

Voids Policy

Purpose

- 1.1 This policy outlines our approach to managing empty properties ('voids'), to minimise the length of time a property stays empty. This will consequently reduce the loss of rental income and maximise income for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), while ensuring that applicants in housing need are allocated a suitable property as soon as possible.
- 1.2 A property is defined 'void' when no tenancy exists following vacation by the previous occupant, and no rental income is being received. The 'void period' exists between a tenancy ending and a new tenancy beginning.
- 1.3 There are several reasons that lead to the initiation of the void process, which are outlined below:
 - Termination: The resident supplies formal written notice.
 - Death of resident: The resident dies and there is no successor to the tenancy.
 - Transfer: The resident moves to another City Corporation owned property.
 - Abandonment: The resident has vacated the property without proper notice.
 - Eviction: The Council has completed court action and obtained authority to evict the resident/s
 - Decants: Residents being re-housed following plans to redevelop, dispose of or demolish housing stock
- 1.4 This policy sets out the Council's approach to the effective management of void properties, ensuring that homes are brought back into use as quickly as possible whilst meeting required standards of quality, safety and compliance.
- 1.5 The policy aims to balance the need to minimise the length of time properties remain empty and the associated loss of rental income to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), with the delivery of homes that are safe, decent, and fit for occupation at the start of a new tenancy.
- 1.6 It provides a clear framework for managing the void process from tenancy termination through to re-let, clarifying responsibilities, standards and decision-making to ensure a consistent, transparent and value-for-money approach.
- 1.7 A property is defined as 'void' when no tenancy exists following vacation by the previous occupant and no rental income is being received. The 'void period' is the period between a tenancy ending and a new tenancy beginning.

Duties of the Council as a Landlord

Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018

- 2.1 The Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018 states that landlords have a duty of care when it comes to meeting their existing responsibilities

relating to property standards and safety, and making sure their property is fit for human habitation at the beginning of the tenancy and throughout.

Regulator for Social Housing – Safety and Quality Standard

- 2.2 Registered providers must have an accurate, up to date and evidenced understanding of the condition of their homes that reliably informs their provision of good quality, well maintained and safe homes for residents.

Decent Homes Standard

- 2.3 Registered providers must ensure that residents homes meet the standard set out in section five of the Government's Decent Homes Guidance and continue to maintain their homes to at least this standard.

Health and safety

- 2.4 When acting as landlords, registered providers must take all reasonable steps to ensure the health and safety of residents in their homes and associated communal areas.

Repairs, maintenance and planned improvements

- 2.5 Registered providers must provide an effective, efficient and timely repairs, maintenance and planned improvements service for the homes and communal areas for which they are responsible.
- 2.6 During the void period we will ensure the Council will meet all our legal responsibilities under the relevant and current compliance legislation for the quality, health and safety of incoming occupants in their homes.
- 2.7 These include gas, water and in-situ electrical installations, including all smoke and fire alarms, will be tested and certified to say that they are in good working order and comply to current legislation. Fire doors and fire prevention mechanisms will be checked and if necessary, replaced to the current relevant legislative standard.

Fitness for Human Habitation

- 2.8 Under the Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018, the Council has a duty to ensure that its homes are fit for human habitation at the start of a tenancy and throughout its duration. This includes ensuring that properties are safe, in good repair, and free from serious hazards.

Regulatory Standards

- 2.9 The Council will comply with the Regulator of Social Housing's consumer standards, including requirements to maintain an accurate, up-to-date and evidenced understanding of the condition of its housing stock, which informs the delivery of safe, decent and well-maintained homes.

Decent Homes Standard

- 2.10 The Council will ensure that its properties meet the requirements of the Decent Homes Standard, as set out in the relevant government guidance, and will continue to maintain homes to at least this standard or any successor standard that may apply.

Health and Safety Compliance

- 2.11 When acting as a landlord, the Council will take all reasonable steps to ensure the health and safety of residents and occupants in its homes and associated communal areas. The void period represents a critical point at which compliance with health and safety requirements must be assured prior to re-let.

Repairs, Maintenance and Compliance During Voids

- 2.12 During the void period, the Council will ensure that all statutory safety checks and inspections are completed and that properties meet the Council's letting standard before a new tenancy begins. This includes, but is not limited to, compliance with gas safety, electrical safety, water safety, fire safety measures, alarms and other safety-critical systems, in line with current legislation and regulatory requirements.

