

	Policy	Void Management Policy.
	Policy category	Housing Management (HS 18)
	Date adopted	17 May 2023
	This review	

1. INTRODUCTION

The Leadership Team have reviewed the above policy. Where appropriate recommended feedback from staff and other stakeholders have been taken in to account.

Purpose of Policy	The Purposed of the Policy is to minimise the period of time that properties are void in order to maximise rental income; limit the length of time that applicants are on the waiting list; and achieve customer satisfaction.
Significant Problems	There is a low turnover of properties therefore, a lengthy void period will impact on the number of properties available to let.
Financial Implications	A lengthy void period will also have financial implications with increased loss of rental income and fewer properties available to let.
Equality & Diversity Implications	The policy ensures clear guidance for staff when dealing with the management of void properties ensuring consistency and fairness.
GDPR Compliance	The policy is compliant with GDPR requirements.
Customer Feedback	N/A
Recommended Changes	<p>The policy was last reviewed in 2015, the changes to the policy are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Updating job titles from Technical Services to Property Services. 2. Section 3 – Termination of Tenancies – Death of a Tenant - The next of kin will be given 14 calendar days following the date of death to empty and clean the property and return the keys to the office – changed from 7 days to reflect current practice. 3. Section 5 – Deletion of reference to Right to Buy 4. Section 7 & Appendix 5 – Deletion of Tenant Inspections 5. New Appendices – A1, Equality Impact Assessment A2- 5= Procedures and standard letters 6. Appendix 6 – previously Appendix 1 Re-lettable Standards 7. Section 3 – Deletion of reference to Tenant Inspectors

2. RECOMMENDATION

Members of the Sub Committee are requested to approve the changes to the above policy.

1. Introduction

An effective and efficient void management policy is central to the good management of void properties. The Association aims to minimise the period of time that properties are void in order to maximise rental income; limit the length of time that applicants are on the waiting list; and achieve customer satisfaction.

2. The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR)

The SHR defines the void period as the time - measured in calendar days – between the date of termination of a previous tenancy or repossession and the start of a new tenancy. A void is a property that has no tenant for a period of time (source: Annual Return on the Charter (ARC)).

The Scottish Social Housing Charter (SSHC) sets out the outcomes and standards that all social landlords should be achieving for their tenants and other customers through their housing activities. This includes the quality of housing and how the Association delivers value for money.

The void management process encompasses a number of related activities ranging from when a tenant gives notice to end his/her tenancy until a date of entry has been arranged for the new tenant. These include:

- Pre end of tenancy – notice period
- Tenancy termination
- Property Inspections
- Identifying re-charges and other tenant responsibilities
- Ordering and undertaking void repair work
- Allocating, offering and viewing properties
- Creating tenancies and signing-up new tenants

Consequently this policy links to other policies and procedures such as Repairs, Gas Servicing and Allocations.

In order to ensure best practice, effective joint working between housing services and technical services staff is essential during void periods to ensure that void repairs and allocations processes work in tandem, and that the Association complies with all legislation in relation to void management. However, in terms of the 'ownership' of the policy, this lies with Housing Services, and specifically with the Housing Officers.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that our activities for dealing with empty properties are co-ordinated, measurable, transparent and efficient.

2. Legal Framework

The Association must comply with the legal requirements as contained in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, 2010 and 2014 and any other relevant legislation. The Act sets out our obligations and rights as landlord and the obligations of our tenants.

Other relevant legislation includes The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1994; the Construction, Design and Management (CDM) Regulations 1994; The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2006; and The Control of Legionella bacteria in Water Systems – Approved Code of Practice and Guidance.

3. Termination of Tenancies

On average, around 70 of our properties become void each year. These result from:

- Notice - where the tenant gives at least 28 days written notice to end the tenancy, for example to move out with the area. Under the Matrimonial Homes (Family Protection) (Scotland) Act 1981, the consent of the "non-entitled" spouse or any joint tenant giving up the tenancy is also required.

- Written Agreement – between the tenant and Bridgewater
- Court Order - under the grounds in Schedule 2 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001
- Abandonment of the property – and legal notices are served
- Death of the tenant – where the statutory right to succeed is not met
- Transfers – where the tenant moves to another Bridgewater property

Bridgewater's Scottish Secure Tenancy (SST) Agreement stipulates that the tenant will give at least 28 days written notice, and where such notice is given, the tenant will be asked to complete an end of tenancy form. Arrangements will be discussed for the submission of keys to the Association's office in addition to arrangements for prospective new tenants to view the house. Where the tenant fails to submit keys by the due date, or requests an extension to the termination date, rent charges will be imposed on a daily basis until such times as the keys have been received at the Association's office. The end of tenancy date will be extended accordingly.

