



# Home Standard

## Lune Valley Rural Housing Association - Home Standard

### 1. Purpose

1.1 Lune Valley Rural Housing Association (LVRHA) is committed to providing excellent services to our tenants and in the local communities in which we work.

The Decent Homes Standard sets out the basic maintenance and repair standards that all housing association homes must meet. LVRHA will endeavour to provide a higher standard than the legal minimum requirement and this is the LVRHA Home Standard.

All of LVRHA properties meet the Decent Homes Standard and the LVRHA Financial Plan ensures that the investment will be sustained going forward. Robust stock condition data underpins the assumptions within the Finance Plan. The plan also contains investments to ensure ongoing compliance with health and safety responsibilities.

The LVRHA Home Standard sets out the enhanced standard that our residents can expect in their homes. The LVRHA Home Standard goes well beyond the basic requirements of Decent Homes, giving residents a safe, warm and modern home in which to live.

The LVRHA Homes Standard outlines how we will:-

- Inspect homes every 7 years as part of our stock survey plans
- Provide good quality affordable housing that is warm and weathertight
- Ensure homes benefit from modern facilities
- Supply homes with an efficient heating and hot water system
- Insulate homes to make them affordable to keep warm
- Maintain a safe and secure environment
- Consider eco-friendly products to help reduce fuel poverty

### 2. References

2.1 This standard has been developed in line with LVRHA's defined governance and delegated procedures and is also set out in line with our legislative and regulatory requirements.

2.2 LVRHA will meet all legal requirements for the refurbishment of housing, the main provisions of which are set out in:

- Section 172 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008
- Sections 81 and 133 of the Housing Act 1988
- Section 173 of the Housing and Local Government Act 1989
- Section 171D of the Housing Act 1985

### 3. Staff Responsibilities

3.1 The Managing Agent's Asset Manager is responsible for ensuring that this policy is kept up to date and consistent with any new LVRHA strategies. It will be reviewed every three years or following a change in legislation or regulatory requirements, to ensure that it remains fit for purpose.

3.2 The Asset Manager is also responsible for ensuring that this policy is adhered to through the implementation of the planned programmes of work.

### 4. Legal & Regulatory Framework

4.1 Where LVRHA maintain properties we will adhere to certain requirements laid down by regulations and legislation. These include:

- The Regulator of Social Housing consent requirements
- Contractual obligations contained within title documents
- Section 172 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008
- Section 133 of the Housing Act 1988

### 5. LVRHA Homes Standard

#### A. Health and Safety and Compliance

##### Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)

In line with Government requirements LVRHA carries out an HHSRS assessment of their homes. The HHSRS survey is included in the Stock Condition Survey, which is undertaken every 7 years. Any Category 1 or 2 risks identified during the survey will be acted on as soon as reasonably practicable.

This initiative has been developed to ensure that each home is safe by identifying possible risks and taking steps to remove or reduce those risks. Our aim is to make homes safer. We will undertake a full review of each home during the stock condition survey or when a tenant first moves in to the home. We will incorporate any work required into our Planned Improvement Programmes and raise repairs where immediate works are identified.

##### Asbestos Management

LVRHA maintain an asbestos register and make this information available to any contractors which are likely to disturb it whilst carrying out any works. It is also good practice to let tenants know where asbestos can be found within their home and LVRHA are looking to adopt this good practice by introducing a tenant friendly survey which can be easily understood.



When an asbestos containing material is found, LVRHA will either encapsulate and/or monitor the material, or remove it depending on its condition. If the asbestos containing material is in poor condition or at highest risk of disturbance we will arrange to have it moved by a licensed contractor.

### **Fire Risk Assessments**

LVRHA carry out fire risk assessments of internal communal areas to blocks of flats and communal areas. The fire risk assessments are currently carried out periodically based on the risk profile of the block of flats or other types of building.

High risk profile areas are assessed annually.

Medium risk profile areas are carried out every 3 years.

Low risk profile areas are carried out every 3 or 5 years depending on the condition of the building as recommended by our fire risk assessors.

Once a fire risk assessment has been carried out we are provided with a list of actions required to reduce the risk of fire, these are all given timescales in which the works are required to be completed and LVRHA ensure these are carried out within the dates given.

### **Annual Gas Safety Checks**

LVRHA is required to carry out annual gas safety checks by law.

