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

Tenant terminates tenancy

Notification Received / Not Received

Housing Officer completes termination visit / inspection

Property passed to the Voids Team

Voids Inspector completes Inspection

Voids Inspector schedules all work on Open Housing System

Property allocated to Voids Team Leader for work allocation

Property allocated to DLO/ Contractor

Works Completed Voids Team Leader completes post Inspection

Joint handover completed with Housing Allocations Officer & Voids Team Leader

Property allocated to tenant

Housing Officer completes introductory visit

Capital Works Inspector completes Tenant Induction visit

Housing Officer Team - Tenancy Terminations

- · Termination Notice (those received and
- Property Inspection
- Recharges etc.
- Meter Readings Debt and Activations
- Pictures & Video etc. Evidence
- Handover to Housing Assets
- Offer of Allocation to proposed tenant

Voids Team - Inspection/ Refurbishment & Investment Works/ Handover

- Notice from Housing Officer Team
- Inspection of full property (internally and externally)
- · Arrange internal clean and possible fumigation.
- · Arrange Asbestos Survey and Asbestos Removal
- · Arrange various other surveys (Kitchen Design/ DPC Survey).
- Schedule of works Standards
- Refurbishment & Investment Works DLO/Contractor
- · Post Inspection
- Pictures (Evidence)
- Handover

Allocations Team - Joint Handover & Allocation

- Joint Handover
- Pictures & Video etc. -Advertisement (YouTube)
- Allocation

Capital Works Team -Tenant Induction

- Asset Maintenance Guidance & Supporting Documentation/Advice (Central Heating Controls & Ventilation, Controlling Mould & Condensation in your home)
- Reporting of Repairs and Request for Service
- · Tenant Improvement works - Permissions
- Recharges
- Loft Access and Storage



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 an 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

