



Voids Policy

Introduction

Irwell Valley Homes (IVH) aims to provide the right homes to the right people, supporting sustainable tenancies, thriving communities, and positive customer outcomes.

When a property becomes empty, it is essential that we:

- Re-let it quickly and efficiently
- Ensure it is safe, compliant, and meets required standards
- Match the property to an appropriate customer

This policy sets out how IVH manages void properties to maximise rental income, minimise vacancy periods, and meet housing need. It should be read alongside the Allocations & Empty Homes Policy, Lettable Standard, and associated procedures.

Aims and Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to ensure an effective void management process that:

- Supports sustainable tenancies and communities
- Complies with all legislative, regulatory, and contractual obligations
- Ensures all properties meet IVH's Lettable Standard before re-letting
- Minimises rent loss and re-let times
- Delivers value for money in void repairs and management
- Provides safe, secure, and compliant homes at the point of letting

Policy

- A "void" is any dwelling that is unoccupied and not generating rental income.
- Lettings Team is defined as any colleague in IVH letting the property.

In order that we will be able to re-let any void properties as quickly as possible and maximise our rental income, IVH will:

- Ensure that all properties meet a minimum lettable standard and comply with all relevant legal health and safety requirements such as Decent Homes Standard and are Housing Health & Safety Rating System (HHSRS) compliant.
- Minimise the length of time properties remain empty, with performance targets being set for both the letting and maintenance elements of the void process.
- Ensure efficiency and focus on value for money in the management of void properties.
- Ensure that any new build or acquired properties are allocated with minimal delay and meet our minimum lettable standard.
- Where a notice of termination is received, the property will be inspected by a member of the Empty Homes Team at the earliest opportunity to assess the condition of the property and to identify any repairs required in advance of reletting the property.
- The Property Inspector will ensure that all necessary statutory safety checks are carried out and documented using the appropriate certifications, ensuring they are recorded appropriately on our systems, prior to re-let.

The property will be checked to ensure that it is free from structural defects. Where essential works are necessary before the property can be re-let, the Property Inspector will ensure that relevant works orders are raised and that the works are completed to a satisfactory standard within an agreed timescale.

Where any type of flooring is considered in satisfactory condition following inspection, IVH will look to retain existing flooring.

Following inspection, the property will be classified as a “major”, “minor” or “strategic” void or “available to let”. This classification will be recorded on our systems, to allow us to monitor progress and ensure that any work is carried out in line with our Void Procedure and to allow our Lettings Team to effectively manage the lettings process for the property. Any property classified as “strategic” needs approval from the relevant Head of Service.

We will carry out necessary works in line with our lettable standard that ensures our properties are let in a clean, safe and clear condition.

Where it is considered reasonable and practical (e.g. for minor repairs), work will be undertaken after the new customers take up occupation. All tenants will be provided with a schedule of works to be completed once they move in. For security reasons, a lock change to all doors connected to a property will be undertaken on all void properties. Where there is considered to be a high risk of squatting, break-in or vandalism, appropriate shuttering and/or door-clamping will be ordered which will be removed post letting and on making suitable access arrangements with the in-coming tenant.

The Lettings Team will be advised of estimated completion dates to allow new tenant(s) to prepare for their move. As soon as a handover date is identified, the Lettings Team will be notified by the Property Inspector / Empty Homes Manager to ensure the new tenant(s) are signed up at the earliest opportunity.

Decorative standards

All properties will meet the IVH Lettable Standard, which includes minimum requirements for cleanliness, safety, decoration, and repair.

General Needs Properties

- Properties will be let in a clean and safe condition, meeting the lettable standard.

Independent Living and Supported Housing

- Where decoration falls below the lettable standard, works will be completed prior to letting, recognising the needs of more vulnerable customers.

Intermediate Market Rent (IMR) and Market Rent

- Internal decoration may be carried out where this is expected to generate a financial return, such as:
 - Reducing re-let times
 - Achieving higher rental values
- Investment decisions will align with an independent RICS valuation undertaken at void stage.

