



# VOID PERIODS

WHY THEY HAPPEN AND HOW TO AVOID THEM

A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR LANDLORDS  
by ABC Gone Ltd

A photograph of a multi-story red brick building with white window frames and decorative architectural details, set against a blue sky with light clouds.

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# WHAT ARE VOID PERIODS?

A void period is any period when a rental property is empty between tenants – that is, there is no rent-paying tenant for that time. Despite no rental income, the landlord remains liable for ongoing expenses such as mortgage repayments, insurance, council tax, and basic maintenance or upkeep during a vacancy. These vacant periods directly impact a landlord's Income: Every day without a tenant, rent is lost, which can soon amount to hundreds of pounds.

Even for a few weeks without tenants. For example, in England, the average monthly rent as of the start of 2024 was around £1,285. Thus, a gap of 18 days equated to approximately £760 of forgone revenue on average. Apart from missed rentals and longer vacant periods, there can also be dangers, such as possible break-ins or unoccupied property damage. They might need extra security steps or insurance, which pushes the prices up.

Void periods can be of different lengths. They could be a few days in duration (ideally, the new tenant moves in a day or two, but others can last for weeks or even months if the property is hard to rent out). Current figures show that the average void periods in the UK are around a Within a matter of weeks. Indeed, by as soon as 2025, English landlords generally have a void period of approximately 21 days. Up from approximately 18 days per year last year. In Greater London – where demand is high – empty periods usually Some areas have shorter voids, about 15 to 18 days on average, while other regions have longer voids. For example, parts of the Midlands average 23–25 days empty). These differ by market. Most landlords can expect to have their property empty for about 2 to 3 weeks between tenants. Every week, a house is left unoccupied, and it is a loss on average that cannot be recovered. So Managing and reducing idle time is essential to ensure a steady rental income.





# WHY VOID PERIODS HAPPEN

**Void periods** happen for a variety of reasons, which can be broadly divided into **natural turnover factors, common preventable causes, and broader market conditions**. Some level of void is inevitable when tenancies end – for example, a tenant might move out due to relocating for work, changing personal circumstances, or buying a home. In such cases the tenancy ends on good terms and the landlord simply needs time to find the next tenant. However, other causes of void periods are **avoidable or within a landlord's control**. Below we outline the typical causes and recent factors contributing to void periods:



## 1. UNDESIRABLE LOCATION:

Properties in places where not many people want to rent or far from Amenities can generate longer vacant periods. If a rental property has a **undesirable location**, a landlord can face "chronic low occupancy" regardless of what they do. Sadly, the location can't be easily changed – that is why diligent research prior to purchasing a rental property is extremely crucial. Landlords should try to invest in **high-demand areas** or else they will be "fighting an uphill battle" to Find tenants and often have idle time.



## 2. INADEQUATE MARKETING AND PROMOTION:

One common cause of avoidable voids is simply not reaching enough prospective tenants. If a landlord uses poor advertising (for example, low quality photos, sparse descriptions, or few listing platforms), it will take longer to find a tenant. Some landlords who try to rent out property privately without using the major online portals or agent networks might see their property sit empty due to limited exposure.



## WHY VOID PERIODS HAPPEN

Effective marketing is crucial – failing to **advertise the property widely and attractively** is a recipe for extended void periods. Conversely, landlords who promptly list their property on popular rental websites and use multiple channels (online listings, local ads, social media) tend to fill vacancies faster



### 3. OVERPRICING OR INCORRECT RENT LEVEL:

Setting the **rent above market rate** can deter interest and cause the property to remain vacant longer than necessary. In a competitive rental market, tenants often skip overpriced homes in favor of better-value options. Some void periods are self-inflicted by landlords insisting on a higher rent than similar properties. It's important to research comparable rents and set a **competitive, fair price**; otherwise, an unrealistically high asking rent can lead to a prolonged void (only to lose more income than the higher rent would have earned). In fact, a recent government survey found that **39% of landlords who lowered the rent did so specifically "to avoid a lengthy void period"** – highlighting that pricing a property correctly is critical to keeping it occupied.



### 4. POOR PROPERTY CONDITION OR PRESENTATION:

The condition of the rental property plays a significant role in the ability to attract and retain tenants. Dirty, aged, or poor-quality rental properties remain vacant for longer periods. Prospective tenants will be less attracted to the property if it "doesn't do it for them style-wise" or if there are conspicuous problems, such as aged appliances and evident disrepair. Renters today are demanding; clean, renovated, and well-maintained properties will rent faster and to better-quality renters. Similarly, a vacant property will occasionally be more difficult to rent—depending on the market—because many renters appreciate the ease of moving into a home that is already furnished. Landlords that neglect maintenance or refuse to perform needed upgrades will frequently find themselves with avoidable vacancies as renters relocate in search of higher-quality homes.

## WHY VOID PERIODS HAPPEN



## 5. POOR PROPERTY MANAGEMENT OR SERVICE:

Frequently, the underlying reason for high voids is tenant dissatisfaction, culminating in high turnover. For instance, when a landlord or their agent does not respond to maintenance issues in good time, or repairs are constantly delayed, good tenants will take the earliest opportunity to move out. Such high tenant turnover, or churn, necessarily translates to increased void periods; with each tenant move-out, there is a risk of being left with an empty unit. Excessive tenant turnover can lead to frequent and extended periods of vacancy," which in turn lowers profitability. Tenants move out due to common service problems such as outstanding maintenance problems, lack of communication, or breach of trust. Landlords themselves, who communicate well and respond to concerns promptly, manage to keep tenants for longer periods and hence lower the vacancy rate.



## 6. TENANT SITUATIONS AND UNAVOIDABLE VACANCIES:

As stated, not all voids are the result of the landlord's fault. Some are simply a result of rental cycles or tenant life events. Student landlords, for example, expect to have summer voids when the academic year. Their HMO rooms could be unoccupied during the summer break. In the same way, a tenant may be forced to leave prematurely due to a job transfer or personal reasons. Though these situations cannot be avoided, they serve to underscore the need to budget for occasional voids as part of business, and the necessity to move fast in getting replacement tenants whenever such instances do arise.



## 7. RECENT MARKET FORCES (2024–2025)

In addition to the property-specific causes mentioned above, wider market forces have impacted void periods in the UK more recently. There has been noticeable growth in rent over the past two years, fueled by record inflation and higher interest rates, which in certain areas seem to be holding back tenant demand.

## WHY VOID PERIODS HAPPEN

Sector statistics in early 2025 showed **voids were at their highest level in almost 4 years**, with rents increasing, as a sign of a slight **softening of demand in the rental market**. Goodlord's Rental Index, for instance, recorded average gaps of 21 days in December to 24 days in January 2025 – a period which is usually quiet but a record high figure. This means that although rents have gone up, rising between 4 and 6 per cent year-on-year in early 2025, tenants are more budget-conscious and bargain more fiercely, which may mean properties are left empty for more extended periods than before. Another factor is the **variation in supply and demand** across regions: regions such as the North West and Midlands experienced large increases in void lengths in 2024, whereas London's demand was so robust that voids actually fell slightly (London only averaged ~15 days void). It's critical to know your **local market pattern** – in some areas a surplus of new rentals or lower numbers of tenants can lengthen void periods, in others healthy demand reduces voids.



## 8. ECONOMIC AND INTEREST RATE PRESSURES:

As interest rate rises since 2022 have had a ripple effect even on vacancies, a number of landlords have been faced with more expensive buy-to-let mortgage payments and attempted to offset these with rent increases. But there is a limit to everything. If a landlord raises the rent too high in an attempt to pay an expensive mortgage, he may find it increasingly difficult to let the house. More landlords in 2024 cited putting up rents in response to rising mortgage costs than in previous years, which, if not set at market rents, can price out tenants and create vacancies. Additionally, the cost-of-living crisis means that tenants are more budget-aware and relocating less (to circumvent escalating rents), thus remaining longer in current properties, resulting in **fewer people moving** and potentially longer marketing times to secure a new tenant.





## 9. LEGISLATIVE DEVELOPMENTS ON THE HORIZON:

Looking forward, landlords must be aware of upcoming changes affecting void periods. The Government has tabled the **Renters' Reform Bill**, sometimes called the Renters' Rights Bill, which aims to abolish fixed-term Assured Shorthold Tenancies and introduce open-ended arrangements—periodic tenancies. The single predicted outcome is that the tenants can move out with two months' notice at any point, **which may boost turnover frequency**. The experts in the industry warn that this may mean landlords facing more regular voids if tenants "jump ship" with little notice. Marc von Grundherr at Benham and Reeves adds that landlords with periodic tenancies can often be left back at square one, footing the cost of void periods more often. Whilst this reform is advantaged by flexibility from tenants, landlords must brace themselves for potentially **more turnover** and be ready to implement measures to re-let their properties efficiently in this changed landscape.

**In summary,** void periods happen for a thousand and one reasons, ranging from where and what your property is, to how manage it, to the broader market forces at work. There are some circumstances, such as tenant life changes or economic cycles frequently lie outside a landlord's control. But there are numerous void drivers, including poor marketing and unrealistic rent, or neglect to keep up the property – **can be controlled or minimized by proactive landlord involvement**.

