



Housing Repairs and Maintenance (HRM) VOID LETTABLE STANDARD

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1. Introduction

1.0 This is the lettable standard for empty properties, where the tenancy has ended, and the property is being repaired in preparation for the new tenant to move in. This sets out our expectations for staff and contractors, to ensure that:

- We are consistent in the quality and standard of all properties managed through the relet process.
- We provide safe properties at an acceptable standard for residents to start living in their new home.
- We achieve value for money in the repairs and investments that we make.
- We achieve an efficient relet time and minimise rent loss through the relet process.

2. General

2.0 Housing Repairs and Maintenance are required to manage void contractors providing services within the scope of void refurbishment works including specialist contractors.

2.1 Housing Repairs and Maintenance will install a key safe on the outside wall of each void unless there is a key-safe in existence during the pre-inspection. All key-safes will have a 4-digit numeric security code which will be made available to the Void contractor and BMSDC Housing Team. A set of current keys for the void will be left in the key-safe at all times, to ensure that contractors and staff can access the property.

2.2 The purpose of the Lettable Standard is to ensure that a consistent standard of work is carried out by Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council and its contractors to all empty properties before they are re-let.

2.3 All properties must meet the Housing Health Safety Rating System (HHSRS) requirements, Decent Homes Standards and must specifically have a **minimum EPC rating of D**. Any properties with a rating lower than band D must have improvement work to improve energy efficiency up to band D or higher prior to reletting. This would normally involve improvements to heating systems or insulation works.

2.4 The Lettable Standard outlines the condition that a property should be let based on the principles of:

- Safety
- Security
- Cleanliness
- All services in working order.
- Planned Maintenance Programme should be checked if any capital items require replacement.
- Life Expectancy should be identified on existing capital items to feed back into the capital programme (e.g. non-standard kitchen fitted but ok to stay)

3. Void Relet Times

3.0 The target relet times are dependent on the scope of works required. The turnaround time is directly linked to rent loss and voids need to be completed and relet as quickly as possible to minimise any loss of income. The below targets are set as a guide of the maximum turnaround for each void type. Housing Repairs and Maintenance and contractors should work as efficiently as possible to achieve the optimum relet time. The targets will be reviewed annually to provide a continuously improving service.

3.1 Target Housing Repair and Maintenance and contractor repairs turnaround times, with effect from when the keys are available, are as follows:

Code	Void Type/Scope	Repairs Ready to Let Turnaround Target
Void1	Void Minor. Level of Work < £1000 includes: Clean and Clear, Lock Changes, Gas and Electrical Checks and other minor Repair items	Up to 7 Calendar days
Void2	Void Standard, Level of Work includes: Clean and Clear, Lock Changes, Gas and Electrical Checks and all necessary Works required to bring the Property up to the lettable homes' standard.	Up to 14 Calendar days
Void3	Void Major, Level of work > £5000 includes: Clean and Clear, Lock Changes, Gas and Electrical Checks required to bring the Property up to the lettable homes' standard. Could also include a major component replacement such as a new kitchen and/or bathroom.	Up to 28 Calendar days

4. Void Lettable Standard

4.1 Kitchen

- All work surfaces will be secure and free from cracks or burns and safe for food preparation.
- Kitchen units should be in good working order with all drawers and doors opening and operating correctly.
- Non standards kitchens in good condition will be left in situ and where partial replacements (single drawers, cupboards, worktops) are required, these will be replaced using the agreed BMSDC standard.
- Where required all plinths will be fitted.
- Hot water supplies will be checked. Where there is no active supply, the hot water will be checked when the property is let.
- Dispose of cooker/cooker hood and/or hob and leave a space for a cooker and a cooker connection point. For both gas and electric if gas is available.
- There will be at least two double electric sockets under worktop and two above where space permits.
- There will be space for a fridge/freezer and a washing machine. (Unless in sheltered housing where there is a communal laundry where only a space for a fridge/freezer will be provided. A cold-water washing machine isolation connection, waste and fused spur will be provided. Water isolation valves will be clearly labelled.

- In a studio/1 bed flat there will be sink base unit and 1000mm floor unit and 1000mm wall unit
- The stop valve to be accessible tested and if a replacement is required a ball valve lever turn type is to be fitted for future low maintenance.
- Replace extractor fans with Envirovent humidistat fan.
- Kitchen floor covering must be slip resistant and free from damage and trip hazards. If outgoing tenant has replaced with unsuitable flooring the replacement will be re-charged to the outgoing tenant.
- Wall tiles three rows high should be fitted around kitchen worktops and be free of cracks.

4.2 Bathroom

- Sanitary ware will be cleaned and free from chips, cracks, and leaks.
- The WC will be fitted with a new toilet seat.
- Electric Showers will be removed and replaced with a thermostatic mixer shower unless property only has storage heaters in this case electric shower would stay.
- Any glass shower screens will be removed and be replaced with a curtain pole.
- Replace Shower head and hose and remove existing shower curtain where present (Incoming tenant is responsible for providing their own shower curtains)
- All sanitary ware will have working taps, plugs and chains.
- There will be at least three rows of wall tiles or a wall board as a splash back around the wash basin and baths.
- Where there is a shower, the walls will be tiled or covered with a wall board to ceiling height along the full length of the bath and surrounding walls .
- Replace extractor fans with Envirovent humidistat fan.
- Bathroom floor covering must be slip resistant and free from damage and trip hazards. If outgoing tenant has replaced with unsuitable flooring the replacement will be re-charged to the outgoing tenant.

