

Supplementary Briefing – Empty Homes Standard

Our tenancy agreement requires tenants to give us four weeks notice of terminating their tenancy.

When notice is received, our Leaving Well Officer arranges to visit the outgoing tenant to:

- Talk through what the tenant will need to do when ending their tenancy
- Explain how the Council expects the home to be left
- To identify and damage/recharges and help tenants to put these right to avoid any costs once they have moved
- Give some indication to the repairs team on the level of works required

When the tenancy ends and the keys are returned, the empty homes team inspect the property against the empty homes standard (see appendix one) paying particular attention to health and safety checks and orders any work needed through our own trades team or via a contractor if there are complex works required.

If the home has been identified as needing “major works” such as a new kitchen/bathroom or heating system, the works will be brought forward and completed whilst empty as this gives a better customer experience.

If the home requires a rewire within the next 2 years, this is brought forward to be completed whilst empty as this can be very intrusive.

If the home has good flooring, we let the applicant know and this can be gifted to them – if they have their own, the Council take them away for no charge.

When the ready to let date is agreed based on the works needed, Housing Choices advertise the property and eligible applicants can place a bid.

Once all the repairs have been done, the property is post inspected (and sometimes also by tenants) to ensure it meets the standard and the property is ready to let.

The successful applicant is contacted to arrange a viewing at the property with tenancy and estates team where the applicants can look around, discussions about the tenancy agreement and any help or support required to ensure a successful tenancy.

VOID LETTABLE STANDARD SPECIFICATION – CORE
(Includes property, outbuildings, outside toilets and garages)

01/06/2021

1. Health & Safety & Utilities

1.1	Complete (EICR) electrical installation condition report and test including smoke detectors and ensure electricians conform to current. National Standards for electrical safety (18th edition of the 'Wiring Regulations', British Standard 7671). Carry out all Cat 1 and Cat 2 remedial repairs (i.e. those that are urgent & requiring attention).	ELECTRICAL
1.2	All electrical sockets, light fittings and switches should be clean and undamaged. 2 repairs.	
1.3	Inspect Immersion heater thermostat to ensure that it is of the safety cut-out, manual reset type. Thermostat should be replaced if required.	
1.4	Remove all DIY electricians and make good.	
1.5	Replace all non-standard light fittings and replace all existing bulbs with LED bulbs.	
1.6	Immersion heater should be in working order (Where required).	
1.7	Install a minimum of 1 'hard wired' smoke detector per floor where not already present. Install a battery alarm with a ten-year battery life if not possible.	
1.8	Disconnect tenant's gas cooker or fitted gas hob (Gas contractor).	GAS
1.9	Dispose of gas cooker or hob. Adjust kitchen to leave a cooker space if necessary. (Repairs contractor).	
1.10	Complete gas test and ensure all gas installations conform to current 'Gas Safe' regulations. (Gas contractor).	
1.11	Gas radiators should be free from rust (i.e. sanded down and painted for minor areas) and in good operational and decorative order (if not replace).	
1.12	Carbon monoxide detectors should be tested and installed if there is a gas fire or boiler is not room sealed and one is not already in-situ.	
1.13	Inspect Mains cold water tank. If it is of plastic construction, ensure that it has a close fitted lid, is insulated to comply with Bylaw 30 and mounted on a suitable base made of a suitable material and thickness which supports the complete base surface area.	WATER
1.14	Inspect property for evidence of rising or penetrating damp and if found remedy. Treat any mould growth areas with a fungicidal wash.	
1.15	Drainage systems will be free flowing and functional.	
1.16	The plumbing system should be inspected for signs of leakage and all stop cocks should be overhauled or replaced and clearly labelled.	
1.17	At appropriate times the water system will be drained down and refilled for frost protection.	

