Solihull Community Housing
Shaping our neighbourhoods

Empty Property (voids) Repairs Policy 2025

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Lead officer	Steve Stone
Approval Chain:	ELT
Last reviewed on:	New Policy
Next review date:	October 2027

Version Control:

Version	Date	Reason for Change
1.0	October 2025	New Policy

1. Scope

Solihull Community Housing (SCH) is the Arm's Length Management Company managing the housing stock on behalf of Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC). It is responsible for managing the Council's Housing Stock including the management, maintenance and letting of its properties. This policy will set out how we will deal with properties which become empty as a result of the tenant giving notice, the death of resident or by way of an enforcement action.

This policy does not relate to new tenancies as a result of a Mutual Exchange or temporary accommodation properties provided under a licence agreement.

2. Definitions

This policy sets out how SCH will manage its properties which are currently empty, called 'voids'.

In general terms, voids are properties which are currently empty because a tenancy has ended and a new tenancy has not yet started. A property for which there is a rent account but for which no current tenancy exists

In some cases properties are void but are not available to let as the property requires major works or modernisation. Other examples include properties that are within a re-development or clearance area and for which properties are earmarked for demolition and redevelopment.

3. Policy Objectives

Within the legal framework set out in Section 9, this policy aims to ensure that properties which become void are re-let as quickly and efficiently as possible, with regard for the needs and requirements of proposed incoming tenants. The void process will ensure that all properties are clean, safe and comfortable with all the necessary fixtures and fittings in place and in good working order.

- Prioritise the health and safety of SCH residents
- Balance the need to ensure maximum occupancy of homes and minimum void re-let times with the needs of tenants
- Ensure our void periods used as part of an overall asset management approach that is as efficient as possible to deliver works required as cost-effectively as possible
- Minimise void rent loss, void periods and void repair costs through effective co-ordination of housing management, maintenance operations to re-let properties within agreed timescales
- Be transparent about our performance and have effective monitoring and management
- Ensure incoming tenants have all the required information, documentation and advice
- Consider value for money in delivering our service

- Understand and respond to the diverse needs of our residents and treat all residents with fairness and respect
- Effectively manage sub-contractors or agency workers carrying out any works on our behalf, ensuring that they are appropriately qualified and that they carry out works in line with our values and expected standards
- Ask all residents for feedback on the condition of their new homes via a transactional survey. This is collecting customer feedback immediately after a specific interaction
- Carry out a % of post-inspections for completed repairs during the voids process

4. Policy Statement

This policy sets out how SCH will manage properties which become untenanted. The policy sets out a framework for bringing these properties back into use to meet housing demand, generate income and sustain neighbourhoods. The policy will ensure properties are returned to a safe, clean and lettable condition for new tenants.

5. Key Policy Details

The voids process will ensure that all properties are let to the lettable standard, without exception. Proposed incoming tenants will be given the opportunity to view the property before the tenancy is accepted.

Void processes fall into three categories:

Repairs Standards:

- All walls and ceilings will be free from graffiti, mould growth, and polystyrene tiles, plaster will be repaired and ready for redecoration by the incoming tenant
- All walls and woodwork will be free from any fixings left by the outgoing tenant
- Sinks, toilets and pipework will be in working order
- Chains and plugs to baths and sinks will be intact
- Hot and cold water supply to kitchen and bathroom are present
- Toilet seats will be changed
- Any shower area will be fully tiled
- A visual inspection of the roof, rainwater goods, manhole covers and guttering will be carried out to ensure there are no defects
- All windows are secure, open and close and are fully glazed and have an emergency opening facility
- Child restrictors will be fitted to windows at first floor level and above
- External doors are secure, weatherproof and safe

- Where there is a staircase, both the staircase and handrail are secure and safe
- A hard-wired smoke detector and carbon monoxide detector are installed
- Gas safety checks of all gas appliances are undertaken leaving the system in safe working order
- Electrical supply will be inspected by a competent person and works carried out in accordance with national standards
- All floors are safe from trip hazards
- Paths, steps and driveways are free from hazards and are stable

Standard of Cleanliness:

