

Void Standard

(Council and Temporary Accommodation properties)

V7.0

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Version History

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V7.0	Liam Bentley, Operations Manager, Corporate and Housing Repairs and Voids	Reviewed definitions and standards to confirm accuracy	October 2022

Section One: Hillingdon Void Standard

1. Purpose of Void Standard

1.1 The London Borough of Hillingdon undertakes that when a dwelling is let for a new tenancy:

- It shall be in a clean and safe condition
- It will comply with government standards and
- It will be presented in a good condition.

1.2 This Void Standard sets out in detail what our residents can expect when they move in to a London Borough of Hillingdon property and also offers guidance to staff and operatives as to how this should be achieved.

1.3 The Void Standard has been drawn up as a basis for providing uniformly good quality accommodation across all newly let dwellings.

1.4 Health and Safety

The overriding principle is that the property should be safe in terms of the health and safety of the future occupants. All repairs relating to the health and safety are to be carried out prior to occupation. In accordance with the Housing Health and Safety Rating Systems (HHSRS) contained within the Housing Act 2004, the property should be free from:

any deficiency that might give rise to a hazard which interferes with or puts at risk the health or safety or even the lives of the occupants.

This Void Standard specifically addresses the following hazards (as categorised within HHSRS) but it is the responsibility of the Void Inspector to ensure that all identified hazards are appropriately dealt with before the property is let:

- Physiological (damp and mould growth, excess cold/heat)
- Pollutants (asbestos, carbon monoxide)
- Psychological (security, lighting)
- Hygiene (pests, food safety, sanitation, water supply, drainage)
- Protection against accidents (falls, electrical hazards, fire)

The Void Clerk of Works will complete a Health and Safety Checklist for each void during the void inspection and ensure that all Class 1 Hazards are addressed before occupation.

Electrical, gas and water/waste services are to be tested and gas safety certificates and NICEIC electrical inspection certificates will be provided.

All systems for heating and hot water will receive standard checks for safety and effectiveness and

- Essential repairs to services are completed prior to letting
- All flues are checked
- All landlords' gas appliances will receive an annual gas safety inspection (once connection arranged by the tenant).

All void properties will have an asbestos survey (refurbishment) carried out to all areas, in line with the Asbestos Management Plan (AMP). Where either Amosite or Crocidolite is identified or any damaged asbestos of any kind, removal will be arranged as required by the AMP.

2. Quality

2.1 The standards of work and materials should adhere to best practice and relevant British Standards including any Codes of Practice.

3. Void Inspection

3.1 The Void Clerk of works will undertake an inspection of the property

3.2 As a result of the inspection the following actions will be undertaken:

- The Void Property Inspection Sheet will be updated and passed to the Voids Coordinator for loading onto Oneserve.
- The Health and Safety Check will be undertaken
- All repairs required prior to occupation will be raised (and marked as rechargeable where appropriate)
- All remedial work carried out should be documented (including before and after photos) and retained for future reference.
- All outstanding work should be recorded on the habitable certificate and orders raised (on assess). Voids Coordinator/Repairs Planners will make appointments with the tenant on sign up.

3.3 All void work will be completed in line with the approved Schedule of Rates.

3.4 At the inspection major works voids (classified in line with the Homes and Communities Agency definition) will be identified and marked on Oneserve accordingly. Where the Void Clerk of Works suspect's structural repairs are required, the Structural Engineer should be consulted.

3.5 Strategic Voids (e.g. isolated properties, extendable properties or those where significant investment is required) will be identified in line with the Asset Management Strategy and passed to the Investment Team for further appraisal (and Northgate void path updated accordingly).

4. Void Type Definitions

4.1 Definition of Standard Void

Where a property requires minimal type works it will be classified as a Standard Void which will be allocated a priority code SV (10WD, 14CD). Repair works to standard type voids include:

- a) **Minor type works** - Any works that meet the required minimal letting standard i.e. removing trip hazards from entrance paths, overhaul internal and external doors, replacement of minor fittings in kitchen and bathroom such as taps and toilet seats, replacement of electrical socket fronts etc.
- b) **Service inspections** - This is a statutory requirement. For example: gas safety check, electricity safety inspection, water supplies. All except the water check will require official compliance safety certification

- c) **Clearance of small amount of previous residents waste and belongings.**
- d) **Removal of asbestos**
- e) **Short Term Let** - If a void has previously been converted to a STL type then minimal refurbishment should be required to bring back to standard as defined below.