Where a tenant leaves the property without the required 28 days notice, the Housing Officer will try to contact him/her through contact details previously supplied. The tenant will be advised (in writing where possible) of the end of tenancy process as described above.

In the event that keys are submitted without the required period of notice with a signed letter from the tenant, the tenancy shall be terminated twenty-eight days later.

Where only keys are submitted, the Abandoned House Procedure will be instigated.

Death of the Tenant

The tenancy is terminated by the death of the tenant if there is no statutory successor. The tenancy end date will therefore be the date of death. We appreciate that the death of a relative is a difficult and stressful time for a next of kin, and staff will deal with end of tenancy procedures sensitively.

The next of kin will be given 14 calendar days following the date of death to empty and clean the property and return the keys to the office. If this is achieved, liability to pay rent for the tenancy will cease at the date of death and no further charge will be made by the Association.

If, however, the next of kin of the deceased tenant, or the executor or prospective executor of the deceased tenant's estate, contact us within the 7 day period to request that a longer period of time be granted in order to empty and clean the house and return the keys to us, we may agree to a longer period (at our discretion) but only on condition that the next of kin or executor/prospective executor agree in writing (by signing the Association's standard form) to be personally responsible for paying to the Association monetary compensation for the additional period. Payment of this will be requested up front at the time that the form is signed. The amount of this compensation will be the sum which is equal to the amount of rent which the Association could have charged for the house in terms of the deceased's tenancy agreement, for the period commencing 15 days after the date of death of the tenant and ending on the date when the keys to the house are finally returned to us.

If the next of kin or executor /prospective executor does not sign the Association's standard form agreeing to be personally responsible for the sums set out above, then no extension of time will be permitted.

Property

The furniture, and other property of a deceased tenant who is intestate, will pass to the next of kin, if there is one. In the event that keys are submitted and the house has not been emptied of all possessions, the next of kin may be charged for additional days (as above) until such times as all belongings have been removed.

If there is no next of kin, the property goes to the Crown. The Association will send an inventory of the goods left in the home to the Treasury Solicitor at Queen Anne's Chamber, 28 Broadway, London SW1H 9JS. The Treasury Solicitor will advise the Association whether it intends to take over the goods, or whether the local authority Property Protection Officer will do so, or whether the Association can dispose of them.

Rechargeable repairs will be raised against the former tenant's estate where the Association is required to empty the property.

Information

Where notice has been given to end a tenancy, we will always try to obtain the following information: why the tenant is leaving; where they are moving to; and what they think of their home and the services they have received. This information will be obtained either by telephone or during the office or home visit.

This feedback will help us improve standards in service delivery and inform strategic issues such as sustainable tenancies and communities.

Acquisitions

The Association may acquire properties, for example, through Mortgage to Rent (MTR).

Repairs to MTR properties will be undertaken with the tenant in situ as no void period occurs.

4. The Re-let Period

Once it is known that a property will become void, a number of steps require to be put into place.

- ◆ The Housing Officer and Property Services Officer will aim to undertake a pre-termination visit to the tenant's home within 3 working days of notice being given. This will establish the extent of repairs which may be required before the property is re-let; whether unauthorised 'improvements' or alterations to the property have been carried out which necessitate further action; whether the level of house-keeping is such that the tenant may require to undertake decoration before vacating the property; whether any damage or vandalism has occurred for which the tenant will be recharged or liable to repair.
- ◆ Where a property has been vacated without damage being made good, or repairs that the tenant has been advised of are not complete, the Association may decide to give the tenant a chance to have the work completed to a professional standard within a short period of time, for example, one week. Where this is not appropriate, we will complete the work and re-charge the former tenant.
- ◆ Repairs which can reasonably be undertaken by the Association before the tenant vacates may be carried out. Discretion will be exercised by the Property Services Officer, based on the condition of the property and the household circumstances.
- ◆ The Housing Assistant will make arrangements with the outgoing tenant for viewings to take place before the property is vacated, where possible. Access arrangements will also be made for contractors where applicable.
- ◆ Repairing empty properties and carrying out required safety checks promptly and quickly is the key to minimising void repair periods consequently when the property becomes void, a full empty house inspection will be carried out by the Clerk of Works/Technical Officer within 2 days to identify any repairs which may need to be instructed. The purpose of the inspection will be to:
 - ◆ Ensure that the property is empty (of both people and goods)
 - ◆ Ensure the property is secure
- ◆ Complete the mandatory checks according to our inspection form
 - ◆ Assess repairs
 - ◆ Assess cleaning required
 - ◆ Assess decorative standard

