



Voids Management

Housing and Communities

Date: 6th September 2022

Voids

- » **Empty properties or voids happen when a tenant leaves one of our Council owned housing units.**
- » **Creates an opportunity to review, modernise and reoccupy.**
- » **Cross cutting service links**
 - » Receipt of the void by housing management
 - » Refurbishment of the void to prepare it for reoccupation
 - » Re-letting of the property to those on the General Housing Register

Voids targets and costs

- » **Measures and key performance indicators (KPI's) in place to monitor performance and benchmark the service.**
- » **Refurbishment target timescales:**
 - » Minor void – 20 days
 - » Major void – 45 days
- » **c. 70% of voids completed within target timescales**
- » **Average cost of voids:**
 - » Minor void - £1,500
 - » Major void - £9,000

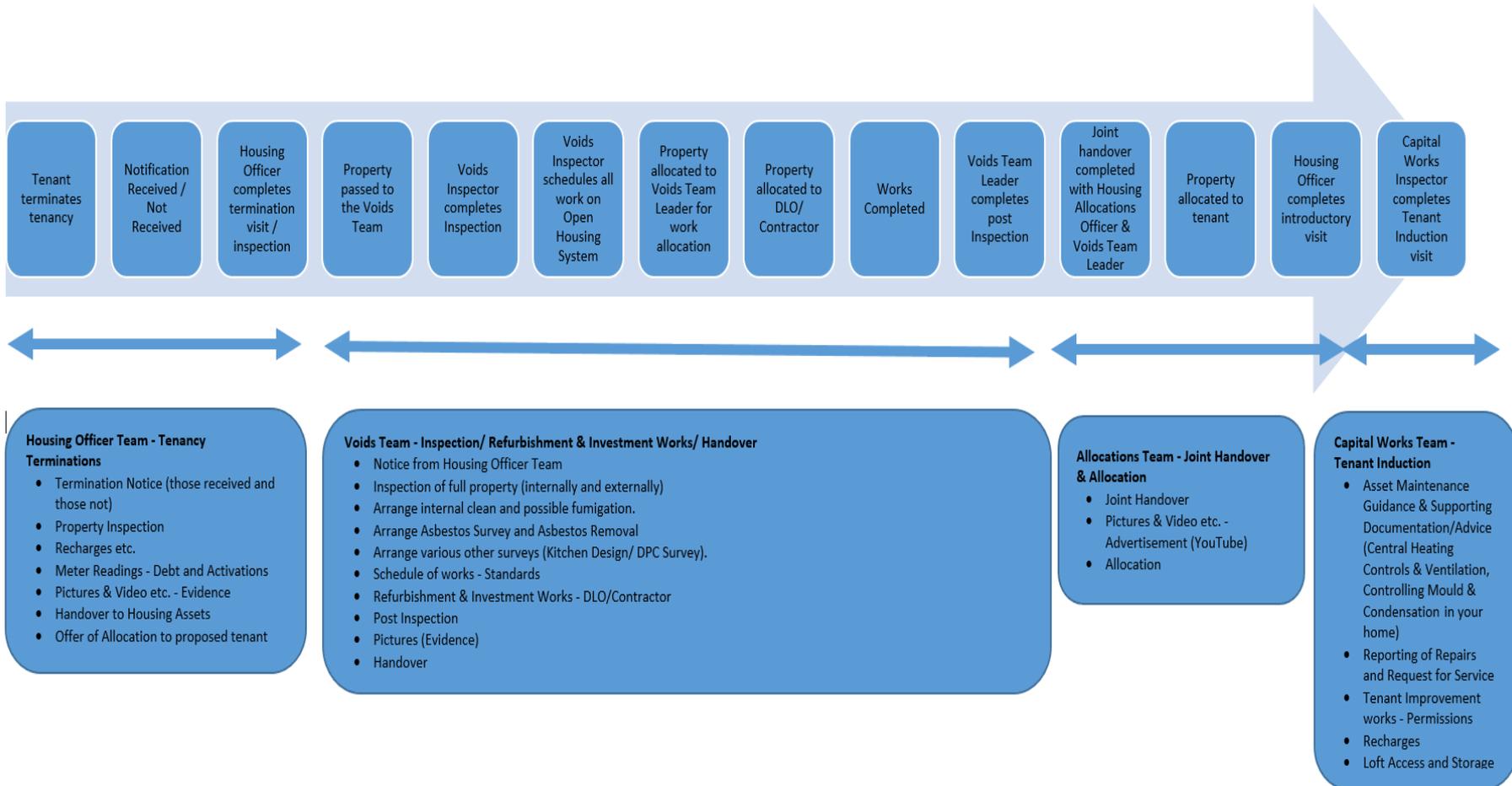
Voids turnover and backlog

- » **Current void turnover c.7.4% based on an average of 550 void properties refurbished annually.**
- » **Average void turnover across the UK ranges from 5%-11%.**
- » **Current void backlog equates to 2.9%, based upon a current backlog of 209 void properties as of 9th August 2022.**
- » **Neighbouring Councils currently averaging similar void backlog percentages of 3.1%**

Estate Management

- » **Operational review of estate management functions ongoing.**
- » **During last 12 months there have been some significant changes and improvements:**
 - » Customer and Secure tenancy teams merged creating a generic housing management function.
 - » Introduction of two new posts in relation to tenancy sustainment
 - » Specific allocations role introduced and being piloted with a small team taking overall responsibility for the allocations process.

End to end process



Resources - staffing

» **Voids Delivery Team**

- » Operations Manager x1 - Oversees overall delivery.
- » Team Leaders x3 - Responsible for managing the refurbishment work element and to monitor the progress of each void property through to completion and handover.
- » Void Inspectors x2 - Responsible for inspecting the void property and undertaking detailed surveys, along with scheduling the required works.
- » **Experienced staff turnover and other absences.**
 - » Currently we have two Team Leaders absent.

Resources - staffing improvement activities

» **Undertaken & Completed**

- » New Allocations Process
- » Securing of additional Grant Funding (£200,000)