The next sections will focus on practical steps landlords can take to minimise these void periods and keep rental income flowing.



# HOW TO MINIMISE VOID PERIODS

**Every landlord** desires to minimise void periods so that they are infrequent and brief. Although you cannot completely remove voids, since tenancies do end from time to time, you can take practical actions to minimize their duration and even prevent some voids entirely. The secret strategy is to be proactive and to center your efforts around the tenants in taking care of your rental property. Presented here are the best strategies and practices, from maintenance to marketing, and tenant relations, that minimize those vacancies you hate:



## 1. INVEST IN PROPERTY MAINTENANCE AND UPGRADES

One of the most effective long-term vacancy reducing techniques is keeping your property in prime condition. A tidy, safe, and friendly home will rent faster to new tenants and will encourage current tenants to remain longer. Ensure that you perform repairs in a timely manner and think about regular upgrades or refurbishments to maintain the property up-to-date and attractive. Bear in mind that first impressions. Something as straightforward as this, like a fresh coat of paint, kitchen hardware, or new carpet, can make an enormous difference. Modern conveniences like washer-dryers and dishwashers can set your rental apart in a significant way. By making your property appear clean, well maintained, and modernized, prospective tenants are more inclined to seize the opportunity sooner rather than later. This minimizes downtime between tenancies.

## HOW TO MINIMISE VOID PERIODS

Regular preventative maintenance is equally important. Don't wait for tenants to report issues; conduct routine inspections (as covered in the Checklist section) to catch small problems before they escalate. Fixing things like minor leaks, damp patches, or broken fittings early can prevent larger repairs that could require a property to be vacant for fixing. Moreover, a property with unresolved maintenance issues will turn off new applicants. By keeping the home in top condition and "rental ready" at all times, you can confidently market it immediately when a tenant leaves, without needing a long fix-up period. Many landlords find that better property upkeep leads to higher tenant satisfaction and retention, thus reducing turnover and void frequency. In short, invest in your investment: the money and effort put into maintaining the property will pay back through shorter voids and steady rent.



## 2. EFFECTIVE MARKETING AND EARLY ADVERTISING

When you know a tenancy is coming to an end, it's crucial to start the re-letting process early. Don't wait until after the tenant has moved out to begin advertising the property. The moment your current tenant serves notice (or you serve notice to them), you should kick off your marketing plan. Begin by preparing the property listing – take high-quality photos, write an appealing description of the home's features, and set a competitive rental price (as discussed, price it right for the market). Early marketing is a proven way to shorten void periods: as soon as the move-out date is set, get the word out and allow prospective tenants to view the property (with proper notice to the current tenant for access). By doing this, you aim to have a new tenant lined up to move in immediately or shortly after the old tenant departs.

Leverage all the **digital tools and platforms** at your disposal to maximise exposure. List your property on the major online **property portals** such as Rightmove, Zoopla, OnTheMarket, or OpenRent – these websites attract the largest pool of renters and make it easy to reach a wide audience .



## HOW TO MINIMISE VOID PERIODS

Ensure your listing is detailed and highlights the property's best aspects (good transport links, recent renovations, included appliances, etc.). In addition to portals, consider using social media marketing to broaden your reach. Platforms like Facebook marketplace or local community groups can help find tenants, especially among younger demographics who are active on social media. Some landlords even use targeted Facebook or Instagram ads to reach the desired tenant profile (for example, advertising a citycentre flat to young professionals). The goal is to cast a wide net and make sure any potential tenant looking in your area knows your property is available. Utilizing multiple channels (online listings, social media, perhaps a "To Let" board, and local agent networks) will fill a vacancy much faster than relying on one small ad or word of mouth alone.

While marketing, make it easy for interested renters to get information and view the property. Respond quickly to inquiries – prompt communication leaves a good impression and prevents you from losing viewers to other listings. If feasible, arrange block viewings or virtual tours to accommodate more prospects in a short time. Also, ensure the property meets any legal requirements for advertising, such as having a valid Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) with at least an E rating (in England you cannot rent out a property or even market it without an EPC). Being organized and proactive in your advertising can significantly cut down the void time. In many cases, landlords who line up a new tenant before the old one leaves manage to have zero days of void – the ideal scenario.



### 3. TENANT RETENTION AND GOOD COMMUNICATION

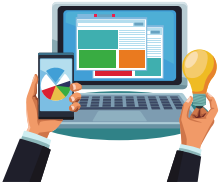
Another powerful way to avoid void periods is **simply to keep your existing tenants for longer**. Every tenancy renewal you secure means you won't have a void or re-letting costs at that time. To achieve high tenant retention, focus on providing a positive rental experience and good communication. **Happy tenants are far more likely to renew their lease or stay on**. How do you keep tenants happy? First, be responsive and respectful in all dealings. Attend to repair requests promptly (a quick fix of a broken appliance or leaky tap shows you care and builds loyalty).

## HOW TO MINIMISE VOID PERIODS

Maintain open lines of communication – check in with tenants periodically to ensure everything is okay, and address any minor gripes before they become reasons to move out. **Treat your tenants well**, with fairness and professionalism. Simple gestures like being flexible with appointment times for repairs, or giving plenty of notice before property inspections, go a long way.

It's also wise to offer incentives for tenants to stay. For instance, when the fixed term is nearing its end, you might offer a small upgrade (like repainting a room of the tenant's choice) or simply discuss renewal early and perhaps avoid a rent increase if they sign again. Some landlords implement loyalty perks such as replacing an old carpet or appliance at renewal, which can entice the tenant to remain rather than look elsewhere. Additionally, consider the length of tenancy agreements: if you (and the tenant) are comfortable, a longer fixed term (e.g., 12 or 24 months instead of 6 months) can lock in occupancy and delay any void. Many tenants appreciate the security of a longer lease as well. By **building a good relationship** founded on trust and mutual respect, you make it more likely the tenant will stick around. High turnover is often a symptom of landlord-tenant friction or neglect; conversely, landlords known for great service often enjoy multi-year tenancies. Reducing turnover directly reduces void periods – it's that simple.

Finally, **plan ahead for renewals**: about 2–3 months before a lease ends, talk to your tenants about their intentions. If they are undecided, this heads-up allows you to either negotiate a renewal or prepare to re-market in advance. If they definitely plan to leave, you then have those few months to start advertising (as mentioned earlier). Being proactive and not leaving things to the last minute will either result in a retained tenant or at least a minimized gap between tenancies. In summary, excellent customer service = fewer voids. It costs far less to keep a good tenant (perhaps by slightly discounting rent or promptly fixing issues) than to lose them and face weeks of vacancy and new tenant acquisition costs.



## 4. UTILIZING TECHNOLOGY AND TOOLS

Don't overlook the array of **proptech (property technology)** tools that can help streamline the letting process and reduce void times. Many digital platforms are available to assist landlords with marketing, communication, and property management:

- **Online Property Portals and Apps:** As mentioned, use the big rental listing sites and even mobile apps where tenants search for homes. Some landlords also use apps like SpareRoom (for house shares) or Airbnb (for short-term lets in between long-term tenants) to monetize empty periods. There are also services that allow you to advertise across multiple portals at once, increasing efficiency.
- **Property Management Software:** Consider using a property management system or landlord app to keep track of tenancies, rent payments, and maintenance tasks. These tools can set automated reminders (for example, alerting you a month before a tenancy expires, or when the gas safety check is due), helping you stay on top of tasks that if forgotten could lead to delays or voids. Some software also enables easier communication with tenants (for reporting repairs, etc.) and faster turnaround on documentation like digital leases.
- **Digital Tenant Screening and References:** Speed is critical in filling a vacancy, but you don't want to skip proper tenant vetting (a bad tenant who stops paying will cause a different kind of "void" – lost income through arrears or eventual eviction). Use online tenant referencing services to quickly run credit checks, employment verifications, and previous landlord references. Many agencies and online platforms offer **fast turnaround tenant screening**, sometimes within 24–48 hours, which means you can confidently sign a new tenant without lengthy delays. The faster you can vet and approve an applicant, the sooner they can move in and end the void period.



## HOW TO MINIMISE VOID PERIODS

- **Electronic Signatures and Digital Paperwork:** Embrace digital processes to eliminate downtime. These days, signing the tenancy agreement doesn't require an in-person meeting. You can use e-signature services to get the lease signed online in minutes, and tenants can complete all paperwork (like referencing forms, inventory sign-off, etc.) electronically. This avoids scheduling delays and often enables a tenancy to begin immediately after approval. Digital lease agreements are convenient and speed up the move-in process – no more printing and posting documents back and forth.
- **Virtual Tours and Remote Viewings:** To widen your pool of potential tenants, you might offer virtual viewings (via video call) or create a 3D virtual tour of your property. Prospective tenants relocating from afar, for example, might take a place based on a virtual tour, which can shorten the marketing period. Even for local tenants, a good video walkthrough in your listing can pre-qualify the truly interested ones, making the process more efficient.

