

Empty Home Grant Guidance

A grant to encourage owners of properties that have been empty for in excess of 12 months to undertake all necessary works to improve them to the Decent Homes Standard and let them out at rent determined by the rent officer, to tenants nominated by the Council.

This information is for guidance only - contact the Private Sector Housing Team for more detailed information when applying.

1. Eligible works

- Work to repair or improve a property that has been empty for in excess of 12 months to meet the Decent Homes Standard.

2. Applicant's eligibility

- The applicant must have an owner's interest in the dwelling.

3. Property eligibility

- The dwelling must have been empty for in excess of 12 months
- The dwelling must be within Council Tax bands A, B, C or D
- The dwelling is of a type and in an area which will meet a housing need as determined by the Council having regard to the current housing waiting list.
- The dwelling currently does not meet the Decent Homes Standard.

4. Application

To apply an applicant must provide:-

- A completed application form signed by the applicant.
- Two detailed priced quotations covering the work from builders not related to any person with an owner interest in the dwelling.
- or, where the applicant is to carry out the work, a priced list of materials to be submitted.
- Plans of the work to be carried out where required by the Council.

- Evidence of ownership of the dwelling.
- A completed agreement to nomination rights, certificate of future letting and acceptance of the grant terms.
- Signed authority to carry out the work from all persons with an owner's interest in the dwelling.
- Any other documentation or evidence required by the council.

5. Value of the Grant

- The maximum grant available for each application is £25,000.
- The cost of the work will be based on the lowest quotation submitted or such lower figure as the Council's Grants Officer may determine to be reasonable having regard to the work proposed.
- The eligible works are those which are necessary to meet the Decent Homes Standard.
- The grant can also include any reasonable costs incurred by the applicant in preparing and submitting the application.
- Claims for unforeseen work will be considered subject to the grants maximum value where the work has been authorised in advance by the Council.

6. Carrying out the work

- On completion of the work the property must meet the Decent Homes Standard
- The work should not be commenced in advance of receipt of written confirmation of the grant offer signed by the Responsible Officer.
- The work must be carried out in accordance with the plans and specification submitted.
- The work must be carried out by one of the contractors whose quotations were submitted as part of the application.
- Any changes to the work or to the contractors used must be authorised in advance by the Council.
- Failure to comply with the above will result in loss of the grant.

Payment of the Grant

- All requests for payment must be supported by an invoice from the contractor(s) carrying out the grant aided work.

- The grant will be paid by cheque sent to the applicant but made payable to the name on the invoice submitted.
- Stage payments may be claimed where agreed by the Grant Officer up to a maximum of 90% of the approved grant. In all cases 10% of the grant will be retained until all works have been completed to the satisfaction of the Council's Grant Officer determined by an inspection.

Post Grant Conditions

- The dwelling must remain let or available for letting as a main permanent residence for at least 5 years from the date of the final grant payment.
- The applicant agrees to give the Council rights to nominate tenants to occupy the property for a minimum of 2 years following the completion of the works, with a further year of nomination rights for each £5,000 of grant provided, up to a maximum period of 5 years.
- The dwelling must be let or available for letting at a reasonable rent as determined by the rent service.
- If the period for which the Council has nomination rights has expired and the owner of the property fails to find a tenant through other means and the property is empty for in excess of 3 months, the Council reserves the right to impose a further period of nomination rights.
- The dwelling must not be sold or advertised for sale or ownership of the dwelling transferred during the five year period.

Failure to comply with these conditions will require repayment of grant in full with interest from the date the grant was paid, calculated at the Council's bank's base rate. A Local Land Charge will be placed on the property for the 5 year period or until the grant is repaid. The Grant conditions will be monitored to ensure compliance. The Council will determine whether sufficient effort is being taken by

the owner of the property to ensure that the property is let to its optimum and whether any refusal of a prospective tenant nominated by the Council is reasonable. The grant may be repayable if the owner consistently refuses the Council's nominees.