



Item B6

Key Housing

# **Void Management Policy**

First approved: March 1997

Revised: 4/98; 2/03; 1/04; 2/08; 2/12, 4/15

## **KEY HOUSING ASSOCIATION**

### **POLICY ON MANAGEMENT OF VOID PROPERTIES**

#### **Scope of Policy**

This Policy aims to maximise the use of KEY's accommodation and reduce rent loss arising from unoccupied property.

#### **Vacant Properties**

When a property becomes vacant it will be confirmed whether the accommodation is to be let on the basis that the forthcoming tenant will be either

- unsupported
- supported by KEY (or Community Lifestyles in Glasgow)
- supported by another support provider

This confirmation will be considered by the Housing Officer in discussion with the Head of Housing and relevant Area/Regional Manager (where the vacancy occurs in a leased property the option of whether the lease should be ended will also be considered at this stage). Where another support provider is involved at a location this confirmation will typically require discussion with that support provider and the social work department

In situations of planned vacancies, as per the terms of the tenancy agreement it is expected that a minimum of four weeks notice is supplied by the outgoing tenant and a date of ending of the tenancy agreed with the Housing Officer.

Where the vacancy occurs in shared housing the decision may be made not to re-let the vacancy in line with the wishes of the remaining tenant(s). In those cases the rent for the property would be shared among the remaining tenants.

#### **Unsupported Allocations**

When properties are let on an unsupported basis they will be allocated according to the allocations policy.

In certain situations it may be the case that it proves impossible to progress with an

unsupported let, typically if the property proves difficult to let. In such cases a further round of discussion with the relevant Area/Regional Manager may see the intended allocation change to someone who will be supported.

### **Allocations with Support from KEY/Lifestyles**

Once a vacancy has been identified to be allocated on this basis, the Housing Officer will confirm the date that the property will be available for let (taking into account any timescales for repair/upgrade work required) to the relevant Area/Regional Manager who will take forward discussion with the local authority social work department to identify a suitable prospective tenant.

In recognition that this can be a complex and intensive process, the expectation is that the vacancy will be filled within an eight week period.

Should the property remain vacant after that period consideration will be given to asking the local authority social work department to meet rent costs from this date. It is recognised that local authorities will vary in their ability to agree to pay rent costs to retain property, and there are circumstances where payment is not forthcoming but it is in the interests of KEY that the accommodation is retained for a further period as available for letting on a supported basis. This will be assessed in discussion between the Housing Officer, Head of Housing and the relevant Area/Regional Manager and if it is felt that the local authority will not meet rent payments the voids loss will be charged to either KEY/Lifestyles from that date.

### **Allocations with Support from Other Organisations**

In these situations, the Housing Officer will confirm the date that the property will be available for let (taking into account any timescales for repair/upgrade work required) to the relevant contacts in the local authority social work department and support provider who will take in turn identify a suitable prospective tenant.

In recognition that this can be a complex and intensive process, the expectation is that the vacancy will be filled within an eight week period.

Should the property remain vacant after that period consideration will be given to asking the local authority social work department to meet rent costs from this date. It is recognised that local authorities will vary in their ability to agree to pay rent costs to retain property, and there are circumstances where payment is not forthcoming but it may be in the interest of KEY that the accommodation is retained

for a further period as available for letting on this basis. This will be assessed in discussion between the Housing Officer and Head of Housing.

### **Voids Monitoring**

A monthly voids monitoring meeting will review the implementation of this Policy. This will involve input from the Senior Housing Officer, Head of Housing, Head of Support and Service Development Manager. Additionally in Glasgow a separate monthly void monitoring meeting also including senior support managers is in place.

This policy is reviewed annually at the January meeting of Management Committee.