Associated Policies and Procedures

- 2.13 This policy operates alongside the Council's wider suite of housing safety, compliance and asset management policies and procedures, including those relating to gas safety, electrical safety, asbestos management, fire safety, repairs and planned maintenance. These documents set out the detailed standards, processes and responsibilities that support delivery of this policy.

Objectives

- 3.1 The Council's objectives are to:
- To minimise void rental loss, void periods and void repair costs through effective coordination of repairs and maintenance operations to re-let properties within agreed target times.
 - Ensure that properties are managed efficiently throughout the void process by supplying transparency of tasks and responsibilities.
 - Ensure that residents are aware of their tenancy obligations in relation to ending the tenancy such as the requirement to give 4 weeks' notice, to return all keys promptly and to fully clear the property and leave it in a clean condition.
 - Minimise the rechargeable repairs costs through clear and effective communication with residents

- Ensure that repairs to properties are undertaken to enable properties to be re-let and that where appropriate rechargeable repair costs are met by the outgoing resident or pursued post termination.
- Make effective use of void periods to carry out upgrades or major repairs as appropriate
- Make effective use of the void period to consider possible works which would improve the energy efficiency and thermal comfort of the property, to help meet the Council's net zero carbon targets.
- Prevent end of tenancy arrears wherever possible.
- Effectively meet housing need in the city through quick return of use of properties.
- Achieve high levels of resident satisfaction with the condition of properties at the beginning of the tenancy
- Minimise rental loss to the Housing Revenue Account by reducing void periods and managing void repair costs, through effective planning and coordination of repairs and maintenance to achieve re-let within agreed target timescales.
- Ensure that properties are managed efficiently and consistently throughout the void process, with clear accountability, defined responsibilities and appropriate oversight.
- Ensure that properties are brought back into use at an appropriate standard, meeting the Council's letting standard and all relevant safety and compliance requirements prior to re-let.
- Ensure that residents are aware of, and meet, their obligations at the end of a tenancy, including notice requirements, property clearance, key return and rent payments, supported by clear and timely communication.
- Minimise avoidable and rechargeable repair costs, and ensure that recharge processes are fair, transparent and proportionate, with costs recovered where appropriate.
- Make effective and proportionate use of void periods to carry out necessary repairs, planned works or upgrades where this represents value for money and supports the long-term sustainability of the housing stock.
- Make appropriate use of void periods to consider energy efficiency and thermal comfort improvements, in line with the Council's wider decarbonisation and net zero carbon objectives and associated policies.
- Prevent end-of-tenancy arrears wherever possible through early intervention and coordination between services.
- Achieve high levels of resident satisfaction with the condition and quality of properties at the start of a new tenancy.

Roles and Responsibilities

- 4.1 The Director of Housing will have overall responsibility for the implementation of the Voids policy.
- 4.2 The Head of HRA Assets, Landlord Services Lead and the Housing Needs and Strategy Manager will have responsibility to develop, implement, and monitor the effective management of Void management, including appropriate management of repairs contracts and service level agreements with

partnering contractors, to ensure the Council delivers an efficient and value-for-money service, by exceeding key performance indicators (KPI's) and financial targets.

- 4.3 This will be achieved by ensuring voids are re-let on time and that our stock is maintained to the highest possible standard to meet our residents' needs. The HRA Assets Lead will ensure all property related health and safety legislation and regulations are adhered to.
- 4.4 Council staff and Contractors will follow the Voids Policy and related associated procedures and have an awareness of property-related legislation and regulations to ensure the operational delivery is fair and consistently delivered across our services. Staff and contractors are aware of their roles and responsibilities and regularly carry out mandatory and personal development training offered to them.

