

Empty Homes Policy

Reference: Housing Act 1985, Equality Act 2010.

Related Policies: Moving Home Policy, Repairs and Maintenance Policy, Aids & Adaptations Policy, Health & Safety Policy, Paying your Rent Policy, Assistance to Elderly Disabled and Blind Policy, Succession and Assignment Policy.

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1. Why do we have this Policy?

The key objectives of this policy are:

- To minimise the time new customers wait to move into a Housing Solutions home;
- To minimise empty home rent loss;
- To facilitate repair works as quickly and efficiently as possible;
- To prepare homes to a consistent minimum standard that is communicated and understood by residents;
- To maximise customer satisfaction with new homes.
- To maintain sector leading empty homes management performance.

Housing Solutions is committed to ensuring a fast, efficient and effective re-let process for vacant properties. In managing the empty homes process we will limit the rental loss by minimising the time that the property is unoccupied. We aim to ensure that when re-let our properties meet our minimum empty homes standard i.e.; are safe, clean, in sound condition with all services in working order. Housing Solutions have clear time deadlines to ensure that the necessary works required for an empty home are completed. By detailing the stages of the empty homes work required we will endeavour to meet these deadlines.

Housing Solutions holds a reputable position nationally against our peers with our void management procedures and we aim to maintain this position and encourage the organisation to aid with any improvements to this in the future.

Housing Solutions employ a dedicated Home Inspection Team who work closely with our lettings department to achieve our Key Performance Indicators and ensure that the process runs smoothly for our customers.

2. Our approach to Empty Homes Management

Housing Solutions always requires 4 weeks written notice from a customer who is moving out. Tenancies are always terminated on a Sunday. This means that when the tenancy is terminated on the first Sunday, at least 4 weeks' notice must be given.

From time to time, customers leave their home with no intention of returning and fail to inform Housing Solutions. The abandonment procedure is detailed in the Empty Homes Procedure (appendix 1).

When a customer dies, appropriate action will be taken to legally end the tenancy if there is not a joint tenant or eligible successor to the tenancy. Rent remains payable until the tenancy has ended.

Tenancies brought to an end by eviction from Housing Solutions are dealt with in line with Housing Solutions' Paying your Rent Policy.

There are other circumstances where tenancy terminations will not result in the properties being classed as empty. These are detailed below, and the processing of such tenancy ends will be dealt with under their own individual Policies and Procedures:

- Mutual Exchange;
- Succession and Assignment,

Where a property has been marked for disposal as part of the Asset Management Strategy and once vacant the empty buildings procedure will be followed (see appendix 5)

3. Empty Home Inspection and Security

Wherever possible, Housing Solutions will carry out a pre-transfer inspection with the outgoing customers' in-situ. We will display a firm and consistent approach to property standards, which include the condition of decoration and cleanliness.

We will make outgoing customers aware of their responsibilities to:

- Undertake any repairs that are your responsibility and reinstate any alterations you have made;
- Vacate the property by the agreed termination date;
- Remove all furniture, personal belongings and unwanted items by the agreed termination date;
- Return all keys including shed, window and communal by termination date;
- Leave the property and any garden areas in a clean and tidy condition;
- Ensure that any outstanding rent and rechargeable repair charges are paid;
- Read any meters and advise utility companies that you are leaving and settle any outstanding debts on the utility meters.

For Care and Supported homes keys should remain at the home and contact will be initiated by the Home Inspection team.

In cases where the outgoing customer is transferring to another landlord's property, we will recharge them if acceptable standards are not achieved.

As soon as a property becomes empty our Home Inspection team will carry out an inspection within 24 hours of receiving the keys to:

- Assess the condition of the property left by the outgoing customer;
- Identify and organise any remedial repairs required to bring the property up to our 'Minimum Empty Home Standard' (see appendix 3);
- Check the gas and electrics;
- Assess whether there are any other planned maintenance works to be carried out, such as

kitchen and bathroom works, before the new tenant moves in. In order to re-let homes as quickly as possible, it is our policy, wherever possible, to undertake planned works post occupation. Any planned works that will be completed after the new tenant has moved in will be identified and a start date offered;

- Identify any relatively minor repairs that can be carried out after the new tenant has moved in;
- Assess the condition of the decorating and cleanliness of the property and the need for any decorating or cleaning works;
- Complete an Energy Performance Certificate.

While the property is being brought up to the minimum empty home standard the lettings team will be identifying a new tenant; further details can be found in our Moving Home policy. As soon as the property has reached the minimum empty home standards, we will arrange a viewing/sign-up interview and a tenancy start date.

