

BELGRAVE NEIGHBOURHOOD CO-OPERATIVE HOUSING ASSOCIATION RELETTING EMPTY HOMES POLICY

Aims of the reletting empty homes policy

The following are aims of the reletting empty homes policy:

- To relet homes as quickly and efficiently as possible
- To ensure that homes are in a good condition when let
- To make the process of moving into a home as member friendly as it can be
- To induct and support new members and to maximise their potential involvement in the co-op

Delegated Authority

- 1 The co-op delegates it's Senior Housing Lead, working with the Senior Property and Compliance Lead, to operate its reletting empty homes policy and authorises it to:
 - Receive and process terminations of tenancies
 - Ensure that homes are prepared for reletting to the co-op's lettable standard
 - Liaise with those allocated to homes
 - Sign tenancy agreements on behalf of the Co-op
 - Carry out the lettings procedure with new members
 - Ensure that follow up activity takes place with new members
- 2 The Senior Community and Resident Engagement Lead will liaise with the Senior Housing Lead to ensure that the co-op participates as appropriate in the lettings process and subsequent follow up procedures as set out in this policy.

Target for reletting homes

- 3 The co-op loses rent and pays Council Tax whilst a home is void between tenancies. The co-op aims to relet an empty home within 18 working days of the home becoming vacant.
- 4 Achieving the target may be dependent on:
 - whether the co-op is aware in advance that a moving is moving out

- how quickly the co-op can successfully allocate to a new member
 - the extent of works that may need doing to bring the home up to a lettable standard
 - other factors beyond the control of the co-op.
- 5 Where the target is not met, the Senior Housing Lead will report the reasons to the Committee which may be something done or not done by either the Senior Housing Lead or the committee or for reasons beyond the control of either.

Vacating a home

- 6 A co-op home may become void through:
- a member giving written notice (usually four weeks' notice is required) that they intend to move out of their home
 - a member transferring or exchanging to another home
 - a member dying whilst living in the home
 - a member breaching the terms of their tenancy by leaving their home without giving written notice
 - the co-op taking legal action to gain possession of a home due to a breach in a tenancy condition.
- 7 If it is known in advance that a member is moving, the service provider will take early steps to ensure that the home is let to a new member, including:
- inspecting the home (known as a pre-void inspection), where possible at least a week before the outgoing member moves out, and agreeing with the outgoing member any works needed
 - arranging viewings for a potential new member (in advance of the outgoing member moving if they are in agreement).
- 8 If it is not known in advance that a member is moving, the Senior Housing Lead will take action as soon as possible to arrange reletting and the Senior Property and Compliance Lead will ensure necessary works on the home.
- 9 When the co-op has received keys for the empty homes, they will carry out a property inspection and photograph the readings on gas and electricity meters and water meters (where applicable).

Lettable standard

- 10 The Senior Property and Compliance Lead will ensure that the void home is brought up to the lettable standard prior to reletting. This includes:
- changing the front door and any other locks that would allow the former member to gain access
 - capping the gas supply pending arranging a gas safety check and obtaining a gas safety certificate
 - carrying out an electrical safety check and obtaining an electrical safety certificate
 - obtaining an energy performance certificate
 - producing a specification for any necessary works to bring the home to a Lettable Standard.
- 11 The Senior Property and Compliance Lead will need to ensure that void works are carried out within the co-op's agreed authorisation levels which may require obtaining quote or tenders for works. Everything will be done by the Senior Property and Compliance Lead and the committee to ensure that this does not delay reletting, but it is recognised that there may be delays where extensive works are required.

Allocating the home

- 12 The Senior Housing Lead will ensure that the home is allocated to a new member in accordance with the co-op's Allocations Policy at the earliest possible occasion, taking into account any necessary management transfers or transfer requests in accordance with the co-op's Transfers and Exchanges Policy. The Senior Housing Lead will issue a formal offer letter on the co-op's behalf to a new member following them viewing and accepting the property.

Letting the home

- 13 The Senior Housing Lead will arrange to let the home where possible, working with the Senior Community and Resident Engagement Lead who will be present at the handover session to welcome the new member to the co-op. The Senior Housing Lead will use the co-op's

handover list to ensure that all things that need to be done in the letting are done.

- 14 The Senior Housing Lead will issue the new member with a co-op contractual tenancy – a form of tenancy used by fully mutual housing co-operatives where tenancy terms are solely contained within the contractual tenancy agreement and which is not subject to any statute other than contract law. The Senior Housing Lead will explain the co-op's contractual tenancy agreement to the new member and arrange for its signing.
- 15 The co-op will ensure that opportunities are maximised to induct the new member into the co-op in accordance with the Active Membership Policy. Those carrying out the handover will explain how the co-op works to the new member and encourage them to play a full role in it.
- 16 The Senior Housing Lead will ensure that CORE returns are completed for each new letting.

Post moving in visit

- 17 The Senior Housing Lead will ensure that a post moving in visit is carried out to the new member to check on how they are settling in, to answer questions and to further encourage active participation in the co-op. The co-op will carry out a Moving In Satisfaction Survey and a New Member Involvement Survey.

Risks to be avoided:

- The co-op loses more income than it needs to because lettings are not organised efficiently
- The co-op does not comply with legislation and/or regulations regarding the lettings process
- The co-op lets homes in poor condition, it spends more than it should do on void properties, or it has variable standards for homes it lets
- The co-op does not maximise the potential involvement of new members and they feel unwelcome