

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council Joint Lettable Standard



Appendix B

Joint Working Together' Void Standard

Item	Void Standard
General	<p>This standard sets out the <u>minimum</u> level of condition that must be achieved before a tenant moves in to a vacant property. We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return vacant properties to use quickly to provide much needed accommodation and to minimise rent loss. • Ensure properties are clean, safe and secure, • Undertake, as far as possible, all repairs and improvements that have been identified when the property becomes vacant prior to the new tenant moving in. • Advise incoming tenant of the timescale for any outstanding repairs to be carried out and the estimated programmed dates for any improvement works in the future. • Take responsibility for any alterations or improvements carried out by the previous tenant, if fit for purpose
Electrical	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out a full safety test of the electrical systems in the property • Remove non-Council electrical fittings. e.g. brass/chrome switches/sockets, dimmer switches and replace with white PVC fittings • Remove electrical fittings e.g. spotlights installed by previous tenants, make good and re-charge outgoing tenants for the work • Ensure whenever possible, that consumer units will be readily accessible with reusable fuses or fitted with Miniature Circuit Breakers (MCB's) or Residual Current Circuit Breakers (RCCB's). • Ensure a mains-operated smoke detector is fitted to each floor of the property. In houses the ground floor will have a smoke/heat type detector. • Disconnect un-authorized electrical supplies to non-habitable outhouses and garages.
Gas/Oil/ Solid Fuel installations	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out a full safety inspection on any, gas, oil or electrical heating in accordance with the current safety regulations and provide a copy of the Safety Certificate to the incoming tenant. • In cases of card meters with debt, clear the debt prior to the start of the new tenancy. • Where there is no oil remaining for the central heating system, cap off the supply until a new delivery is made, and then test, re-commission and provide the Safety Certificate. • Any appliances which have been installed by previous tenants will be removed. • Decommission any open flue (or room-sealed) solid fuel appliance, brick up the opening, and ensure the flue is capped and vented to eliminate the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning and any future compliance issues.
Heating/ hot water	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all homes will be provided with an adequate and safe form of central heating and hot water supply. • Drain down heating systems if weather conditions make it imperative to do so, and re-commissioned at the start of the new tenancy. • Ensure hot water cylinders will be fully insulated and operational, including an immersion heater whenever possible. • Ensure roof tanks are fully supported, lagged and made of a non-metallic substance. • Ensure pipe work in roof voids (or the like) is adequately lagged. • Provide an accessible stop tap that isolates all incoming supplies to the property. The location of this stop tap will be recorded in the handover documentation.

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Water supply/ waste	We will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the property is free of leaks and all stop taps will be in good working order. • Ensure any waste pipes will be free flowing and free of leaks. • Inspect and sanitise the water systems in line with regulations relating to legionella ensuring all shower heads are cleaned or replaced. • Provide a cold water supply and waste suitable for a washing machine in the kitchen
Security	We will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that locks to all external doors will be to insurance standards where possible with a minimum of two sets of keys. • Remove keys to locking windows (this is now a health & safety recommendation to ensure any loss of keys does not prevent upstairs windows being opened in the event of a fire)
Floors	We will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that concrete/cement based floors will be dry, flat and free from excessive cracking, and ready to receive carpet or covering without preparation work being necessary. • Repair damaged or missing floor tiles with a levelling compound to provide a suitable surface for floor coverings. • Ensure that timber floors will be dry, flat and free from any signs of excessive movement, rot or wood worm infestation. Any timber floors in a poor condition will be covered with plywood (or similar). • Leave a vinyl floor covering that has previously has been fitted (kitchen or bathroom) if it is free from damage. • Provide a non-slip floor covering to kitchen & bathroom floors.
Kitchen	We will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that adequate storage space is provided by cupboards, floor units or storerooms/pantries. • Provide cupboards with all drawers, door fronts, blanks, hinging mechanisms and openers in full working order. It should be noted that where a non-standard kitchen has previously been fitted some repairs may not fully match. • Ensure shelving will be clean and free from signs of dampness, is securely fixed and level without any excessive marking, chipping or staining, and sealed at all edges to tiling, sinks etc. • Replace sinks (complete with plugs and chains) that have excessive marking or chipping • Where possible provide space for a cooker, fridge and washing machine will be provided. • Ensure taps are easy to operate without undue pressure.
Bathroom	We will : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure suites are clean, free from defects and leaks and securely fixed (complete with plugs and chains) with all panels and other fixtures (hand rails, towel rails etc.) secured and undamaged • Ensure taps are easy to operate without undue pressure. • Provide a new toilet seats • Provide a new non-slip floor covering whenever possible

