

Service Standards - Abandoned Property

Standard

Barcud's policy is to re-let properties as quickly as possible in order to minimise rent loss resulting from abandoned properties. We also aim to ensure that properties are occupied by those in housing need. It is therefore essential to ensure that properties that appear to be abandoned or where the tenant is no longer in occupation are repossessed as quickly as possible.

Tenancies can only be ended by the tenant by way of written notice or by Barcud serving Notice to Quit / Notice Requiring possession or with an order from the Court.

Should an ongoing tenant fail to provide the required notice to end their tenancy or fail to reside in the property as their only or principal home, the property may be deemed to be abandoned and rigorous investigations will be undertaken by the Housing Officer to clarify the status of the property.

Barcud will therefore:

- take steps to secure, as necessary, any suspected abandoned property to avoid any such problems.
- fully investigate all suspected abandoned properties promptly and thoroughly. Housing Officers will follow the abandoned property procedure.
- encourage residents and staff to inform us of any suspected abandoned properties in their neighbourhood through the publication of articles in the Tenant's newsletter, regular estate visits by Housing Officers, the requirement of all staff to adopt an "eyes and ears" approach and report back any potential abandonments to the Housing Officers.

In cases where there is NO DOUBT that the property has been abandoned Barcud will:

- serve a seven day notice in letter form accepting the surrender, posted through the letter box and fixed to the main door.
- take photographs of the exterior of the property, the notice in situ and complete a Certificate of Service.

- carry out thorough and robust investigations and be able to demonstrate reasonable steps have been taken to clarify that the tenant is no longer using the property as their only or principal home.
- provide strong and clear evidence that the tenant has no intention of returning.
- carry out regular checks on the property and take notes regarding any changes or otherwise.

In cases where there is an element of doubt that the property has been abandoned e.g. some furniture left in the property, Barcud will;

- issue a warning letter followed seven days later by a Notice to Quit.
- (if there is no contact after 28 days) act upon the Notice to Quit and re-possess the property, without the need of a court order.
- take internal and external photographs of the property detailing the condition of the property (and garden if applicable).
- clear the property. The property will be re-possessed after a full inventory and photographic record are completed.

Storage

We will:

- store any personal or irreplaceable items up to 9 months.
- make every effort to contact the tenant to ask them to collect any possessions, furniture or other items of a significant value within a month. If there is no contact the possessions will be disposed of or sold.
- seek to recover the cost of storage, removal, or any other debt from the tenant if they wish to collect their possessions.
- keep a record of the former tenant's file of the income received from the sale of his/her property. If the former tenant contacts Barcud in the future, they are entitled to the proceeds of the sale of their goods, less any costs for storage, removals or any other debt owing.

In both scenarios detailed above, rent charges will remain in force until such time as Barcud achieve vacant possession of the property.

A copy of our Abandoned Property Policy and Procedure is available upon request on 0300 111 3030 or email post@barcud.cymru

These Standards will be reviewed regularly, at least every three years.