- ◆ Advise of possible rechargeable repairs
- ◆ Ensure necessary action is taken
- ◆ Arrange for gas and electrical appliances and installations to be professionally checked. Gas central heating services will be 'turned on and tested' or serviced if due within the following 6 months, and electrical installations will be inspected and tested.
- ◆ Arrange for Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) – and for it to be displayed in the property
- ◆ Carry out a full Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) inspection. This will be consistent with our approved Standard Delivery Plan
- ◆ Arrange for taps and shower heads to be disinfected to eliminate legionella
- ◆ Take final meter readings (the Housing Officer will arrange for 'Utility Aid' to deal with end and start of tenancy fuel suppliers)
- ◆ Repairs will be undertaken consistent with the void targets agreed with the contractor. Currently these are 5 working days, where the estimated cost of work are over £500, and 10 working days where the cost of work exceeds £1,000.
- ◆ Where the property has been vacated but items of furniture and possessions have been left behind, the Property Services Officer will arrange for rechargeable repairs to be raised against the former tenant.
- ◆ The Housing Officers will liaise with the Property Services Section on a day to day basis over the progress and completion of repairs, and ensure that all relevant steps are being taken to expedite repairs.
- ◆ The property will be re-let once it is in a tenantable condition and meets the Association's lettable standard, and a post-inspection has been undertaken by the Clerk of Works/Property Services Officer.
- ◆ All repairs, unless essential, will be deferred until after the new tenant has moved into the property to minimise the void period. Such repairs will be carried out in accordance with the Association's time-scales.

5. Allocation Process

The process to re-let the property will run alongside the property inspection and repair processes, and will start immediately notice is received to terminate the tenancy. The Assistant is responsible for making all selections. In accordance with the Association's Allocations Policy, prospective tenants will be selected from the appropriate Priority Group and the details given on the application form will generally be verified at a pre-allocation visit.

Prospective new tenants will be selected within 2 working days of confirmation of the end of tenancy and the process defined with the Void Management Procedure will be followed.

Where an offer of housing is being made, an accompanied viewing will be carried out with the prospective tenant and Housing Officer meeting in the property. The purpose of the visit will be to familiarise the prospective tenant with the property and to discuss any outstanding repairs issues.

Once the tenant accepts the tenancy, arrangements will be made to sign the Tenancy Agreement. This will normally be achieved on the day of the viewing.

In the event that the offer is refused or withdrawn, other applicants will be selected and the process repeated until such times as the property has been accepted.

6. Re-let Standard

The Association's re-let standard sets out the minimum standard of the properties we will let to our tenants. A copy is attached at Appendix 5 of the Void Management Procedures. It aims to strike a balance between aspirations and cost in order to ensure value for money is achieved.

7. Tenant Inspectors

The Association will consult with the Residents Forum and with tenants – particularly those with an interest in void property management - about receiving training to becoming tenant inspectors. This would involve inspectors post inspecting or spot checking ready to let properties with the Clerk of Works/Technical Officer for compliance with the re-let standard.

8. Decoration

It is the Association's Policy to not carry out decoration work in empty properties or to provide decoration allowances.

Exceptions may be made where properties are in a very poor condition. Such decisions will be made by the Housing Officers and be based on allowances approved within the lettable standard.

9. Special Needs Housing

The Association has a limited number of properties which are suitable for wheelchair users and people with other mobility needs. Consequently where there is demand for further accessible properties, staff will seek to make best use of existing mainstream stock by identifying properties which may be suitable for adaptation or extension during the re-let period.

Where such a property is identified, the Housing Assistant will verify demand from the Association's waiting list and will notify the Property Services Manager of requirements within 1 working day. The Property Services Manager will then have responsibility for verifying budget provision and instigating contract procurement, where appropriate. The work will be carried out promptly, having regard to the Association's Procurement Policy.

Aids and adaptations

Demand for aids and adaptations is increasing, driven by a greater awareness of assistance available, and an ageing population profile. The incidence of disability and the need for support rises with age, however the need to provide adaptations to maintain independent living is an issue for people of all ages.

