



Belmont House, 57 Belmont Road, Cambuslang, G72 8PG
www.wwhc.org.uk E: enquiries@wwhc.org.uk T: 0141 641 8628

Policy Name	Void Management Policy
Policy Author	Head of Housing Services
Approved by Sub Committee	May 2022
Approved by Management Committee	June 2022
Latest date of Next Review	May 2025

West Whitlawburn Housing Co-operative will provide this policy on request at no cost, in larger print, in Braille, in audio or other non-written format, and in a variety of languages. Please contact the office.

1. Policy Statement

1.1 Our void management policy aims to ensure properties are allocated as quickly as possible and that any lost rent due to properties being void is kept to a minimum. In order to achieve this, a flexible approach is encouraged.

1.2 All void properties will meet our minimum lettable standard (appendix 1)

1.3 Void times will be kept to a minimum by clearly advising the contractor of the work required, agreeing realistic time scales and close monitoring of empty-house work while it is ongoing.

1.4 This policy should be used in conjunction with the relevant policies for Whitcomm and the biomass heating system.

2. Legal, Good Practice & Regulatory Framework

2.1 We will comply with all relevant legislation and associated regulations, including:

- The Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, 2001, 2010 & 2014;
- Data Protection Act 1998 & GDPR 2018

2.2 The Scottish Housing Regulator has identified a number of key indicators relevant to void management by which it will measure landlord performance, including the following:

- Quality of housing – tenants' homes, as a minimum, meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) by April 2015 and continue to meet it thereafter, and when they are allocated, are always clean, tidy and in a good state of repair. Including meeting the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH and EESH 2).
- Estate management, anti-social behaviour, neighbour nuisance and tenancy disputes – tenants and others live in well-maintained neighbourhoods where they feel safe.
- Value for money – tenants, owners and other customers receive services that provide continually improving value for the rent and other charges they pay.

3. Equality and Diversity

3.1 We are committed to ensuring equal opportunities and fair treatment for

all people in our work. In implementing this Policy, we will provide a fair and equal service to all people, irrespective of factors such as gender, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, language or social origin, or other personal attributes.

4. Policy Review

4.1 This policy will be reviewed every 3 years unless there is a requirement to review outwith this cycle.

4.2 The next policy review will be due May 2025.

Procedures for dealing with void properties

1. When the tenancy ends

1.1 Whenever possible, four weeks' notice should be sought when a tenant ends their tenancy. In the event of notice being given, a pre-selection of the property should be made in line with the Co-operative's Allocation policy.

1.2 If a tenants dies and there is no one to continue the tenancy we will terminate the tenancy on date of death but allow the tenant's representatives a realistic time to clear the property. The reasonable time will be negotiated on a case by case basis depending on the circumstances.

1.3 Where possible an end of tenancy visit will be carried out to ensure the outgoing tenant leaves the property in an acceptable condition. This visit will also give an indication of any standard or rechargeable repairs that will be required to bring the property up to a lettable standard.

1.4 Whenever possible all void properties will be registered under the Void Care scheme to ensure utility changes/supply do not impact on the void time.

2. Inspecting properties and instructing works

2.1 The void house inspection should be carried out within one working day of the keys being returned to the office. Whenever possible the inspection should be carried out in the morning to allow lines to be raised the same day. The inspection will be carried out by the Housing Officer and the Property Officer. If the keys are returned to the office prior to the end of tenancy date advantage should be taken of this additional time.

2.2 The Housing Officer should record the necessary repairs on the vacant house inspection form and then pass form to the Property Assistant. Property Services staff will raise the lines for the work. The Housing Officer will agree the expected date of return of the property with the Property Services team.

2.3 A minimum standard level of works has been agreed and is attached in appendix 1

2.4 In most instances, where only minimum works is required, five working days will be agreed however this will vary depending on the level of works required to bring the property up to a lettable standard. In this instance, the Property Assistant will negotiate a realistic timescale with the Contractor.

2.5 If a clear out or valet is required, the Property Assistant will negotiate a date for this with the contractor.

2.6 The repair lines will be raised the same day or first thing on the next working day. During the void period the works will be monitored by the Property Officer and the Housing Officer.

2.7 In cases where a property has been fire damaged or badly vandalised the property will then be treated as a "project" and an elongated timescale agreed with the Contractor. The Property Manager will progress any resulting insurance claim with the loss adjuster. The let will then be progressed as usual.

3. Monitoring the work

3.1 The Property Services team will liaise with the Housing Officer while the property is under repair to anticipate and resolve any problems and ensure the prompt return of the property to the letting pool. This is in the form of weekly meetings where the progress is monitored and performance is measured.

3.2 The Assistant Director (Tenancy Services) will monitor all void times on a monthly basis and report to the Performance, Assurance and Regulation Sub Committee quarterly.

3.3 If there are any concerning trends or overall problems with the void repair times the Housing Officer will raise the concerns with the Assistant Director (Tenancy Services) and the Property Manager. The Property Manager will then contact the Contractor to resolve the matter.

