

PORT OF LEITH HOUSING ASSOCIATION LTD

VOID MANAGEMENT POLICY

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The term 'void management' is used to describe the various processes which are involved in dealing with a property from the point it is known that it will become vacant to the re-letting of the property to a new tenant.
- 1.2 Approximately 9% of the Association's properties become vacant each year through tenancy terminations. Effective management of void properties and the limitation of void periods is essential to maximise rental income, provide a quality service, meet housing need and achieve good estate management.
- 1.3 This Policy and its related procedures comply with Communities Scotland Performance Standard AS1.5 which states that Associations must 'monitor demand for properties and maximise the use of available housing, keeping empty properties to a minimum, making sure that properties are of an appropriate lettable standard'.

2.0 Scope of Policy

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to set out the Association's position on void management. This covers a number of related activities which include:
- Tenancy termination
 - Relet inspections to identify repairs, including rechargeable works
 - Ordering repair work and monitoring completed work
 - Offering tenancies and arranging viewing
 - Creating new tenancies, signing tenancy agreements etc

2.2 The Void Management Policy applies to all rented property owned by the Association. The specific objectives of the Void Management Policy are:

- to relet vacant properties as quickly as possible, so as to minimise the loss of rental income as a result of properties being empty
- to ensure that properties allocated by the Association meet acceptable standards and prevent offers being refused due to poor decoration
- to make effective use of the Association's stock, to meet housing need

2.3 To achieve these objectives the Association will:

- work to a clear relet standard as set out in void management procedures
- undertake repairs of void properties in accordance with the Association's responsibilities
- relet vacant properties as quickly as possible
- record action taken at each stage of the void management process
- keep tenants informed during the void management process
- communicate with tenants clearly and in appropriate formats, identifying the responsible officer to contact in case of queries.

3.0 Void Procedures and Targets

3.1 The Association will regularly review its procedures for managing void properties to ensure they remain effective.

3.2 The Association's Management Group will set and regularly review targets for the maximum number of days for reletting a property and for rental loss. These indicators will be monitored by the Property Manager and the Housing Manager and reported on a monthly basis to the Management Group, with reasons for any significant variation from target. The percentage of rental income lost through void properties will be reported to the Committee of Management on a two monthly basis.

4.0 Legislative Context

When managing void properties, the Association will meet legislative and good practice requirements, including the following:

Housing (Scotland) Act 2001: this legislation provides guidance in relation to the termination of a tenancy, including those abandoned without notification, compensation for improvements and access rights

for inspection.

Schedule 7, Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 - Gifts or Hospitality: when involved in managing voids, staff and Committee members involved in the process must ensure there is no conflict of interest. If there is any doubt or a conflict of interest arises, staff will advise their line manager and Committee members will liaise with their Chairperson.

The Gas Safety (Installations and Use) Regulations 1998: the Association will ensure that void properties benefit from an annual inspection of gas appliances.

The Construction, Design and Management Regulations 2007: the Association will ensure that it meets health and safety requirements in the management of voids.

Data Protection Act 1998: the Association will ensure that information requested from applicants or tenants is relevant only to the management of void properties and is treated in strict confidence. Individuals have the right to see and receive a copy of any personal information that is held about them by the Association and to have any inaccuracies corrected.

4.1 The Void Management Policy will be reviewed on a 5 yearly cycle.