In light of this demand, where a property has previously been medically adapted/extended/converted, every attempt will be made to re-let the property to a waiting list applicant with mobility needs who can maximise usage of the features of the property.

10. Conversions

The high level of Right to Buy sales throughout the Association's housing stock has led to a shortage of 4 apartment properties. In order to maximise our ability to re-house applicants who require level accommodation on the ground or first floor because of ill health, 3 apartment flats with 2 bedrooms and a dining room may be converted to 3 bedroom (4 apartment) properties where demand exists. Such conversions will only proceed with the consent of Building Control. (Refer to HM Procedure Note 13).

11. Sheltered and Extra Care Housing

Applicants for sheltered housing require to have a demonstrable need for our housing support service, so support needs require to be assessed in conjunction with housing needs. The Housing Assistant will ensure that collating this information does not delay the re-let process.

Applicants for our extra care housing will have their care and support needs assessed by the Joint Allocation Panel (JAP). The Housing Officers will attend meetings of the JAP and will ensure that the process is sufficiently robust to ensure that applicants have been assessed in advance of void properties being available for re-let.

12. Abandoned Properties

From time to time, staff will discover or will otherwise become aware of properties which appear to have been abandoned.

In such circumstances, the Association's Abandoned House Procedure (Housing Management Procedure Note: 4) will be implemented to ensure that properties are repossessed at the earliest opportunity.

13. Performance Monitoring

Voids monitoring is undertaken for five specific purposes:

- To ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of the void management process
- To monitor our overall performance in relation to voids over a period of time
- To provide good quality information about our voids performance against our stated objectives and inform service review
- To allow benchmarking against other landlord organisations to improve performance
- To fulfil our regulatory purposes.

In order to monitor demand for the Association's properties and re-let times, void management performance information will be compiled each month and presented to the Housing Land and Property Services Sub Committee on a quarterly basis. Property Services will report on repairs and expenditure, and Housing Services will report on all other information. For example, on:

- Number of terminations
- Turnaround times from tenancy end date to start dates measured in calendar days
- Lost rental income
- Reasons for refusal – where properties are difficult to let
- Void repair category – percentage of jobs completed on time
- Void expenditure – performance against budget
- Changes to the waiting list
- Number of lets by type.

Targets for voids will be based on achieving overall continuous improvement in the quality and timeliness of delivering a ready-to-let property.

Performance data for the sheltered accommodation is reported separately.

To further assist the Association in monitoring demand, equal opportunities information will also be compiled on the Key Performance Indicator (KPI) Report on changes to the waiting list and total allocations made.

The Association will continue to benchmark with the other housing associations in FLAIR (Federation of Local Associations in Renfrewshire) and with other relevant parties.

Performance information is made available to tenants in the quarterly editions of 'Bridgewater News' and in the Association's Annual Report.

This information will be made available to prospective tenants and other stakeholders.

14. Referral Arrangements

The Association will monitor the efficiency of referral arrangements with our partners. This will cover but not be limited to Section 5 Referrals from Renfrewshire Council.

15. Equality and Diversity

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 places an overarching duty on Registered Social Landlords to exercise the functions conferred on them by the Act in a manner which encourages equality of opportunity and observes equal opportunity requirements laid down in other legislation and regulations.

The Association's Equality and Diversity Policy covers a range of issues such as access to housing, disability and age, and has the overarching aim of mainstreaming equality in all that we do. The Void Management Policy should also reflect the principles of the Equality and Diversity Policy. The Equality Impact Assessment is detailed at Appendix 1.

16. Policy Review

The Policy will be reviewed in 3 years time and tenants will be consulted on any significant changes to the policy.

In reviewing the void management service, feedback from new tenants' satisfaction surveys with the house at the start of the tenancy and other void related feedback will be taken into account.

Equality Impact Assessment

Question	Response
1. Name of policy/service activity/event being assessed	Void Management Policy
2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/service activity/event	To minimise the period of time that properties are void in order to maximise rental income; limit the length of time that applicants are on the waiting list; and achieve customer satisfaction.
3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? (e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)	Policy issued to all staff members for feedback and input.
4. Who is affected by the policy/service activity/event?	Bridgewater staff members and customers.
5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/service/activity/event?	This policy will be reviewed every 3 years and amended if necessitated by any events.