4. Accompanied Viewings

4.1 The applicant who has been selected for the property should be advised of the target completion date and an accompanied viewing arranged. If only minimal work is required in the property the accompanied viewing should be arranged before the work is started or while it is ongoing

4.2 If the outgoing tenant agrees an accompanied viewing can be carried out with the outgoing tenant in situ. This may result in the incoming tenant's tenancy starting on the day after the departing tenant's tenancy ends and a nil void time. This is only possible if the void repairs are minimal and can safely be carried out once the new tenant has moved in.

4.3 In most instances it may not be appropriate to arrange a viewing prior to the outgoing tenant leaving due to the anticipated work required to bring the

property up to an acceptable standard. The Housing Officer will decide this on a void by void basis.

5. Decants

5.1 When a property has been identified as being required for decant purposes due to development works an empty house inspection should be carried and repairs instructed in line with clause 2 of this policy. When decant properties are returned to the letting pool by the Property Team they will be in a lettable condition and should not require further repairs. Thereafter accompanied viewings can be arranged immediately and the let progressed.

6. Void Budget

6.1 The Assistant Director (Tenancy Services) and the Property Manager will monitor the void budget on a monthly basis and highlight any areas causing concern.

Appendix 1

Void minimum lettable standard

Works	Minimum Standard
General Cleanliness	The house will be cleared of all personal belongings/rubbish from the previous tenant. If necessary property will also be sprayed for infestation. No carpets or floor coverings will be left in the property. Floors will be swept out, kitchen and bathrooms surfaces will to be washed down. Caged areas and tenant stores will be emptied. If a new padlock is required then Concierge will issue it to the new tenant.
Garden Areas	Any private garden area will be cleared of rubbish.
Electrics	An electrical check will be carried out in all properties. Any alterations to the electrical system will be corrected to ensure compliance with regulations. All non-standard light fittings will always be replaced with standard ones.
Gas	A gas safety check will be carried out in all properties. Any alterations to the gas system will be corrected to ensure compliance with the regulations.
Gas/Electric Cooking	Where the previous tenant has left a cooker, this will be removed as we are unable to certify their safety.
Smoke and Heat Alarm	The smoke alarm(s) will be tested in all properties. Within the Towers, concierge will verify call received at the station.
Security system	In MSF properties, test calls will be raised from the handset and intruder alarm will be reset to factory settings. Concierge will verify calls received.
Communal aerial	The aerial socket will be inspected and will be secure to the wall.
Water Supply	During the months November - March or during severe cold spells, consideration will be paid to whether stopcocks should be shut off and the water supply drained down. If water supply is drained down access panels will not be reinstated until the water has been turned on.
Medical Adaptations	All medical adaptations will be inspected to ensure that they are fully operational and meet with the needs of the incoming tenant where possible.
Housing alarms	The unit will be fully inspected and a test call put through to the concierge station. If the unit is not required for the new tenant it will be removed and reallocated.
Windows	All windows will be fully operational and checked for safety catches/retainers. All tenants will be issued with thumb turns or keys.

Front Door	The minimum lock standard is a mortice on a timber door or a security lock on security door. Check security and for drafts/water ingress. If relevant the glazing panel will also be checked. 3 sets of keys will be available for the new tenant. If not a lock change will be carried out.
Internal Pass Doors	All pass doors will be intact and operating properly. Bathroom doors will have locking device. In MSF properties, a fire door will be in place between living room and hall and the bomber spring must be fully functional. Any pass doors which have been replaced by the former tenant and have glass panels will be replaced with the Co-operative's standard doors.
Cupboard Doors	All cupboard doors will be intact, operating properly and have appropriate handles
Floors	All loose and missing floorboards will be re-secured/ replaced - floor surface will be even to allow carpets to be laid.
Skirtings, facings and walls	Missing or badly damaged skirtings/facings will be replaced. If possible to repair - should be re-secured and filled where necessary. Large holes in walls should be plastered however the new tenant will be responsible for any minor holes.
Heating system	The heating system will be fully functioning with all radiators attached securely to the walls. Radiators will be appropriate for each room size. In Towers and Low Rise properties a smart meter will be in the property to allow your consumption and payments to be monitored. A heating account will be set up in the new Tenant's name and any outstanding balance accrued by the former tenant will be cleared.
Kitchen Units	All kitchen units will be thoroughly checked and hinges replaced/adjusted where necessary. If adequate storage is not available (as per the standard kitchen spec), additional storage should be provided. The sink top earth connection will be secure. Damaged drawers and doors should be replaced, where possible. Damaged worktops as a result of burning/water ingress should be replaced where appropriate. If a connection has been made for a washing machine and it has not been sealed by the former tenant this will be discussed with the new tenant at the viewing. If they do not wish to reuse the connection, the pipe will be sealed. The cooker space will not be adjacent to the sink

