

Void Management

October 2013



Introduction

Welcome to the latest in a series of regular briefings prepared by the Housing Strategy team on the big issues concerning housing. These briefings will be shared with staff, tenants and elected members and keep everyone up to date with regards the ever changing policy context that we are operating within.

The Housing Strategy section is responsible for:-

- Supporting the development of a culture of continuous improvement in Housing services and to facilitate opportunities to excel;
- Developing and implementing effective strategies for Housing and Community Safety Services within West Dunbartonshire;
- Developing the Council's housing strategy to ensure that it supports the delivery of our strategic priorities;
- Performance management within Housing and Community Safety services; and
- Promoting effective management and the involvement of tenants across all aspects of Housing Services.

For further information on Housing Strategy please telephone 01389 737889 or e-mail: housing.strategy@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

Briefing Note

Title

Introduction:

Rent loss due to voids results in reduced resources, empty properties are a wasted resource and the visible presence of long term empty properties has a detrimental effect on local communities.

Background:

Void Management is a core housing management function and within the organisational structure of Housing & Community Safety, our aim is to manage the housing stock as efficiently and effectively as possible. This involves developing a streamlined approach across a number of specialist teams to minimise the number of empty properties, the length of time properties are empty and the resulting rent loss due to voids.

Void Management incorporates a range of different activities which include:

tenancy termination,

property inspections,

identifying landlord and tenant responsibilities

void repairs, and

selecting and creating a tenancy.

To deliver a comprehensive approach to the management of all void properties we need to have effective, accountable void management procedures, appropriate customer service standards and good communication with applicants and tenants. In this way we can demonstrate that we are compliant with our statutory duties, regulatory requirements and good practice guidelines.

Key Points:

The Allocations section manages the overall process and is responsible for the management of the waiting list and all aspects of the lettings function.

The Repairs & Maintenance section is responsible for co-ordinating all necessary repair work, bringing the properties to re let standard and applying the appropriate discounts.

The Homelessness section is responsible for identifying suitable and sustainable offers of housing for homeless applicants.

The Anti Social Behaviour Task Force is responsible for ensuring that background information is made available as and when required.

The Estate Management section is responsible for carrying out viewings and new tenant visits.

The Strategy section is responsible for ensuring that any proposed changes to strategy and policy meet legislative and best practice guidance.

How can we improve?

We recently carried out a Void Self Assessment exercise in consultation with tenant representatives. Following on from this we have developed an Action Plan with clear objectives and timescales. (Copies of the Action Plan are available from your line manager).

Within the Action Plan we have identified that there is room for improvement in the following areas:

Operational management arrangements across the specialist teams

Roles & responsibilities within and between teams

Communication within and between teams

Training

Joint Briefing Sessions

Joint briefing sessions are being arranged over the next few weeks to discuss void management in more detail. We want to know what you think of the current void management process and what we can do to make it more efficient and effective.

For further information contact:

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