Termination of Tenancy

- 5.1 A resident must give four weeks' written notice of their intention to end their tenure. On receipt of the written notice, the Council will send a letter to confirm the vacant possession date and remind the outgoing resident of their end of tenancy responsibilities, including:
 - Confirming arrangements for a pre-void inspection of the property to be completed during the notice period.
 - The property, including the garden (if any) is to be left in a clean, tidy condition, and clear of all resident belongings and items.
 - The removal of improvements, fittings and fixtures must result in the property being left safe and not detrimental to the condition of the property. Improvements installed without permission or repairs being carried out due to resident neglect, will be subject to recharges
 - Pay all rent owed up to the end of the tenancy.
 - Return keys on or before the end of tenancy date.
 - Provision of a forwarding address.
- 5.2 A resident must give at least four weeks written notice of their intention to end their tenancy unless a mutual agreement had been reached with a deed of surrender.
- 5.3 On receipt of written notice, the Council will confirm the vacant possession date and remind the outgoing resident of their end of tenancy responsibilities, including:
 - Confirming arrangements for a pre-void inspection of the property to be carried out during the notice period. A Housing Officer and an HRA colleague would form the inspection team.
 - Leaving the property, including any garden (where applicable), in a clean and tidy condition and clear of all personal belongings.
 - Ensuring that any alterations, improvements, fittings or fixtures are managed in accordance with the Council's policies and the terms of any permissions

granted. Where improvements have been authorised and deemed suitable to remain, they should not be removed unnecessarily. Unauthorised alterations, or damage arising from neglect, may be subject to recharge in order to reinstate the property to an acceptable standard.

- Paying all rent and other charges owed up to the end of the tenancy.
- Returning all keys on or before the tenancy end date.
- Providing a forwarding address to support final account reconciliation and any post-tenancy correspondence.

Pre-Void Inspections

- 6.1 Carrying out a Pre-Void inspection is beneficial to minimise the void period of a property and to identify any problems that can be discussed with the resident and resolved prior to the tenancy end date.
- 6.2 The Pre-Void inspection will include the resident's home, and any sheds/garages licensed to the resident. When the inspection is carried out, a checklist is completed and any rechargeable repairs and required clearance of possessions will be discussed with the resident or their representative (should they be present).
- 6.3 If the resident is not present at the time of the inspection, the Council will write to the resident setting out what rechargeable repairs were identified during the inspection.
- 6.4 HRA Assets Team will order the necessary void works (which shall include any rechargeable repairs), and a letter will be sent to the resident confirming the amount to be charged and payment process and timescale.
- 6.5 If a resident leaves either prior to an inspection, or after the inspection but prior to us writing to the resident explaining the recharges, the rechargeable repairs will be ordered and a letter and invoice sent to the forwarding address advising that the repair work will be recharged and explaining how those charges will be recovered.
- 6.6 The Council considers the pre-void inspection to be a critical and essential step in the void management process. A robust pre-void inspection supports the timely re-letting of properties, minimises avoidable void repair and clearance costs, and provides outgoing residents with clear expectations of what is required to leave the property in an acceptable condition.
- 6.7 Where notice of tenancy termination is received, the Council will endeavour to carry out a pre-void inspection within the first two weeks of the notice period, wherever practicable. This allows sufficient time for the outgoing resident to address identified issues whilst the tenancy remains active.
- 6.8 The pre-void inspection will comprise a full walk-through of the property, including any gardens, sheds or garages licensed to the resident. The inspection will record the condition of the property and clearly identify:

- Repairs or remedial works required to bring the property to an acceptable standard for re-let.
 - Any alterations or improvements and whether these are authorised in line with the Council's policies
 - Any items, furniture or possessions that must be removed by the outgoing resident prior to the end of the tenancy.
 - Any potential rechargeable repairs, clearance or remedial costs that may be incurred if actions are not completed.
- 6.9 Findings from the pre-void inspection will be clearly communicated to the outgoing resident or their representative, setting out the actions required before the tenancy ends and the potential consequences if these are not addressed.
- 6.10 The Council will provide outgoing residents with clear written guidance, including information on how to leave the property, expected standards at termination, and the circumstances in which charges may be applied. This may include the use of standard information leaflets or appendices to support consistent understanding and reduce avoidable disputes.
- 6.11 A record of the completed pre-void inspection, including any supporting photographs or documentation, must be saved against the property record within the Council's housing management system. A copy of the inspection outcomes will also be shared with the relevant Council officer or team responsible for coordinating and instructing void works, to support early planning and mobilisation of works in advance of keys being returned.
- 6.12 Where the resident is not present at the time of the inspection, the Council will write to the resident to confirm the outcomes of the inspection, including any actions required and any potential rechargeable items identified.
- 6.13 Where a resident vacates the property prior to a pre-void inspection or fails to complete required actions identified during the inspection, the Council may arrange for works, repairs or clearance to be undertaken. Any costs reasonably incurred as a result may be recharged to the outgoing resident in accordance with the Council's recharge processes, with details provided to the forwarding address.

