

Void Management Policy

Summary

This policy outlines our approach to the management of voids (empty properties) to ensure all our properties are maintained and that the suitable homes are provided when needed whilst utilising our housing stock.

Effective date

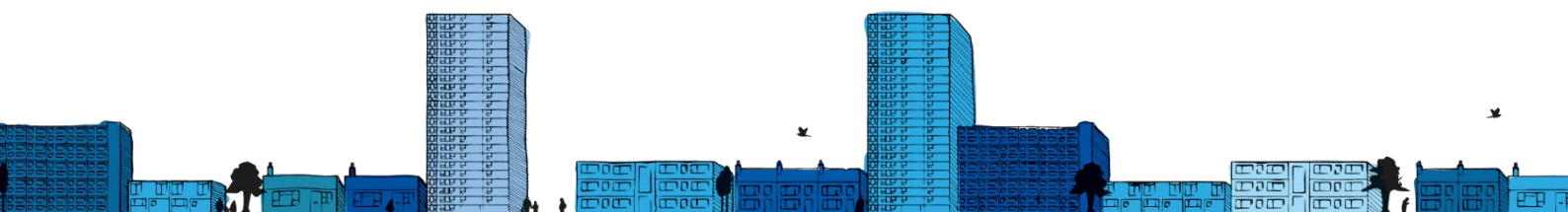
1 June 2025

Review

We will review this Policy every 3 years or when there has been an update to legislative, regulatory, best practice or operational changes

Version

1.0



Void Management policy contents

Summary	1
Effective date.....	1
Review	1
Version	1
Void Management policy contents	2
Scope	3
Purpose	3
What is a Void?	3
Our Void Service	3
Our Void Responsibility	3
Moving in standard.....	4
Your Void Responsibility	9
Moving out standard	11
Recharging	12
Your voice	12
What have we done to make sure this Policy is fair?.....	12
Regulation and legislation	12
Related documents	13
How to feedback	14
Compliments	14
Complaints	14
Housing Ombudsman Service	14



Scope

The policy covers:

- All Portsmouth Homes dwellings including houses, bungalows, flats, maisonettes, bedsit, studio flat and sheltered schemes.

Any reference in this policy to 'we', 'our' or 'us' refers to Portsmouth Homes.

Any reference in this policy to 'tenant', 'customer' or 'resident' refers to a Portsmouth Homes tenant.

Purpose

The purpose of the policy is to:

- Outline our approach to manage voids effectively and provide a service that ensures all our properties are maintained by carrying out the right repair at the right time and that suitable homes are provided when needed.
- Ensuring we meet our statutory and legislative obligations.

What is a Void?

A 'void' can be defined as an empty property, which does not have a legitimate tenant. There are many reasons why voids occur, sometimes a property may be awaiting a new tenant; or a previous tenant may have given notice and vacated the property.

Our Void Service

When notice is received from a tenant that they will be leaving their home we will arrange a home visit by us with a contractor to assess the work required and ensure an outgoing tenant is aware of all their obligations when ending a tenancy, including how the property should be returned to us.

We will undertake the work required to enable the property to be re-let, agree a date to start a new tenancy and provide information to the new incoming tenant.

Our Void Responsibility

We are responsible for maintaining the structure and installations of our property, we will carry out repairs to maintain the property and ensure the proper working order of installations.

We will ensure that all statutory tasks together with health and safety checks are undertaken prior to the new tenant moving in and provide the new tenant with all the appropriate records and useful information to help them live in their new home that is appropriate for the property that they are moving into as necessary.



In some circumstances new tenants may move into a property when general void works are outstanding which will then be completed as a repair on occupation, providing that all compliance and health & safety works are completed.

We will assess and manage requests for aids and adaptations recommended by an Occupational Therapist (OT) for tenants or members of their household to restore or enable independent living for tenants and their families who may reside within a disabling environment in accordance with our aids and adaptations policy. Any adaptations that are likely to exceed £30,000 and/or include a proposed extension to a property will be referred to the disabled adaptations panel before a new tenancy is agreed.

Please refer to the aids and adaptations policy.