Incorporating technology can make the rental turnover process faster and smoother, thereby chopping down the time your property spends empty. Landlords and letting agents today use everything from automated messaging to data analytics. As a landlord, **staying tech-savvy gives you a competitive edge** – for instance, using online rental marketplaces and social media ensures you fill vacancies faster, and using management apps ensures you don't forget critical tasks that could delay a new tenancy. The bottom line is: take advantage of these tools to streamline operations and keep your rental income flowing with minimal interruption.

# CHOOSING THE RIGHT LETTING AGENT

**Deciding** whether to use a **professional letting agent** – and if so, which one – is a significant choice that can greatly affect your experience as a landlord and the void periods you might face. A good letting agent can proactively minimise voids by marketing your property effectively, setting the right rent, and managing tenants professionally. On the other hand, a poor agent might mishandle communications or delay finding new tenants, inadvertently prolonging vacancies. This chapter will guide you through evaluating letting agents, understanding the benefits of professional services, and spotting red flags:



## BENEFITS OF USING A LETTING AGENT

Many landlords, especially those short on time or new to the game, find that the **benefits of a competent letting agent outweigh the costs**. Here are some key advantages of using an agent to handle your rental:

- **Time and Hassle Saved:** Letting a property involves numerous tasks – advertising, conducting viewings, vetting tenants, handling paperwork, collecting rent, managing repairs, and staying on top of legal compliance. If you lack the time or don't live near the property, an agent's services can be invaluable. A good agent will **take on the day-to-day management** so you don't get calls at 2 AM about lost keys or broken boilers. This peace of mind and reduction in stress is a major draw for busy or remote landlords.

## CHOOSING THE RIGHT LETTING AGENT

- **Faster Letting and Lower Voids:** Experienced letting agents have deep knowledge of the local market and often have a database of waiting tenants. They know how to market your property quickly and widely. A skilled agent can usually rent your property out more quickly, for a competitive rent, to a vetted tenant, compared to a DIY approach. Their expertise in setting the right rent and advertising on multiple channels can shorten your void periods. In essence, an agent's efficiency can keep your income stream steadier.
- **Tenant Screening and Quality:** Agents handle the **tenant finding and vetting process** – they'll do credit checks, references, and Right to Rent checks, delivering you a tenant that (hopefully) pays on time and respects the property. This reduces the risk of tenancy problems that could lead to premature vacancy. An agent's experience in selecting **reliable tenants** is extremely valuable, especially if you're not confident in how to screen for red flags.
- **Legal Compliance and Paperwork:** The private rented sector in the UK is heavily regulated, with requirements for deposits, prescribed information, safety certificates, How to Rent guides, and more. Letting agents (particularly those that are professionally accredited) stay up-to-date with the latest legislation. They ensure your tenancy agreements are solid and that you're complying with laws – thus **avoiding legal pitfalls** or fines that could arise from non-compliance. Having an agent handle the paperwork and legalities can save you from costly mistakes.
- **Professional Management and Tenant Relations:** Agents will manage **tenant communications, routine inspections, and maintenance coordination**. For landlords who prefer not to have direct interactions or who worry they might not handle tenant issues optimally, an agent provides a buffer. They can address tenant queries, negotiate renewals or rent increases, and arrange repairs through their network of contractors. Good letting agents keep tenants satisfied (some even have 24/7 helplines), which can lead to longer tenancies and fewer voids. Essentially, they bring professional customer service to your tenants on your behalf.

## CHOOSING THE RIGHT LETTING AGENT

Of course, all these benefits rely on choosing a competent, ethical agent. A poor agent could do the opposite – alienate good tenants or neglect your property – so selection is critical. But before that, consider if an agent is right for you. If you're someone who does have the time, knowledge, and desire to be hands-on, you might manage fine by yourself (and save the management fees). However, many landlords conclude that the 10–15% management fee is worth the time saved and potentially higher rent achieved by a professional. One industry advisor put it this way: *"Put a price on your time. If you don't have the time to manage properly, a full management service is worth it"*. Especially in today's complex environment, more landlords are indeed choosing to use agents on a full management basis for peace of mind.



## HOW TO EVALUATE LETTING AGENTS

If you decide to use an agent, **choose wisely** – not all letting agencies are equal in quality or service. Here are important factors and questions to consider when picking the right agent for your needs:

- **Services Offered:** Determine what level of service you want—**tenant-find only**, **rent collection**, **full management**, or **rent guarantee**. Tenant-find means the agent markets the property and sets up the tenancy, then hands it over to you. Rent collection adds the service of collecting monthly rent and chasing arrears. Full management means the agent handles everything throughout the tenancy, including tenant find, rent, maintenance, inspections, and legal compliance. Rent guarantee goes a step further by ensuring you still get paid even if the tenant stops paying, often including legal cover and arrears protection. Decide which suits your situation, check that the agent offers that package, and ask for a clear breakdown of what's included and the fees.



## CHOOSING THE RIGHT LETTING AGENT

- **Reputation and Experience:** Research potential agents' reputations. How long have they operated in the area? Do they specialize in the type of property you have (for example, some agents might be experts in student lettings, others in high-end city apartments)? Look for **reviews or testimonials** from other landlords. A strong track record and positive feedback from clients is a good sign. Don't hesitate to ask the agent for references – a reputable agent should happily provide references from other landlord clients. Speak to those references or check independent reviews online to gauge reliability.
- **Local Market Knowledge:** A great letting agent will possess in-depth local market knowledge – they should know the going rents, the tenant demand trends, and the neighbourhood advantages or challenges. During initial discussions, ask the agent about their experience with similar properties in your area. If an agent **seems unsure about local details or can't tell you much about the tenant market in that postcode, that's a red flag**. You want an agent who can confidently advise on pricing and marketing strategy tailored to your locality. Local expertise helps in renting the property out faster and to the right tenants.
- **Professional Credentials:** Check if the agent is a member of recognized industry bodies and complies with legal requirements. In England, all letting agents **must be members of an approved redress scheme** by law (either The Property Ombudsman or the Property Redress Scheme) – you can ask which scheme they belong to. They also must have Client Money Protection (CMP) for handling rents and deposits. Beyond legal minimums, look for membership in professional organizations like **ARLA Propertymark (Association of Residential Letting Agents)** or **RICS**, or accreditation such as **SAFEagent**. **An agent without professional credentials or affiliations could be a warning sign** regarding their commitment to standards. Membership in these bodies indicates the agent has training, follows a code of practice, and is up to date with legislation.

## CHOOSING THE RIGHT LETTING AGENT

- **Transparency of Fees and Terms:** Lack of transparency is a major red flag when choosing an agent. A trustworthy agent will be upfront about their fee structure (letting fees, management fees, renewal fees, extra charges for inventories, etc.) and business terms. When interviewing agents, request a clear schedule of fees in writing. Be wary of agents who are vague or avoid giving straight answers about costs – hidden fees could lurk later. Also, read the agency agreement carefully: note the contract duration, how to terminate it, and whether there are any penalties or notice periods. If anything is unclear, ask questions. You want to ensure the agent's terms align with your expectations and that you can exit the agreement if needed (for instance, if you decide to sell the property or switch agents).
- **Communication and Responsiveness:** Void periods can be worsened by slow agent communication, e.g., if an agent doesn't promptly respond to tenant inquiries or delays passing feedback to the landlord. **Test the agent's communication style and speed early on.** When contacting them, note how quickly they reply and how they answer your questions. An agent that is hard to get hold of or disorganised in communication could handle your tenants similarly, which is not ideal. During your vetting, you might pose a few scenario questions: "How do you handle maintenance requests?" or "How often will you update me during a void marketing period?". Their answers will illustrate their communication protocol. Good agents should keep you **informed regularly**, provide updates on viewings and offers, and be reachable when needed.
- **Promises vs Realism:** Be cautious of agents who make **unrealistic promises** to win your business. For example, if an agent guarantees an unachievable high rent or assures you they can fill the property "immediately, no matter what", be sceptical. **"If something sounds too good to be true, it probably is."** A reliable agent will give you a balanced outlook – they'll highlight your property's strengths but also set realistic expectations about rent level and void periods. Watch out for overly salesy pitches that don't acknowledge any challenges. You want honesty, not empty promises. It's better to choose an agent who is frank about market conditions than one who over-promises and under-delivers (leaving you with a longer void than expected).

## CHOOSING THE RIGHT LETTING AGENT

In summary, evaluate agents on competence, transparency, and trustworthiness. Take the time to shop around, interview multiple agents, and consider a checklist of the above factors. The right letting agent should act as a reliable partner who looks after your interests and those of your property, ultimately helping to maximise your rental income (by keeping the property rented with good tenants) and navigate the complexities of letting.