- All doors and skirting boards will be clean
- A new shower curtain will be provided at the start of the tenancy only
- All floors will be free from dust and debris
- The bath, wash hand basin and toilet will be cleaned, major staining removed
- All kitchen cupboards, worktops, sink and draining board will be cleaned
- All grout and sealant will be intact in the bathroom and kitchen areas
- All inside window ledges will be clean
- Gardens and outside areas are clear of rubbish and grass cultivated to a manageable level, hedges and shrubs will be cut back to a manageable level
- Lofts, garden stores and sheds will be clear

Useful information:

- A copy of the asbestos report for your property will be provided and will also be available for you to download in future years
- The gas safety certificate will be provided
- Electrical safety test certificate will be provided
- A leaflet on how to combat or prevent condensation will be available
- Guidance on gas safety, energy saving and fire safety in the home will be available
- Stopcock location, fuse board and utility meter location will be provided

6. Communications

This policy is available to view by all tenants, SMBC and stakeholders on the Solihull Community Housing website and will be updated with any changes.

Internally this policy will be viewable and accessible by all staff and stored on the SCH intranet. It is the responsibility of the policy owner to ensure staff employed in the execution of this policy are aware of the policy and work within the parameters of the policy.

7. Meeting individual needs and reasonable adjustments

We will ensure equal and fair access to our services. We will do this by taking into consideration the individual needs of our tenants, their family or other persons living with them. We will ensure that individual needs are considered throughout the voids process where required and make reasonable adjustments where necessary. We will treat people fairly and with dignity and respect.

We will support the needs of our diverse residents by making reasonable adjustments to our repairs processes, which could be a physical change or change in work practices to avoid any disadvantage to a resident in accessing this policy. Examples of reasonable adjustments include but are not limited to:

- We will provide information in appropriate alternative formats (e.g. large print, coloured paper, braille etc)
- We will risk assess and re-prioritise minor works considering the vulnerabilities or individual needs of the household where identified
- We will communicate through a representative
- We will provide additional support such as a sign language interpreter or translator.

8. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion summary

SCH recognises the needs and requirements of its diverse customer profile, and acts within the scope of the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy and the Equality Act 2010.This is to ensure that every tenant can access the same quality and consistency of service. This policy applies to all properties managed by Solihull Community Housing.

All staff are trained in Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion to embed understanding about where we may need to adapt normal policies, procedures, and ways of working to accommodate resident's individual needs

9. Legislative & Regulatory Framework

The Regulator of Social Housing places a requirement on landlords to provide safe, well maintained, warm homes as defined in the Safety and Quality Consumer Standard. The main legislation and regulations governing this policy are:

The Housing Act 1985	The Secure Tenants of Local Housing Authorities (right to repair) Regulations 1994
The Housing Act 2004	Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
Defective Premises Act 1972	Building Regulations Act 1984
Homes Fitness for Human Habitation Act 2018	Building Safety Act 2022
Data Protection Act 2018	The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023
Equality Act 2010	The Decent Homes Standard
Common & Leasehold Reform Act 2002	Awaab's Law 2025
Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999	

10. Related Policies & Procedures

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Tenant Handbook Our responsibilities and your responsibilities - Solihull Community Housing
- SCH-Empty-Homes-Service-Standard-Leaflet.pdf
- Gas Safety Policy
- Electrical Safety Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Data protection Policy

11. Key Roles and Responsibilities

Key Role	Responsibilities
Board	Oversight
ELT	Ownership and approval
Employees	Understand and implement
Customers	Understand
Contractors	Understand and implement

12. Monitoring & Review

Performance Monitoring Arrangements

Performance against Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) will be reported regularly to the Executive Leadership Team, our Board and Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council.

Tenant feedback as part of our satisfaction surveys for void properties will be used as an additional means of monitoring and improving the quality of the service.

We will publish repairs performance information to tenants. As standard practice, our repairs performance is included in our quarterly performance report which is published and accessible to tenants.

SCH will complete its 'Tenant Satisfaction Measures' (TSM) and will submit results annually to the Regulator of Social Housing. These results will also be published on our website, keeping the process transparent and inclusive.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every **2** years by the Repairs Manager unless there are any significant changes to current legislation or regulation, good practice or guidance, or as the result of the outcome of an incident review or Ombudsman determination.

13. List of Appendices

None