

CORNWALL HOUSING

VOID LETTABLE STANDARD



PART OF THE
CORSERV GROUP
A CORNWALL
COUNCIL COMPANY

Cornwallhousing.org.uk

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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 re-let 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 re-let time and minimise rent loss through the re-let process.

2. General

2.0 Cornwall Housing (CHL) are required to manage void contractors providing services within the scope of void refurbishment works including specialist contractors.

2.1 CHL 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 CHL Voids 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 CHL 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 and Decent Homes Standard and must specifically have a **minimum EPC rating of C**. 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 re-letting. 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 Program should be checked if any capital items require replacement.
- Life Expectancy should be identified on existing capital items to feed back into the capital program (e.g.: non-standard kitchen fitted but ok to stay)

2.5 Whilst the void property has been assigned to the contractor, this property will be classed as a CDM site and all applicable regulations must be followed. The contractor will be responsible for the site as per the CDM 2015 Regulations and the CHL CDM manual.

3. Void Relet Times

- 3.1 The target re-let 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 re-let 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. CHL and contractors should work as efficiently as possible to achieve the optimum re-let time. The targets will be reviewed annually to provide a continuously improving service.
- 3.2 Targeted CHL 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 TargetL
Void1	Void Minor: Minimal Level of Work: Includes Clean and Clear, Lock Changes, Gas and Electrical Checks and other minor Repair items	Up to 7 working 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 working days
Void3	Void Major >£5,000.00: 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.	Up to 28 working 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 CHL 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 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 one double electric socket, 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 to a 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.
- Any glass shower screens will be removed and be replaced with a curtain pole (incoming tenant is responsible for replacement of the shower curtain).
- 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 as a splash back around the wash basin and baths.
- Where there is a shower, the walls will be tiled in that immediate area only.
- Replace extractor fans to a 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.
- The main front door lock will be changed, and 3 keys will be provided. 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 a recharge for damage or replacement 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. CHL Contractor will check that existing firebreaks are intact, if not report to CHL 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:-
 - Heating System Operation and Controls
 - Stop Cock Location
 - Solar Operations and Controls
 - Contact number to uncap Gas
 - Gas and Electrical Certificates
 - Asbestos Details
 - Copy of EPC
 - Water Hygiene flushing information

4.5 Electrical Safety

- Electrical safety is of paramount importance to CHL and a property void period provides the opportune time to complete inspection, testing and remedial actions whilst the property is vacant.
- The CHL electrotechnical specification serves as the benchmark for any required installation and remedial arising from unsatisfactory electrical findings in a property. The specification shall be adhered to for all newly installed accessories and remedial actions. This specification is intended to provide information and instruction and not act as a minimum electrical standard for the void property.
- The following list provides the minimum level of electrical compliance for a property whilst at the voids stage. In all instances a £500 limit has been applied as a self certification limit for void work to gain a satisfactory certificate accounting for accessory replacement. Smoke and CO alarms do not factor into this cost cap.
- Any additional works required which take the cost over the £500 limit will need approval by the voids surveyor with associated evidence/justification:
 - Complete an electrical and inspection certification report satisfying the requirements for initial verification testing as laid out in the current edition of BS7671.
 - Any Code 1's and 2s will be rectified. The electrical installation shall be in good working order and suitable for continued usage with services adequately secured All FI's will be fully investigated and rectified.
 - A minor works certificate will be issued on completion of any work.
 - Fire detection and alarm installation shall conform to LD3 standards in domestic settings. Detection in sheltered housing or other property types shall be agreed with the client before installation.
 - A Carbon Monoxide detector and alarm system shall be fitted in each room with a Gas/Oil/Solid Fuel appliance.
 - Details relating to all pre-existing smoke and CO alarms plus new installs shall be captured on a suitable and sufficient record confirming:
 - Manufacturer and model,
 - Location
 - Expiry Date
- Confirmation of functionality check.
 - Electrical testing and remediation shall be completed as early as reasonably practicable within the void period.

- There shall be a suitable number of sockets in the property, the below serves as an informative guide. Where additional sockets are required or there is concern over cascading or stacking of adapter plugs when tenanted this will be agreed with the voids team/surveyor prior to approval.