Protected Characteristic Group	Is there a potential for positive or negative impact?	Please explain and give examples of any evidence/data used	Action to address negative impact (e.g. adjustment to the policy)
Disability	Yes, positive.	This policy specifically states that no one will be unlawfully discriminated against because of any protected characteristics.	
Gender reassignment	As above.	As above.	
Marriage or civil partnership	As above.	As above.	
Pregnancy and maternity	As above.	As above.	
Race	As above.	As above.	
Religion or belief	As above.	As above.	
Sexual orientation	As above.	As above.	
Sex (gender)	As above.	As above.	
Age	As above.	As above.	

Evaluation:

Question	Explanation / justification	
Is it possible the proposed policy or activity or change in policy or activity could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?	Unlikely as the policy is closely aligned with the Association's Equality and Diversity Policy. However, if a customer reported any form of discrimination, the incident would be investigated and if necessary the policy would be reviewed and amended.	
Final Decision:	Tick the relevant box	Include any explanation / justification required
No barriers identified, therefore activity will proceed .	✓	
You can decide to stop the policy or practice at some point because the data shows bias towards one or more groups		
You can adapt or change the policy in a way which you think will eliminate the bias		
Barriers and impact identified, however having considered all available options carefully, there appear to be no other proportionate ways to achieve the aim of the policy or practice (e.g. in extreme cases or where positive action is taken). Therefore you are going to proceed with caution with this policy or practice knowing that it may favour some people less than others, providing justification for this decision.		

Completed by:	Ruth Brogan
Will this EIA be published? Yes/Not required:	Yes
Date completed:	05/05/23
Review date (if applicable):	2026

VOID MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to detail the procedure for managing void/vacant properties within the Association.

The Association aims to maximise our rental income from our properties and minimise the rent loss and period of time taken to re-let void/vacant properties.

The management of voids is split between Housing Services & Property services. This procedure details the stages and the responsibilities.

This document should be read in conjunction with the SDM guidance note on the Void Phase (appendix 1)

2. Void Management Process – Housing Services

- 2.1 A tenancy can be ended in 4 ways, by notice, death of tenant, abandonment or court order, in all cases the void phase must be followed.
- 2.2 28 days written notice should be given to the Association by tenants who wish to terminate their tenancy at the Tenancy Agreement, this preferably should be by the tenant signing a termination notice, however we will accept a letter signed by tenants as end of tenancy notification, an email would also be acceptable. We must acknowledge receipt of termination either in writing or via email.

Following the death of a tenant, confirmation of death must be received. This can be in the form of a death certificate or notification from formal body i.e. HB, DWP, Procurator Fiscal.

If the tenant lacks capacity, a termination can be accepted upon receipt of documentation confirming Power of Attorney. We will also accept notification from Social Work.

As soon as notification of termination has been received the Housing Officer and Technical Officer must carry out a joint pre-end of tenancy visit to determine the condition of the property and re-iterate end of tenancy procedures with the out-going tenant. The Housing Officer also requires to take utility meter details- supplier, dry/key/card, serial numbers, smart meter/old meter and meter readings, including any debt and submit the "Tenant Out" form to Void Utility broker.

- 2.3 There are occasions when a property is returned to the Association unexpectedly and with little or no notice. On these occasions, activities to return the property to the letting pool will be implemented as soon as reasonably possible. Housing staff should complete a termination notice on these occasions detailing as much information as they can and load the relevant void phase on SDM.
- 2.4 Where the tenant fails to submit keys by the due date or requested an extension to the agreed termination date, rent will be charged on a daily basis until the new agreed termination date. Housing staff should complete a termination. There may be times when the vacating tenant moves to their new address after terminating and does not

hand in keys, Housing staff should write to tenant at forwarding address (if applicable) advising tenant that if keys are not returned within 7 days then a lock change will be carried out to their old tenancy and will result in a recharge invoice being raised and issued to them.

- 2.5 After written notice to terminate has been accepted (appendix 1) a Leaving Tenant Visit will be carried out and will explain the responsibilities to the tenant prior to them leaving. The expected condition of the property when vacated will also be confirmed.

The Technical Officer will carry out a visual check of the property and highlight any rechargeable repairs to the outgoing tenant and will confirm these details in writing. (appendix 3)

Arrangements will be made by the Housing Officer for handing over of keys and the payment of outstanding rent.