1.18	Inspect all fire doors and fire prevention mechanisms to ensure in good working order.	OTHER
1.19	Sources of heating should be tested and ready for use once tenants have credit on the meter.	
2. Internal		
2.1	Inspect internal doors for damage, ensure furniture will be correctly fitted and serviceable. If required replace glazing with safety glass. <i>N.B. Curtains, curtain poles and blinds will normally be left for security reasons, but will be removed on request of tenant at the beginning of the tenancy.</i>	DOORS & FLOORS
2.2	Damaged/broken/loose floor tiles with ACMs to be removed by asbestos specialist.	
2.3	Gaps where floor tiles have been removed to be filled with self-levelling latex screed.	
2.4	Carpets left by previous tenant that are in good condition, should be left and gifted to the next tenant (unless infestation has occurred, or at tenants request then all carpets to be removed). Carpets may need to be cleaned if instructed to do so. If not in good condition, to be removed.	
2.5	Inspect all internal floorboards, fixed floor coverings, stair treads, banisters and handrails to ensure they are free of tripping hazards. To replace all damaged or badly stained flooring. Old gripper rods in the property to be removed. Handrails will be installed to all stairwells between the ground and upper floor. <i>N.B. Badly stained flooring is that which stains cannot be removed through cleaning.</i>	
2.6	Any laminate floor fitted in an upper floor flat, regardless of the condition of it, should be removed.	
WALLS & CEILINGS		
2.7	Adaptation handrails from bathroom/WC and the living space (other than stairways) to remain in situ.	WALLS & CEILINGS
2.8	Remove all polystyrene ceiling tiles. And skim coat plaster repair over area of removal. Mist coat emulsion paint to be applied to all newly plastered surfaces.	
2.9	Inspect any bathrooms, kitchens and doors that have been left at the property by the previous tenant and ensure safe and fit for use.	
2.10	Architraves, skirting boards, picture rail and dado rail will be complete, with any holes or gaps filled and sanded down.	
2.11	Carry out plaster repairs to areas where ACMs have been removed – double board separation.	
2.12	All walls and ceilings should be free of excessive cracking or holes. The soundness of the plasterwork will be checked as far as is possible, Where required damaged/peeling off wall paper will be stripped for the whole room, and surfaces made good and left ready to receive decoration. Heavily stained doors, architraves or skirting to be sand down and painted with gloss.	
2.13	Lock the loft hatch with an agreed type FB lock so that it is kept out of use.	
2.14	Vents will be unobstructed allowing for the free flow of air.	
BATHROOMS		
2.15	All sinks, basins, WC pan/cistern and baths are to be checked and if damaged or cracked, are to be replaced.	BATHROOMS
2.16	Mastic sealant or sound grouting should be in place at the joint between sanitary units, work top and wall tiles. If the sealant or grout is discoloured or dirty it will be removed and reapplied.	
2.17	Carry out enamel repairs to bath rather than replacement, if possible unless enamel is badly stained.	

2.18	All toilet seats should be replaced with a one that meets British Standards.	
2.19	All bath, sink, wash hand basins should have a plug.	
2.20	Replace Shower head and hose and remove (and replace for wet rooms) existing shower curtain where present. Removal of shower seats unless in over 55's or special needs (including for the elderly) accommodation. Shower seats in over 55's will be replaced if damaged or severe mould or mildew is present.	
2.21	Kitchen fittings and fixtures will be safe and functional.	KITCHENS
2.22	Every kitchen will contain an electric cooker point and a gas cooker point where gas is fitted to the property.	
2.23	Where reasonably practical existing kitchens should be capable of receiving the three basic modern day appliances, a cooker, a washing machine and a fridge (or fridge freezer) where there is suitable space or minor adjustments can take place to any existing layout, even where this may reduce storage capacity.	
2.24	There must be the ability to ventilate by means of window(s) or extractor fans.	
2.25	There should be as a minimum: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Stainless steel sink top with single drawer. · Kitchens which are too small to fit a 1000x600mm sink unit can be fitted with a 1000x500mm. · Double base unit with draw-line and complete with rolled worktop. A 1000x300x600 wall unit securely fixed to the wall. 	
2.26	All drawing pins, blue tac, nails, screws, picture hooks and the like from walls should be removed safely and holes to be filled. All carpet tacks and gripper rods should be removed from the floor areas.	FINISHES
2.27	Any graffiti should be removed from walls and ceilings. In severe cases a stain block to be used followed by coat of emulsion.	
2.28	Loose wall coverings (i.e. paper) should be removed if unable to repair.	
2.29	Wall tiles two rows high should be fitted around all baths, splash back areas and kitchen worktops. Where possible to try matching or replace with white tiles for all. Where shower units have been installed, tiles should be fitted to the walls. Cooker spaces should have tiles installed from skirting level.	
3. External Fabric of the Building		
3.1	Roof will be watertight and any noted broken or missing tiles replaced and any missing pointing to eaves or ridge tiles to be filled.	HEALTH & SAFETY
3.2	Gutters and rain water goods will be functional with no signs of leaks.	
3.3	Inspect all external footpaths, ramps, steps and handrails to main door entrances to ensure they are free of tripping hazards and safe.	
3.4	Assessment of condition of all windows and external doors and arrange necessary repairs prior to re-let to ensure ease of operation, security and safety. All cracked/blown or broken glass should be replaced. At least one key for windows in each room, which should be tested for use.	
3.5	Casement opening windows at first floor level and above should be fitted with opening restrictors to reduce risk of falling from a height.	
3.6	Inspect all Outbuildings and attached canopies / garages, to ensure that they are safe and watertight.	

