

Void Management Policy

STOKE-ON-TRENT CITY COUNCIL



City of
Stoke-on-Trent

Void Management Policy

2023

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT SERVICES

ENABLING AND PROJECTS TEAM

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1. Purpose

The Void Management Policy sets out the council's commitment to how it will effectively manage empty homes within its stock in order to achieve value for money and make best use of its homes.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Set out the principles and service standards of the void management service
- Help to meet local housing need by maximising availability of social housing.

The aims of the Policy are to:

- Minimise the length of time that a property is empty, the amount of rental income lost, and costs incurred
- Ensure that properties are let in a clean and safe condition that meets the Lettable standard
- Meet customers' needs and maximises their satisfaction.
- Provide a value for money service
- Make best use of the void period to meet the council's investment requirements in line with the HRA Asset Management Strategy 2022-27
- Meet the council's statutory, regulatory and compliance requirements.

Void management includes the following activities:

- Tenancy termination
- Inspections
- Viewings and offers
- Work to void properties
- Creating tenancies
- Management of long-term voids
- Management of low demand properties.

2. Key Principles and Service Standards

This policy aims to ensure that a property is properly managed when it becomes vacant, that it is brought up to the council's "lettable" standard before a new tenant moves in, and that the rent loss is minimised within the whole process. This policy is

aligned with the council's Allocations Policy to ensure the most effective use of the housing stock in order to help meet housing need in Stoke-on-Trent.

The policy will ensure that a forward thinking and strategic approach is adopted to void management by:

- Ensuring that outgoing tenants are aware of their responsibilities prior to leaving the property in order to keep repair costs to a minimum
- Ensuring that tenants who are found to have wilfully damaged property are recharged for repairs
- Reducing rent loss by minimising the length of time during which properties are being repaired
- Ensuring properties are available as quickly as possible for people in housing need
- Undertaking works to voids which are appropriate to the customer needs
- Minimising any costs associated with tenant transfers.

3. Legal and Best Practice Framework

This Policy, and the way in which the council's void management service is delivered is underpinned by Tenancy Agreements which are granted by the council and comply with the requirements of the following standards and legislation:

- Localism Act 2011
- The Housing Act 1985
- Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982
- Housing Act 1996 (Part 6)
- Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 (GSIUR) as amended 2018. Approved Code of Practice and guidance
- Health and Safety Legislation including Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Housing Health and Safety Rating System (England) Regulations 2005
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH)
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Building Safety Act 2022
- Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Regulations 2015 and Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (Amendments) Regulations 2022
- Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018
- Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 2018
- Electrical Safety, Quality and Continuity Regulations 2002/2665
- Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012

- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR
- Equalities Act 2010
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995

Following best practice, the policy is aligned with the existing Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England, and relevant themes within the Social Housing Regulation Bill 2022, by:

- Minimising the time that a property is empty between lettings – taking account of the circumstances of the new tenant
- Meeting all applicable statutory requirements that provide for the health and safety of new occupants
- Demonstrating an appropriate balance of planned and responsive repairs, and value for money. The approach should include responsive and cyclical repairs, planned and capital work, work on empty properties, and adaptations
- Ensuring that tenants' homes meet the standard set out in the Government's Decent Homes Guidance and continue to maintain their homes to at least this standard.

This policy is in line with the council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Asset Management Strategy and HRA Business Plan and has links with the council's Tenancy Strategy, Repairs and Maintenance Policy, Allocations and Lettings Policy. It should also be considered in conjunction with the council's other relevant policies and policy framework, referenced in section 9.

4. Equality statement

The council recognises that it provides housing for communities which include wide social diversity and is committed to providing equal access to services.

This policy aims to treat all customers fairly, with respect and professionalism. In line with the duty placed on the local authority under the Equalities Act 2010, specific consideration of the impact of this policy has been given to people with protected characteristics, including gender, race, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation and marital status. The approach adopted within this policy focuses on understanding individual circumstances in order to provide appropriate advice and support; this includes understanding the needs of tenants who have protected characteristics. Consideration will therefore be given to language barriers, accessibility and cultural

issues which may affect a tenant's ability to manage their tenancy or seek advice on problems, and resolutions which take account of the individual's beliefs and abilities.

