

Scrutiny Panel Exercise - Standard of Empty Homes (Voids) When Re-let
Action Plan 24.05.24

Report Recommendation	Action	By who	By when
<p>1. If cleaning and repairs that are part of the lettable void standard haven't been carried out properly, contractors should be asked to redo them, and the property should be inspected to ensure the work has been done before handed over to lettings.</p>	<p>All properties are post-inspected and we will reinforce this point with the maintenance officer when he does post-inspections. On viewings, the lettings officer will ask for contractors or HMT to return to the property if it is not clean to the required standard.</p>	<p>Shelley Naylor</p>	<p>Complete</p>
<p>2. Homes should have heat, hot water, and bathroom facilities that work when a customer moves in, and this should be checked.</p>	<p>On transfers, we will check if the heating & any showers are working properly before the previous customer leaves. If the heating is not working for the new tenant then this will be treated as an emergency repair.</p> <p>Our gas policy states that we will cap all properties that are void for more than 48 hours. Part of our letting process is to arrange to uncap the gas and carry out safety checks on the boiler and leave it in working order for the new customer</p>	<p>Shelley Naylor</p>	<p>July 2024</p>
<p>3. If damp or mould is present in a property this should be treated before the customer moves in</p>	<p>This should always be removed and remedied before a new tenancy begins, we will reinforce this with the maintenance officer when he carries out the post-inspection. We will monitor feedback from our new</p>	<p>Shelley Naylor</p>	<p>Complete</p>

	tenancy survey to pick up any concerns customers raise with us post-tenancy.		
4. Improved training for operatives to carry out cleaning to a higher standard or look at employing a cleaning team.	We will discuss this with the maintenance team, Neat does have some staff with specialist cleaning skills and we are looking at utilising the resource more widely across our voids.	Stephen Knowles	September 2024
5. The decorating pack should be offered to all customers, if needed, as a cost-effective way to alleviate the expense to SYHA of decorating the property. More paint be made available if needed and consideration is given to those who are unable to decorate themselves, by either offering support or advice.	<p>These are always offered where the maintenance officer & lettings officer feel they are necessary, and we do make more paint available if required. If we know the incoming tenant is vulnerable we will request the property be decorated before handover.</p> <p>It would be too costly to universally offer decorating packs to all new tenants but we are using our assessment of condition to target provision.</p>	Tim Crawford	Complete
6. The garden and outside space should be of a presentable standard that can be easily maintained by the customer, before moving in, if possible. Health and safety issues should be a high priority.	<p>We recognise we do need to agree in more detail on what a presentable standard is with our colleagues at Neat.</p> <p>We will always ensure that we address any health & safety issues such as discarded needles.</p>	Tim Crawford	October 2024 (New standard to be in place)
7. The option is to be made available to all customers to keep existing flooring and window dressings with a	We do try and ensure that any decent floor coverings are left for the incoming tenant. In practice, the standards of flooring do vary. This is	Tim Crawford	July 2024

<p>disclaimer. Ensure this is a high standard to reduce the chance of compensation claims.</p>	<p>often more achievable on transfer cases as other cases do not always give access for a pre-quit inspection where we can assess the condition. Where we can assess their condition and they are of a decent standard we will look to retain them but if the contractors have not been instructed to leave them they will remove them as part of the voids works.</p>		
<p>8. Ensure the furniture packs are offered to all customers and this should be part of the tenancy sign-up pack to avoid any embarrassment to the customer</p>	<p>We are not able to offer all new tenancies furniture packs due to the potential costs and the administration involved. The scheme was set up for applicants moving from temporary accommodation such as people granted homeless priority by the local authority, people fleeing domestic violence and other people who would not be able to access a property without it being furnished. We will continue to offer to those groups and extend this to any applicants who express they will have difficulty affording furniture or carpeting.</p> <p>We are conscious that many of our customers do not require furniture and providing a package can also lead to a benefit trap for anyone who has a change in circumstances such as finding full or part time employment.</p>	<p>Tim Crawford</p>	<p>June 2024</p>
<p>9. Make it known to the previous customer if they have furniture</p>	<p>This is something we would like to do and we will explore a partnership with a charity. The challenge</p>	<p>Tim Crawford</p>	<p>December 2024</p>

<p>that is in a reusable condition this can be left in the property. Arrange for this furniture to be collected by a charity and not thrown away. Negotiate with a chosen charity.</p>	<p>we will face is to ensure the furniture is taken away before the tenancy ends and the voids work begins. A further challenge will be around what is considered a decent standard but over time we will establish this with our teams and the charity. We feel It would probably work better with transfer cases and any pilot we introduce would start with these cases.</p>		
--	---	--	--