

# Tenant Scrutiny Review- Voids and Allocations Process



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## **1. Reason, Scope and Aims of the Scrutiny Review**

### **1.1 Reason for the review**

Homes First Senior Leadership Team advised the scrutiny team that from May 2023, they would be introducing a new “workflow” IT system to manage the voids and allocations process. The new system will allocate tasks to staff at the appropriate times, make very complex processes easier to manage and ultimately improve the void turnaround time. The team agreed to oversee the implementation and to identify if any improvements can be made.

During the course of the review, the scrutiny team also identified plans to dispose of void homes with high repair costs. They agreed they also wanted to investigate and influence Homes First decision making in respect of these plans.

### **1.2 Scope of the Review**

In scope- basic voids and allocations procedures/ways of working - from when a tenant gives notice to move out, to when the new tenant moves in.

Out of scope- All additional processes eg death of a tenant.

### **1.3 Aims of the Review, Potential Outcome, Identifying Strengths and Weaknesses**

Aims:

- To look at the new voids and allocations system, review its effectiveness and make recommendations for improvements
- To understand and influence decision-making in respect of void costs and potential disposals.

Potential outcomes of the review are:

1. Improved void turnaround times
2. Improved customer experience.

3. Improved staff experience
4. Resources maximised.

Identifying strengths and weaknesses:

For **every** scrutiny review the team looks to identify the services strengths and weaknesses in the following areas

- What are the policies and procedures and how are they applied?
- How effective is the service?
- Are communications with tenants effective?
- Have equalities issues been taken into account?
- Does the service make best use of resources? (Value for Money)
- Are staff well trained and supported?
- Are tenants involved in shaping the service? And do we learn from any feedback they give us?
- How does the service compare with other landlords?

## 2. Thanks and Methodology

### 2.1 Thanks to Those Involved

This Tenant Scrutiny review has involved the following tenant volunteers:

Peter Noble, Sue Bulmer, Debbie Twitchen, John Langley, Sylvia Gibbs, Colin Lockyer and Sue Wells. Many thanks to the team for all of their hard work, carried out in an entirely voluntary capacity.

Also thanks to the following staff members who have made contributions to the report. Their insight, honesty and co-operation have been greatly appreciated and we hope has led to a mutually beneficial report:

Sara Cosham, Jess Kelsey, Keith Bulmer, Harriet Fitzgerald, Angela Dearnley, Jo Smith, Natalie Weller, Nikkee Hughton, Gina Hadfield, and Tina Goldsmith.

The team also would also like to thank TPAS and Brighton and Hove City Council, with whom they consulted on best practice relating to voids and allocations .

### 2.2 Methodology

<b>Milestones:</b>	<b>Date completed</b>
Held initial meetings with new workflow process designer & scoped the review	April 2023
Agreed information for Desk Top Review: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workflow processes</li> <li>• Guidance manuals</li> <li>• Letters/information to tenants</li> <li>• Performance Information</li> </ul>	May 2023
Agreed to allow additional month for new process to bed-in before proceeding with review	
Carried out Desk Top Review of information provided, using Desk Top Review template.	July 2023
Agreed a programme of reality checks to see how the staff/tenant experience related to the new process	Aug 2023
Carried out reality checks:	Sept/

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews with staff</li> <li>• Reviewed findings of “Moving-in” transactional surveys with tenants.</li> <li>• Investigated best practice and ways of working via TPAS &amp; Brighton and Hove City Council</li> </ul>	Oct 23
Evidence collation meetings -reviewed findings of reality checks/Desk Top Review	Nov 23
Agreed recommendations:	Nov/Dec 23
Report written	Dec 23
Clarification meeting held with managers	Jan 24

### 3. Detailed Findings, Recommendations, Potential Outcomes, and Response from Clarification Meeting With Service Managers.

