



Procedure: Empty Homes (Void) Management Procedure

Approved by: Leadership Group

Date: 02 May 2023

Approved:

Frequency of review: Every 3 years

1. PURPOSE

This procedure has been developed to ensure all BHA complies with current legislation, regulatory expectations, and good practice.

Please refer to the Policy for Scope, Responsibilities, Data Protection, Legislative, and Regulatory Requirements, etc.

2. KEY STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

Leadership Group, Board

Leadership Group are responsible for approving policy and monitoring the performance on a regular basis.

Senior Managers

Ensuring that the Board's decisions are implemented in accordance with legislative and regulatory requirements.

Staff

Ensure that Policy decision and procedures are followed. Any query from the tenants are dealt with in a timely manner.

Key Staff Roles

BHA employs four Local Delivery Maintenance Managers (LDMM), of whom have specific roles in dealing with our empty homes (void) management. There is also oversight by a Local Delivery Manager whom empty homes (voids) is their specialism to review performance and implement any improvements to the process.

BHA also employs Neighbourhood Officers across the geographical area who complete viewings and sign ups to the empty homes, they work closely with the LDMM's to ensure the standard of work set out in the Lettable Standard is adhered to.

3. DEFINITIONS

BHA – Broadland Housing Association

BBS – Broadland Business Systems

LDMM – Local Delivery Maintenance Manager

H&S – Health and Safety

Procedure Owner: Jack Harvey, Local Delivery Manager

Revised by: Dale Wordley, Assistant Maintenance Director

Verified by: Louise Archer, Executive Operations Director

EIA – Equality Impact Assessment

PIA – Privacy Impact Assessment

Repair - The process of rectifying a component or installation in a Broadland owned and/or managed property for which it is responsible when it is faulty or in a state of disrepair.

Maintenance - The upkeep of components or installations in a Broadland owned and/or managed property for which it is responsible.

Empty Homes (void) – Property that is vacant awaiting remedial works to bring to Broadlands letting standard before becoming available for relet.

4. RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Corporate Strategy
- Asset Management Strategy
- Electrical Policy
- Responsive Repairs Policy & Procedure
- Gas Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Compensation Policy
- Tenancy Agreement
- Recharge Policy
- Asbestos Policy & Procedure
- Aids & Adaptations Policy & Procedure
- Control of Asbestos Regulations 2006
- Electrical Safety Regulations 18th Edition (IBS7671 Wiring Regulations)
- RSH Regulatory Standards
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Housing Health and Safety Rating System 2006
- Empty Homes (Void) Lettable Standard
- Homes for Cathy commitments
- Empty Homes (Void) Lettable Standard
- Allocations Policy
- Mutual Exchange Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Domestic Abuse Policy

5. OVERVIEW

Notification of Empty Homes (Void)

- Tenants should terminate their tenancy in writing. This requirement is made clear in the tenant's tenancy agreement.
- In the case of a joint tenancy, both tenants are encouraged to sign the termination document, except in exceptional cases e.g., domestic abuse or lack of mental capacity. One tenant can end a joint tenancy, so the Neighbourhood Officer must inform the other tenant where possible.
- Termination of tenancies can also occur due to tenant death, evictions and abandonment, these processes will be covered in the relevant allocation, termination, eviction, and abandonment policies.

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- The notice period of 28 days should be adhered to in all cases, except transfers by agreement with the Local Delivery Manager or where the tenancy agreement states a different timeframe.
- The notice period of four weeks is applied to abandoned properties. Where abandonment is suspected a Notice to Quit shall be served by the Neighbourhood Officer to ensure that BHA recovers possession of the property as quickly as possible.
- The Local Housing Advisor will record the termination on Broadland Business Systems, Microsoft Planner and the British Gas Void Care Portal.
- If the tenant intends to hand in the keys sooner than four weeks, they will be liable for the rent and service charges up until their formal termination date.
- Tenants will be made aware of the amount of rent owing up until the end of their tenancy.
- A pre-void inspection should be undertaken within 7-10 days of the initial notification of a termination is received from the tenant.
- Outgoing tenants will be charged for outstanding repairs for which they have a defined responsibility.
- If keys are brought to the office and handed to staff when the tenant is leaving, but the tenant has not given adequate notice, the tenant will be liable for the rent until the notional four-week period has expired.
- Although it will be unlikely that the outgoing tenant will be happy to pay rent for the four weeks that they are not occupying the property, this is their liability and should be pursued. If arrears remain outstanding when the tenancy has formally ended this will be treated as a bad debt and dealt with in accordance with the former tenant arrears procedure.
- The keys must be returned by 17:30 on the last day of the tenancy.
- If the keys are not returned, the locks should be changed in accordance with the tenancy agreement timescales, unless the Neighbourhood Officer has agreed otherwise with the tenant. Contact is to be made with the former tenant prior to changing the locks, the property to be visually checked externally where possible and needs be a two to attend when carrying out the lock change.

