

**EMPTY HOMES POLICY**

## **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 This document sets out our approach to managing the empty homes we own. The empty homes process includes finding a suitable new tenant for the home, preparing the home so that it is ready for letting and completing any asset renewals that are required to the appropriate standard whilst the home is empty.
- 1.2 The policy aims to support our Empty Homes process to:
- Provide good quality homes for the community
  - Make homes available for letting to the community as soon as practical
  - Ensure homes are let to a safe and secure standard and to the agreed quality standards
  - Minimise rent loss
  - Minimise void costs for us and our landlord customers
  - Enforce tenant recharges for damage and neglect
  - Ensure tenants understand the termination process including their responsibilities
  - Ensure allocations agreements are followed and correctly applied
  - Report on empty homes enabling identification of hard to let homes and development of strategies to minimise them
  - Comply with legislation with regards to gas, electric, asbestos and fire regulations

## **2. Responsibilities**

- 2.1 The Head of Relationship will be responsible for the following, delegating responsibility to the Empty Homes & Lettings Team leader where appropriate
- Ensuring that the period a home is empty is kept to a minimum by owning the complete process from tenancy termination to reletting to a new tenant
  - Ensuring that staff understand their responsibility for delivering empty home management processes regarding rent setting, managing the home return standards and the allocations and letting procedures and they are adequately trained to implement the procedures
  - The health and safety of staff and applicant visiting an empty home
  - Effective key management and security of empty homes
- 2.2 The Home Pod will be responsible for

- Managing pre-inspection to determine condition of the home, confirm any recharges and pre-scope the void repair works
- Managing the performance of contractors engaged in working in empty properties
- Ensuring homes meets the lettable standard
- Ensuring gas and electrical tests are completed
- Undertaking other compliance checks as necessary i.e. water testing where required
- Draining down systems during inclement weather
- Ensuring the health and safety of contractors and staff visiting an empty home.

### **3. Legal framework**

3.1 There are a number of pieces of legislation and regulations relating to our empty homes process including

- Defective Premises Act 1972  
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1972/35/contents>
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985  
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1985/70/contents>
- Environmental Protection Act 1990  
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/43/contents>
- General Data Protection Regulations 2018  
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/29/contents>
- The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012  
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/632/contents>
- Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998  
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1998/2451/contents/made>
- Construction Design Management Regulations 2015
- IET Guidance Note 3 – Inspection and Testing

### **4. Definitions**

- 4.1 An empty home is a home owned or managed by Twenty11 which does not have a tenant. Empty Homes are often referred to as a “void” home.
- 4.2 Empty homes management is the process of managing a home from the start of the notice to quit period to the date a tenant moves into their new home and after care check ins. The process mainly involves identifying the right applicant to become the tenant of the empty home and completing necessary repair works ready for their occupation.
- 4.3 A home may become empty for a variety of reasons. These include:
- It is a new or improved home awaiting a new tenant following hand-over
  - The previous tenant has given notice and vacated the home
  - The tenancy period has come to an end, and the tenant or landlord has decided not to renew the tenancy
  - The death of a tenant
  - The landlord has a court order for possession of the home and has carried out an eviction
  - The home is suspected as having been abandoned and the correct notice has been served and expired
  - The home has been badly damaged by fire or flood, or is any other way defective and unsafe and the extent of repair work requires the tenant to be moved in order for the repairs to be made
  - The home has been categorised as awaiting demolition/regeneration

## **5. Policy statement**

- 5.1 We are committed to keeping the number of empty homes and the length of time they are empty, to a minimum for the following reasons:
- To make the best use of our assets
  - The aim to provide homes to meet the needs of the local community
  - The loss of rent and security costs incurred use resources that could be better spent on improving our homes
  - Empty Homes have a negative impact on the time waited by households registered on Choice Based Lettings
  - They can be targets for vandalism and squatting and can result in increased costs in terms of repair damage
  - They can have an adverse effect on the local community of increased fears of crime, higher incidences of fly-tipping and vermin and undermining community regeneration

- We will be liable for Council Tax
- 5.2 Twenty11 is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion in the delivery of its services. In managing empty homes and letting homes, we will ensure that all and new tenants are treated fairly, consistently and without discrimination.
- 5.3 We will have due regard to the needs of individuals with protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010. Our processes will be applied transparently and equitably to ensure that homes are prepared and relet in a way that supports access to safe, suitable housing for all.
- 5.4 Where required, reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure that individuals are not disadvantaged when engaging with our services. This may include adapting communication methods, providing information in accessible formats, or considering individual needs when preparing a home for occupation.
- 5.4 Where a prospective or new tenant requires a home with specific adaptations, we will assess and consider this need in line with our Aids and Adaptations Policy.