Potential outcomes are 1. Improved voids turnaround time. 2. Improved staff experience. 3. Improved customer experience. 4. Resources maximised (VFM) **Recommendations shown in yellow are ongoing and have been added to a service improvement plan (SIP)**

<b>Findings (strengths/weaknesses)</b> Findings of desk top review and reality checks	<b>Recommendations From Scrutiny Team</b>	<b>Potential Outcome (see above)</b>	<b>Response from Clarification Meeting with Service Managers and also SLT 28<sup>th</sup> Feb</b>
<b>1. Policy and procedures</b>			
The team reviewed the New “Workflow” system Voids and Allocations Process Map and the five guidance manuals provided to staff, to assist them with the new process. The team were very impressed with the attention to detail and hard work involved in making the complex processes as user friendly and streamlined as possible.			No action but well done!
1. Most team leaders were aware of all of the cases being dealt with by their staff, because any new actions to the team are fed into a “group work tray”, which they oversee. They then allocate tasks to individuals. Some staff reported they felt out of the loop with regard to the cases being dealt with by their team and relied on staff updating them as they don’t use group work trays. Some staff report that their team leaders do not use the workflow system, so they feel unsupported and unable to ask for help.	1. All team leaders should be using the workflow system. All teams should have a “group work tray” to which actions are allocated. Actions to then be distributed amongst the team and monitored by team leaders/managers	2	Took a while to set up, but group work trays are now in place across the service, and all trays should be monitored by team leaders. <b>NFA</b>

Findings (strengths/weaknesses)	Recommendations	Outcome	Response managers/SLT
<p>2. Whilst all staff interviewed felt that current workflow process is an improvement, they are unable to run reports from the system, to enable them to have an overview of current voids. Many also use complicated spreadsheets to keep track, which is time consuming and a double up on resources. They are keen for a new reporting module to be provided, but stressed it must be tested thoroughly first to make sure it is fit for purpose.</p>	<p>2. Provide, test and implement the reporting element of the new workflow process, to ensure accurate monitoring of voids and allocations and do away with spreadsheets.</p>	<p>2,4</p>	<p>IT have been asked to do this. Is in hand. <b>Add to SIP with target date, who is responsible and date for completion</b></p>
<p>3. Some staff reported that they can be held up in completing their workflow actions, as they are reliant on a different action being completed by another staff member, before they can do theirs.</p>	<p>3. Investigate whether parts of the workflow process can be run in parallel, so that different staff members can be working on different issues at the same time</p>	<p>1,2</p>	<p>The system is limited and in its current format cannot run parallel processes would be very costly to achieve <b>NFA</b>.</p>
<p>4. In relation to the current system of Choice Based Lettings, to advertise and allocate available properties. The team felt this system is not fit for purpose. It takes up a great deal of resources and is time intensive. Staff report problems with accuracy when advertising properties, which has led to complaints. The system also gives unrealistic expectations to tenants/home-seekers as there are so few available properties to let. These views have also been expressed by tenants to TOLD.</p>	<p>4. Consider removing “Choice Based Lettings” and replacing with a faster, more accurate, but fair way of re-allocating homes.</p>	<p>1,2,3,4</p>	<p>A review of allocations and CBL is being carried out. Likely to lead to a direct lettings scheme. This has been delayed. Further consultation with tenants in June. <b>Add to SIP with target date, who is responsible and date for completion</b></p>
2. Effectiveness of the service/ performance/equalities			
<p>The KPI’s provided to the team show a marked improvement in the void turnaround time since the introduction of the new “Workflow” process. Which is to be congratulated.</p>			<p>No action but well done! Noted at SLT that the void turnaround time has dropped again, but because of budget issues.</p>



Findings (strengths/weaknesses)	Recommendations	Outcome	Response managers/SLT
<p>5. Whilst conducting the review, the team identified that properties with expensive void works, were being sent to a RAMP committee to potentially be disposed of and that a number of homes have been empty for many months awaiting a decision. The team had huge concerns around this issue, particularly as tenants were unaware this was happening, why it was happening or whether it was cost effective to the HRA.</p> <p>They sought further information and raised the issue with SLT and TOLD as a matter of urgency. The team have since been assured that any potential disposals will be kept to a minimum and discussed first with TOLD and RV- with explanations for why the disposal would be provide value for money to the HRA. Additional money to fund void works, In LDC, is being made available this year, which should enable outstanding repairs to be carried out on many of these void homes.</p> <p>The team will ask TOLD/RV to press for homes to be bought back into use asap. They are aware that whilst properties remain empty there is a loss to the HRA in terms of rent unpaid and having to pay council tax and utility costs. They will continue to pursue this via TOLD/RV.</p>	<p>5. Empty properties on the RAMP list to be repaired and bought back into use asap, or to be taken to TOLD/Residents Voice (RV) to discuss if they are to be considered for disposal. Agreed this will happen. To be monitored by TOLD/RV.</p>	<p>3,4</p>	<p>Majority of LDC properties on the RAMP list are being repaired for re-let. TOLD being consulted on potential disposal of four. The same information re EHL homes on RAMP list needs to be discussed with Residents Voice. Reported at SLT that both committees consulted <b>NFA</b></p>
<p><b>6. Moving Out inspections</b> are an essential part of the voids and allocations process. The team were concerned that these have only just started happening again following covid.</p> <p>6.1 Staff were keen for moving out inspections to happen at the very earliest opportunity to allow</p>	<p><b>6. Moving out inspection recommendations:</b></p> <p>6.1 Consider doing an early moving out inspection for any tenant who has been</p>	<p>1,2,3,4</p>	<p>6.1 Natalie Weller to give a list of tenants on the</p>