Return of keys

- 7.1 The keys should be returned by the resident or the resident's representative on or before the agreed vacant possession date.
- 7.2 The rent account for the outgoing resident will be terminated on the date that the keys are returned. This ends the outgoing resident's rent obligation and starts the void accrual period from the following day.
- 7.3 Should keys not be returned on, or before, the agreed termination date, rent will continue to be charged on the property until the keys are received.

Death of Resident

- 8.1 When a resident dies and there is no succession, it is compulsory that the tenancy is formally ended through a four-week notice being served on the next of kin or the Public Trustee once notified.
- 8.2 The Council will advise the deceased resident's next of kin or Public Trustee of the process to formally end the tenancy, supplying the end of tenancy and vacant date.
- 8.3 The Council recognise that the loss of a family member or friend is a difficult and sensitive period and therefore extra time will be provided, if required, to clear the property past the expiry date of the notice.
- 8.4 The property must be left empty and in good condition. The estate of the deceased is responsible for settling any outstanding charges in respect of the property. The estate should also ensure that all supplies are turned off.

Abandonment

- 9.1 Abandonment will be decided following an investigation when there has been evidence or information supplied that the registered resident has left the property with no intention to return, and no termination of the tenancy has been received.
- 9.2 The Council will make reasonable enquiries to prove whether a property has been abandoned and record their findings.
- 9.3 The Council will consider:
 - If the property is secure
 - If possessions have been left in the property
 - Speaking to family and friends on contacts list
 - Information neighbours can provide
 - Unauthorised occupants
 - Collaborating with the Fraud Investigation team.
- 9.4 Legal action should be taken to recover the property once adequate evidence has been gained to confirm the abandonment.
- 9.5 Images should be taken to also act as a record to any items left by the previous resident and utilised as an inventory.

Eviction

- 10.1 Following an eviction - when receiving the property back via the courts and execution of the warrant - pictures and/or videos will be taken to also act as a record to any items left by the previous resident and utilised as an inventory within 24/48 hours of the repossession date. The Council will arrange removal of any items that are left to be placed in storage. The items would be left in

storage for one month where the Council is aware where the owner is and can serve notice on the tenant(s) to collect the items. Where the Council is unaware where the tenant(s) is, the period would be six months storage. After these periods, the Council would dispose of the items. This is in line with s41 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982.

Repairs

- 11.1 After the property has been vacated by the outgoing resident, the Council will organise a property inspection which will be undertaken by Council surveyors and staff from Oxford Direct Services or any equivalent organisation. The inspection records the condition of the property, notes property characteristics and records any work to be completed before re-letting. Information and costs about any recharges will be sent to the outgoing resident by letter or email.
- 11.2 The Council will complete all repair works before the property is re-let and within a clearly specified timescale. During this period, an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) assessment and where required a landlord gas safety record (LGSR) will be completed.
- 11.3 Once a property has been vacated, the Council will arrange for a post-termination inspection to be carried out by appropriately qualified Council officers and/or representatives of the Council's contracted repairs service. The inspection will record the condition of the property, confirm key characteristics, and identify all works required prior to re-letting.
- 11.4 The outcome of the inspection will inform a specification of works, which will be prepared in line with the Council's approved void and letting standards. These standards may vary depending on property type, tenure, or intended use, and are set out in the Council's associated policies and technical documents. The specification will ensure that properties are returned to an appropriate, consistent and compliant standard prior to re-let.
- 11.5 Where applicable, information gathered during the pre-termination inspection will be used to support early planning of works, reduce avoidable delays, and minimise void periods.
- 11.6 Details of any rechargeable repairs identified during the inspection process will be communicated to the outgoing resident in accordance with the Council's recharge procedures, and with reference to the outcomes of the pre-termination inspection where applicable.
- 11.7 The Council will ensure that all required repair works are completed before the property is re-let and within clearly defined and monitored timescales. During the void period, the Council will also ensure that all relevant statutory safety checks and certifications are completed as a matter of course prior to re-occupation. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - A valid Landlord Gas Safety Record (LGSR), where gas is present
 - Electrical safety certification in line with current legislation

- An Energy Performance Certificate (EPC), where required
- 11.8 No property will be re-let unless it meets the Council's letting standard and all required safety and compliance obligations have been satisfied.

