

Melton Borough Council Voids Policy: Appendix One Melton Voids Quality Standard January 2021

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1. Purpose

- 1.1 Melton Borough Council is committed to providing high quality homes for our tenants. The purpose of the Melton Voids Quality Standard (MVQS) is to enabling our tenants to know what they can expect from their home: that it will be clean, safe, secure, comply with any legal requirements, and meet the criteria specified in the standard.

2. Priorities

- 2.1 The specifics of the MVQS sit below a number of key priorities and the MVQS should be read in conjunction with the Council's Void Policy, which gives the following general priorities:
- a) Provide a safe and secure home;
 - b) Ensure that our homes meet the Decent Homes Standard;
 - c) Improve re-let timescales;
 - d) Provide a re-let standard that meets customers' expectations;
 - e) Capture excellent data on the property and its major components; and
 - f) Maximise the use of IT.

3. Melton Void Quality Standard – general approach

- 3.1 The Voids Policy confirms the following approach to re-let standards:
- a) Carry out a gas safety check where gas is installed and leave a copy of the certificate at the property.
 - b) Carry out a safety check of the electrical installation.
 - c) Undertake a water hygiene test and provide a certificate.
 - d) Remove any rubbish from the property and garden.
 - e) Clean the property.
 - f) Re-decorate some or all of the property if it is required, or provide a decoration voucher to assist with the cost.
 - g) Carry out all of the urgent repairs and try and complete all other repairs whilst the property is empty.
 - h) Keep the incoming tenant informed of the date the property will be ready.

4. Inspection

- 4.1 Before we re-let every property the Council will undertake a thorough visual inspection of the following:
- a) Gas central heating system
 - b) Electrics
 - c) All plumbing
 - d) Ceilings and roofs
 - e) Internal walls
 - f) Internal floors, stairs and landings
 - g) Internal doors
 - h) External doors and windows
 - i) Smoke and CO alarms, where fitted
 - j) Previous tenant alterations
 - k) Sanitary fittings
 - l) Kitchen units
 - m) Walls, fencing and gates
 - n) Paths and gardens

o) Polystyrene tiles and polystyrene coving

5. Kitchens

- a) All units will be in a useable condition.
- b) Where space allows, we will supply at least one wall unit, one base unit with a sink top above and one length or worktop to prepare food (this is the minimum standard but most kitchens will meet a higher standard with additional units and worktops).
- c) Worktops will be clean and sealed where the worktop meets the wall and around the sink.
- d) The sink will be clean and free from rust and stains.
- e) Taps will be useable and labelled hot or cold.
- f) A cold and hot water supply will be provided to the kitchen sink.
- g) There will be at least two rows of tiles on the walls above the sink where space allows.
- h) The kitchen will provide sufficient food storage and food preparation areas.
- i) Where space allows we will ensure there is provision made to site a fridge, washing machine and cooker.

6. Bathrooms and WC's

- a) The bath will be clean and sealed where the bath edges meet the tiling on the walls.
- b) The WC will be clean, easy to flush with a seat and lid.
- c) The wash hand basin will be clean.
- d) Taps will operate easily and be labelled hot or cold.
- e) A cold and hot water supply will be provided to the wash hand basin, bath and shower where fitted.
- f) There will be at least two rows of tiles on the walls above the bath and wash hand basin where space allows.

7. Gas Services

- a) The Council's Gas Contractor will visit the new tenant to fire up their heating system, issue a test certificate and provide a demonstration on how to use it.

8. Electrics

- a) A full electric test will be undertaken and an electrical certificate will be provided to the tenant.

9. Water Services

- a) The water supply will be flushed.
- b) All pipe work, leaks, overflows, taps, waste systems, cisterns and storage tanks will be inspected, reattached, repaired or renewed to function correctly.

10. Ceilings

- a) All ceilings will be free from large cracks, bulges, large holes, and polystyrene tiles and coving will be removed.