The council will enable all tenants to have clear information and equal access to available services and information in a range of appropriate languages and formats will be provided when requested. This policy has been designed to be fully inclusive regardless of the ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religious belief, or disability of service users or residents. The Equality Impact Assessment will be reviewed in order to inform any changes that may be required.

From time to time the council may ask tenants to provide details of their gender, age, religion, disability, ethnicity and sexual orientation in line with the protected characteristics identified within the Equalities Act 2010. This is in order to help the council to deliver more effective, appropriate and inclusive policies and practices. All data collected is kept securely, used only for monitoring purposes and is de-personalised at the point of analysis to protect individual's privacy.

The completed Equality Impact Assessment is available on request.

5. Policy Detail

5.1 Tenancy Termination

Full details about ending a tenancy can be found in the Tenancy Agreement, including the requirement for a tenant to provide 4 weeks written notice. Tenants who are transferring to another social tenancy (either council or another Registered Provider) may be permitted to give a reduced notice period. All decisions in this respect will need to be agreed with the council in advance.

Where the outgoing tenant has given notice and fails to leave the property after the end of the notice period, legal action may be taken to remove them from the property.

The council will, wherever possible, inspect properties becoming vacant, both prior to and following the termination of a tenancy.

5.2 Pre-Termination Visits

Once written notice ending the tenancy has been received, a pre-termination visit will be undertaken as soon as practicable. This visit will determine the condition of the property and highlight any repairs that the tenant will be required to undertake before leaving the property, and where applicable, explain that the council reserves the right to recharge the outgoing tenant for any damages to the property caused by the wilful

neglect or arising out of unauthorised alterations to the property. This visit will seek to establish the reason why the tenant/s is/are leaving and identify whether any support/solutions are available to help them to remain (if applicable).

At this stage if the tenant has undertaken their own improvements, where permission has not been authorised, the inspecting officer will look for damage to the property. If the outgoing tenant is advised that they need to remove the improvement works, they are liable for all costs associated with returning the property to the original state.

If the tenant is on the housing register and is transferring to another council property a pre-transfer visit will be carried out. If the works are not completed during this visit the council may withdraw alternative offers of accommodation or they may be charged for the works to be undertaken on their behalf.

Where improvement work has been carried out to the property the outgoing tenant may request compensation to cover part of the costs. Full details may be found in the Tenant and Leaseholder Compensation Policy.

5.3 Post-Termination Inspection

A post-termination inspection will be undertaken on all void properties as soon as possible after the tenant leaves.

The purpose of this inspection will be to:

- Ensure the property is empty, and to remove any items that pose a risk to the health and safety of prospective tenant(s) or contractors
- Determine whether prospective tenants can be allowed to view the property
- Ensure the property is secure and change the front and back door locks.
- Identify any outstanding disrepair which may be the responsibility of the previous tenant
- Arrange for electrical appliances and installations to be checked
- Identify if the property requires a pre-clean or other works before the prospective tenants can view
- Identify works needed to comply with health and safety requirements.
- Identify necessary repairs which are required to enable a property to be re-let as soon as possible
- Apply a risk based approach to determining the appropriate level of security (if required).

5.4 Terminations Following the Death of the Tenant

Where the tenant dies, the tenancy still needs to be terminated by the giving of 4 weeks written notice. The council may however, agree to accept a shorter notice period. Normally, the council will offer the next of kin of the deceased tenant(s) two rent free weeks to enable them to clear the property. The two rent free weeks are applicable for the two weeks from the Monday following the date of death. If the property is not cleared during this time any additional weeks' rent will be charged to the estate until the tenancy is legally terminated.

In the instances where the tenancy has been ended due to the death of the sole tenant the person who has been properly authorised to deal with the late tenant's estate is responsible for the removal of all goods from the property. Where there is no person properly authorised to deal with the deceased tenant's estate, then the council will commence the formal legal process to end the tenancy by the service of a Notice to Quit on the Public Trustee. Once this Notice has expired, any goods remaining in the property will be disposed of following the procedure set out in Section 41 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 which is discussed below in this policy

The property will still be subject to a pre and post termination visit. In the event that damage to the property has occurred owing to the wilful neglect of the deceased tenant or the carrying out of unauthorised alterations by the deceased tenant, then the council may consider pursuing the estate for the costs of making good any damages caused by the deceased tenant during the tenancy.

