Void Management Policy

If you have difficulty with reading this policy, including any difficulties with sight or hearing, or if you require this document translated into another language, please contact us and we will be happy to provide this information in a format that suits your needs.

Last Review: June 2025 Next Review: June 2028 Policy Number: H20

Our Vision, Our Values, Our Strategic Objectives

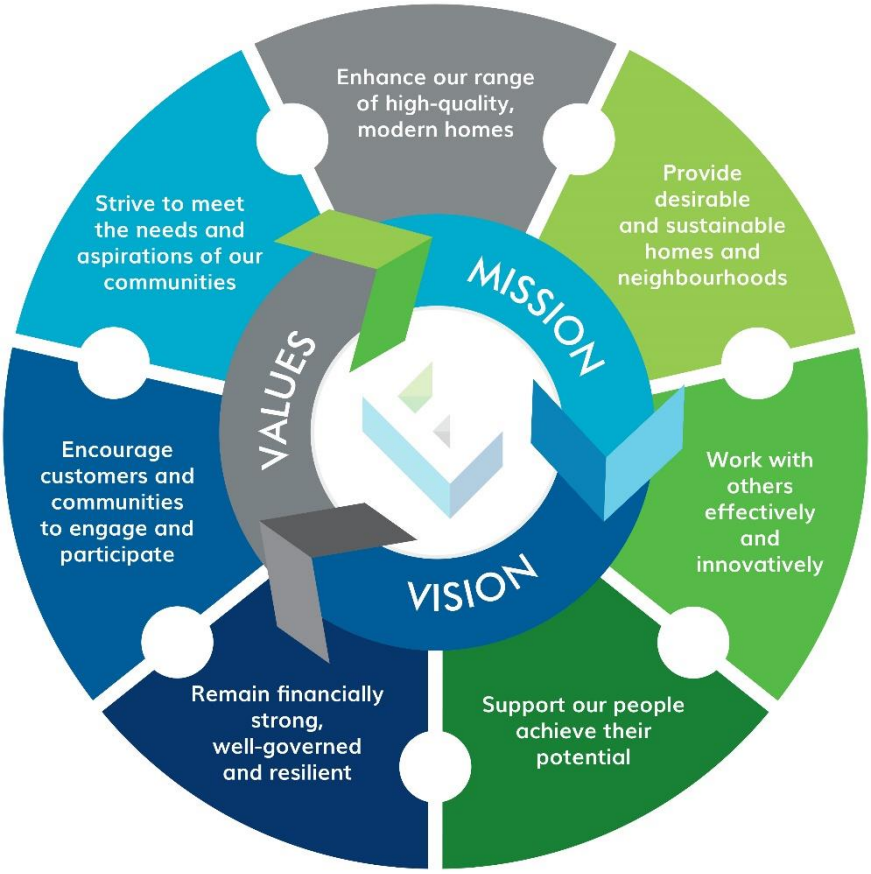
Our Vision

A vibrant neighbourhood where everyone can prosper.

Our Values

Caring, Reliable, Fair, Open and Adaptable

Our Strategic Objectives



Equality and Diversity Statement

Elderpark Housing are committed to ensuring people or communities do not face discrimination or social exclusion due to any of the following protected characteristics: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion and belief; sex or sexual orientation.

This document complies with our Equality and Diversity Policy.

We will regularly review this Policy and consider any equalities implications taking the necessary action to address any inequalities (either directly or indirectly) that result from the implementation of this Policy.

Executive Summary

Policy Author

The Housing Manager has developed this policy on behalf of the organisation. It applies to all aspects of void management of properties

Purpose of the Policy

The Void Management Policy Elderpark' s approach is to re-let these properties as quickly as possible, minimise the cost in bringing void properties up to Elderpark Housing's acceptable letting standard, and minimise the loss of rental income as a result of properties being empty,

Aims and Objectives of the Policy

The aims and objectives of the policy are:

- Minimise void re-let times (the length of time that the property is untenanted).
- Achieve value for money by balancing costs against positive outcomes.
- Ensure that the Association provides a consistency of service in letting our properties, as determined by our Allocation Policy and procedure.
- Put in place measures to identify circumstances, should service delivery, such as achieving the letting standard, fall below consistency of service.

Legislative and Regulatory Compliance

We will seek to meet all of our legal obligations as set out in the following legislation:

- Housing (Scotland Act) 2001
- The Energy Performance of Buildings (Scotland) Regulations 2008
- The Gas Safety (Installations and Use) Regulations 1998
- The Construction, Design and Management Regulations –
- Data Protection Act 1998
- The Equality Act 2010

In addition, we will meet the outcomes and standards contained within the Scottish Housing Regulator's Regulation Framework.

- **Standard 1 – EQUALITIES** -to support the right to adequate housing every tenant and other customer has their individual needs and rights recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services.
- **Standard 2 – COMMUNICATION** – to make it easy for tenants and other customers to communicate with their landlord and get the information they need about their landlord, how and why it makes decisions and the services it provides.
- **Standard 3 – PARTICIPATION –** to offer tenants and other customers a range of opportunities that make it easy for them to participate in, and influence their landlord's decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.