Moving in standard

We will undertake the following statutory compliance tasks and health and safety checks prior to a new tenant moving into their new home.

Void Compliance and Health & Safety Works	Work undertaken
Gas	Landlords gas safety record. Inspection to include all fixed gas appliances installed in the property to ensure all gas installations conform to current 'Gas Safe' regulations.
Electrical	Electrical inspection condition report (EICR) or domestic visual inspection (DVI) if an EICR has been undertaken within the last two years to ensure electrics conform to current NICEIC regulations. We will carry out all Cat 1 and Cat 2 recommendations before you move in.
Energy Performance	An Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) to assist you to make some informed decisions about energy usage in your new home.
Asbestos	An asbestos management survey of your home so that our asbestos register is updated
Fire Detectors	At least one mains powered smoke alarm present on each storey of the property, where there is a room used for living accommodation.
Carbon Monoxide Detectors	Will be installed in any room of the property used wholly or partly as living accommodation where a fixed combustion appliance is present or where a flue passes through (excluding gas cookers)
Legionella	Water systems will be flushed every 7 days during the void period and prior to handover and we will make sure redundant pipework identified is removed
Windows	All windows will be inspected, lubricated, and adjusted to the correct closure to ensure ease of operation, security and safety. Restrictors will be checked working to all windows in properties above ground floor. Locks and keys will be checked working and available for all windows.



Void Compliance and Health & Safety Works	Work undertaken
Doors	All doors will be inspected and adjusted to close correctly. Locks to external doors including stores will be changed for a new suitable lock. The incoming resident will be supplied with 2 new keys for each door. Where a door entry system is present, working keys or fobs will be provided to suit the resident's needs.
Damp & Mould	Any damp and mould identified will be fully treated and, in where appropriate, additional measures considered to mitigate recurrence.
Fire Doors	Fire doors as required by building regulations for the property, they will be inspected for any damage to the door and frame, excessive gaps exceeding 3mm between the door and frame, intumescent strips and smoke seals present as appropriate, door closer operating correctly.
Asset Survey	We will undertake an asset management survey to allow us to update our records, assess the condition of the property, identify and assess any health & safety and HHSRS category 1 hazards and remove or mitigate any hazards identified.

We will undertake the following general void specification prior to you moving into your new home.

Void General Works	Work undertaken
Loft	- Lofts will be cleared of any of any items - Insulation levels below 100mm (joist height) should be overlaid and upgraded to a minimum of 270mm
Decorations	- Decorated surfaces will be left in a clean, sound condition ready for the incoming tenant to undertake their own decorations without the need for specialist materials and equipment. - Any bare plaster will be left with a mist coat of white emulsion paint ready for a finishing coat by the new tenant. - Any residual staining such as water, nicotine, cooking or mould stains will be cleaned and painted with the appropriate sealing primer paint to leave ready for decoration by the new tenant - Decoration of the property is the resident responsibility



Void General Works	Work undertaken
Decorations (Continued)	Wallpaper in fair condition can be left however any material that is de-bonding, ripped, stained, or worn should be removed, the surface below prepared, mist coated and left to be decorated by the new tenant. If the wall surface is not in a condition that can be simply painted, then lining paper should be applied together with a mist coat of emulsion.
Ceilings	- Damage to textured coatings will be made good as appropriate depending on the product type. - Polystyrene ceiling tiles will be removed from all ceilings and the exposed surface made good ready for decoration.
Flooring	- Where missing or beyond repair, sheet vinyl flooring will be provided to bathrooms, WC's, and kitchens where appropriate, whilst we will endeavour to match existing this will not always be practical - Solid concrete floors will receive vinyl tiles to all rooms. - Timber floors will be left clean and any loose boards should be secured and damaged boards replaced. Any remaining nails, staples, gripper rods, wood splinters or other protrusions will be removed. - Any existing floor covering in good condition such as carpet or laminate flooring will be left fitted in the property and gifted to the new tenant unless explicitly asked not to do so by the new tenant. - Hard laminate flooring will be removed if there have been reports of noise linked to the property - Anti-vibration mats will be fitted into the washing machine space as standard in flats above the ground floor
Extractor Fan	- Humidistat-controlled extractor fans are to be fitted to both the kitchen and the bathroom - Any existing fans will be inspected, checked that in working condition and cleaned
Pest Control	If the property shows signs of vermin or insect infestation, then fumigation or other appropriate treatment will take place.
Bathrooms	- All sinks, basins, WC pan/cistern and baths will be checked and if damaged or cracked, will be replaced. Cosmetically they may show normal wear and tear. - We will descale existing shower head and hose and remove existing shower curtains where present.