	<p>basin. If this is the case, steps will be taken to alter sink position.</p> <p>The kitchen should also be checked for mould growth. If greater than 5% appropriate works will be instructed to rectify. If the piecemeal work required to bring a kitchen up to standard is excessive then replacing the whole kitchen will be considered.</p>
Kitchen vent	If a vent is installed in the kitchen it will be checked for obvious signs of damage and wear.
Bathroom Suite	Bathroom suite will be checked for chips, cracks and should be securely attached to wall. Seal around bath will also be checked. The bathroom will also be checked for mould growth. If greater than 5% appropriate works will be instructed to rectify
Bathroom vent	Grille will be checked to ensure ventilating the space properly. If not grille will be cleaned.
Shower Unit	Any instantaneous electric shower which has not been fitted by the Co-operative will be removed & re-tiling done as required.
Decoration	The Co-operative is generally not responsible for the condition/level of decoration in a property. However, where the condition of the decoration is deemed to be so bad as to affect the likelihood of anyone accepting the property or the decoration is offensive (i.e. graffiti) then minimum decoration will be carried out.
Energy Performance	Each void will be inspected to determine whether and Energy Performance Assessment has been carried out. If it has and certificate not displayed, a duplicate will be printed and displayed. If no EPC is available, an Energy Assessment should be instructed

Roles and Responsibilities

1. Once notice of termination is received

- This will be added to the next void meeting minute as an incoming void and to the void team register by the Housing Officer.

2. Pre-end of tenancy inspection of property

- This will be carried out by the Concierge Manager, Housing Officer or Housing Assistant. Scheduled dates/times of these visits will be noted on the minute of the void meeting.
- The completed inspection sheet will be passed to the Property Team and following review will be added to the HomeMaster property tab for the specific address.

3. Offer of tenancy

- The Housing Officer will review the breakdown of lets Year to Date and will determine the list which the property will be offered to. The Housing Officer in adhering to the Allocations Policy will make a formal offer to the most suitable applicant.
- If the exiting tenant will allow a tenanted viewing, the Housing Officer, Concierge Manager or Housing Assistant will carry out this viewing. All such information will be noted on the minute of the void meeting. This will allow WWHC staff to be made aware of any agreement to leave furniture between exiting and incoming tenants, and to ensure a mandate is signed for any such agreement.

4. Void inspection

- The tenancy will be ended and receipt of keys will be added to HomeMaster by the Housing Officer.
- The formal void inspection will be carried out within 1 working day of key receipt, and will be completed jointly by the Property Officer and the Housing Officer.
- The Property Officer or Property Assistant will raise the repairs within 1 working day following completion of this visit.
- If the viewing did not take place whilst the exiting tenant was in place, it should be considered at this stage. If the property is not fit to be viewed

(e.g. if the state of repair is extremely poor) the date should be noted when it is anticipated that the repairs will be to a stage at which the viewing can be conducted. This should be agreed between teams, and noted on the void meeting minute.

5. Void repair progress

- Void repairs and progress of same will be monitored by the Property Officer. A formal repair update will be presented by the Property Officer or Property Assistant at the weekly void meeting, and will be included in full within the minute. Out-with these meetings the same members of staff will update the Housing Officer or Housing Assistant of any anticipated dates for return of the property, and of any unforeseen delays.
- Following implementation of new repairs contractor (anticipated June 2024), the Head of Housing Services will record performance broken down by property services days and housing/allocation days at the foot of the void register. Any specific learning will be discussed during the void meetings, and on a team specific basis if necessary.
- Void performance will be reported on a quarterly basis to the PAR sub-committee and during Senior Staff meetings if required.

6. Repairs contractors KPIs

- If any performance issues are noted and if KPIs are not met this will be actioned by the Property Manager in terms of the repairs contract (effective June 2024). If such performance is not remedied an alternative contractor, as per the terms of the contract, can be utilised along with a penalty clause for the original contractor.

7. Decants

- When it has been identified that a property is required for decant the Head of Housing Services will lead this full process including application of void loss exclusions and instructions to housing and property officers and assistants of repairs and arrangements.

8. Void Loss/Actual Spend on Void Properties

- A monthly meeting will take place between the Head of Housing Services and the Property Manager to monitor repairs void spend within properties and reported ARC void loss. This will also be discussed at Senior Staff level/meeting if there are any significant concerns noted.

Equality and Diversity Compliant	Yes
Equality Impact Assessment required	No
Data Protection (GDPR) compliant	Yes
Health & Safety compliant	Yes
Training requirements	None
Regulatory Framework Assurance Information Bank Updated	AN3
Policy Implementation	
Reporting arrangements Performance, Assurance and Regulation Sub	Quarterly report on void rent loss and relet times
Policy register updated	Following Committee Approval
Published on Website	Following Committee Approval
Publicity material issued	N/A
Related Policies	Allocations Estate Management Maintenance Policy Risk Management Policy Asset Management Strategy Business Plan Annual Assurance Statement