

## Void Management and Lettings Procedures

This procedure gives details of the processes to be followed when a property becomes void.

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**i Version Control for Void Management & Lettings Procedures**

Date Revised	18/1/2013	Author	Mark Jolly, Performance Team
Date Approved		Approved by	Lawrence Blake Housing Operations Manager
Date effective from	18/1/2013	Lead Officer	Phil Mills, Tenancy Service Manager
Review Due		Staff involved	Voids Officer Repairs Team Housing Support Services Team Estate Management Team Home Choice Team
Location			
Senior Manager's Signature	I agree that I have seen and ratified this procedure and proper consultation has been carried out to ensure it does not knowingly discriminate against any individual or community.		

**ii Void Management & Lettings Policy**

It is Council policy to manage voids in an efficient and effective manner, maximising rental income, reducing void times to a minimum and letting properties to an acceptable standard.

**iii Aims and Objectives**

- 1) To maximise the use of the Council's housing stock by minimising:
  - The time that properties remain empty
  - The number of refusals
  - Rent loss
  - Repair expenditure.
- 2) To continually improve our performance as measured by Performance Indicators and to be in the top quartile of local authorities.
- 3) To ensure that all empty properties meet the Void Letting Standard as set out in the **New Home Property Standard** leaflet.
- 4) To ensure that we comply with statutory and legal requirements regarding terminating tenancies and starting new tenancies.

**iv Purpose of these Procedures**

These procedures are designed to show staff involved in void management what to do and when to do it. Following these procedures correctly should lead to realising the aims and objectives of the void policy.

**v Related Procedures**

Staff should refer to the following procedure documents to ensure that tenants receive consistent and coherent services from the Council, regardless of which team is responsible for delivering each individual procedure. Related procedures are:

- Home Choice shortlisting and offers
- Starting tenancies
- Mutual exchanges
- Tenancy management
- Downsizing.

**vi Risk Management**

There are a number of key business, financial and health and safety risks associated with the letting of Council properties, and it is important that all staff using this procedure are aware of the risks and how to minimise them.

A risk management table for this procedure can be found at [Appendix 1](#).

**vii Staff Responsibilities**

- Overall responsibility for void performance rests with the Tenancy Services Manager (TSM)
- The Income Recovery Manager (IRM) will produce relevant void information and will chair void management meetings. These meetings will be attended by representatives from Neighbourhood Management, Repairs, Housing Support Services, Home Choice and Temporary Accommodation
- The Voids Officer (VO) will manage the day-to-day voids process from an Estate Management point of view. He will liaise with managers and staff from other teams as required
- Technical Officers (TOs) and Repairs Housing Assistants (RHAs) inspect and organise repairs to void properties
- Neighbourhood Officers (NOs) will deal with voids arising after the death of a tenant only until the tenancy is properly terminated and the keys returned. NOs will also deal with abandoned properties until they have been correctly repossessed (see Abandonment in the Tenancy Management Procedures)
- A designated Neighbourhood Assistant (NA) will act as administrator to the voids process.

See also [Section 18.0](#) below.

## **Void Management and Lettings Procedures**

### **1.0 Notices Terminating Tenancies**

Notification of a potential void may come from a number of sources, for example:

- Telephone call
- Letter
- Another agency (e.g. social services)
- Next of kin
- Keys returned.

All notifications terminating a tenancy should be in writing and must give four weeks' notice. By whatever method we are informed that a tenant is ending a tenancy we need confirmation from the tenant (where at all possible) in writing.

The four-week notice period will always be enforced, with the period ending on a Sunday. This includes where a tenant transfers to another social landlord or moves into a residential care home or similar.

- 1) All written notices will be sent to the NA who will forward these to the VO
- 2) The NA will enter the termination details onto the Academy system
- 3) The NA will establish the forwarding address of the tenant.

If the NA cannot establish a forwarding address, they will notify the VO. The VO/NO will attempt to find the address, and if it is discovered, will inform the NA.

### **2.0 Acknowledgement Letter (within one working day of notice)**

The NA will send a standard acknowledgement letter to the tenant setting out:

- The termination date
- The date the keys are due back (with a reminder that a further week's rent will be added if the keys are late)
- A reminder to make sure that the property is left clean and free from rubbish or there may be an extra charge
- Explanation of the incentive scheme to encourage tenants to comply with their tenancy agreement and leave the property in good order (see [Appendix 2](#)).

### **3.0 Void Date and Key Returns**

The date the property is void is the Monday following the expiry of the four weeks' notice.

VO will complete the 'Void Record Sheet' ([Appendix 6](#)).

Keys must be handed in on the relevant Monday by 5pm at the latest. Keys are handed in to Customer First who will issue a receipt.

The Repairs Team will collect the keys from Customer First and will inform the VO and IRM that they have been returned at the same time.

If the keys are handed in after 5pm on the relevant Monday, another full week's rent will be charged and the void date put forward to the following Monday. If the keys are late in the VO will chase them up.

