

RUNNYMEDE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Void Standard Policy

Review due: October 2025

1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this Void Standard is to make clear for practical purposes the main characteristics of a property which will make it acceptable for re-letting to Runnymede Borough Council residents.

2. Responsibility

2.1 The contractor is responsible for carrying out all works required to ensure that this standard is met and/or carrying out the tasks described herein unless otherwise indicated.

2.2 The contractor shall liaise with RBC's specialist contractors to assist them in meeting the requirements of the Void Standard.

2.3 The contractor's responsibility for carrying out all works required to ensure that this standard is met commences on receipt of a functioning set of keys for the void property from RBC.

2.4 The contractor will ensure that all voids, no matter the works needed, will be handed back to the RBC contract administrator within the agreed timescales, as set down in the repairs, maintenance, and voids contract.

2.5 Any delays in return need to be communicated with the RBC contract administrator within the agreed timescales.

3. General Requirements

3.1 All properties offered for letting are to be:

- a) Clean, secure and in a reasonable state of general repair and decoration as described herein
- b) Safe for occupation and use
- c) Wind and weathertight
- d) Free from infestation and pests
- e) Free from dampness

And with:

- f) A hot & cold water supply
- g) A working form of space heating
- h) A safe and operational electrical system
- i) A useable kitchen with sink
- j) A useable WC
- k) A useable bathroom with a wash basin and bath or shower
- l) Adequate means of escape in case of fire

4. Information Gathering and Recording

4.1 Before inspection and specification of works, the Contractor is to obtain from the Contract Administrator such pre-termination information as is held by RBC. To include general property information, such as status of electrical, gas and energy efficiency certification, any asbestos information, and predicted remaining lives or replacement

dates of main components (electrical installation, space & water heating installation, kitchen, bathroom, windows, roof covering, boundaries).

4.2 Gas, electrical and water meter readings are to be taken at the first opportunity. Readings are to be re-taken at handover and photographic evidence of both is to be provided to the Contract Administrator as soon as they are taken.

4.3 The Contractor shall arrange for such live gas and electricity supplies as are required for carrying out the works.

4.4 The position of the water stop tap and utility meters is to be recorded, photographed and passed to the Contract Administrator.

4.5 Photographs are to be taken of any items left by the tenant which may be re-chargeable such as rubbish left, unauthorised improvements, component damage, missing joinery etc. and this information is to be passed immediately to the Contract Administrator.

4.6 Any serious defect e.g. structural cracking, subsidence, damp etc. shall be reported to the Contract Administrator immediately.

4.7 Any installed aids and adaptations shall be referred to the Contract Administrator for a decision on removal or replacement.

4.8 A current energy performance certificate (EPC) is to be prepared as necessary and provided at Handover.

4.9 The asbestos register for the property shall be checked by the Contractor, who shall ensure that all operatives involved in the works are aware of the content and are suitably trained to work with asbestos.

5. Security

5.1 If required by the Contract Administrator net curtains or security screens shall be installed for the duration on the void period.

5.2 If required by the Contract Administrator, security screens shall be installed for the duration of the void period.

5.3 Other than in sheltered elderly schemes, each final exit door is to have a means of deadlocking. Where locks are renewed or newly installed, they are to be operable without the use of a key internally. A minimum of 2 sets of keys for each lock is to be provided.

5.4 Front entrance doors shall have either a viewing panel or viewer and a safety chain fitted.

5.5 If the property has a doorbell it must be left working.

5.6 Windows at ground floor or accessible from balconies or landings are to be fitted with locks and window restrictors. Window keys must be provided where key operated locks are fitted.

6. Clearance and Removal of Belongings

6.1 The property (including any loft space, outhouse, front or rear garden, shed or garage) must be cleared of all rubbish and personal belongings, including any fixtures and fittings which are not the property of RBC.

6.2 The Contract Administrator is to be advised of any fixture or fitting left by the previous resident which is in good condition (such advice to include photographs) and will instruct whether such items should be cleaned and tested as necessary and left for the incoming resident.

6.3 Where appliances have been provided and maintained by RBC because of the nature of the scheme, they should be cleaned, tested and left ready for use at the property.

6.4 Any open fireplace is to be blocked up, provided with a vent and plastered ready for decoration.

6.5 Any communal satellite dish, television aerial or associated equipment is to be left in situ.

7. Space & Water Heating Installation (including Gas Supply)

7.1 All gas works are to be carried out by RBC's Specialist contractor. The Contractor shall liaise closely with the Specialist Contractor to assist them in meeting the Void Standard and timescales.