4.2 Definition of Short Term Let Void

Where a property requires conversion to accommodate residents on a short term basis additional works will be classified as a Short Term Let Void and allocated a priority code STL (20WD, 28CD). Repair works in addition to standard type voids include:

- a) **Additional fixtures and fittings** - All Short term let voids require additional fittings such as carpets throughout and installation of white goods. White goods will be added to the asset control register and repaired and maintained throughout the life of the asset both during and after warranty periods.
- b) **Decoration** - All Short term let voids require full decoration throughout.

4.3 Definition of Non-Decent Void

Where a property requires Capital type works it will be classified as a Non-Decent Works Void and allocated a priority code NDV (20WD, 28CD). Repair works in addition to standard type voids include:

- a) **Capital type works** - Any works that significantly improve the dwellings (i.e. capitalised repairs) should be classified as non-decent upgrade repairs, for example kitchen and bathroom refurbishment, boiler replacement installation of mains smoke alarms.
- b) **Service installations** - This is work to building services, where deterioration is such that the basic amenities in a dwelling could be seriously impaired. For example: renewal of gas, electricity, drainage and water supplies, heating and ventilation; windows and doors, lift renewal
- c) **Infestation treatment**
- d) **Clearance of large amount of previous residents waste and belongings.**
- e) **Removal of asbestos**
- f) **Emergency Major Repairs** – e.g. where substantial repairs are necessary as a result of vandalism or damage or neglect by former tenants

4.4 Definition of Hard to Let Void

If Lettings Team has attempted to let a property where completion of standard void refurbishment has taken place and had no interest from residents or identifies an area with previous history of being hard to let. The Lettings Team refer the property to Senior Management (Service Manager Level) for approval to apply an agreed Minimal Lettings Standard plus (MLS+). These will only be issued on a case by case assessment and usually only offered to residents downsizing to either bungalows or flats or maisonette property types.

Where a property requires MLS+ type works it will be classified as a Hard to Let Void and allocated a priority code HLV (20WD, 28CD). Repair works in addition to standard type voids include:

- a) **Capital type works** - If necessary provide works that significantly improve the dwellings (i.e. capitalised repairs), for example kitchen and bathroom refurbishment, boiler replacement installation of mains smoke alarms.
- b) **Additional fixtures and fittings** - All hard to let voids require additional fittings such as carpets throughout.
- c) **Decoration** - All hard to let voids require full decoration throughout.

4.5 Definition of Major Void

4.6 At the inspection major works voids (classified in line with the Homes and Communities Agency definition) will be identified and marked on Oneserve accordingly. Where the Void Inspector suspect's structural repairs are required, the Structural Engineer should be consulted.

4.7 Strategic Voids (e.g. isolated properties, extendable properties or those where significant investment is required) will be identified in line with the Asset Management Strategy and passed to the Investment Team for further appraisal (and Northgate updated accordingly).

4.8 Definition of Major Works Void:

Where a property requires major works it will be classified as a Major Works Void and allocated a priority code MWV (130WD, 181CD). Repair works in addition to standard type voids include:

- c) **Structural repairs** - These are works that are essential to maintain stability and weather resistance in the main structural elements of a dwelling, i.e. floors, walls, and roofs and involve replacement or substantial reconstruction of these elements. Examples of qualifying repairs include underpinning or reconstruction of foundations, rebuilding load-bearing walls, crack repairs, structural ties, damp proof course and related works, wet or dry rot treatment, insect attack, insulation, roof element replacement or strengthening, cladding, rendering of external load-bearing walls. Also included are extensive works to non-structural external elements (e.g. window replacement, chimney repairs, dry lining) Fire damaged properties or could involve statutory consent.
- d) **Site works** - This is work around the dwelling that is essential to the safety, security and protection of tenants. Examples are the replacement or substantial reconstruction of unstable boundary walls, footpaths, demolition of outbuildings, removal of trees
- e) **Service installations** - This is work to building services, where deterioration is such that the basic amenities in a dwelling could be seriously impaired. For example: renewal of gas, electricity, drainage and water supplies, heating and ventilation; windows and doors, lift renewal
- f) **Infestation treatment**
- g) **Removal of asbestos**
- h) Any works that significantly improve the dwellings (i.e. capitalised repairs) should be classified as major repairs, for example kitchen and bathroom refurbishment.