If no notice is received and the keys are just returned, the void will start on the Monday following 28 days (the same date that would have applied had the correct four weeks' notice been given). The notice period will be charged to the rent account of the (former) tenant.

However, investigation should be made by the VO/NO to confirm that the handing in of the keys is a genuine surrender of the tenancy. If in doubt the Abandoned Property section of the Tenancy Management Procedures should be followed.

Where a property has been used by Temporary Accommodation as 'perm as temp' accommodation, and is being handed back to Neighbourhood Management, the Move On Officer will give the VO at least two weeks' notice before the keys are handed over.

The appropriate Rent Officer will chase any former tenant arrears.

For death of tenant see [Section 17.0](#)

#### **4.0 Downsizing**

See Downsizing Procedure.

#### **5.0 Pre-void Inspection** (within two working days of the notice)

- 1) The VO will undertake the pre-void inspection. The purpose of this inspection is to:
  - Identify any rechargeable repairs (see recharge procedure and New Home Property Standards leaflet)
  - Identify any items that may have to be removed
  - Explain the tenant's responsibilities on leaving the property, i.e. the property, fixtures and fittings should be left in good condition, the property should be clean, tidy and free of rubbish, and the rent account should be up to date
  - Complete property details for Home Choice, including taking a photograph of the property
  - Obtain the forwarding address.
- 2) VO will send void details and the photograph to Home Choice on the same day.

- 3) Where the property has disabled adaptations the VO will make sure full details are passed to Home Choice so that suitable people have the opportunity to bid for the property. The VO will also ensure that details of disabled adaptations are recorded on Academy.

The VO will inform the Council's Housing Occupational Therapist where the property has significant adaptations.

- 4) Asbestos (see [Section 14.0](#)). Where it is feasible and practical the asbestos survey can be carried out in the pre-void period

## **6.0 'Sensitive' Lettings**

In some extreme circumstances it may be appropriate to make a 'sensitive letting' that is a letting which does not follow the letter of the Home Choice policy and pays regard to the particular needs of the local community.

Such lettings may be appropriate, for example, if there has been prolonged and serious anti-social behaviour and the local neighbourhood are legitimately entitled to as much care as we can take to try to ensure some respite.

Before advertising any void the VO should check with the NO and Anti-Social Behaviour Case Manager to see if there is any reason to consider a sensitive let. If officers believe there is, the matter should be discussed with the TSM who will need to approve before any request can be made to Home Choice. The TSM will discuss with Home Choice.

The VO or TSM will send Home Choice an email requesting a sensitive let with reasons to justify the request.

If there is a difference of opinion over whether the letting can be considered sensitive or not, the matter should be resolved by a discussion between the Housing Needs Manager and the TSM.

## **7.0 Advertising the Property** (within one week of notice)

**NB** Deadline for weekly advert is 12 noon on the Thursday of each week.

- 1) The VO will ensure that the property is advertised within the first week of notice being received.
- 2) The VO will load details onto the Abris system
- 3) Home Choice will advertise the property. Home Choice will email the advert to the VO by 1pm on Friday. VO will make a final check that the details are correct. Any inaccuracies must be reported to Home Choice within one hour.

## **8.0 Property Shortlisting** (within 48 hours of the advert closing)

Within 48 hours of the advert closing (midnight on a Monday) the Home Choice team will run a shortlist from the Abris system with the aim of identifying the successful bidder.

The Home Choice team will undertake preliminary checks on the successful bidder to establish:

- Previous tenancy history with ECC/other social landlord
- Arrears/re-charge history
- Previous anti-social behaviour
- Entry on Sex Offender register
- Any support needs. **Support must be in place before a tenancy is offered.**

Where possible the Home Choice team will inform the VO of the successful bidder within 48 hours of the close of the advert. However, this may not always be possible when dealing with clients with rent arrears, anti-social behaviour issues or clients who have been accepted as homeless.

## 9.0 Transfers

If the successful bidder is an existing council tenant the VO will liaise with the relevant NO to check that everything is in order prior to the transfer taking place (see New Home Property Standards leaflet and [Section 11.0](#) below).

Once the tenant is successful in bidding for the void property and has been accepted by the VO, their property should be advertised as in [Section 6.0](#). Information should be passed to the NA who will input the pre-void details onto Academy as in [Section 1.0](#).

The VO will send a letter to the successful bidder (see [Section 10.0](#) below), which should inform them that they will have **one week** overlap on the two properties (so that for one week there will be no rent to pay on the old property). If the keys for the old property are not handed in by the end of the overlap week rent will be payable **on both properties**.

The VO does not have to accept the transfer if there are rent arrears, anti-social behaviour issues or any other breaches of the tenancy. (See [Section 12.0](#) below, and the New Home Property Standards leaflet)

If the VO refuses to accept a bidder who is an ECC tenant because they have rent arrears, or their property does not meet the required standard, they will speak to Home Choice who will inform the tenant both verbally and in writing. The letter will set out clearly what the tenant must do in order to be considered for a transfer. A timescale for improvement can be given (e.g. seven days before re-inspection). Alternatively the VO may wish to move to the next name on the shortlist.

