



53 Ballindalloch Drive, Glasgow G31 3DQ


# VOID MANAGEMENT POLICY

**PC/TJ/NOV 2022/REF: P55**

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The guiding principle of effective Void Property Management (vacant or soon to be vacated properties) is that they should be re-let at a minimum cost to MHA, consistent with being in a satisfactory re-let standard for an incoming tenant. The Milnbank Lettable Standard has been developed for this purpose and is included within Appendix 1.

This guiding principle is achieved by the following:

- Ensuring that the outgoing tenant carries out their responsibilities in relation to the property being clean/clear and all remedial works, for which they are responsible, completed to the Association's satisfaction; or failing this, that they are recharged for the cost of any necessary works. This will be picked up at the Pre-Termination visit which will be a joint inspection with the Housing and Asset Officer. Pre-Termination visits will be carried out in all instances with the exception of Abandonments and Evictions.
- Suspending a transfer application or deferring an offer of a transfer until a tenant carries out necessary remedial works or has paid for those works to be carried out on their behalf by MHA.
- Ensuring that MHA's Void Management Procedures are implemented timeously in order to minimise the period for which the property is vacant. The Association aims to complete the repairs and allocate the property within a total of 20 working days, excluding technical voids (where major works are required such as Re-wires, structural repairs etc).
- Ensuring that the MHA in-house team and external contractor performance in relation to void turnaround and quality, meets the targets and standards set. Properties will have an Internal Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) Survey carried out and will meet the SHQS prior to let, any SHQS exemptions or abeyances will be recorded. The MHA Lettable Standard goes above the requirements of the SHQS in some instances.

Separate and detailed Void Procedures are also appended to this Policy (Appendix 2).

## **2. COMPLIANCE WITH THE SCOTTISH SOCIAL HOUSING CHARTER**

In reviewing this Policy, the Association recognises the need to work towards achieving the relevant Indicators as set out in the Scottish Social Housing Charter and in particular:

- Indicator 6 – Percentage of Stock meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) (Newly allocated properties must meet the SHQS as a minimum, with any exemptions and abeyances recorded).
- Indicator 7 – Percentage of tenants satisfied with the standard of their home when moving in.
- Indicator 14 – Percentage of tenancy offers refused during the year.
- Indicator 17 – Percentage of lettable houses that became vacant in the last year.
- Indicator 18– Percentage of rent due lost through properties being empty during the year.
- Indicator 30 – Average length of time taken to re-let properties in the last year.
- Indicator C2 – The number of lets during the reporting year by source of let.
- Indicator C3 – Number of lets during the reporting year split between 'general needs' and 'supported housing'

### **3. RESPONSIBILITIES FOR VOID MANAGEMENT**

Asset Management and Housing Services are jointly responsible for the overall effective management of void properties. The role of each section and the input required from them is detailed in the Void Procedures.

### **4. MONITORING, REPORTING AND REVIEW**

In the pre-termination stage, Housing Services will be responsible for co-ordinating action and ensuring that properties are vacated and keys handed in on time, along with gas/electric cards or keys.

Once keys are received, voids will be inspected, by Asset and Housing if applicable, with all works recorded on the Homemaster Void Package (including timescales for completion) and monitored by Asset Management during the period of the works being carried out; and by Housing Services once works are completed.

Overall performance on void turnaround will be monitored by the Housing Services Manager and reported to the Scottish Housing Regulator through the Annual Return on the Charter (ARC); and also to other agencies/groups for the purposes of performance benchmarking. Performance on void turnaround times and quality of works will be monitored by Asset Management.

Post Allocation Visits (PAV's) will also be carried out with the incoming tenant and the feedback closely monitored, to regularly evaluate tenant satisfaction with the MHA Lettable Standard. The results to date for the financial year 2021/22 show 98% satisfaction with the MHA Lettable Standard (52 out of 53 tenants surveyed).

The total rent loss due to the time taken to re-let properties once the works are completed, will be reported by the Housing Manager, on a regular basis, to each Services Committee.

The financial cost of bringing MHA properties up to the Lettable Standard will also be monitored closely. The costs will be reported to the Services Committee as part of future Standard Reports and any necessary action taken to maintain an average spend of approximately £1,500 per void to achieve the MHA Lettable Standard. Based on an average of 140 voids per year, £1,500 of works per void equates to circa £210,000 in void expenditure per annum (this does not include any component replacement).

The Void Policy and Procedures will be reviewed annually or whenever operating conditions, good practice guidance or legislation dictates.

## 5. **DATA PROTECTION**

MHA controls the personal information that we collect, this means that we are legally responsible for how we collect, hold and use personal information. It also means that we are required to comply with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) when collecting, holding and using personal information.