4.9 Definition of Regen Void

Where a property requires conversion to accommodate residents being vacated from a regeneration project area, additional works will be classified as a Regen Void and allocated a priority code NDV (20WD, 28CD). Repair works in addition to standard type or if appropriate in addition to a non-decent type voids include:

- i) **Additional fixtures and fittings** - All Regen voids require additional fittings such as carpets and/or Vinyl sheet flooring throughout. These will be a choice of the following:
 - a. Beige or Grey Carpets
 - b. Grey wood effect Vinyl or plain wood effect
- j) **Decoration** - All Regen voids require full decoration throughout.
 - a. White or Magnolia

Specifications will be agreed prior to works commencing at void stage and will be confirmed within the Regen Void tracker.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

- k) **Void Clerk of Works:** employees will be responsible for carrying out initial void inspections, specifying void works and conducting post-void work inspections. Responsible for ensuring that health and safety requirements referred to in this standard are met
- l) **Void Contractors:** Will be responsible for carrying out void works
- m) **Voids and Lettings Team:** employees will be responsible for managing direct offers and choice based lettings and for carrying out property viewings and tenancy sign-up, for termination, end of tenancy checks and Medequip adaptations, etc.
- n) **Void Coordinator:** responsible for updating Northgate void path and Oneserve, co-ordinating activities, checking Asbestos database, arranging Asbestos Surveys, any necessary removals and the updating of the Asbestos Register
- o) **Structural Engineer:** responsible for ensuring completion of structural works
- p) **Void Manager:** Responsible for overseeing and managing the void process.

6. Documentation to be handed over with void

- Copy of Landlords Gas Safety Record (LGSR) – to tenant after sign up
- Copy of periodic electrical installation check – kept on file
- Decoration Allowance Recommendation (If applicable)
- Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) – to tenant
- Tenant Home Pack – to tenant
- Three sets of keys, including fobs and window lock keys – labelled – to tenant
- Asbestos Survey data – recorded on Keystone and given to tenant
- Habitable Certification – to tenant

7. Aids and Adaptations

If Social Services aids and equipment are found in the property, they should be labelled 'do not remove' and details recorded on the Void Property Information Sheet. The Voids & Lettings Team Officer should arrange for collection and removal of items by Social Services.

If the property is either purpose-built or specifically adapted for occupation by a disabled person the Void Clerk of Works will indicate on the Void Property Inspection Sheet what those adaptations are at the inspection stage and alert Voids & Lettings Team.

Any adaptations will normally be left in situ. The Voids Coordinator will consult the Adaptations Manager who will advise regarding suitability, repair or removal as necessary.

8. Parlour Houses

Where there is a parlour (i.e. a separate back room) that can be used as a bedroom (i.e. independent of the kitchen) this will be recorded on the Void Property Information Sheet.

Section Two: General Void Standard

1. Structure

A visual inspection of the property exterior must be carried out by the Void Clerk of Works to ensure that the property is structurally sound and wind & water tight. Items to be inspected include:

- Roof coverings, flashings, chimneys and stacks
- Rainwater pipes, gutters and surface water gullies
- Soil pipes, wastes manhole covers and overflows
- Soffits, barge and fascia boards
- Cracked or very uneven surfaces to paved areas both front, side and rear elevations
- Dangerous leaning, cracked or loose masonry to the house, out buildings or boundary walls or fences
- Any large holes or missing vent covers will be rectified
- Ponds to be filled.

All remedial work carried out should be documented (including before and after photos) and retained by the Voids Team for future reference. All outstanding work should be logged with responsive and planned maintenance teams, and the Lettings team advised accordingly.

2. Cleaning

The property will be cleaned thoroughly before hand back. All rubbish should be removed from loft, dwelling, outbuildings, and curtilage (grounds). This includes environmental cleans or needle sweeps as necessary. All work carried out should be documented (including before and after photos) and retained by the Voids Team for future reference.

3. Vermin

Vermin must be dealt with immediately by specialist contractors. The Void Clerk of Works will raise such work orders and supervise completion of the works.

4. Damp

Visual inspection of the damp proof course should be carried out. If damp and mould is evident appropriate remedial action should be taken.

5. Asbestos

The Asbestos Management Plan sets out particular requirement in relation to Void Properties (Section 2.2) as set out below:

- All properties that become void will have a full refurbishment survey carried out to all areas of the property
- The completion of the survey report will determine where all ACMs are present
- When the survey report records that Category 1 (Amosite and Crocidolite) are present, then these will be removed before any work is carried out or the property relet. Removal of Category 1 Asbestos will be arranged with a licensed removal contractor by the Voids Coordinator.

