



## VOIDS MANAGEMENT POLICY

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<b>Applicable Committee(s)</b>	Management Committee
<b>Owner - role</b>	Director of Housing Services

<b>Record of Updates/Changes</b>			
<b>Current Version</b>	<b>Date Approved</b>	<b>Approved By</b>	<b>Changes</b>

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Void properties are an inevitable part of Housing Management as tenancies end and customers move on to other housing options.

A property is void when there is no current tenant. Whilst a property is void, Castlehill Housing Association (CHA) cannot collect a rental income. Loss of rental income due to voids has an impact on CHA's financial management and impacts our ability to meet loan commitments and provide services.

Effective management of voids will help to ensure that CHA are meeting the needs of applicants waiting for housing in the North East of Scotland in line with our Allocations Policy. Effective void management will also ensure that CHA are complying with the Homelessness strategies of each of the Local Authority areas in which we operate.

## 2. POLICY AIMS

CHA aims to ensure that properties which become void are re-let as quickly and efficiently as possible, with due regard to the needs of outgoing and incoming tenants and the need to maintain our properties to the agreed lettings standard.

A void property is one that has no current tenant. During the period there is no current tenant and CHA cannot collect a rental income. In line with Scottish Housing Regulator guidelines the "void period" is the period which commences the first day there is no rent debit and ends on the day before a new rent debit is raised.

This policy aims to ensure CHA minimises void rental loss, void periods, and void repair costs through effective coordination of Housing Services and Property Services Teams to re-let properties within agreed target times. Both Teams must ensure that they:

- Enable effective monitoring and reporting of void management and service delivery.
- Ensure that tenants are aware of their tenancy obligations in relation to ending the tenancy e.g requirement to give 28 days' notice, to return all keys timeously and to fully clear the property and leave it in a clean condition and good state of repair.
- Ensure that repairs to properties are undertaken to enable CHA to re-let to the letting's standard (see appendix 1) and that where appropriate "rechargeable" repair costs are met by the outgoing tenant or pursued post termination.
- Make effective use of void periods to carry out upgrading or major repairs as appropriate and to co-ordinate with the major repairs programme about decant requirements.
- Prevent end of tenancy arrears wherever possible.
- Ensure incoming tenants are given all required information, documentation and advice to allow them to move into the property promptly at the agreed commencement of tenancy date.
- Achieve high levels of tenant satisfaction with the condition of properties at the beginning of the tenancy.

### 3. RELATED POLICIES:

The Void Management Policy has direct links to the following other policies and the content should be cross referenced with these documents:

- Allocations Policy.
- Reactive Maintenance Policy.
- Debt Management Policy
- Abandonment Policy
- Asset Management Policy
- Health and Safety Policy.
- Lettable Standard Policy

### 4. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

- Housing (Scotland) Act 2001
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2014
- Data Protection Act 1998
- GDPR Regulations
- The Energy Performance of Buildings (Scotland) Regulations 2008
- The Gas Safety (Installations and Use) Regulations 1994

The policy aims to enable compliance with the Scottish Housing Charter 2022:

- Outcome 4: Quality of Housing
- Outcome 13: Value for money

Outcome 4 states that:

*Social landlords manage their business so that: tenant's homes, as a minimum meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) by April 2015 and continue to meet it thereafter, and when they are allocated, are always clean, tidy and in a good state of repair.*

These standard covers what registered social landlords should be achieving in all their properties.

Outcome 13 states that:

*Social landlords manage all aspects of their business so that: tenants, owners and customers receive services that provide continually improving value for the rent and other charges they pay.*

This standard covers the efficient and effective management of services and specifically refers to minimising the time houses are empty.

