

Housing Furnishing Policy

1. Overview / Policy Statement

- 1.1 South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils (the councils) are committed to ensuring that the temporary accommodation they provide is furnished to a consistent standard that allows for a comfortable and functional living environment.

2. Objectives

- 2.1 The objectives of this policy are as follows:
- To clarify which items will remain the property of the councils and which will be gifted to tenants.
 - To define the responsibilities of the tenant and the councils in relation to the provision, maintenance and replacement of furnishings.
 - To standardise the approach across all temporary accommodation provided by the councils.

3. Scope

- 3.1 This policy applies to all housing accommodation provided by the councils. It does not apply to any general needs housing let by the councils.

4. Roles and Responsibilities for Delivery

- 4.1 This section outlines the different roles and responsibilities that the councils and their tenants have in relation to furnishings.
- 4.2 The councils:
- Will provide essential furniture, white goods and household items as part of the inventory of the property.
 - Will inform tenants that any non-essential items they bring are their responsibility to replace if damaged.
 - Recognise that tenants, depending on individual circumstance, may possess or wish to purchase items that meet their needs and preferences.
 - May provide some additional items at their discretion that will be gifted to the tenants, should the tenants' circumstances qualify, and suitable funding is available.

- Will ensure that non-gifted items provided are in good working order. This will include performing annual In-service inspection and testing (ISIT), previously known as portable appliance testing (PAT), on electrical items.
- Will replace non-gifted items that are no longer in good working order at their expense, unless they were broken, damaged (beyond reasonable wear and tear) or disposed of by the tenant.

4.3 The tenants:

- Will be responsible for the maintenance, replacement and disposal of any items gifted to the family by the councils, any personal belongings and/or decorative items.
- Can decline to accept any items offered through gifting by the councils during the move-in process. Any rejected gifting items will be removed from the property. Once gifting items have been declined and removed the councils have no obligation to return or replace that item at a later date.
- Must ensure that any gas appliance they have brought into the property is in good working order and, where appropriate, fitted by qualified individuals – a notification will need to be provided to the councils. During the annual Landlord Gas Safety Record (LGSR), all gas appliances will be serviced, regardless of ownership.
- Will ensure that any electrical works are undertaken by a qualified electrician – they will also require written permission from the councils.
- Will be responsible for any repairs/damage that result from the fitting of appliances and/or work undertaken.
- Must not carry out alterations, additions or improvements either inside or outside the home.
- Will not move or remove any fixtures, fittings and equipment without prior written consent.

5. Relevant Legislation

5.1 The relevant legislation is listed below:

- [Regulatory standards for landlords - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/the-health-safety-commission)

6. Relevant Policy and Procedure

6.1 The relevant policy and procedures are listed below:

- Housing Compliance Policy
- Housing Gas Safety Policy
- Housing Asbestos Policy
- Housing Electrical Safety Policy
- Housing Fire Safety Policy
- Housing Repairs Policy
- Housing Legionella Policy
- Housing Void Policy
- Data Protection policy

6.2 The relevant health and safety policy and codes for the councils will also apply to this policy. This includes, but is not restricted to:

- First Aid
- Violence and Aggression at work
- Workplace Safety
- Working at Height
- Electrical Safety Personal Protective Equipment
- Asbestos Management
- Incident Reporting and Investigation
- Manual Handling

7. Policy and Procedure

Process For Furnishing

- 7.1 Before a tenant moves into temporary accommodation, an assessment of what they require will be conducted by the councils. This will help determine which items are needed and avoid duplication or unnecessary provisions. The council will make best endeavours to provide items, but it is not duty bound to do so.
- 7.2 The councils will maintain a standardised list of essential furnishings for all properties (Appendix 1). This will help to streamline the provision of items and ensure consistency across properties. The standardised list will be maintained and updated regularly to ensure it aligns with tenant needs and available resources.
- 7.3 An inventory of standard furnishings and a list of discretionary items will be maintained. A formalised process for stock management will be implemented to ensure that the necessary items are readily available and that costs are appropriately allocated to the correct cost centre.
- 7.4 Responsibility for furnishing properties will sit with the Housing team, who are accountable for ensuring properties are appropriately furnished prior to let. In furnishing properties, officers will use approved suppliers and adhere to procurement rules.
- 7.5 Requests for specific items, such as douches or other specialised furnishings, will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, particularly in relation to any cultural requests or additional support needs.
- 7.6 Regular reviews of the furnishing policy will take place to ensure it is effective, efficient, and meets the needs of tenants. The councils will seek to signpost to charities and other community organisations to facilitate access to additional furnishings for tenants with limited financial resources.
- 7.7 All data pertaining to this policy will be stored and managed in line with statutory data protection requirements, as outlined in the councils' data protection policy.