**NB** with transfers it may be possible for Housing Benefit to pay on two addresses at the same time. The VO/NO will check if this is possible on a case-by-case basis, and assist the tenant in making a double claim if necessary.

## 10.0 Provisional Offer (within 15 working days after the notice from the former tenant)

The Home Choice team will draw up a provisional offer letter to the successful bidder and will pass the letter and the application file to the VO.

The letter will state:

- Address of property offered
- Size and type of property
- Weekly rent (and service/support charges if applicable)

Clients accepted as homeless will be sent a different, 'provisional offer' letter.

**11.0 Home Visit** (within two working days of notification from Home Choice) **See *Starting tenancies procedures***

The Home Visit applies to **all** successful bidders. At the visit (if not already sent) the VO will issue the formal written offer for the property.

**12.0 Refusals** (See ***Tenancy Commencement Procedures***)

If at any point during the provisional offer process (for example during the initial telephone conversation or at the Home Visit) the applicant expresses a definite desire to decline the offer, it is important that the applicant's refusal of the offer is evidenced in writing. There is a section on the provisional offer letter which allows a formal refusal to be recorded.

The VO should ensure that as much detail as possible about the reason for refusal is recorded (preferably on the same piece of paper as the written refusal itself), and that this is passed to the Home Choice Team for processing. A refusal form should also be completed (see [Appendix 10](#))

No later than one working day after the VO learns that an applicant has refused a provisional offer (or is likely to) he should contact the Home Choice Team to request a replacement name.

Likewise if there is no response from the applicant 48 hours after being contacted by the VO, the VO should contact the Home Choice Team to request a replacement name.

The VO may decline to accept a name from Home Choice if the bidder's details are found to be false.

**13.0 Direct Lettings**

In the event of a property being hard to let (that is, it is advertised but has no bidders, or all bidders refuse the property) a direct letting can be made by Home Choice. A direct letting could be to anyone registered with Home Choice. Home Choice will liaise with the VO (who may wish to discuss the matter with the TSM) to discuss any proposed candidate.

Likewise, if within one month of the hard-to-let property being advertised another virtually identical property in the same area becomes void, Home Choice may again make a direct letting in consultation with the VO (who may wish to discuss the matter with the TSM) without another advert being made.

Where there is a property which has been adapted for disabled use and there is no one on the shortlist of bidders who needs such a property, Home Choice may



again make a direct letting in consultation with the VO (who may wish to discuss the matter with the TSM) without another advert being made.

In the circumstances described above, each case will be assessed on its own merits. Details should be recorded on file (either written reports or copies of emails) for audit purposes.

#### **14.0 Repairs Period** (time dependant on work required)

On receipt of keys:

- 1) Property to be made gas safe prior to inspection
- 2) Asbestos: Repairs Housing Assistant will check to see if an asbestos survey has been carried out. If not, a survey will be arranged via a suitably qualified surveyor. Once the survey has been made the keys are passed to the TO to carry out an inspection. See [Section 5.0](#).
- 3) A Technical Officer (TO) will undertake a void inspection to determine the work required to comply with the void letting standard. The TO will specify work and time allowed for the contractor (minimum of 5 days with multiples of five days for more extensive works). TO to ensure that void inspection and notification of works required to the contractor takes place **within five working days of the property being made gas safe**.
- 4) TO will inform RHA of the condition of the property so that they can assess if the outgoing tenant qualifies for the incentive payment (see [Appendix 2](#))
- 5) Where 'major works' are required (i.e. kitchen replacements, central heating, new bathroom etc.) a decision will be made as to whether these works will be included in the void works specification or undertaken after the new tenant moves in.
- 6) The (TO) will inform the VO of the expected date that the keys will be returned after the works are completed. The VO will make a provisional accompanied letting appointment with new tenant.

#### **15.0 Keys Returned from Contractor**

- 1) Contractor will return keys to the Repairs Team
- 2) TO will inspect a random sample of void properties to check the quality of work by the contractor
- 3) VO will pick up keys from the Repairs Team on the same day they are returned.

#### **16.0 Accompanied Let**

See ***Starting tenancies procedures*** for details of how the Accompanied Let is carried out.

If the prospective tenant refuses the property at the accompanied let visit, the VO

will contact Home Choice immediately to obtain details of the next short listed bidder. The VO will carry out a Home Visit and arrange another accompanied let visit.

If the prospective tenant accepts the property, the VO will inform Home Choice via the lettings list. The VO will also inform the IRM and HA who will start the tenancy on Academy.

## **17.0 Death of Tenant**

When a tenant dies, one of two procedures will be followed:

- Where there are next of kin
- Where there are no next of kin.

With the death of a tenant we do not insist on four weeks' notice (i.e. we do not charge rent for the four weeks after the death). We allow three 'rent free' weeks for the family to clear the property and return the keys. Once the keys are returned, the tenancy can be terminated. If the family takes longer than three weeks to return the keys, additional rent will be charged unless there are exceptional circumstances.

