually to ensure that dust is not blocking the sensor.



- 3.13 Fire warning systems installed to BS5839: Part 1 should be tested at least weekly using a different call point for each successive test. The duration of the test should be sufficient to check that the system is operating satisfactorily. Any defects should receive immediate attention. The date, result and the signature of the person carrying out the test should be recorded.
- 3.14 Fire warning systems installed to BS5839: Part 6 shall be routinely tested by a competent person. Successive inspections and servicing shall be carried out on a risk assessed periodic basis. The recommended period between successive inspection and servicing visit should not exceed six months. On completion of the work, any outstanding defects should be reported to the responsible person, the system log book should be completed and an inspection and servicing certificate as recommended in Annexe G6 of the above standard issued.
- 3.15 Emergency lighting systems installed to BS5266 shall be tested by a competent person at regular intervals not exceeding six months. Any defects should receive immediate attention. The date, result and signature of the person carrying out the test should be recorded.
- 3.16 Where provided, fire fighting equipment shall be examined annually by the manufacturers or other competent persons and maintained and tested in accordance with BS5306-3.

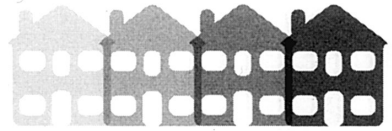
Response to disrepair

- 3.17 Where a complaint about disrepair is received the following service standards should be met:

Emergencies	Remedy within 24 hours
Urgent repairs	Remedy within 3 working days

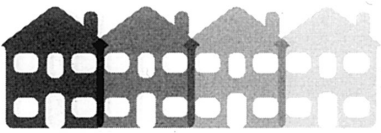
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Priority repairs	Remedy within 7 working days
Non priority repairs	Remedy within 28 working days or longer if necessary

- 3.18 Emergencies include:
- Total loss of electric power
 - Unsafe lighting socket or electrical fitting
 - Blocked or leaking foul drain
 - Toilet not flushing
 - Leak from water or heating system
 - Blocked flue to open fire or boiler
 - Insecure external window, door or lock
- 3.19 Urgent repairs include:
- Partial loss of electric power, e.g. light socket
 - Blocked sink, bath or basin
 - Tap which cannot be turned on or off
 - Loss of space heating or hot water supply
 - Loose or detached banister or hand rail
- 3.20 Priority repairs include: Leaking roof
- 3.21 Planned or routine maintenance should be carried out with respect and consideration to the convenience of the students.
- 3.22 Where possible reasonable notice will be given to tenants for the commencement of works or visits by contractors, and that following works of repair all debris and waste materials will be cleared from the building and it will be left in a clean and tidy manner. It is expected that all tradesmen will behave in a courteous and professional manner at all times.
- 3.23 All repairs reported shall be recorded in a log, which can be used to confirm dates of referral.



Responsibility to neighbourhood

- 3.21 A notice will be provided which describes the refuse storage arrangements for the dwelling and the refuse collection arrangements for the locality.
- 3.22 Members will ensure that any front gardens are kept tidy and that any litter is cleared away. Similarly rear gates and alleyways should be kept in a clean and tidy manner.
- 3.23 Members will be expected to respond to complaints about the behaviour of the tenants, and to notify the accommodation officers of the relevant institute of higher education who may liaise with the appropriate statutory body.
- 3.24 No 'To Let' boards will be displayed in either the front garden or front window

Deposits

- 3.25 From 6th April 2007 the government introduced a Tenancy Deposit Scheme. There are two types of scheme available.

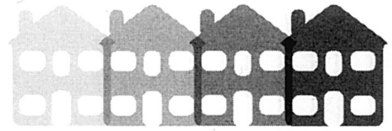
The Custodial Scheme where the landlord or agent pays the deposit to the scheme and it is then kept with the scheme until the end of the tenancy.
or

An Insurance Scheme where the landlord or agent keeps the deposit but pays an insurance premium to the scheme. The deposit is insured if there is any dispute and the scheme will repay the tenant the agreed amount directly.

Members must provide tenants with information regarding their deposit within 14 days of the day when they paid their deposit. This information must include:

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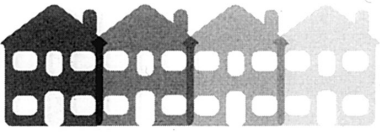
1. Contact details of the landlord or agent.
2. Which tenancy deposit scheme they are using and contact details for the scheme.
3. Information about the purpose of a tenancy deposit.
4. How deposits can be returned at the end of the tenancy.
5. What to do if there is a dispute about the deposit.
6. Landlords should ensure that there is an adequate period between tenancies (no less than 4 weeks) to ensure that end of tenancy inspections can be carried out, deposits returned and maintenance and cleaning completed before the next tenancy commences. At the end of the tenancy landlords must provide a written breakdown of the specific costs if they intend to retain any part of the deposit. Landlords are only entitled to retain amounts owing to damage caused to property or rent owed. Wear and tear is not covered.
7. Deposits should be returned within ten days of the end of the tenancy.

Disputes

- 3.26 Should a dispute between a member and student occur, then it is expected that members will deal with that dispute in a reasonable manner at all times.