Housing Solutions will change all locks before a new tenant moves in. Within 24 hours of the empty homes works being completed the Home Inspection Team will carry out a post inspection to ensure that the property meets the minimum empty homes standard and to ensure that all the required compliance checks have been carried out prior to occupation. The Home Inspection Team will follow through the Empty Homes Checklist (see appendix 2) during the post inspection and the Surveying Services Manager and Lettings will sign the document to confirm receipt of all the required paperwork. Photographs will also be taken of the new bathroom and kitchen (where applicable) and will be stored on the association's database. Once this inspection is completed the keys will be passed to the Tenancy and Neighbourhood Team to carry out viewings and signup.

4. Gifting

In some circumstances where items, fixtures and fittings are in good working condition these can be gifted to the new customer. This means that the new customer takes on responsibility for any repair or replacement of that item, fixture or fitting going forward for which they will be asked to sign a disclaimer. All such items will be recorded on the Empty Homes Checklist (see appendix 2)

5. Decoration Allowance

Housing Solutions will pay a decoration allowance in the form of a decorating scheme voucher; the value will be at the Home Inspection team's discretion.

The voucher can be used in applicable stores to purchase **only** decorating packs.

Housing Solutions provides decorating assistance for specific tenancies where residents are 55 and over. Properties that relate to these tenancies will be fully decorated prior to re-occupation. These properties and residents are therefore exempt from the decorating allowance detailed above.

Further information on additional help and support available can be found in our Assistance to the Elderly, Disabled and Blind Policy.

For our Care and Supported sites the Home Inspection Team will arrange for the flats to be decorated (where eligible) before a new customer moves in. therefore, no vouchers will be issued to the new customer moving in.

6. End of Tenancy Bonus

Housing Solutions want to reward customers who maintain their homes to a good standard. By encouraging customers to leave their homes in a good standard, Housing Solutions can provide homes to new customers more quickly and save money on repairs and clearance.

To qualify for our end of tenancy bonus you must meet the following criteria:

- Provide 28 days written notice;
- Pay your utilities bills and leave to arrears;
- Pay for any damage to the property or put it right;
- Leave your home completely empty;
- Leave garden sheds empty;
- Remove satellite dishes;
- Remove any rubbish from the garden and communal area;
- If you have made any changes to the property the work must have been done with our permission;
- Return all the keys;

A final inspection will be carried out by our Home Inspection team to determine eligibility for the bonus payment. The end of Tenancy Bonus is currently £100 and is reviewed annually. If the tenancy has ended in one of the following ways however, residents will not be eligible for the bonus payment:

- Customers move via Home Swapper or a Mutual Exchange;
- Customers move as a compulsory temporary transfer;
- Abandonment;
- Repossession.

Full details of the end of tenancy bonus scheme can be found on our website:
www.housingsolutions.co.uk

If you fail to leave your property in the condition set out in section 3, Housing Solutions reserves the right to recharge customers for any works caused as a result of neglect, wilful damage or misuse (including accidental damage) by a customer, their family or their visitors, including any un-

authorised alterations to the property during the tenancy and for the removal of items left in the property. Additional information is listed in our Repairs and Maintenance Policy.

7. Responsibilities

Housing Solutions will ensure that all staff responsibilities in relation to the empty homes procedures are clear.

The Director of Asset Management and Head of Housing Services will be responsible for managing the overall performance of empty homes management.

The Home Inspection Team will be responsible for co-ordinating the whole empty homes management procedure and will ensure that all empty property times are kept to a minimum via ownership of the process from customer exit to new customer. The Home Inspection Team are responsible for the keys to the empty home. They will also be responsible for providing all compliance paperwork associated with the property together with a completed and signed Empty Homes Checklist. They will provide a copy to the customer on sign up and maintain a copy on the Housing Solutions database. Please see appendix 2 for an example of the Empty Homes Checklist.

The Home Inspection Team will also maintain contact with the new customer and within 1 week of moving into the new property will review the new customers experience and ensure that any issues are addressed promptly.

8. Performance Management

Housing Solutions uses Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) to monitor and benchmark its services and performance against set criteria and standards. KPI's are reviewed annually in line with performance with an assumption that performance will continually improve.

Housing Solutions reports on KPI's on a monthly basis to Senior Managers and the Executive Team. Performance is reported quarterly to Board and to Residents via Streets Ahead.

In order to continuously improve Housing Solutions "empty homes management working group" will regularly meet and review operational performance. Housing Solutions carry out a customer satisfaction survey to the new customer to ensure they are satisfied with the re-let process and the overall condition of the property. This data is reviewed by Senior Managers and Executive Team.