**NB** NOs will deal with voids arising after the death of a tenant until the tenancy is properly terminated and the keys returned. VO will, however, deal with advertising the property and liaison with Home Choice.

## **17.1 Where There are Next of Kin**

- 1) As soon as we are informed of the death of a tenant, the NO should advise any relatives that they will have three rent free weeks from the Monday following the date of the death to clear the property and return the keys. If notified by letter, the letter should be passed to the NA as in stage 4) below.
- 2) If the tenant was claiming Housing Benefit (HB), the next of kin should be advised to inform the Benefit Section immediately to prevent any HB overpayment.
- 3) The NO should ask for the next of kin's details (i.e. name, address, contact telephone number) and request a copy of the Death Certificate.
- 4) Next of kin details should be emailed to the NA or, in their absence, the TSM, together with the date of death. The NA will send a standard letter ([Appendix 7](#)) and prepare a void sheet.
- 5) The NO should make an entry in the Diary pages of the rent account so that Rent Officers are aware that a death has occurred and who the next of kin are.
- 6) The property should be advertised in the normal way as soon as the death is reported (i.e. before the tenancy has been formally terminated).

## **17.2 Where There are No Next of Kin**

A Warden or Bereavement Services will usually advise us that a death has occurred. Initially the NO will make every effort to trace next of kin.

- 1) Where the tenant lives alone and there are no keys, the NO will arrange to meet contractors on site to change the locks.
- 2) Once access has been gained and the locks changed, two NOs should enter the premises and record and remove all valuable items; these will include cash, bank/post office books, jewellery, and cash cards. Larger items of value such as TV's, DVD Players etc. need only be recorded with make, model and approximate condition
- 3) Three Notice to Quit (NTQ) letters ([Appendix 8](#)) should be left at the property, witnessed by the other NO - one addressed to the Deceased, one to the Personal Representatives and one to the Executors. The NTQ gives one month's (28 days') notice from the following Monday.
- 4) The property should be left secure and the keys remain with the NO.
- 5) On their return to the office, the NO will create an inventory of the goods taken from the property which must then be placed in a sealed envelope, witnessed by the other attending NO, and placed in the safe in Room 1.34 (Admin).
- 6) If any address books or information that may relate to a next of kin were found in the property, the NO should attempt to contact that person to see if they wish to take responsibility for emptying the property of personal effects.
- 7) If next of kin can be located but they do not want to take responsibility for the property, then a letter must be sent to the Treasury Solicitor (Bona Vacantia – literally 'vacant goods' – contact details on their website [www.tsol.gov.uk/](http://www.tsol.gov.uk/)) advising that there are next of kin but they do not want to take responsibility.
- 8) If no next of kin can be traced, then a letter should be sent to the Treasury Solicitor (Bona Vacantia)([Appendix 9](#)) advising that there is no traceable next of kin, listing any items removed from the property and asking for permission to clear and re-let the property as soon as possible.
- 9) The property should be advertised as normal. At the end of the 28 days Notice to Quit period the property can be repossessed by the Council.

Any items retained in the safe must remain in the Council's possession until guidance has been received from the Treasury Solicitor, which may take some time.

## **18.0 Void Performance / Co-ordination**

- The VO will monitor and track each void from start to finish.
- The VO will liaise with each section or person responsible for each part of the process to help ensure that the procedures are followed correctly and void times are kept to a minimum.
- Each section (i.e. Neighbourhood Management, Repairs, Home Choice) is responsible for carrying out their duties regarding void management and for

co-operating among themselves and with the VO.

- Key 'action dates' will be entered into the Academy void system to enable each void to be tracked and analysis of performance undertaken. This will be done by the VO, NA and Repairs Team as appropriate.
- The IRM will produce a weekly void report showing where each property is within the system. The report will include those properties where the tenant has given notice but are yet to become void.
- The VO, IRM, Tenancy Services Manager and Repairs and Technical Services Manager will meet on a regular basis to monitor all void properties.
- Overall void turnaround time will be maintained on a weekly basis and circulated to all relevant officers. Void turnaround times per NO patch will also be tracked together with other monthly performance trends.

## **Appendix 1 Risk Management**

### **Financial risks:**

- Legal costs if unlawful tenancy termination occurs
- Failure to enforce tenancy conditions at end of tenancy
- Failure to collect rent arrears if procedures not followed correctly
- Failure to maximise income if void times are high
- Staff time wasted putting right prior mistakes or omissions
- Increased costs if voids returned in poor condition.

### **Health and safety risks:**

- Tenants possibly put at risk if lettable standards are not adhered to
- Poor support for staff or tenants who find a deceased person
- Injury to staff if risk assessment and procedure not followed.
- Injury to contractors

### **Legal and regulatory risks:**

- Failure to properly end tenancies
- Failure to meet Audit Commission inspection standards
- Failure to meet gas regulations
- Failure to meet asbestos regulations.

