

## Women's Pioneer Housing Void Management Policy

Title	Void Management Policy
Issue Date	7 June 2022
Effective date	7 June 2022
Document Owner	Kemal Hulusi
Post of Document Owner	Head of Contracts Compliance and Property Services
Date approved by SMT	8 June 2022
Date approved by HASC	June 2022
Version number	3
Date of next review	June 2025
Appendices	a. WPH Home Standard

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy contributes to Objectives 1, 2 and 5 as set out in our Corporate Plan

### 2. Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of the policy is to ensure that we effectively manage the process of bringing empty flats back into letting to minimise the loss of rental income and to provide an effective service to residents leaving the properties and those taking up the tenancy on completion of the works.

### 3. Scope

- 3.1 This policy applies to all socially rented properties owned and managed by Women's Pioneer Housing. A separate policy applies for properties let by Women's Pioneer Homes. Leasehold properties are not covered by this policy.
- 3.2 The works we carry out to bring void properties back into letting will be those to meet the WPH Homes Standard with the exception of properties within buildings identified for redevelopment or with leases less than 5 years to run where the scope of works may be limited to meeting our legal obligations.
- 3.3 Mutual exchanges do not result in flats being void and therefore changes of tenancy resulting from mutual exchanges are excluded from this policy and covered within the Tenancy Management Policy.

### 4. Legislation and relevant WPH policies and procedures

- 4.1 WPH will comply with all relevant legislation when re-letting a property including The Housing Health and Safety Rating system (HHSRS) and the Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018. In addition, this policy helps to ensure that WPH meets the Regulator for Social Housing's Decent Homes Standard and the Consumer Standard.

4.2 In addition, there are other WPH policies and obligations that influence this policy, that include:

- The Allocations and Lettings policy
- The Asset Management Strategy
- The Home Standard
- The Void Management procedure
- The Responsive Repairs policy
- Recharges Policy (under review)
- Tenant Engagement Strategy
- Tenancy Management Policy
- Starter Tenancy procedure

## 5. The Policy

5.1 This policy supports objectives 1, 2 and 5 of the Corporate Plan as follows:

### **Objective 1 – Providing high quality homes and services for existing and future residents**

- The Housing Officer and Maintenance Surveyor will carry out an inspection of the flat during the one month notice period and advise the tenant of any works for which they are responsible.
- We will refurbish all voids to meet the WPH Home Standard.
- We will consider altering the layout of our older flats where this will offer greater flexibility of use
- We will improve the fire safety of the property where required.
- We will ensure that works are completed such that they are free of defects and hazards or potential hazards, at the point the resident moves in
- We will provide effective communication with residents to ensure that they understand their and our responsibilities.
- We will allocate the property to a new tenant for that particular flat in accordance with the Allocations and Lettings policy.
- We will engage with tenants to inform the specification and design of new kitchens and bathrooms to be provided in void properties.
- We will work with any tenant transferring from another WPH property so that they can make their own choices of finish where it is practical for them to do so.
- We will improve the Energy Efficiency of the home to a minimum of EPC C where permitted\* ,practical and financially feasible to do so.

\*Some works will require planning and Listed building Consent.

### **Objective 2 – Supporting our residents independence and well being**

- We will support tenants in their homes by providing helpful documentation and ensuring that staff visit within the first two weeks of their tenancy. We will

tailor this information and the way it is provided, to ensure that it is understood.

- We will obtain customer feedback from tenants who have accepted a property as well as from those who have refused, so that we can continually seek ways of improving the service.
- In making allocations we will take into account tenant needs

### **Objective 5 – Strengthening our organisation**

- We will act promptly at all stages of the voids process to meet the KPI in respect of void turn round time .We will aim to improve on the KPI where this is possible.
- We will seek to keep financial void losses to a minimum.
- We will continually review the procedures so that all staff are aware of their responsibilities..
- We will seek to offer value for money through appropriate procurement of the building works.
- We will benchmark our performance in this area against our peers.
- We will re charge outgoing tenants in accordance with our Resident Recharges Policy for making good any damage caused or any costs of clearing the flat of any personal effects left behind.

## **6. Financial implications and value for money**

- 6.1 A budget is provided for both minor and major voids and included within the annual budget. The budget is monitored regularly by the Finance and Property teams. Similarly, an allowance is included within the annual budget for void losses.
- 6.2 If it is anticipated that costs will exceed the budget, then, as void works cannot be deferred or standards reduced, monies will be vired from other parts of the property budget to cover the overspend.
- 6.3 Works are procured through a framework of approved contractors.

## **7. Tenant Engagement**

- 7.1 We will continue to seek feedback from tenants and consider recommendations from the Homes and Services Committee and any Task and Finish or Focus groups considering any element of the voids process. Where possible, we will offer incoming tenants a choice of colours for decorations, kitchens and bathrooms.

We will:

- Provide a guidance note on what new tenants can expect from a WPH home;
- A 'Moving in' pack that provides essential information relating to the home;
- Introduce inspections prior to tenants moving out with a moving out pack being provided.
- Provide induction visits within 2 weeks of a tenant moving in.

- Obtain satisfaction feedback from new tenants;
- Provide money saving tips for new tenants;

## **8. Stakeholder Engagement**

- 8.1 We will meet our commitments required through Nomination agreements with local authorities or other bodies as appropriate.
- 8.2 We will meet periodically with contractors to review the effectiveness of the arrangements for both minor and major voids.

## **9. Equality and diversity**

- 9.1 WPH will ensure that this policy is applied fairly and consistently. We will not directly or indirectly discriminate against any person or group of people in line with our Equality and Diversity Policy. We will act sensitively towards the diverse needs of individuals and communities and will take positive action or make reasonable adjustments where appropriate.

## **10. Reporting Key Performance Indicators**

- 10.1 We will report performance against the following KPI's:
- In properties where major refurbishments are required, the total void time will be no more than 80 days, with the work period being 71 days.
  - In standard voids, the total void period should be no more than 28 days with the works period being 21 days.
- 10.2 We will monitor the average cost of voids and regularly compare total costs against the annual budget.
- 10.3 We will periodically review these KPI's

## **11. Contact officer**

Roger Barton, Director of Property and Estates Services.  
roger.barton@womenspioneer.co.uk