9. Appeals

Residents who wish to make a complaint about the Empty Homes management process may do so in line with Housing Solutions' Complaints Policy which can be found on our website; www.housingsolutions.co.uk

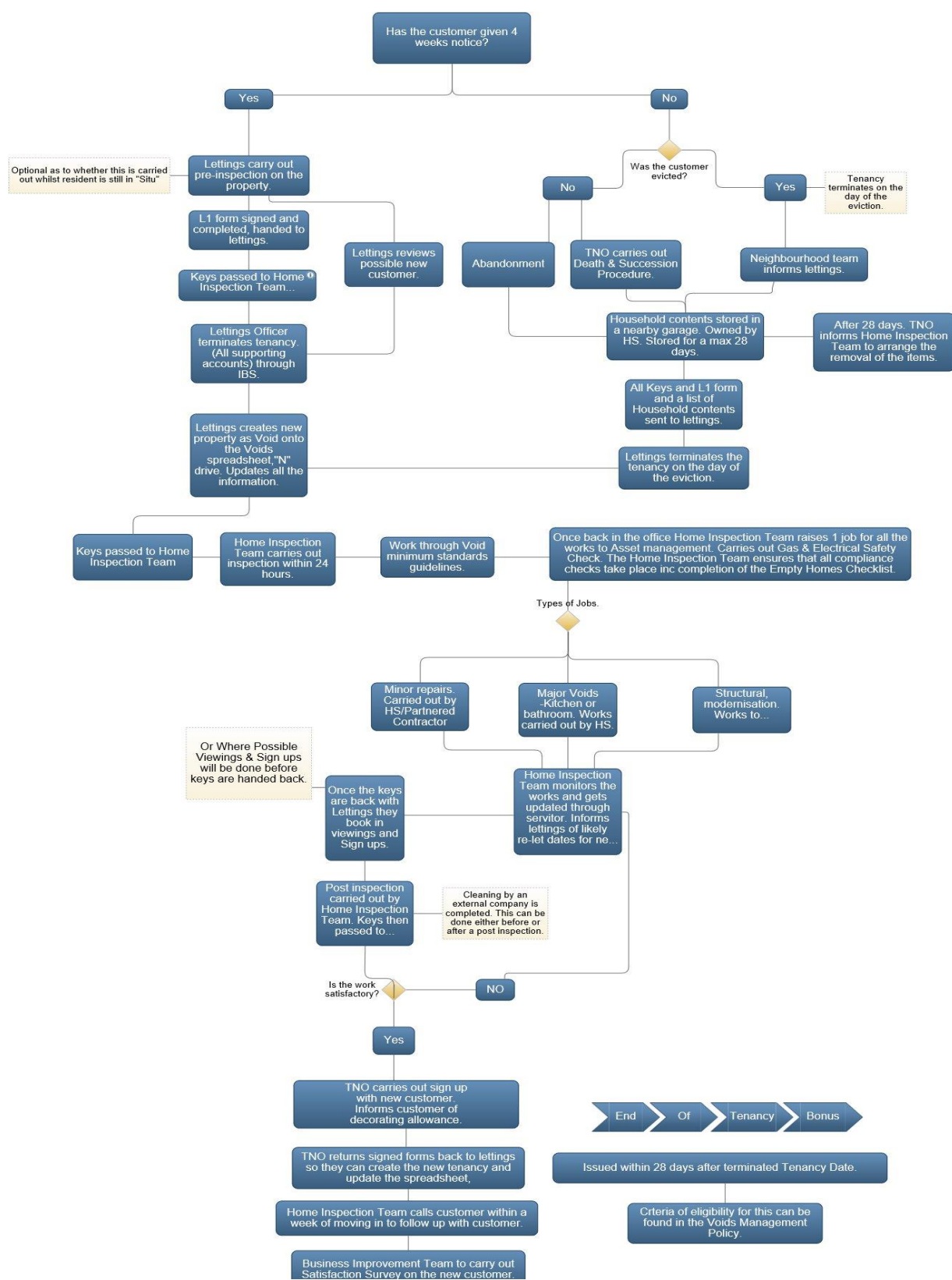
10. Equal Opportunities

Housing Solutions is committed to a policy of fair and equal treatment for all our members, tenants, employees and applicants, regardless of religion, sexual orientation, age, class, racial origin, sex, disability or marital status as determined in the Equality & Diversity Strategy.