Location type	Smaller Rooms (Up to 12m ²)	Medium Rooms (12-25m ²)	Larger Rooms (More than 25m ²)
Main Living Area	4	6	8
Dining Area	3	4	5
Single Bedroom	2	3	4
Double Bedroom	3	4	5
Bedsit	4	5	6
Utility Room	3	4	5
Kitchen	6	8	10
Hallway and landing	1	2	3

Recommendations provided by electrical safety first. In each instance number of recommended double sockets.

- 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.
- Rooms that have spotlights will be changed to CHL approved spotlights where they are not fire rated and or installed correctly. (This is a recharge item to the outgoing tenant if spotlights are not fire rated or not installed correctly)

4.6 Gas & Heating Safety

- **In all instances the respective heating technical specifications shall be referenced for more in depth guidance on products and equipment to be used. All completed 'work' shall confirm to current regulations, standards, guidance and CHL instructions and specifications.**
- 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 including correct vented chimney cowl, i.e. pepper pot style cowl. An electric fire shall be installed as a secondary form of heating in its place.
- The gas cooker point will be completely removed with all supply pipework safely purged in accordance with current standards and guidance. Service to be removed back to the nearest upstream tee.
- In all instances any applicable void property shall receive a gas cap off as soon as possible after the key handover from the tenant. When arranging the new sign up and with prior notification the approved provider shall uncap, service and demonstrate the appliance operation to the new tenant on commencement of the new tenancy.
- A copy of the landlords Gas Safety Record 'LGSR' or other heating safety check record shall be provided to the tenant within 28 days of the gas safety check. Where a rental period is less than 28 days ensure a copy of the certificate is clearly displayed in the property.

- As with Gas safety checks all statutory safety inspections such as servicing for solid fuel, Oil, shall be completed during the void period with all defects and remedial actions completed at the time of service.
- Consideration shall be given to the upgrade of carbon intensive heating systems such as solid fuel and oil however prior approval is required from the voids & Mechanical & Electrical team at CHL.
- Gas combination boilers shall only be replaced where they are beyond economical repair or have suffered a complete failure. Approval for heating upgrades shall be sought from the voids and Mechanical and Electrical Team.
- A Carbon Monoxide detector and alarm system shall be fitted in each room with a Gas/Oil/Solid Fuel appliance.

4.7 Fire

- Fire detection will be installed to LD3 Standard. 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 through the use of the Asbestos Teams approved surveying contractors and the Asbestos removal contractors.
- 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, CHL Asbestos Team will continue to hold the asbestos register and survey information received direct from the Asbestos contractors who will co-ordinate this and make the relevant information available to them. Where surveys are required, we will commission the appropriate survey through the Asbestos Teams approved contractors, make the information available, and update our register.

4.9 Legionella

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

- Each property shall receive a legionella risk assessment completed by an Legionella Control Association registered provider for the respective discipline.
- All properties shall have the domestic hot and cold water services flushed through on a weekly basis whilst the property is void. This can be completed by contractors/trades working in the property and logged in the CDM site file.
- Any remedial action identified on the legionella risk assessment shall be completed following quotation and approval from the Mechanical & Electrical Team. This could take the form of dead end removal and/or storage tank cleaning and disinfections.
- The Mechanical & Electrical team shall issue a compliance certificate to the voids team confirming that a risk assessment, remedial actions and flushing has been completed and the property is ready to let.
- A new showerhead and hose shall be installed for the incoming tenant.

4.10 Damp and Mould

Any evidence of damp and mould will be investigated by CHL 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.
- Damaged/broken/loose floor tiles with asbestos containing materials to be removed by asbestos specialist.

4.12 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 the standard of decoration is unacceptable a suitable decorating pack were deemed necessary, will be available to the incoming tenant.

4.13 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.

4.14 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.
- 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 neighboring 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 CHL will replace this in line with our repairs policy:
- Where damage including accidental damage has been caused to CHL fencing or gates or where fencing or gates have been altered or removed by a tenant, tenants' family or visitors, CHL 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.