- **Standard 4 – QUALITY OF HOUSING** - tenants' homes, as a minimum, when they are allocated are always clean, tidy and in a good state of repair, meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS), and Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESSH).
- **Standard 5** – **REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE** - tenants' homes are well maintained, with repairs and improvements carried out when required, and tenants are given reasonable choices about when work is done.
- **Standard 7,8 and 9 – HOUSING OPTIONS** –
    - people looking for housing get information that helps them make informed choices and decisions about the range of housing options available to them tenants and
    - people on housing lists can review their housing options.
    - people at risk of losing their homes get advice and information on preventing homelessness.
- **Standard 11 - TENANCY SUSTAINMENT -** tenants get the information they need on how to obtain support to remain in their home; and ensure suitable support is available, including services provided directly by the landlord and by other organisations.
- **Standard 13 - VALUE FOR MONEY -** tenants, owners and other customers receive services that provide continually improving value for the rent and other charges they pay.
- **Standard 14/15 - RENTS AND SERVICE CHARGES –**
    - a balance is struck between the level of services provided, the cost of the services, and how far current and prospective tenants and service users can afford them
    - tenants get clear information on how rent and other money is spent, including details of any individual items of expenditure above thresholds agreed between landlords and tenants.

Equalities

Elderpark Housing will ensure there is a consistent approach in promoting equality and diversity across all areas and this policy will be administered in accordance with this policy.

Privacy

This document fully complies with General Data Protection Regulations (2018) and once approved will be published on our website to ensure transparency of how we will seek to ensure Equality and Diversity across everything we do.

Related Policies

Policy Title	Location
Equalities and Diversity Policy	V:\Elderpark Policy Suite\Governance Policies\G13 Equality and Diversity Policy.pdf
Allocations Policy	V:\Elderpark Policy Suite\Housing Management Policies\H2 Allocations Policy.pdf

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Appendices

1 Introduction

1.1 Elderpark Housing Association (EHA) is a registered social landlord, established in 1975. We have strived to improve the lives of our residents, create opportunities and build a safe and secure environment. The Association is a 'not for profit' organisation, registered and regulated by the Scottish Housing Regulator and is governed by a voluntary Management Committee of up to a maximum of 15 people who employ a team of staff to manage the Association on a day-to-day basis.

1.2 The Management Committee is responsible for approving this Policy, and for overseeing its implementation. The Chief Executive and Management Team have operational responsibility for policy implementation, and for reporting to the Management Committee on areas relevant to void management.

2 Purpose of Policy

Elderpark' s approach is to re-let these properties as quickly as possible, minimise the cost in bringing void properties up to Elderpark Housing's acceptable letting standard, and minimise the loss of rental income as a result of properties being empty.

3 Aims and Objectives

- Minimise void re-let times (the length of time that the property is untenanted).
- Achieve value for money by balancing costs against positive outcomes.
- Ensure that the Association provides a consistency of service in letting our properties, as determined by our Allocation Policy and procedure.
- Put in place measures to identify circumstances, should service delivery, such as achieving the letting standard, fall below consistency of service.

4 Principles for Effective Letting of Void Properties

- Elderpark will ensure our procedures are reviewed on an ongoing basis to include the principles of the effective letting empty properties.
- Elderpark will put effort to minimise voids times and costs we remind tenants, both at the start of their tenancy as well as during the settling-in visit and regularly thereafter, that to end their tenancy they must provide 28 days written notice.

- Tenants will also be reminded of their tenancy obligations which are to maintain the property by ensuring it is kept clean, tidy and the decoration is to an acceptable standard.

Elderpark will ensure that performance targets are reviewed on an annual basis for:

- the total number of void days between a property becoming vacant and it being re-occupied
- the maximum time for repairing properties between lets for routine repairs and complex repairs
- the number of days to identify a new tenant and have an offer accepted.

Elderpark will ensure that all vacant properties are brought up to our current Lettings Standards (before they are re-let).

Where certain items covered by the standards are due to be improved within a reasonable time as part of current planned maintenance programmes the new tenant will be given the appropriate information.

5 Implementation of Policy

The Policy for void management cannot be seen in isolation and must work in conjunction with the Association's Allocation Policy, Tenancy Agreement, Abandonment Procedures, Reactive and Planned Maintenance Policy.

6 Monitoring Void Management Performance

6.1 Performance Reporting

The Housing and Asset Manager are responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented as required. Both managers will provide departmental performance reports to the Housing Sub-Committee on a quarterly basis in line with EHA Performance Framework Reporting.

We will undertake regular reviews of our performance and will produce an annual performance report which we will publish on our website. Performance reporting will focus on monitoring our performance against the relevant outcomes and standards in the Scottish Social Housing Charter. Void and allocation-related information will also form part of our performance reporting to the SHR.

