

Empty Homes Policy

This policy outlines the approach to the preparation and repair of empty homes following termination of a tenancy and before allocation to another tenant.

Department	<i>Asset Management</i>
Policy Owner	<i>Garry Knights – Director Strategic Asset Management</i>
Approved Date	24 April 2023
Date for Review	24 April 2026
Approving Body	<i>Asset Management Committee</i>
Associated Legislation/Regulation	<i>n/a</i>
Legal Advice From	<i>n/a</i>
Equality Impact Assessment Date	<i>March 2023</i>
Version Number	1.2

Purpose / Principles

We aim to provide safe, affordable and warm homes for our tenants, and this begins when we allocate a new home to a new tenant.

While we have three distinct housing teams within the Flagship Group, we apply the same lettable standard to all our empty homes prior to allocation as set out in the table attached in our 'Lettable Standard' document.

The provision of budget for, and amendment to, the standard is owned by the Flagship Group Asset Management Team and is developed in conjunction with the relevant Housing teams, Flagship Services and Gasway as appropriate.

This policy applies to homes owned or managed by Flagship Group, excluding market rented, student accommodation, shared ownership, temporary and supported accommodation.

This policy does not apply to mutual exchanges.

Roles / Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities involved and our approach to the delivery of this policy are outlined in the following documents which are tailored to the local offering within each housing team:

- Victory Allocations & Lettings Procedure
- Samphire Allocations & Lettings Procedure
- Newtide Void & Newbuild Allocations & Lettings Procedure

Legislative and Regulatory requirements

There are legislative and regulatory requirements setting out the minimum standards of a dwelling that need to be maintained to deliver a decent home

The Regulator for Social Housing (RSH) has published a range of Consumer Standards that Registered Providers (RP's) must always comply with. This policy most specifically aligns to the Safety and Quality Standard 2024 which requires RP's to:

- Have accurate and up to date and evidenced understanding of the condition of their homes that reliably informs the provision of good quality, well maintained and safe homes
- ensure that tenants' homes meet the standard set out in section five of the Government's Decent Homes guidance and continue to maintain their homes to at least this standard

- provide an effective, efficient and timely repairs, maintenance and planned improvements service to homes and communal areas for which we are responsible, informed by the needs of tenants and provides value for money. tenants,
- must take all reasonable steps to ensure health and safety of tenants in their homes and associated communal areas, and safety is considered in the design and delivery of services.
- must assist tenants seeking housing adaptations to access appropriate services, including co-operating with other relevant bodies

Disposals

If a property requires a disproportionate amount of work in order to bring it up to the required lettable standard, then it will be considered for disposal.

The methodology for this assessment is set out in the Asset Disposals policy.

EIA statement

An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken for this policy in March 2023. It identified no adverse or negative impacts on groups or individuals with protected characteristics.

Training statement

Training on this policy will be provided for relevant colleagues on Flagship's Learning Management System and the most recent version will be available on bob.

Supporting documents

As referenced above, the following documents relate to the delivery of this policy

- Flagship Group Lettable Standard
- Victory Allocations & Lettings Procedure
- Samphire Allocations & Lettings Procedure
- Newtide Void & Newbuild Allocations & Lettings Procedure
- Asset Disposals Policy
- Flagship Group Repairs Policy

Measuring Effectiveness

The following measures will be used to assess the success of the service provided when dealing with empty homes:

Category of work	Timescale	Service Measure
Repair period 'key to key' for standard operational Voids	12-calendar days	90%
Repair period 'key to key' for major Voids	28-calendar days	90%

These are in keeping with the measures set out in the Flagship Group Repairs Policy.

Review Period

This policy is updated as required and formally reviewed every three years by the Director of Strategic Asset Management. It is approved by the Asset Management Committee.