3.7	Inspect roof/loft space to ensure it is clear (tenant items removed) and that existing firebreaks are intact.	
3.8	All window types and materials shall be free from rot or decay offering ease of use for opening/closing and fitted correctly to prevent water ingress. Windows not of this standard to be considered for replacement either during the empty period or later date (programmed schedule).	
4. Cleaning		
3.9	Front fire door locks are to be replaced with the agreed Primary Test euro lock barrel and provide 2 sets of keys. Where suited lock systems are in place, they need to be retained.	SECURITY
3.10	Ensure there are two working keys for front/back doors; and for (if applicable) all side doors, communal door entry, garage, or outside storage sheds linked to property when returned fit to let.	
3.11	Non fire door front doors are to have a replacement Eurolock for existing multilock systems or a dual latch and mortice lock arrangement for standard timber doors.	
3.12	Test Door entry systems (where installed) for correct operation.	
3.13	Remove any existing burglar alarms systems and/or CCTV equipment.	
3.14	An external meter cabinet key should be provided (where required).	
4. Cleaning		
4.1	All furniture, rubbish, remaining goods, personal effects, loose electrical equipment, clothes, and loose floor coverings will be removed. The property will be cleared of all discarded drugs or sharps and needles. All waste material will be removed from the property and taken on the day of removal to a licensed disposal or storage site as appropriate.	INTERNAL
4.2	If the property shows signs of vermin or insect infestation, then fumigation or other appropriate treatment will take place.	
4.3	All cleaning should be completed using appropriate and safe cleaning equipment and materials.	
4. Cleaning		
4.4	All floors and stairs should be swept and cleaned to high standard and wet mopped where possible. Bathroom and WC floors should be disinfected.	SPARKLE CLEAN
4.5	All scuffs (where possible) and paint splashes should be removed.	
4.6	All doors (internal and external), doorframes, , including architraves and side casings windows, window frames, windowsills, skirting boards, radiators and pipe works should be washed down and wiped cleaned.	
4.7	Cobwebs will be removed from all areas.	
4.8	All storage cupboards to be swept and mopped.	
4.9	Kitchen units, all work surfaces, tiles, cupboards, drawers and sink to be thoroughly cleaned and all cleaning residue to be rinsed away. (All cleaning to be carried out inside and out of unit, cupboard, drawers).	
4.10	All bathroom fittings, i.e. toilet (front and around the U bend), sink, tiles, pipework, shower and bath to be cleaned, particular attention to be given to cleaning of taps to good standard and removal of lime scale where possible. If the toilet or bath are heavily stained and unlikely to be removed by cleaning, then the fitting will be replaced.	

4.11	Electrical sockets, light fittings and switches to be thoroughly cleaned. Light pulls to be replaced where necessary.	
4.12	Radiators to be cleaned at the front and as much as possible behind and under the grill if possible.	
4.13	Final check (includes leaving toilet strip confirming clean and deodorants in bathroom and kitchen).	
4.14	All cleaning to leave no marks, finish streak free and left dry.	
4.15	All rooms to be deodorised with mist spray and a freshener pot left in each room.	
5. Garden & Curtilage		
5.1	All rubbish and litter left in gardens, garage and outbuildings should be removed. Do not leave any garden debris or rubbish in the dustbins.	Garden
5.2	Hedges to garden areas will be trimmed to a manageable height not exceeding 4ft at the front and 6ft at the rear.	
5.4	Trim all grass areas, rake up all cuttings and remove from site.	
5.5	Gardens / yards will be cleared and safe for use with grass / vegetation strimmed and taken away and dog / cat excrement to be cleared.	
5.6	Alterations made to the garden by the outgoing Tenant should be removed i.e. rockeries, ponds etc.	
5.7	Any existing boundary fences, walls, gates etc. will be made safe. N.B. On a cases by case basis, consideration will be given to repair or renew damaged boundary fencing or wall bordering onto a public footpath.	
5.8	Sweep and wash down pathways as necessary.	
5.9	All sheds or greenhouses should be removed, unless in good order and incoming tenant is willing to have them gifted to them. N.B. If asbestos is present the shed will be removed within 5 days of letting the property (subject to tenant's approval).	
5.10	Note the number, condition and type of all trees in the garden.	
5.11	Add a padlock to gates (this will help reduce fly tipping). All outhouse to have a working lock or padlock fitted and keys to be supplied.	