6.2 Performance Targets

Performance in relation to these targets, will be monitored by the Housing Manager and Maintenance Manager and reported to the Housing and Maintenance Sub-Committee on a quarterly basis

6.2.1 Maintenance Targets

Standard Void – 10 Working Days
Complex Void – 20 Working days

6.2.2 Housing Management Targets

Re-let property 5 working days from keys received from maintenance department.
Void loss

6.2.3 Exemptions

If, for any reason, the above targets cannot be met, maintenance or housing staff must inform their relevant line manager. Additionally, if there are any major works or circumstances that would justify an exemption for void days, these should also be reported to the line manager to ensure that the information provided to the regulator for the annual return on the charter is accurate.

7 Complaints

Our complaint handling procedure was established by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO).

Following housing law, we provide our tenants with thorough information about our complaint-handling process. Moreover, advice is given to all service users on their right to complain.

A complaint is defined as: “An expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public about the housing association’s action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of the housing association”.

Elderpark Housing Association’s handling process includes explicit reference to customer complaints relating to equality issues. In addition, the Association has a regulatory requirement to provide information to the Scottish Housing Regulator on the number of customer complaints the Association receives that relate to equality issues in the Annual Return on the Charter.

8 Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed within 3 years from the date of approval by the Management Committee, following Elderpark Housing Association's policy review framework and approval process

GDPR Impact Assessment

Name of Policy to be assessed	Void Management Policy	New policy or revision of existing?	Revision of Letting and Void Management Policy
Person(s) responsible for assessment		Rachel Cooper	
Briefly describe the aims, objectives and purpose of the policy.	The aims, objectives and purpose of the policy is to: • Minimise void re-let times (the length of time that the property is untenanted). • Achieve value for money by balancing costs against positive outcomes. • Ensure that the Association provides a consistency of service in letting our properties, as determined by our Allocation Policy and procedure. • Put in place measures to identify circumstances, should service delivery, such as achieving the letting standard, fall below consistency of service.		
Which type of data will be used by implementation of this policy? (e.g. personal, sensitive or special category)	Personal and potentially sensitive information will be used by implementation of this policy.		
What outcomes are wanted from this policy? (e.g. necessary to meet legal obligations)	The outcomes of this policy are: • To give clear guidance to staff when dealing with void properties • To ensure properties are let to the letting standards • To ensure that any actions taken are dealt with within the existing legal provisions, regulatory requirements and best practice guidance • To ensure that void loss is kept to a minimum • To ensure that any actions taken are dealt with in accordance with our equality and diversity policy		
Which groups could be affected by the policy? (note all that apply)			
Tenants	X	Committee	X
Employees	X	Contractors	X
If the policy is not relevant to any of the data groups listed above, state why and end the process here.			

Have those affected by the policy / decision been involved?

There is no requirement for consultations

Describe the likely positive or negative impact(s) that the policy could have on the groups identified above.	Positive Impact(s)	Negative Impact(s)
	None	None
What actions are required to address the impacts arising from this assessment? (This might include: additional data, putting monitoring in place, making adjustments, taking specific action to mitigate any potentially negative impacts)	The Association has systems and checks in place to ensure that personal data remains confidential. Information will be shared with work colleagues on a strictly 'need to know' basis.	

Signed:	Rachel Cooper
Dated:	07.05.2025

Equality Impact Assessment

Name of Policy to be assessed	Void Management Policy	New policy or revision of existing?	Revision of Policy
Person(s) responsible for assessment		Housing Manager	
1. Briefly describe the aims, objectives and purpose of the policy.	The Void Management Policy aims to ensure that EHA has an accountable process to identify, record and put in place procedures to deal with abandoned properties.		
2. Who is intended to benefit from the policy? (e.g applicants, tenants, staff, contractors)	It applies to all tenants and staff that are responsible for implementing policy and procedures for abandoned properties		
3. What outcomes are wanted from this policy? (e.g the measurable changes or benefits to members/ tenants / staff)	The outcomes of this policy are: • To give clear guidance on the process for dealing with tenants that have abandoned their properties • To ensure that any actions taken are dealt with within the existing legal provisions, regulatory requirements and best practice guidance • To have effective engagement with the appropriate external enforcement and support agencies • To ensure that any actions taken are dealt with in accordance with our equality and diversity policy • To advise tenants whose properties has been terminated through the abandonment of the appeal process		
4. Which groups could be affected by the policy? (note all that apply)			
Age	x	Disability	x
Gender reassignment	x	Marriage and Civil Partnership	x
Pregnancy and Maternity	x	Race	x
Religion or Belief	x	Sex	x
Sexual Orientation	x		
5. If the policy is not relevant to any of the equality groups listed above, state why and end the process here.			

6. Have those affected by the policy / decision been involved?		
Tenants will be provided with details on how the association deals with abandoned properties if they request information and information will be made available on our website.		
7. Describe the likely positive or negative impact(s) that the policy could have on the groups identified above.	Positive Impact(s)	Negative Impact(s)
	None	none
8. What actions are required to address the impacts arising from this assessment? (This might include: additional data, putting monitoring in place, making adjustments, taking specific action to mitigate any potentially negative impacts)	N/A	

Signed:	Rachel Cooper
Dated:	06.02.2025