Void General Works	Work undertaken
Bathrooms (Continued)	• Showers will only be replaced when uneconomic to maintain, new showers will only be installed if assessed required by an Occupational Therapist • All scale and stains will be removed and all fittings to be clean and serviceable
Cleaning	• All floors and stairs will be swept and wet mopped where possible. • All doors (internal and external), doorframes, windows, window frames, windowsills, skirting boards, radiators and pipe works will be washed down and wiped cleaned. • Kitchen Units, including all work surfaces, cupboards and drawers will be cleaned and sanitised internally and externally. • All sinks, basins, taps, tiled areas, and showers should be cleaned and sanitised. • Graffiti will be removed or decorated so that it is not legible
Kitchen	• Where available space allows, the kitchen should contain 3 double units, in any combination of floor and/or wall units and a minimum of 3 linear meters of worktop. • Provision will be given for a standard 600mm spaces for a cooker, washing machine and tall fridge freezer along with any service connections as appropriate. • Existing kitchen units, doors and worktops will be left in a serviceable condition but may show signs of normal wear and tear or minor cosmetic damage. • Kitchen unit doors will be securely fixed to the carcass • 450mm high ceramic tiled splashback will be present where the worktop touches a wall. • Stainless-steel sink will be free from damage or deflection, the sink may show signs of use with minor scratches but will be left clean complete with a plug and chain. • Kitchens only be replaced if assessed non-serviceable by us and will not be replaced to accommodate oversized or multiple additional appliances, any changes required will be recharged to the incoming tenant.
Electrics	• Any rewiring required will be undertaken in surface conduit, no wiring will be chased into walls. Additional sockets requested by the resident will not be installed by us, any requests for additional sockets will be recharged to the incoming tenant



Void General Works	Work undertaken
Electric & Gas Appliances	- Non-standard built in electrical/gas appliances including oven, hob, dishwasher, fridge, washing machine, microwave, or secondary fires. Where these have been left in the property, they may be gifted to the incoming tenant subject to statutory checks to establish safety. We will not be responsible for replacement or repair - Fitting or checking of the incoming tenant's appliances will not be undertaken by us.
Windows and Glazing	- Safety glass should be fitted in all doors and other windows or glazed areas that are lower than 800mm from the floor level. - We will ensure that a pelmet batten is installed over a window to enable to fix a curtain pole.
Gardens and Outbuildings	- The garden will be cleared of all rubbish/items and any health and safety issues addressed and assessed. Grassed areas, shrubs/bushes and trees will be assessed and where appropriate will be mown, cut back or felled to allow for easy management by the new tenant. - We will ensure that any existing patios or paths are safe, but will not install new or additional patios or paths - If sheds are present and in good condition these may be gifted to the incoming resident - Any existing shed in a poor condition will be removed and not replaced - Where additions are present to the building such as garages, stores, conservatories or lean-tos, where in good condition these may be gifted to the incoming tenant. If in poor condition or likely to cause future maintenance issues these will be removed.

We will provide the following certificates to the incoming tenant when they sign up to commence their new tenancy.

Certificates Provided	Purpose of Information
Gas Certificate	A Landlords gas safety certificate if there are any gas installations within the property to confirm that the installation is safe.
Electrical Certificate	An Electrical Inspection Condition Report (EICR) undertaken to confirm that the installation meets current standards and has no outstanding category 1 or 2 recommendations
Energy Performance Certificate	An Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) that assists you to make some informed decisions about energy usage in your new home.



At sign up we will provide the following leaflets and helpful information as appropriate for the property you are moving into.