5.5 Evictions and Abandonments

The outgoing tenant is responsible for removing all personal possessions from the property by the end of the written notice period. However, there may be some instances where the tenant fails to give notice (either as a result of eviction or abandonment) and belongings are left in the property or where notice has been given but belongings are still left within the property. Once the notice period has expired and the tenant has left the property, the council accepts no responsibility for any items left within the property or the land forming part of the tenancy. In such circumstances the council reserves the right to issue a formal Notice in accordance with section 41 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 advising there are personal belongings within the property and that upon expiry of the notice any belongings remaining will become the property of the council and will be dealt with in accordance with section 41.

For details relating to the storage and removal of personal belongings which have been left in a property are contained in the Tenancy and Estate Management Policy and the Section 41 procedure.

5.6 Recharges

The council will seek to recover from the outgoing tenant any compensatory damages to the property arising as a result of wilful neglect¹ on the part of the tenant and/or any other compensatory damages to the property occurring as a result of any unauthorised alterations the property.

In default of the outgoing tenant complying with his/her tenancy obligations to vacate the property and leave it in a satisfactory condition² with vacant possession and/or in default of the outgoing tenant returning all keys and fobs³ the council will seek to recover from the outgoing tenant, by way of compensatory damages, the cost of cleaning the property, and/or any costs in removing left *items at the property and/or the cost of any replacement keys.

At the end of the tenancy, the council reserves the right to recover from the outgoing tenant any compensatory damages that have occurred during the period of the tenancy as a result of the tenant being in breach of the tenancy agreement.

The council will make every reasonable effort to contact the outgoing tenant to inform them of any outstanding items for which they may be liable in order to offer the tenant the opportunity to settle the matter and thereby avoiding the need for formal legal proceedings via the civil courts. The amount claimed by way of compensatory damages will be raised by way of a recharge notification to the outgoing tenant. Any recharge notifications will be noted on the debtors' system and may affect any future application for re-housing if they are not cleared.

Further information on charges and recovery of rechargeable repairs are contained in the Rechargeable Repairs Policy.

¹ As per clause 8.6 of the Council's Tenancy Agreement

² As per clause 8.2 of the Council's Tenancy Agreement

³ As per clause 8.8 of the Council's Tenancy Agreement

5.7 Letting a Void Property

The council aims to ensure that allocations are made giving full consideration of the customer needs, the property and any issues in the local area.

5.8 Selection of New Tenant(s)

To ensure that void rent loss is kept to a minimum, the process of selecting a new tenant for a property will begin as soon as possible after notice is received from the outgoing tenant or the council is made aware that the property will be available for re-letting. Prospective tenants will be selected in accordance with the council's Allocations Policy. All tenants will have been assessed when joining the housing register in accordance with the allocations policy. All applicants must meet the policy eligibility criteria (Allocations Policy - section 7.4.4). and any applicant who fails the eligibility criteria is ineligible to join the housing register.

5.9 Viewings and Offers

Once a suitable applicant has been identified they will be invited to attend a viewing at the property. The viewing is intended to ensure that the property is suitable and identify any specific work the applicant requires to enable them to move into the property. Requests for additional works will be considered in line with the council's Repairs and Maintenance Policy.

Prospective tenants may be given the choice to keep window and floor coverings that have been left in the property by the former tenant. If the outgoing tenant has left gas or electric appliances in the property, the council cannot take responsibility for maintaining these and they will therefore be removed.

The applicant will also be provided with the most recent copy of the Energy Performance Certificate for the property (where available) to help them to understand its potential running costs.

Once the required repair work has been identified as per the lettable standard an approximate completion date of the property will be determined.

Prospective tenants will be advised of the date and informed in advance if this date is unlikely to be achieved, for example if additional works are identified during the course of completing the repairs.