<p>tenants more time to prepare to move on. If a tenant is identified as likely to be offered a property imminently, they should have an inspection so they can have enough time to do any rechargeable works.</p>	<p>identified by the Neighbourhood Housing team as “likely to move out soon” to enable them to have more time to do any works they need to do and to de-clutter etc.</p>		<p>transfer list. Property services to commence early moving out inspections <b>Add to SIP with target date, who is responsible and date for completion</b></p>
<p>6.2 Some staff report that tenants are being told different things about what can be recharged by different surveyors.</p>	<p>6.2 Ensure there is a more consistent approach to re-charging. (see recommendation 17).</p>		
<p>6.3 The team were advised that currently one surveyor completes moving out inspections, and another surveyor oversees void works and signs off the properties when works complete. The team felt that to enable a consistent service it would be beneficial for the same surveyor to oversee the same properties throughout the process and to split the two roles.</p>	<p>6.3 Consider splitting roles so that the moving out inspection and voids inspections are carried out by the same surveyor, rather than having a separate surveyor for each role.</p>		<p>6.3 Property services are going to do this <b>Add to SIP with target date, who is responsible and date for completion</b></p>
<p>6.4 The team were concerned that vulnerable tenants might not be able to do recharge works identified at moving out inspections. eg a very elderly tenant, without family to help, looking to downsize may not be physically able to do recharge works. Staff advise that they have had held back money, which should have been paid to tenants downsizing, to pay for re-charges. The team were keen that this should not happen if tenants are unable to do works due to disabilities.</p>	<p>6.4 When discussing with the outgoing tenant works they need to be complete, surveyor to consider if the tenant has any vulnerabilities that might prevent them being able to complete works eg if they are disabled and have no relatives, and make a note on the system. This should be taken into account when considering whether to re-charge.</p>		<p>6.4 Already look at individual cases eg in domestic abuse cases, recharges may be waived. With earlier moving out inspections there will be more time for NH and property services to liaise re vulnerable tenants <b>NFA</b></p>

Findings (strengths/weaknesses)	Recommendations	Outcome	Response managers/SLT
<p>The team were keen to ensure where tenants have inherited problems in properties, often via mutual exchanges, that they should not be expected to put right the problems when they move out. Staff assured the team that this should not be an issue going forward as photographs are now taken of voids and kept on file.</p> <p>6.5 The team were advised by staff, from transactional surveys and also from complaints received (one of which was an Ombudsman complaint) that incorrect information recorded on CX has led to properties being advertised incorrectly. Tenants have been allocated properties that do not fit their needs, or have turned down properties at viewings/sign-ups, because they are unsuitable.</p> <p>6.6 Staff advise that turnaround times could be quicker if they could do viewings when voids works in process. Other councils enable tenants to view voids properties before works completed, resulting in a quicker turnaround time. This would also give staff more time to prepare for sign-ups.</p>	<p>6.5 Moving Out Surveyor to check the property information held on CX is correct eg number of bedrooms, whether its ground floor etc and to make amendments as necessary. Not always CX at fault as tenants do unpermitted alterations and add/reduce no's of rooms</p> <p>6.6 See recommendation 10. If it is agreed that viewings can be done during void works periods, the Moving Out surveyor should make a note if it will be safe for this to happen- eg if there are no major works that could cause a health and safety issue</p>		<p>6.5 Surveyor to check property details are correct and amend as necessary as part of moving out inspections. <b>Add to SIP with target date, who is responsible and date for completion</b></p> <p>6.6 see rec 10</p>
<p>7. Concern expressed by Property services that Some tenants who have deliberately caused damage to their properties are being allowed to transfer to new homes, (where they also cause damage). This leaves costly void works, sometimes many thousands of pounds, that Homes First can ill afford.</p>	<p>7. The councils should investigate a way to ensure that tenants are not allowed to transfer to a new home if they have deliberately damaged their existing home.</p> <p>This could be done in the following way: At the point a tenant asks for a transfer, they</p>	<p>4.</p>	<p>7. SLT agreed with the recommendation in principle, but needs to be caveats that in some cases tenants may not be at fault eg someone fleeing domestic violence.</p>

