

Changeover checklist

Our guide to successful holiday letting



SYKES
HOLIDAY COTTAGES



Initial checks

Visitors' book: When you enter the property, the first thing to do is check the visitors' book (and breakages book if there is one) for comments/issues. Guests frequently leave helpful comments that they may not mention to you, even if you meet them.

Initial check: A swift external and internal check of the property may identify issues which will take time to resolve. Here are some we think fall into this category, but there may be more.

Open the windows

- ☐ Check window opening and closing
- ☐ Check window keys are present in correct place
- ☐ Check window restrictors are attached

Switch on all the lights

- ☐ Replace blown bulbs

Check oven and hob

- ☐ If exceptionally dirty, immediately apply cleaner

Switch on all electrical equipment

- ☐ Check dishwasher, washing machine, fridge, freezer, hob, oven, kettle and toaster are all working
- ☐ Check Wi-Fi, TVs (check channels), satellite are all working

Switch on the heating and hot water

- ☐ Check the settings are working
- ☐ Check all heating is working

Inspect carpets, rugs and soft furnishings

- ☐ If there are stains, address them immediately

Inspect bathrooms

- ☐ Flush all toilets and check for fill and flush (not blocked or noisy)
- ☐ Check heated towel rails are working
- ☐ Check loo seats aren't wobbly
- ☐ Check the bathroom fan is working (not noisily)
- ☐ Check electric shower is working and the thermostat is functioning

Check beds

- ☐ Look for damage or wetness

Check smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors

- ☐ Make sure they are still there and batteries are connected. Test the batteries and record this in the house maintenance book (replace batteries, if necessary)

Security

- ☐ Check door locks/bolts
- ☐ If any of these require repair or replacement, action immediately. If not possible, report to Sykes.
- ☐ Once the initial check is done, continue with the rest of the changeover.

Garden and grounds

You should look at the garden and grounds of the property, checking for the following:

- ☐ Play equipment isn't damaged
- ☐ Perimeter fence isn't damaged
- ☐ There are no bottles, broken glass or other debris
- ☐ House sign is visible from the road
- ☐ Outside lighting is working
- ☐ Outside furniture is not damaged or broken
- ☐ Paths, patio and steps are swept and not slippery or loose
- ☐ Entrances and paths are clear of foliage
- ☐ Garden is tidy
- ☐ Flower tubs and hanging baskets are watered
- ☐ Bins are empty and the rubbish removed
- ☐ Furniture is cleaned and arranged neatly
- ☐ Barbecue is clean

Inside

- ☐ Beds: Strip the beds. If you launder the sheets (rather than sending them to a laundry), get a load into the washing machine. This tests the machine, saves time laundering them later and allows the beds to air. Check the duvets, pillows and mattress protectors. If they're stained or grubby, replace them.

- ☐ If the property has an open fire or woodburner, you might like to deal with this first. They are messy and cleaning them after the rest of the house can lead to your other good work being undone.
- ☐ Ash should be removed
- ☐ The fire laid and ready to put a match to
- ☐ Hoods and woodburners need to look clean on the outside
- ☐ Fuel - a starter pack of fuel should be provided with instructions where to find more and instructions on how to operate the woodburner or light the fire
- ☐ Fire irons and fire guard should be in place

Kitchen

- ☐ Cobwebs - remove high and low
- ☐ Skirting boards - dust
- ☐ Windows - dust sills, remove smears and finger marks from panes
- ☐ Bins - empty, replace liners and leave clean
- ☐ Blinds/curtains - open/close, check and tie back
- ☐ Pictures - dust
- ☐ Paintwork - remove or touch up marks
- ☐ Light fittings - dust
- ☐ Light switches - clean
- ☐ Kitchen door - dust and wipe down (remove finger marks)