## RED FLAGS TO AVOID IN LETTING AGENTS

As you assess potential agents, keep an eye out for these common red flags, which could indicate an agency that might cause you headaches down the line:

- **Vague on Fees or Services:** If an agent is not crystal clear about **what they charge and what they do**, alarm bells should ring. Any hesitation or evasiveness in discussing their fees, contract terms, or included services is a major warning sign. Reputable agents will provide a written schedule of fees and a draft contract for you to review. If you find an agent's fee sheet confusing or full of jargon, or they only mention some fees upfront and others pop up later, proceed with caution (or walk away). You don't want surprises like an extra "inventory fee" or high renewal commission that you weren't aware of.
- **Poor Communication Habits:** During your initial interactions, if the agent **takes too long to respond to calls or emails**, misses appointments, or generally seems disorganized in communication, consider it a red flag. This likely foreshadows how they'll communicate (or fail to) when managing your property. You and your tenants both need an agent who is **responsive and proactive**. An agent who can't promptly return an inquiry from a potential new client (you) might certainly be slow when handling tenant repair requests or negotiating a tenancy – and slow response can mean a tenant moves on to another property, extending your void.

## CHOOSING THE RIGHT LETTING AGENT

- **Lack of Local Knowledge:** As noted earlier, an agent's inability to talk specifically about your local market is a bad sign. If, for example, you ask "What rent do you think we could achieve here?" and they cannot back up their estimate with some local comparables or insight, they may not be the right fit. **No local market knowledge = potentially longer voids**, because the agent might misprice the property or target the wrong tenant segment. Favour agents who know your neighbourhood "like the back of their hand."
- **Unrealistic Guarantees:** Be wary of agents who guarantee things not in their full control, such as promising a zero void period or a very high rent without justification. No agent can control the market demand or tenant behaviour 100%. If they're over-confident ("I guarantee we'll rent this within 3 days at £1,500/week" when similar units go for £1,200/week), you have to question their integrity or competence. It may be a ploy to get your instruction, only for you to be disappointed later. Choose an agent who gives you a realistic marketing plan rather than one who just tells you what you want to hear.
- **No Credentials or Memberships:** As mentioned, if an agent isn't a member of a **redress scheme or lacks Client Money Protection**, they're not compliant with the law – avoid them. Also, an agent who isn't a member of any professional body (like ARLA, NAEA, etc.) might not be held to industry standards. This doesn't automatically mean they're bad, but generally, **membership in professional organizations is a positive sign**, and the absence of any could be a negative. At minimum, verify their redress scheme membership (they should display a logo on their website or in-office).
- **Negative Reviews or Landlord Horror Stories:** Do a quick search for "[Agency Name] reviews" or ask on local landlord forums if anyone has experience with them. A pattern of negative reviews (especially recent ones) is a red flag. Also, if other landlords in your network had bad experiences – such as the agent not passing on rent on time, or neglecting properties – heed those warnings.



## CHOOSING THE RIGHT LETTING AGENT

One specific thing to check: ensure the agent hasn't been "expelled" from any redress scheme or had enforcement action – a bit of Googling can reveal news if, say, an agency was fined by trading standards.

Ultimately, trust your instincts. If something feels off or if the agent is pressuring you to sign quickly without due diligence, step back. The relationship with your letting agent can be long-term and deeply affects your investment's success. **Choosing the right agent** can mean the difference between a smoothly running, profitable rental and a string of avoidable voids and headaches. Take your time, do your homework, and don't be afraid to walk away from agents that exhibit red flags. There are plenty of fish in the sea – find one that aligns with your interests and operates transparently and professionally.

# REAL LANDLORD CASE STUDIES

In this chapter, we present a few real-world examples of UK landlords dealing with void period challenges and the solutions they found. These short case studies illustrate common scenarios – and how practical changes can make a big difference in reducing or avoiding voids:

## CASE STUDY 1: OVERPRICING AND POOR MARKETING LEAD TO A VOID – CORRECTED BY MARKET-BASED PRICING AND ONLINE ADVERTISING

Dave is a landlord in the West Midlands who inherited a three-bedroom rental house. Confident in its value, he initially advertised the property at a rent significantly higher than similar homes in the area, and only posted a simple ad in a local newspaper. As weeks went by with no suitable inquiries, the property sat empty for **2 months**, costing Dave lost income. He finally consulted a local letting agent, who informed him that the asking rent was about £100 too high. Dave reluctantly **reduced the rent to align with the market rate**, prioritising occupancy over a high rent. Almost immediately, interest picked up. He also switched to a modern approach by **listing the property on Rightmove and Zoopla with quality photos and a 360° virtual tour**. The result? Within 10 days, he secured a new tenant at the adjusted rent, halting the void period. Dave's experience underscores the importance of **pricing your rental competitively** – he learned that it's often wiser to accept the market rate than to hold out for a premium and risk a long void (especially since many landlords end up lowering rent to avoid lengthy vacancies [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)). Additionally, by embracing **wider advertising exposure online**, he tapped into a much larger tenant pool, rather than relying on one outdated channel.

## REAL LANDLORD CASE STUDIES

With a broader audience, the right tenant was found quickly, cutting short what could have been an even longer void. Dave now always researches comparable rents and uses multiple advertising platforms from day one, and he hasn't faced an extended void since.

## CASE STUDY 2: HIGH TURNOVER DUE TO MAINTENANCE ISSUES – SOLVED BY PROPERTY IMPROVEMENTS AND BETTER TENANT CARE

Mrs. Shah is an experienced landlord in Leeds with a portfolio of two rental flats. One of her flats, in an older building, saw three different tenancies end within a two-year span – each time the tenants decided not to renew their leases. This frequent **tenant turnover** meant Mrs. Shah dealt with a few weeks of void period every time, not to mention the re-letting effort. She realized from exit feedback that a common theme was the flat's condition: tenants were frustrated with recurring issues (a damp patch that kept returning and an aging boiler prone to breakdowns) and felt the property was not well looked-after. Essentially, neglecting some maintenance was driving tenants away. To break this cycle, Mrs. Shah took action during the next turnover. She invested in properly fixing the damp problem (hiring a professional to improve ventilation and treat mould) and installed a brand new energy-efficient boiler. She also gave the flat a fresh coat of paint and replaced worn carpeting. Going forward, she committed to being more responsive when tenants reported issues, and even scheduled **quarterly check-in calls** to ensure any minor repairs were addressed promptly. The difference was dramatic: the next tenant who moved in was delighted with the fresh, cozy condition of the flat and ended up staying for a 3-year continuous period with no voids in between. Mrs. Shah's story highlights how **property upkeep and attentive management lead to tenant retention**. By eliminating the problems that were causing dissatisfaction, she stopped the revolving door of tenants. We can see clearly that **"high tenant turnover can lead to regular and extended periods of vacancy"**, so retaining tenants by meeting their needs is one of the best void-prevention strategies. In her words, "Happy tenants don't move out." The cost of the upgrades was quickly recouped by over two years of uninterrupted rent.

## CASE STUDY 3: TACKLING SEASONAL VOIDS IN A STUDENT RENTAL

John owns a 5-bedroom HMO in Nottingham, rented to university students. In his first year as a student landlord, he signed a standard 10-month tenancy (September to June). Come summer, all the students left, and John found himself with **July and August completely vacant** – a 2-month void where he still had to pay bills and the mortgage with no rental income. Many student towns experience this academic cycle, but John wanted to mitigate the loss. The next year, he tried a different approach: he offered 12-month fixed term contracts to the incoming group of students, meaning they'd pay for the summer months as well (and could stay or leave their belongings). To his surprise, the students accepted this because it guaranteed them accommodation for the next year without having to move out, and some did stay over parts of the summer. For another group that was hesitant about a full 12 months, John offered a half-rent retainer for July–August – they paid 50% rent to hold the property over summer while not in residence. Both approaches ensured he got some income in the summer and did not have an empty house. Many student landlords use these tactics – either insisting on a 12-month lease or charging a partial rent over the summer – to avoid the typical void between academic years. Additionally, John learned to start advertising for new student tenants **very early (in January)**, since students often secure houses for the next year by spring. By locking in the next tenants by March, he no longer had uncertainty about summer occupancy. John's case study shows how understanding your rental market's rhythm (in this case, the student calendar) and **structuring your tenancies creatively** can practically eliminate expected void periods. With 12-month agreements, John now enjoys year-round rent, and if tenants do leave in summer, he already has new ones lined up to move in September, minimizing any gap.

These case studies demonstrate that most void period problems have solutions. Whether it's adjusting your pricing strategy, investing in property improvements,



**REAL LANDLORD CASE STUDIES**

or adapting lease terms to tenant needs, landlords can significantly reduce downtime with the right approach. The common thread is being proactive and responsive – to the market, to the property’s condition, and to tenant feedback. By learning from such examples, you can apply similar solutions to your own rental business to keep your properties occupied and profitable.



# TOOLS & CHECKLISTS FOR LANDLORDS

In this section, we provide practical tools and checklists to help landlords navigate tenant turnover and property management in a way that minimises void periods. These checklists serve as step-by-step guides you can follow each time a tenancy ends and a new one begins, and for ongoing maintenance. Having a clear checklist can ensure you don't miss any crucial tasks that could delay re-letting or contribute to a void. Feel free to print or adapt these lists for your own use.