Gifting Items

- 7.8 Personal items such as duvets, towels, and a basic set of crockery are provided upon move-in if required and gifted to the tenants. (A list of gifted items is included in Appendix 1). Upon move in, tenants will be asked to sign a copy of a gifting list to acknowledge receipt.
- 7.9 Standardised stock for basic furnishings (like plates or cups) will be maintained for easy replacement.
- 7.10 In some cases, there may be specific cultural preferences or needs for additional furnishings, and the councils aim to be responsive to these needs within budget constraints.
- 7.11 The councils do not typically gift furniture or large household items (e.g. TVs).

Summary of Furnishing Provision in Temporary Accommodation

Hostels

- 7.12 Each room will include a double bed, kitchenette (fridge and cooker), and access to shared washing and drying facilities. Additional items are not provided, except in cases where essential items (e.g. pots, pans, duvets) are needed. All provided items will be checked regularly through void and tenancy inspections and tested annually where required, including ISIT of electrical items that are owned by the councils.

Houses

- 7.13 White goods (fridge, cooker), sofa, beds, and basic furniture such as a table and chairs will be provided for the property but will not be gifted to tenants. Additional items like kettles, crockery, and other non-essential household goods will be gifted by the councils where required. All provided items will be checked regularly through void and tenancy inspections and tested annually where required, including ISIT of electrical items that are owned by the councils.
- 7.14 Tenants moving into houses will be assisted to ensure they have the minimum required furnishings, and efforts will be made to connect tenants with charitable and community organisations for additional items where there may be financial barriers.

8. Employment Contractual Status

- 8.1 This policy does not form part of the contract of employment for South Oxfordshire District Council or the Vale of White Horse District Council.

9. Communication and Contact Information

- 9.1 For further information about this policy, please contact the Housing team via email: email_tenants@southandvale.gov.uk or telephone 01235 422000.

10. Alternative Formats

- 10.1 Please do not hesitate to contact a member of the Housing team if you would like this policy in an alternative format, via email tenants@southandvale.gov.uk or telephone 01235 422000.

11. Change Record

Change Record	
Policy title	Furnishing Policy
Version number	1
Owner(s)	Housing Delivery Manager
Author(s)	Housing Delivery Manager
Approved by	ICMD
Approved date	21/11/2025
Effective date	28/11/2025
Renewal date	28/11/2028

Appendix 1 - Furnishings provided where appropriate (and must remain in the property at the end of the occupation)

Not all of these items will necessarily be provided in all properties.

Kitchen

Cutlery
Knife set
Chopping boards
Oven
Fridge/freezer
Microwave
Kettle
Pots and Pans – a frying pan and 2 pots of different sizes
Crocery
Bin
Utensils
Sieve/colander
Washing machine

Lounge/Sitting Room

Sofa
Dining Table
Chairs
Coffee table

Bathroom/Toilets

Bin
Toilet Brush

Bedroom 1

Double bed
Mattress
Wardrobe
Bedside table
Mattress Protector

Bedroom 2

Single or bunk beds (dependent on property layout)
Cots as required
Wardrobe
Bedside Table
Mattress/es
Mattress Protector

Bedroom 3

Single or bunk beds (dependent on property layout)
Cots as required
Wardrobe
Bedside Table
Mattress/es
Mattress Protector

Bedroom 4

Single or bunk beds (dependent on property layout)
Cots as required
Wardrobe
Bedside Table
Mattress/es
Mattress Protector

Laundry Items

Clothes airer
Linen Basket
Clothes Pegs

Gifted Items

Hygiene/Personal Items as Top Up (Gifted each time)
Towel
Hand towel
Flannel
Bedding
Cot and mattresses (if required)