

OPS046 - Termination and Void Management Policy

MONITORING FORM	
Department	Housing and Technical Services
Department Director	Operations
This policy is applicable to	Housing Management and Technical Services
Author	Housing Manager
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Date of next review	September 2022
Internal /external consultees (if required)	Housing Management and Technical services

1. INTRODUCTION (AIM)

- 1.1 The Void Management Policy aims to ensure that Weslo Housing Management (Weslo HM) allocates all of its vacant (void) properties as quickly as practicable, and within the prescribed timescales as agreed by the Board of Management, and to minimise rent loss as a result of properties being empty.
- 1.2 Every property that we allocate should be let in accordance with our Housing Allocation Policy and should meet our Void Lettable Standard as detailed in **Appendix A**.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1 For the purposes of this policy it is deemed to include Weslo HM housing stock, all employees (permanent, temporary or contracted) and any other stakeholder if relevant to the Policy.

3. CONTENT (OBJECTIVES)

- 3.1 Our objectives are:
 - being efficient and proactive in fulfilling our statutory and contractual obligations as a landlord;
 - ensuring that tenants are fully aware of their legal obligations in relation to giving notice to terminate their tenancy and the condition in which the property must be left at the end of the agreement;
 - accelerating void turnaround;
 - minimising void rent loss;
 - identifying low demand stock and the factors which have led to this and developing appropriate strategies (including local initiatives) to deal with them;
 - ensuring that staff are fully trained in their area of work (i.e. housing management/void management) so that they have the appropriate skills to deal with issues that arise; and
 - monitoring and reviewing void performance and management issues and intervening as appropriate.

4. COMPLIANCE WITH REGULATORY STANDARDS

- 4.1 In terms of the Scottish Social Housing Charter, the Scottish Housing Regulator has identified a number of key indicators relevant to void management by which it will measure landlord performance, including the following:
- 4.2 Quality of housing – tenants’ homes as a minimum, meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) when they are allocated, are always clean, tidy and in a good state of repair, and also meet the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH) by December 2020. EESH sets the minimum energy efficiency standard for social housing in Scotland. EESH

was developed by the Scottish Government following consultation with social landlords and tenants.

- 4.3 Value for money – tenants, owners and other customers receive services that provide continually improving value for the rent they pay.

5. INFORMING AND INVOLVING TENANTS AND STAKEHOLDERS

- 5.1 In order to ensure that our tenants are fully aware of our commitment to them, we will promote our Termination and Void Management Policy through our website and tenancy calendar. Where we plan to make significant changes to this policy, we will consult tenants through short-life working groups, consultation events or our Tenant Scrutiny Panel.

6. LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

- 6.1 We will comply with all relevant statutory legislation, current applicable Regulations and good practice, including:
- The Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, 2001, 2010 & 2014; and
 - The Scottish Social Housing Charter.
- 6.2 Our tenancy agreement defines the roles and responsibilities of Weslo HM as landlord and those of our tenants when a property is to be vacated (e.g. tenants are required to give 28 days' notice and leave their house in reasonable condition etc.) It also states that we will ensure that all of our properties should be wind and watertight, safe and secure. This also applies not only to tenanted houses but to our void properties.

7. CONTENT AND KEY PRINCIPLES

- 7.1 Pre-Termination and Void Management Process

Although there are distinct stages in the process, they will usually operate concurrently to expedite void turnaround and minimise void rent loss. A number of staff and contractors are involved in the process as set out in our Termination and Void Management Procedures.

Key stages in the void management process include:

- pre-termination arrangements;
- end of tenancy;
- void repairs; and
- shortlisting and allocation.

- 7.2 Pre-termination Arrangements

In accordance with their Tenancy Agreement, tenants are required to give us 28-days' notice that they are intending to end their tenancy. In order to

ensure that we are receiving a house in a good condition, we will carry out a pre-termination visit and inspection. At this visit we will advise the tenant of their responsibility prior to handing in their keys and will advise of any possible recharges as set out within our Rechargeable Repairs Policy. There will however be circumstances where we do not receive notice and where it is not possible to carry out a pre-termination visit, such as where the tenant has died, where a property has been abandoned by the former tenant or where the former tenant has been evicted.