11. Review

The policy will be reviewed on a three yearly basis, or in response to changes in legislation, regulatory guidance, or in any other relevant Housing Solutions policy.

Appendix One – Empty Home Procedure



Appendix Two – Empty Homes Checklist

EMPTY HOMES CHECKLIST

PROPERTY ADDRESS:	
Job No.	

HANDOVER INFORMATION:			
	Date	By	Signed
Keys returned			
Lock change			
Key safe INSTALLED			
Key safe REMOVED			

GENERAL INFORMATION:			
			Comments (circle where applicable)
Meter Type	Gas: Key / Quarterly		Electric: Key / Quarterly
Meter reading – Start		Gas:	Electric:
Meter reading - Finish		Gas:	Electric:
Stopcock location	Yes	No	Confirm location:
Loft insulation – MIN 300mm	Yes	No	CORRECT / UPGRADED
Decoration pack	Yes	No	Brewers Pack / HSL Contractor
Legal Boundaries	LEFT / RIGHT / FRONT / BACK		

LEGISLATIVE WORKS:			
	Date	By: (Trade/Contractor)	Signed
Electrical Safety Check:			
Gas Safety Check:			
Asbestos Survey:			
Legionella Test:			
Energy Performance Certificate:			

SPECIALIST / NON-SPECIALIST WORKS:			
			Comments (circle where applicable)
Environmental	Yes	No	

Clean			
Pest Control	Yes	No	
Asbestos Removal	Yes	No	
Stain blocking	Yes	No	
Final Clean	Yes	No	

CUSTOMER ALTERATIONS:			
			Comments (circle where applicable)
Patio	Yes	No	AUTHORISED / GIFTED / REMOVED
Additional / secondary fencing	Yes	No	AUTHORISED / GIFTED / REMOVED
Internal partition walls	Yes	No	AUTHORISED / GIFTED / REMOVED
Driveway	Yes	No	AUTHORISED / GIFTED / REMOVED

STOCK CONDITION SURVEY:	
Date:	
Surveyor:	

KEY ELEMENTS – SUBJECT TO VALIDATION		
	Replacement year	Comments
Kitchen		
Bathroom		
Windows		
Front door		
Back door		
Shed door(s)		
Other door(s)		Garage / Patio

HOME INSPECTOR: I confirm that this property, now meets housing solutions minimum void standard and is now ready for handover			
Signed		Dated:	
Comments:			

SURVEYING SERVICES MANAGER: I confirm that legislative requirements have been met			
Signed:		Dated:	
Comments:			

LETTINGS TEAM: I confirm that I am now in receipt of a completed handover pack			
Signed:		Dated:	
Comments:			

Appendix Three – Empty Homes Minimum Standards

Introduction

The purpose of this standard is to let homes to a consistent, cost effective standard that is communicated and easily understood by incoming customers. The standard is split into items and our commitment on each area is outlined.

The works identified in this standard are split into two distinct categories: - those required to be undertaken prior to the customer moving in (termed 'pre inspection'), and those undertaken after the customer has moved in (termed 'post inspection').

All pre inspection works will be undertaken in accordance with the Association's repair priority structure (with the exception of complete kitchen replacements).

In addition to the standards outlined below each home must have a valid Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) and Asbestos Survey (where applicable?)

Please note: Where the standard differs for Sheltered and Supported services we have highlighted it for ease of understanding.

General Items

External timber doors and door frames

General:

- All external timber doors and door frames are to be in a satisfactory condition offering an acceptable level of security. Any door below standard is to have minor remedial works undertaken, or shall be recommended for a low maintenance door under the replacement programme.

Pre Occupancy Works:

1. Inspection of door, frames, glazing and locks followed by remedial works to ensure an acceptable level of security is provided. Front door - Where fitted, the cylinder barrel to the front door night latch lock is to be changed prior to letting. Incoming customer to be supplied with a minimum of 2 no. keys.
2. Secondary doors – Existing cylinder barrel to be changed prior to letting.
3. Communal door - Where applicable, incoming customer to be supplied with at least 1 no. key or fob to the communal entrance door. Additional fobs can be purchased from Housing Solutions.

Post Occupancy Works:

1. Complete door and frame installed if required as part of the planned replacement programme.

Windows**General**

- All window frames and opening casements are to be in a satisfactory condition offering an acceptable level of security. Any window below standard is to have minor remedial works undertaken.