## 5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Job title	Key responsibilities
Management Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor performance against published targets</li> <li>• Reviewing the Voids Management Policy and Allocations Policy</li> </ul>
Housing Services Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-chair weekly voids meeting</li> <li>• Prepare quarterly performance report for the Management Committee</li> <li>• Represent CHA at TheseHomes strategic and operational meetings</li> <li>• Approve allocations</li> <li>• Monitor Housing Services Team performance</li> </ul>
Senior Housing Services Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management of Housing Officers</li> <li>• Approve allocations</li> <li>• Monitor Housing Officer performance</li> </ul>
Housing Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First point of contact for tenants terminating</li> <li>• Producing adverts for TheseHomes</li> <li>• Allocate properties to new tenants</li> <li>• Complete new tenancy lease signings</li> </ul>
Housing Services Support Team Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Running monthly and quarterly void reports</li> </ul>
Housing Services Assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Setting up new tenancies on the Housing Management System</li> <li>• Terminate tenancies on the Housing Management System</li> <li>• Sending offer letters</li> <li>• Producing sign up paperwork</li> <li>• Sending termination paperwork</li> </ul>
Housing Allocations Support Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Running shortlists from TheseHomes</li> <li>• Assessing applications and awarding priority passes</li> <li>• Oversee production of adverts</li> <li>• Represent CHA at TheseHomes operational meetings</li> </ul>
Property Services Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management of Property Services Team</li> <li>• Co-chair weekly voids meeting</li> <li>• Monitor contractor KPI performance</li> <li>• Monitor Property Services Team performance</li> <li>• Report to Management Committee on void repair costs</li> <li>• Approve invoice completion over SPSO approval limits</li> </ul>
Senior Property Services Officer (Repairs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management of Property Services Officers</li> <li>• Day to day operational responsibility</li> <li>• Contractor KPI performance meetings</li> <li>• Monitor Property Services Officer Performance</li> <li>• Approve invoice completion over PSO approval limits</li> </ul>
Property Services Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre termination inspection, void inspection and post void inspections</li> <li>• Raise works orders</li> <li>• Sign off works invoices</li> <li>• Day to day contractor monitoring</li> <li>• Arrange power supplies and change of supplier if needed</li> <li>• Raise recharges where required</li> </ul>
Customer Services Officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administer Gas Safety Records</li> <li>• Administer Electrical Installation Condition Reports</li> </ul>

## 6. KEY PRINCIPLES

### 6.1 Proactive Approach

- It is a key principle of CHA to reduce void management inefficiencies by ensuring that void and allocation activities are carried out simultaneously.
- CHA will effectively and efficiently use the notice period to undertake void activities to reduce the void period.
- Both the Housing Services & Property Services teams work in partnership to ensure best use of resources.
- CHA will utilise key safes at void properties to enable multiple contractors and Property & Housing Services staff to carry out void activities in the property simultaneously.
- Effective management of void activities will be employed to ensure a smooth turnaround of void properties.
- Pre-termination inspections will be carried out at the earliest opportunity.

### 6.2 Performance Management

- Strategic Overview – few days as possible. A proactive and efficient void management service to limit the length of time properties are empty as much as possible.
- Void periods are minimised to reduce the amount of rental income lost through void properties.
- Operation Overview - type of void influence void period, refusal reasons
- Void properties are available timeously for applicants on TheseHomes and in particular homeless households.

### 6.3 Communication

- Discussion with tenant terminating
- We will keep prospective customers who have received an offer, informed throughout the void management process.
- Between Teams

## 7. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

CHA recognises the importance of working to specific timescales in dealing with voids as part of performance monitoring and ongoing review of operations. The targets are as follows:

General Needs/Amenity:	15 days*
Supported Housing:	25 days*

\*calendar days

It is important to note that the above targets are the maximum timeframe, staff should always be working towards minimising the number of void days. KPI information will be produced to support and help monitor performance as detailed below:

- SHR ARC reporting bi -annually
- Quarterly updates to CHA management committee
- Audits on operation procedures
- Monthly operation reports
- Weekly – monitoring report
- Use of HM software reports & MS Teams
- Area overview – provide staff with detailed info on patch
- Annual Review – managers review

## 8. TRAINING

Ensure all staff are competent and aware of Void policy and procedures.  
Standard training for new staff.  
Annual review of all staff training requirements.

## 9. REVIEW OF POLICY

Three yearly, or earlier if legislation or compliance regulations changed during that time.  
Consult with CHA tenants and applicants on policy and procedure.