Voids and Empty Homes

Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee

26th September 2018

Sandra Fawcett

Chair - Tower Hamlets Housing Forum (THHF)

Importance of void management

➢ **Make effective use of stock**
  - o Reducing time in temporary accommodation

➢ **Maximise income**
  - o Void properties reduce rental income

➢ **Effective asset management**
  - o Maintaining homes and meeting H&S requirements

➢ **Landlord's reputation**
  - o Prolonged or high number of void properties indicates poor management

➢ **Sustainable communities**
  - o Long term voids can lead to decline of an area

Dealing with voids

➢ Notification of tenancy terminating

➢ Pre-void property inspection

➢ Clear instructions given to outgoing tenant on their responsibilities

➢ Robust targets and time-frames in place

➢ Responsibilities for voids clear for repairs, lettings, housing teams

➢ Effective monitoring in place

Empty property management

➤ **When keys are not returned**
- Eviction
- Death of tenant, no family
- Property illegally occupied
- Abandoned

➤ **Abandoned properties**
- Robust process for reporting and investigating
- Act quickly
- Take legal steps to end tenancy
- Recover, repair and relet

Lettings process

➤ **Advertise during notice period, when**

  o Existing tenant offered and accepted another property

  o Existing tenant has died and no successor

➤ **ELHP Nomination Agreement**

  o Promotes best practice

  o Standardised approach by LA and RP

  o Consistency in allocation processes

Key stages

➢ **Notice generates tasks and targets**

- o Date the keys are due
- o Starts lettings process
- o Pre-void inspection indicates work needed to relet

➢ **Keys returned**

- o Tenancy ends
- o Locks changed – suited locks/key boxes
- o Enable multiple trades/works to be done
- o Viewings
- o Let through the Common Housing Register

The numbers

➢ THHF Members join the Common Housing Register

➢ 2017/18 – Register let 1,680 new/ relet homes across the borough

➢ Challenging targets set by Registered Providers

➢ Average void turnaround time – range from 14 to 30 days depending on stock type and condition

Thank you for listening
Any questions?