7.2 At the start of the void period, the heating and hot water system is to be checked and repaired to be left in good working order with all necessary repairs being carried out.

7.3 The gas installation is to be decommissioned and the main gas supply capped off including any gas cooker supply.

7.4 If the gas carcass or boiler is left expired the Contract Administrator shall be advised immediately and shall instruct on repair or replacement.

7.5 On occupation, the Contract Administrator shall instruct the re-commissioning of the gas installation by RBC's Specialist Contractor.

7.6 As part of the re-commissioning work, the resident shall be shown by the specialist contractor how to use the system and shall be left with a copy of the operating instructions for the boiler and (if available) the control system.

7.7 Any gas fire or back boiler unit is to be treated as life expired and removed.

7.8 Radiators which have been painted over shall be replaced if the paintwork is in poor condition, and where painted non-white shall be re-painted white.

8. Electrical Installation

8.1 An electrical installation condition report is to be completed by a competent person. The "Contractor" is to provide a test certificate detailing any faults, including Code 1 and 2 defects before instructions are given. Upon approval, the electrical works must be rectified, and an appropriate electrical installation certificate is to be issued upon completion of works.

8.2 A minimum of two double docket outlets are to be provided in each living room, dining room and bedroom.

8.3 One hard wired smoke detector for each floor of the property is to be provided. Any battery operated detectors are to be removed.

8.4 Test any installed fire alarm system. Where necessary advise the Contract Administrator immediately of any defects to ensure that these are repaired prior to Handover.

8.5 Test any communal TV reception socket. Where necessary advise the Contract Administrator immediately of any defects to ensure that these are repaired prior to Handover.

Where a sound cable run exists, a TV point shall be fitted.

8.6 Where possible test all installed emergency call facilities and/or complete a visual inspection. Where necessary advise the Contract Administrator immediately of any apparent defects to ensure that these are repaired prior to Handover.

8.7 Test any door entry system controls. Where necessary advise the Contract Administrator immediately of any apparent defects to ensure that these are repaired prior to Handover.

8.8 Switch covers which have been painted over shall be replaced if the paintwork is in poor condition, and where painted non-white shall be re-painted white.

9. Internal Decorations

9.1 Unless directed otherwise by the Contract Administrator, voids in older persons' schemes and designated disabled persons' units are to be handed over in good decorative order throughout (where good decorative order means that no further decoration will be required within three years). All other voids are to be handed over in a condition which allows decoration work with minor preparation to be carried out by the incoming resident.

9.2 The table below describes the standard to be achieved:

Internal Decoration – Required Finish		
Decorative Condition	Action Required – Older Persons' Scheme/Disabled Persons' Unit	Action Required – All Other Voids
Wallpapered – good decorative order	No work required	No work required
Wallpapered – poor decorative order	Strip, prepare & emulsion/gloss	Strip & leave surface requiring minor preparation & subsequent decoration by others
Graffiti on walls/woodwork	Seal & obliterate	Seal & obliterate
Painted – good decorative order	No work required	No work required
Painted – fair/poor decorative order	Prepare & emulsion/gloss	Leave surface requiring minor preparation & subsequent decoration by others
Following full kitchen/bathroom replacement	Prepare & emulsion/gloss	Prepare & emulsion/gloss

9.3 Where internal decoration is carried out, woodwork and ceiling colour shall be white, walls shall be magnolia. Wall & ceiling finish shall be matt emulsion in all rooms except kitchen & bathroom, which shall be vinyl silk.

9.4 All voids will receive the hall, stairs and landing to be painted to provide a fresh first appearance. Further decorations will be based on the condition of decorations in each room.

10. Internal Walls & Ceilings

10.1 The cause of any apparent penetrating damp, condensation or timber infestation or dry rot is to be diagnosed and proposed remedial action reported immediately to the Contract Administrator, who shall instruct straight away.

10.2 Any defective wall or ceiling plaster is to be hacked off and re-plastered to finish flush with adjacent surfaces. Superficial cracking of less than 3mm width in otherwise sound plaster requires no action.

10.3 Walls finished with Artex or Polytex are to be skimmed if in poor condition.

10.4 All polystyrene tiling/coving is to be removed and skimmed.

10.5 Sound wall tiling is to be provided to 450mm above basin, bath or worktop. Tiling more than 450mm above bath, basin or worktop (e.g. shower enclosure) is to be carried out only where necessary to avoid water damage. Patch replacement tiling is to match existing colour & size; if no match is available, all tiles are to be removed & replaced with new white tiling.