## TURNOVER CHECKLIST – BETWEEN TENANCIES

When one tenancy is ending, it's important to manage the turnover efficiently and professionally. Your objectives are to **close out the outgoing tenancy properly**, take care of the property during any short vacant window, and **get the new tenancy set up smoothly**. Here's a checklist for the end-of-tenancy and pre-new-tenant period:

- **Serve or Receive Notice in Writing:** Confirm the tenant's move-out date in writing as per the lease terms (or serve proper notice if you are ending the tenancy). Mark this date clearly in your calendar.
- **Pre-Move-Out Inspection:** About 2-3 weeks before the tenant leaves, consider doing an informal inspection or walk-through. This can identify any issues you might want to fix immediately once they leave, and also remind the tenant of their move-out responsibilities (like cleaning) while they're still there.

## TOOLS &amp; CHECKLISTS FOR LANDLORDS

- **Check-Out Day Procedures:** On the move-out day (or final week), conduct a check-out inspection with the tenant if possible. Use your original inventory to note any changes or damages. During check-out, **collect all sets of keys**, record meter readings for utilities, and make sure the tenant hasn't left belongings behind. Clarify the next steps regarding their deposit return and get a forwarding address.
- **Secure the Property:** Once vacant, ensure the property is secure – lock windows, set alarms, etc., especially if it might be empty for a short while. You don't want any security incidents during a void period.
- **Assess Repairs and Cleaning Needs:** Inspect the empty property thoroughly. Identify any repairs needed (leaky faucet, flaky paint, appliance issues) and any tenant-caused damage that might come from the deposit. Also evaluate cleanliness. **Use the void period to perform repairs, maintenance, and redecoration** as necessary. It's much easier to do painting, flooring, or major fixes when the property is empty. Even minor improvements like patching nail holes or steam-cleaning carpets can make a difference before showing to new tenants.
- **Professional Cleaning:** A clean property rents much faster. If the outgoing tenant hasn't left it clean to your standard, invest in a professional deep clean (or at least thorough DIY cleaning). Especially focus on kitchen, bathrooms, and flooring. A sparkling clean unit is more attractive in viewings.
- **Safety Checks and Certificate Updates:** Verify all your safety compliance is up to date. For example, **arrange the annual Gas Safety Certificate** if due during the void, so you have it ready for the new tenancy. Check smoke/CO alarms are working (replace batteries if needed). Ensure your EPC is still valid (they last 10 years). If any compliance item (EICR, gas, etc.) expired or will soon, get it done now while no tenant is in situ.

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- **Locks and Security (if needed):** Some landlords opt to change locks between tenancies for safety – this is optional, but if keys were lost or you're unsure about copies, a lock change might be prudent. At minimum, re-code any digital locks or alarms.
- **Marketing Preparation:** As soon as you know the place is becoming vacant (or even before the old tenant leaves), start prepping your marketing materials. Take good photos when the property is empty and clean, or even use photos from before if they're representative. Draft your listing so that the moment repairs are done, you can go live with advertisements.
- **Determine Rent and Advertise:** Decide if you will adjust the rent for the new tenancy (based on market research). Then **list the property on your chosen platforms** with a target of finding a tenant as quickly as possible. Ideally, begin advertising even before the previous tenant has fully moved out (if feasible to show it). This is key to a quick turnaround – the goal is to have applicants ready to view immediately after the property is vacant.
- **Viewings and Tenant Screening:** Coordinate viewings as efficiently as possible. Since the property is likely in great shape post-cleaning and maintenance, try to bunch viewings close together to generate competition. Have your **tenant application or referencing process ready** to go (forms, credit check service, etc.) so you can swiftly vet interested parties. Tip: Use a standard set of screening criteria and be consistent (income requirement, references, etc.). Quick but careful screening will ensure you don't rent to an unsuitable tenant in haste.
- **Prepare Tenancy Documents:** While advertising, get your paperwork in order: a draft tenancy agreement, the How to Rent guide, deposit protection info, etc. That way, when you select a tenant you can move fast to signing. If you use an agent, they'll handle this, but if not, have your documents and a plan for signing (electronic or in person).

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- **Utilities and Council Tax:** Notify utility providers and the council of the change in occupancy. During a void, you as the landlord might be responsible for council tax (some councils offer short void exemptions, others don't). Same for gas/electric – take readings when old tenant left, and set up accounts in your name (or interim accounts) so that bills are covered during the vacant period. You'll switch them to the new tenant's name when they move in, but handle the interim to avoid any disconnections or issues (and to ensure heating etc., can be used during showings).

By following this turnover checklist, you cover all bases from tenant move-out to new tenant move-in. It helps you **use any vacant time productively** – for repairs and improvements – rather than scrambling. A well-managed turnover process directly leads to shorter voids and a better start for the next tenancy.

## ADVERTISING &amp; TENANT-FIND CHECKLIST

A targeted and professional approach to **advertising your rental** will significantly cut down the time it remains empty. Use this checklist to ensure you're covering all steps in marketing and securing a new tenant:

- **Set the Right Rent:** Research comparable properties in your area (size, condition, location) to determine a fair market rent. Consider checking recent listings or using online rent calculators. Aim for a competitive price that balances income with attracting enough interest. (Remember, overpricing can prolong voids – a slightly lower rent that fills quickly often yields more income overall than a higher rent sitting vacant).



## TOOLS &amp; CHECKLISTS FOR LANDLORDS

- **Compile Quality Photos & Description:** Take clear, bright photos of each room and any special features (garden, new kitchen, nice view). Consider staging the space so it looks inviting – open curtains, turn on lights, tidy up. Write a compelling description highlighting the key benefits: e.g., “Spacious two-bedroom flat with newly renovated bathroom, 10 minutes’ walk to station, includes parking and balcony.” Make sure to mention features that tenants value (appliances, furnished/unfurnished, internet availability, nearby amenities). A well-written listing with **good photos** will attract more clicks and viewings.
- **List on Major Platforms:** Post your advert on the leading rental websites (**Rightmove, Zoopla, OnTheMarket**) either via an agent or through services like OpenRent. These portals have the largest audience. If you’re DIY, OpenRent can put your listing on Rightmove/Zoopla for a low fee, which is cost-effective. Being on the big sites is essential – **online property marketplaces are where most tenants search, and they help fill vacancies faster by reaching a wide audience.**
- **Leverage Social Media and Local Advertising:** Share your listing on social media platforms. For instance, advertise in local Facebook groups or on your personal LinkedIn if appropriate. Instagram can work for visually showcasing high-end apartments. If targeting younger renters or students, consider posting on university housing boards or sites. You can also ask current tenants or friends for referrals (sometimes offering a referral bonus). Traditional methods like a “**To Let**” sign at the property or a card in local shop windows can still help, especially for capturing local interest. Using **multiple channels maximises visibility.**
- **Ensure Property Accessibility:** Be ready to conduct viewings promptly. Keep keys handy, and if you’ve moved out or the property is empty, consider if you’ll do viewings yourself or delegate to an agent or trusted person. Respond to inquiries the same day – speed is key, as interested tenants are often looking at multiple places.

## TOOLS &amp; CHECKLISTS FOR LANDLORDS

- **Prepare Application & Screening Materials:** Have your tenant application form or questionnaire ready (to capture info like employment, references, etc.). Line up a referencing service or credit check provider so you can send details as soon as someone applies. Let prospective tenants know what documents you'll require (ID, payslips, etc.) so they can prepare – this transparency also shows you are a diligent landlord.
- **Conduct Viewings Strategically:** Schedule as many viewings as possible in a short window. A tip is to set a block of time (e.g., Saturday morning) and book slots with each interested party. If multiple people view around the same time, it can even create a sense of competition (when applicants see others interested, they may act quicker or be more decisive). During viewings, have a basic printed info sheet about the property to give out (rent, what's included, preferred move-in date, etc.). Be ready to answer questions about the property and the tenancy terms (e.g., "Is it ok for pets?" or "Do you provide any furniture?").
- **Advertise Key Amenities and Avoid Pitfalls:** Make sure in your advertising and viewings to mention any recent improvements (new appliances, fresh paint – it reassures them the property is well cared for). Also, be honest about any limitations (if there's no parking or it's a top-floor flat with no lift, clarify that) – setting correct expectations leads to more successful tenant matches. Highlight energy efficiency if it's good (many tenants now care about bills – if your property has a good EPC or modern boiler, mention that).
- **Follow Up with Interested Viewers:** After viewings, follow up that day with those who seemed keen. Promptly provide or collect application forms. If someone wants to take it, move quickly to the next steps (credit check, etc.). Speed can win you a good tenant before they find another option.

By using this advertising checklist, you'll approach the tenant-finding process in a structured and comprehensive manner. The aim is to reduce the vacancy period by attracting as many suitable applicants as possible, as quickly as possible, and then efficiently processing the one who will become your next tenant. Effective marketing is one of the landlord's strongest tools to combat void periods – the more interest you can generate, the less time your property stays empty.

