



Void Contracts Policy

Department: Property Service

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CONTENTS	PAGE NO.
1 INTRODUCTION.....	2
1.1 Definition	2
2 AIMS & OBJECTIVES.....	2
3 POLICY STATEMENT	2
3.1 Void Inspections.....	2
3.2 Decent Homes Standard	3
3.3 Gas Safety	3
3.4 Letting Standards	3
4 LEGISLATIVE /STATUTORY BACKGROUND	3
5 CONFIDENTIALITY	4
6 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY	4
7 MONITORING & EVALUATION.....	4



1 INTRODUCTION

As a Social Landlord One Housing Group (OHG) recognises meeting the demand for and supply of housing to our clients is the key requirement of our role. OHG has prepared this policy after consultation with residents. This policy should be considered in conjunction with the **OHG Void Contracts Procedure**.

This policy relates to Void Property Works. Please refer to the OHG **Allocations Policy** for information on the nominations and allocations process with regards to void properties.

1.1 Definition

Void Property Works can be defined as any repairs, renewals, reinstatement, replacement, internal decorations or cleaning and clearing out that has been ordered in accordance with the provisions of the contract, arising as a result of a change of tenancy (with the exception of mutual exchanges).

2 AIMS & OBJECTIVES

Aims:

- to meet a voids turnaround target of 28 days
- to develop a consistent, co-ordinated, measurable and effective strategy to achieve the best possible service
- to meet the 'excellent service' level as set out in the Audit Commission's Key Lines of Enquiry.

Objectives:

- to work closely with contractors to avoid an over bureaucratic processes
- to provide an effective monitoring and evaluation strategy
- to develop common and local policies for voids across OHG
- to develop good systems of communication and information sharing within, and across, agencies, organisations and local communities in all local authority (LA) areas in which we operate

3 POLICY STATEMENT

Through local and fully integrated teams, OHG will ensure void property works are delivered in a customer focused manner that recognises the needs of residents and housing applicants. OHG will take into account local issues and work to minimise void turn around time to deliver an efficient, value for money, consumer orientated service.

3.1 Void Inspections

The Contractors full technical inspection of voids will be carried out once the premises are empty. In cases where they discover obvious wilful damage to the property by the outgoing resident they will take photographs and OHG will take legal action. OHG aims to ensure all void properties are re-let within a target of 28 days period.



3.2 Decent Homes Standard

OHG's completed Void property internal specifications will be brought up to the Decent Homes Standard and OHG's Letting Standard.

3.3 Gas Safety

OHG will carry out a gas safety inspection and issue appropriate certification. It will also test and inspect electrical installations. Originals of certificates of safety and guarantees including CP12 Landlord Gas Safety Certificate will be maintained on files and their existence recorded on the Property database. Copies relevant to the property will also be included in the Residents' Moving-in Pack provided at sign-up.

3.4 Letting Standards

OHG will ensure that at the point of occupancy the property will be:

a fit, safe and secure home
structurally sound and where possible energy efficient
weather tight, damp free and properly ventilated
ready for all operating connections to the main utilities
wherever possible provided with modern and fully functioning gas central heating
fitted with modern kitchens and bathrooms
compliant with all utilities checks and certified
decorated to the agreed standard.

Please note that the incoming resident is responsible for signing up to the relevant utility supplier. The resident's housing officer can assist them with the process during sign up.

4 LEGISLATIVE /STATUTORY BACKGROUND

OHG accepts the importance of managing its housing stock in an equitable manner in line with the demands of Housing legislation. OHG also expects its Contractors to ensure compliance with all legal requirements and statutory obligations in respect of Landlord responsibilities during the voids period. Listed below are the key Acts and regulations to take into account:

Landlord & Resident Act 1985
Housing Act 1985
Defective Premises Act 1972
Environmental Protection Act 1990
Commonhold & Leasehold Reform Act 2002
Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996
Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998
Building Regulations Act 1984
Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002 (CAW)
Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999
Pertaining to the control of Legionella bacteria in water systems 1999



5 CONFIDENTIALITY

Under the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Human Rights Act

1998, 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 committee member
sensitive organisational information

Officers will ensure that they only involve other agencies and share information with the consent of the resident concerned, unless:

- OHG is required to by law
- the information is necessary for the protection of children

6 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

OHG recognises the needs of a diverse population and always acts within the scope of its own **Equality and Diversity Policy**, the Human Rights Act 1998, The Disability Discrimination Act, and Race Relations Act. OHG works closely with its partners to ensure it has a clear understanding of its resident community with clear regularly updated service user profiles. The Performance Information Team is responsible for recording, analysing and monitoring information on ethnicity, vulnerability and disability.

This process allows OHG to deliver an appropriate service through a prioritisation of resources. Information about up and coming properties (completed voids) are available to prospective clients in a range of languages and formats to match the local population. When required, OHG will use the void period to make necessary adjustments and adaptations to a property to suit an incoming client's particular needs, such as external wheelchair access slopes. It works closely with its LA partners and local communities to ensure a fair representation of residents monitoring the voids service delivery and take-up of completed void properties.

7 MONITORING & EVALUATION

Contractors' performance will be measured on a monthly basis against the following Key Performance Indicators contained within the contract:

- meeting statutory requirements, such as ensuring gas safety certificates are in all properties (CP12s)
- achieving 98% of re- lets (void turn around) within the 28 day target.

Where issues of poor performance are identified, strategies will be developed, in consultation with the contractor and the Residents Monitoring Panel in an attempt to rectify such situations.