

Void Management Policy

1.0 Purpose of policy

- 1.1 The effective management of empty properties is crucial in meeting housing need and maximising the use and occupation of Karbon's homes, whilst ensuring that the surrounding communities retain their sustainability.
- 1.2 This policy explains how Karbon will deal with properties that have been vacated by the previous tenant in order to ensure that the vacant property is brought up to Karbon's agreed standard of repair before the new tenant moves in.

2.0 Objectives

- 2.1 Karbon Homes is committed to:
 - a) Providing a high quality, efficient and cost effective void management service.
 - b) Letting all its properties as quickly as possible and ensuring the smooth and timely transition from one tenancy to the next.
 - c) Adopting a prudent, planned approach to re-letting empty properties which will ensure there is sustainability in provision, management and maintenance of housing stock.
 - d) Ensuring that outgoing tenants are communicated with effectively to make sure they understand their responsibilities prior to terminating a tenancy and with the incoming tenant to keep them informed throughout the void management process.
 - e) Working in partnership with tenants and applicants to agree and publish any changes to the lettable standard.
 - f) Ensuring this policy is implemented in line with Karbon's Equality and Diversity Policy and associated legislation. Consideration will be given to all protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations, ensuring this policy and associated documents are available in different languages and alternative formats such as large print, audio type etc.

2.0 Policy detail

- 3.1 Karbon's Void Policy aims to ensure that empty properties are re-let promptly in order to meet demand and benefit new customers whilst also ensuring that both void rent loss and turnaround times are minimised.
- 3.2 This policy and associated lettable standard will ensure that all Karbon properties are offered to a high and consistent standard both internally and externally to all customers.

Ending Tenancies

- 3.3 Karbon will work closely with tenants ensuring that all possible support is provided to enable the tenancy to be sustained and reduce unnecessary terminations wherever possible.
- 3.4 All tenants are required to give written notice to vacate their property. Tenancies end on a Sunday. The standard notice period is four weeks. Karbon may however, in certain exceptional circumstance, accept a shorter notice period.

Lettable Standard

- 3.5 Karbon aims to create high quality, sustainable tenancies and achieve a high level of customer satisfaction.
- 3.6 In circumstances where the decorative condition of a void property is considered by Karbon to be poor, a decoration pack will be offered to the incoming tenant. The pack offered will reflect the extent of the decoration required and the property size to bring the property to a decent standard throughout. Where decoration is particularly bad, Karbon may also arrange for rooms to be decorated during the void period in order to encourage acceptance of properties identified as difficult to let.
- 3.7 The need to take action to protect void properties in the winter varies between property types. At the void inspection, decisions will be made as to whether the property will require frost precautions to be taken. Frost precautions include draining down of water supply pipes and water filled heating systems and conducting regular inspections.

Creating new tenancies

- 3.8 Successful general needs applicants are contacted within 24 hours after the close of the Choice Based Lettings advertising cycle, or as soon as practicable thereafter. Applicants will be asked to attend a viewing of the property as soon practicable thereafter. If there is no response to contact within 48 hours of the offer being made, the offer is withdrawn and the property offered to the next eligible applicant on the shortlist. Applicants for supported accommodation will follow the procedures set out in the allocations procedure.

- 3.9 At the viewing stage, all prospective tenants are provided with information about the property attributes and local neighbourhood facilities by Karbon. Applicants have 24 hours from the viewing in which to decide whether to accept the offer of the tenancy.
- 3.10 When a prospective tenant has indicated their acceptance of a vacant property, the tenancy will commence as soon as possible after all essential repairs are completed. Tenancies can start on any day of the week. Rent is payable from the day the tenancy commences.
- 3.11 The sign up process and the post letting visit have a significant impact on the sustainability of tenancies. Karbon has a number of supporting procedures in place to ensure each new tenant is provided with all the assistance they require in order to sustain that tenancy.
- 3.12 A representative sample of new tenants are asked to provide feedback regarding their satisfaction with the void management process and standard of their new home.

4.0 Monitoring and Review

The policy will be reviewed every three years. The review will be brought forward if there are significant changes to best practice, regulatory or legislative requirements.

5.0 Equality and Diversity

This policy is implemented in line with Karbon Homes Equality and Diversity Policy and associated legislation. Consideration will be given to all protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

This policy and associated documents are available in different languages and alternative formats where necessary.

7.0 Data Protection and Privacy

Karbon Homes has a clear policy on data protection and sharing data with other partners/outside agencies under the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998. This is clearly set out in Karbon Homes Data Management Policy which, along with the supporting Data Management Guidelines, must be followed throughout the operation of this policy.