### **Quality risks:**

- Staff insufficiently trained in the procedures
- Policy and procedures do not reflect current legislation or good practice

### **Publicity risks:**

- Adverse publicity for ECC if voids go wrong e.g. if:
  - The law is broken
  - The body of a deceased person is left for any length of time
- Risk to ECC reputation if anything goes wrong, particularly health and safety issues

## **Appendix 2**

### **Incentive Scheme for Tenants Leaving an ECC Property**

The object of the scheme is to reward tenants who vacate their property and leave it in good order. This should lead to shorter void times and a reduction in the amount that has to be paid to contractors for the removal of rubbish.

£150.00 will be paid to secure tenants who satisfy the following conditions –

- They give four weeks notice of vacation
- Keys are handed in by midday on the Monday that their tenancy ends
- They leave the property, garden and out buildings free of rubbish and furniture
- They leave no outstanding repairs for which they are responsible. If any such repairs are outstanding, money will be deducted for these repairs from the incentive payment and the balance then paid to the tenant
- There is a clear rent account at time of vacation.

The details of the scheme and the conditions to be met will be sent to tenants in their pre-vacation letter and re-enforced by the Voids Officer at the pre-void inspection visit.

The Technical Officer will assess the condition of the property after the keys have been returned.

It will be up to the Technical Officer to inform the Housing Assistant responsible for administering the procedure what the condition of the property was, and if it does not meet the criteria supply photographs.

If the property does meet the condition criteria then Housing Assistants will check the remaining circumstances for compliance i.e. –

- Four weeks notice.
- Keys are handed in by midday on the Monday that their tenancy ends.
- Clear rent account at time of vacation.

If all this is met then a cheque can be raised and sent to the tenant at their new address. A letter will be attached thanking them for leaving the property in such good condition. Consideration should also be given informing tenants who did not meet the criteria why they did not.

**Appendix 3  
Home Choice Void Sheet**

<b>Landlord Ref</b>	<b>ECC</b>
Void From date	
Void Status	
Empty or Occupied	
<b>Flat No.</b>	
<b>Street No.</b>	
Ad 1	
Ad 2	
Ad 3	
Ad 4	
Postcode	
Area	
<b>Financial Details</b>	
Rent	
Service Charge	
Other Charges	
Payment Cycle	
<b>Marketing Info</b>	
<b>Proposed Works</b>	

<b>Letting cycle e.g. 1/1/2008 for 1 week</b>	
<b>General Details</b>	
Number of beds	
<b>Accommodation Type (Please Tick)</b>	
House	Maisonette
Flat	Bedsit/Room
Bungalow	
Floor	
Lift Available	
Tenancy Type	
Contact Name	
Shared Ownership	
<b>Garden Type (please tick)</b>	
Own	Communal
Check on Viewing	
<b>Heating Type (Please Tick)</b>	
GCH	None
Elec. Storage	
Check on Viewing	
<b>Bathroom (Please Tick)</b>	<b>Garden (Please Tick)</b>
Own	Own
Communal	Communal
<b>Available Rooms (Please Tick)</b>	
Dining Room	Lounge
Kitchen Diner	Bathroom
Lounge/Kitchen	Kitchen
<b>Other details</b>	
Communal Entry	
Access to amenity space	
Own front door	
Drying	
Level Access Shower	
Internal Hand Rails	
Scooter Store	
Sensory	
Stair Lift (fitted or suitable)	
Steps to Front Door	
Adapted Standard	
Sheltered	
Wheelchair Standard	
Level Access	

**Appendix 4**

**Voids to CBL Form [For reference – advertising is now online]**

**VOID SHEET** – This form **MUST** be emailed to 'Homechoice team' email address by Thursday 4pm to be advertised the following Tuesday

**PAPER COPIES WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED**

**Date completed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Completed by:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Postcode:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Area:** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>House type</b>	<b><i>Please cross</i></b>
House	
Bungalow	
Flat	
Sheltered	
Bedsit	
Maisonette	

<b>If the property is a flat</b>		
<b>What floor is it on?</b>		
	<b>YES</b> <i>(Please cross)</i>	<b>NO</b>
Is there a lift		
Is there a door entry system		
Is there level access to the communal front door		
If not how many steps ?		



Void Management and Lettings Procedures

Bedrooms		Other rooms (please cross)			
No of double bedrooms		Lounge		Dining room	
No of single bedrooms		Lounge/Diner		Kitchen/Diner	
No of box bedrooms		Kitchen		Bathroom	

<b>OCCUPANCY</b> -Please state the max no of adults for property	
<b>Maximum no of adults</b>	
Maximum no of children	

<b>ACCESS TO PROPERTY</b>	
No of steps to front door	
No of steps to back door (if applicable)	
Width of front door	
Are stairs straight (i.e could accommodate a stair lift)	

<b>Features</b>					
GCH	F Garden	B Garden	Garage	Parking	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Drying	Pets	Communal Entry	Own Front Door	Other	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	