We will check all gas boilers, oil-fired boilers or solid fuel appliances annually. We will also inspect and report on tenants' own gas-fired appliances. Upon completion of the annual gas check copy of the report will be left at the property and a further copied forwarded to LVRHA. Should any repair and maintenance work to any LVRHA appliances be identified at the time of the safety check these will either be completed at the same visit or programmed in for a future appointment.

Items of work identified under 'not to current standards' will be undertaken at the discretion of LVRHA and at a time of minimal disruption.

Should the tenant have their own appliance, it is their responsibility to have it repaired and maintained. Any appliances deemed to be at risk will be isolated immediately and must not be reconnected until repairs/replacement has been undertaken at the tenant's own cost and a copy of the works certificate must be provided to us to evidence that the works have been carried out by a competent engineer.

### **Periodic Electrical Testing Safety Checks and Electrical Rewire**

All of our homes receive a periodic electrical safety check every 5 years or at change of tenancy, whichever comes first. These tests are undertaken to ensure that the electrical system is safe to use and that it complies with the electrical regulations, a copy of the periodic safety check is held by LVRHA. Should any urgent works be identified whilst undertaking the safety check these will be



completed at the same time. Any other repairs that are identified will be reviewed by our Compliance Surveyor and organised should any be deemed necessary.

Homes will meet the LVRHA Home Standard if the electrical system is less than 30 years old and free from major disrepair.

If a homes wiring is more than 30 years old and in poor condition, we will look to repair or replace the installation.

### **Mains Powered Smoke Detectors and Fire Alarm Systems**

All LVRHA properties have automatic smoke detection alarms and it is our intention that every property will have mains powered detection installed by April 2019 (where appropriate). We will inspect them annually as part of a service contract or when annual gas safety and periodic electrical tests are undertaken.

If a home is served by a communal fire alarm system, this will be regularly serviced and maintained as part of our planned servicing contract.

### **Carbon Monoxide Detectors**

We will install a carbon monoxide (CO) detector if there is a gas or solid fuel appliance (this includes open fires, stoves & multi-fuel appliances).

### **Lifts**

There are no lifts in LVRHA ownership. Should this change in future then LVRHA will, in accordance with the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (LOLER,) instruct thorough examinations to all passenger and through floor lifts every 6 months to ensure it is safe to use. Should a lift be deemed to be unsafe to use it will be isolated and LVRHA will instruct remedial actions needed to bring it back into service. Any other recommendations identified within these checks will be carried out as soon as practicable.

### **Legionella**

There are no water testing requirements within LVRHA current stock. Should this change in future then LVRHA has a legal requirement to have a legionella risk assessment done to any property where a communal water distribution system is in place. These will be reviewed every 2 years in accordance with the Approved Code of Practice (ACOP Legislation nr 8). A new risk assessment will be carried out following any modifications.

LVRHA will arrange for regular system flushing, monitoring of water temperatures and disinfect shower heads, this will be carried out by an external provider.

## Radon

Radon will be monitored in all properties potentially affected by Radon in accordance with Public Health England guidance. LVRHA will arrange for any remedial actions necessary to reduce the exposure level to acceptable limits. LVRHA will continue to monitor these levels to ensure the health and safety of tenants.

### B. Condition of Building Components

We will carry out stock condition surveys every 7 years and plan works in accordance with the information gathered. We will monitor and assess condition and where appropriate will extend component lifecycles up to the disrepair dates.

#### Primary roof covering

The LVRHA Home Standard aims to ensure that a roof covering will be surveyed for both condition and age within the following timescales:

- Concrete tiles 55 years
- Clay tiles 35 years
- Natural slate 80 years
- Man-made slate 35 years
- Felt roof 15 years

A roof is defined as being in poor condition if there is a requirement to replace 50% of the roof covering.

When replacing a roof covering we will generally replace like for like. We will consult with tenants should an alternative covering be proposed.

#### Re-roofing will include:

- Renewal of roof tiles, felt and battens
- Renewal of gutters, rainwater goods
- Renewal of fascia's, soffits, and bargeboards with white PVC-U
- Upgrade loft insulation to at least 300mm depth
- If a chimney is no longer in use it will be taken down below roof level and vented.

## Chimneys

A home will not meet the LVRHA Homes Standard if the chimney is in poor condition and needs to be partially or fully rebuilt.