Additional Investment

- In exceptional circumstances, IVH may approve enhanced works where this delivers clear benefits, including improved letting performance or long-term value.

Short term Supported Housing Schemes

Due to the nature of short-term supported housing, voids in these schemes will be prioritised.

- Accelerated turnaround times will be applied
- Properties must be safe, secure, and meet the lettable standard at the point of letting
- Processes will reflect the urgency of housing need and service delivery requirements

Garages

Where a garage tenancy has been properly ended, with the tenant(s) providing the appropriate notice and upon receipt of the keys, the garage will be promptly inspected by the voids inspector prior to re-letting.

Performance will be monitored and reported as follows:

Operational Monitoring

- Weekly monitoring by the Empty Homes Manager and Lettings Team Leader
- Review of KPIs including:
 - Re-let times
 - Void levels
 - Rent loss

Management Oversight

- Monthly review by senior leaders, including:
 - Head of Customers and Communities
 - Housing Services Manager
 - Head of Independent & Community Living
- Corrective action taken where:
 - Targets are not met- the risk trigger for relet times in 45 days.
 - Negative trends are identified

Board Reporting

- Quarterly reporting to Board through the Performance Report, covering:
 - Void performance across all tenures
 - Void rent loss
 - Key risks and mitigation actions

Customer Feedback and Scrutiny

- Customer feedback will be obtained through:
 - Post-let satisfaction surveys
- Results will be monitored and any customer expressing dissatisfaction will be contacted by a member of the Lettings Team to understand their experiences.
- The Resident Scrutiny Panel may review void performance and standards to identify improvement opportunities

Roles and Responsibilities

- Head of Customers and Communities and Head of Independent Living- responsible for overall policy implementation and performance oversight
- Empty Homes Manager- responsible for:
 - Operational delivery of void process
 - Monitoring performance
 - Ensuring compliance with standards and procedures
- Housing Services Manager- responsible for lettings performance and allocation processes
- All Relevant Colleagues- responsible for adhering to policy and procedures

Training and Assurance

- All relevant colleagues will receive training on this policy and procedures
- Compliance will be monitored through:
 - Audits
 - KPI performance
 - Management oversight
- Where non-compliance is identified:
 - Corrective action and refresher training will be implemented

Associated Documents and Good Practice

Associated Documents

- IVH Voids Procedure
- IVH Lettable Standard
- IVH Allocations & Empty Homes Policy
- Code of Practice for Management of Electrotechnical Care in Social Housing

This policy supports compliance with the Regulator of Social Housing Consumer Standards, including:

- Safety and Quality Standard – ensuring homes are safe and compliant before letting
- Tenancy Standard – supporting effective allocation and tenancy sustainment
- Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard – through performance reporting and customer feedback

Legislative Compliance

This policy ensures compliance with relevant legislation, including:

- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Housing Act 1996 (as amended)
- Homelessness Act 2002

- Localism Act 2012
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 2018

Compliance is achieved through:

- Completion of statutory safety checks prior to letting
- Ensuring properties meet minimum health and safety standards
- Maintaining accurate certification and audit records

Equality, Diversity and Safeguarding

IVH is committed to ensuring fair and equitable access to housing.

- An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is completed for this policy
- Consideration will be given to the needs of vulnerable customers when managing voids and re-letting properties
- Safeguarding responsibilities will be considered throughout the void and allocations process, particularly in supported housing settings

Approval Date:	14 th May 2026
Approval Body	Leadership Team
Implementation Date:	May 2026
Policy Author:	Shaban Talib- Housing Services Manager
Policy Owner:	Ross Powell- Head of Customer and Communities
Frequency of Review	Every 3 years
Planned Review Date	April 2029
Equality Impact Assessment Date and Link to EIA	Completed- May 2026
Safeguarding Impact	N/A
Lead Team	Communities Team

The latest version of this policy should be viewed online from The Hub area of the IVH intranet, and any printed version cannot be relied on as the most current version.

Title of the policy / procedure Voids Policy	Author:	Page 6 of 4
Approved by/when:	Next Review	