**MHA LETTABLE STANDARD APPENDIX 1**



53 Ballindalloch Drive, Glasgow G31 3DQ

**MILNBANK HOUSING  
ASSOCIATION**

**Lettable Standard**

PC/NOV 2022

## **MHA Lettable Standard**

Milnbank Housing Association will carry out a full inspection of all void properties to assess the level of repair work required to bring each property up to a satisfactory standard for new tenants to move into. A pre-void inspection form will be completed by the asset team with all additional works over and above the lettable standard noted and passed to the relevant contractor. These inspections will be uploaded to home master to allow anyone to access the repair information.

All void properties will require differing levels of works to meet the MHA Lettable Standard. The undernoted table provides information on the typical areas of works undertaken within a void property and the Lettable Standard MHA will bring each area of the property up to, if it doesn't already achieve it when handed over by the outgoing tenant.

<b>Lettable Standard</b>	<b>Works</b>
<b>Locks</b>	Locks changed and 2 new full sets of keys made available for the new tenant. This must include all common keys/fobs as well as veranda and cellar doors where applicable. Personalised name plates to be removed from front flat doors.
<b>General Cleanliness</b>	Before any repair works are carried out, the flat is cleared of all furniture, belongings, and rubbish from previous tenant. This will be agreed with the outgoing tenant at the pre-termination visit. All floor areas will be swept, sanitary ware & kitchen washed down.
<b>Floor Coverings</b>	These will be removed unless they are deemed to be in a reasonable condition. The Association will not be responsible for maintaining any flooring coverings left at the request of the incoming tenant.
<b>Electrics</b>	Electrics will be checked and deemed safe, a new Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) will be carried out and logged against the property.
<b>Gas</b>	A full Landlord Gas Safety Check will be carried out to void properties with a gas supply and a copy of the compliance certificate (CP12) issued to the new tenants. Gas cooker supply to be capped off.

<b>Water Supply</b>	Ensure a supply of hot and cold running water in the kitchen and bathroom(s).
<b>Windows</b>	Service all windows in the property ensuring all are in working order, leak free and are safe. All safety catches checked and in working order. Replace any damaged UPVC/timber trims as required Remove any internal/external defective mastic and replace as required making sure all internal windows are clean and tidy
<b>Fire Safety</b>	An LD2 Fire Safety System will be installed (if not already completed) and will be checked annually to ensure it is in working order, via the Gas Servicing Contract.
<b>External Doors</b>	All external doors will be serviced and in working order, this includes common entry systems.
<b>Minimum Standard</b>	<b>Works</b>
<b>Internal Doors</b>	All internal pass doors and cupboard doors will be intact and operating correctly. The Kitchen door will be fitted with a half hour fire door and all bathroom/toilet doors will be fitted with a mortice locking latch (not a slip bolt). All slip bolts to be removed from internal doors.
<b>Walls/Ceilings</b>	All visible broken or loose plasterwork will be repaired. Any materials that could potentially contain Asbestos will be sampled and, if positive, managed accordingly. Remove all screws, hooks and fill to suit.
<b>Floorboards</b>	All visible loose/missing flooring will be secured/replaced (It is not standard practice to re-sheet all floor areas) but if it is more practical, we will assess on an individual basis.
<b>Skirtings and Facings</b>	All broken and missing skirtings/facings will be repaired/replaced as required. Do not patch repair, replace full length as required. Remove all cables and clips along skirtings.
<b>Heating Systems</b>	Heating systems will be in full working order. With boiler meeting EESSH standard.
<b>Energy Efficiency</b>	Properties will be brought up to the applicable EESSH standard, where possible and financial resources allow. EPC certificate will be left in the property for incoming tenants to view.
<b>Kitchen Units</b>	All kitchen units will be checked, and any significant defects repaired. Kitchens will be replaced if the kitchen is deemed not fit for

	purpose and cannot be repaired to meet the requirements of the SHQS.
<b>Bathroom Sanitary Ware</b>	All fitments will be free from chips and cracks (including the bath panel). Where there is a shower installed these will be in working order and have a shower rail / curtain and appropriate water seal around these areas. Any properties without a shower, MHA will install one whether it be electric or thermostatic. Shower head and hoses will be replaced in every property as standard. Sanitary ware will be replaced if deemed not fit for purpose and cannot be repaired to meet the requirements of the SHQS.
<b>Sinks and Wash Hand Basins</b>	Sinks and wash hand basins will be securely fitted with taps in working order and plug and chains in place. All pipework boxed in as required.
<b>Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS)</b>	Properties will meet all applicable elements of the SHQS, at letting stage, with any exceptions and exemptions recorded.
<b>Ventilation</b>	Remove all grills and filters from ventilation systems and clear all debris from communal ducting.
<b>External</b>	All grass in private garden to be cut, soil to be turned and litter removed. Cut back all hedging within the private garden where applicable. Wash down common close area including front door and all windows, inside and out.