Information Provided	Purpose of Information
Asbestos Information	We will provide an 'Asbestos in Your Home' leaflet detailing locations where asbestos is known to be in your home and asbestos advice
Fire Safety	We will make you aware of the fire safety policy for the block of flats, managing fire doors and ensure you are aware of the evacuation procedure. It may also include additional information about large panel system (LPS) blocks and fire evacuation alarms if appropriate for your block.
Home Contents Insurance	We will make you aware of our home contents insurance scheme, we recommend that all residents have home contents insurance
DIY Leaflet	We will make you aware of the process for making alterations, asking for repairs, asbestos information, and decorations
Condensation & Mould	We will make you aware of advice for managing moisture levels within your home and how to escalate any more serious issues
Right to Buy	We will make you aware of your right to buy (RTB)
Privacy Notices	We will make you aware of our privacy notice explaining how we store your personal sensitive information and data, and why and who we can share this with.
Mobility Scooter	We will make you aware of our mobility scooter policy and how you should inform keep us informed including advice about how you should store and charge any mobility scooters
Living At Height	We will provide advice regarding how you should live at height in a flat, bedsit or maisonette as appropriate
Condition Report	We will provide you with a condition report that contains photographs of your home at the start of your new tenancy

Your Void Responsibility

To end your tenancy, we will ask you to give four weeks written notice to an area housing office. In some situations, this may be reduced depending on individual circumstances ie. domestic abuse, safeguarding, additional needs, however this would be reviewed. There is a requirement for a home visit and other checks to be completed before the tenancy ends.

You must allow access for a home visit by us with a contractor before your tenancy ends so we can assess the work required and ensure you are aware of how the property should be returned to us.

On leaving your home you must remove all your own belongings and leave the property in a clean and tidy condition and in good decorative order and repair. You are responsible for the reinstatement of any unauthorised or unsafe alterations that you have made



You will have to pay for the removal of any rubbish/abandoned items and for any repairs needed that are not normal wear and tear because of misuse, damage or neglect by you or any member of your household, visitors or pets. You will also have to pay for reinstatement of any unauthorised alterations you have made.

When your tenancy comes to an end you must ensure that your keys are returned to an area housing office by 12pm the day after your tenancy ends. If we do not receive your keys and receive no contact, we will instruct our contractors to change the lock and commence clearance of the property.

You should not leave any debts on meters for gas or electric.

When moving into a new property at the start of your tenancy you are responsible for moving, fitting or checking your appliances including cookers, fridges, washing machines and dishwashers or large items of furniture and any adaptations or removal of doors to accommodate your appliances or furniture.

Any white goods, furniture or flooring that we 'gift' to the you at the start of your tenancy are your future responsibility, we are not responsible for repairs or replacement of these items.

You are responsible for any fittings and furnishings such as light bulbs, lampshades, toilet roll holders, shower curtains / screens, curtain poles, curtains, carpets and mirrors etc.

You are responsible for taking meter readings for utilities and setting up an account with a supplier as appropriate.



Moving out standard

Your home must be in good condition when it's returned to us with the keys, clean and ready for us to work in.

Area	Moving Out Standard
General Condition	The property including the loft should be cleared of all your personal belongings such as furniture, carpets (in poor condition), personal effects, appliances and rubbish. Carpets and floor coverings may be left where in good condition and agreed with Portsmouth Homes at the home visit.
Kitchen	Kitchen cupboards, doors, drawers, worktops, and plinths should be left in good working condition.
Bathroom	WCs, showers, basins and baths should be left in good working condition, clean and have plugs and chains fitted.
Electrics	Electric fixtures, such as electrical sockets, light fittings, and switches, should be clean, work and not be damaged. Any resident installations should be removed.
Decorations	Decorations should be in a good condition to all rooms with no graffiti and walls not damaged.
Heating	Radiators are securely fixed to the wall and aren't damaged.
Doors	Doors should be in good condition, not damaged, close correctly and with no doors or keys missing or have broken glazing
Windows	Windows should be in good condition and not damaged, close correctly and with no keys or restrictors missing or have broken glazing
Stairs	There should be no missing or damaged handrails or banisters
Garden	The garden including the outbuildings or sheds should be safe, clear of all rubbish, personal belongings and reinstated if any resident alterations undertaken, to an acceptable standard and not contain ponds.
Alterations	Any unauthorised alterations should be inspected by a surveyor to assess if they require reinstatement or can be retained in the property

If you are transferring to another Portsmouth Homes property your move may be delayed where you have not met the conditions expected for ending your tenancy.



