



Providing Choice



Addressing Inequalities

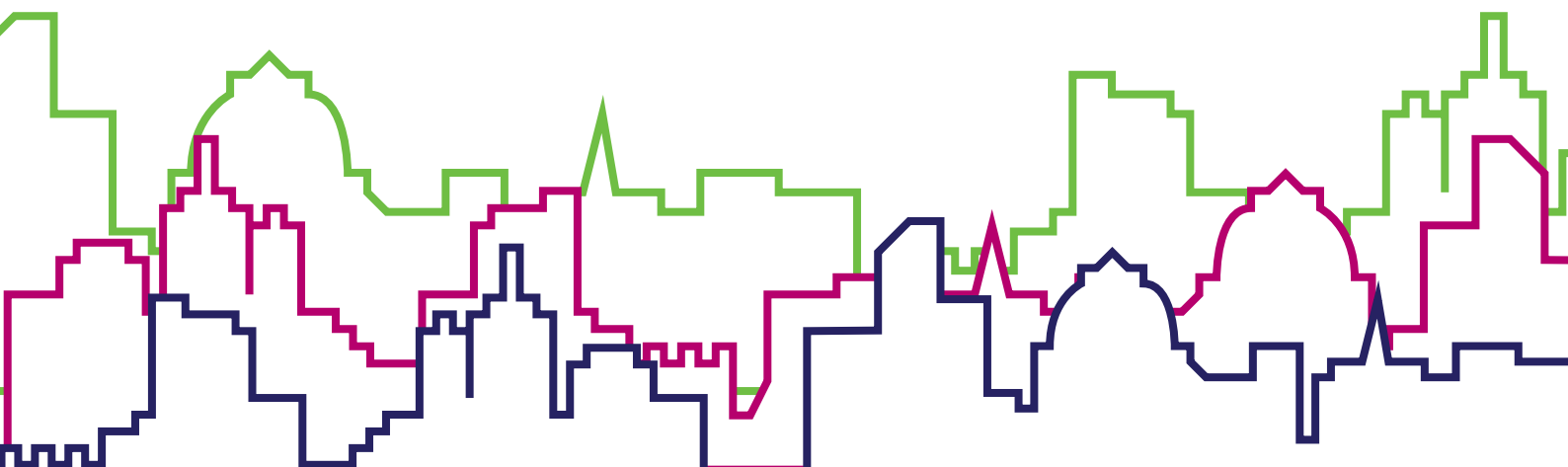


Improving Life Opportunities



Void Policy

The Association is committed to making best use of our housing stock in order to create decent homes in decent neighbourhoods, places where people want to live and stay.



1. Background & Principles

Unity is a leading provider of social rented housing in Leeds, providing affordable housing for people from all walks of life. Unity particularly seeks to impact on the position, well being and future outlook of Black & Minority Ethnic communities.

The Association is committed to making best use of our housing stock in order to create decent homes in decent neighbourhoods, places where people want to live and stay.

We recognise the need to ensure that when properties become empty, it is in the best interests of all concerned, to re-let the property in a timely and appropriate way.

The Association is legally obliged to maintain it's properties in a proper manner, free from defects and disrepair. This also extends to the safety of Gas Appliances and the management of asbestos.

It is important that an empty property is presented to a lettable standard when it is offered to a prospective tenant;

- to reduce the time that a property is vacant,
- reduce the number of offers that have to be made,
- to reduce the risk of vandalism,
- to reduce rent loss

The Association is committed to continually improving the way in which we deal with properties that become empty as we believe that the first impressions that new tenants get of the Association will reinforce how they conduct their tenancies in the future.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Voids Procedure, the Terminations Procedure and the Lettings Standard and the Recharge Policy & Procedures.

2. Outgoing tenants

2.1 Tenants have a responsibility to maintain the property in a good state of repair and to expediently report any repairs that are the landlord's responsibility to carry out.

2.2 Tenants are required to keep the property in good decorative order and upon terminating the tenancy, return the property to the Association in a condition that reflects the condition that it was in, when they moved in.

2.3 In cases where the property has not been properly looked after, where damage has been caused by the tenant's neglect of, or abuse of the property, the Association may recharge the outgoing tenant the cost of any works deemed not to be the Association's responsibility (see Recharge Policy & Procedure).

2.4 A fuller version of the tenant's responsibilities is detailed within the Tenant's Handbook.

3. Property Inspection & Repairs.

3.1 When the Association becomes aware that a property is to become vacant arrangements will be made to inspect it and to prepare a schedule for any work that may be required. This would include any rechargeable works that are deemed to be the responsibility of the outgoing tenant.

3.2 In cases where the Association receives no notice of termination or where a tenancy has come to an end as a result of an eviction, the Maintenance / Housing Officer will inspect the property as soon as it is practical to do so.

3.2 The property shall be inspected by a Maintenance/Housing Officer and if required digital images (photographs) of the property may be taken.

3.4 Works required to bring the property to a lettable standard will be ordered quickly, with a view to have them complete within timescales set for the amount of repairs required. This target would vary for more complex or specialist works.

3.5 The Asset Register shall be checked to and consideration given to ensure that any Planned Works are undertaken during the void period. The Gas Servicing register will be checked and any servicing and Landlord Gas Safety checks completed during the void period.

4. Lettable Standard

4.1 The Association has a lettable standard which is agreed by staff in consultation with tenants, and all property that is offered to prospective tenants should reach that standard.

4.2 In the case of properties that are 'at risk' it may be certain components, such as boilers, are not installed until the new tenant moves in. It may also be the case that these properties may be boarded up with steel sheeting, but that the sheeting would be temporarily removed for the viewing.

4.3 Where the decorative standards are poor the Association can choose to offer the incoming tenants decorating vouchers instead of redecorating the property through the void works.

5. Quality Control & Tenant Feedback

5.1 On viewing the property prospective tenants may pick up some items that have not been attended to. Whilst it is clear that if these are major issues they ought to be attended to before the tenant moves in, but in the case of minor repairs the Association will offer an appointment to attend to them once the tenant has taken up the tenancy and moved in.

5.2 New tenants will be offered the opportunity to feedback on their experience through a new tenant's satisfaction questionnaire

6. Policy Review

6.1 The Association will review this policy annually and on an interim basis should that be required.

6.2 This policy is subject to approval by the Association's Board or delegated committee.

6.3 This policy is owned by the Maintenance Manager, and was first produced in December 2004.

6.4 It was reviewed in May 2006, November 2006, June 2007, September 2009, July 2011 and March 2013.

6.5 The next formal review is March 2015

