

Policy	Empty homes policy
Date adopted	November 2022
Date of next review	November 2025
Version	1
Responsible board	Homes and property board
Responsible officer	Head of lettings / Director of maintenance and commercial services

1. Policy statement and purpose

This policy sets out our approach to managing empty homes.

This policy is aligned with the regulatory standards set by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH). It is specifically aligned with the tenancy and home standard, by addressing the following requirements:

- ♦ Minimising the time that a property is empty between lettings, while taking into account the circumstances of the new tenant.
- ♦ Meeting all applicable statutory requirements, including the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), which ensures homes are safe for occupants.
- ♦ Demonstrating an appropriate balance of planned and responsive repairs, and value for money. The approach should include responsive and cyclical repairs, planned and capital work, work on empty properties, and adaptations.

2. What the policy covers

This policy covers all of our social and affordable rented homes, including supported and specialist housing.

Market rent and shared ownership properties are out of scope of this policy.

3. Definitions contained in the policy

Capital works. High-cost works that are completed on homes, including roof or structure works.

Cyclical works. Routine tasks that will be completed on a regular basis.

Decent Homes Standard. This is a national standard that states that, "A decent home is one which meets all statutory requirements in relation to the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), is in a reasonable state of repair and has reasonably modern facilities." Further information can be found at www.gov.uk/guidance/decent-homes-standard-review

Disposal. A decision to sell an empty property. More information can be found on page two.

Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). This is a guide for organisations, to ensure homes are safe for customers.

Quality Homes Standard. The standard you can expect your home to meet when you accept it. More information can be found on page two.

Sign up. This is the appointment you must attend when you sign a tenancy agreement with us for your new home.

4. Quality Homes Standard

Before we let our properties, we will make sure they are safe, clean, secure and in good repair. We make a commitment to you that on moving day, your new home will be 'ready to let'.

This commitment is our Quality Homes Standard and you can find more information at www.homesplus.co.uk/documents

It has been designed to set out the standards we will work to in our empty properties, so that you know what to expect when you move into your new home.

5. Disposals

An assessment of the cost of repairs required to bring the property up to the Quality Home Standard will be carried out on each property, taking into account:

- ◆ Long term customer demand
- ◆ Desirability of the area/neighbourhood
- ◆ Any future alternative use (such as part of a wider development site)

If the assessment concludes that a property is no longer sustainable, a decision will be made to dispose of it. Further information with regards to how we manage the disposal of properties can be found in our Disposal policy which can be found at www.homesplus.co.uk/documents

6. Long term empty properties

Occasionally, we may hold a property empty for a long term period without re-letting it, this is usually because:

- ◆ It is being sold.
- ◆ It is held for a customer who requires another home for a period of time. For example, they may need to relocate temporarily while works are carried out on their existing home.
- ◆ It is being upgraded through a regeneration programme.
- ◆ It requires substantial structure or other repair works.



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