<i>Special requirements regarding client group (please write below)</i>	
Age restrictions	
Client needing adaptations	
Applicants without children	
Other (Please specify)	

<b>PROPERTY CHARGES</b>	
LANDLORD	
Weekly Rent (OVER 48 WEEKS)	£
Service charge	£

Void Management and Lettings Procedures

<b>ADAPTATIONS (please cross)</b>	
Level access shower	
Ramp	
Internal handrails	
Stairlift	
Sensory adaptations	
Wheelchair adapted (eg widened doors, lowered worktops <b>please specify</b> )	
Scooter store	

<b>SHARED OWNERSHIP</b>	
Size of share	
Cost of share	£
Service charge	£
Rental charge	£

<b>VOID STATUS</b>					
Proposed Termination Date				Work Completion Date (if known)	

<b>BAND OF PROPERTY</b> (please indicate which band property is to be advertised to)	
<b>RED</b>	
<b>AMBER</b>	
<b>GREEN</b>	
<b>ALL BANDS</b>	

**Please indicate any planned improvements, other notable features or other comments about the property**

**Form completed by:**

Name:

Contact Telephone No

Email address

Property to be included in advertising cycle start date

**Appendix 5  
Inspection Report**

**EXETER CITY COUNCIL PROPERTY INSPECTION REPORT**

**Date of Inspection:**.....

*Inspected By:*

Tenant/s  
Name.....

Address.....  
.....  
.....

Post Code..... Tel  
No.....

Date keys due in.....  
Forwarding  
Address.....  
.....

**ACCOMMODATION TYPE**

GENERAL NEEDS  ELDERLY DESIGNATED  SHELTERED

HOUSE  FLAT  BUNGALOW  MAISONETTE  BED SIT

No. Of Bedrooms ..... Steps Leading to Property .....

Lift Yes  No

Ground Floor  1<sup>st</sup> Floor  2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  3<sup>rd</sup> Floor

---

**REASON FOR VOID (PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY)**

Termination of Tenancy  Internal Transfer  Eviction

Death of Tenant  Mutual Exchange  Abandonment

---

CONDITION OF PROPERTY

**LOUNGE**

Good Fair Works Required (please state)

- Decoration     
.....
- Windows     
.....
- Electrics     
.....
- Doors     
.....
- Flooring     
.....
- Other  
Comments.....  
.....

---

**HALL/STAIRS/LANDING**

Good Fair Works Required (please state)

- Decoration     
.....
  - Windows     
.....
  - Electrics     
.....
  - Doors     
.....
  - Flooring     
.....
  - Other  
Comments.....  
.....
-

Void Management and Lettings Procedures

**KITCHEN**

Good Fair Works Required (please state)

- Decoration     
.....
- Windows     
.....
- Electrics     
.....
- Doors     
.....
- Plumbing     
.....
- Kitchen Units     
.....
- Worktops     
.....
- Flooring     
.....
- Other  
Comments.....  
.....

**DINING ROOM**

Good Fair Works Required (please state)

- Decoration     
.....
- Windows     
.....
- Electrics     
.....
- Doors     
.....
- Flooring     
.....
- Other  
Comments.....  
.....



Void Management and Lettings Procedures

**BATHROOM/TOILET**

Good Fair Works Required (please state)

- Decoration     
.....
- Windows     
.....
- Electrics     
.....
- Doors     
.....
- Plumbing     
.....
- Flooring     
.....

Bath  Basin  shower  Toilet

- Other  
Comments.....  
.....

---

**BEDROOM ONE**

Good Fair Works Required (please state)

- Decoration     
.....
- Windows     
.....
- Electrics     
.....
- Doors     
.....
- Flooring     
.....

- Other  
Comments.....  
.....

Void Management and Lettings Procedures

**BEDROOM TWO**

Good Fair Works Required (please state)

- Decoration     
.....
- Windows     
.....
- Electrics     
.....
- Doors     
.....
- Flooring     
.....
- Other  
Comments.....  
.....

**BEDROOM THREE**

Good Fair Works Required (please state)

- Decoration     
.....
- Windows     
.....
- Electrics     
.....
- Doors     
.....
- Flooring     
.....
- Other  
Comments.....  
.....

**BEDROOM FOUR**

Good Fair Works Required (please state)

- Decoration     
.....
- Windows     
.....
- Electrics     
.....
- Doors     
.....
- Flooring     
.....

Void Management and Lettings Procedures

- Other Comments.....  
.....

**OTHER COMMENTS**.....  
.....

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**HEATING & HOT WATER SYSTEM**

Gas Central Heating  Independent Gas Fire/s  Night Store Heaters

**UTILITIES**

Gas Supplier.....Meter Reading.....

Meter Number..... Card  Standard Meter

Electricity Supplier.....Meter Reading.....

Meter Number..... Key  Standard Meter

Water Meter            Yes     No

---

**EXTERNAL CONDITION**

Shed            Yes  No             Garage Yes  No

Identify Shed/s Assigned To This Property:  
.....  
.....