- » Additional Capital resource allocated to Voids Team

» **Proposed**

- » Additional resource allocated to Void Inspections & Void works
- » Building in resilience (Assistant posts & Succession Planning) – Ongoing
- » Additional training, inspection templates and guides

Resources - budgets

» **Budgets**

- » Constantly stretched in terms of labour and materials

» **Welsh Government**

- » In the process of increasing their standards with regards to the Welsh Housing Quality Standards (WHQS) and Decarbonisation

» **Flintshire Stock**

- » Age and condition of the stock (Wales has oldest average stock in UK) increasing the likelihood of the asset requiring refurbishment

» **Impact of Brexit**

- » On our supply chain and material availability

Resources – budget improvement activities

» Undertaken

- » Successful in securing additional funding to assist with accelerating the refurbishment works to specific void properties - received over £200k in grant funding

» Proposed

- » Identify and secure additional funding to meet Welsh Government's new WHQS standards, DECARB ambitions and address the backlog of properties currently not tenanted

Resources - refurbishment

- » **Contractors**
 - » Current contract arrangement means access to only one main Contractor
- » **Materials/ Suppliers**
 - » Multiple material and supply issues over the past 24 months
- » **Stock Condition Surveys & Inspection**
 - » Improvement of stock condition information to ensure efficiency of programming and scheduling.
- » **COVID pandemic**
 - » Restrictions on activity created backlog of voids

Resources – refurb improvement activities

» Undertaken / ongoing

- » Re-tendering to procure additional contactors to increase resilience, whilst ensuring new procured contracts are robustly managed through our existing Capital Works regimes.
- » Work halted and reallocated to maximise resources when materials delayed.
- » Void Refurbishment Framework in process of completing necessary documentation to finalise tender in the next 3 months.
- » Completion of stock condition survey

Oversight and reporting

» **Void Working Group**

- » Established since January 2022 incorporating key teams and officers.
- » Full review of standards, processes and specifications.

» **Regular reporting**

- » Regular reports will be presented to capture the progress and performance of our new contractor framework, quality of works and successful allocations