



Housing Repairs and Maintenance (HRM) VOID LETTABLE STANDARD

Policy Date	January 2025
Approved by	Jane Branch
Version	January 2025 – Version 1 March 2026 – Version 2
Review Date	March 2027 (In line with changes in legislation)
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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 always left in the key-safe, 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 C when economically viable** . Any properties with a rating lower than band D must have improvement work to improve energy efficiency up to band C if economically viable 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 and Security (No significant hazards under HHSRS)
- 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 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 compliance works have been completed and the void handed over to void contractors, are as follows:

Code	Void Type/Scope	Repairs Ready to Let Turnaround Target
Void 1 (Temporary Accommodation)	Void Minor level of work <£1000	7 Calendar days
VOID 2	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.	14 Calendar Days
VOID 3	Void Major > £10,000.00: 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.	28 Calendar days, unless otherwise agreed with the Client Representative.

Where an overall predicted expenditure on a void is over £40k BMSDC will trigger an asset review for a decision on investment or disposal.

4. Void Lettable Standard

4.1 Kitchen

- Kitchen age and condition will be assessed, and the planned replacement date reviewed. Where the kitchen does not meet the Decent Homes Standard or is due to be replaced in the current financial year the kitchen will be replaced. If repairs required to the kitchen are uneconomical and do not significantly extend the lifespan of the kitchen then the whole kitchen will be renewed.
- 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. Refer to Appendix A.
- Where required all plinths will be fitted.
- Hot water supplies will be checked.
- If the cooker/cooker hood and/or hob is in good condition these will be cleaned and issued as a gifted item. If not in good condition will be disposed 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. Please see appendix D Full rewire specification.
- 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.
- 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.
- Extractor fans will be tested to approved document F and flow rate if fails replace extractor fans with specified humidistat fan.
- Kitchen floor covering must be slip resistant and free from damage and trip hazards.
- Wall tiles three rows high should be fitted around kitchen worktops and be free of cracks and any damage.

4.2 Bathroom

- Bathroom age and condition will be assessed, and the planned replacement date reviewed. Where the bathroom does not meet the Decent Homes Standard or is due to be replaced in the current financial year the bathroom will be replaced. If repairs required to the bathroom are uneconomical and do not significantly extend the lifespan of the bathroom then the whole bathroom will be renewed. When this applies Wet Rooms will be replaced with standard bathroom specifications unless in Sheltered accommodation or as required by an incoming tenant.
- Sanitary ware will be cleaned and free from chips, cracks, and leaks.
- If a full replacement is required replacement specification will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Refer to Appendix B for bathroom replacement specifications and C for Wet room replacements.
- 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.
- Glass shower screens will be assessed and if in good condition and kite marked will be gifted or if in poor condition 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 sanitaryware 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 .
- Extractor fans will be tested to approved document F and flow rate if fails replace extractor fans with specified humidistat fan.
Bathroom floor covering must be slip resistant and free from damage and trip hazards.

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 cylinders 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 and keys supplied. Where windows are beyond economical repair will be replaced in line with BMSDC standard.
- Windows first floor and above will be fitted with child safety restrictors, refer to **Appendix F** Window restrictors.
- All meter cupboard keys will be provided.
- Inspect internal doors for damage and repair/replace as required. Ensure there is an external door between a habitable and non-habitable space/area.

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.
- Shelves and coat hooks will be left in place where in good condition.
- 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.
- Loft Insulation will be a minimum of 250mm if not will be topped up or installed.
- Where found, any polystyrene ceiling tiles which have been fixed to any ceiling are to be removed and the ceiling made good.
- The BMSDC Voids Coordinator will collate the information required for the Tenant handover pack which will include the following information:-
 - Gas (where applicable) and Electrical Certificates
 - 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

All electrical works will be undertaken by BMSDC Compliance Contractor prior to handover to void contractor by our approved electrical contractor.

- Where a full re-wire is required, installation will be designed to meet BMSDC electrical standard Appendix D.
- 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/electrical installation 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, hall, and landing. Strip LED lamps provided in kitchens. Approved IP rated lamps in bathrooms and wet rooms.
- Rooms that have spotlights will be assessed and checked they are compliant if not they will be changed to BMSDC approved spotlights.
- All electrical sockets, light fittings and switches should be clean and undamaged.
- All emergency call points will be removed where they are not required. BMSDC surveyor will confirm at time of inspection.