10.6 Missing or damaged skirting board is to be replaced.

10.7 Any passive ventilation (air bricks, hit and miss ventilators, spinner vents and the like) is to be checked and left unobstructed and free flowing.

10.8 Any suspended ceiling or ductwork is to be checked and left providing satisfactory resistance to the passage of fire and smoke.

10.9 Walls to be cleared of fixings left by previous tenant.

11. Windows & Glazing

11.1 All windows are to be fully serviceable, with glass in sound and weathertight condition.

11.2 Any cracked glass or defective sealed double glazing unit is to be replaced. Any replacement glazing within 900mm of floor level is to be replaced with minimum 6mm toughened or 6.4mm laminated safety glass.

11.3 Where defective glazing is intended to protect a means of escape route, any replacement glazing shall provide at least 30 minutes resistance to the spread of fire.

Each opening window is to be provided with a fully operational fastener.

11.4 Where fitted, window restrictors are to be repaired as necessary and left fully operational. Opening windows above ground floor are to be fitted with restrictors.

11.5 Any louvred glazing is to be removed and re-glazed with a single pane.

11.6 All windows are to be provided with draught stripping.

11.7 All windows are to be provided with curtain battens.

11.8 All internal quarry-tiled windows cills are to be covered with PVCu trim.

12. Doors

12.1 All internal doors and frames must be fully operational, with all door furniture in good working order. Doors are to be replaced if damaged beyond repair or fitted if missing.

12.2 Where the property is a flat or has only 1 means of exit the kitchen door set is to be checked and upgraded or replaced as necessary to give 30 minutes (FD30 Timber door and frame) resistance to the spread of fire.

12.3 Where any final exit door opens onto a means of escape route, the door is to be checked and upgraded or replaced as necessary to give 30 minutes FD30 Timber door and frame) resistance to the spread of fire.

12.4 Replacement doors (if required) to kitchen will be 30-minute fire checked door FD30, including stops and overhead closers.

12.5 Buffers are to be provided as necessary to prevent damage to door or wall.

12.6 External door frames are to have draught stripping fitted if none exists. Existing draught stripping is to be left in good condition.

12.7 Front door is to be fitted with brush draught excluder to bottom rail, letter plate (with brush draught excluder) and door numbers.

13. Floors and Staircases

13.1 The cause of any apparent timber infestation or dry rot is to be diagnosed and proposed remedial action reported immediately to the Contract Administrator, who shall instruct straight away.

13.2 Any remedial treatment for infestation or dry rot is to be completed before Handover.

13.3 All timber or composite suspended flooring is to be flat, secure and sound with a minimum of movement/squeaks. Flooring is to be left ready to receive new floor coverings.

Any sub-floor ventilation must be free from obstruction. All damp proof courses are to be left sound and unbridged.

13.4 Solid floors are to be sound and level, and free from dampness.

13.5 All broken or damaged sheet or tiled floor covering to be repaired. To be replaced like for like where beyond repair, except in kitchens and bathrooms, where sheet vinyl only shall be fitted.

13.6 All unnecessary gripper rods, thresholds, stair fixings are to be removed and surfaces to be made good.

13.7 Banisters, handrails, staircases, and all other joinery such as ducts, hatches, frames, shelves, panels and the like is to be repaired or replaced as necessary and left sound and secure.

Banisters and handrails must be minimum of 900mm high.

14. Kitchens

14.1 Space for a cooker and a refrigerator is to be provided, with suitable connections for gas and electricity supplies.

14.2 Plumbing connections for a washing machine are to be provided if suitable space exists, with valves and waste connections left ready for use.

14.3 Taps, overflows and wastes are to be confirmed free from leaks or blockages, soundly fixed and left in proper working order, sink plugs and chains to be replaced if missing.

14.4 The rising main stop valve is to be tested, labelled and left accessible and working.

14.5 Unit drawers and doors are to open and close securely. Where damaged drawers and doors are beyond repair they are to be replaced to match existing as closely as possible.

14.6 Worktops and sinks are to be free from excessive marks, scoring or staining. To be replaced like for like if damaged.

14.7 A washable floor covering is to be provided and to meet the decent homes standards. The floor covering must be non-slip

14.8 Floor and wall units, worktops, sinks, tiling, floor coverings and appliances (where left in situ) are to be properly fixed and left ready for use. Where possible, there shall be a minimum of two wall units.