5.10 Creating New Tenancies

As soon as all essential repairs are completed satisfactorily, the prospective tenant will be invited to sign the Tenancy Agreement. The terms of the Tenancy Agreement will be explained to ensure that the tenant(s) is fully aware of the landlord and tenant responsibilities, and the consequences if conditions are breached.

The new tenant will also be provided with appropriate advice about:

- Paying their rent.
- Applying for benefits, if required.
- Setting up utilities.
- Reporting any repairs.
- Fire safety
- Solar panels (where applicable).

If the property has solar panels fitted as part of the Community Energy Scheme Stoke Ltd, the incoming tenant will be invited to sign a Tenancy Variation Agreement and join the Community Energy Scheme Stoke Ltd. The Tenancy Variation Agreement identifies the additional equipment on the property and allows the provider of the scheme the right to access the loft from time to time to carry out repairs or maintenance. Should the incoming tenant not wish to sign the Tenancy Variation Agreement and join the Community Energy Scheme, the property offer will be withdrawn.

All new tenants will be given the opportunity to provide feedback relating to the void management and allocations process by completing a New Tenancy Survey. Feedback and satisfaction will be monitored and reported in accordance with the council's performance management framework.

5.11 Works to Void Properties

All properties will meet the lettable standard, as shown in Appendix 2 and the Decent Homes Standard. Prior to any works being undertaken the council will ensure that there is an up to date asbestos survey for the property.

Tenants/prospective tenants will not be given access to the property for any reason once Unitas has begun works, due to health and safety reasons.

In some instances, works to the property may be undertaken after the tenant has signed up, specifically where the works can be completed without significant disruption for the tenant, the works will not pose a significant health and safety risk to

the tenant or member of their household and the tenant agrees to the works being undertaken on tenancy. External works to the property will, in the main, be undertaken after the new tenancy has started.

The council may also delay the completion of some works if the property is known to be included on a planned programme in the near future.

Where a property requires an element of decoration, Unitas, may deliver a painting pack directly to the incoming tenant which enables the work to be completed by the tenant without a financial cost for materials to the tenant.

Internal decorating may be undertaken by the council in exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances may include an elderly or vulnerable tenant moving into the property and/ or the property being in a particularly poor state of decoration.

Some adaptations will be completed before the tenancy commences, but these will be dependent on the individual needs.

5.12 Utilities and Services

All properties will be inspected and be issued with both electrical and gas safety certification ensuring that the property is compliant with the current gas and electrical regulations. All properties will have a valid Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) in place prior to the letting with a minimum rating of between A to E to mirror the council's commitment to sustainability and compliance with minimum energy efficiency standards (MEES).

When a property has become void the council will cap both the electric and gas supplies in order to reduce any health and safety risks. Wherever possible the supplies will also be transferred to a preferred supplier in order to reduce any delays in managing the void process.

During the health and safety checks the electric and gas meters at the property will be checked. Any evidence of tampering will be recorded. Tampering with meters is a criminal offence and the council will provide tenancy details to utilities companies and the Police if there is evidence that a meter has been damaged

The electric supply will be uncapped as part of the final works to the property before the sign up is arranged. Incoming tenants will therefore have a working supply at the point of sign up – subject to appropriate levels of payment on the meter.

The gas supply will not be uncapped until the tenant confirms that they have moved into the property, to ensure that any risks of gas build up are minimised. The council

aims to ensure that the gas is uncapped as soon as possible following the request of the customer. When the gas is uncapped the tenant will also be provided with the annual Gas Safety Certificate.

The council will ensure the water supply/system within each property is maintained in accordance with the Legionella and Water Safety Control Management Plan.

Smoke and Carbon Monoxide alarms will be fully tested and installed where required in line with the council's Fire Management Plan and the Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm Regulations 2022.

5.13 Major Voids

Where a void property requires major works, and therefore a high level of investment is needed in order to bring it up to an appropriate standard, then an options appraisal may be undertaken in order to assess whether the works should be completed, or if the property should be taken out of use. Consideration will be given to:

- Level of rent loss if the property is not tenanted and the impact on the Housing Revenue Account
- The level of demand for the property type and area
- The overall cost of the works required.