- ☐ Oven – ensure grease free, including trays, shelves and hinges
- ☐ Hob – remove any food spillages and make grease free
- ☐ Microwave – clean thoroughly, remove smears and food spillages and check roof of oven, leave door ajar
- ☐ Fridge and freezer – remove any food items, clean thoroughly and make grease free. Refill ice tray. Check seals
- ☐ Dishwasher – empty/clean if necessary and check filter, salt and rinse aid levels and run if necessary. Wipe front
- ☐ Washing machine – clean powder drawer. Wipe front
- ☐ Tumble dryer – check fluff filter
- ☐ Cupboards – remove any food items left. Wipe inside and out. Rearrange so all items are left neat and tidy
- ☐ Crockery, glasses, cups/mugs, cookware – check all are clean.
- ☐ Replace/report any breakages or missing items
- ☐ Bread bin/cake tin – empty crumbs
- ☐ Cutlery drawer – make sure the cutlery is clean and there's enough
- ☐ Kettle – empty of water and remove finger marks
- ☐ Toaster – empty tray of any crumbs and wipe over.
- ☐ Remove smear marks
- ☐ Work surfaces – thoroughly clean and disinfect
- ☐ Tiled surfaces – wipe clean, check grout discolouration (bleach, if necessary) and disinfect
- ☐ Sink/drainers – clean and disinfect
- ☐ Chrome and stainless steel appliances – polish
- ☐ Oven gloves – check and replace if necessary
- ☐ Knives – sharpen if necessary
- ☐ Fire blanket – check present
- ☐ Fire extinguisher – check not discharged and in date
- ☐ High chair – set up if necessary (check booking confirmation for babies). Check harness, check cleanliness
- ☐ Floor – Hoover, mop (with disinfectant) or sweep as necessary
- ☐ Hazards – check for obvious hazards and remove anything broken
- ☐ First aid kit – check contents and replace as necessary. Remove any tablets
- ☐ Welcome folder – check contents and leave in obvious place
- ☐ Housekeeping pack – supply bin bags (5), dishwasher tabs (5), washing machine powder/tabs (5), washing up liquid (at least 100ml), spare light bulbs, new dishcloths (2), paper towel (1 roll), new pan scourer/washing up sponge (1), general cleaner e.g. Cif. Ensure all stored out of reach of children
- ☐ Welcome pack – supply minimum welcome pack: welcome card, tea (2 teabags x the number the property sleeps), coffee (at least 5g x the number the property sleeps), fresh

milk (at least 50ml x the number the property sleeps), sugar (10g x the number the property sleeps), salt, pepper

- ☐ Grocery order – if ordered, perishables in the fridge
- ☐ Optional extras (in addition to welcome and housekeeping packs) – wine, cake, biscuits, cream tea. Where possible, provide local products

Bathrooms / loos / shower-rooms

- ☐ Cobwebs – remove high and low
- ☐ Skirting boards – dust
- ☐ Windows – dust sills, remove smears and finger marks from panes
- ☐ Bins – empty, replace liners and leave clean
- ☐ Blinds/curtains – open/close, check and tie back
- ☐ Mirrors – clean
- ☐ Pictures – dust
- ☐ Paintwork – remove or touch up marks
- ☐ Light fittings – dust light switches
- ☐ Extractor – check working and not noisy
- ☐ Bathroom cabinet – check empty and leave clean
- ☐ Loo – check flush, clean and disinfect. Polish handles
- ☐ Shower – clean (nothing in plug hole), check grout discolouration (bleach if necessary) and disinfect. Polish controls. Check ceiling above shower for mould

- ☐ Basin – check plugs attached/clean (nothing in plug hole) and disinfect. Polish taps
- ☐ Heated towel rail – dust/wipe and turn off
- ☐ Loo brush – check
- ☐ Anti-slip mat – clean
- ☐ Bath mat – check for cleanliness
- ☐ Hand towel – provide a clean one
- ☐ Loo roll – supply 1 plus 1 spare
- ☐ Disposal bags – supply for nappies and sanitary items
- ☐ Toiletries/cleaning agents - remove
- ☐ Floor – Hoover, mop (with disinfectant) or sweep as necessary
- ☐ Hazards – check for obvious hazards, remove anything broken

Bedrooms

- ☐ Cobwebs – remove high and low
- ☐ Skirting boards – dust
- ☐ Windows – dust sills, remove smears and finger marks from panes
- ☐ Bins – empty, replace liners and leave clean
- ☐ Blinds/curtains – open/close, check and tie back
- ☐ Mirrors – clean
- ☐ Pictures – dust
- ☐ Paintwork – remove or touch up marks
- ☐ Light fittings – dust
- ☐ Light switches – clean
- ☐ Beds – check under and behind, check duvets, pillows and mattress protectors and replace/laundry as necessary.

Make up (linen should be good quality and ironed)

- ☐ Spare blankets – check and replace spare blankets in wardrobe or chest of drawers
- ☐ Bedside tables – check drawers and remove anything left behind
- ☐ Wardrobes – remove any non-standard coat hangers and replace with wooden ones (4 per person)
- ☐ Chests of drawers – check drawers and remove anything left behind
- ☐ Towels – supply 1 bath and 1 hand towel per person. Leave in bedroom
- ☐ Toiletries – supply soap and shampoo. Leave in bedroom
- ☐ Cot – set up, if necessary (check booking confirmation for babies). Check operation, check clean
- ☐ Floor – Hoover, mop (with disinfectant) or sweep as necessary
- ☐ Hazards – check for obvious hazards, remove anything broken

Living room

- ☐ Cobwebs – remove high and low
- ☐ Skirting boards – dust
- ☐ Windows – dust sills, remove smears and finger marks from panes
- ☐ Bins – empty, replace liners and leave clean
- ☐ Blinds/curtains – open/close, check and tie back
- ☐ Mirrors – clean
- ☐ Pictures – dust
- ☐ Paintwork – remove or touch up marks