Chimneys will be inspected as part of the stock condition survey programme. If found to be in repairable condition, we will carry out the appropriate remedial works. If beyond repair, we will either partially or completely rebuild it, or remove it entirely by taking the external chimney structure down to below roof level and venting.

### **Walls – Brickwork/Stone/Render**

A home will not meet the LVRHA Homes Standard if 50% of the wall finish requires re-pointing or renewal. We anticipate render finishes having a lifespan of 50 years and will inspect this every 7 years as part of the stock condition survey.

We will inspect cavity wall ties and lintels when re-rendering properties and replace these where necessary as part of the works. If cavity wall insulation is found not be present this will also be included as part of the works.

Render will be patched to match the existing following repair works, where less than 50% of the entire elevation finish is in good condition. All elevations will then be painted to provide a uniform colour finish. A coloured rendering system will be used where render to a one or more full elevations is needed.

If the external finish of a home is already painted it will be included in LVRHA's 10 years cyclical painting programme.

### **Windows**

The LVRHA Home Standard aims to ensure that windows will be surveyed for both condition and age within the following timescales:

- Wooden windows 20-25 years
- PVC-U windows 30 years
- Aluminium windows 45 years

Windows are defined as being in poor condition if one of more casements is beyond economical repair.

When replacing windows, we will generally use white PVC-u, we will replace the window fenestration like for like subject to planning restrictions. We will install secondary glazing to properties where planning restriction prevents the installation of double glazing such as listed building or properties within a conservation area.

### **Window replacement will include:**

- Double glazing units in white PVC-u frames
- Multi point high security locking systems with lockable handles
- Internally beaded glazing for added security
- Casements with the facility to be locked in an 'ajar' position to improve ventilation
- Pattern or obscure glass to bathrooms/wc's
- Draught proofing
- Trickle vents
- Window restrictors as appropriate
- Escape windows above the ground floor
- PVC-u trims to internal reveals where necessary

## External Doors

The LVRHA Home Standard aims to ensure that doors will be surveyed for both condition and age within the following timescales:

- Wooden doors 25 years
- PVC/Composite/Aluminium 30 years

Doors are defined as being in poor condition if they are beyond economical repair.

When replacing external doors, we will generally use insulated PVC-u or GRP faced composite doors. Tenants will be offered a choice of door design and colour. External doors will be fire resistant where appropriate and fitted in accordance with current regulations.

### External doors will include:

- Double glazing
- Multi point high security locking systems with lever handles, door pull, spy hole, numerals and letter plate

## Central Heating

The LVRHA Home Standard aims to ensure that our central heating systems are efficient and key central heating components will be surveyed for replacement within the following timescales:

- Gas boiler 15 years
- Complete gas central heating system 30 years
- Electric storage heaters 15 years
- Warm Air system 30 years

When replacing heating systems we will also consider alternative fuel systems and aim to give the best balance between replacement cost and fuel efficiency. For example:

- We will only use the most efficient programmable 'A' rated gas condensing boilers
- When replacing radiators we will fit thermostatic radiator valves and where appropriate alter sizes to minimise the need to redecorate
- Installation of programmable room thermostats
- We use modern efficient programmable electric storage heaters
- We will consider the use of more sustainable heating systems such as solar heating, ground and air source heat pumps

Wherever possible the preferred option for replacement will be a gas fired system. This may not be achievable in some areas where there is no current gas supply and in these situations we will consider the use of renewable energy systems and consult with tenants on the options available such as Air Source Heat Pumps. We will encourage tenants to use SMART meters and where possible these will be installed during the voids process.

## Bathrooms

The LVRHA Home Standard aims to ensure that Bathrooms will be surveyed for replacement every 30 years and will generally comprise of:



- A matching white bath, wash hand basin and toilet
- Over bath shower facilities
- Ceramic tiled splash backs and shower area as appropriate, with a choice of colours.
- Slip resistant vinyl sheet floor covering in a choice of colours
- An extractor fan
- Decoration
- Refitting of tenant's items such as toilet roll holders, soap dishes, etc

All new bathrooms will be designed in full consultation with tenants to ensure we meet their individual needs.

If the central heating system has sufficient pressure, when modernising a bathroom, we will fit a thermostatic bath shower mixer tap, where this is not possible an electric shower will be installed.