If the assessment finds that the works are financially viable they will be completed. For properties where the assessment finds that it is not financially viable to undertake the works and there is little demand for the property type and/or area, the property may be disposed of – either through sale or demolition.

5.14 Low Demand Properties

The priority for the council is to ensure that all homes are let as soon as possible to tenants who are able to sustain the tenancy. A property will be considered to be low demand if there are no suitable applicants on the Housing Register for the property.

Additional action(s) may be taken when a low demand property is identified in order to attract a suitable tenant. A combination of the following may be agreed and implemented:

- Additional internal works beyond the needs of the customer
- Internal decoration
- Improved security
- Fencing and landscaping improvements

- Support for tenants moving in.

5.15 Adapted Properties

Properties which are adapted when they become void will be considered in line with the council's Major Adaptations Policy with the priority being to ensure best use of the adaptations. In some instances, where a property has major adaptations, the council may choose to leave the property void for a longer period until a suitable tenant, who requires the adaptations, can be identified. Decisions to remove major adaptations from properties will be made by a service manager based on all available information on the demand for the property.

6. Financial Implications

The costs of undertaking and managing the void management activities of the council are accounted for within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). As part of the financial regulations in relation to HRA, the council is obliged to ensure that there are sufficient funds available to cover the costs of repairs and maintenance to all properties. The costs of the void repairs will be considered as part of the annual rent review. The annual budget for void management repairs has been accounted for within the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan.

The council will review and amend its HRA Business Plan from time to time to take into account any significant changes to the policy and/or operating environment. These amendments may impact on the funding available for the council's void management activities.

7. Consultation and Communications

The development of this policy has included views from a range of relevant stakeholders including tenants, internal teams, Unitas and the Cabinet Member for Housing and Environment. The wider scope of the policy also allowed reflection of best practice elsewhere and incorporated the relevant statutory requirements.

8. Complaints

The council actively encourages all customer feedback about its services, and uses complaints, comments and compliments to review and improve our services.

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the Council, Unitas, its own staff, those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents.

If a customer is dissatisfied with a service that has been provided, they can make contact via

- the council formal Complaints Procedure. Details are available from any council office or online [Comment on a council service Stoke-on-Trent](#)
- the Unitas online feedback form www.unitas.co.uk
- Telephone – 01782 234100
- Email at – feedback@unitas.co.uk
- Message via social media – FaceBook/Twitter

Complaints will be acknowledged within 2 working days with a response to the customer within 10 working days.

The customer has the right to challenge the response to their complaint via the appeals process. Further information on how Unitas processes its complaints can be found in the compliments, comments & complaints policy and complaints process leaflet.

Unitas will never unreasonably refuse to escalate a complaint through all stages of the Complaints procedure. If a complaint is refused escalation, we will explain the clear and valid reasons for taking that course of action and also set out the customers' right to take this decision to the Housing Ombudsman.

9. Safeguarding

There is a formal framework in place for identifying, reporting and recording safeguarding issues. Staff employed by the council, by Unitas and by external contractors have all had relevant safeguarding training and this will be refreshed on an annual basis.

10. Links to other policies

This policy, together with the Tenancy and Estate Management Policy, Repairs and Maintenance Policy and Rechargeable Repairs Policy will guide staff in ensuring that tenants are aware of their repair responsibilities and tenancy obligations.

This policy should be considered in conjunction with the Allocations Policy to ensure that the stock is well used in a way that meets local demand in a fair and equitable way. As the main provider of affordable homes, the council is committed to reducing homelessness and meeting housing need through maximising the use and occupation of its homes and the effective turnaround of void properties.

This policy should also be read in conjunction with the following:

- Tenancy Agreement
- Tenancy Variation Agreement – Community Energy Scheme (Solar Panels)
- Tenancy and Estate Management Policy
- Repairs and Maintenance Policy
- Major Adaptations Policy
- Rent Setting and Collection Policy
- Rechargeable Repairs Policy
- Tenant and Leaseholder Compensation Policy
- HRA Asset Compliance Strategy - covering
 - Asbestos Management
 - Electrical Safety
 - Fire Safety
 - Gas and other Fuel Safety
 - Legionella Control and Water Safety
 - Mechanical and Engineering Equipment Safety.
- Allocations Policy

11. Measuring Quality and Performance

The council is committed to ensuring that its repairs and maintenance services are delivered to a high standard and provide high levels of customer satisfaction. In order to help it do this, it will monitor and manage performance through a range of methods.

