

Empty Homes Policy



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Scope: Housing assets owned by Housing
Solutions

Approved by: Executive Team

Legislation: Housing Act 1985
Equality Act 2010
Section 11 of the Landlord & Tenant Act
1985
Section 20 of the Common hold and
Leasehold Reform Act 2002
The Defective Premises Act 1972 The
Environment Protection Act 1990
Gas Safety (Installation and use) Regulations
1998
The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order
2005
The Secure Tenants of Local Authorities
(Compensation for improvements)
Regulations 1998
Construction (Design and Management)
Regulations 2015
Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and
dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013
Environmental Protection Act 1990 (EPA)
Building Regulations 2010

**Date of
approval:** 10th June 2021

**Regulatory/
Governance:** Regulator of Social Housing Home
Standard and Tenancy Standard

**Date of next
review:** 10th June 2024

**Related
Policies:** **Asset Management Strategy**
Procurement Strategy
Repairs and Maintenance Policy
Tenancy Policy
Allocations Policy
Aids and Adaptations Policy
Access Policy
Complaints Policy
**Standing Orders and Financial
regulations**
Fire Safety Policy
Gas Safety Policy
Electrical Safety Policy
Asbestos Management Policy
Water Hygiene & Legionella Policy
Succession Policy
Assignment Policy

1. Policy Statement

1.1 This Policy helps us to deliver:

- Our vision of making our residents proud of where they live and our colleagues proud of where they work.
- Our statutory responsibilities for health and safety
- Our duties under the Regulator of Social Housing's Home and Tenancy Standards to provide decent homes at the point of letting in accordance with our Tenancy and Allocations Policies
- Our commitment to provide safe homes and effective services while meeting our Consumer Standards
- Clarity about the minimum standard for empty homes
- Change and adaptation in the face of a crisis and in consultation with our Board and Service improvement Team

1.2 The key objectives of this policy are:

- Minimising the time new customers wait time to move into a Housing Solutions home
- Minimising empty home rent loss
- Facilitating repair works as quickly and efficiently as possible
- Preparing homes to a consistent minimum standard that is communicated and understood by customers, kept under regular review and provides value for money
- Maximising customer satisfaction with their new home
- Maintaining sector leading empty homes management performance.

1.3 The Empty Homes Minimum Standard is at the heart of our empty homes offer. During the lifetime of this Policy we will review and update the standard in the light of new legislation and regulation; value for money and consultation with our customers and the Service Improvement Team. The current standard will always be available on our website.

2. Scope

2.1 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.

2.2 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 endeavor to meet these deadlines.

2.3 Our approach to managing Empty Homes includes:

- Requiring four weeks written notice from a resident who is moving out.
- Terminating tenancies on a Sunday
- Using our procedures for dealing with properties and possessions left behind where we can evidence a tenant has abandoned their tenancy and the property

- Using our Succession Policy to deal with **death in occupation** with or without a qualifying successor
 - Dealing with tenancies ended by eviction
- 2.4** Succession to a qualifying or discretionary successor and assignment will not result in an empty home and are not included in this Policy
- 2.5** Properties designated for regeneration or disposal in our Asset Management Strategy will not result in a home to be relet and are not included this Policy.
- 2.6** This Policy relates to all tenure types detailed in our Tenancy Policy and to shared ownership and leasehold. We carry out repairs to:
- General needs properties
 - All sheltered housing
 - Self-contained accommodation with support
 - Shared accommodation with support
 - Key Worker accommodation
 - Accommodation let at a market rent
 - Properties identified for but not yet ready for regeneration
 - Mobile homes owned by Housing Solutions on land owned or managed by us
 - Caravans owned by Housing Solutions on land owned or managed by us
 - The communal areas, services and structure of buildings which include leasehold properties

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Role / Team	Responsibilities
Executive Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy approval • Monthly review of KPI figures
Head of Asset Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To deliver this Policy, be accountable for its implementation and colleague training; controls budgets; and engage with resident forums and manage continuous improvement. • To ensure all works are carried out within standing orders
Head of Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To deliver this Policy and supporting Letting and Neighbourhood Policies, be accountable for colleague training and engaging with resident forums and manage continuous improvement.
Specialist Housing Services Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsibility for Lettings and Home Ownership Team performance
Fire, Health and Safety Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Senior Named Person responsible for compliance with health and safety legislation.
Compliance Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure compliance checks are completed before the relet of a home
Surveying Services Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure properties marked for disposal are subject to review and proposed to ET for approval to dispose of when they become void

