



# **EMPTY PROPERTY (VOIDS) POLICY**

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## **1. Policy Context**

This policy focuses upon how the delivery of work on empty properties (“voids”) can be achieved quickly whilst ensuring quality standards are achieved and rent loss is minimised.

Managing voids is one of the most important areas of housing management. Leeds Jewish Housing Association aim to have the lowest possible number of voids in our stock and to re-let empty properties as quickly as possible. High levels of empty properties can:

- Be a drain on resources through rent loss, security and repair costs;
- Be targets for vandalism, leading to increased costs for repair damage;
- Deny someone speedy access to a home particularly in high demand areas; and
- Stifle and undermine community regeneration.

## **2. Definition**

A void or empty property refers to the period that a property is between tenancies and no rent is being collected.

It is vital that Leeds Jewish Housing Association view void repairs (the works needed prior to re-let) as an integral part of the end-to-end lettings process from notice of termination through to the re-let of the property and beyond.

## **3. Legislative Context**

Leeds Jewish Housing Association accepts the importance of managing its housing stock in an equitable manner in line with the demands of housing legislation. We also expect our Contractors (or other 3<sup>rd</sup> parties contracted to work with Leeds Jewish Housing Association) to ensure compliance with all legal requirements and statutory obligations during the voids work period.

## **4. Aims & Objectives**

Leeds Jewish Housing Association aims to provide quality housing to its tenants and ensure that properties are available to re-let at the earliest opportunity. In doing so, we will:

- Ensure void properties are left empty for the minimum amount of time;
- Ensure Leeds Jewish Housing Association does not incur any unnecessary loss of rent;

- Ensure there are good systems of communication and information sharing across all parties involved in the void works / re-letting process;
- Ensure our properties meet our lettable standard set to give a good and consistent standard to the commencement of all new tenancies.

## **5. Policy Statement**

Leeds Jewish Housing Association will ensure void property works are delivered in an efficient, value for money, customer-focused manner that recognises the needs of tenants and housing applicants.

### **5.1 Empty Property Inspections**

The full technical inspection of voids will be carried out once the premises are empty. Joint pre-void inspections will take place with the outgoing tenant to understand the condition of the property as early in the process as possible. In cases where it is discovered there is wilful damage to the property by the outgoing resident, photographs will be taken and Leeds Jewish Housing Association will seek to recharge the tenant accordingly for reasonable repair costs.

### **5.2 Safety Checks**

LJHA will carry out a full electrical safety check on each change of tenancy and then periodically every five years. If there is gas to the property then the supply will be capped at the meter during the void period and then checked and certified upon re-let.

### **5.3 Lettable Standard**

Leeds Jewish Housing Association will ensure that at the point of occupancy the property will be:

- In line with LJHA's lettable standard
- a fit, safe and secure home;
- structurally sound and where possible energy efficient;
- weather tight, damp free and properly ventilated;
- ready for all operating connections to the main utilities;
- wherever possible provided with modern and fully functioning heating;
- fitted with modern kitchens and bathrooms;
- compliant with all regulatory checks and certified;
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*Note:* The incoming tenant is responsible for signing up to a utility supplier. LJHA staff can assist the tenant with the process during the tenancy sign up process.

## **6. Performance Monitoring and Review**

LJHA will manage and monitor the performance of the full void process and benchmark against targets and other small housing associations.