4.3 Doors & Windows

- All broken, cracked or misted glass will be replaced.
- All rooms will be fitted with a door where all latches, locks, hinges, and handles will operate correctly and safely. There should always be an internal fire door between the hall and kitchen as a protected escape route.
- The main front and rear door lock will be changed, and 3 keys will be provided. The lock will be operable without a key from the inside, thumb turn for easy escape. Any additional lock changes will be the responsibility of the tenant.
- Any Windows with locks or restriction devices will be checked and be fully operational. Windows will be assessed and life expectancy updated, where windows are beyond economical repair they are referred to the Asset team as a priority replacement with tenant in situ.
- Windows on the 1st Floor and above will have window restrictors where none exist a window restrictor will be added.
- All meter cupboard keys will be provided.
- Inspect internal doors for damage and repair/replace as required. (if damage is caused by misuse of previous tenant, then recharge will be sought).

4.4 General

- Balustrades and handrails on staircases will be in place and secured, ranch style banisters should be risk assessed. Should the risk be rated high, banisters should be enclosed. All balustrades will be safe and secure meeting BS EN 1991-1-1.
- All floor surfaces will be safe and secure.
- The property will be free from damp and mould.
- Where there is a loft, it will be clear and emptied. BMSDC Contractor will check that existing firebreaks are intact, if not report to BMSDC HRM Voids Team.
- We will check that the Loft Insulation is a minimum of 250mm.
- Water supplies will be capped off in long term void properties.
- Where found, any polystyrene ceiling tiles which have been fixed to any ceiling are to be removed and the ceiling made good if required.
- Tenant handover pack will include the following information:-
 - Gas (where applicable) and Electrical Certificates
 - Contact number to uncap Gas
 - Heating System Operation and Controls
 - Copy of Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)
 - Asbestos Details
 - Stop Cock Location
 - Water Hygiene flushing information
 - Where Solar panels are installed, documentation as well as user guide

4.5 Electrical Safety

- Any Code 1's and 2s will be rectified. All switches, sockets and fuse boxes will be free from cracking and will be properly secured. All F1's will be fully investigated and rectified.
- A minor works certificate will be issued on completion of any work.
- An electrical safety certificate will be supplied which confirms the electric installation is safe to use.
- Lamps are the responsibility of the tenant; however, lamps will be provided where missing. There will be at least one light fitting per room including the staircase and hall and landing. Strip LED lamps provided in kitchens.
- Rooms that have spotlights will be changed to BMSDC approved spotlights where they are not fire rated and or installed correctly. If Asbestos is present, it may be more cost effective to renew the ceiling with light pendant fitting. (This is a recharge item to the outgoing tenant if spotlights are not fire rated or not installed correctly).
- All electrical sockets, light fittings and switches should be clean and undamaged.

4.6 Gas Safety

- Any gas fires will be removed as well as the tiled fireplace surround. Any opening will be blocked up, re-plastered and a vent provided.
- The gas cooker point will be capped off for safety. It will be the tenant's responsibility to ensure that a gas safe registered engineer installs any gas appliances such as cookers.
- Voids 1 Minor Gas supplies and equipment will be checked to ensure that no tampering has taken place by the outgoing resident. The new tenant will be supplied with a copy of the existing LGSR.

- Voids 2 & 3 Standard & Major Gas supplies will be capped off once the system has been proven to be working. Once the new tenant arrives in the property, they will call the number provided so that the heating engineers can re-instate the supply. This will happen within 24 hours of the call being made.
- A carbon monoxide detector will be present where there are fixed appliances. Where there is no carbon monoxide detector present one will be fitted.

4.7 Fire

- Fire detection will be installed to LD2 Standard. Refer to appendix E. Smoke detectors will be suitably located; one must be in the living room where possible and in the hall and landing of the property.
- Mains operated hard-wired smoke alarms will be installed where no hardwired or battery-operated smoke alarm currently exists.
- Fire doors and mechanisms are checked and where necessary repaired or replaced and the appropriate certificate issued.

4.8 Asbestos

We will review existing asbestos survey information prior to carrying out any intrusive void work, day-to-day repairs, planned maintenance or refurbishment work.

Where there is no asbestos information, prior to the work taking place, we will commission a refurbishment/demolition survey to the areas of the property that are likely to be disturbed as part of the proposed works.

We will also undertake a management survey to the remainder of the property as part of the same refurbishment/demolition survey. Once completed, survey details will be provided to the relevant operatives or contractors.

Where the repair or planned improvement work is carried out by any of our contractors or strategic partners, we will continue to hold the asbestos register and survey information and will co-ordinate this and make the relevant information available to them. Where surveys are required, we will commission the appropriate survey, make the information available, and update our register.