Pre Occupancy Works:

1. All windows are to operate correctly & shut securely.
2. Where applicable, the incoming customer is to be supplied with a minimum of three locking handle keys (where locking handles exist).
3. The casement opening sashes are to be draught free in the fully closed position.
4. The casement opening sashes at first floor & above are fitted with opening restrictors. (excl. fire egress windows) Ensure correct operation, and renew all defective & missing items.
5. All cracked and broken glazing is to be renewed.
6. All windows above first floor will be fitted with window restrictors (Sheltered, Care and Supported homes only)
7. Curtain rails to be fitted above all windows (Sheltered, Care and Supported homes only)

Post Occupancy Works:

1. All sealed double glazed units showing evidence of integrity failure, (moisture between glazing panels are to be renewed or repaired).
2. All glazing beads are to be in good condition and secure.

Walls and ceilings**General**

- All surfaces to be sound and free from major cracks, flaking, blown, or missing plaster.
- Wall coverings shall not be disturbed to determine plaster condition and any defects identified after tenancy commencement date shall be treated as a responsive repair action.
- In addition, minor cracking of plaster finishing shall be classed as decorative defects and be covered by the New Tenants' Decorating Allowance (NTDA).
- Please note: Where applicable Sheltered and Supported homes will be painted with magnolia emulsion on the walls and white emulsion on the ceilings.

Pre Occupancy Works:

1. Any polystyrene tiles must be removed and all loose and flaking plaster to be made good. If required, the ceiling will be plastered/artexed.
2. Major cracks and evident blown plaster to be made good.

Flooring**A. Ground floor concrete substrate & PCC beam****General**

- All screeds to be sound, and free from perishing.
- Where present, all vinyl flooring tiles to be in a good and secure condition. If 20% of floor coverage is in poor condition then all tiles to that area to be removed and the floor screed left as final finish. All wet rooms will have water resistant flooring laid.
- Please note: Where required Supported homes will have either vinyl or carpet supplied to the lounge, hall and bedrooms (to be agreed with community housing). Vinyl flooring will be supplied to the bathroom and kitchen.

Post Occupancy Works:

1. All flooring works to be undertaken prior to re-letting.

B. Floor condition first floor & above (timber and chip board substrate)

General

- Floorboards all are to be in good condition, correctly supported and secured.
- Floorboards are to be checked for protruding nails and all carpet track is to be removed. All wet rooms will have water resistant flooring laid.
-

Pre Occupancy Works:

1. All flooring works to be undertaken prior to reletting.

Electrical installations

General

- An electrical installation condition report (EICR) complying with BS7671 shall be commissioned for each empty property and the certification passed to the Home Inspection Team.
- Any defects identified from the periodic testing shall immediately be reported to the Home Inspection Team for assessment and actioning.
- All power & lighting fittings to be in good functional & safe condition. Painted over & decoratively poor items shall not be renewed if functional & safe.
- Smoke alarms (mains powered and battery) are to be in good condition, and installed to comply with BS7671 & BS5839 Part 1.
- Portable equipment supplied by Housing Solutions will be PAT tested.
- Prepaid meters shall be cleared of debt.

Pre Occupancy Works:

1. All items requiring immediate action following the void electrical inspection.
2. New batteries fitted to battery powered smoke alarms and battery back-up replaced on mains powered smoke alarms.
3. All previous customers' unapproved wiring and appliances are to be disconnected and removed.

Post Occupancy Works:

1. All items identified during the void electrical inspection and not requiring immediate action.

Gas installations

General

- Where gas appliances are present, a landlord's gas safety test shall be commissioned in accordance with the Gas Safety (Installations & Use) Regulations 1994. The resulting certification will be passed to the home inspection team for actioning.

- Prepaid meters shall be cleared of debt.
-

Pre Occupancy Works:

1. All customer installed gas appliances and gas pipes shall be removed and capped at source. Flue apertures through walls are to be made good.
2. Cooker bayonet connectors to the supply side shall be removed and capped.

Heating Installation

General

- No Empty property shall be relet without an approved and functional system of space & domestic hot water heating.
- The heating source shall be preferably a gas fired radiator 'wet' system with domestic hot water heating.
- Other types of heating systems (i.e. electric or gas warm air units) are acceptable if these assemblies are found to be fit for purpose during empty homes servicing.
- In certain areas mains gas is not available. In these instances low tariff electric heating shall be provided to all main rooms. Water heating shall be provided by low tariff electric immersion heating.