14.9 Minimum fittings to be:

- 1 x 1000mm wall unit (double)
- 1 x 500mm wall unit (single)
- 1 x 1000m floor unit with work top
- 1 X 1000mm sink unit with stainless steel sink and drainer top

All replacement units to be drawer line and at least one drawer line should exist in every kitchen.

14.10 Gas Cooker point – bayonet to be provided by incoming tenant. Electric cooker point. Minimum 450mm high glazed tile splash backs.

14.11 A minimum of 3 double socket outlets are to be provided, 2 of which must be above the kitchen worktop.

14.12 Any existing extractor fan shall be repaired or replaced as necessary, and where there is no fan, one shall be provided. New or replacement fans shall achieve a minimum extraction of 30 l/s.

15. Bathrooms & Toilets

15.1 All bathroom sanitary ware is to be properly fixed and free from cracks or leaks. The bath is to be unchipped in the seating area; otherwise repaired or replaced as necessary.

15.2 Taps, overflows and wastes are to be confirmed free from leaks or blockages, soundly fixed and left in proper working order; sink plugs and chains to be replaced if missing.

15.3 The toilet cistern is to flush as designed and be confirmed free from leaks.

15.4 Any WC seat and cover is to be renewed.

15.5 A washable non-slip floor covering is to be provided.

15.6 Any electrical shower unit not fitted by RBC which is installed correctly and functioning properly is to be left ready for use; otherwise, all such units are to be removed and replaced with a bath mixer tap with shower feature.

15.7 Any existing extractor fan shall be repaired or replaced as necessary, and where there is no fan one shall be provided. New or replacement fans shall achieve a minimum extraction of 15 l/s.

15.8 Any bathroom light fitting shall be enclosed, whether within reach or not.

15.9 Any shower enclosure is to be fully tiled.

15.10 Any shower curtain (whether missing or not) is to be replaced.

15.11 Any existing shower head or handset shall be replaced.

15.12 Renew all mastic.

15.13 Acid clean and remove all limescale.

16. Roof Voids

16.1 Any roof space is to be left free of rubbish or personal belongings.

16.2 All supply and overflow pipe work, valves and tanks must be properly fixed, free from leaks, free flowing and fully operational.

16.3 Water storage tanks and cisterns shall be insulated and have close fitting lids. Water supply pipework shall be insulated.

16.4 Loft insulation is to be provided to a minimum thickness of 350mm.

16.5 Ventilation to roof spaces shall be left unobstructed.

16.6 Provide fireproof insulated loft hatch.

16.7 Loft hatches in communal areas will be locked and no access will be provided to tenants for fire risk related issues.

17. External Areas (within Curtilage of Property)

17.1 All dangerous or dilapidated structures should be demolished and removed. Greenhouses, and garden sheds to be removed. Garages which are in sound condition are to be repaired as necessary and left clean and tidy for future use.

17.2 Boundary walls should be repaired as necessary and left sound and fully pointed.

Boundary fences to be left sound and complete. Where boundaries appear to have been previously removed, the Contract Administrator is to be advised immediately and may instruct reinstatement. Gates or doors to be left latched and properly functioning, with any repair or replacement carried out on a like for like basis.

17.3 Suspected defective party structures are to be reported to the Contract Administrator immediately, who will investigate ownership and instruct accordingly.

17.4 Leaking, blocked or damaged rainwater goods and gullies are to be cleared, repaired or replaced and left free flowing and watertight.

Any roof must be watertight with any missing or damaged slates, tiles or other covering repaired or replaced as necessary.

17.5 Locks to associated outhouses and garages must be left working and keys provided at Handover.

17.6 Drains shall run clear and free and have sound and secure inspection chamber covers.

17.7 Chimney stacks to be sound, show no signs of distortion with brickwork or render in good condition.

17.8 All paths to front or rear gates, and all hard landscaping is to be left sound and level and free from any visible trip hazards.

Any necessary tree surgery is to be reported to the Contracts Administrator immediately, who shall instruct RBC's specialist contractor accordingly.

17.9 Gardens shall be left free of rubbish, with grass of reasonable length, planting in a manageable state, and any garden pond removed or puncture and filled in.

18. Asbestos Survey and Removal

18.1 If the property is safe by age or is confirmed to have no ACM's present no further action is required. Where necessary, RBC shall arrange for any remedial work in respect of asbestos to be completed by a specialist company before handing the keys to the Contractor.