Empty Homes Repairs Processes

Pre-void Inspection

The LDMM should inspect an imminent void property ideally within 7-10 days of receiving the notification. This will allow maximum time to organise works and for the tenant to carry out any defects they are responsible for.

See **Appendix 1** for process map.

Oversight of works

The LDMTL should continue to have oversight of the work through to completion of all works in the empty home to ensure it is ready for letting.

See **Appendix 2** for process map.

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Monitoring, Measurement and Reporting

Performance in relation to this policy will be reported to the Board as follows:

- Terminations in a month
- Relet timescales will be reported to board by Local Delivery Manager (Allocations), highlighting any performance related issues which arose, or foreseeable.
- Leadership Group and Board can access performance data which is to be reviewed on a regular basis.
- Percentage of rental income lost through empty homes (voids).
- Within the complaints policy we will report on new lets and relet complaints per annum, The Local Delivery Manager (Voids) will take the lead and review complaints relating to empty homes (Void) monthly.
- Mystery shopper feedback

6. REVIEW

This procedure will be subject to ongoing review in the light of experience, changes in legislation and Group policy and meeting the needs of our stakeholders.

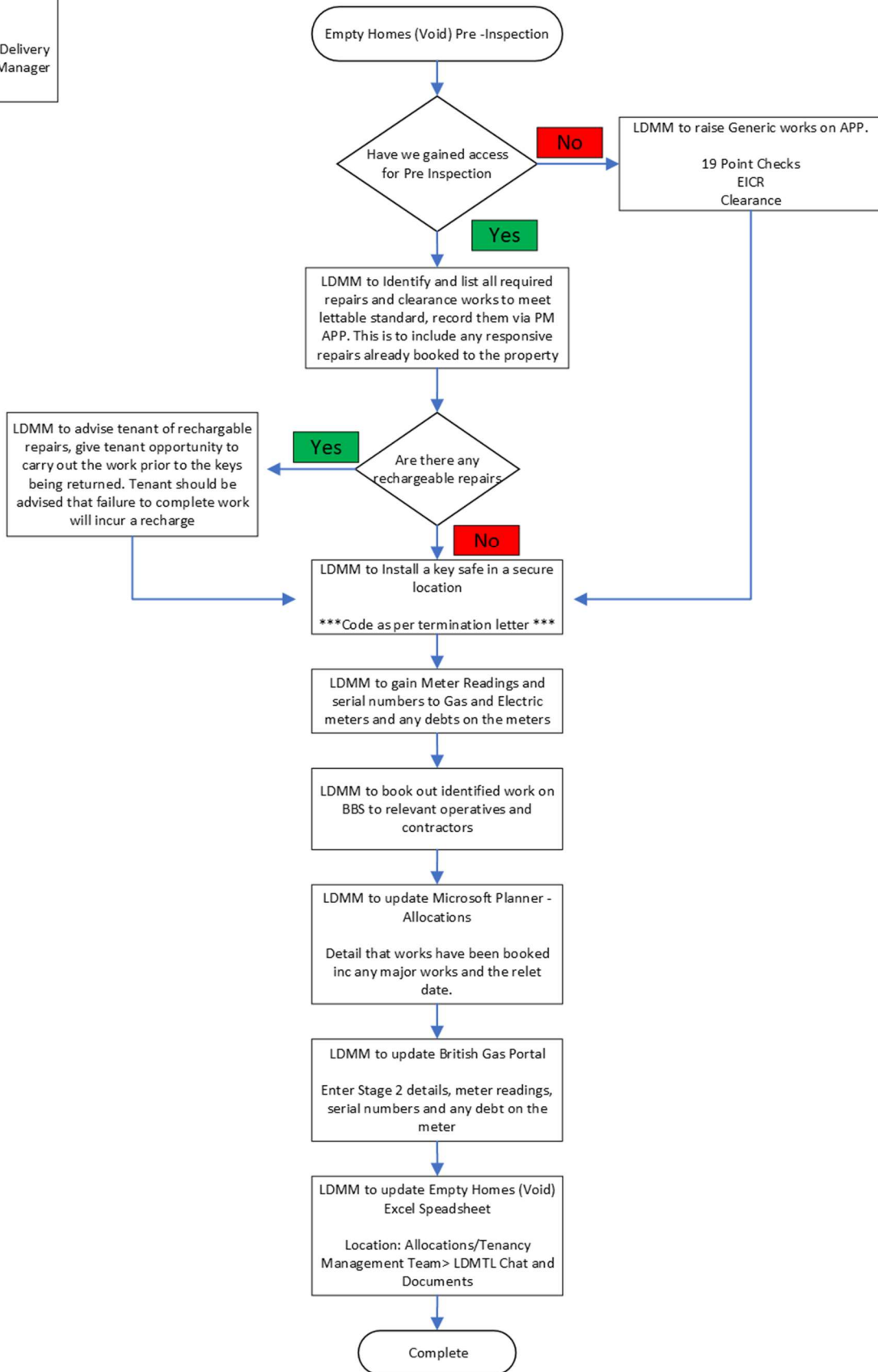
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Appendix 1

