karbon group

Providing a strong foundation for life.

ABANDONED PROPERTIES POLICY

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Unrestricted

Abandoned Properties Policy

Responsible Officer	Group Director Housing
This policy is applicable to	Karbon Group
Policy version	4
Date this version implemented	September 2026
Date of next review	September 2029

Policy Statement

This policy outlines how the Karbon Homes Group (the Group) manages homes that are believed to be abandoned, ensuring actions are fair, lawful, and respectful to customers while protecting housing resources.

Where abandonment is suspected, we carry out thorough checks and make every reasonable effort to contact the customer to confirm whether they intend to return. If contact is made, we support customers to end their tenancy appropriately and remove their belongings.

If a property is confirmed or strongly believed to be abandoned, we will promptly secure it and, where legally entitled, recover possession to prevent it remaining empty unnecessarily. All actions are taken in line with legal requirements.

Any belongings left behind are handled with care. Items of value or personal importance are recorded, stored securely, and retained for at least 14 days while attempts are made to contact the customer. Items that pose risks or have little value may be disposed of sooner. In some cases, valuable items may be sold, with proceeds used appropriately, such as reducing any outstanding debt, in line with legal obligations.

We maintain clear records to ensure all decisions are reasonable, proportionate and transparent. Strict standards apply to colleagues and contractors, who must never take items from a property.

Overall, this approach ensures abandoned homes are managed efficiently while treating customers fairly and respectfully.

Risk the policy is designed to control

2. Financial Viability – risk that the Group fails to remain financially viable.

3. Customer Service & Satisfaction – failure of the Group to keep its promises to customers by meeting its customer service and TSM targets.

Key performance measures

Number of suspected abandoned properties
Number of possessions

Definitions

Abandoned Property	An abandoned property is a property that the customer(s) and the household have vacated without providing the due notice, and to which the customer(s) and the household do not intend returning.

Abbreviations

None

Policy Detail

1.0 Purpose of policy

1.1 The Group will investigate and act upon any reasonable belief that a home has been abandoned and is no longer occupied by the customer.

1.2 We will take action to reclaim/repossess a property once all reasonable checks have been made to confirm that the home has been abandoned, and where possible, to establish that the former customer does not have an intention to return to the property.

2.0 Objectives

2.1 when it is believed that a property has been abandoned, we aim to:

- Ensure properties are managed, secured and recovered in a timely and lawful manner.
- Make reasonable efforts to contact customers and confirm occupancy status before taking action.
- Protect and appropriately manage any belongings left in the property, with due regard to their value, sensitivity and legal requirements.
- Prevent and identify tenancy fraud by ensuring that properties are occupied as the tenants only or principle home, investigating suspected abandonment promptly and taken appropriate action where a tenancy appears to have been unlawfully assigned, sublet, abandoned or otherwise misused.

3.0 Policy detail

3.1 This policy applies to all properties owned or managed by the Group.

3.2 **Establishing abandonment**
We will:

- take reasonable steps to establish that a tenancy has been abandoned, ensuring:

    - the property is not being occupied.
    - The customer does not intend to return.
- Conduct a thorough investigation and make every effort to contact the customer
- Where contact is made, we will:
    - Confirm whether the customer intends to return.
    - Encourage the customer to formally terminate or surrender the tenancy where appropriate.
    - Advise the customer to clear the property of belongings.

3.3 **Securing and recovering the property**

We will:

- Arrange to secure any suspected abandoned property, where required, on the same day a report is received.
- Where we believe the customer is not living in the property as their sole or principal home, take appropriate steps to recover possession.
- Pursue termination or surrender of the tenancy where possible to provide a swift and legally clear resolution.
- Take possession of the property when legally entitled to do so.
- Check that the property is secure and take steps to make it secure where necessary.

3.4 **Management of customer belongings**

Where belongings remain in the property, we will:

- Complete a full inventory (including photographs), with particular attention to items of perceived value.
- Arrange storage for items of value, personal papers and sentimental items e.g. photographs
- Store such items for a minimum period of 14 days, while attempting to locate the customer.
- Where possible, serve notice in accordance with the Torts (Interference with Goods) Act 1977

3.5 **Disposal of belongings**

We will:

- Dispose of items immediately where they pose an environmental or health hazard e.g. rotting food.
- Dispose of items of little or no value where appropriate.
- Proceed with disposal in line with this policy if a customer has been advised to clear belongings and fails to do so.

In exceptional circumstances where a court has granted possession and items of value remain:

- We may sell or otherwise dispose of those items.
- Costs (e.g. transport, storage, sale) will be offset against any proceeds.
- Any remaining proceeds will be used as deemed appropriate (e.g. to reduce outstanding debt), subject to legal obligations and any potential claim by the former customer.

3.6 **Record keeping and governance**

We will:

- Clearly record all investigations, decisions and actions taken (including disposal of belongings)
- Ensure records demonstrate that decisions were reasonable, proportionate and compliant with legal requirements

3.7 **Colleague conduct**

Under no circumstances may employees or contractors take or retain items from an abandoned property, even if those items are due for disposal.

4.0 Customer Vulnerabilities

4.1 This policy is applied in line with our Customers in Vulnerable Circumstances Policy. We want people to be treated fairly, have equality of opportunities, freedom, respect, and access to our services.

4.2 We will support people in vulnerable circumstances to help us deliver this service. We will work alongside external agencies such as social services, the police and fire services and other appropriate agencies to help and support people in vulnerable circumstances and to ensure we meet our statutory and regulatory requirements as a social landlord.

4.3 Policies and key information are made available on our website.

5.0 Monitoring and Review

5.1 This policy will be reviewed at least every 5 years. The review will be brought forward if there are significant changes to good practice, regulatory or legislative requirements.

5.2 The policy will be reviewed and monitored by the Group Director of Housing.

6.0 Equality and Diversity

6.1 This policy is applied in line with our Inclusion and Belonging Policy. This includes the legal requirements of the Equality Act 2010, Workers Protection Act 2023 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

6.2 At the Group we aim to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity, foster good relations and define the nine protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

6.3 If you would like this or any other policies in a different language or format please contact inclusion@karbonhomes.co.uk.

7.0 Data Protection and Privacy

7.1 We have a clear policy on data protection and sharing data with other partners/third parties under the requirements of the UK General Data Protection Regulation, the Data Protection Act 2018 and other associated legislation. This is clearly set out in the Data Protection Policy for the Group which, along with its associated procedures, must be followed throughout the operation of this policy.