Major Voids

- 12.1 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.
- 12.2 Consideration will be given to:
- Level of rent loss if the property is not occupied 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.
- 12.3 Decisions on potential disposals will follow the process as stipulated in the Disposals Policy.
- 12.4 Where a void property requires significant or non-routine works, and a high level of investment is likely to be required in order to bring the property up to an appropriate letting standard, the Council will apply enhanced oversight and control to ensure that works are justified, properly specified, and aligned with approved budgets and asset investment priorities.
- 12.5 In such cases, the Council may undertake an options appraisal to determine the most appropriate course of action. This may include consideration of whether works should proceed, be phased, be incorporated into planned investment programmes, or whether the property should be taken out of use.
- 12.6 The options appraisal will consider, where relevant:
- The level of rental loss associated with the property remaining void and the impact on the Housing Revenue Account.
 - Demand for the property type and location.
 - The nature, scope and overall cost of the works required to achieve the required standard.
 - Whether proposed works include replacement of major components (such as kitchens, bathrooms, heating systems, electrical installations or other lifecycle items) that may be more appropriately delivered through approved capital or planned investment programmes.
- 12.7 Where major works are approved, the Council will ensure that:
- The scope of works and associated costs are clearly defined and agreed in advance.

- Works are raised against the appropriate budget headings and cost codes, in line with the Council's financial controls and asset management arrangements.
 - Replacement of key components is recorded accurately within the Council's asset and property systems to support lifecycle planning, compliance and future investment decisions.
- 12.8 This approach ensures that high-cost voids are managed in a controlled and transparent manner, supports value for money, and prevents unplanned or inappropriate expenditure being incurred without appropriate visibility and approval.
- 12.9 Where it is determined that the works required are not financially viable, or that the property is no longer suitable for its intended use, decisions on disposal or alternative use will be taken in accordance with the Council's Disposals Policy.

Adapted Properties

- 13.1 Properties which are already adapted when they become void will be considered in line with the Aids and Adaptations Policy with the priority being to ensure best use of the adaptations.
- 13.2 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 resident, who requires the adaptations, can be identified. A property will be advertised with the appropriate adaptations listed in order for those on the housing register to identify a suitable tenant. A mobility report would be produced to show those individuals who have a need for adapted properties.
- 13.3 Decisions to remove major adaptations from properties will be made by the HRA Assets Lead based on all available information on the demand for the property and compliance with the Aids and Adaptations Policy.
- 13.4 Where a property contains adaptations, these will be considered in line with the Council's Aids and Adaptations Policy, with the primary objective of ensuring the best and most appropriate use of adapted housing stock to meet identified need.
- 13.5 In some cases, where a property has significant or specialist adaptations, the Council may choose to hold the property void for a longer period in order to identify a suitable incoming resident whose needs match the adaptations provided.
- 13.6 Information relating to adaptations within a property, including those identified during the pre-termination inspection process, will be used to inform decisions about re-let, suitability, and allocation. The Council will seek to maintain accurate records of adapted properties and the nature of adaptations provided, to support effective matching, asset management and strategic planning.

- 13.7 Decisions to remove, alter or replace adaptations will be made by the Council's HRA Assets team and Landlord Services taking into account demand, suitability, value for money, and compliance with the Aids and Adaptations Policy. Where adaptations have been authorised and are suitable to remain, they should not be removed unnecessarily.
- 13.8 This approach supports the effective use of adapted housing stock, reduces avoidable waste, and ensures that adaptations are managed in a coordinated and strategic manner.

Advertising Properties

- 14.1 Void properties will be advertised once the pre voids property inspection during the notice period or when the tenant has left the property unexpectedly has confirmed their condition, including any existing adaptations. The details of the inspection would be on a pro forma template before advertisement. All available properties will be marketed in line with the Council's established weekly advertising cycle. Shortlisting will be completed promptly, and nominations will be made within the agreed key performance indicators to ensure an efficient and transparent allocations process. All offers will be made in accordance with the Council's Allocations Scheme.