Findings (strengths/weaknesses)	Recommendations	Outcome	Response managers/SLT
<p>Whilst it is possible to re-charge the tenant, often this takes many months, and is often never re-claimed as recharges cannot be added to the tenants rent account and has to be chased separately.</p>	<p>should be advised they must put right any damage or non-permitted alterations BEFORE the surveyor does a moving out visit. If it gets to the point that a moving out inspection happens and there is extensive deliberate damage, or non-permitted alterations that will cost above a certain amount to put right, the tenant will be refused a move and not put back on the list, until works are done (retaining their position on the list)".</p>		<p>may not be responsible for damage, <b>Add to SIP with target date, who is responsible and date for completion</b></p>
<p>8. The team were made aware that the council have been investigating working with a local charity, who will remove re-useable items left in properties by outgoing tenants. The charity then stores the items, PAT test any electrical items and provides them to other incoming tenants, as and when necessary. The charity is currently working with Wealden DC, so is well established.</p>	<p>8. Further Investigate working with a charity that will remove any items that are left in voids properties, for re-use. The charity to store the items and provide to other incoming tenants in need, as and when necessary.</p>	<p>3,4</p>	<p>8. This is in the process of being set up- waiting on insurance/risk assessment info from charity. <b>Add to SIP with target date, who is responsible and date for completion</b></p>
<p>9. Staff advise that the current policy is to wait for the void works to be completed before viewings can take place. This can result in delays to allocating homes and places unnecessary pressure on staff to do sign ups quickly and tenants to move in as soon as void works finished. The team were advised that viewings do not take place when voids being carried out as it may be unsafe to visit some properties whilst they are being worked on. The team were also advised that other housing providers do carry out viewings during voids periods.</p>	<p>9. Consider carrying out viewings during the voids works period, this will allow more time for a nominee to view and accept or refuse a property, for caseworkers to become acquainted with the prospective tenant and, if necessary, time for staff to find an alternative nominee.</p>	<p>1,2,3</p>	<p>Reported that this does already happen. Staff perception is incorrect. Service leads will ensure staff aware <b>NFA.</b></p>

Findings (strengths/weaknesses)	Recommendations	Outcome	Response managers/SLT
<p>10. Homes First complaints staff report they have received complaints about wasting resources on unnecessary void works eg non-standard kitchens ripped out and replaced during voids periods. Staff explained that non-standard items cannot be maintained and that incoming tenants would have to accept responsibility for maintaining them, which can result in delays or problems in the future when repairs are needed. The scrutiny team's view is that tenant's should be asked to accept a good quality kitchen, rather than waste time and resources putting in a new one. The kitchen can then be added to major works replacement programme in the usual way. If the tenant want's it replaced, this should be done after they have moved in.</p>	<p>10. Any non-standard fixtures (eg kitchens) that are in good condition, should be offered to the incoming tenant to be maintained by them and only replaced as part of the normal cycle of major improvements. If the incoming tenant insists they want the kitchen replaced immediately this could be done outside void period.</p>	<p>3,4</p>	<p>If direct lettings introduced, there will be more time to offer incoming tenants any non-standard fixtures, in good condition (eg kitchens). Surveyors to be asked to work to the recommendation and liaise with NHT to ensure incoming tenants are offered good quality non standard items if possible.. Surveyors to continue to use their judgement on whether there is a H &amp;S issue <b>Add to SIP with target date, who is responsible and date for completion.</b></p>
<p>11. The team accepted that it is not always possible to leave carpets for incoming tenants due to possible infestations. Transactional surveys report that whilst carpets are removed, often gripper rods are left which can be a health and safety issue.</p>	<p>11. Ensure if carpets removed, gripper rods are also taken out.</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>This should already be happening. <b>NFA</b></p>
<p>12. Signing off void works</p> <p>12.1 It was reported by staff and tenants via transactional surveys that in some voids, there are issues with works not being completed properly, some very basic issues such as those mentioned in</p>	<p>12.1 Before signing off a property to say works complete the voids inspector to complete a short checklist of essential items to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• toilet flushing/water running</li> <li>• lights working,</li> </ul>	<p>2,3</p>	<p>12.1 A checklist should already be in place for sign offs. Conflicting reports as surveyors report doing a mental checklist. Check to see if the items listed in</p>