Pre Occupancy Works:

1. All heating installations to be serviced in accordance with gas and electrical requirements.

Post Occupancy Works

1. Where the heating system is found to be insufficient, a replacement heating system shall be installed.

Rooms

Kitchen

General

Minimum standards for a kitchen are as follows:

- A single drainer sink unit, fitted to a suitable base unit, complete with waste plug secured to the sink by chain.
- Hot and cold taps in working order.
- Space provided for a cooker

- Cupboard space comprising of a minimum of: One double base unit and one double wall unit.
- Units and Worktops must be fitted correctly, be clean and free from lime scale, grease and excessive staining.
- Water resistant floor covering shall be present to this area.
- A working extractor fan.
- Kitchen appliances supplied by Housing Solutions shall be in good working order and PAT tested.

Where a kitchen is deemed to be in need of complete replacement, the Home Inspection Team shall notify the Kitchen Refurbishment Team and ascertain likely installation date. Incoming customer will be advised of this date by the Lettings Team.

Pre Occupancy Works:

1. Floor coverings in a state of disrepair shall be renewed.
2. Faulty hot and cold water taps to be rectified.

Post Occupancy Works:

1. Complete kitchen replacement (new customer to be offered choice of finishes in accordance with programme).

Hall Stairs and landings

General

- All stairways must be fitted with a banister rail. Balustrades, where fitted shall be safe and secure, ensuring no gaps wider than 100mm are present.
- Stair treads must be in a sound condition and loft hatch covers are to be installed and correctly fitted, to isolate the roof void from the living area.

Pre Occupancy Works:

1. All works required to the balustrades and banister in order to meet safety requirements.
2. Securing of loft hatch.

WC Rooms and Bathrooms

General

- All sanitary ware shall be clean and free from cracks & corrosion. Baths and wash hand basins shall be fitted with a waste plug secured to the item by chain. Hot and cold taps shall be in working order and toilet seats shall be fitted correctly and be free from damage.
- Waste pipes shall be free from any obstructions or blockages.
- All splash back glazed wall tiles shall be in good condition. Privacy locking to WC and bathroom doors shall be in good order.
- Water resistant floor covering shall be present to these areas.
- A working extractor fan.

Pre Occupancy Works:

1. Renewal of damaged items.
2. Any floor covering not in good repair shall be renewed.
3. Where non-existent, the means of privacy locking shall be provided.
4. Renewal of WC seat.

Post Occupancy Works:

1. Any missing and cracked tiles shall be renewed.

Redecoration

General

- A New Tenant Decoration Allowance (NTDA) is to be issued with each general needs relet. The amount of the NTDA is determined by the condition of each room in accordance with the NTDA procedure note. In exceptional circumstances, the home inspection team may decide to have a room or an entire general needs property decorated. This decision will be taken in consultation with the Surveying Services Manager.
- All sheltered and supported accommodation relets will be redecorated internally.

Exterior

Sheds (concrete only)

General

- Doors and windows shall be in good working order and be in reasonable condition. Locks where applicable should be fitted and in working order with a minimum of 1 no. key supplied to the new tenant. These locks are not changed at void status. Roofs are to be sound and free from leaks.
- All shed repairs are to be undertaken post-void.
- Any timber shed in a suitable condition may be gifted to the incoming customer.

Exterior Observations

General

The empty home inspection will include an inspection of associated grounds. The following areas will be inspected:

- Roofing tiles must be intact, including ridge tiles.
- Chimneys shall be sound and repointed as necessary.
- All guttering and down pipes shall be in good working order.
- Gullies and drains, including waste outlets to be free and clean.
- Footpaths, boundary fences, walls, and gates are to be in a serviceable condition;
- Grounds will be tidied and cleared of debris. Grass will be cut and overgrown hedging pruned as necessary;
- Fencing will be renewed as necessary in accordance with the fencing renewal strategy.

All items requiring remedial action shall be actioned post void with the exception of items considered to be potentially hazardous.

Clearance

General

The empty home clearance encompasses the removal and disposal of the following items left by a previous customer: **See previous exceptions to Sheltered and Supported services.**

- All carpets and floor coverings. (Carpets can be left if deemed to be in a satisfactory condition. In this event, a disclaimer will be provided to Lettings).
- Floor surfaces are to be free from carpet backing foam, double-sided adhesive tape and other adhesives.
- All carpet tracks and nails are to be removed.
- All curtains, curtain poles and blinds are to be removed. (Curtain tracks properly secured to a batten will be left).
- All lampshades to be removed.
- All shelving and bearers to be removed.
- All wall fixings, hanging basket anchors, brackets and cabinets to be removed.
- All furniture and white goods to be removed.
- Upon completion, all surfaces and floors are to be thoroughly swept.

Some of the items listed above can be gifted to the incoming customer if deemed to be in satisfactory condition. See the “Gifting” section of the empty homes policy.