Garden Yes  No             Fences Yes  No

Identify Garden Assigned To This Property:

Front     Back     Right Hand Side     Left Hand Side

Other  
.....  
.....

Condition of Garden  
.....  
.....





Void Management and Lettings Procedures

Should it be necessary for any of this work to be carried out by Exeter City Council you will be recharged in accordance with the Councils Schedule of Rates.

Tenants Signature..... Date.....

ECC Officer:

Signature .....

Position Held - Estate Officer

Date.....

**Appendix 6  
VOID RECORD SHEET**

ADDRESS.....

TYPE OF PROPERTY.....

DATE OF PROPOSED TERMINATION.....

REPAIRS DUE DATE.....

Date notice received		EM01
Date of pre-void property inspection (within 2 days on notice)		EM02
Date void details and photo to Choice Based Letting		EM03
Date advertised		EM04
Date prospective tenants name received		EM05
Transfer/Waiting List/ Homeless		
Prospective tenants name		
Prospective tenants current address		
Telephone number		
Verification home visit date (within 2 days of name received)		EM06
Date of accompanied viewing		EM07
Refused – Choice Based Lettings told		EM08
Reason for refusal		
Verification issue		EM09

Notes.....

.....

## **Appendix 7 Death of Tenant Letter**

Dear

### **Late tenant name and address**

I am sorry to hear of your recent sad loss and wish to offer my condolences.

Further to our telephone conversation of #####, I write with regard to your notification that xxxxxxx passed away on #####. **I will be obliged if you could let me have sight of either the original death certificate or a certified copy so that I am able to change the tenancy details on our file.**

I would also be grateful if you could confirm if you will be dealing with the estate of the deceased. It would be helpful to me if you could confirm whether Mr B Beadle left a will and if so who was appointed to act as executor(s).

I appreciate that this is a sad time for you but the council must now begin the process of recovering possession of 47 Russett Avenue Exeter so that it can be made available for others seeking accommodation from the Council.

The first thing to note is that the Council will provide three rent free weeks (from the date of death) to allow the family and or the executors of the deceased to make arrangements to empty the property and to provide vacant possession to the Council. The tenancy is due to end on **20th January 2013 (provisional)** and the keys for this property are to be returned by **noon on Monday ##### (provisional)**. If you wish to extend this notice please advise me as soon as possible. Please ensure that all keys are returned to the Customer First Reception, failure to return the keys on time will result in incurring an extra rent charge.

However, please note that any Housing Benefit payable will cease from the date of death, so once the rent free period expires the maximum rent will apply thereafter and will be charged to the estate of Mr B Beadle.

You are also advised to have the gas and/or electric and/or water meters read and the accounts closed. I also suggest that you notify the utility companies of the death and advise them of when you intend to give vacant possession of 47 Russett Avenue Exeter . to the Council. However, all fittings such as gas fires, central heating etc., must be left in place for the next occupier.

The Council's Officers will wish to have access to the property as soon as convenient to you to undertake various surveys of its condition including an asbestos survey so you may be contacted for access. If you do not retain the keys please let me know who the key holder is.

*Finally, once the surveys have been completed and or the Council has vacant possession of the property, the Council may contact you again or the executors in relation to other monies which may be due to the council from the estate of the deceased. I attach a list of the standard works carried out at in such circumstances as this and the standard charges levied by the Council. Please be advised, if the property contains a stair lift please leave it at the property. If removal is needed to enable you to clear the property, please contact 01392 265381.*

We realise that this is a lot of information to absorb at such a difficult time if it would prefer us to visit the property with you to clarify any of the above please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

Tenancy Services Team

**RETURN OF KEYS**

**Name of Deceased:** .....

**Address:** .....

**Garage Address** .....

**Next of Kin** .....

**Address** .....

## TYPICAL RECHARGEABLE REPAIR COSTS

If we discover you have left any rubbish in the property, garden or outbuildings or you have left any other items of rechargeable repairs this is a list of the typical charges we will send you (please note all charges are liable to 17.5% VAT) –

• Removal of standard amounts of rubbish from inside property including furniture and non approved fixtures and fittings	£55.44
• Removal of larger amounts of rubbish from inside property (If skip hire required this will be charged at rate of £153.96 per skip)	£173.03
• Removal of rubbish from roofspace	£59.09
• Removal of standard amount of debris from garden	£31.83
• Removal of larger amounts of rubbish from garden (If skip hire required this will be charged at rate of £153.96 per skip)	£95.49
• Removal of non-Council sheds and other structures (per sq mtr)	£20.00
• Removal of environmental waste from property (Fridges, freezers,TV's etc)	£35.00
• Renewal of door lock	£34.96
• Renewal of internal door	£92.16
• Capping off of gas pipes	£35.00 per point
• Removal of tongue and groove wall panelling	£20.00 per sm
• Renewal of washbasin	£164.69
• Renewal of WC pan	£92.08
• Surveyors fees (per hour)	£10.67
• Administration fees	£4.72

**All other items will be charged at the Council agreed rates.**

Please note: **Floor coverings (including carpets, laminates and tiling)** can be left in the property. You will not be charged for leaving these items. Should you decide to remove the floor covering this should be done carefully so as not to disturb any tiles underneath which may contain an element of asbestos.