<p>the recommendation. These issues are only identified when the tenant signs up or moves in. Staff doing sign ups report being embarrassed by this.</p> <p>12.2 Tenants report that they often have to chase up outstanding repairs, sometimes many times before work completed. Surveyor reported that he emails a list of any outstanding repairs to the allocations team, and they then notify the lettings officer, to notify the tenant. Would be more efficient for the surveyor to leave the incoming tenant a list of repairs with the other information he leaves for the tenant.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• cleaned to an acceptable standard</li> <li>• the key is in the key-safe.</li> <li>• garden is clear of rubbish- raise re-charges if necessary.</li> </ul> <p>12.2 If there are any small outstanding repairs, the surveyor to leave the incoming tenant a list of works still to be done and ensure they are reported.</p>		<p>the recommendation are on the sign off list and update if necessary. Ensure surveyors and Mears staff use the list. <b>Add to SIP with target date, who is responsible and date for completion</b></p> <p>12.2 recommendation agreed. List to be left alongside info about gas connections. <b>Add to SIP with target date, who is responsible and date for completion</b></p>
<p>13. Caseworkers feel their opinions are not considered when properties are allocated. Often the first they know of a nomination is when they are instructed to offer the property on a Thursday. If team leaders attend these meetings as and when a void on their patch is being considered, Caseworkers could be consulted and their views could be represented</p>	<p>13. Consider some involvement of team leaders at key-to-key meetings, to enable information from caseworkers to feed into the allocations/nominations process.</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>13. Team leaders are welcome to feed their comments into the allocations process. Allowing time to do this should be easier if direct lettings happen. Team leaders to be reminded to seek caseworkers opinions. <b>Add to SIP with target date, who is responsible and date for completion.</b></p>

Findings (strengths/weaknesses)	Recommendations	Outcome	Response managers/SLT
<p>14. Staff and tenants in the transactional surveys report that there is often insufficient notice given to tenants moving into properties. The scrutiny team were advised that Caseworkers are often advised on a Thursday about a nominated tenant to move into a property. They are then expected to contact the tenant/homeseeker immediately, and to provide a viewing and sign them up the next day. They are also expected to request that they move in to the property on the next Monday.</p> <p>The team felt that it may be possible for someone moving out of TA to move at such short notice. But for a tenant moving from another LDC/EHL property three days is impossibly short notice. Tenants will need to arrange removals, pack up their stuff, do any works that might be re-charged to them and notify utilities etc over one weekend.</p>	<p>14. Consider giving a minimum of 10 days moving-in notice to transferring tenants. Apart from those moving out of temporary accommodation.</p>	<p>2,3</p>	<p>14. It is normal practice to allow 10 days for tenants to move into a new home, unless they are in TA and can move quickly. Ensure caseworkers know they are not under pressure to make someone move within 3 days. <b>Add to SIP with target date, who is responsible and date for completion</b></p>
<b>3. Communications with tenants</b>			
<p>15. Scrutiny team reviewed a number of letters and leaflets relating to moving out and identified they needed updating, as they contained information that was relevant during Covid lockdowns but not relevant now, causing confusion to the tenants. The updates requested by the team have already been actioned.</p>	<p>15. Update moving out letters and moving out guidance- already completed. Thank you to staff for their swift co-operation.</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>15. Completed. <b>NFA</b></p>
<p>16. Results of transactional surveys to tenants moving in to new homes, picked up that there was a perceived lack of information on a number of topics (as mentioned in the recommendation). Staff reported that so much information needs to be imparted at sign-ups that tenants may not always be</p>	<p>16. Investigate how information provided to new tenants can be improved. Possibly at six weeks visits or via introductory videos available online. Provide more clarity on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to pay rent</li> </ul>	<p>3</p>	<p>16. Tenant Handbook has been revised to improve information to new tenants. Investigate adding introductory videos for new</p>