- 2.7 Internal Transfers

Tenants eligible for a transfer must have an inspection of their property carried out prior to any offer being made. The process noted at 2.5 should apply

- 2.8 Returning of Keys and Tenancy Terminating

Once keys have been returned and the tenancy terminated, the outgoing tenant will be unable to gain access to the property and any items remaining in the property will be disposed of.

The Housing Officer will seek to recover all of the keys associated with the property, but it should be noted that this is not always possible and new keys will require to be obtained during the void period.

The outgoing tenant must be notified by the Housing Officer, that all keys including common keys must be returned or will be re-charged. Both Housing and Technical require all keys returned in order to carry out a thorough inspection

Should any common keys be missing, such as fobs, door entry key or cupboard keys, the Housing Officer must replace from stock prior to handing to Technical Team. If any keys are not in stock or property keys are missing, the Housing Officer must notify the Technical Officer.

Keys should be passed to the Technical Officer within 24 hours of receipt and the void phase should be updated.

3.0 Void Management Process – Property Services

- 3.1 Once the tenancy has been terminated The Housing Officer and must carry out an end of tenancy inspection to determine if the property has been vacated in the requested condition, that any outstanding repairs have been made good and all floor coverings removed. Once the inspection has been completed, the keys are passed to Technical, they are now responsible for the void property.

The Technical Officer will carry out an inspection of the property within 24hrs of the keys being received from Housing Services.

In order to minimise the risk of any tenant claiming items have been left in the property, in some cases it may be necessary to take pictures of the property, the following categories will be noted on the void inspection sheet.

- There is nothing of any value left in the property so no photos are required
- There are a few items left which have been photographed and are in poor condition so will be removed (these should then be listed and described in the room they are in)
- A considerable amount of items have been left and Housing Officer is required to attend

Pictures should be archived to SDM along with the void inspection documentation.

- 3.2 Repairs lines to the contactor should be issued within 24 hours of the void inspection. The property must also have locks changed in this time.
- 3.3 The Technical Officer should keep the Housing Officer advised of progress and an anticipated date of return as this will allow the Housing Officer to schedule viewings with the prospective tenant.

The anticipated date of return will be the target date unless otherwise notified. Therefore, the Technical Officer should only need to provide an update should they expect the void to run over time or alternatively be returned early.

- 3.4 The Technical Officer will post-inspect the void and take a meter reading prior to returning to Housing Services.
- 3.5 Void – Ready to Let

Following an acceptable post-inspection of the void, the Technical Officer will return the property to the Housing Officer.

If the void property has gas/electric card meters and a credit balance in the region of £5.00 should be left in the meter. If the meter has not been transferred to Utility Broker, the Technical Officer must advise the Housing Officer of this detail.

The Technical Officer should return the following to the Housing Officer

- 2 x full sets of keys (minimum) including fobs, door entry, chute room, bin stores, close doors, car park (Sheltered Properties- one set of keys to be handed into the wardens office on completion of the void.) (Extra Care Properties- No lock change required as keys are suited.)
- EPC
- CP12
- Asbestos Information
- User guides (if applicable)

Only when the above has been received by the Housing Officer should the Technical Officer update the void phase as Void Ready to Let.

3.6 Delayed Lets & Meter Readings

In some circumstances, properties are not let within target and as such credits in energy meters will reduce. In these cases the Housing Officer is responsible for topping up meters prior to a let being made. Tenants should not be allocated a property with debt in the meters.

4.0 Archiving Documentation to SDM

4.1 In order to comply with audit requirements and to have a consistent process the following documentation must be archived to SDM:

- Notice of Termination
- Tenant Leaving Visit Form
- Notification of Tenant Charges
- Utility Broker Tenant Out Form
- Void Inspection Form
- Confirmation of Post Inspection- Noted on the void inspection form and system date.

Appendix 3

Title Name Surname
00 Street Name
City
Postcode

Enter date here
Ref: 123 456 789A

Dear Name Surname

Termination of Tenancy

Thank you for notifying us that you wish to terminate your tenancy with Bridgewater Housing Association.

I can confirm that your 28 day notice period will end on (enter date), this is your termination date and keys must be returned to this office on this date.

A Leaving Tenant Visit must be completed before your tenancy is terminated and I have noted the date and time of the visit below:

(enter date and time)

If this date or time is unsuitable please contact me on **(enter email)** or **(enter contact number)** to rearrange.

The purpose of the visit is to discuss your responsibilities as an outgoing tenant prior to termination and also to identify any rechargeable repairs.