- In addition to the above, any damaged asbestos containing materials (non-Category 1 Chrysotile) are to be removed. All asbestos removal is to be undertaken by a licensed contractor. For the avoidance of doubt, removal of any asbestos containing material is not to be undertaken by the in-house team under current procedures.
- Where any asbestos labels are removed as a result of decorating, they must be replaced.
- Once asbestos removal works are complete, the Void Coordinator will arrange to update the asbestos register.

6. Decoration

Walls and ceilings must be clean, undamaged, flat and free from graffiti.

- Where there is graffiti, wash down first where necessary and decorate where damage has occurred up to a natural break
- Existing 'bold' decorations should be prepared for customer decoration
- All polystyrene ceiling tiles to be removed and the ceilings made good or skimmed and decorated.
- Torn wallpaper should be removed and walls prepared for re-decoration to a natural break
- Plaster coving to be left in situ if it is secure; all polystyrene coving must be removed
- Hard to reach areas in need of decoration (such as staircases, hallways and landings in houses and maisonettes) should be decorated
- Tobacco or nicotine patches will be mist-coated
- Defective plaster to be hacked off and reapplied where necessary.

Kitchen Bathroom and/or Toilet (Presently Not Offered)

- The Voids Inspector will decide if a decorating allowance is to be granted.

Other Rooms (Presently Not Offered)

The London Borough of Hillingdon will provide appropriate flat rate decorations allowance based on number of bedrooms to the new resident. Some rooms that are not fully decorated may qualify for decorating vouchers. The Voids Inspector will confirm the number of rooms which qualify for decoration vouchers at the start of the void.

7. Windows

Windows to be free from internal damage and cracked glass; all opening casements are to be operational. In the event that they are not, repair is to be undertaken.

- Fire escape windows and restrictors need to be checked for safe operation or fitted if not present
- Window locks are to be provided on ground floor and to other windows which are readily accessible
- Childproof restrictors are to be fitted on all 1st floor windows and above where not currently fitted
- Restrictors are also to be present if windows open onto common areas
- Where replacement of window furniture is undertaken, thought will be given to the reach and ease of opening for the target group in Care and Support schemes
- Where a number of windows require replacement Voids Inspector will follow the process for out of scope works

- Check that all glazing complies with current British Standards (Safety glass in accordance with BS620)
- Where window replacement is required, refer to Investment Team for programming post occupation.

8. Internal Doors

Doors should open and close easily without sticking and should meet the NHBC standards and tolerances.

- The door furniture should work satisfactorily
- Door stops to be fitted on all doors
- Physical damage to the door (e.g. a hole through the door) will require repair or replacement and recharged
- Minor chipping, denting and scratching is permissible
- Fire doors will close on a Perco
- Missing Perco's will be replaced and adjusted where it is evident that one has previously been installed
- Any internal non-standard doors will be replaced and recharged
- Remove and replace any non-safety glass and recharge.

9. Door Locks

All external door locks must be changed at void stage for all general needs properties excluding sheltered accommodation and extra care property types.

10. Front Door

The front door should open freely and easily, should be free of damage that would compromise the security of the door, have a suitable lock and a turn-bolt lock present.

- A security spy hole to be fitted to solid, wooden, unglazed doors
- Re-decorate external face of all wooden front doors if required
- Carry out visual inspection of apartment door to check fire rating. Follow out of scope process if not a fire door.
 - Doors must be designed to provide the appropriate fire check protection,
 - There should be no breaks or holes in the surface of door or frame,
 - Door, frame, hinges and hardware must be secure, aligned and in good working order.
 - The self-closing device must be in working order.

If any alterations are required to the front door of a flat, it should be replaced with an appropriate fire resistant door and, where opening onto a means of escape, a fire resistant door set.

Other external doors

- The back door (where applicable) is to open freely and easily without sticking on the frame

- The door should be free of any damage that would compromise the security of the door in the event of an attempted burglary, a suitable lock to be fitted with a turn bolt.

11. Loft Access

- Hatch should be easily removable and in good condition
- The loft space must be clear of the outgoing tenant's debris
- Any DIY loft ladders and DIY loft lights must be removed and recharged
- Check Insulation, which should be at a minimum level of 270 mm – where installation is required, this should be to 300 mm (Presently Not Offered)
- Check loft ventilation from loft hatch for signs of condensation
- Tank is to be lagged
- Pipe-work is to be lagged and labelled.

12. Flooring

Floorboards (including rigid sheet flooring), should be repaired as necessary and should be securely fixed. Any boards showing movement should be re-secured where possible. Solid floors should be in serviceable condition.