7.3 End of Tenancy

Once a tenancy has been ended, we will (in summary) in accordance with our procedure:

- update our tenancy and property records;
- arrange for the gas safety and asbestos safety checks to be carried out the void property to be inspected and necessary repairs instructed;
- identify and pursue any former tenant arrears, rechargeable repairs etc; and
- allocate the property.

7.4 Void Repairs

We inspect all of our empty properties to assess their condition, suitability for re-letting and instruct repairs to ensure that our properties meet our Lettable Standard as detailed at Appendix A.

In accordance with our Asset Management Strategy we will generally carry out Planned Programme Renewals, such as kitchens/bathrooms etc. out when the tenant is living in the property. This will coincide with our approved investment timetable in accordance with our planned maintenance programme. However, in certain circumstance it may be more expedient to carry out planned programme renewals when a property is void – there is discretion to do so where it is financially viable and where this has been agreed by the Operations Director.

7.5 Void Categories

In order to manage our void properties efficiently and with regard to void rental loss we have defined our voids by 4 categories:

V1 (5 Days) – Where safety checks and minimal works are required.

V2 (10 Days) –Where safety checks and standard level of void works are required to a higher degree than the 5-day category.

V3 (20 Days) –Where safety checks and major works or a higher volume of repairs are required. Within the 20 Day void category there may also be the ability to undertake a void Exemption Request. This may be in cases where for example major Asbestos works are required.

PV – Policy Voids – these will be longer term voids resulting from action required due to e.g. Fire damage/Flood/Asbestos removal/Major Works where we would not allow or expect a tenant to live in the property. This is detailed within the Termination and Void Management Policy.

7.6 Rechargeable Repairs

There may be occasions where the outgoing tenant has failed to clear their house of all of their belongings, e.g. floorcoverings, white kitchen goods and furniture. Often this is with good intention as they believe that they will be of use to the incoming tenant or they have agreed with the incoming tenant that the belongings will be left.

In relation to our properties where we have not carried out an Asbestos Safety inspection, this is inappropriate as it prevents such inspection being carried out properly and effectively.

Until such times as we are aware of the position in regard to Asbestos safety in every property owned by Weslo HM, we require all properties to be completely cleared. The officers responsible for the voids pre-termination inspection stress this to the outgoing tenant and explain that a rechargeable repair will be instructed (as detailed within the Rechargeable Repairs Policy) for all items left within the property.

In circumstances where we have carried out an Asbestos Safety inspection we will allow the outgoing tenant to leave goods in the property, provided that they do not pose a health or safety issue for the incoming tenant. The Housing Officer will be responsible for determining the suitability of the goods. In such instances the incoming tenant will be required to sign a mandate to the effect that the goods are now their responsibility and any future requirement for repair and maintenance will not be undertaken by Weslo HM.

7.7 Tenant selection and allocation of the property

We will allocate our void properties in accordance with our Allocations Policy.

8. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

8.1 This policy will always be carried out in accordance with Weslo HM's Policy of Equality & Diversity which aims to promote diversity, fairness, social justice and equality of opportunity by adopting and promoting fair policies and procedures.

8.2 We have carried out an Equality Impact Assessment and identified actions which have been incorporated into the Pre-Termination and Void Management procedure.

9. PUBLICISING AND AVAILABILITY

- 9.1 This policy is available on the Weslo HM website, to Board and staff members and any other key stakeholders. Copies are available free of charge. A summary of this policy can be made available in other formats and languages on request.

10. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 10.1 Weslo HM recognises that void management is a key landlord responsibility. We will therefore seek to mitigate against business risk through managing our void management service in an efficient, effective and economic manner.