Kitchen:

- The clearance will entail the removal of any poorly fitted units installed by the previous customer and any items considered to be potentially hazardous.
- If a previous customer has installed a new kitchen and this is deemed to be of a satisfactory standard, then the Home Inspection Team may choose to leave it in situ. Where this occurs, the new customer will be gifted the kitchen and the estimated lifecycle will be updated on the Asset Management database. The contents of all unit cupboards and drawers will be removed and the cupboards/drawers swept out.

Roof Void:

Where applicable, roof voids will be cleared of all contents. This clearance will include a brief inspection of the roof void and notification to the home inspection team of the following:

- Insufficient or lack of insulation material.
- Wet or rotting roof timbers.
- Hot water/steam at the central heating expansion tank.
- Obvious roof holes.
- Any other evident defects.

Exterior:

In general, all outbuildings such as sheds are to be cleared of debris. Where applicable, gardens will be cleared of hazardous items such as ponds, unsafe greenhouses, play equipment and general debris etc.

Empty Home Cleaning

General

Consultation with customers during the Best Value Reviews reinforced the importance placed upon cleaning of an empty home prior to occupation. In view of this it is essential that the cleaning process is undertaken in a thorough and professional manner.

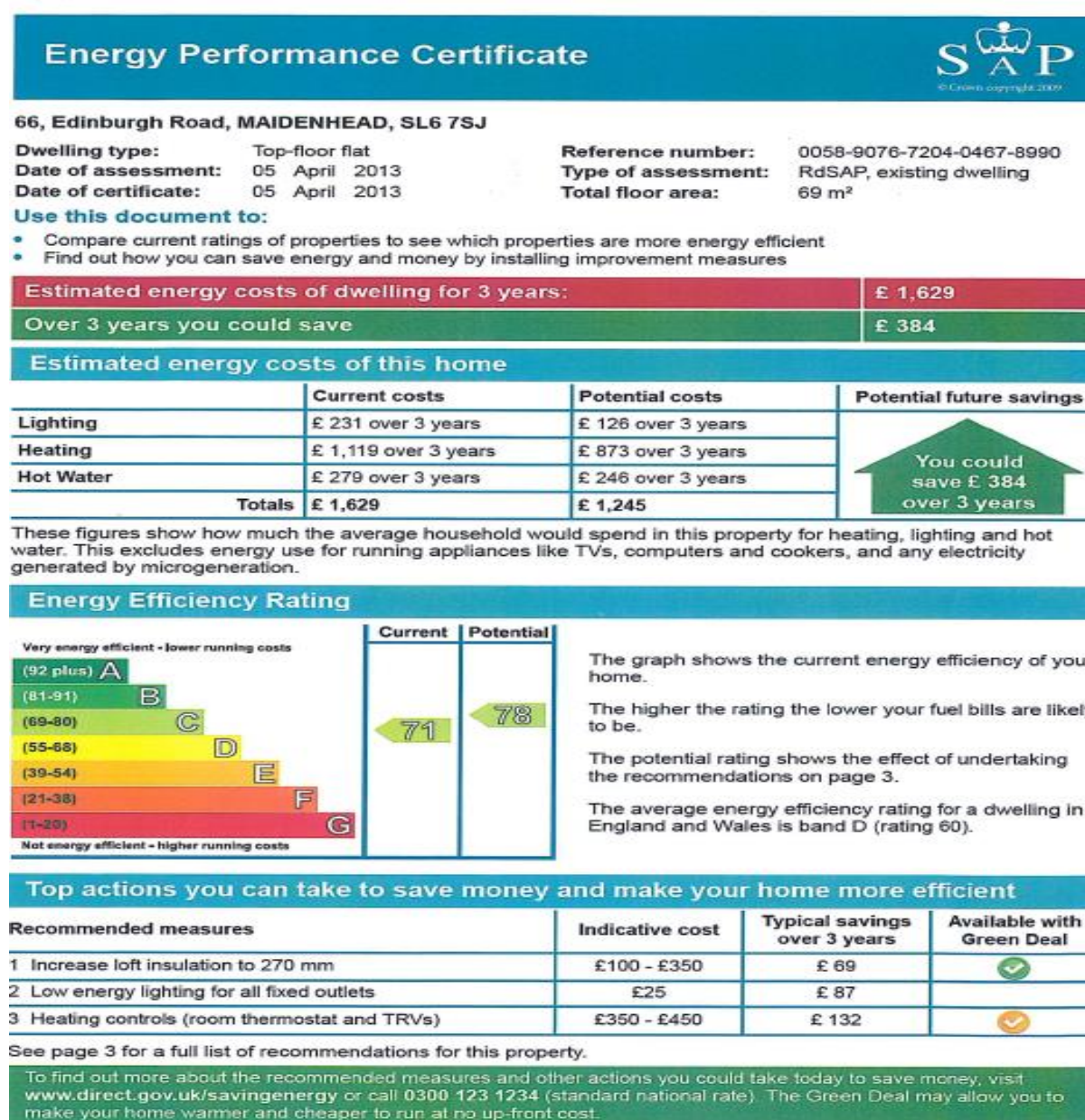
The key areas to be encompassed by the professional clean are as follows:

- All cobwebs removed.
- All walls to be washed/wiped with a detergent solution.
- All hard floors to be swept and mopped.
- Where applicable, carpets are to be hoovered.
- All woodwork and doors to be washed/wiped with a detergent solution.
- All cills and surfaces to be washed/wiped with a detergent solution.
- All sanitary ware to be acid cleaned.
- Kitchen unit/cupboard doors to be washed/wiped with a detergent solution.
- Kitchen cupboard/drawer inners to be washed/wiped with a detergent solution.

- Kitchen sink to be cleaned and descaled where applicable.
- Window frames to be washed/wiped with a detergent solution and the inner glass surface cleaned.

Appendix Four – Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)

Example



Appendix Five – Empty buildings procedure (Disposals)

This procedure relates to any building marked for disposal and should be adopted once the last remaining occupant has vacated.

Security & Safety

Housing Management will keep the Home Inspection Team and Development Project Manager fully apprised of the potential timescales. Then, as soon as the last occupant leaves the premises, the Home Inspection Team will secure the premises as follows:-

- All external doors, ground floor windows, and those accessible from either adjacent flat roofs or fire escapes, are to be secured from the inside.
- Either the existing front door lock core needs to be changed to a Best Lock 6-1 lock core, or a tamper proof hasp and staple with separate Best 6 -1 padlock is to be installed.
- In addition the code on the door entry system needs to be deleted so that only the new core or scheme master keys will allow access.
- To prevent nuisance tripping and call-outs during the clearance process or afterwards, the fire alarm system needs to be de-commissioned at the outset.
- The entire water supply system needs to be drained down and isolated at the roadside stopcock.
- The entire electrical installation needs to be isolated at the first possible location where the supply enters the building or at every individual consumer unit.
- Then the premises are to be removed from all relevant cyclical maintenance programmes and or inspection regimes.
- Any monitoring phone lines need to be disconnected and Finance advised to cancel their contracts
- Any fire extinguishers of use need to be removed to a place of storage and also taken off any Maintenance Contract.

Having completed the above, the property needs to be placed on a rota for inspection by a CME or similar. That inspection needs to:-

- Be carried out every two weeks.
- Include a full walking inspection of the perimeter of the building to ensure it has remained secure.
- If part of the perimeter is inaccessible from the outside, the inspection should be completed from within but following the Association's standard loan working procedure.
- The completion of the inspection needs to be recorded, either through the job allocation system or a log to be held in the office.
- Any works found necessary as a result of that inspection are to be notified to the Home Inspection Team to organise their completion.

The Development Project Manager will arrange for the removal of all electrical supplies entering the building.

Salvage of materials and or components

Apart from ensuring third party equipment is retrieved and returned, opportunities may exist to salvage materials and or components for re-use in the on-going maintenance of other premises. Therefore, the Home Inspection Team needs to ensure that both Property Services Managers should be informed of the opportunity and the time frame before the clearance of the premises is started.

Clearance

Unless specified otherwise, the entire building and grounds need to be cleared of all fixtures and fittings including;-

- Formers occupant's and or staff possessions or equipment
- Furniture and carpets, fixed or otherwise, but not curtains.
- Fixtures and fittings such as pelmets, shelves, wall mounted cabinets, mirrors, sheds and green houses.
- Clinical Waste bins
- Garden furniture

The areas to be cleared will include;-

- Individual dwellings or rooms
- Communal areas
- Associated outbuildings, such as garages

On-going Grounds Maintenance and Communication

Apart from our statutory duties, consideration needs to be given to the appearance of the empty building and its effect on neighbours. For that reason, any such property must remain on the grounds maintenance rota until possession passes to either the contractor or a new owner. Along with the presence of curtains, this will minimise the impression of abandonment and thus minimise nuisance from most passing miscreants. Issues will still arise and any contact from concerned parties is to be directed to the project manager but not using the CRM system as these are not customers.