- ☐ Light fittings – dust
- ☐ Light switches – clean
- ☐ Sofa and chairs – check covers, check down back and under cushions, remove crumbs/debris, Hoover, plump cushions
- ☐ CDs/books/toys/games – tidy
- ☐ TV, etc. – Wipe screen, check batteries in remote controls
- ☐ Floor – Hoover, mop (with disinfectant) or sweep, as necessary
- ☐ Hazards – check for obvious hazards, remove anything broken

Dining room

- ☐ Cobwebs – remove high and low
- ☐ Skirting boards – dust
- ☐ Windows – dust sills, remove smears and finger marks from panes
- ☐ Bins – empty, replace liners and leave clean
- ☐ Blinds/curtains – open/close, check and tie back
- ☐ Mirrors – clean
- ☐ Pictures – dust
- ☐ Paintwork – remove or touch up marks
- ☐ Light fittings – dust
- ☐ Light switches – clean
- ☐ Place mats – check cleanliness
- ☐ Crockery, cutlery, glasses – check cleanliness
- ☐ Table – polish, if appropriate
- ☐ Floor – Hoover, mop (with disinfectant) or sweep, as necessary
- ☐ Hazards – check for obvious hazards, remove anything broken

Hall / stairs / landing

- ☐ Cobwebs – remove high and low
- ☐ Skirting boards – dust
- ☐ Windows – dust sills, remove smears and finger marks from panes
- ☐ Torch – check working and batteries are charged
- ☐ Floor – Hoover, mop (with disinfectant) or sweep, as necessary
- ☐ Hazards – check for obvious hazards, remove anything broken

Front porch area

- ☐ Front door – check clean, clean handle, opens/closes easily, check locks/bolts work easily (oil, if necessary)
- ☐ Outside area – clear of any dropped leaves especially in Autumn and loose rubbish. Sweep under door mat. Shake out mat
- ☐ Outside lighting – check lighting is working and leave on for night time arrivals
- ☐ Cobwebs – remove high and low
- ☐ Floor – mop/sweep, as appropriate

Pets

- ☐ Include dog treats in welcome pack
- ☐ Map with local dog walks

- ☐ It is recommended that the property provide dog-friendly fencing around the garden and all external areas, with no gaps or escape routes for even the smallest dog. If this is not the case, it must be explicit in the property description.
- ☐ External tap and hose to clean mud away
- ☐ Stair gates if required
- ☐ Couch covers
- ☐ Bed protectors / covers if required
- ☐ Bowls for food and water
- ☐ Towels and blankets
- ☐ Non-slip mat for food area

Finally

- ☐ Fresh flowers – a posy from the garden or a few daffodils in spring are perfect
- ☐ Deodorise – as necessary
- ☐ Vacuum cleaner – empty bag if necessary
- ☐ Hot water – turn on
- ☐ Heating – turn on if required (will normally be required)
- ☐ Oil/gas tank – check level
- ☐ Ensure key in key safe or other agreed place as per guests' directions
- ☐ Report any maintenance or other issues
- ☐ Call guests after they arrive to check all is ok

Unwelcome visitors

Guests don't appreciate pests, so check regularly for their presence and don't allow conditions to develop that attract them in the first place.

Flies – removing debris from the property helps reduce the number of flies. In the autumn, cluster flies can be a problem. Opening windows and cleaning out hinges helps. Sealing windows and cracks is the most effective way to prevent the flies from entering, but cleaning around windows with mild detergent or placing lavender on window sills is said to repel flies too. Fly sprays will blitz them temporarily (but remember to Hoover up corpses).

Fleas – if the property welcomes dogs, schedule regular spray, powder or fumigation anti-flea treatment to ensure fleas are kept in check.

Mice – food left in the house will attract mice. There are lots of effective products available to get rid of them. If you choose traps or poison, guests must be made aware of the location.

Spring clean – at the start of every year, a thorough spring clean should be undertaken, including soft furnishings, carpets, curtains, bedding and behind kitchen appliances. At this time, walls and paintwork should be washed down, windows cleaned, drawers re-lined with paper, etc.

Wear and tear – holiday homes get hard wear. Suitcases, a full house, people around all day – all these contribute to a higher rate of wear and tear than in normal domestic properties. Retain tins of paint to touch up scuffs and scratches and keep on top of wear and tear, otherwise it can easily get away from you.

Mattresses – turn regularly.

Fridges – a tub of bicarbonate of soda in the fridge combats smells.

Health and safety

Always be on the lookout for hazards: loose carpets or rugs, for example, broken light switches, slippery steps or wobbly handrails. Guests are unfamiliar with the property and won't compensate for the unexpected that you, through familiarity, might not see as a problem. All hazards should be dealt with immediately and never sign off a changeover with hazards unresolved. If you are unable to resolve a hazard, bar access to that part of the property, pending resolution. If that makes the property unusable, then contact us so we may deal with the issue. Note hazards in the maintenance book as you find them and the action you take to minimise or eliminate them.

If there's a problem, it should be dealt with immediately. If you can't resolve it, please call us.



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