Where asbestos floor tiles are removed, they are to be replaced with slip resistant flooring (vinyl floor tiles or vinyl sheeting in kitchens and bathrooms) or latex to match floor level on areas that do not need a sanitary floor covering.

Coverings

All carpets should be removed unless they are in a suitable condition to gift to an incoming resident. A risk assessment should be undertaken where the Lettings Officer expresses a desire to keep carpets.

- Where carpets are removed, grippers and door bars will be removed and screed applied over any damaged floor tiles
- Laminate flooring to be inspected and cleaned. If the laminate floor is on the first floor or above it should be removed if not part of original build and recharged
- Asbestos flooring to be replaced with vinyl tiles.

Kitchen

- Slip-resistant sheet covering to be laid (under kitchen plinths where present) and mastic sealant applied around the perimeter.

Bathroom

- Slip-resistant sheet covering to be laid (under bath panel where present) and mastic sealant applied around the perimeter.

Other Rooms

- Floor tiles can be left in situ unless they are damaged, in which case they will be repaired or removed and screeding/latexing undertaken if necessary
- Where over boarding is required, ply-wood should be used
- A door bar to be present between the vinyl floor covering and adjacent rooms.

13. Kitchen

Kitchen Units

Where the kitchen size permits, each will have a minimum of 2 matching base units (including sink) and 2 double wall units.

- Cupboard doors, units and worktops must be undamaged. Unit doors must open and close freely.
- Light scratching is permissible if it does not compromise the tenant's ability to keep the door fronts or surfaces hygienically clean, and is not through the entire laminate.
- In the event that worktops cannot be kept hygienically clean they should be replaced to the best possible match
- Where a unit door needs to be replaced, all doors should be changed to match (Presently Not Offered)
- Where unit doors are replaced in sheltered schemes consideration will be given to the handles used on the doors to enable ease of opening for the client group.

Appliances

Ensure gas or electric cooker point is available and washing machine point where practical (including service points with valves and an appropriate waste point). Washing machine points are not provided in sheltered units where there is a communal laundry. A minimum of 4 electrical sockets to be provided.

Following spaces are to be available for appliances: -

- Cooker - 640 mm minimum width (include cooker width within the home guide if non-standard)
- Fridge - 620 mm minimum width (either full height or, under worktop)
- Washing machine - 620 mm minimum width (if no adequate space, then blank door, new unit or client referral)
- Cold feed and trap for washing machine connection will be provided.

Sink and Draining Boards

- Sink must be undamaged and clean - light scratching, staining, and light denting is acceptable
- Draining Board must be undamaged and clean - light scratching, staining, and light denting is acceptable
- Sink taps are to operate with water flowing and no leakage
- The Voids Clerk of Works to specify most appropriate taps – need to consider client group (thermostatic-taps) when taps need replacing
- Lever taps should be supplied when replaced in sheltered schemes.

Tiling

- Wall tiling must be undamaged.
- Any damaged, cracked or chipped tiles are to be replaced.
- If these are coloured tiles these should be completely removed and changed to white or replaced using nearest match in size or shade. (Presently Not Offered)
- If tiles are to be completely replaced then they should be replaced with 3 rows of 150 mm tiles to a height of 450 mm, where possible the cooker space should be tiled from skirting level to the existing tile line.
- Any poor or failing mastic to be removed and replaced.

14. Bathroom

Sanitary Ware

- Sanitary ware to be clean and undamaged
- In the event of damage, bath to be repaired if possible or replaced
- In the event of damage, sink and toilet pan to be repaired if possible or replaced.

Showers and Baths

Showers are not to be changed to baths and baths are not to be changed to showers.

- All baths to be fitted with mixer taps, shower hose and shower head (for hair spray only)
- When replaced, showers should be regulated to a flow rate of less than 9 litres per minute to meet Eco Homes XB requirements
- In the event that the bath needs to be replaced baths shall be suitable for the dimensions of the bathroom. They should be provided with a side panel fixed to the timber framework. Any excess gap should be boxed and tiled to planned programme specification
- Undertake a chemical clean to bathroom and de-scale where necessary
- Plugs and chains to be present in bath and sink
- All bath panels to be removed and replaced and the bath filled to check for leaks
- All wastes will be clear and in working order.

