



| TRAFALGAR HOUSING ASSOCIATION | |
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| <i>Name of Policy</i> | Void Management Policy |
| <i>Responsible Officer</i> | Housing Manager |
| <i>Date approved by the Management Committee</i> | 27th July 2022 |
| <i>Date of next review</i> | July 2025 |
| <i>Section</i> | Housing Management |

We can produce information, on request, in large print, Braille, tape and on disc. It is also available in other languages. If you need information in any of these formats, please contact us on 0141 952 4676.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This document sets out the Association's policy in relation to the management of empty homes, referred to throughout the document as void management

2.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 The overall aim of the void management policy is to maximise our rental income whilst meeting the following objectives:

- to maximise use of available housing
- to keep empty properties to a minimum, and
- to make sure our properties are of an appropriate lettable standard.

In order to achieve this we promote efficient procedures for dealing with termination of tenancies, carrying out property inspections and repairs, and reletting properties.

3.0 EQUALITIES

3.1 As part of our commitment to equal opportunities, this policy can be made available in large print or audio tape or translated into another language if required. We also ensure that we meet the equalities requirements of the Scottish Social Housing Charter as set out below.

4.0 LEGISLATION

4.1 This policy takes account of the following legislation:

- Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. The policy adheres to the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, in particular in relation to the termination of a tenancy (notified or abandoned), compensation for improvements and access rights for inspections.
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2010. The introduction of the Scottish Social Housing Charter through the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 requires the Association to report to the Scottish Housing Regulator annually on the achievement of the Charter Outcomes. This includes performance in the management of empty homes.
- Matrimonial Homes (Scotland Act) 1981
- Gas Safety (Installations and Use) Regulations 1998. The Association will ensure that it allocates void properties that have benefited from an inspection of gas appliances and fittings.

- The Energy Performance of Buildings (Scotland) Regulations 2008. The Association will ensure that it allocates void properties that have a valid Energy Performance Certificate.

5.0 SCOTTISH SOCIAL HOUSING CHARTER, APRIL 2017

5.1 This policy also takes full account of the following Outcomes, which are part of the Scottish Social Housing Charter of April 2017:

Outcome 1, Equalities

Social landlords perform all aspects of their housing services so that: *every tenant and other customer has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing services.*

Outcome 4, Quality of Housing

Social landlords managed their businesses so that: *tenants' homes, as a minimum, meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) when they are allocated, are always clean, tidy and in a good state of repair; and also meet the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH) by December 2020*

6.0 VOID CATEGORIES

6.1 Properties becoming void will be classified in one of the following categories:

Lettable – the property can be relet on completion of standard void property safety checks and repairs required to reinstate the property to the minimum relet standard outlined in the association's maintenance policy;

Minor repairs required: minor repairs required and normally these will be carried out after a new tenant moves in

Substantial repairs required: substantial repairs required and the property cannot be relet until these repairs are complete;

Decant: the property is not available for reletting as it is required for decant – temporary use, normally by an existing tenant of the Association, whose home requires work to be carried out which cannot be done safely with the tenant remaining in the property.

7.0 NOTIFICATION OF TERMINATION OF TENANCY

7.1 As soon as a termination of tenancy notice is received, the outgoing tenant is given information on what they are required to do before moving out and staff will commence procedures to reinstate the property to an appropriate lettable standard and relet the property with minimum void period.

8.0 INSPECTION OF PROPERTIES

8.1 Wherever possible, a pre-termination inspection will be carried out before the tenant moves out of a property in order to:

- identify and organise any repairs required to bring the property up to an appropriate lettable standard;
- advise the tenant of any rechargeable repairs or work the tenant is required to do before they move out;
- identify any previously agreed improvements made by the tenant which are eligible for compensation, in line with the Association's Compensation for Improvements Policy.

8.2 Once the property is empty, a further inspection will be carried out in order to:

- establish if any further repairs are required;
- check that the property has been cleared and left in a clean and tidy condition;
- ensure that any necessary security measures are taken

9.0 RELETTING PROPERTIES

9.1 On receipt of a termination of tenancy notice, staff will commence procedures to relet the property, in accordance with the Association's allocation policy, with minimum void period.

9.2 In order to keep empty properties to a minimum, the Association will normally pre-allocate a property prior to the end of the previous tenancy and, where it is acceptable to the out-going tenant, viewings may be arranged before the end of the tenancy.

9.3 Where a property is in poor decorative condition, prospective new tenants may be offered a rent free period of up to one month or an equivalent decoration allowance to minimise refusals of such properties. In coming to a decision on which approach to use, full account will be taken of the new tenant's circumstances.

10.0 DECEASED TENANTS

10.1 Where a property becomes void on the death of the tenant and there is no successor, the termination of tenancy date will be the date the tenant died and a rent free period of up to 28 days will be given to allow the tenant's representatives to clear the property. Should the tenant's representatives take longer than 28 days to clear the property, the Association may charge for loss of rent and any applicable service charges.

11.0 TARGETS

11.1 The target for loss of rental income due to void periods is no more than 0.2% of the Association's annual rental income.

11.2 The targets times for reletting properties are:

- Lettable – within 3 days of termination;
- Minor repairs required – within 10 days of termination;
- Substantial repairs required – within 28 days of termination.

12.0 PROCEDURES

12.1 Comprehensive procedures for all aspects of void management, including timescales, are specified in housing management and maintenance procedure documents.

13.0 TRAINING

13.1 This policy will be underpinned by training for all staff involved in any aspect of void management.

14.0 PERFORMANCE MONITORING

14.1 Reports detailing voids by category, void days and loss of rental income are presented to the Committee on a quarterly basis.

15.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

15.1 The Management Committee will monitor the implementation of this policy to ensure that it is properly operated and that there is effective scrutiny of the implementation of the policy. The Committee will ensure that the policy is meeting its intended objectives and that monitoring, and reporting takes place in accordance with the Charter indicators listed in the Performance Monitoring section of this Policy.

15.2 The Housing Manager has responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the policy and our housing management staff are responsible for key aspects of the day to day service delivery with delegation of specific tasks to appropriate staff.

16.0 COMPLAINTS

16.1 Any complaints regarding the implementation of this policy will be referred, in the first instance, to the Director. If the matter is not resolved, tenants or former tenants will be advised to complain in accordance with the Association's complaints procedure copies of which are available on our website, and at our office and available from staff.

16.2 If after exhausting the Association's complaints procedure a tenant or former tenant is still unhappy, they should contact the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO):

- Scottish Public Services Ombudsman
Bridgeside House
99 McDonald Road
Edinburgh
EH7 4NS

Telephone 0800 377 7330 – free phone or 0131 225 5300

Fax 0800 377 7331
Text 0790 049 4372
E-mail ask@spsso.org.uk

SPSO
Freepost

17.0 REVIEW OF POLICY

17.1 This policy will be reviewed every three years, or sooner if required by any relevant changes in legislation, guidance or practice.