Please be aware that as part of our process, we have notified the Utility Broker that your tenancy is due to terminate on the above date and they will automatically take over the energy supply of your property the following day. If at any point, you expect to be handing in your keys late you must notify us as the Utility Broker need a clear 3 day notice period to

delay the takeover. We ask you to do this as your energy tariff may change which may result in increased energy costs.

Yours sincerely

Name Surname

Post

Appendix 4

Household Details			
Name			
Address			
Contact No.		Email	
Forwarding Address			
Termination Date			

Rent Account						
Current Balance						
Payment Method						
Rent balance due at termination date	£					
Payment method of final balance						
Is arrangement required?						
Energy Supplier & Meter Details						
Electricity				Gas		
Meter Ref No.				Meter Ref No.		
Meter Type	Key/Card	Dry		Meter Type	Key/Card	Dry
Meter Reading				Meter Reading		
Outgoing Tenant Responsibilities						
<p>Prior to leaving the property and returning keys to BHA you must ensure that you complete the following. Please note that any items left in the property will be disposed of.</p>						
1.	Uplift floor coverings throughout					
2.	Remove light shades and reinstate any non-standard light fittings					
3.	Clean/sanitise kitchen & bathroom areas					
4.	Remove all furniture, personal effects & rubbish					
5.	Contact Renfrewshire Council to report any bulk items being left for uplift					
6.	Remove all blinds, curtains and curtain poles throughout					
7.	Remove all shelving, fittings & cabinets and fill holes					
8.	Redirect mail, the Association has no obligation to forward mail to new address					
9.	Contact energy suppliers and provide final meter reading					
10.	Notify DWP/HB regarding termination of tenancy & new address					
11.	Leave gas/electricity cards or keys in the meter					
Reactive & Rechargeable Repairs						
<p>If we identify any reactive repairs during our visit we will raise a repair line. We will advise you of any rechargeable repairs identified and confirm this in writing to you. You must ensure that you rectify any rechargeable repairs otherwise you will be charged.</p>						
Reactive			Recharge			
1.			1.			
2.			2.			
3.			3.			
4.			4.			
Acknowledgement & Signature						
<p>I confirm that I understand my responsibilities as an outgoing tenant. I confirm that all rent monies due will be paid upon the termination of my tenancy. I understand that I will be unable to access the property once I have returned the keys and I note that any items left in the property will be disposed of, I note that there are no exceptions to this. I will ensure to return all keys associated with the property to BHA.</p>						
Tenant or Representative				Date		

BHA Representative		Date	
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Appendix 5

Title Name Surname
00 Street Name
City
Postcode

Enter date here
Ref: 123 456 789A

Dear Name Surname

Leaving Tenant Visit

Further to my recent home visit, I can confirm that we have agreed that you will carry out the following work to your property prior to termination your tenancy:

- **Enter recharge work to be done**

Please note that any further repairs identified during the void inspection may be rechargeable.

In addition to the above we have agreed that the following must be completed prior to you returning keys:

- Uplift floor coverings throughout
- Remove light shades and reinstate any non-standard light fittings
- Clean/sanitise kitchen & bathroom areas
- Remove all furniture, personal effects & rubbish
- Contact GCC to report any bulk items being left for uplift
- Remove all blinds, curtains and curtain poles throughout
- Remove all shelving, fittings & cabinets and fill holes
- Redirect mail, the Association has no obligation to forward mail to new address
- Contact energy suppliers and provide final meter reading
- Notify DWP/HB regarding termination of tenancy & new address
- Leave gas/electricity cards or keys in the meter

Please note that once keys have been returned to the Association further access to the property is not permitted.

If you have any questions regarding the above, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Name Surname
Post

RE-LET STANDARD

LETTING STANDARD

Our letting standard sets out the minimum standard of the properties we will let to our tenants. The standard describes the levels of repair, decoration and cleanliness that incoming tenants can expect, and will be shared with them when the property is being offered. The letting standard covers standards for internal and external aspects of the property.

Any other repairs required to the property may be carried out after the tenancy starts.

TENANT/APPLICANT PARTICIPATION

Our standard has been developed in conjunction with tenants and housing applicants, to identify what their needs and expectations are. In developing the standard, we have recognised the need to strike a balance between aspirations and cost in order to ensure that value for money is achieved. **Our Tenant Inspectors will be involved in the monitoring/quality control of our letting standard and through their inspections, will identify that standards are being met and maintained.**

HEALTH AND SAFETY

We will carry out safety checks in each of our empty properties. These are generally for gas and electrical safety. Incoming tenants will be responsible for arranging their own fuel suppliers.