Tiling

- Any damaged, cracked or chipped tiles are to be replaced
- Extend tiling where a shower has been installed to the best possible match in shade or size
- Splash backs behind basin and bath are to be present - any cracked or chipped tiles are to be replaced
- If tiling is to be replaced completely it is to be replaced with the following: -

Basin Splash-back – 2x150 mm tiles high and where necessary these will be continued into window openings

Bath Splash-back – 2x150 mm or to full ceiling height fitted above bath to full extent of shower curtain position

- Where tiling is to be completely replaced it is to be replaced with standard white tiles

- Any poor or failing mastic or grouting to be removed and replaced.

Toilets

- Replace toilet seat
- Toilet must flush clear paper tissue. If not, it must be investigated
- Where a flush handle is replaced in a Care & Support scheme it should be replaced with an appropriate flush handle for the target group
- Remove and make good on flooring external W/C not attached to properties.

Taps

- Sink and bath taps to operate with water flowing and no leakage. If not, water pressure/flow to be investigated and only where necessary replace taps
- Install flow restrictors to reduce water wastage, in accordance with Eco Homes XB, (where taps are replaced)
- When replacing taps in Sheltered Accommodation, replace existing taps with lever taps.

Grab Rails

- Grab Rails should be secure & undamaged. If not they should be removed.

15. Pipe Work

- All stop-taps to be in good working order and clearly labelled.
- All exposed pipe work within a loft space to be lagged and secured.

16. Fire Place

- Board and vent
- Where there is a gas fire, remove and cap below finished floor level (where possible).

17. Balustrade

- Gaps in balustrade or equivalent should be no more than 100mm
- Continuous balustrade/handrail will be present and secure. If not, make secure or, replace as appropriate
- Horizontal balustrades to upper levels are to be encased. Top landing covered if there are horizontal balustrades
- Newel posts will be secure or replaced
- Any loose or damaged stair treads will be repaired.

18. Basements and similar non-habitable areas

- Any property with a basement must be checked for serious water ingress or flooding issues.
- Any meters are to be relocated where possible (see 19 below) and basement area secured with FB lock.

19. Electrical and Gas Meters

- The Voids Team completes gas and electric readings at the start of the void and logs this information with utility company and Finance.
- Where pre-payments keys or cards are missing, the Voids Manager will order the keys from the current utility company
- Where meters are missing or broken the Voids Manager or Service Provider will arrange for the repair/replacement as appropriate
- Where meters are located in basements, external relocation to be requested from provider
- Gas/Electric meter cupboard doors/covers to be replaced, if missing.

20. Electrical

- The electrical system is to be inspected by an electrician and an NICEIC Periodic Inspection Certificate is to be issued
- Where electrical work is undertaken all wiring must be chased, there is to be minimal mini-trunking used.

21. Lighting

- Low energy bulbs to be fitted in all light fittings (Presently Not Offered)
- For Sheltered schemes a fluorescent fitting will always be fitted in kitchens
- Bathroom and toilet light cords and other pull cords to be replaced at void
- Any non-standard fittings will be removed and recharged.

22. Power Circuits

- Every kitchen should have a 30 amp electric Cooker Control point and fused spur
- TV Aerial Point will be serviceable (where present)
- Fit 2 x sockets adjacent and away from heat source for cooker and 4 x additional sockets in the kitchen.

23. Smoke Alarms

- A hard-wired heat or smoke detector (or Fire Angel) should be fitted in each Kitchen
- In addition one hard-wired smoke detector (or Fire Angel) should be fitted per floor of the dwelling
- All new or existing alarms must be tested.

24. Gas

- Where the property is connected to a gas supply a Landlords Gas Safety Record (LGSR) is to be obtained

- The Tenant's copy is to be provided at hand-over. All gas works to be undertaken by a qualified gas servicing engineer
- Gas Cooker supply (bayonet pipe), where applicable, must be capped off
- Gas meters should be capped/disked while property is void until occupancy excluding Payment Meters.

25. Condensation and Ventilation

- Ventilation must be adequate to ensure that condensation and mould growth cannot occur under normal conditions. Each habitable room should have an opening window. Where there is no opening window one should be installed.
- If trickle vents are fitted to windows, ensure that the vents are free from obstruction and that any draft excluders are operating correctly
- If passive ventilation is installed via airbricks, these are to be free from obstruction.

Extractor Fans

- Every property should have a working extractor fan in the kitchen and bathroom. Where no fan is present a suitable fan should be fitted to planned specification, check planned programme of works. (Presently Not Offered)
- Existing fans should be cleaned and repaired, or replaced if necessary
- Check that all extract fans are vented via hoses to atmosphere, and correct as necessary.