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure no properties are let below a SAP rating of 55 (Band D) without Executive Team approval
Lettings and Home Ownership manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oversight and management of the Lettings function. Responsibility for Lettings KPIs and the performance of the team to minimize void turnaround time
Operations Manager (DLO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsibility for the overall void function Ensuring compliance with the policy To effectively manage the DLO and contractors To ensure VFM in the delivery of the voids service
Procurement team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To engage independent contractors for the delivery of voids works To ensure compliance with procurement legislation and standing orders
Commercial and contracts transformation manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide VFM and control to services delivered To control and mitigate contractual risk To provide management and repairs data to control spend and quality of materials
Void Surveyor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To control the work issued and carried out by the DLO and contractors To ensure consistent quality via spot check and post inspections by both the Direct Labour Organisation (DLO) and our contractors To be the first point of contact for residents who are dissatisfied with the service Responsible for ensuring empty homes are dealt with in-line with this policy Responsible for key to key times alongside lettings Responsible for KPIs relating to voids and relet times Being responsible for providing all compliance paperwork associated with the property and completing a signed Empty Homes Checklist Ensuring post inspection is in line with the voids minimum standard, in addition to ensuring compliance check completion before returning the property for letting
Lettings team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying new residents, in conjunction with our Allocations policy Carry out pre-termination inspections Carry out all viewings and sign ups for General Needs properties (unless ASB is present, in which case ASB officers will be involved) Responsible for key to key times alongside the voids surveyor Adding new voids to energy supplier portals Responsible for KPIs relating to voids and relet times Providing the sign up pack, including: copies of the compliance certificates, EPC, and any other relevant documentation.

Community Housing Officers and Supported Housing Officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out pre-termination inspections • Carry out all viewings and signups for respective tenant groups.
Resident liaison officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arranging and signing up the tenancy • Arranging and carrying out a pre-termination inspection of the property • Contacting the customers and arranging a 6 month re-view of their tenancy
DLO and contractors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure they are working in a safe and controlled manner at all times, following all health and safety advice, guidance and risk assessments in place. • To following the voids minimum standards

When notice is received for termination of the tenancy

3.1 Housing Solutions will carry out a pre-termination inspection while the outgoing residents are still in occupation and in accordance with the Void Minimum Standard and Checklist. We will make outgoing residents aware of their responsibilities to:

- Undertake any repairs that are their responsibility and reinstate any alterations they 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 they are leaving and settle any outstanding debts on the utility meters

When the tenancy is terminated

3.2 The void surveyor will carry out an inspection within 24 hours of receiving the keys to:

- Assess the condition of the property left by the outgoing resident;
- Identify and organise repairs required to meet the Void Minimum Standard
- Check the gas and electrics and arrange to conduct any necessary compliance checks
- Assess whether there are any other planned maintenance works that must be carried out before the new tenant moves in
- Identify 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
- Ensure the property meets decent homes
- Arrange a stock condition survey if one has not been completed in the last 4 years
- Complete an Energy Performance Certificate
- Ensure the minimum SAP rating will be 55 (Band D) before commencing works

4. Definitions

4.1 Void repairs: take place before a new resident moves into the property, or when no one is

occupying the property. This could be a new or improved property, where a previous resident has given notice, an abandoned property or a property becoming vacant following the death of a residing resident. More detail on void repairs can be found in our Empty Homes Policy.

- 4.2 Stock condition survey:** A stock condition survey allows us to collect information relating to the Government's Decent Home Standard, and about the property in general. This is used to identify and programme future replacement works.
- 4.3 Rechargeable repairs:** A rechargeable repair is deemed where Housing Solutions reserve the right to charge their residents for damage caused by neglect, willful damage or misuse.
- 4.4 Works order variation:** A set amount that orders issued can be varied by, to allow completion, subject to current standing order guidance.
- 4.5 Mutual exchange:** A mutual exchange is when residents of the same or alternate housing associations exchange properties.
- 4.6 National Housing Federation (Natfed) Schedule of Rates:** a comprehensive technical specification with a fully specified schedules of rates for repairs.
- 4.7 Service Improvement Team (SIT):** the team constructed to ensure our services have a residents voice, to scrutinise performance and hold Housing Solutions to account, to review services to ensure cost effectiveness and to improve them for all customers, to review new and existing policies.
- 4.8 Direct labour organisation (DLO):** the maintenance team that work directly for Housing Solutions
- 4.9 Key to key:** a term used for when Housing Solutions receives the key from the outgoing resident before passing to the new incoming resident
- 4.10 Gifting:** In some circumstances where items, fixtures and fittings are in good working condition these can be gifted to the new resident. This means that the new resident 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.
- 4.11 Vulnerable residents:** Our approach to vulnerability is set out in detail in our Vulnerable Residents Policy. We include in our description of vulnerability, young people under 18; people in need of community care and support services and anyone who experiences difficulties with everyday living or needs additional support to meet their obligations. In shaping and delivering services to vulnerable people we will use a partnership approach building strong relationships with support agencies, developing service level agreements where appropriate, to ensure an effective response to the needs of vulnerable residents.
- 4.12 Decorations:**
 - Housing Solutions will pay a decoration allowance in the form of a decorating scheme voucher based on the inspection by the void surveyor. Residents will be given details of the suppliers where the voucher can be used. The voucher will only be redeemed for decoration packs agreed by us with the supplier.
 - Housing Solutions provides decorating assistance for specific tenancies where residents are 55 and over. Qualifying properties will be decorated prior to letting.
 - Care and Supported sites the void surveyor will arrange for the flats to be decorated before a new resident moves in.

4.13 Rechargeable repairs – Housing Solutions reserves the right to recharge residents for any works caused as a result of neglect, willful damage or misuse (including accidental damage) by a resident, 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. All repairs will be charged at the current version Housing Solutions are using under Natfed rates. Rechargeable repairs may be recovered from any remaining credit on the account at point of termination.