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • Previously fitted non-standard bathrooms (which will be expensive to maintain) will be left until such a point where it is too expensive to maintain them, they will then be removed and a new bathroom fitted. • Retain previously installed wet rooms in flats and bungalows, but first floor installations will be replaced by a traditional bathroom.
Walls & ceilings	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all walls'& ceilings will be in a sound condition with no loose plaster • Remove flammable polystyrene ceiling tiles and coving and the remaining surface prepared for decoration. • Ensure all tiles are securely fixed and free from cracks. • Provide a minimum of three rows of wall tiles over baths, worktops, sinks and basins. • Provide full height around the bath for over-bath showers • Ensure all handrails will be safe and securely fixed.
Internal doors/ joinery	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all internal doors will open and close freely and will be fitted with handles and catches in good working order. • Check that all internal joinery is sound, securely fixed, free of major defects and have a surface suitable for decoration, and remedy if not • Ensure that all internal woodwork is free from active woodworm or rot.
Windows/ Glazing	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all windows will be, as far as possible, draught-proof and watertight, and will open and close freely. • Check that any glazing extending below 800mm from floor level will be either safety glass or will be replaced by a timber infill panel fitted. • Replace any cracked glass, or failed double glazed sealed units
Decoration	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leave all rooms in a condition such that they are ready for the incoming tenant to decorate. • Not remove wall or ceiling paper which is in good condition will be left. • For properties in poor decorative order compensation or vouchers will be issued to the incoming as a contribution to decorating costs for each affected room in accordance with a defined scale of costs • Seal existing 'artex' walls and apply a plaster skim coat that does not contain asbestos
Clearance	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear every property of all belongings from the previous tenancy, with outgoing tenants being re-charged as necessary • Remove carpets and curtains and other fittings left by the out-going. tenant with outgoing tenants being re-charged as necessary • Ensure properties will be free from any pests and/or vermin.
Gardens/ Externals	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange for any substantially overgrown weeds, shrubs, trees and grass will be cut back. • Lop or remove trees if they are likely to cause structural damage.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove sheds or outbuildings and • Fill in fish ponds • Ensure external walls are free from major defects and graffiti. • Check all paths, driveways and any other pedestrian areas to ensure they are free from 'Category 1' trip hazards. • Remove existing water butts. These are only permitted if fitted under a tenants alteration request. You will be advised to remove these at the point of a pre-termination inspection and recharged if not removed and the pipework made good prior to the property becoming empty.
Insulation	We will identify the level of loft insulation and upgrade the insulation on a planned program
TV Aerials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenants in individual properties are responsible for the aerial system or satellite system. • We will ensure that aerial socket faceplates are intact and securely fixed. • We will maintain communal aerials systems in blocks of flats
Cleaning	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sweep or vacuum all hard floors and/or carpets and mop all vinyl sheeting and/or tiled floors • Damp wipe all fixtures, fittings (including electrical face plates), cills, radiators, pipes and ledges • Clean all windows internally and ensure vents are clear. • Clean and de-scale wash hand basins, baths and toilets including around the U bend as required and polish taps. • Wash all worktops, cupboards and sink units inside and out. • Clean/degrease all extractor fans and degrease behind appliances.
Roof space	We will clear roof spaces of any alterations, previous stored items, debris, rubbish or clutter. The outgoing tenant will be recharged.
Outbuildings	<p>We will:</p> <p>Ensure that attached or detached outbuildings are not intended for habitable use and can only be used as storage areas. These areas will not be upgraded in terms of heating, security or insulation.</p>
Work after start of tenancy	<p>While the Councils will endeavour to carry out repairs and improvements while a property remains empty there is always a possibility that planned maintenance work will be undertaken at a later date.</p> <p>Such works will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • replacement windows or double glazed units • new exterior doors • a new kitchen • a new bathroom • a new or improved central heating system • minor roof repairs • repairs to gutters • repairs to downpipes and drains • loft insulation top ups • repairs to paths, walls, fencing and gates.

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Homes Standard	At least three double socket outlets in the living room, kitchen and bedrooms; Electrical socket in the bathroom for electric shavers and toothbrushes; and Carbon monoxide detectors (linked to smoke detectors wherever possible). To be reviewed after 12 months in conjunction with the average void costs.
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