11. Walls

- a) All walls will be free from major defects including large cracks, bulges or large holes.

12. Floors

- a) Damaged tiles will be replaced and damaged floorboards renewed.
- b) Flooring surfaces will be ready to take floor covering.
- c) Carpet grips will be left in place for the new tenant to reuse, however if it is their preference not to use them they will be removed at the tenant's request.

13. External Doors and Windows

- a) All doors and windows will be in good working order with secure locks.
- b) Window Glass will be intact and secure.
- c) A full set of keys including window lock keys will be issued.
- d) All door locks will be replaced.

14. Internal Doors

- a) Internal doors will open and close with useable door furniture.
- b) All door openings will have a door fitted.

15. Staircase

- a) A safe handrail will be provided to all staircases.

16. Smoke alarms and Carbon Monoxide Detectors

- a) Adequate numbers of smoke alarms will be fitted, and Carbon Monoxide Detectors where required.
- b) Where these are provided, they will be checked and serviced.
- c) If not hard wired the batteries will be changed.

17. Damp

- a) All properties will be free from damp.
- b) The Council will ensure an exhaustive inspection whenever damp or mould is present and will undertake whatever works are needed, e.g. upgrading fans and ventilation.

18. Gas and Electricity

- a) It is the responsibility of the new tenant to arrange their utility supplier.

19. Decoration

- a) The Council is not responsible for the decorative order of the property; however where standards are so poor that re-letting is difficult, minimum redecoration will be completed at the discretion of the Void Working Group.
- b) A decoration grant may be given for rooms which we feel do not meet a satisfactory standard in accordance with our Policy, to assist the new tenant with the cost of decorating.
- c) Sheltered accommodation and Temporary Accommodation will be redecorated

20. External

- a) Fences and walls will be sound.
- b) Hedges in conservation areas will not be removed.
- c) Lawns will be left manageable and no longer than six inches in height.
- d) Trees will not be over eight foot in height.
- e) Overgrown shrubs will be trimmed back.
- f) Sheds/outbuildings in a poor condition will be removed.
- g) Rubbish and debris will be removed.

21. Repairs After Re-let

- a) Not all repairs will be carried out before re-letting. Some repairs may be completed once the incoming tenant has moved in. These will be repairs that wouldn't prevent the tenant from living in the property.
- b) The new tenant will be advised of any outstanding work during viewing and/or during sign-up. New tenants will be asked to sign an acceptance form that confirms the property is of an acceptable standard, with any repairs due after re-let clearly noted.

22. Planned Capital Works

- a) New tenants will be provided with details of capital works due in the next five years.

23. Tenant Improvements/Alterations

- a) Our homes are of an age that it should be expected by incoming tenants that fixtures and fittings are in a used condition. The homes we let will have been occupied by other tenants who may have differing standards and decorative tastes; however we will ensure that any previous tenant alterations the Council deem to be substandard will be removed.
- b) Existing tenant improvements will be left in place and, in effect, gifted to the new tenants.

24. Energy Performance – SAP Rating

- a) Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) has been adopted by the Government as part of the national standard for calculating the energy performance of buildings. SAP ratings are expressed on a scale of 1 to 100 – the higher the number, the better the rating:
 - A 92-100 points (Most efficient)
 - B 81-91 points
 - C 69-80 points
 - D 55-68 points
 - E 39-54 points
 - F 21-38 points
 - G 1-20 points (Least efficient)
- b) All properties will be assessed and an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) will be issued.
- c) Our aim is to have an average SAP rating within Band C across the Council's housing stock.

25. Complaints

- a) Should there be a complaint from the outgoing tenant or the new tenant concerning any aspect of the void works, this will be dealt with via the Council's Corporate Complaints Policy.

26. MVQS Review

- 26.1 The MVQS has been developed with the input of the Tenants Forum Executive Committee and will be reviewed every two years or if required by changes to statute or regulation.