18.2 If, during the course of the works, the presence of asbestos is suspected the Contract Administrator shall be informed immediately, and any work that may disturb the material suspended.

18.3 The Contract Administrator may instruct a specialist company to remove or encapsulate asbestos discovered during the course of the works.

19. Cleaning

19.1 The property shall be cleaned to a standard sufficient to allow the new tenant to take up residence without the need for further cleaning.

19.2 In addition to any cleaning more particularly described above, cleaning shall include as a minimum the following:

- All cobwebs removed.
- All walls to be washed and wiped with a detergent solution. Any residual mould or damp staining to be removed using an anti-fungal solution.
- All hard floors to be swept and mopped.
- Where applicable, carpets are to be hoovered.

- All windows left clean inside. The outside of windows to be cleaned where safely accessible from within the dwelling.
- All woodwork and doors to be washed and wiped with a detergent solution.
- Kitchen unit/cupboard doors to be washed and wiped with a detergent solution.
- Kitchen cupboard/drawer inners to be washed and wiped with a detergent solution.
- Kitchen sinks to be cleaned and de-scaled as necessary.
- Any scaled or stained sanitary ware cleaned using a suitable chemical cleaner applied for in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.
- All floors must be swept free of dust and dirt.

20. Summary – Fire Safety

20.1 Renewed or newly installed locks are to be operable without the use of a key internally.

20.2 One hard wired smoke detector for each floor of the property is to be provided. Any battery-operated detectors are to be removed.

20.3 Test any installed fire alarm system. Where necessary advise the Contracts Administrator immediately of any defects to ensure that these are repaired prior to Handover. This will include carbon monoxide alarm also.

20.4 All polystyrene tiling/coving is to be removed.

20.5 Any suspended ceiling or ductwork is to be checked and left providing satisfactory resistance to the passage of fire and smoke.

20.6 Where defective glazing is intended to protect a means of escape route, any replacement glazing shall provide at least 30 minutes resistance to the spread of fire.

20.7 Where the property is a flat or has only 1 means of exit the kitchen door set is to be checked and upgraded or replaced as necessary to give 30 minutes resistance to the spread of fire.

20.8 Where any final exit door opens onto a means of escape route, the door is to be checked and upgraded or replaced as necessary to give 30 minutes resistance to the spread of fire.

21. Summary – Energy Efficiency

21.1 External doors if not already, will be upgraded to new composite energy rated.

21.2 External windows will be overhauled if needed and left in full working order. Should windows be in need of replacement, then the property will be added to the planned upgrade programme and works undertaken in line with the renewal program.

21.3 Loft insulation to a depth of 350mm is to be provided.

21.4 Energy Lightbulbs will be fitted throughout the property and gifted to new incoming tenants.

21.5 A current energy performance certificate is to be provided at Handover –

22. Completion

22.1 All voids will have a maximum turnaround timescale of 15 working days and KPI will be monitored to ensure properties are returned within the agreed timescales as set down in the contract.

22.2 RBC shall arrange a joint Handover meeting with the Contractor at which RBC shall confirm that the works have been completed in accordance with the Void Standard.

22.3 When void works have been completed in accordance with the Void Standard and not before, the Contractor shall immediately return the keys to the Contract Administrator.

22.4 In addition to the return of a functioning set of keys, the Contractor shall ensure that the following documentation is supplied as part of the Handover:

- A completed Handover Schedule (which will contain meter readings, property attributes, remaining lives of key components, decoration assessment, certification details and other notes)
- A valid electrical installation certificate.
- Where applicable, a valid Landlords' Gas Safety Certificate.

22.5 In the interests of expediting the letting process the Contract Administrator may, in exceptional circumstances, accept Handover of a void property where a small number of minor items of work are outstanding. Such items are to be completed by the Contractor within 28 days of the date of occupation by the new resident, are to be agreed prior to the Handover meeting, and set out in an outstanding items list forming part of the Handover Schedule.

22.6 On receipt of all the above, the Contract Administrator shall enter the receipt date on RBC's Contractors' Portal, and this date shall mark the end of the works phase of the voids process.

22.7 The defects liability period in respect of any defective work carried out by the Contractor shall be twelve months from the date of the Handover of the void property.

23. Version Control

Version Number	Date Amended	Comments	Date Approved	Author	Approved By
V1	February 22	First Draft created	October 2022	Simon Allen	HMT