

Dorset Council
Void Policy
Housing Management
May 2026



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1. Introduction

This policy outlines the Council's approach to managing voids across its Temporary Accommodation (TA) and wider housing portfolio, including hostels, supported and specialist housing, shared accommodation, and self-contained units.

This policy supports Dorset Council's commitment to:

- Delivering **safe, clean, and secure accommodation**
- Ensuring **legal and regulatory compliance**
- Achieving **value for money and efficient use of available housing stock**
- Applying a **transparent and consistent approach to working**

To support, this policy should be read alongside additional documentation (not exhaustive):

- Housing Voids Technical Specification: Dorset Council: Property & Housing Repairs
- Void Procedure (Temporary Accommodation)
- Placement and Suitability Procedures (in development)
- Lettable Standards Guidance
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Statement – Dorset Council
- Health and Safety Policy (Property and Premises)

2. Purpose and Aims

Dorset Council's Voids Policy establishes a consistent and strategic approach to managing empty housing across its portfolio. It ensures that when properties become vacant, they are recovered, inspected, repaired, and re-let efficiently while meeting all legal, safety, and quality standards.

The policy is designed to minimise void turnaround times, reduce rental income loss, and support the Council's statutory duties - by making suitable accommodation available as quickly as possible. It emphasises providing safe, clean, compliant homes and adopting a person-centred approach that takes into account vulnerability, accessibility, and household needs.

The policy applies to all council-managed, leased, and partner-provided housing and covers the full voids process from tenancy termination and inspection through to repair,



compliance checks, and re-letting. It is underpinned by key legislation and regulatory standards.

Through defined lettable standards, categorisation of void types, and robust performance indicators, Dorset Council aims to ensure consistency, accountability, and value for money while continuously improving services through monitoring, reporting, and feedback.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all properties used or managed by Dorset Council across its accommodation portfolio. This includes (But not limited to):

- Properties owned by Dorset Council
- Properties leased or licensed from private landlords
- Properties managed in partnership with housing associations or commissioned support providers

The policy applies to a wide range of accommodation types, including:

- Hostels (self-contained or shared rooms with communal facilities)
- Shared accommodation (e.g. with shared kitchens and/or bathrooms)
- Self-contained accommodation (exclusive use of all living facilities)
- Supported housing schemes, specialist housing, or Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme (RSAP) properties

This policy applies to voids arising from:

- Planned moves or end of licence/tenancy
- Transfers, decants, or move-on
- Lease expiries, property hand backs, or contract terminations
- Evictions, abandonment, or legal possession
- Enforcement actions, death of a tenant, or safeguarding/legal interventions



4. Legal and Regulatory Framework

The following legislation, regulatory standards, and national frameworks underpin void property management and the provision of high standard, suitable, accommodation.

A. Statutory Legislation

This policy and the way in which the council manages its void process complies with the contractual, statutory, regulatory and health and safety requirements as set out in the following (This list is illustrative and not exhaustive):

- Housing Act 1985
- Localism Act 2011
- Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982
- Housing Act 1996 (Part 6)
- Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 (GSIUR) as amended 2018.
Approved Code of Practice and guidance
- Health and Safety Legislation including Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Housing Health and Safety Rating System (England) Regulations 2005
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH)
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Building Safety Act 2022
- Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Regulations 2015 and Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (Amendments) Regulations 2022
- Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018
- Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 2018
- Electrical Safety, Quality and Continuity Regulations 2002/2665
- Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR
- Equalities Act 2010
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995

B. Regulatory Standards and National Guidance

- Regulator of Social Housing – Home Standard
- Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 (Awaab's Law)
- Decent Homes Standard (2006 – pending update)
- Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) Practice Guidance

5. Performance Indicators

Dorset Council will monitor voids across all council-managed accommodation using the following Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). *Please refer to Appendix A for outline explanation of void categories:*

Indicator	Target or Monitoring Aim
Key-to-key turnaround (overall)	30 working days (Minor) 45 working days (Major)
Contractor repairs turnaround	20 working days (Minor) 35 working days (Major)
Rent loss per void	Minimise and report weekly

6. Monitoring Responsibilities

Housing Management Staff (Team Leaders, Seniors and Housing Officers) are responsible for overseeing all voids, progress, and turnaround times. Performance will be monitored through systems such as Huume and internal dashboards/systems.