## MAINTENANCE & INSPECTION CHECKLIST

Keeping up with routine maintenance and regular inspections is not only vital for property condition and safety – it also plays a role in void prevention. A well-maintained property retains tenants and is ready to rent out faster. Below is a checklist of preventative maintenance tasks and inspection points for landlords:



## TOOLS &amp; CHECKLISTS FOR LANDLORDS

- **Schedule Regular Inspections:** Plan to inspect your property periodically during tenancies (for example, every 3–6 months, as allowed by your tenancy agreement with proper notice). Also do a thorough inspection between tenancies. Regular inspections help catch issues early and signal to tenants that you care for the property.
- **Check for Leaks and Damp:** During each inspection, **look for any signs of leaks or moisture**. Peek under sinks, around toilets, and along ceilings/walls for water stains, mould, or damp spots. Small leaks (a drip from a pipe or a minor roof leak) should be fixed before they turn into big problems. Also ask tenants if they've noticed any damp or condensation issues. Addressing these promptly can prevent major repairs later and also maintains a healthy environment that tenants will appreciate.
- **Test Smoke and CO Alarms:** It's legally required to have working smoke alarms on each floor and CO alarms in rooms with solid fuel (and advisable near gas boilers). Use inspections as a chance to **test all smoke and carbon monoxide alarms** by pressing the test button to ensure they beep. If any are not working, replace the batteries or the unit immediately. This is critical for safety – a protected property is more attractive, and it's your duty. Document that you checked them.
- **Perform Seasonal Exterior Checks:** At least once a year (especially after winter), do an outside walk-around. **Clear gutters of debris** and ensure downspouts are flowing – clogged gutters can cause water damage. Examine the roof (use binoculars if needed) to see if any tiles are loose or missing. Check that no tree branches or foliage are damaging the building. If the property has a garden, ensure boundary fences are intact and gates lock. In autumn, trim back vegetation; before winter, maybe lag external pipes to prevent freezing. Seasonal upkeep prevents small issues from escalating – for example, cleaning gutters can avert leaks that might necessitate a vacant period for repairs.

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- **Service Heating and Utilities:** Make sure the **boiler/heating system is serviced annually** by a Gas Safe engineer (not only to get the Gas Safety Certificate, but to keep it running efficiently). Bleed radiators if tenants report uneven heating; doing so in summer is a good practice to prep for winter. For electrical systems, the law now requires an EICR (Electrical Installation Condition Report) every 5 years – stay on top of that and fix any recommended works. Regularly test extractor fans in kitchen/bath (a weak or non-functioning fan can lead to damp buildup). If the property has a chimney, have it swept yearly to prevent fire risk. These measures keep the home safe and habitable, reducing the chance you'll need to leave it empty for emergency repairs.
- **Inspect Plumbing and Fixtures:** Check all taps, showers, and toilets for proper function. Fix dripping taps or running toilets (they waste water and irritate tenants). Ensure sealants around baths/showers are intact to prevent leaks. Look under sinks for any minor pipe drips. It's cheaper and easier to tighten a connection or re-seal a tub now than to deal with water damage later.
- **Ventilation and Moisture Control:** Look at any air vents, filters, and fans. **Clean or replace extractor fan filters** (especially in kitchens with hood vents, and bathroom vents). Ensure trickle vents on windows (if present) are open and not blocked. Proper ventilation prevents mould – a common cause of tenant complaints. If you find any evidence of mould starting, treat it and investigate the cause (e.g., tenant not ventilating when showering, or an exterior leak).
- **Doors and Windows:** Check that all doors and windows open, close, and lock properly. Inspect weatherstripping and seals – **gaps around doors/windows can cause drafts and heat loss**, which tenants will notice in their bills. Reseal or draught-proof if needed. Also, well-sealed windows mean no rainwater ingress. Lubricate hinges or locks if they're sticking (especially important for multi-point locks on uPVC doors, to avoid them failing).



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- **Safety & Compliance Items:** Beyond alarms and certificates already mentioned, ensure any fire safety equipment (fire extinguishers, fire blankets in an HMO kitchen, etc.) are in place and in good condition. If your property is an HMO requiring fire doors or emergency lighting, include those in inspections. Check that furnishings (if provided) still meet fire safety regs (no old foam furniture that's not fire-resistant). For any gas appliances, look for any signs of issues (soot, yellow flames) and remind tenants of proper use.
- **Encourage Tenant Reporting:** While not a physical task, a vital part of maintenance is encouraging tenants to notify you promptly of any issues. Many serious problems (like a small leak) start minor but grow if the tenant hesitates to bother the landlord. Make it clear in your welcome pack or conversations that you want them to report maintenance needs. Provide an easy channel (text, email, or a reporting app). Quick attention keeps the property in shape and keeps tenants happy.
- **Document Everything:** Keep a log of your inspections and maintenance. Note dates and what was checked or any repairs done. This not only helps you track recurring issues but also provides proof that you've been diligent (useful for insurance or any disputes). It ensures nothing falls through cracks – e.g., you can see when the gutters were last cleaned or the alarm batteries replaced.

By following a consistent maintenance and inspection routine, you protect your property's condition and value. More importantly for our topic, you make the property easy to re-let (no massive refurb needed due to neglect) and you keep current tenants content so they are likely to stay. Preventative care is often cited as an overlooked landlord duty that pays off greatly: one nationwide landlords' association emphasizes adding simple tasks like checking for leaks, testing alarms, and sealing drafts to your checklist – these small actions can save money and hassle down the line. All in all, a well-maintained property is one that spends minimal time vacant.



# THE GUARANTEED RENT SOLUTION

Among the strategies to eliminate or reduce void periods, one option sits in a category of its own: Guaranteed Rent schemes. This approach is sometimes described as the landlord's path to peace of mind, as it involves a third party paying you rent regardless of whether the property is vacant or tenanted. In this chapter, we'll explain what guaranteed rent is, how it works, its pros and cons, and when it might make sense for a landlord to use this solution.

## WHAT IS GUARANTEED RENT AND HOW DOES IT WORK?

In a **Guaranteed Rent scheme**, a landlord essentially hands over the management and letting of their property to a company (or sometimes a local authority or housing association) in exchange for a fixed monthly rent payment. The arrangement can be thought of as the landlord becoming a leaseholder to the company. **The property management company guarantees a fixed rent to the landlord every month**, for a term typically between 1 to 5 years, whether or not the property is occupied and regardless of any tenant payment issues. The company then sub-lets the property to tenants and manages all aspects of the tenancy.

Here's how it typically works in practice: You sign a **lease or contract with the guaranteed rent provider** – this contract will specify the length of the term (say 3 years), the monthly amount you'll receive, and each party's responsibilities. Often, the company will ask for the property in a certain condition and may even do some refurbishment to attract tenants (depending on the deal). Once the contract starts, you get your agreed rent every month on a certain date, paid by the company, not by individual tenants. The management company then finds tenants, collects rent

## THE GUARANTEED RENT SOLUTION

from them, handles any void periods in between, covers things like council tax during voids, and addresses maintenance and tenant issues as they arise. In essence, **you no longer deal with the day-to-day landlord duties** – it's a hands-off investment for you during the contract term.

It's important to distinguish guaranteed rent schemes from **rent guarantee insurance**. Rent guarantee insurance is an insurance policy you buy to cover missed rent in case a tenant doesn't pay, whereas a guaranteed rent scheme is a lease agreement where a company becomes your tenant (and they take on the risk of the property being empty or the sub-tenants not paying). Guaranteed rent is sometimes also called "rent-to-rent" (when done by companies who rent and then sublet) or a "leasing scheme" when done by councils for social housing use.

## PROS (BENEFITS) OF GUARANTEED RENT

The obvious benefit is **zero void periods (for the landlord)**: you get a **steady, reliable income** every month, even if the property is between tenants. This completely eliminates the financial uncertainty of vacancies. Here are the key advantages:

- **No Void Risk and Income Stability:** The biggest draw is that your rental income is guaranteed. You know exactly how much will come in and when. For landlords relying on rent to cover mortgages or those who have tight cash flows, this stability is golden. Even if a tenancy ends and it takes 4 weeks to find another tenant, **you don't lose a penny** – the guaranteed rent provider shoulders that cost. It essentially transfers the void period risk from you to the provider.
- **No Tenant Management Hassles:** The guaranteed rent company will handle everything: marketing the property, vetting tenants, signing agreements, collecting rent, chasing arrears, handling maintenance calls, legal evictions if needed, etc. For you as a landlord, this is very hands-off. It's akin to having a full

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management service, but even more so – you typically won't even know if there's an issue with a tenant; the company deals with it. This means far **fewer administrative duties for you** – you're not dealing with day-to-day headaches. It's almost like being a step removed from being a landlord, while still getting paid.

- **Protection from Tenant Default:** Since your agreement is with the rent-guarantee company, you don't have to worry about late or missing rent from the sub-tenants. Even if the occupants fail to pay or are consistently late, you still get your full payment on time. The provider assumes the risk of non-payment and legal costs if eviction is needed. This can be a relief, as dealing with tenant arrears and evictions is one of the most stressful parts of landlording.
- **Maintenance Covered (sometimes):** Depending on the scheme, some guaranteed rent providers handle certain maintenance and repairs. Often, minor routine maintenance is taken care of by them, and they may only refer back to you for major expenditures or structural issues. Some agreements even include periodic property upgrades by the company. This can further reduce your workload and expenses (though usually, the cost of this is baked into the rent they offer).
- **Long-Term Contract Security:** If you sign for, say, 3 or 5 years, you have a long horizon of knowing exactly what your income will be from the property with no breaks. This can be great for planning or if you simply want to "lock it and leave it" as an investment for a while. During this term, you typically won't be involved unless something major arises.