<p>able to take everything in. Maybe further explanations could be given at the 6 week visit. Whilst not in scope the team were also made aware of some negative feedback on Mutual Exchanges with exchanging tenants also feeling they had not received crucial information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to pay utilities</li> <li>• How solar panels work</li> <li>• Accessing benefits</li> <li>• Help for vulnerable tenants- eg aids and adaptations</li> </ul>		<p>tenants on key issues onto website. <b>Add to SIP with target date, who is responsible and date for completion</b></p>
<p>17. The team reviewed the top 10 re-chargeable items list provided to tenants before they move out. During interviews it became apparent that councils do not re-charge tenants for many of the items mentioned on the list eg stripping wallpaper. In reality it was reported that re-charges were only usually made for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• deliberate damage to the property eg holes in walls/doors</li> <li>• to replace things that have been removed by the outgoing tenants such as internal doors</li> <li>• for the removal of rubbish/goods left behind.</li> </ul> <p>The Scrutiny team were concerned that the top ten list is prohibitive/inaccurate and could put some older tenants off down-sizing if they think they need to do all of the things mentioned.</p>	<p>17. Review the re-chargeable items leaflet with all staff involved in the re-charging process, to reflect actual practise. (see recommendation 6)</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>17. Recommendation agreed. <b>Add to SIP with target date, who is responsible and date for completion</b></p>
<b>5. Staff training</b>			
<p>18. Whilst staff felt the guidance manual are excellent, it often takes a long time to track down the bit of guidance you need and is not always possible to wait until the drop in training. There is only expert, who cannot help everyone. If super-users could be trained and staff can access them via teams for a quick bit of advice this would help.</p>	<p>18. Train up super users for the new workflow system.</p>	<p>3,4</p>	<p>Sara C not at meeting. <b>Add to SIP with target date, who is responsible and date for completion</b></p>



Findings (strengths/weaknesses)	Recommendations	Outcome	Response managers/SLT
<p>Staff reported that regular staff meetings had been held, whilst the new system was being implemented, with all users encouraged to attend. This had led to problems with the system being identified and steps taken to resolve issues. Also staff felt supported and able to receive additional guidance. This approach is to be congratulated and considered as best practice.</p>			<p>No action- well done</p>
<p>19. It was reported at staff interviews that some leaders are not using the new workflow system at all and so are unable to support their staff or access the system to look at ongoing cases.</p>	<p>19. Ensure ALL team leaders/managers are trained and using the new workflow system</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>Took a while to set up, but all team leaders/managers are now trained and using workflow system <b>NFA</b>,</p>
<p><b>6. Tenant Involvement/ learning from feedback</b></p>			
<p>20. Accuity conduct surveys of tenants who have recently moved into a property (on behalf of Homes First. The scrutiny team have taken on board the comments made from transactional surveys made this year and included some recommendations in this report.</p>	<p>20. Accuity conduct surveys of tenants who have recently moved into a property (on behalf of Homes First). Implement a system to learn from comments made and agree any necessary changes to improve the service.</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>Already working with Customer experience lead on best way to do this. <b>Add to SIP with target date, who is responsible and date for completion.</b></p>

## 4 Next Steps and lessons learnt

### 4.1 Next steps

Steps to be taken	When	Who
<p>Submit report to SLT for discussion- scrutiny team member to attend.</p> <p>Recommendations from scrutiny review to be amalgamated with recommendations from recent internal audit (of voids and allocations process) and put into one Service Improvement Plan.</p>	February 2024	<p>Ruth T and member of scrutiny</p> <p>Jaime Wainwright-Jones</p>
<p>Send Final Report and Service Improvement Plan to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scrutiny team</li> <li>• All staff with Actions in the Service Improvement Plan</li> <li>• All staff involved in the review</li> <li>• Relevant councillors.</li> </ul>	March	Ruth T/Jaime WJ
<p>SLT to report back to scrutiny team on progress of actions in the Service Improvement Plan every 3 months until completed.</p>	3 monthly	SLT
<p>Publicise the report and SIP via</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tenants Voice/Open House</li> <li>• Website/Facebook</li> </ul>	<p>March 2024</p> <p>March 2024</p>	Ruth T

**4.2 Lessons Learnt** – This review has taken longer to complete than originally anticipated as additional time was allowed for the new system to bed down, before carrying out reality checks of the service. The extra time taken has resulted in the team struggling with continuity issues and having to keep going back over information provided earlier in the process. The team will be exploring trialling a “boot camp” approach to future reviews. Boot camp reviews will take the same format as a normal review, but will be carried out over two whole days, with a break in between each day. If any recommendations are agreed a Service Improvement Plan will be drafted, for approval at SLT as opposed to a full report.