11. MONITORING AND REPORTING

- 11.1 Performance management is extremely important in order to assess whether the policy objectives and statutory obligations are being met.
- 11.2 It is a requirement to meet the Scottish Housing Regulator's activity standards. The specific indicators to monitor the policy are detailed below
- Number of Voids let within 5 calendar days
 - Number of Voids let within 10 calendar days
 - Number of Voids let within 20 calendar days
 - Number of Voids let greater than 20 calendar days
 - Average time taken to re-let properties (I30)
 - Total number of properties let
 - Total number of calendar days properties were empty
 - % of properties that became vacant (I17)
 - Total number of properties that arose in the last year in self-contained lettable stock
 - % of rent lost through properties being empty during the last year (I18)
 - Total value of rent due for the reporting year
 - Total rent loss through properties being empty during the reporting year

12. COMPLAINTS (if applicable within the Policy)

- 12.1 Anyone wishing to make a **formal** complaint about the services provided by the organisation should do so as per our complaint's procedure.

13. OTHER RELEVANT POLICIES and PROCEDURES

- 13.1 This policy relates to:
- Corporate Plan
 - Business Plan
 - Financial Regulation

- Allocations Policy
- Asbestos Management Policy
- Electrical Safety Policy
- Fire Risk Management Policy
- Gas Safety Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Rechargeable Repairs Policy
- Rent Setting Policy
- Repairs & Maintenance Policy
- Water Safety Policy
- Write – Off Policy

14. POLICY REVIEW

- 14.1 This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner if legislative or best practice changes requires it.

Void Lettable Standard



October 2019

1. INTRODUCTION

Weslo Housing Management seeks to ensure that all empty houses that we allocate meet the void lettable standard which is attached to this policy.

Once notified that an empty house, referred to as a 'Void' is becoming available, our aim is for new tenants to be able to move quickly into their new home and enjoy living there.

We seek to minimise the time that our properties are empty and we therefore ensure that outgoing tenants leave their homes in good condition. However empty houses need to be inspected and potentially have a number of repairs carried out before a new tenant can move in.

Our starting point is to ensure that all our houses are safe, wind and watertight. Over and above that we will ensure that our properties meet our Lettable Standard as detailed below.

2. REVIEW OF THE LETTABLE STANDARD

We will routinely review our Lettable Standard within the context of our Allocation Policy. New tenants should receive a settling in visit shortly after moving into their new tenancy. New tenants will have the opportunity to provide feedback on the Minimum Lettable Standard. This feedback will be considered when the Minimum Lettable Standard is reviewed.

Void Lettable Standard	
Location	Standard
External	
ROOF	
tilled/slate	Wind and watertight – free of water ingress/secure roof tiles/slates
flat surface	Wind and watertight – free of water ingress/surface material secure
gutters/downpipes	Free of visible damage/weed growth. Where required work will be carried out post void.
ridge/hip/verges	Pointing will be in place and secure. Where required work will be carried out post void.
fascia/soffits	Securely fixed to the property. Where required work will be carried out post void.
chimney	Where in place will be tested to ensure free air flow and will be of sound structure
EXTERNAL WALLS	
render/roughcast/timber clad/EWI	Free of major cracks/no visible bossing to roughcast. Where required work will be carried out post void.
facing bricks to lower area	Will have secure pointing. Where required work will be carried out post void.
air bricks	Free of blockage and obstruction. Where required work will be carried out post void.
EXTERNAL LIGHT to rear	Where the existing light is unsafe or may cause any Health and Safety issues it will be replaced
DOORS - front and rear	
canopies above surface	Will be safe and secure
security	Free of any major damage – Where required work will be carried out post void unless it presents a danger.
handles/hinges	Will open freely and close securely
draught excluder	Will be operational
threshold bar	Draught excluders will fit securely and be undamaged. Where required work will be carried out post void.
letter plate	Will be secure and prevents water ingress. Where required, work will be carried out post void.
glazing	Will be operational. Where required, work will be carried out post void.
GRABRAILS/ HANDRAILS	Any glazing panels will comply with British Safety standards at the time of installation.
FENCING	Will be securely fixed where they exist
boundary	Boundary fencing will be sound and free of defects. Where required, fencing will be replaced with 1.2m picket fence single slatted. Where the existing fence

