

Empty Homes Policy

1.	SCOPE
	Purpose
1.1	The purpose of the policy is to set out whg’s policy towards ensuring empty homes are brought back into management as quickly and efficiently as possible.
	Legal and regulatory framework
1.2	All empty homes (voids) must comply with the Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018. The Act aims to raise property standards and make it easier for customers to hold their landlords to account where standards are not met.
1.3	To comply with this regulation whg needs to ensure that the property is fit for human habitation at the commencement of the tenancy and must remain fit for occupation during the lifetime of the tenancy.
1.4	Both under the terms of our tenancies and under section 11 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985, we have an obligation to “keep in repair the structure and exterior of the dwelling and keep in repair and in proper working order the installations in the dwelling for the supply of water, gas, electricity, sanitation, space heating and heating water.
1.5	Registered Providers are subject to regulatory intervention and enforcement action if found to have not complied with the Consumer Standards 2024. The ‘Safety and Quality Standard’ specifically applies to this policy and requires landlords to provide safe and good quality homes and landlord services to tenants.
1.6	The Charities Act 2022 will be relevant if we sell properties through our Development Committee (DC) process.
2.	POLICY STATEMENT
2.1	The policy aims to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> bring empty homes back into management as quickly as possible to maximise their social value to communities and prospective customers and to ensure we maximise our rental income; and improve customer satisfaction through achieving whg’s lettable standards in a timely and consistent manner
2.2	Empty property surveys are carried out on all properties to include works that ensure we meet the requirements of the Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018.
2.3	When a home becomes empty an inspection will be carried out to ensure that the services are safe so that colleagues can assess the home for any repairs or work needed.
2.4	If a whg home has been neglected, damaged or had unauthorised and/or poor-quality

	alterations, the leaving customer would normally be restricted from the housing register in accordance with the Allocations Policy.
2.5	<p>We may recharge the customer for carrying our alterations or improvements in the home where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The customer is leaving and did not have consent to carry out the work, and is unable to revert the property to its former state; and/or • Retrospective permission has been refused for the improvement or alteration they wish to leave behind; and/or, • The alteration or improvement is a risk to health and safety, where we are required to complete the work urgently, and no access was given to complete inspection and/or works that were pre-arranged.
2.6	All rechargeable repairs will be managed in accordance with the Recharge Policy.
2.7	Where a home is in a vulnerable area due to vandalism and theft, security alarms and screens will be installed. A controlled access/egress process will be implemented to manage risk.
2.8	When a home has been assessed it will be categorised as either requiring 'Major' or 'Minor' works or placed 'Under Review' due to substantial investment requirements.
2.9	A 'Major' void is classified as requiring extensive repairs and will require a major component replacing such as a kitchen/bathroom/heating replacement, a rewire, re-roofing, large asbestos removal or full plastering to ensure that it complies with the Decent Homes Standard.
2.10	A 'Minor' void requires works to bring it back into management to meet the Standard but may require a component replacing within the following six months which will be included onto the next available programme of works.
2.11	Where costs exceeding £25000 have been identified to bring a home up to lettable standard, the home will go through the 'Under Review' process at Asset Investment Panel. A home placed 'Under Review' will have an appraisal carried out to determine whether retaining the home is viable.
2.12	The review considers the cost of works required, the potential future financial returns and the impact on the community. The home must be a house where whg owns the freehold and must be unencumbered by grant requirements (except for mortgage rescue properties). Those homes may occasionally result in the decision of whg to dispose of the home.
2.13	All homes will have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) available for any prospective customer to view the typical energy use and costs. The certificate will rate the home using a scale of A - G where 'A' is the most energy efficient. whg is committed to achieving the A-D rating in all homes that they let.
2.14	This policy will ensure that all homes meet a minimum standard and comply with all legal health and safety requirements when they are let.
2.15	This policy will also ensure that all homes are free from damp and mould when they are let. All contributory structural and environmental defects will have been rectified including the provision of sufficient mechanical extraction in kitchen and bathrooms wherever

	practicable. In addition, fire safety compartmentation is also assessed and verified for any flatted accommodation.
2.16	When a decision has been made to demolish a home, a timetable will be drawn up from the time a customer leaves until the demolition date. During this period, we will ensure that the home has its services capped off and that the windows/doors are boarded up and secure.
3.	PERFORMANCE MEASURES
3.1	Performance against key performance indicators is reported at Asset Investment Panel and quarterly to the Customer Service Oversight Committee.
3.2	Performance against Void Rent Loss targets are recorded monthly in the Business Intelligence Framework and reported quarterly to the Group Executive and Board.
3.3	We will also benchmark our performance with peers on an annual basis.
4.	EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY
4.1	An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been undertaken, due to the impact to customers. It has been ascertained that there were no major factors that required any actions. The EIA has determined the policy shows no evidence of potential for discrimination and all appropriate opportunities to eliminate discrimination, advance equality and foster good relations between groups are taken.
5.	TRAINING AND DISSEMINATION
5.1	Current processes ensure the delivery of all Home Maintenance services outlined in the policy are disseminated to appropriate colleagues. Policy awareness and training is incorporated within induction sessions with new starters. All training relevant to colleagues' roles will be mandatory.
6.	MONITOR AND REVIEW
6.1	The policy will be monitored by the Director of Home Maintenance Services and Asset Investment Panel.
6.2	The policy will be reviewed regularly and at least every three years. Any substantial changes to the policy will be approved by the Customer Service Oversight Committee.
7.	ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
7.1	Documents, policies and procedures associated with this policy are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asset Management Strategy • Allocations Policy • Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy • Decent Homes Standard • Letting and Void Procedures

Document author	Assistant Director Home Maintenance Services
Document owner	Director of Home Maintenance Services
Version and status	v4.0 LIVE
Legal advice	None
Consultation	Yes, due to the impact on customers. Service Assessors (customers) undertake quarterly assessment of a number of properties against whg's Lettable Standards.
Approved by	Customer Service Oversight Committee – 5 May 2026
Review Date	Quarter 1 – 2029
Transformational Programme	Forward Thinking Services
Equality Assessment	6 March 2026
Customer Impact Assessment	2 February 2026
Key changes made	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Included 2.5 – neglect, damage or unauthorised and/or poor-quality alterations • Included 2.6 and 2.7 – rechargeable repairs • Update to 2.12 and 2.13 – 'Under Review' appraisal statement