

**TEANT REGULATORY PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS**  
**Identified in Tenant Regulatory Panel Voids Review Report – March 2014**

<b>R1 Current Weekly Voids Sheets</b>				
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Action we will take</b>	<b>Target date for completion</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
<p><i>It is suggested that a Voids Co-ordinator pulls together all relevant documents into a manageable report, which is updated on a regular basis with accurate information in co-ordination with all relevant Officers, contractors and the repairs department.</i></p>	<p>Introduce a Voids Administration Co-ordinator role. This role will ensure all relevant areas of Northgate are fully utilised to support the management of the voids process. Role will also include administration of Planned works so that the completion of both void and planned works can be integrated. Role will have responsibility for producing status and statistical reports and liaising with internal officers and external agencies for all matters relating to the voids process.</p>	<p>January 2015</p>	<p>Job Description to be drafted as part of Depot review project.</p>	<p>RM</p>
<b>R2 Voids Cost Report</b>				
<p><i>It is recommended that planned works are separated from other void works and that costs are aligned with the correct budget, and that it is updated on a regular basis. Work where possible is invoiced on a 30-day basis and recorded under the correct category and Northgate is updated in a timely manner. This process is to be managed by the Voids co-ordinator.</i></p>	<p>Agreed that planned works such as kitchen and bathroom upgrades identified at the void stage should be costed to the relevant planned codes and not the voids code. Voids work costs should only then identify a true cost of the void. Timeliness of invoiced voids works to be monitored by the Voids Administration Co-ordinator. Wherever possible annual inspections being completed by the Housing Management team will identify potential planned and voids works prior to the property becoming void.</p>	<p>2014/15 Budget management</p>		<p>PE</p>

R3 Availability of Properties				
<p><i>It is suggested that Choice Based Letting sheets are published weekly and updated on the UDC website as this would enable prospective tenants to access void properties on a more frequent basis, thus lowering the period of voids.</i></p>	<p>Officers feel that weekly advertising would currently be a costly exercise that would not necessarily reduce the void turn-around time at present. The proposal would be to increase the number of pre-void inspections that are completed by both the Housing Officers and Repairs Surveyors. Once a letter of notice has been received an inspection visit will be arranged within that 4 week period. A greater understanding of the anticipated works will then be obtained for realistic re-let timescales to then be determined. Officers to set up a trial of the revised process in a specific area and a full cost analysis to be completed. Once this 'front-end' of the process has improved there may be an opportunity to increase advertising cycles.</p>	<p>September 2014</p>		<p>JS</p>
R4 Dedicated Voids Team				
<p><i>It is recommended that a dedicated voids team is developed to be managed by a voids Project Co-ordinator, working in conjunction with the Landlord and Housing Services Manager. This individual could oversee all the activity of a void from the vacating of a property to re-let, with visits on site to check delays. It is also suggested that a dedicated work team are assigned to voids taking into consideration minor works as these are an on-going process.</i></p>	<p>Allocation of workload and skilling of operatives to be reviewed as part of Depot Review project. Consideration for a dedicated voids resource will be made. Resource needs to be managed to ensure voids works are prioritised to optimise cost and workforce efficiencies. Voids Administration Co-ordinator to support the voids process (as stated above). All major voids to be project managed with works completion times determined, communicated and monitored. Where works given to external contractors introduce penalty fees if deadlines are not met.</p>	<p>January 2015</p>	<p>Resource analysis to be completed as part of Depot review project.</p>	<p>RM</p>