	is unsafe or may cause health and safety issues it will be replaced with 1.2m picket fence or chain link fence. Where required work will be carried out post void, unless the condition presents a danger.
divisional	Divisional fencing between two of Weslo tenanted properties will remain the responsibility of Weslo. Where one of the properties is privately owned the Owner Liaison officer will be involved.
GATES	
gate	Gates will be secure to the fence post, free of defects and functioning properly. Where missing or requiring repair it will be repaired or replaced with a standard gate.
gate latch	The gate latch will be secure to the gate and fence post and functioning properly. Where required, work will be carried out post void, unless it presents a danger.
DECKING	
front garden	There will be no decking. Any previously located in the front garden will be removed as this does not comply with Local Authority Regulations.
back garden	Where permission has previously been granted to the former tenant, decking will only be left where it is structurally sound and complies with local Planning Regulations. In the event that the Technical Officer deems that it is acceptable to leave the decking, the incoming tenant will be required to sign a legally binding mandate to the effect that they are taking on the responsibility.
DRIVEWAYS	
	Where a driveway exists it will be maintained by Weslo. We will ensure that it is of sound construction and free of trip hazards.
FOOTPATHS	
	Slabbing/tarmac paths will be free of trip hazards.
DOOR STEPS	
	Will be safe and secure. Where there are more than 3 steps we will fit a handrail
GARDEN FRONT/REAR	
grassed areas/hedges	Not overgrown
garden sheds/greenhouses	Any belonging to previous tenant that have not been removed may be left for the incoming tenant if it is in good condition. The incoming tenant will have to sign a mandate accepting the ongoing responsibility for the maintenance of the structure.
debris	All debris will be removed
bin shed areas	All debris will be removed
Internal	
FLOORS	
concrete	Free of major cracks. Where required work will be carried out post void unless it presents a danger.
timber floorboards	Secure and free of woodworm/dry rot/wet rot

chipboard	Will be secure, dry and free of signs of deterioration
WALLS	
plasterboard	Free of dampness Ames tape will be secure
plaster	Free of major cracks. No crack will be greater than 0.5mm wide. Plaster work should be sound and show no signs of bossing. No signs of mould, mould growth or water ingress Free of graffiti or offensive language or drawings
CEILINGS	
plasterboard	Free of dampness Ames tapes will be secure.
plaster	Free of major cracks. No crack will be greater than 0.5mm wide – No signs of mould, ,mould growth or water ingress
polystyrene tiles/coving	No ceiling will have polystyrene tiles/coving
STAIRS	
treads/risers	Secure and in good condition, free of woodworm/dry rot/wet rot
handrail	Fixed securely to wall
banister	Fixed securely to wall
WINDOWS	
opening unit	Will open and close freely
handles/hinges/locks	Securely fitted to the windows and in good working order
safety catches	Securely fitted to the windows and in good working order
trickle vents	Will be operational and free of any blockages
DOORS	
surface	Free of splits/major dents/holes and securely hung
handles/hinges	Securely fitted to the door and in good working order
doors standards/checks/facings	Fixed securely to wall, free of woodworm/dry rot/wet rot
glazing	Any glazing panels will comply with British Standards at the time of installation.
KITCHEN	
worktop	Free of cracks and holes / securely fixed to the base units. Seal in place between worktop and back wall Sealant should be intact, clean and free of mould
tiles	Free of cracks and holes securely fixed and grout should be intact, clean and free of mould
base units	Fixed securely to wall
wall units	Fixed securely to wall
base/wall unit doors	Fixed securely to base/wall units
handles to base/wall unit doors	Fixed securely to doors
hinges to base/wall unit doors	Fixed securely to doors/base and wall units, allowing the doors to open and close freely
kick plate below base units	Fixed securely to base units