The council will measure and evaluate performance against a range of appropriate and relevant performance indicators and will benchmark itself against other social housing providers. The council may audit the quality of repair works and investigate complaints in relation to the standard of works and will actively collect and analyse tenants' views on the repairs service provided, with feedback collected by staff acting independently of the delivery of the service.

Performance information and benchmarking data will be reported to the council, Unitas' Board and customers through the Annual Report and Customer Engagement framework.

12. Delivering Value for Money

The council is committed to ensuring its Void Management Services offer excellent value for money and will therefore ensure that a range of mechanisms are in place to demonstrate value.

The mechanisms used will include:

- Benchmarking against peers
- Market testing against other providers
- Reviewing internal cost and performance data
- Internal business reviews.

Performance in relation to the void management service will be monitored through the Performance Framework. Key measures in relation to void management are:

- Number of void properties
- Average re-let time for a standard void
- Average re-let time for a non-standard void
- Amount of void loss
- Average void costs.

13. Policy review

The policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure it is consistent with changes in legislation and regulation. As standard, the policy will be reviewed at five yearly intervals.

Key Contacts

For comments or complaints about the Void service contact:

- Online form: <https://www.stoke.gov.uk>
- Post: Void Team, Stoke-on-Trent City Council, Floor 2, Civic Centre, Glebe Street, Stoke-on-Trent, ST4 1HH.

For comments in relation to this consultation draft policy and its development contact the Enabling and Projects team:

- Email: housing.strategy@stoke.gov.uk

For further information on how to influence policy development, contact the tenant relations team:

- Email: housing.engagement@stoke.gov.uk
- Telephone: 01782 235105 (office hours only)

Appendix 1 - Glossary / Definitions

Throughout this policy document, it is inevitable that words or phrases are used that are readily understood by some readers, but which are new to other readers and their meaning is not immediately apparent. The meanings of some words/phrases used in this document are given below:

Decent Homes Standard - a standard set nationally which states that a Decent Home is one which meets all statutory requirements in relation to the Housing Health and Safety Rating System, is in a reasonable state of repair, has reasonably modern facilities and provides reasonable thermal comfort.

Major Adaptations - refer to changes to the property or equipment provided in order to assist a disabled person to live more independently.

Equality Statement – Sets out the council’s commitment to ensure everyone is treated the equally.

Fair Wear and Tear – the law defines fair wear and tear as “reasonable use if the premises by the tenant and the ordinary operation of natural forces.” ‘Natural forces’ relates to time and normal daily activities.

Major Void – a major void is one which requires over £10,000 worth of work to be put right.

Planned Improvement Works - include the replacement or renewal of building elements or components due to them reaching the end of their life, for example windows, kitchens and bathrooms.

Post-termination – refers to the period immediately after the tenant has left the property.

Pre-termination – refers to the period after the tenants has given notice to leave but has not yet left the property.

Recharges – is the cost of repairing or putting right damage or neglect to properties. The costs are charged to the tenant and reclaimed.

Sign-up – is where the new tenant/s are asked to sign the tenancy agreement and given the keys to the property.

Statutory Standards – are standards laid down by the law which must be adhered to.

Tenant Improvements – is the term used for works carried out on the property by the tenant (usually with permission from the council).

Unitas Stoke-on-Trent Ltd – the name of the council owned company established to deliver repairs and maintenance services to council owned properties.

Value for Money – is the overall value based on cost, efficiency and effectiveness.

Void / Void Property – is the term used to describe a property that has no legal tenant and is generally empty.

Void Management – is the process of bringing an untenanted property up to standard to enable a new tenant to move in.