Please note. The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 require certain criteria to be met. Any mechanical ventilation that is installed must be installed prior to the issue of a Landlords Gas Safety Record (LSGR). If in doubt, consult the Council's Gas Engineers and seek advice.

26. Heating

- Central Heating is to be provided as standard
- Ideally, every room should have heating; however every habitable room should have adequate heating as a minimum
- Adequate heating is either a radiator or a controllable electric storage/convector heater. Simple convectors are not considered adequate
- The heating system must be checked at the start of the void (or as early as possible) so that faults can be rectified without delaying the void process.

27. Water Services

- From 1 October to 31 March drain down the cold-water tanks and individual central heating systems
- Properties connected to District Heating will not be drained down
- Identify and check the stop cock and note its location on the Void Property Information Sheet.
- Ensure the Cold water storage tanks are free from excessive debris and have fixed lids and are appropriately lagged to protect from frost.

Section Three: External Void Standard

1. Gardens – for the sole use of the property

- Front and rear gardens to be clear from rubbish and graded appropriately for the prevalent ground conditions
- Overgrown grass should be trimmed to enable the incoming tenant to keep the garden neatly (Presently Not Offered)
- Fencing to be inspected for damage and repairs/replacement of panels and posts to be undertaken where damage is evident. Post and wire fences to be left. Minor repairs to be carried out.
- Sheds and outbuildings to be inspected and necessary repairs undertaken and left in a safe and secure condition, or they should be removed and recharged, any rubbish should be removed.
- Green houses to be removed and recharged
- Garden ponds are to be filled in and recharged
- Loose or uneven paving is to be re-secured or, re-laid so that the area is level or graded appropriately for prevalent garden conditions
- Voids Manager to report any trees that require attention as early as possible in the void process
- Main gate to be secured and working well.

2. Garages and Outbuildings

- Remove and clear previous tenants' items and re-charge
- Up and over doors should operate correctly and have a means of being secured
- Roofs should be safe, weather-proof, and watertight.

3. Intercoms and Communal Doors

- Where applicable, check intercom works. If the intercom does not work, or the handset requires repair/replacement, log a work order with Responsive Repairs team
- If the communal door does not lock, log a work order with Responsive Repairs team.

4. Rainwater goods and Fascias/Soffits

- Complete a visual inspection of rainwater goods, and check that all clips are in place
- Fascias and soffits to be secured to property. Where rot is affecting their integrity and the incoming tenant's safety, reference should be made to the planned and cyclical programme, and if safe, to wait for refurbishment.
- Complete inspection of external vents covering, replace if necessary
- If any asbestos is chipped or broken, the Void Clerk of Works should assess the damage, remove if necessary, and update the asbestos register.

5. Overflows

- A visual inspection of overflows is required to ensure that there are no leaks emanating from storage tanks. If there are leaks or evidence of leaks should be inspected and repaired.

6. Loose Cables

- Any loose cables to be neatly tucked away or removed (i.e. satellite dish cables)
- The satellite dish should be removed where accessible.

7. External Letter Boxes

- Ensure letterboxes are secure and door/cover is in place.

8. Porch

- Ensure that structure is safe and secure, lighting is checked, and repairs carried out as necessary.

9. External Taps

- All external taps are to be removed and capped off.

Section Four: Sheltered Housing Void Standard

The items identified here are in addition to the minimum standard set out above.
(Presently Not Offered)

1. Decoration

- Properties should be assessed to determine if all areas require painting or full decorations, **where necessary**, as decoration vouchers will not be accepted.

2. Carpets/flooring

- Replace existing flooring with non-slip flooring in kitchen and bathrooms. Vinyl tiles throughout living room, hallway and bedrooms.

3. Emergency Call Lines

- The emergency call line system (Link-line service) within the property should be checked to confirm that it is working and that pull cords and buttons are in good repair.

Section Five: Temporary Accommodation Minimum Property Standards

Major works will be carried out by the landlord as per the TA Lease Agreement when the property becomes void

The items identified here are in addition to the minimum standard set out above.

1. External Lettings Standards:

- Damp-proof courses, flashings and waterproof membranes are to be in good condition to the standard repaired. Guarantees to be supplied where appropriate
- Stairs to be in good condition and structurally sound. Surface should not be loose or slippery especially when wet. Handrail to be provided on one side where stairs are less than 900 mm wide and over four risers high, where stairs width exceeds 900 mm wide a handrail is to be located on each side.
- External and internal cold water storage cisterns, tanks etc. To be properly housed, insulated and protected.