New Tenancies

- 15.1 New residents will be invited to sign the Tenancy Agreement. The terms of the Tenancy Agreement will be explained to ensure that the resident(s) is fully aware of the landlord and resident's responsibilities, and the consequences if conditions are breached. The new resident will also be provided with appropriate advice about:
- Paying their rent
 - Applying for benefits, if required
 - Setting up utilities
 - Reporting any repairs
 - Property information in the form of the property pack
- 15.2 All new residents will be given the opportunity to provide feedback relating to the voids and allocations process by completing a New Tenancy Survey at sign up. Feedback and satisfaction will be monitored and reported in accordance with the council's performance management framework.

Performance Management and Benchmarking

- 16.1 The Council is committed to ensuring its voids work offer excellent value for money and will therefore ensure that a range of mechanisms are in place to demonstrate value.
- 16.2 The mechanisms used will include:

- Benchmarking against peers. This is defined as local authority social housing providers and Registered Providers who have a housing stock of up to 10,000 dwellings
- Market testing against other providers
- Reviewing internal cost and performance data
- Internal business reviews

16.3 Operation of the Voids Policy and its procedures and subsequent data will be recorded monthly and reported on a quarterly basis. Details of procedures for gathering information and recording each stage of void processing and this information will be used to provide the following performance monitoring indicators:

- Average void time (standard voids) (days)
- Average void time (major voids) (days)
- Average void turnaround time (contractor only) (days)
- Total voids (number)
- Voids pre-handover inspections completed (%)
- Average void to advertising time (days)
- Voids meeting Letting Standard at handover
- Properties let after one offer (%) (YTD)
- Number of properties let
- Number of properties let (management transfer/direct offer)
- Properties offered within 10 days of handover (%) (YTD)
- Properties refused due to quality or condition (number - YTD)

16.4 Teams will work together within the Council and the Local Authority Trading Company (Oxford Direct Services) to ensure the efficient delivery of void properties to the market.

16.5 The following approach would be followed if targets are being missed to ensure void properties are not re-let in a timely period.

Stage	Action	Responsible Party	Outcome / Next Step
1. Ongoing Monitoring	Void performance will be reviewed through regular void meetings involving the Council, Oxford Direct Services (ODS), and Allocations. Progress against agreed target timescales will be monitored, including emerging risks, revised completion dates and barriers to re-let.	HRA Assets Team / Voids Manager	Live oversight of void performance and early identification of delay risks
2. Operational Management	Where a void is forecast to exceed target, the Voids Manager will review the	Voids Manager	Revised timescales and actions agreed

	reasons for delay, liaise with the relevant contractor or service area, and agree revised timescales and required actions to support delivery.		
3. Management Intervention	Where delays continue, or where specific issues are affecting delivery, the Voids Manager will work with the relevant contractor, service area or delivery partner to review progress, clarify expectations, and monitor the actions required to progress the void. This may include agreeing a recovery plan, revised timescales, and enhanced monitoring arrangements.	Voids Manager / HRA Assets Team	Recovery plan in place and progress monitored
4. Senior Escalation	Where delay presents a material risk to void performance, rental income, customer outcomes or reputation, the matter will be escalated by the Voids Manager to the HRA Operations Manager for review and direction. The Head of HRA Assets will be informed through reporting and escalation arrangements where delays are prolonged, high-risk, or otherwise significant.	Voids Manager / HRA Operations Manager	Senior management oversight applied, with Head of HRA Assets visibility where required
5. Reporting and Assurance	Void performance, including prolonged delays, emerging trends and high-risk cases, will be reported through the Council's management and governance arrangements. This will ensure appropriate oversight by the Head of HRA Assets and wider senior leadership as required.	HRA Operations Manager / Head of HRA Assets	Organisational oversight, reporting assurance and service improvement

16.6 Timely escalation helps minimise income loss and ensures properties are re-let efficiently.

16.7 Regular monitoring and communication between teams is essential throughout the process.

Key Targets

17.1 The Council recognises the importance of working to clear and measurable timescales in the management of void properties. For the purposes of this policy, a distinction is made between:

- a) contractor works targets, which relate to the period from works commencement to completion of void works; and
- b) end-to-end relet performance, which relates to the full void period from the previous tenancy end date to the start date of the new tenancy.