### DISCONNECTION OF GAS APPLIANCES

*When clearing the property and removing any gas appliances it is very important that this work is done correctly to ensure the safety of you, your family, Council employees and the next tenants.*

It is your responsibility under the Gas Safety Regulations that the person undertaking the work is Gas safe registered and competent to carry out what has been asked of them. We would also like a copy of the safety certificate that should be left with you when the work is complete.

Should you have any questions please contact the Repairs Team on Exeter 265031.

**Appendix 8  
Example of Notice to Quit**

**NOTICE TO QUIT**

**To:- (\*)**

I, PHILIP MILLS, for and on behalf of the EXETER CITY COUNCIL and by their direction, hereby GIVE YOU NOTICE TO QUIT and deliver up possession of the premises known as (\*) on the (\*) or on the expiration of the week of your tenancy which expires next after four weeks from the service of this Notice, of ALL THAT PREMISES KNOWN AS (\*) which you now hold as tenant under the said Council.

DATED this the (\*) 2008

.....  
TENANT SERVICES MANAGER

Please note:

1. Any payments made after the expiry of the Notice will be received as for use and occupation only and will not constitute a new tenancy.
2. That your attention is drawn to the information contained in the Schedule (overleaf) being information which the Council is, by law, obliged to provide.

**THE SCHEDULE**

1. If you do not leave the dwelling mentioned above, the Council must get an order for possession from the Court before you can lawfully be evicted. The Council cannot apply for such an order before this Notice to Quit has run out.
2. If you do not know if you have any right to remain in possession after the Notice to Quit runs out or are otherwise unsure of your rights, then you can obtain advice from a solicitor. Help with all or part of the cost of legal advice and assistance may be available under the Legal Aid Scheme.

You should also be able to obtain information from a Citizens Advice Bureau, a Housing aid Centre, a Rent Officer or a Rent Tribunal Office.

ANY ENQUIRIES ARISING FROM THE SERVICE of the Notice should be made of the Community and Environment Directorate, Civic Centre, Exeter, telephone Exeter 277888, extension (\*)



## **Appendix 9**

### **Example of Letter to Treasury Solicitor**

Dear Sirs

**[Name and address]**

I am writing to advise you that **[Name]** died on the **[Date]** at the above address.

We have been unable to find a Next of Kin.

However correspondence dated 1991 has been found in the property which I believe relates to **[name and address of possible next of kin]**. Please find this correspondence enclosed. I have informed the Coroner.

**[Name]** was our tenant at **[address]** which is a one bedroom flat.

We have found correspondence relating to a Post Office Account **[details]**

The remainder of his effects (furniture, bedding etc) have little or no value and we have cleared and professionally cleaned this property in order that it may be offered to the next prospective tenant.

There are cremation expenses and unpaid service and utility bills yet to be settled.

I have issued a Notice to Quit on the deceased tenant **[name]**, the tenancy will cease on **[date]** Please find attached copy.

Please advise the way forward from here.

Yours faithfully,

Estate Management Officer

## Appendix 10 Refusal Form

This form <b>MUST</b> be emailed to Home Choice team member that is doing shortlist at time of refusal					
Property Ref			Date Client refused:		
Address:			Postcode:		
Client Name:			Client's Band:		
Area:			Is property Sheltered?		
Number of bedrooms:			Property type : (House/flat etc)		
code	Reason(s) for refusal	Please tick all that apply		Please tick one main reason	
LA	Location: Didn't realise where property was	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
LB	Location: Believe to be a lot of ASB in area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
LC	Location: Too far away from shops/ school etc	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
LD	Location: Too far from family/friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
LE	Location: Too far from city centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
LF	Location: Too close to other clients that cannot have contact with	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MA	Medical: Not suitable adaptations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MB	Medical: Unsuitable access	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PA	Property: Condition : Bad décor / needs updating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PB	Property: Condition : Poor communal areas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PC	Property: Condition : No heating/ wrong type of heating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PD	Property: No. of bedrooms unsuitable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PE	Property: Bedrooms too small	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PF	Property: Living areas too small	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PG	Property: Outside : No garden / garden too small	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PH	Property: Outside : No parking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PI	Property: Unaffordable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PJ	Property: Pets not allowed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PK	Property: Just don't like it	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
AA	Advert was misleading (i.e. client misunderstood it)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
AB	Advert was inaccurate (i.e. it contained wrong details)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
AC	Too little detail (wouldn't have bid if advert had been more specific)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
OA	Other offer : bid for two properties and prefer the other one	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
OB	Other : please state details below	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Add any pertinent details of client's reason for refusal: e.g. "steps are concrete", "advert didn't say pets weren't allowed", "advert did say access had steps, but having tried them, they are too steep", etc					
Estate Manager Name:					