Essentially, the pros of guaranteed rent boil down to convenience, peace of mind, and risk reduction. It's almost like having a fixed-interest bond instead of a stock – lower volatility and more predictability. For many landlords – especially those who are remote, very busy, or anxious about the upcoming changes in tenancy laws – this scheme offers a stress-free approach to letting.

## CONS (DRAWBACKS) OF GUARANTEED RENT

However, guaranteed rent is not a magic solution for everyone. There are trade-offs and risks to consider:

- **Lower Income Potential:** The guaranteed rent company needs to make a profit for taking on void and management risks. Therefore, the **monthly rent they offer you will typically be less than the market rent** you might achieve on the open market. Effectively, you're paying them (via a rent discount) to assume the risk. For example, if your property could rent for £1,300 pcm normally, a company might offer you only £1,100 pcm guaranteed. You trade some income for the guarantee. Some companies advertise "we pay up to 90% of market rent" – so that's a ~10% cut for you. If you are confident in managing and keeping the place occupied yourself, that reduction might not be worth it to you.
- **Long-Term Commitment & Less Flexibility:** When you sign a guaranteed rent contract, you are locking your property in for that period. If your plans change – say you want to sell the property or move back in – it may be complicated or even impossible until the contract ends (unless you negotiate a break clause). **You lose a degree of control** over your own property for the duration. Furthermore, if the market rent rises significantly during that time, you won't directly benefit because you've fixed your income (unless some schemes offer a rent review, but many don't). You could end up getting below-market rent by year 3 or 5 of the contract if the market grew fast. Essentially, you might be sacrificing upside potential.
- **Reliance on the Provider's Performance:** You are placing a lot of trust in the guaranteed rent provider. While you expect them to handle everything diligently, not all companies are equal. If the provider fails – **e.g., goes out of business – or fails to manage the property well, you could face problems.** There have been cases of unscrupulous rent-to-rent operators who take properties, sublet poorly or to bad tenants, and then disappear leaving



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landlords with issues. That's why doing due diligence on the company is paramount. You want a reputable, established provider. The worst-case Scenario: A provider stops paying you, and you have to reclaim your property, possibly with problematic occupants in it. While rare with good companies, it's a risk. (Note: some councils run guaranteed rent schemes for private landlords, which tend to be lower risk in terms of default but might involve housing vulnerable tenants, etc.)

- **Maintenance Responsibility and Wear-and-Tear:** Read the contract carefully about who pays for what maintenance. Many guaranteed rent schemes will pass on certain costs to the landlord (especially large repairs). Also, because you're not directly overseeing the tenants, you might find the property doesn't get the same TLC. Some landlords worry about **excess wear-and-tear** or sub-tenants not caring for the property since the owner isn't directly in contact. At the end of a long contract, you might need to do more refurb than usual if the managing company wasn't on top of it – or if they placed tenants that were not ideal. Essentially, you could "lose control" over selecting tenants or inspecting the property regularly (though you can often arrange to inspect annually). One expert noted that if a guaranteed rent service isn't diligent, "the landlord loses control of the property, and this is where the problems begin".
- **Contractual Obligations and Fees:** Some providers might have clauses that could be onerous – for example, maybe they require exclusive rights for a period, or there are penalties if you break early. Always check if there are any extra fees (for example, setup fees or inventory fees) you need to pay. Generally, in a genuine guaranteed rent, you shouldn't be paying typical agent fees – they make money on the rent margin – but just be sure nothing hidden is in the contract.

In summary, the **cons of guaranteed rent** include reduced profitability, less flexibility, and potential risks if the provider isn't reliable. It's not "free money" – you pay for the convenience one way or another.

## WHEN DOES GUARANTEED RENT MAKE SENSE?

Guaranteed rent schemes can be very attractive to certain landlords, but may not suit others. Here are scenarios and considerations for when it makes sense:

- **Hands-Off Investors or Overseas Landlords:** If you're a landlord who does not want to be involved at all in management, or you live far away (another country, etc.), a guaranteed rent offers ultimate hands-off operation. For someone with a busy career or multiple commitments, the idea of truly passive income (even if slightly less) can be worth it. It's effectively outsourcing the entire landlord role. Many expat landlords, for instance, find this appealing.
- **Risk-Averse Landlords:** If the thought of void periods, tenant non-payment, or the upcoming law changes (like abolition of Section 21) keeps you up at night, guaranteed rent can reduce that anxiety. You trade some income for **peace of mind and risk reduction**. Also, during times of economic uncertainty or in locations with less stable demand, having a fixed rent can be reassuring. It's like opting for a stable, if lower, return rather than riding market fluctuations.
- **Properties in Certain Sectors:** If you have a property that could be leased to a local council or housing association under a guaranteed scheme (for use as social housing or temporary accommodation), it can be a win-win: you get guaranteed rent often for several years, and the council handles tenants. These schemes might pay a bit below market, but they often cover maintenance and guarantee no voids. They can be ideal for properties in areas where private renting is slower but councils have housing need.
- **Multiple Property Owners:** If you have a large portfolio, you might decide to put a couple of properties on guaranteed rent for stability while actively managing others for growth. It diversifies your approach. Also, for landlords who feel they have "too many hats to wear," handing one hat to a provider for a fixed outcome can simplify life.

## THE GUARANTEED RENT SOLUTION

- **Tired Landlords or Those Stepping Back:** Perhaps you've been a landlord for decades and you're tired of it, but you're not ready to sell the property yet. A guaranteed rent deal for a few years can allow you a breather from active management. It could also be a way to semi-retire – you lock in an income stream without the work, at least for the contract term.

On the other hand, if **maximising financial return** is your priority and you're confident in managing voids and tenants, you might not opt for guaranteed rent. Also, if you cherish having full control over tenant selection and property decisions, you may find guaranteed rent arrangements too restrictive.

**Due Diligence:** If you do consider a guaranteed rent scheme, do your homework on the provider. Check how long they've been in business, ask for references from other landlords, and **review the contract carefully** (preferably with legal advice). Key points to clarify: Who is responsible for what maintenance? What happens if the sub-tenant damages the property? What are termination clauses? A reputable company should be transparent. As Paul Shamplina (a well-known eviction specialist) advises, "tread carefully and make sure you're using a reputable provider". Especially with upcoming law changes (like the end of Section 21), you want to ensure the contract covers scenarios of getting the property back if needed.

In conclusion, **Guaranteed Rent schemes** offer a trade-off: **lower stress and no voids, in exchange for some profit margin and control**. For many landlords – particularly those valuing stability or freedom from management – this solution can indeed be the "practical guide" to avoiding void periods entirely. Just weigh the pros and cons in the context of your personal circumstances and financial goals. When done with a trustworthy company and with eyes open, guaranteed rent can deliver exactly what it promises: rent in your account every month, void period nightmares banished.

# CONCLUSION

Void periods are an inherent part of being a landlord, but as we've explored in this guide, their **frequency and impact can be greatly reduced through proactive management and informed strategies**. It's worth recapping a few **key takeaways** and immediate action steps from "Void Periods: Why They Happen and How to Avoid Them":

- **Understand and Monitor Your Void Periods:** Keep track of how often and how long your properties sit empty. Compare with benchmarks (the UK average is around 2–3 weeks) to gauge if you have a problem to solve. Awareness is the first step – if you notice a pattern (e.g., always empty in winter, or after short tenancies), you can address the underlying causes.
- **Be Proactive, Not Reactive:** Almost every chapter stressed the importance of being ahead of the game. From marketing early when a tenant gives notice, to performing preventative maintenance tasks to avoid later issues, proactive behavior will save you time and money. Don't wait for a crisis (an empty month, or a tenant leaving due to disrepair) – plan ahead and act in advance.
- **Keep Your Property and Practices Tenant-Centric:** Properties that are well-maintained, reasonably priced, and managed with the tenant in mind will naturally have **fewer and shorter voids**. Happy tenants stay longer, and desirable homes re-let faster. On the flip side, ignoring tenant feedback, delaying repairs, or overcharging rent will lead to higher turnover and longer vacancies. Thus, focusing on good service and quality is not just nice-to-do – it's financially smart for void prevention.

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- **Use Resources and Professionals Wisely:** Consider if hiring a letting agent or using certain services would help in your specific situation (especially if you struggle with voids). A good agent can rent your property quicker and handle tedious tasks, but choose carefully to avoid the red flags we discussed. Similarly, leverage technology and landlord tools to streamline your process – whether that’s advertising on more platforms or using software to remind you of tasks. And if voids are a major concern or you want ultimate ease, evaluate whether a **Guaranteed Rent scheme** fits your goals, weighing the secure income against the cost.
- **Stay Informed on Market and Legal Changes:** The rental landscape is always evolving. Interest rate fluctuations, local housing supply shifts, or new laws (like the Renters’ Reform Bill) can all influence void periods. By staying informed via reliable sources (e.g., NRLA updates, GOV.UK news, property market reports), you can anticipate challenges. For instance, knowing that tenants have more flexibility to leave (if Section 21 is abolished) means you might place even greater importance on tenant retention efforts to avoid surprise voids.