5. Legislation

5.1 Housing Solutions will comply will all relevant legislation, regulation and best practice.

6. Resident Service Commitment

6.1 We will:

- Offer a high quality and efficient service;
- Keep you informed and involved, and help you have your say;
- Provide value for money housing and services;
- Treat you with respect and offer a courteous and helpful service;
- Make sure our services are easily accessible and understandable;
- Communicate with you in the most appropriate way to meet your needs

6.2 When we get things wrong we will:

- Aim to put it right as soon as possible
- Keep you informed at all times
- Apologise
- Through our Complaints Policy aim to learn from our mistakes, to improve the services we provide

7. Equality & Diversity

7.1 Housing Solutions recognises the needs of a diverse population and always acts within the scope of its own Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy and Equalities Act 2010. Housing Solutions works closely with its partners to ensure it has a clear understanding of its resident community with clear regularly updated service user profiles. Housing Solutions will record, analyse and monitor information on ethnicity, vulnerability and disability.

8. Confidentiality

- 8.1** Under the Data Protection Act 2018, UK General Data Protection Regulation (UKGDPR) 2021, all personal and sensitive organisational information, however received, is treated as confidential. This includes:
- anything of a personal nature that is not a matter of public record about a resident, client, applicant, staff or board member
 - sensitive organisational information
- 8.2** Housing Solutions employees will ensure that they only involve other agencies and share information where there is a legal basis for processing the information.

9. Review and ongoing monitoring

- 9.1** This policy will be reviewed on a 3 yearly basis or more frequently in response to changes in legislation, regulatory guidance, good practice or changes in other relevant Housing Solutions' policy.
- 9.2** All items in this policy will be subject to Housing Solutions Customer Involvement Strategy. All significant repair matters affecting residents' homes or their neighbourhood will go before the Service Improvement Team which is formed of mainly residents and the Head of Asset Management. The information collected from the residents' feedback is investigated and analysed by the Business Improvement team to see if this could be done differently or more effectively.
- 9.3** 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. Our current KPIs include:
- Rent loss due to voids as a percentage of rent due (GN + HfOP)
 - Average number of days to relet void (GN minor only)
 - Average number of days to relet void (Sheltered minor only)
 - Average working days to complete works on a minor void
- 9.4** Housing Solutions reports on KPI's on a monthly basis to the Executive Team. Performance is reported quarterly to Board and to Residents via our annual report.
- 9.5** Regular reports will be submitted to the Executive Team and Board detailing performance in relation to commissioning and managing the repairs service. This is to ensure that objectives and targets are being achieved. Housing Solutions will ensure that all repairs responsibilities, relating Policies, reporting methods, service standards and all other relevant information is readily available to all its customers in easily readable format.

Appendix One – 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)

General Items

External timber doors and door frames

General:

1. 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 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 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

1. 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.

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.

Sheltered and supported additional items:

Pre occupancy

1. All windows above first floor will be fitted with window restrictors
2. Curtain rails to be fitted above all windows

Walls and ceilings

General

1. All surfaces to be sound and free from major cracks, flaking, blown, or missing plaster.
2. 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.
3. In addition, minor cracking of plaster finishing shall be classed as decorative defects and be covered by the New Tenants' Decorating Allowance (NTDA).

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.

Sheltered and supported additional items:

Pre occupancy

1. Where applicable Sheltered and Supported homes will be painted with magnolia emulsion on the walls and white emulsion on the ceilings.

Flooring

A. Ground floor concrete substrate & PCC beam

General

1. All screeds to be sound, and free from perishing.
2. 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.

Post Occupancy Works:

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

Sheltered and supported additional items:

Pre occupancy

1. 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

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 before being relet.
- Any defects identified from the periodic testing shall immediately be reported to the void surveyor 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 and outstanding debt recharged to the outgoing tenant.

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 void surveyor for actioning.
- Prepaid meters shall be cleared of debt and outstanding debt recharged to the outgoing tenant

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 (E.g. electric) 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

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 Void Surveyor shall notify the Kitchen Refurbishment Team and ascertain likely installation date. Incoming customer will be advised of this date by the Lettings Team.

Bathroom

Minimum Standard:

- Non slip flooring
- New toilet seat
- Bath will be in good condition, free of chips
- As a minimum, taps will have a shower attachment to provide hair washing facilities.
- All taps in working order and taps not dripping

- Plugs for bath and basin
- Working W/C

Other

- Fire places and back boilers will be removed during void works.
- All floors and surfaces will be left free of trip hazards.
- Visible trip hazards within the property boundary will be removed.

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 NDTA procedure note. In exceptional circumstances, the void surveyor may decide to have a room or an entire general needs property decorated. This decision will be taken in consultation with the Operations Manager

Sheltered and supported additional items:

Pre occupancy

1. Where required, 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 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. Gardens will be handed over in a manageable condition
- Fencing will be renewed as necessary in accordance with the fencing renewal programme, if deemed necessary.

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:

- 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 void surveyor 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 void surveyor 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.