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| **Empty Homes Policy**  **SER-POL-23**  **Version 2.0** |
| **Date approved: 09 November 2021**  **Approved by: People and Places Committee** |

# Introduction and Scope

* 1. An empty home is a property where there is no current tenancy.
  2. This policy will ensure that an effective and efficient system is in place to manage empty homes and ensure that they are returned to letting in a timely way, limiting void rent loss and inconvenience for new customers.
  3. The policy applies to all homes that are let at a social or affordable rent except for mutual exchanges
  4. The Trusts aim is to provide a good quality of home to new customers who are in housing need. The standards that we use to improve and repair Empty Homes are available at Appendix A.

# Classification of Empty Homes

2.1 There are four categories of empty homes that will be used, and each will have target timescales that will be reviewed on an annual basis:

* Routine – these are voids that require basic repairs and maintenance
* Major – voids that require more significant and repair and maintenance work including component replacement prior to re-letting
* Refurbishment – voids that require three or more components replacing and more than one room requires significant flooring or plastering works
* New Homes Acquisition – a property newly acquired by the Trust that need void works completing prior to letting

2.2 Each Empty Homes category will be monitored in relation to cost and time to support the efficient management of empty homes to achieve our aim of limiting the time homes remain empty. These will include:

* Overall number of days taken to re-let an empty home
* Number of days any repair / refurbishment work takes
* Number of days to start the tenancy once the home is ready to let
* Cash lost through empty homes
* For newly acquired home the property should be let within three months of purchase

# Responsibility

* 1. The Strategic Director People and Places has overall responsibility for the management of empty homes.
  2. Operationally, there is shared responsibility for empty homes management between the Head of Asset Services and the Head of Customer Operations.

# Adapted Homes

* 1. If an empty home is adapted or could be suitable for applicants with medical needs, then the property will be advertised stating this and officers will work closely with the Manchester Equipment and Adaptations Service to make best use of our homes and meet a specific housing need.

# Equality and Diversity

* 1. Southway will provide an equal and accessible service to all of its customers and an Equality Impact Assessment has been completed to support this.
  2. This Policy and related publications of Southway can be provided on request in other formats (e.g. in an alternative language, Braille, large print, or audio).

# Related Policies and Procedures

Empty Homes Procedures and Flowchart

End of Tenancy Policy

Tenancy Policy and Tenancy Agreement

Equipment and Adaptations Policy

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| **POLICY REVIEW HISTORY** | |
| *To be completed during each review* | |
| **Previous versions**  (version number – approved by – approval date – title if different)  V1 – Chief Executive – 19/06/07 | |
| **Date of last EIA:** | October 2021 |
| **Review lead by:** | Strategic Director People and Places |
| * Title of the policy changed to include homes. * Aims changed to include providing a good customer service * Removal of all procedural documentation * Updated responsibilities section * Definitions and key KPIs included | |
| **Next review due:** | **Q3 2022/23** |
| **Approval level:** | **People and Places Committee** |