## AS IMMEDIATE ACTION STEPS, HERE ARE SOME THINGS YOU CAN START DOING NOW:

1. **Evaluate Your Current Tenancies:** Are any fixed terms ending soon? If yes, reach out to those tenants now to discuss renewals or prepare for marketing. Check your rent levels – are they fair or possibly causing resistance? Adjust if necessary to keep good tenants or attract new ones quickly.
2. **Inspect and Tackle Maintenance:** Schedule an inspection of each property in the coming weeks (if you haven’t recently). Use the Maintenance Checklist to identify any issues to fix before they become reasons for a tenant to leave or a new tenant to balk. For example, that little damp stain – sort it out now.



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- 3.**Revamp Your Marketing Materials:** Take a critical look at your property listings (or create a template if you don't have a vacancy now). Improve the photos or description using tips from the Advertising Checklist. Research one new platform or method (like OpenRent or a Facebook group) to expand your reach next time you need it.
- 4.**Connect with Other Landlords or Professionals:** Perhaps join a local landlord association or online forum. Share experiences and void-busting tips. Networking can also lead to recommendations for reliable tradespeople or letting agents, which in turn helps you manage properties better.
- 5.**Consider Your Long-Term Strategy:** If void periods have been a persistent pain and you find active management overwhelming, reflect on whether options like full-service management or guaranteed rent might be worth exploring. Get some quotes or have discussions to see the numbers and terms involved.

Above all, **treat void period management as an integral part of your business strategy.** It's not an afterthought; it deserves planning just like finding a property or securing a mortgage does. By implementing the practices in this guide – from smart turnarounds and tenant care to savvy use of services – you can turn voids from a big unknown into a manageable, minimized aspect of your rental operation.

Remember, every day with a paying tenant is a day your investment works for you. With the right approach, you can ensure those days far outnumber the empty ones.

Happy landlording, and may your void periods be few and far between!

## Appendix

### Useful Links for Landlords

- **GOV.UK – Private Renting Guidance:** The UK Government’s official website provides a wealth of up-to-date information on landlords’ legal responsibilities and tenants’ rights. Start here for guides on topics like deposit protection, eviction processes, safety regulations, and any new legislation (e.g., Renting out your property: Landlord responsibilities – GOV.UK).
- **Shelter:** Shelter is a housing and homelessness charity that also offers excellent free advice resources for both tenants and landlords. Their website (England section) has clear explanations of the law, including dealing with deposits, repairs, and ending tenancies. Shelter’s perspective is tenant-centric, so it’s useful for understanding tenant rights and how to avoid disputes. Website: Shelter England – Advice for renters and landlords.
- **National Residential Landlords Association (NRLA):** The NRLA is the leading membership organization for private landlords in the UK. Their site has news, guidance, and training on all aspects of landlording, often reflecting the latest changes in regulation. Members get access to template documents and a help line. Even non-members can read many articles and the “Helpful Tips” section. Website: NRLA – Resources and News. (They also publish a Landlord Confidence Index and regional trends, which can be insightful for void trends.)
- **Property Market Websites (News and Data):** Industry news sites like Propertymark, LandlordZone, LettingAgentToday, and Property Industry Eye regularly report on market trends, average rents, and void period statistics. For example, Propertymark (the professional body for letting agents) often has guides on choosing agents, and Property Industry Eye covers rental indices. Checking these can keep you informed about the rental market climate.
- **Deposit Protection Schemes:** Since handling deposits correctly is vital, the official deposit scheme websites have guidance too. MyDeposits, Deposit Protection Service (DPS), and Tenancy Deposit Scheme (TDS) each offer FAQ and guides on end-of-tenancy procedures and disputes (which tie into handling void-related turnover matters). e.g., Tenancy Deposit Scheme – Guides.

**(All links above are current as of 2025. Always ensure you’re reading guidance specific to your region of the UK, as rules can differ in Scotland, Wales, N.I.)**

## Contact Details for ABC Gone Ltd

**Void Periods:** A Practical Guide for Landlords is published by ABC Gone Ltd, a property management consulting company specializing in landlord education and guaranteed rent solutions.

For inquiries, support, or more information about our services and guides, you can reach us at:

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Feel free to contact us if you have any questions about reducing void periods or if you are interested in our Guaranteed Rent program for your property. We also welcome feedback on this guide and suggestions for future editions.

## ***Landlord Void-Period Checklist***

(Use this checklist as a quick-reference tool to manage tenant turnovers and ongoing maintenance, thereby minimising void periods. You can print and tick items off each time you have a changeover or as part of your routine inspections.)

### **Before Current Tenancy Ends:**

- Confirm tenant's move-out date in writing (serve notice or receive notice).
- If tenant is leaving, start advertising early (online listings, notify agents) with an available date.
- Schedule a pre-move-out visit or send move-out instructions to tenant (regarding cleaning, keys, etc.).
- Line up any services needed (cleaners, handymen, decorators) for immediately after move-out.

### **At Tenant Move-Out / Checkout:**

- Conduct check-out inspection with tenant; use inventory to note damage or missing items.
- Collect all sets of keys (including any windows/garden keys, etc.).
- Take meter readings (gas, electricity, water) and note them.
- Explain deposit return process and timelines to the departing tenant; get forwarding address.

### **During Void Period (Property Preparation):**

- Secure the property (lock all windows/doors, set alarm).
- Thorough cleaning of the property (ensure kitchen and bathrooms are spotless, carpets cleaned).
- Complete all necessary repairs:
  - Fix any leaks, dripping taps, running toilets.
  - Patch holes or repaint scuffed walls.
  - Service boiler if due and ensure heating/hot water operational.
  - Replace any broken appliances or light fixtures.

**Safety checks:**

- Test smoke and CO alarms; replace batteries if low.
- Ensure Gas Safety Certificate and EICR are up to date (do inspections if expired).
- Check that locks and latches work properly on doors and windows.

**Refresh property appearance:**

- Ensure curb appeal (tidy front garden/entrance, replace burnt-out exterior lights).
- Air out property to eliminate any odours.
- Set thermostat to reasonable level if in winter (to avoid freezing pipes while empty).

**Advertising & New Tenant Process:**

- Take high-quality photos of the clean, empty (or nicely staged) property.
- Post listings on Rightmove/Zoopla/OpenRent and social media with clear description and rent price.
- Respond promptly to inquiries; schedule block viewings.
- Provide application forms or reference links to interested applicants without delay.
- Screen tenants (credit check, employment/income verify, landlord references).
- Choose tenant and confirm move-in date (ideally as soon as possible).
- Prepare tenancy agreement and required documents (How to Rent guide, deposit PI, etc.) for signing.
- Protect deposit in authorised scheme within 30 days (and mark calendar to do this).
- Inform utility companies and council of end of old tenancy and prepare to hand over to new tenant (meter readings, etc.).

**New Tenancy Move-In:**

- Do an inventory and schedule of condition (with photos) right before move-in.
- On move-in day, meet new tenant (or agent does):
  - Sign tenancy agreement (if not done earlier electronically).
  - Collect first month's rent and deposit (if not already done via bank).



- Hand over keys.
- Go through inventory with tenant and have them sign it.
- Provide copies of Gas Safety Cert, EPC, EICR, How to Rent, etc. as required.
- Ensure tenant has your contact info for any issues and understands how to report maintenance.

**Ongoing (to reduce future voids):**

- Schedule regular inspections (note next date: e.g., 3 months from move-in, then 6-12 months intervals).
- Keep communication open with tenant – address concerns promptly.
- Diary note for lease renewal offer 2-3 months before fixed term ends (to avoid surprise move-outs).
- Keep an emergency fund or insurance for unexpected repairs (so you can fix issues quickly without needing a long void to deal with them).

By following this comprehensive list, you'll ensure a smooth transition between tenancies and maintain your property in top shape, thereby minimising the time it remains unoccupied. Customize the checklist as needed for your specific property and needs. Good luck, and may your voids be short and infrequent!

**Sources:** Proactive maintenance tasks adapted from NRLA recommendations [nrla.org.uk](http://nrla.org.uk) [nrla.org.uk](http://nrla.org.uk); Turnover and marketing steps based on industry best practices [prosperity-wealth.co.uk](http://prosperity-wealth.co.uk) [landlordvision.co.uk](http://landlordvision.co.uk); Government and NRLA guidelines for legal requirements.



# THANK YOU!

**Thank you for taking the time to read this guide.** We hope it helped you gain clarity and confidence as a landlord.

If you're ready to take the next step and see how your property could benefit from a professional approach:

**[BOOK A FREE VALUATION TODAY](#)**

**GOT QUESTIONS OR NEED SUPPORT? WE'RE HERE TO HELP.**

 02085 530645  [info@abcgone.com](mailto:info@abcgone.com)  [www.abcgone.com](http://www.abcgone.com)