Therefore members will agree to:

1. Respond reasonably and promptly to any complaints raised by tenants or their representatives.



2. Ensure written response to correspondence from tenants or their representative within 10 days of receipt.
3. Ensure that all settlements and agreements reached are actioned within 3 weeks of the settlement being agreed.

Complaints and Appeals

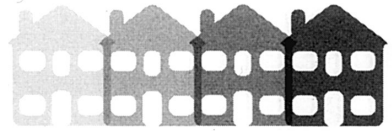
3.27 Members will undertake:

to acknowledge complaints about a breach of the code of practice; and to respond to repairs in the time scales specified in para 3.17 – 3.19.

3.28 If a breach of the Code is confirmed, then all advertising for that landlord or agent may be withdrawn. If it is more appropriate the landlord may be invited to remedy the defect. In either case if the landlord is of the opinion that the actions are unreasonable then an appeal may be submitted to a panel comprising of members, taken from the signatories to the code of practice, the panel to review the decision. The final decision will remain with the Institute of Higher Education. This procedure does not affect any statutory rights that may be consequent to any action taken by one of the statutory bodies.

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4. PARTICIPATION IN THE SCHEME

4.1 If you think that your accommodation meets the standards required by the scheme and you are prepared to agree to the management arrangements, then you may apply to join and, if accepted, your property details will be advertised.

The standard landlords are asked to achieve may be more than that which can be enforced in law.

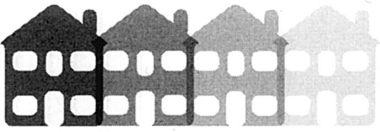
4.2 The scheme is based on self-accreditation. Landlords will have to satisfy themselves that their property is compliant with the code of practice. The Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Service have undertaken to inspect all properties enrolled on the scheme otherwise there is no regular external assessment. However, any of the signatories to the code of practice may elect to inspect a property to ensure compliance with the Code

4.3 Members may advertise with one or both of the institutes of higher education. Each requires an administrative fee and the forms are available direct from the Bishop Grosseteste University or the University of Lincoln.

4.4 The code of practice has been prepared in conjunction with the statutory bodies and who will offer advice to either party.

4.5 When an application has been accepted the property details will be advertised with either or both of the universities.

4.6 Each university will produce a notice for display by the member.



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- 4.7 The code of practice is in general self-monitoring. However, any instance of failure of compliance would lead to the member being removed from the advertising listing and that fact being displayed within the code of practice information areas used by the Residential Service. Compliance with the code of practice does not mean a particular property complies with local authority standards, which will be subject to inspection and to current legal requirements and official guidance at the time of the inspection.

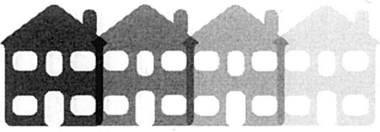
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CHECK LIST BEFORE SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

1. The property is in good repair.
2. The decoration is in good order.
3. All rooms and surfaces are clean.
4. Gas appliances new (less than 12 months) or serviced within last 12 months.
5. Automatic fire detection in place.
6. Fire blanket fixed in easy reach.
7. Fire extinguisher where provided fixed in easy reach.
8. WC has wash hand basin.
9. Kitchen safe layout, all amenities.
10. Bedrooms - all amenities.
11. Sitting room/dining room - all amenities.
12. Furniture and furnishings - all labelled for safety.
13. Appliances - all checked for safety.
14. Heating - provided for each room.
15. Insulation - roof insulated, pipes lagged.
16. Security - measures in place.
17. Refuse bins provided.
18. Clothes line provided.
19. Planning permission has been obtained for the proposed use of the dwelling.
20. The dwelling will not be overcrowded.



NOTICES TO DISPLAY IN HOUSE

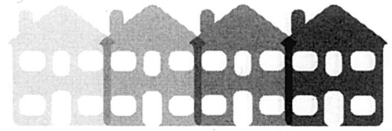
1. Latest gas appliances report.
2. Use of fire extinguisher.
3. All appliances have easy to use instructions.
4. Refuse collection details.
5. Contact details for emergency repairs and leaks.
6. Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue service letter of satisfaction

DOCUMENTS

1. Electrical report including readings, whole dwelling, supplied by a competent electrician
2. Service record of gas appliance (last 2 years i.e. last 2 reports).
3. Electrical report describing the automatic fire detection system, supplied by a competent electrician
4. A specimen copy of the tenancy contract
5. Brief description of house and amenities.
6. Inventory of fixtures, fittings and contents. Comment on condition where appropriate.
7. Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Service letter of satisfaction.

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USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Lincoln Police

Monks Road area. Office tel no: 01522 882222 Ext 5768

PC Dave Millings

PC Rachel Barnett

PCSO Horace Squire

PCSO Kate Bannister

High Street (West Side). Office tel no: 01522 805744

PC Alison Stocks

PCSO Kate Duffy

High Street (East Side Football ground side). Office tel no: 01522 805744

PC Luke Casey

PCSO Kay Rowntree

PCSO Gemma Blore

Carholme Road area. Office tel no: 01522 885382

PC Rick Mosely

PCSO Pete Davis

PCSO Simon King

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