<b>R5 Regular Inspection of UDC Council Properties</b>				
<p><i>The Housing Officer should attempt to visit all properties on a yearly basis. The Housing Officer would then be able to ascertain whether the property was being maintained to the UDC requirements, or if there needed to be any further support or consultation with the tenant to enable the tenant to keep the property up to UDC re-let standards therefore reducing the condition and cost of an eventual void.</i></p>	<p>Housing Officer Inspection schedule has already commenced. With current resources it is estimated that not all tenants will be able to be visited within the year. Inspection forms capturing property and tenant details are being collated and all relevant data uploaded onto Northgate. Stock Condition Surveyor now also employed.</p>	<p>On-going</p>	<p>Continuation of inspection visits.</p>	<p>JS/FG</p>
<b>R6 Re-Chargeables</b>				
<p><i>It is recommended that each property is inspected after the tenant has given notice but before they return the keys. This would ensure that the tenant was aware of repairs that would need to be carried out by themselves prior to vacating the property. The rechargeable process should be clear to all tenants and considered when moving a tenant into another UDC property. This revenue should be credited against the voids budget. However it is understood that this may not be able to be enforced if a tenant has died or is hospitalised. Officers could discuss with other Landlords who have experienced similar issues to see what procedures or policies they have put in place to help with this problem.</i></p>	<p>Inspections to be completed (as above). Housing Officer/Repairs Surveyor to identify rechargeable repairs and advise tenant that unless it is put right there will be a charge. Re-charge policy to be included in sign-up packs. Consideration to be given to change the process for administering re-chargeable repairs. Once re-charge identified works will not be completed until the tenant has made an advance payment. Full analysis to be completed on re-chargeable write-offs and numbers for last 2 years.</p>	<p>On-going</p>	<p>Continuation of inspection visits.</p>	<p>PE</p>

<b>R7 Gifting</b>				
<i>It is recommended that a form is prepared to be given to a tenant vacating the property for them to list gifted items and items to be removed, There is some lack of communication and consistency between Voids Surveyors and Housing Officers as to which items are to be removed and which items are to remain.</i>	Current 'gifting' process to be formalised. Items being left identified by previous tenant detailed on Voids Inspection form. Void Path to be updated to include gifted items. Voids standard needs to be followed. Annual inspection visits are now identifying authorised and unauthorised alterations to property which will be uploaded onto Northgate.	September 2014		DM/JS
<b>R8 External Contractors</b>				
<i>It is recommended that external contractors are used for Major Works or Planned Works and those works which are under current contract, and a dedicated voids work team are used for minor repairs.</i>	As per R4 above. Review of depot resources will aim to ensure as much of the voids work as possible is completed by UDC operatives therefore reducing external contractor costs.	January 2015	Resource analysis to be completed as part of Depot review project.	RM
<b>R9 Re-Let Standards</b>				
<i>It is suggested that new tenants moving into a property are supplied with a Re-let Form to verify that all works have been completed in accordance with UDC regulations. They are also supplied with an information pack with all the necessary forms supplied to keep their property up to the Re-let standard.</i>	Officers to implement a new agreement whereby details of all completed works are listed and tenant agrees to current condition of property on sign-up (satisfaction form?)	September 2014		JS

<b>R10 Letter of Promise</b>				
<i>It is recommended that there is a letter of promise produced for the new tenant whereby UDC records any outstanding works at the time of the tenant moving in with a relevant job number and a date of completion. This would result in tenants accepting properties that need minor works to be done if there is a promise of completion within an agreed time scale.</i>	In conjunction with R9 above, the Voids Administration Co-ordinator could identify those works not completed during the void period with an estimated completion date formalised in a 'Letter of Intent'.	January 2014		JS
<b>R11 Property Records</b>				
<i>It is suggested that an easily accessible record is introduced for each property, to record any alterations by the tenant, planned works and repairs by UDC, to ensure that work is not duplicated unnecessarily. A stock condition survey on a 5 year programme would help eliminate this problem.</i>	Data for all properties is already held and updated on a regular basis. Records are held on the shared 'K' drive so that access can be gained by all officers as necessary. Stock Condition surveys now being completed by dedicated permanent resource. Housing Officer Inspection visit data will be uploaded to improve property information on Northgate.	On-going		BG
<b>R12 Housemark</b>				
<i>It is suggested that all officers should utilise the Housemark performance indicators platform on a regular basis, to review where UDC stands against Landlords with similar stock levels. Therefore where UDC performance figures are low, contact could be made with the higher performing councils to see how or what they have changed to improve the particular service being reviewed.</i>	Benchmark reporting and use of Housemark data to be improved. Business & Performance Manager to create awareness amongst officers of the voids performance data that is available. Officers to then ensure its use to manage the void process and identify process improvements where possible.	On-going		PE