## 6. Empty Homes Process

- 6.1 When we are notified that a home will become empty, a pre-termination visit will be carried out within **seven working days** of receiving the termination notice to inspect the condition of the home. Any repairs identified during the inspection will be assessed to determine whether they are the responsibility of the tenant and therefore subject to recharge, or the responsibility of Twenty11.
- 6.2 Where the required works are the tenant's responsibility, the work to be carried out will be clearly explained to the tenant before the tenancy ends to allow them the opportunity to complete the works and return the home to the required standard [Home Return Standard](#). Should the tenant not carry out the work expected or damage is later identified as a result of misuse or neglect once the home is empty, the tenant will be recharged the cost of repairing the damage in accordance with the tenancy terms and conditions and our [Recharge Policy](#).
- 6.3 If any works that involve damp, mould and condensation have occurred in the last six months or when empty we must issue the "Your home – DMC" document detailing the works that have been carried out, and the need for a 6 week and 6 month visit to be performed to check that there is no re – occurrence of the issue.
- 6.4 If the tenant is moving to another Twenty11 home then the offer may be withdrawn if they do not carry out the work expected in order to meet the [Home Return Standard](#) or pay for recharged work.
- 6.5 Necessary repair and asset replacement to bring our homes up to our [Empty Homes Lettable Standard](#) will be carried out. This could be work whilst the current tenant is still in occupation or after the tenant has moved out.

- 6.6 All statutory safety works and checks will be completed before any home is let. Some non-urgent work may be completed after the new tenant has moved in. If asset replacement work is needed, such as the programmed installation of a new bathroom, and that renewal will cause a delay to the void turnaround, then where possible, it will be carried out once the new tenant has moved in and this will be explained clearly. The tenant of a Twenty11 home will be offered a choice of materials and styles of components where possible. Where a stairlift or other alterations have been done by the outgoing tenant will be removed before the home is let.

## **7. Allocation of Empty Homes**

- 7.1 Our Twenty11 Allocations Policy sets out how Twenty11 will let our empty homes.
- 7.2 When letting homes Twenty11 will first seek to work in partnership with the appropriate Council to house those who meet the criteria for Twenty11 homes. Where a letting is achieved through partnership with the Council, they will initially assess the prospective applicant, and a further assessment is undertaken by Twenty11 in line with our Allocations Policy. Where a home is being let through any other channel, Twenty11 staff will conduct pre-tenancy assessment to assess the prospective tenant.
- 7.3 Twenty11 may allocate some empty homes to Twenty11 existing tenants who have a need to move. We also partner other agencies to provide homes to applicants who meet our allocations criteria.
- 7.4 Where we are managing market rent homes, lettings will be to suitable prospective tenants as assessed against Twenty11 criteria please see the Market rent (Investment Homes) Policy.

## **8. Monitoring Performance**

- 8.1 Our Board sets the parameters for target re-let times. We will monitor performance and take appropriate action to ensure homes are re-let within agreed and optimal timescales.
- 8.2 All key stage completion information in our empty homes process will be recorded and evaluated in order to ensure that the service is delivered in the most efficient and effective way.
- 8.3 A weekly Key-to-Key meeting will be held to monitor progress and address any bottlenecks at each stage of the process. This will ensure the timely management of all empty homes, including those exceeding 40 days, with a clear focus on improving performance and implementing action plans where required.
- 8.4 Performance information will be used to identify trends that will help to improve the empty homes process. For example, by capturing trends in hard to let homes solutions can be identified to stimulate demand in these homes.
- 8.5 Twenty11 will work with our contractors to ensure that they embrace our Empty Homes Policy and contribute to us minimising the length of time a home is empty.

- 8.6 A monthly operations performance meeting will be held to review performance, identify any challenges, and agree actions for continuous improvement.
- 8.7 Empty homes performance information will be shared with the Senior Leadership Team and the Operational Performance & Tenants Service Committee (OPATs).

Document Controls			
<b>Version</b>	3	<b>Effective date</b>	March 2026
<b>Subject matter expert drafter</b>	Empty Homes & Lettings Team Leader	<b>Policy owner</b>	Head of Relationships
<b>Related pod</b>	Relationships	<b>Related policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Twenty11 Allocations Policy</li> <li>• Repairs Policy</li> <li>• Recharges Policy</li> <li>• Market Rent (Investment Homes) Policy</li> </ul>
<b>Review period</b>	3 years	<b>Next review due by</b>	March 2029
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<b>The 3 lines of defence have been checked and are valid</b>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Equality Impact Assessment completed</b>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Delegated approvals			
<b>Approved by ELT</b>	Sarah North, Customer Services Director	<b>Approved Date</b>	12 <sup>th</sup> March 2026