### **Kitchens**

The LVRHA Home Standard aims to ensure that kitchens will be surveyed for replacement after 20 years and will generally comprise of:

- New base and wall units with a choice of colours and handles
- Upgrade of electrics to modern standards
- Stainless steel sink and taps
- 38mm worktop with a choice of colours
- A choice of ceramic tiled splash backs or upstands between worktops and wall units and behind the cooker space, with a choice of colours
- Slip resistant vinyl sheet floor covering in a choice of colours
- An extractor fan
- Decoration
- Plastering where required
- Relocation of white goods if necessary
- Refitting of tenant's items such as blinds, kitchen roll holders etc

All new kitchens will be designed to take into account adequate space and layout and in full consultation with tenants to ensure we meet their individual needs.

### **C. Communal Areas**

The LVRHA Home Standard for communal areas will including the following;

- We will replace traditional lighting in blocks with energy efficient LED motion sensor lighting
- Install Passive Infrared (PIR) motion sensor external lighting
- Upgrade flooring to either slip resistant vinyl floor or maintain existing finishes
- Install secure composite entrance doors (in some circumstances we will install powder coated aluminium security doors with magnetic locks on a electronic entry system)
- Windows in white PCV-u
- Internal decoration every 5 years to include handrails

## **D. None Component Standards**

### **Noise Insulation**

The LVRHA Home Standard will ensure that where tenants suffer from noise nuisance, as determined by either HHSRS or an environmental improvement notice issued by the Local Authority, we will undertake improvement work directly related to the nuisance to abate matters.

### **Insulation**

Loft insulation in all homes will be upgraded to at least 300mm (12") in accordance with the LVRHA Energy Efficiency Strategy. This exceeds the current Building Regulations standard and Decent Homes Standard and will help to reduce energy bills.

We will undertake a survey and install cavity wall insulation where appropriate. Where the construction of a house does not allow for cavity wall insulation we will explore the opportunity to install internal/external wall insulation.

### **Energy Efficiency Rating (SAP)**

The LVRHA Home Standard considers Band D (SAP score 55-68) as a minimum standard and are working to improve our lowest performing stock through targeted efficiency measures.

In line with our Energy Efficiency Strategy the LVRHA Home Standard for SAP ratings will increase in line with Government requirements.

### **Energy Performance Certificates**

The LVRHA Home Standard requires all properties to hold an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC). The certificate will include a SAP rating and suggested areas for improvement. EPC's are valid for 10 years and we will re-survey in accordance with this or if major improvements that effect the energy efficiency have been carried out.

## **E. External Components**

### **Security Lighting**

The LVRHA Home Standard will ensure that all properties will be provided with Passive Infrared (PIR) motion sensor lighting to the front and/or back of their homes.

### **External Painting**

The LVRHA Home Standard requires the following;

- External joinery will be repaired and re-painted every 5 years
- Previously painted render to be re-painted every 10 years

### **Footpaths**

The LVRHA Home Standard requires all footpaths to be inspected as part of the stock condition survey and a programme of repairs carried out where required to ensure trip or slip hazards are negated.

### **Boundaries**

The LVRHA Home Standard will ensure all boundaries are clearly demarcated either by means of hedging, fencing or boundary walls. These will all be inspected as part of the stock condition survey and a programme of repairs carried out where required.

Where a clear health and safety hazard is determined a secure boundary will be put in place.

## **F. Communities and Consultation**

### **Leaseholder Consultation**

The LVRHA Home Standard requires consultation with leaseholders on works requiring a contribution in excess of £250 or more. All works will be consulted on with leaseholders in accordance with Section 20 Legislation.

### **Resident Consultation**

We recognise that each home is unique so we will arrange for a Resident Liaison Officer to visit all tenants to discuss their needs when we carry out planned improvement works.

Before any planned work starts, ourselves or our partnering contractor will agree a date and time that is convenient to the tenant. They will confirm this in writing and the tenant will receive a letter confirming choices (where applicable) and a start date. The works will be supported by a dedicated Resident Liaison Officer who will be on hand to answer any questions or queries tenants may have both before and during the works.

### **Resident Satisfaction**

Resident satisfaction underpins our desire to continually improve our service to residents. Tenant views and comments are key to improving our services. When we carry out major work in a home we will leave a Satisfaction Survey to be completed and returned to us.

### **Service Standard Monitoring and Reporting**

Delivery of the LVRHA Home Standard is monitored through a variety of means including quarterly Decent Homes reporting through the Performance Dashboard to Board and within annual reports to stakeholders.