The Association is not responsible for the condition or level of decoration in a property. There may, however, be certain circumstances where the decoration is deemed so poor that works are required to let the property. If decoration is required, in the first instance, a paint package will be offered to the incoming tenant, or if the tenant is unable to carry out decoration (e.g. due to ill health etc.) decoration works will be carried out by the Association as part of the void works. (Paint to be supplied or a voucher for B&Q). The decoration options will be agreed between Asset Management and Housing Management and awarded at the discretion of the Housing Officer.

Upon completion of all repairs and maintenance works the void flat will be cleaned. The undernoted table provided the cleaning standard expected.

- All skirting boards to be washed down and cleaned
- Doors and frames to be washed down and cleaned
- Window frames and sills to be washed down and cleaned
- Plug/light sockets and light fittings/switches to be washed & cleaned
- Air vents/extractor fans to have filters removed and cleaned



- All floors to be swept and mopped
- All tiling surfaces/wet wall to be to be washed down
- All kitchen worktops to be cleaned if not replaced
- All kitchen units inside & out to be cleaned
- Kitchen sink & taps to be cleaned
- All sanitary units to be cleaned down (i.e., bath, sink, shower, toilet, taps).
- Window glass to be cleaned inside and outside

All staff who are involved in the Void Management process will receive a copy of this Lettable Standard, and will sign a mandate confirming they are in agreement. See Appendix 3.

## **VOID PROCEDURE APPENDIX 2**

<b>TERMINATION RECEIVED IN OFFICE</b>	<b>ACTIONED BY</b>
Letter to be sent to outgoing tenant/transfer to confirm date keys due and final rent charge up to this date.	Housing Services
Termination notice to be scanned and attached to occupancy history	Housing Services
Homemaster software updated with new terminations received. Asset Management to check this list at the beginning of each week to monitor number of voids expected in.	Housing Services /Asset Management
Housing to arrange an inspection from Asset Management to view the property and assess void works required. Using appropriate incentives were required. This is the Pre-Termination visit.	Housing Services
If access is granted by the tenant at this stage, Asset Management will inspect the property and record any re-charge items and/or potential items to mandate to incoming tenant (e.g. carpets etc.) and email to Housing Services.	Asset Management

<b>ONE WEEK PRIOR TO KEYS BEING DUE</b>	<b>ACTIONED BY</b>
Contact outgoing tenant to remind them of date that keys are due, and to leave gas/electric cards for us.	Housing Services

<b>KEYS FOR VOID RECEIVED</b>	<b>ACTIONED BY</b>
Keys to be handed into Head Office on or before the agreed termination date.	Housing Services
Ensure all items removed, including floor coverings, unless agreed by HSO/AO, as per the Pre-Termination Visit.	Housing Services
Ensure Gas/electricity keys/cards have been handed over with house keys or left in meters.	Housing Services
An e-mail will be autogenerated from Homemaster once Housing close the tenants account. Asset will then collect keys/action keys for the property.	Housing Services /Asset Management

<b>VOID INSPECTION AND WORKS</b>	<b>ACTIONED BY</b>
If access was not granted by the tenant at termination stage, Asset Management will inspect the property and record any re-charge items and/or potential items to mandate to incoming tenant (e.g. carpets etc.) and email to Housing Services.	Asset Management
A joint inspection will be carried out where possible by the HSO/AO to determine the scope of works. Once work scope is agreed, a timescale for completion will be provided at the weekly void meeting and priorities agreed with Housing. Works will be carried out to the MHA Lettable Standard. All works required will be recorded in the Homemaster void package for all staff to view.	Asset Management
Inspection with HSO and prospective tenant to take place, if void can be viewed whilst works ongoing. All live void viewings are to be ran past Asset as major works may be underway.	Housing Services/Asset Management
Post inspection to be carried out by Asset to determine if all works completed to satisfactory standard and that house meets MHA Lettable Standard. Keys will then be returned to Housing.	Housing Services/Asset Management

<b>SIGNING UP NEW TENANT</b>	<b>ACTIONED BY</b>
Tenants are signed up on same day or next day upon void completion	Housing Services
If pre-selected applicant rejects offer new selection to be made ASAP	Housing Services
Keys to be issued at point of sign up	Housing Services
PAV to be completed within 14 working days of tenancy move-in date.	External Party

The way in which both Housing and Asset are working has produced great results i.e. dedicated officers from each team and, including weekly cross team meetings etc. The current level of voids is at a very healthy level, and the average completion times for Asset to turn voids round, and Housing to reallocate has improved dramatically over the past few months.

The average turnaround periods will continue to decrease as the long-term voids are now complete, and we will not allow such a situation to arise again.

**LETTABLE STANDARD MANDATE APPENDIX 3**



53 Ballindalloch Drive, Glasgow G31 3DQ

I \_\_\_\_\_, can confirm that I have received and read the MHA Lettable Standard for void property works. I can also confirm that I am aware of what is required for working in each void property before it can be re-let to a new tenant.

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_