

# **KINGDOM HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED**

## **EMPTY PROPERTY POLICY**

### **1. Statement of Intent**

- 1.1 Kingdom is committed to the principles of good corporate governance and sustainability and will endeavour to develop fair and consistent policies, procedures and practices.
- 1.2 This policy details how we will manage empty properties to minimise the period that a property is empty and the cost of repairs and to maximise rental income.
- 1.3 This policy and the related procedures are consistent with legislative requirements and established good practice.
- 1.4 In line with our commitment to equality and diversity, this policy can be made available in a variety of formats, including large print, translation into another language or audio tape. Reasonable adjustments will also be made to assist individuals who have particular needs.

### **2. General Principles**

- 2.1 The Empty Property management process begins when we become aware that a property is likely to become vacant.
- 2.2 This policy and the related procedures aim to:
  - Retain high relet standards and maximise tenant satisfaction,
  - Minimise the period for which properties are empty,
  - Minimise the cost of empty property repairs,
  - Reduce rechargeable repairs by undertaking exit inspections and encouraging outgoing tenants to rectify identified repairs themselves,
  - Minimise the numbers of empty properties,
  - Minimise rental loss ,
  - Provide relevant support and advice in an effort to ensure sustainable tenancy and so reduce turnover.

### **3. Targets and Performance Standards**

- 3.1 We have detailed procedures which set challenging targets and standards for defined areas within the empty property process:
  - Terminations,
  - Change of Tenancy,
  - Arranging Interviews,
  - Viewings,
  - Utilities,
  - Relet,
  - Allocation of New Schemes,
  - Abandoned Properties.

3.2 Housing Management staff will meet regularly to discuss the progress of each empty property. Exceptions will be reported to the Housing Manager by the Area Managers.

3.3 Procedures are in place to ensure that relevant information regarding empty properties is shared between staff from Property Services, Customer Services, Customer Accounts and Housing Management.

#### **4. Difficult to Let Properties**

4.1 A property which is deemed difficult to let is a property where one or more of the following conditions apply:

- There is a small or non-existent waiting list for the property.
- Offers of tenancy are refused frequently for reasons other than personal reasons.
- There is a higher than normal rate of tenancy turnover for properties in that area.

Properties that are deemed to be low demand will be allocated in line with our Marketing Procedure.

#### **5.0 Monitoring and Review**

5.1 Our IT system will be used to:

- Monitor the progress of empty properties.
- Provide analysis of the empty property process for reporting purposes.

5.2 Monthly reports will be generated to allow management to monitor agreed targets.

5.3 We will look to benchmark with comparable organisations.

5.4 We will carry out post allocation surveys to measure new tenant satisfaction with the empty property process and will use the results to ensure that standards are maintained and improved upon.

5.5 Reports on performance times for empty properties in repair and management will be provided for the Committee of Management on a quarterly basis.

5.6 Targets will be reviewed on an annual basis and will form part of our Key Performance Indicators.

5.7 Our performance in the management of Empty Properties will be made available to tenants, prospective tenants and stakeholders.

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Policy drawn up with reference to:  
Housing Scotland (2001) Act

Reference made to the following sources and other guidance:  
SFHA Raising Standards in Housing  
Housing Management Standards of the Chartered Institute of Housing  
The Scottish Housing Regulator self assessment performance standards: Void management

Cross Reference to Performance Standards for social landlords and homelessness functions: Guiding Standards GS1.2, GS3.1, GS3.2, GS3.4, and AS1.5

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Policy Approved Yes

Next review date: No later than March 2015