Appendix 2 – Lettable Standard

Kitchen

- The sink-top and work surfaces will be in a clean and hygienic condition
- All units will be secure and doors and drawers will operate satisfactorily
- The water supply will be working
- The number of storage cupboards will depend on the size of kitchen. The storage space will consist of wall and floor units.
- Areas with a Splashback will be sealed and free from defects
- There will be a safe and compliant cooker space with a suitable gas and electric point if both are available. It is your responsibility to arrange the connection of your cooker by a suitably qualified person
- There will be a minimum of two double electrical sockets
- We will provide space for a tall fridge and, washing machine with plumbing, taps and waste, the connection of your washing machine is your responsibility
- The kitchen floor will have a washable clean floor covering free from broken and damaged tiles
- If the property is a new build we will make every effort to maintain the integrity of the “as built” components/parts for as long as reasonably practicable

Decoration

- The redecoration of the property is your responsibility, including filling small holes and cracks.

Doors, internal woodwork, windows and glazing

- All fire doors will be checked to meet agreed standards
- All internal and external doors will operate correctly and be fit for purpose
- The locks to all external doors will be changed
- All glazing will be intact when you move in and all windows that are designed to open will be in working order
- Windows and doors be assessed and where identified, repairs will be rectified
- Loft insulation will be maintained to the required legal standard

Ceilings and walls

- Visible plasterwork will be in a condition that can be decorated
- We will remove any polystyrene tiles throughout the property

- Removal of Wallpaper will be your responsibility and care must be taken to avoid unnecessary damage to underlying plasterwork
- Graffiti will be removed or decorated over internally and externally
- Aertex will be left in situ if it is in good condition
- Mould affected area will be cleaned and treated with anti-fungal paint or the issue repaired to help to reduce the risk of damp and mould and the likelihood of condensation occurring. More information can be found on line [Damp, Mould and Condensation](#)

Floors and stairs

- With your agreement the previous tenants' carpets, lino, ceramic tiles, laminated or wooden floor coverings that are in reasonably good condition will be left in the property. The ongoing maintenance and replacement of these items would become your responsibility
- Floors will be even and free from tripping hazards
- The flooring in the kitchen and bathroom will have a clean and washable covering, broken and damaged tiles will be replaced
- Timber floors will be secure and in an acceptable condition
- Solid floors will have no major ongoing defects
- Stairs will have safe and secure handrails and balustrades

Bathroom and toilet

- All existing bathroom elements will be operational and free from leaks
- All Splashback areas will be correctly sealed and free from defects and mould
- All toilets will work properly, be securely fixed and have a new toilet seat fitted
- If required, a Decent Homes standard bathroom will be installed at the discretion of the Lettings Officers / Asset Management Team. If the property is a bungalow, and does not meet Decent Homes standards a wet room will be installed

Heating and mains services

- If the property has a gas supply, we will have the gas supply and any appliances tested in line with current gas safety regulations to make sure they are safe and in working order
- We will give you a copy of the landlord's gas safety certificate and let you know where the emergency control valve is when you sign the tenancy agreement

- The mains water supply will be left working, the main stop tap (also called a stopcock) will be checked and left operational. We will let you know where it is on the sign-up visit
- We will have the electrical supply checked in line with the National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contractors (NICEIC) inspection procedure.
- Appropriate smoke alarms will be installed at the property
- Legionella - All water services will be flushed in line with current regulations
- There will be a working carbon monoxide (CO) detector in all required rooms in accordance with legislation and regulations

Outside

- Access and egress to front and rear property entrances will be clear of obstructions
- Where possible boundaries will be clearly defined
- Existing fencing and gates - please refer to the council Repairs and Maintenance Policy
- Roofs, walls, gutters and downpipes will be safe and in working condition.
- We will remove rubbish from the front and back gardens, bin stores and any sheds
- We will remove sheds, greenhouses and other similar garden structures unless they are in good condition. In the event that any of these items are left, the ongoing maintenance and replacement of these items would become your responsibility
- We will cut back any overgrown hedges, lawns and trees to an acceptable height. The ongoing maintenance and replacement of these items would become your responsibility

Cleaning

- The property will be clean and free from rubbish including the loft space
- Surfaces and cupboards will be cleaned
- Kitchen and bathroom floors will be mopped
- The sink, wash hand basin, bath/shower and toilet will be sanitised.