Recharging

Where we identify repairs needed that are your responsibility you will need to arrange for a competent person to complete these repairs to a satisfactory standard prior to your move. We may be able to complete these on your behalf, but you will be recharged for the costs involved and will need to make payment in full before your move.

You will also be recharged if your home is not in good condition when you return the keys and does not meet our moving out standard.

Please refer to the recharging for repairs policy.

Your voice

We provide tenants a wide range of meaningful opportunities to engage, influence and scrutinise the Landlord Strategies, policies and services, to include participation in regular resident meetings and give feedback on services and policies.

If you would like to be included in future resident engagement focus groups and would like to know how to get involved, please contact us for more information:

You can contact our team by:

- Email: housing.engagement@portsmouthcc.gov.uk
- Phone: 02392 834835
- Website: visit the [Resident engagement and community resources on our website](#)

What have we done to make sure this Policy is fair?

We completed an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) to consider the positive and negative impacts this Policy may have on people with protected characteristics under the [Equality Act 2010](#). This Policy should have direct and positive equality and diversity impacts.

Regulation and legislation

We recognise the variety of legislation, and we will continue to monitor relevant legal guidance. The list below reflects some of the existing legal framework and relevant publications:

- [Housing Act 2004](#)
- [Social Housing \(Regulation\) Act 2023](#)
- [Regulatory standards for landlords](#)
- [Fire Safety Act 2021](#)



- [Building Safety Act 2022](#)
- [Landlord and Tenant Act 1985](#)
- [Environmental Protection Act 1990](#)
- [The Secure Tenants of Local Housing Authorities \(Right to Repair\) Regulations 1994](#)
- [Disability Discrimination Act 1995](#)
- [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [The Regulatory Reform \(Fire Safety\) Order 2005](#)
- [Legionnaires' disease. The control of legionella bacteria in water systems](#)
- [The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012](#)
- [The Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998](#)
- [The Electricity at Work Regulations 1989](#)
- [The Gas Safety \(Installation and Use\) Regulations 1998](#)
- [The Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm \(Amendment\) Regulations 2022](#)
- [The Construction \(Design and Management\) Regulations 2015](#)
- [Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974](#)
- [The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999](#)
- [The Workplace \(Health, Safety and Welfare\) Regulations 1992](#)
- [The Health and Safety \(First-Aid\) Regulations 1981](#)
- [The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998](#)
- [The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002](#)
- [The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health \(Amendment\) Regulations 2004](#)
- [The Personal Protective Equipment at Work \(Amendment\) Regulations 2022](#)
- [The Confined Spaces Regulations 1997](#)

Related documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Portsmouth Homes Landlord Policies, Strategies and Reports - [Housing policies, strategies and privacy notices](#)
- Tenancy Agreement



How to feedback

If you have any questions around the policy or would like to know more about its application, please contact the relevant service in the first instance.

You can get this policy in large print, braille, audio or in another language by contacting your Housing Office. More information is available [translation, interpreting and audio information](#).

Compliments

To help us provide the best service we can. We would like to hear customer views on the services that they use. If the customer is pleased with a member of staff or service, please let us know.

- Telephone: 02392 606383
- Email address: HNBLandlordComplaints@portsmouthcc.gov.uk

Complaints

If a customer is unhappy, they can refer to our Landlord Complaints Policy.

- Online complaint form at [Make a housing complaint](#)
- Telephone: 02392 606383
- Email address: HNBLandlordComplaints@portsmouthcc.gov.uk
- [Landlord complaints policy](#)

Housing Ombudsman Service

If a customer is unhappy, they can contact the Housing Ombudsman Service for advice and guidance at any time.

- Online complaint form on [the Housing Ombudsman Service website](#)
- Telephone: 0300 111 3000
- For more information, visit [Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code](#)