There were difficulties with sound during hybrid meetings, due to technical difficulties, making it hard for the team to hear and to be heard, which was very disruptive. The team have asked that in future everyone should make every effort to attend scrutiny meetings in person.

## Appendix One- Information Requested and Information Provided for Desk Top Review

<p><b>Service Area to be Reviewed</b></p>	<p>New Voids and Allocations process</p>
<p><b>Documents &amp; information requested</b></p>	<p><i>Policy/ procedures for the voids/ allocations process:</i></p> <p>supplied:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 Guidance manuals</li> <li>• Workflow process map</li> <li>• Please also provide any other internal forms completed by staff such as a form for voids works to be carried out etc</li> </ul> <p><i>Performance information</i></p> <p>KPI's voids turnaround times for EH?LDC for last two years, including recent figures since introduction of new process..</p> <p><i>Any feedback received from tenants on the voids and allocations service- eg compliments, or complaints</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information from the Customer Experience Complaints section</li> <li>• Information from transactional surveys – tenants moving in, beginning of 2023 to date</li> </ul> <p><i>Any Information provided to tenants about the voids/allocations service ie:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tenancy terminations letters</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moving out guidance</li> <li>• Top ten recharges leaflets</li> <li>• Sign up information and letters</li> </ul> <p><i>Any information that shows how we provide all tenants with an equal service (e.g., help for vulnerable tenants, tenants with disabilities, mental health issues etc.)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your Unique Profile form</li> </ul> <p><i>Any Information that shows how LDC/EHL seeks to continually improve the service?</i></p> <p>None provided</p> <p><i>Any information that shows that the service provided is good value for money.</i></p> <p>No specific information provided</p>
<b>Date of Request</b>	24/05/20223

## Appendix Two- Reality Checks Timetable

Reality Check Activity	Staff involved	Where	Date	Time	Scrutiny team and TI staff members involved	Transport needed
Interview by MS teams or in person <a href="#">Click here to join the meeting</a>	Jess Kelsey – Surveying Services Manager  by MS teams	Or, in person at the Express Room, The Point, College Road Eastbourne	Weds 15 November	11.30 to 12.30	Peter Noble Sue Bulmer Ruth Tahsin	Order Taxi <b>01323 726726</b> , quote the password “House” and book it to account no 62.
Interview by MS teams or in person <a href="#">Click here to join the meeting</a>	Natalie Weller- Team Leader Voids Val Morrison- Case Worker Lettings  by MS Teams	Or, in person at The Tenants Resource Centre, 2a Horsfield Road Lewes (in the office)	Thursday 16 November	12 noon to 1pm	Sylvia Gibbs John Langley Ruth Tahsin	01273 514141 or 07760 778385- order for the “Housing account”
Interview by MS teams or in person <a href="#">Click here to join the meeting</a>	Harriet Fitzgerald- Seniors Specialist Advisor Neighbourhood Housing  By MS Team-	Or, in person at the Express Room, The Point, College Road Eastbourne	Thursday 16 November	2pm to 3pm	Peter Noble Sue Bulmer Ruth Tahsin	Order Taxi <b>01323 726726</b> , quote the password “House” and book it to account no 62.
Interview by MS teams or in person <a href="#">Click here to join the meeting</a>	Jo Smith- Neighbourhood Housing Team Leader Angela Dearnley- Retirement Housing Team Leader	Or, in person at The Tenants Resource Centre, 2a Horsfield Road Lewes (in the office)	Weds 22 November	12.30 to 1.30	Colin Lockyer John Langley Ruth Tahsin	01273 514141 or 07760 778385- order for the “Housing account”

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On site at a voids inspection- Seaford	Keith Bulmer- Property Surveyor	Lexden Court Vale Avenue	Thurs 23 November	11-12.30	Debbie Twitchen Colin Lockyer Ruth Tahsin	Ruth to collect and take to visit
Interview by MS teams or in person  <a href="#">Click here to join the meeting</a>	Nikkee Hughton- Caseworker Neighbourhood Housing Gina Hadfield- Caseworker Tina Goldsmith- Caseworker  By MS TEams	Or, in person at The Tenants Resource Centre, 2a Horsfield Road Lewes (in the office	Thursday 23 November	2-3pm	Debbie Twitchen Sylvia Gibbs Ruth Tahsin	01273 514141 or 07760 778385- order