2. Internal Lettings Standards:

2.1 Windows

- Windows shall be restricted to 100mm opening restriction, as a child safety precaution. An override device could also be installed in case of emergency.
- Safety glass, safety adhesive film or similar approved safety precaution is to be fitted in full height windows and doors or in panels below 1000mm above finished floor level. Safety rails may be used as an alternative to safety glass. Size and spacing of batons to comply with Building Regulations as must safety adhesive film.
- Balcony and store doors used other than a means of escape route are to be fitted with a keyed level deadlock, and to be locked shut
- Joints around windows and doors to be sealed and flashed to form a watertight junction, window and door sills, thresholds, joints and heads to be in good condition and allow easy operation of window sash. Glazing to be secured and not cracked or broken.

2.2 Bedrooms

- Room sizes: First or only bedroom should be a MINIMUM of 70 square feet. All supplementary bedrooms must be a MINIMUM of 50 square feet as outlined in the Housing Act 1985.
- Carbon Monoxide (CO) alarm to be installed where the boiler is located, particularly when boilers are in bedrooms.

2.3 Natural Light and Ventilation

- Every habitable room to have a window or windows opening directly to the external air with glass area not less than one tenth of the floor area of the room
- Rooms below ground level must provide sufficient natural light on an average day for living in the lounge/bedroom without assistance of electric light
- Non-mechanical ventilation system e.g. air bricks, gutters or permanents, to be provided for the removal of foul air and condensation build-up in auxiliary or habitable rooms (living or bedrooms with external walls)
- Ventilate all permanently closed fireplaces with a fibrous plaster louver or a fixed grill over the chimney breast.
- Where French Windows are the only form of natural light to a room they must be kept locked and some additional form of mechanical or natural ventilation must be provided. For example adding window restrictors.

2.4 Doors

- Wall or floor stops shall be provided for all doors to protect wall decorations
- Exit doors to be fitted with simple fastening locks
- Security protection measures such as grills, hinge bolts, spy holes, and entry phone system to be fitted where appropriate
- Letter boxes and doorbells shall be fitted for each unit with appropriate identification, where appropriate, to be located at the main entrance.

2.5 Kitchen and Cooking Areas

- Storage, preparation and cooking facilities, minimum requirements are a four ring cooking appliance with grill and oven and food storage cupboard
- Kitchen sink units, water and gas service pipes should be cross-bonded and earthed to current electrical Regulations
- All oven doors should be "cool doors" so they should not be hot to the touch.

2.6 Tiling to Kitchens and Bathrooms

- Existing wall tiled areas to be thoroughly cleaned and free of grease, cooking fat, dirt and other by-products.
- Caulking sealant located around worktop, sink tops and sanitary ware is to be in good condition. Where sealant faulty this is to be raked out and re-sealed to prevent water penetration.

2.7 Bathrooms

- Mechanised ventilation to be provided with humidity switch or overrun linked to light switch. Capacity to give at least three air changes per hour.
- Shower unit not required to be installed if there is a bath.

2.8 Floorings

- Floors to be level and even with boarding securely fixed to joists
- Aluminium binding strip (or similar) to be fixed on changes in floor finish.

2.9 Meters

- Meters, gas and electric (and water where applicable), for each flat or unit and be accessible 24 hours a day.

2.10 Keys

- Three sets of keys provided per flat including three keys to shared main entrance door in blocks of flats
- If key fobs are not returned with keys then the Receptionist should order replacement at this stage.

Implementing our Void Standard

This Void Standard has been developed in consultation our residents and with the Council's staff:

- Resident Services
- Hillingdon council Repairs team
- Hillingdon council Lettings & Sales and Voids teams
- Voids Management review Group

An active and responsive document

The Void Standard was initially approved Gary Penticost of Penticost and Associates LTD

To keep the document up to date amendments have been required and these have been approved by Gary Penticost as shown in the Version History on page 4.

This issue (V5.0) has added specific definitions of each void refurbishment type. It also incorporates minor changes to correct errors, or give further clarification.

We want this Void Standard to be an active and responsive document that keeps up with the business needs, changes in policy and demand for services. To this end, we will continue to work and engage with our stake holders on implementation of our Void Standard.

A further review to ensure document still accurately represents process was conducted by Liam Bentley Operations Manager for Corporate and Housing Repairs and Voids

Feedback and Comments

All our efforts have been focused on developing this Void Standard that is informative and clearly sets out our expectations for delivering voids and providing excellent housing services.

If you have any queries or wish to amend the Void Standard please contact Liam Bentley