Key
LDMM - Local Delivery
Maintenance Manager



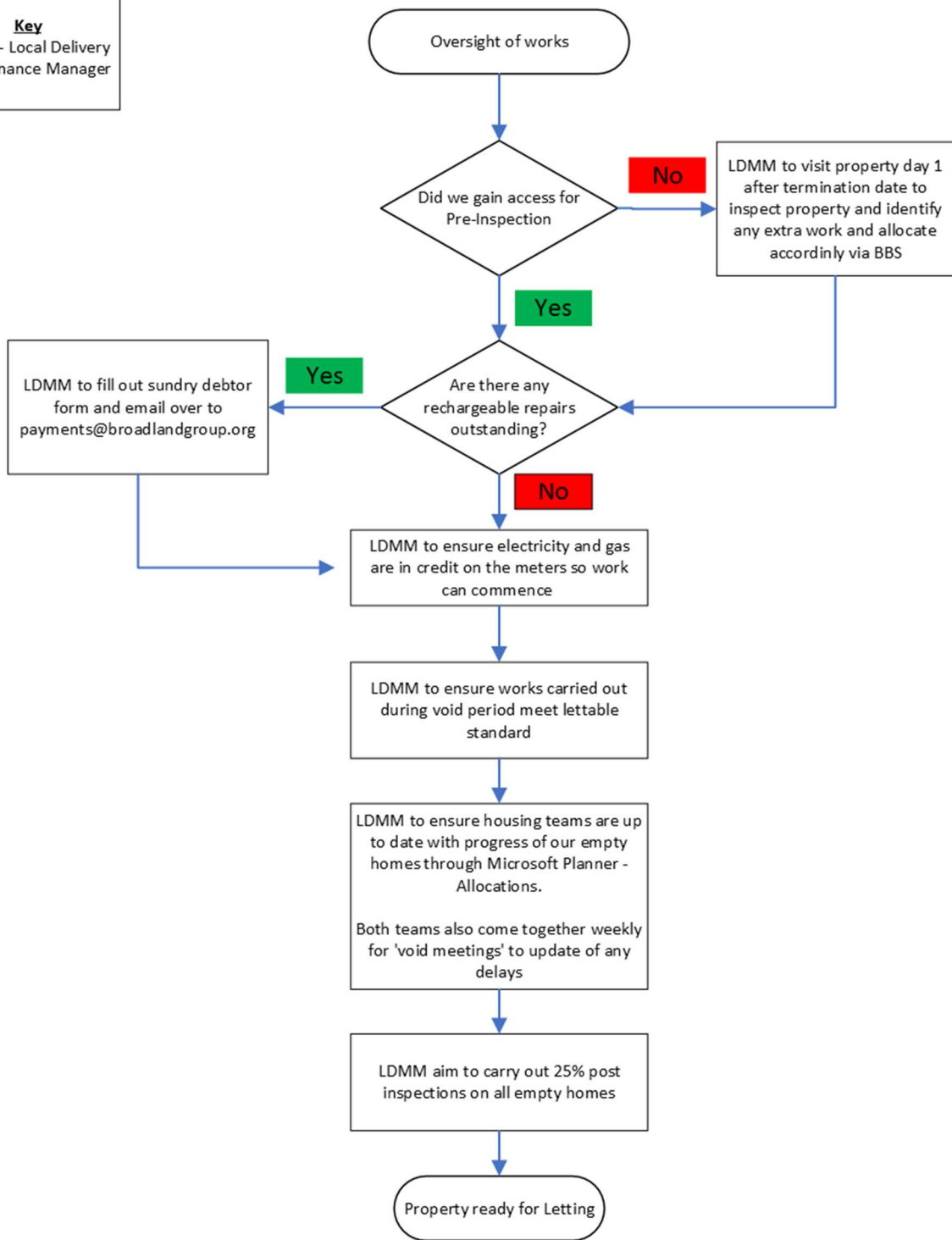
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Appendix 2

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