Asset Management and Surveyors are responsible for monitoring the progress of void works and notifying the Helpdesk and Housing Management team of any blockages, delays, or access issues impacting turnaround, and initial categorisation of works required.

Team Leaders will:

- Review KPI performance on a weekly basis
- Report key performance trends or concerns to the Service Manager
- Escalate any voids exceeding agreed turnaround thresholds to senior management for intervention
- Reporting periodically to elected members

7. Internal Reporting

The Void Performance Dashboard will be reviewed weekly by Housing Management Leads.

Persistent contractor delays or repeated Lettable Standard breaches will be reviewed weekly, and consulted with Dorset Council Assets Team – who lead on works raised and contractor delegation.

A weekly review of average turnaround, spend, and property void time will be carried out to inform asset planning, contract performance, and service delivery strategy.

8. Policy Review and Update Schedule

This policy will be reviewed at least every three years, or sooner if triggered by any of the following:

- Significant changes to legislation, regulatory requirements, or government guidance
- Evidence of systemic delays or proven poor performance through KPI monitoring,
- Introduction of new accommodation types, service delivery models, or contractual arrangements
- A formal request from senior management, internal audit, or the Regulator of Social Housing

The review will be coordinated by the relevant Service Manager responsible for Temporary Accommodation and Housing Supply, in consultation with operational teams, contractors, and other stakeholders.

The latest version of this policy will be made available to staff, partners, and stakeholders via Dorset Council's intranet.

9. Document Control

Field	Details
Policy Owner	Service Manager – Temporary Accommodation and Housing Supply
Version	1.0
Status	Complete
Date Approved	01.06.2026
Next Review	April 2029 or earlier if required
Approved By	(Interim)



Appendix A – Void Categorisation Guide

1. Purpose

This guide sets out how Dorset Council classifies temporary accommodation voids to ensure:

- Consistent assessment of void works
- Clear performance targets and expectations
- Efficient prioritisation of resources

Void categorisation supports:

- Faster turnaround of low-complexity properties
- Effective planning of major repair works
- Accurate performance monitoring and reporting

2. Principles of Categorisation

Void categorisation is based on:

- Property condition at inspection
- Extent and complexity of repairs required
- Health and safety risks
- Estimated time to bring the property to lettable standard

Categorisation will be confirmed following the initial void inspection and may be reviewed if circumstances change.



3. Void Categories

Void Category	Description	Typical Findings	Works Required	Target Timing
Minor Void	Property requiring minimal work and quick turnaround Routine repairs: no structural issues	Generally good condition No significant damages No major compliance issues Moderate wear and tear	Cleaning and Waste Clearance Minor Repairs Small Replacements Safety Checks Joinery Repairs Minor Kitchen/Bathroom works Redecoration Fixture Replacement	Up to 30 days - unless escalated, and/or specialist services required (Plasterers, listed building works etc)
Major Void	Significant works required	Major damage Structural issues H&S risks	Full replacements Electrical/plumbing works Damp/structural works Cyclical upgrades Specialist clearance	Up to 45 days – allowance for longer periods if additional departments or untypical practice applies. Examples (not limited to) of insurance claims and planning permissions.
Exceptional Void	Property requiring extensive, complex or non-standard works involving multiple stakeholders and/or specialist interventions	Extensive damage or deterioration Complex structural failures Fire/flood/major incident damage Full property refurbishment or rebuild	Specialist fire, asbestos or environmental works Major structural repairs	Typically 60+ days – subject to complexity, statutory approvals, funding, and multi-agency coordination - Review at reasonable periodic timescales. Timescales may extend significantly depending on planning, legal or insurance requirements. Examples (Not limited to) of community impact reporting, closure orders, dilapidation.

4. Categorisation Process

Categorisation will be determined:

- At initial void inspection
- By the appointed scheduler or other relevant officer

Categorisation will be:

- To be recorded on huume/relevant housing management system for the relevant property details
- Linked to expected timescales and contractor instructions

Re-categorisation may occur where:

- Additional defects are identified
- Works become more complex than originally assessed upon review and feedback from attending contractors, or revisit from surveyors/housing officers

5. Performance Monitoring

Void categories will be used to monitor:

- Turnaround times
- Contractor performance
- Cost of works

Persistent delays or mis-categorisation will be reviewed through:

- Weekly performance monitoring
- Contract management processes via Dorset Council Assets Management Team