4.5.1 Solar

Where fitted will be serviced by BMSDC Compliance programme on an annual basis

4.5.2 Air Source Heat Pump

A visual inspection of ASHP will be undertaken by BMSDC contractor. Filters will be cleaned in the unit if needed and system will be tested to ensure correct level of anti-freeze and top up is present with visual checks of hot water cylinder and associated tests on the unit. An inspection of the overall heating system will be undertaken to make sure all radiators work and the controls work accordingly.

4.6 Gas and Oil

The following works will be undertaken by BMSDC Compliance Contractor prior to handover to void contractor.

- 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.
- All gas dead legs will be removed.
- 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.
- Gas supply will not be capped heating is to be left on and set at low temperature to prevent damp and mould and frost damage.
- A carbon monoxide detector will be present where there are fixed appliances. Where there is no carbon monoxide detector present one will be fitted.
- All oil heating systems will be serviced and checked. If there is no oil a minimal amount will be purchased by BMSDC to allow testing.

The following will be carried out by the Voids Contractor

- Log Burners and Open Fires – these are to be removed and blocked in and chimney capped.

4.7 Fire Detection – refer to Appendix E

The following works will be undertaken by BMSDC Compliance Contractor prior to handover to void contractor.

- Fire detection will be interlinked and installed to a minimum of D1 LD2 Standard in line with BS5839-6.
- Properties deemed to be higher risk will have D1 LD1 installed, e.g. sheltered scheme flats and temporary accommodation rooms/flats.

- Mains/hard-wired smoke alarms will be installed where no hardwired or battery-operated smoke alarm currently exists. These need to be interlinked, normally via radio frequency.

4.8 Asbestos

The following works will be undertaken by BMSDC Compliance Contractor prior to handover to void contractor.

An asbestos survey will be carried out to all properties older than Year 2000. On receipt of the survey BMSDC will raise orders to remove all recommended red and amber priorities.

Once completed survey details will be provided to contractors,

4.9 Water

The following works will be undertaken by BMSDC Compliance Contractor prior to handover to void contractor.

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.
- Compliance Contractor will replace shower head and hoses.

After handover to tenancy, it will be tenancy team responsibility to flush the system regularly in line with the legionella policy.

4.10 Damp and Mould

Any evidence of damp and mould will be investigated by BMSDC Voids Surveyor at pre-inspection and diagnosed and treated accordingly. Any underlining issues of damp and mould will be treated at void stage and BMSDC Voids Surveyor will notify damp and mould team.

4.11 Flooring and Floor Coverings

- 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.

4.10 Decoration

The acceptable standard for decoration is that the walls and ceilings shall be in a good state of repair, free from defects and painted in a neutral colourway.

- Minor damage, indentations, cracks, and poor existing colourways will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Where these are not considered acceptable whole room decoration will be required.
- All newly plastered wall and/or ceiling areas are to be fully decorated in standard off white colour.
- All wallpaper will be removed, walls made good and painted white.
- All replacement internal doors will be painted white.

4.11 Cleaning

All properties to be deep cleaned and left 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 pipework should be washed down and wiped cleaned.
- All storage cupboards to be swept and mopped.
- All rooms and stairways to be swept.

If an environmental is required, this will be organised by BMSDC before handover to voids contractor.

4.12 External

- Where possible the roof will be checked ensuring it is watertight and planned works programme will be checked if replacement is due in the current financial year will be replaced.
- 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.
- Any external WC will be disconnected and removed all dead legs will be removed and waste pipe sealed.
- Any coal bunkers will be removed.
- Wooden sheds will be cleared and checked, if in poor condition will be removed. 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,
- All access paths and paved/concrete areas will be free from any significant trip hazard access will be safe and not restricted.
- 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. Grass will be cut at handover to tenancy, and any recently excavated areas will be seeded or turfed as required. Existing All Gardens shall be free of any significant hazards (HHSRS)

- Any astro turf installed that is in poor condition will be removed including any associated materials, if in good condition will remain and be gifted.
- 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 responsibility that falls outside of the fencing policy will be assessed on case-by-case basis to ensure incoming tenant can fulfil their maintenance responsibilities. [Fencing Policy Link](#)
- Walls will be assessed for structural stability and in line with HHSRS. BMSDC Surveyor will assess on an individual basis.
- Any ponds will be filled in and all debris removed.
- 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. Ground below removed decking or paving will be made good.