17.2 - The following contractor works targets apply once the void works have commenced, subject to property classification, specification, statutory compliance requirements, access, availability of materials and any approved exceptions:

- Minor void works: 5 working days
- Standard void works: 15 working days
- Major void works: 25 working days
- Exceptional voids: target timescale to be agreed on a case-by-case basis, with enhanced monitoring and review

17.3 These contractor works targets do not represent the full end-to-end void turnaround target. The overall end-to-end relet period includes all stages of the void process, including tenancy termination, key return, inspection, specification, compliance checks, works, advertising, allocation, viewing, acceptance and tenancy sign-up.

17.4 - The Council's indicative end-to-end standard void relet target is 35 calendar days, measured from the previous tenancy end date to the start of the new tenancy, excluding properties formally classified as major, exceptional, complex, or deliberately held for operational reasons. This target will be monitored alongside stage-based performance indicators to ensure that delays are identified and addressed across the full process.

17.5 - In respect of decant properties, adapted properties awaiting a suitable match, properties held for operational reasons, or properties requiring options appraisal, disposal consideration, structural works, fire / flood reinstatement or other complex intervention, the Council may classify these separately so that they do not distort standard void performance reporting. These properties will remain subject to management oversight, review and appropriate reporting.

17.6 - It is important to note that all targets are intended to support effective performance management and service improvement. Staff, contractors and partner teams should always seek to minimise avoidable delay, reduce rent loss and return homes to occupation as quickly as possible, while ensuring that homes are safe, compliant and meet the Council's letting standard.

17.7 A major void includes:

- Structural repairs – these are works that are essential to maintain stability and weather resistance in the main structural elements of a dwelling ie floors, walls and roofs as determined by the surveyor. Major works to these elements will involve replacement or substantial reconstruction of the component or element
- Site works – this is work around and specific to the dwellings involved and is essential to the safety, security and protection of tenants (eg the replacement or substantial reconstruction of unstable boundary walls, footpaths etc)
- Consequential and other works – these are works that are required as a consequence of major repairs such as reinstatement or making good finishes and fittings.
- Any works that significantly improve the dwellings (ie capitalised repairs) should only be classified as major repairs if they could not reasonably be carried out with a tenant in occupation
- Emergency repairs constitute any defect that puts the health, safety or security of the tenant or a third party at immediate risk; or that affects the structure of the building adversely. These would qualify as reasons for classifying the property as needing major repairs
- Asbestos removal – Notifiable asbestos works should be counted as major works. Non-notifiable asbestos works should be counted as standard void works.

17.8 An exceptional void refers to a property that is vacant but is excluded from standard re-letting performance targets due to specific, long-term, or non-routine circumstances. Unlike standard voids (short-term turnovers), these properties are often undergoing major, complex, or strategic work that prevents them from being occupied. This includes installation of components such as, for example, air source heat pumps.

17.9 If an extension is needed due to individual circumstances within a property, the contractor can seek permission from the Council in advance of these timescales being potentially breached.

Training

18.1 The Council will ensure that all staff involved in the void process will have the required skills, training and detailed understanding of this policy and related procedures.

Policy Review

19.1 This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure it remains current, effective and aligned with legislative, regulatory and organisational requirements.

19.2 The policy will normally be reviewed every three years, or sooner where there are significant changes to legislation, regulation, service delivery arrangements, or the Council's strategic priorities.

Equalities Assessment

- 20.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been carried out to determine whether the policy would have an impact on any member of staff, tenants, or contractor workforce, which unfairly discriminates or disadvantages them in the context of the Equality Act 2010.
- 20.2 The EqIA has identified that there are no particular groups who will be unlawfully disadvantaged by this policy.

Associated Policies and Documents

- 21.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with the Council's wider suite of housing, safety, compliance and asset management policies and procedures, including (but not limited to):

Gas Safety Policy

- Electrical Safety Policy
- Fire Safety Policy
- Asbestos Management Policy
- Aids and Adaptations Policy
- Disposals Policy

- 21.2 Associated operational documents and guidance may include:

- Pre-termination inspection procedures and templates
- Void and letting standards
- Resident guidance and information provided at end of tenancy, including expectations for property condition, clearance of possessions and potential recharges

- 21.3 These associated documents set out the detailed standards, processes and guidance that support delivery of this policy.