Gas Safety Checks

We will carry out a gas safety check where gas is supplied to a property. The gas supply and all gas appliances will be checked and will be in good working order. A safety certificate will be issued to the new tenant.

Electrical Safety Checks

We will carry out an electrical inspection of the electric installations in the property to ensure that they are safe and working properly.

Asbestos

If there are any suspected asbestos containing materials found during the empty house inspection (with the exception of textured coatings) we will arrange for an asbestos survey/test to be carried out in the property. If the test proves positive then the asbestos will either be encapsulated or removed. Where textured coatings are present it will be assumed that these contain asbestos and advice will be given to prospective tenants to minimise their exposure through the prevention and control of the spread of fibres.

Cleanliness

We will sweep out the property and dispose of any rubbish or belongings left by the former tenant. We will clean out the loft area and dispose of any items which may have been left.

Window Catches

We will check all of the window catches in the property to ensure they are in working order. We will provide keys where windows are fitted with locks.

Central Heating

Central Heating and other heating appliances will be in full working order.

Smoke Alarm

The property will be fitted with at least one mains operated smoke detector per floor or storey which will have been checked and will be operational.

Heat Detectors

We will check that heat detectors are working properly.

SECURITY

The incoming tenant will be provided with all sets of keys that the Association has for the property. This will generally be a minimum of 2 sets of house keys for front and back doors. Tenants of flats will receive 2 controlled door entry keys, and 1 key for the bin store and pram store.

Tenants in supported accommodation, such as sheltered housing, may wish to consent to a house key being retained by the Housing Support Officer for access in emergencies.

ENERGY PERFORMANCE

We will check the energy performance of the property before it is re-let.

A copy of the Energy Performance Certificate will be fixed in a suitable location within the house or flat. The certificate provides information about how energy efficient the property is.

DECORATION

It is the Association's Policy to not carry out decoration work in empty properties or to provide decoration allowances. Exceptions may, however, be made where properties are in a very poor condition. Such decisions will be approved by the Housing Services Manager.

INTERNAL Kitchen

Kitchen units and fittings will be clean and in a serviceable condition.

Work surfaces will be clean and suitable for use.

A suitable cooker connection will be provided.

A suitable connection will be provided for a washing machine.

Bathroom

All sanitary ware will be clean, free from significant defects and in working order.

The Association is responsible for repairing/replacing showers which it has installed.

Doors & Woodwork

Internal pass doors, door facings and skirting boards will be clean and free from significant defects. Glazing will meet health and safety/ BS standards.

Walls & Ceilings

Any significant defects in plaster or plasterboard will be made good and polystyrene tiles will be removed. Minor dents on walls will generally not be repaired.

Stairs, Banisters and Balustrades

Stairs, banisters and balustrades will be clean and secure.

Floors

Floorboards will be secure and free of significant defects. Floors will be swept and clean. Good quality floor coverings, for example, tiling in bathrooms, from a previous tenancy may be left.

Aerials

The property will have a digital aerial compliant with digital switchover in summer 2011.

EXTERNAL

Fabric of the building

The fabric of the building will be free of significant defects and wind and water tight.

Paths, Steps and External Handrails

Paths, steps and external handrails will be stable, free from trip hazards and will be in a reasonable condition.

Gardens

The garden will be tidy and free of litter. The grass will have been cut to a manageable height and any overgrown hedges or trees will have been cut back.

Clothes poles or a rotary dryer will be provided. If a new rotary dryer has been provided, this may be left in the property for the new tenant to install at his/her preferred location.

Communal Garden Areas/Drying areas

Occupants within a block of flats are responsible for garden maintenance. Communal drying areas will be free of trip hazards and will have sufficient hooks for clothes lines or rotary dryers.

Fencing/walls

The Association is responsible for the maintenance of boundary walls and fences adjacent to footpaths, pavements and roadways. These will be in a reasonable condition and will be stable and secure.

Divisional Fences

Divisional fences are the responsibility of the incoming tenant and his/her neighbour(s). The fencing will have been repaired only if a hazard exists or may be replaced if it is beyond effective repair.

Meter Reading & Fuel Supply

To help reduce your energy costs, 'Utility Aid' will help you switch to the supplier which offers the best deal for your home. Your Housing Assistant will give you a form to complete if you want them to check this out on your behalf.