4.9 Water

When properties become void, we will ensure that void properties are subject to the following checks and procedures:

- Each property will be checked for dead legs, which are runs of pipework that are no longer in use or a pipe that has become isolated from the regular flow of water.
- All properties will have the water system flushed, shower head and hose replaced.

4.10 Damp and Mould

Any evidence of damp and mould will be investigated by BMSDC Surveyor at pre-inspection and diagnosed and solution specified, for example, extract fans/insulation.

4.11 Flooring and Floor Coverings

- Serviceable waterproof slip resistant coverings in both kitchen and bathrooms
- Loose timber flooring to be securely fixed and free from any trip hazards.
- Carpets and laminate flooring left by previous tenant that are in good clean condition, should be left and gifted to the next tenant (unless infestation has occurred, or the condition and cleanliness is poor) then all carpets and laminate flooring to be removed. BMSDC Housing Team will gift to the incoming tenant and any repairs/replacements of floor coverings gifted will be the tenant's responsibility).
- Floor grippers and tracks to be removed where required and screed/floor tiles made good
- Damaged/broken/loose floor tiles with asbestos containing materials to be removed by asbestos specialist.

4.10 Decoration

The acceptable standard for decoration is that the walls and ceilings shall be in a good state of repair and ready for decorating.

- Minor indentations and cracks will be deemed acceptable.
- Minor damage and chipped paintwork are considered acceptable.
- All newly plastered wall and/or ceiling areas are to be covered with mist coats of emulsion paint.
- If wallpaper is damaged or falling off, then this should be removed ready for re-dec by tenant.
- If the standard of decoration is unacceptable a suitable decorating pack were deemed necessary, will be available to the incoming tenant.

4.11 Cleaning

All properties to be left in clean and clear of any belongings this includes.

- All damp and mould will be cleaned with a fungicidal cleaner.
- All cobwebs removed and the property swept out.
- The kitchen works tops surfaces and sinks to be cleaned and cleaning residue to be rinsed away.
- The bathroom fittings (including sinks, WC, bath, and showers) to be cleaned and free from lime scale and water stains.
- Toilets to be cleaned fully including the back, front and around the U bend.
- All doors (internal and external), doorframes, windows, window frames, windowsills, skirting boards, radiators and pipe works should be washed down and wiped cleaned.
- All storage cupboards to be swept and mopped.
- All rooms and stairways to be swept.

4.12 External

- Where possible the roof will be checked ensuring it is watertight.
- All down pipes will be safely secured. A visible inspection will be carried out to check for potential leaks and visible signs of ingress and repaired where possible.
- Gutters will be inspected and cleaned.
- Any permanent outbuildings will be cleared before the property is occupied and any broken or damaged glazing will be removed. An Asbestos survey will be carried out and any Asbestos containing materials will be removed and replaced.
- Any external WC will be disconnected and removed.
- Any coal bunkers will be cleared and checked, if in poor condition removed.
- Wooden sheds will be cleared and checked, if in poor condition will be removed and re-charged to outgoing tenant. If in good condition will be gifted to the incoming tenant who will be responsible for ongoing maintenance/repairs and/or replacements.
- All greenhouses will be removed, and costs of removal re-charged to outgoing tenant.
- We will ensure the front access path is free from any trip hazard access will be safe and not restricted.
- We will ensure any additional paved or concrete areas will be free from any trip hazard, for example, raised and broken paving slabs.
- The garden will be cleared of any rubbish and debris. Any large trees or hedges to be checked to ensure there is no obvious potential damage to the property and other neighbouring properties and will be trimmed or removed where required. All other garden maintenance is the responsibility of the incoming tenant. Any exceptional garden clearance will be recharged to the outgoing tenant.
- Noticeably damaged boundary fencing will be repaired and made safe where possible. If a replacement fence or part of a fence is required BMSDC will replace this in line with our fencing policy. [Fencing Policy Link](#)
- Where damage including accidental damage has been caused to council fencing or gates or where fencing or gates have been altered or removed by a tenant, tenants' family or visitors, the Council will recharge the full cost of any necessary repair or reinstatement in accordance with the current Council's recharge policy.
- Any ponds will be filled in and all debris removed. (it is the responsibility of the outgoing tenant to ensure that ponds are filled in therefore this would be a re-charge to the outgoing tenant)
- If decking is installed this is to be checked and if unsafe/damaged it should be removed if ok, then this will be gifted and will become the incoming tenant's responsibility to maintain and repair moving forward.

5. Notes for Housing Management Team – Gifted Items

Where properties have integral electrical appliances and or built-in oven and hob units as detailed above it will be necessary to advise the new tenant that these appliances have been 'gifted' to them and that they will be fully responsible for the future servicing and maintenance. Whilst BMSDC Contractor will carry out an initial safety check it will not be responsible for future maintenance or repairs to appliances/built-in ovens and hobs that have been left in the property.

If the tenant chooses to have these appliances removed, then they will also be responsible for any alterations to existing cupboards/appliance housings that may need altering to accommodate their new appliance.

Repairs/maintenance/servicing and/or replacement of any other gifted item will be the responsibility of the new tenant and should sign their agreement to this when signing the tenancy agreement.