Sink	Fixed securely to base unit and sealed to ensure there is no water ingress to below. Sealant should be intact, clean and free of mould
plug and chain taps	A plug and chain will be fixed to the kitchen sink Fixed securely to sink and allowing water to flow freely through the taps with no leaks. Clean and free of mould
ventilation	Adequate ventilation will be in place
BATHROOM	
bath	Free of cracks and holes. Fitted securely
w.c.	Free of cracks and holes. Secure to wall – free of any excessive residual staining.
w.c. seat	This will be renewed
cistern	Free of cracks and holes. Secure to wall and functioning properly
wash hand basin (whb)	Free of major cracks and holes. Fixed securely to the wall
wash hand basin pedestal taps (whb/bath)	Free of cracks and holes Fixed securely to floor Fixed securely to wash hand basin/bath and allowing water to flow freely through the taps with no leaks. Clean and free of mould
plugs and chains – whb/bath	Wash hand basin and bath will be fitted with a plug and chain
shower	Safe, fixed securely to wall and in good working order. Shower head and hose renewed
shower screen	Safe, fixed securely to wall and in good working order. Sealant should be intact, clean and free of mould
shower rail	Safe, fixed securely to wall and in good working order
grab rails	Safe, fixed securely to wall and in good working order
wallboards	Fixed securely to walls and sealed around bath and at wash hand basin. Sealant should be intact, clean and free of mould
tiling	Fixed securely to wall and sealed around bath and at wash hand basin. Free of cracks and holes and grout should be intact, clean and free of mould
floorcovering	Free of any damage and trip hazard
ventilation	Adequate ventilation will be in place
legionella	Will comply with current Regulations
ELECTRICS	
safety	Safety check carried out and remedial works undertaken to comply with current Regulation and Standards
sockets and switches	Securely fixed to walls. Free of paint and adequate in each room to comply with current Regulations and Standards
immersion heater	Where in place will be operational

electric fire	Where in place with be operational and remedial works undertaken to comply with current Regulation and Standards
smoke & heat detectors	Where in place will be operational and remedial works undertaken to comply with current Regulation and Standards. Installation required if not already in place.
GAS	
safety	Gas supply capped at date keys received from outgoing tenant and re-connected at date of new tenancy start date
carbon monoxide detector	The property will be fitted with a Carbon Monoxide Detector
boiler	Safety check carried out and remedial works undertaken
Thermostatic Radiator Valves (TRVs)	Radiators will be fitted with TRVs to allow tenant to regulate heating
safety certificate	A Copy (yellow) will be left with new tenant after the gas engineer turns on and tests the system.
pipes	Free of leaks
radiators	Fixed securely to walls
radiator in hall	This will not be fitted with a TRV as it is a by-pass radiator
WATER	Hot water cylinders will be insulated to current standard
General	
ATTIC	
entrance to	Entrance hatch will be in good working order to allow access
attic space	Clear of all debris/previous tenant belongings
attic space	Free of woodworm/dry rot/wet rot
skylight	Sealed to prevent water ingress
insulation	Thermal insulation will be in place to a thickness as detailed within current Regulations.
PLUMBING	
stopcocks	Free and in working order
water pipes	Secure and not leaking. Adequately pipe clipped to prevent vibration
exposed/vulnerable pipework	Will be lagged to minimise the risk of freezing
EPC: Energy Performance Certificate	Renewed where required. Displayed next to the electrical board.
CLEANLINESS	
kitchen cupboards/worktops	Will be free of debris and clean
sanitary ware	All bathroom fittings will be clean
rooms/halls (including cupboards & window sills)	Will be free of debris, brushed out and cleaned where required

electrical fittings throughout	Will be clean and free of paint
poor house condition (cleanliness)	Where required a deep clean will be undertaken (in house)
extremely poor house (health and safety concerns)	Where there are issue around Health and Safety – such as drug related items, body fluids, faeces a specialist cleaning company will be appointed.
REFUSE /RECYCLING BINS	All bins will be emptied. Any replacement should be sought through the local council.
DECORATION	A decoration allowance in the form of white /magnolia emulsion paint in 10L tins will be issued to the new tenant. The quantity will be determined based on the standard of decoration /cleanliness of the property.