

## **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)**

Q. I do not class my 'Empty Home' as empty, as I use it as a holiday home. Are the Council going to try to get me to either sell or let my property?

A. Once it has been established that your property is a genuine furnished, regularly used holiday home/second property, the council will not be following this up. We would advise you to inform Council Tax that your property falls into this category.

Q. A house nearby has been empty for a long time and it is making my neighbour hood look really bad. What can I do?

A. Please let the empty homes officer know about this property so that it can be investigated. We will contact the owner and try to bring it back up to standard and also to bring it into use again. If negotiations are not successful it may be possible for us to start enforcement action requiring them to bring it back up to a satisfactory standard.

Q. I own a property which has been empty for a long time. What options are open to me to get this back into use?

A. Your main choices are to either let your property out or to sell it. If you wish to sell your property, you can do it either through an estate agent or privately. If you wish to let your property, you can do so either privately, through a managing agent, or to a Local Authority/ Registered Social Landlord (RSL). Some methods may yield you a higher return in terms of monthly rental income, but may have associated risks with them e.g. risk of no income due to void tenancies;

tenants may cause damage to the property etc whereas other approaches may yield you less income per month but more financial stability (e.g. guaranteed rent/not having to pay for tenants damaging property) and less stress for you as property can be advertised for you, managed on your behalf, tenants checked prior to moving in and property inspected regularly etc. If you are interested in any of these methods, or would like a list of local estate/letting agents please contact us for more details.

Q. I believe an empty home nearby may not be safe to others due to the poor condition of it e.g. broken glass in ground floor windows and doors, perimeter wall falling down, property insecure, structure looking unstable etc. What can I do?

A. Phone Private Sector Housing on 01255 686617 and ask to speak to the empty homes officer, who will make arrangements to visit the property and if appropriate arrange for it to be boarded up/made safe.

Q. I am an owner of an empty property which is not a second home, I do not wish to let it out or sell it, nor do I wish to maintain it. I am happy for it to deteriorate over time and hope that the property value will still be higher in the future so I can recover all my costs. What can the Local Authority do about it?

A. The Local Authority has a range of enforcement powers at their disposal to deal with owners of derelict empty properties who have no intention of maintaining them and those which may be unsafe or a nuisance to others. Enforcement actions may include the following (see link below), however an informal route will be sought beforehand. See [Local Authority Enforcement Powers](#) for details.