

Scottish Empty Homes Partnership

The Scottish Empty Homes Partnership exists to help councils and their partners pursue work to bring private sector empty homes back into use. The project is funded by the Scottish Government and housed by Shelter Scotland

According to Scottish Government data there are over 27,000 long term private sector empty homes in Scotland. A property becomes 'long term' empty when it's been unoccupied for 6 months or more.

Work on empty homes can achieve positive outcomes with regards to:

- Housing Supply
- Community Regeneration/Town Centre Renewal
- Sustaining Rural Communities
- Restoring Confidence in local property markets
- Discouraging Anti-Social Behaviour (due to fire/vandalism/flytipping of empty properties)
- Climate Change and Sustainability

Work on empty homes also represents value for money. The Empty Homes Agency in England has estimated that the cost of refurbishing an empty home is between £6,000 - £25,000. The average cost of a new build home in Scotland is £100,000 +. And of course when you are bringing an empty home back into use the infrastructure and local services will already be in place.

The Scottish Empty Homes Partnership collects and develops best practice in Scottish private sector empty homes work; runs Empty Homes Officer training; manages shared services projects (where more than one local authority share an Empty Homes Officer); runs networking events; and lobbies for change where needed.

Having been in operation since 2010 the work of the Partnership has recently been extended until 2018 and expanded to increase capacity, including the introduction of the new Empty Homes Advice Service.

Empty Homes Advice Service

The Empty Homes Advice Service was launched on the 16th of June. An Empty Homes Adviser is in place and eager to help. Her name is Frances Snee and she can be reached on 0344 515 1941 or email emptyhomes@shelter.org.uk

What does the Empty Homes Advice Service do?

- Provide first level empty homes advice to empty home owners, neighbours and organisations interested in empty homes work.
- Make referrals to our network of local Empty Homes Officers working in Scotland's Local Authorities.
- Follow up on empty homes reports and pursue empty homes case work in areas without a local empty homes service (to demonstrate the art of the possible).
- Provide information on where empty homes grants and loans are available throughout the country and link into local Empty Homes Matchmaker Schemes.

Empty Homes Grants and Loans

Two thirds of Scotland's local authorities offer some form of empty homes grant or loan assistance where owners of empty homes are willing to bring their properties back into use for affordable rent or sale. The Empty Homes Adviser (see above) can inform you of availability in your local area and link you into the funding teams at each council.

There are several funds open at the moment from Scottish Government and the Nationwide Foundation where community groups and Social Enterprises can bid for grants to take forward empty homes projects. For the latest information about available funding contact the Scottish Empty Homes Partnership to discuss your potential project (see Local Project Support below).

Local Project Support

Following the expansion of the team to include an Empty Homes Local Projects Manager the Scottish Empty Homes Partnership can now offer support to organisations interested in renovating empty buildings and refurbishing or converting them to provide residential accommodation.

The types of organisations we can support range from local authorities, to RSLs, Social Enterprises, local community groups and developers. If you aren't quite sure what you want to do but you know you have a local empty property problem and that more local residential accommodation would benefit your area there are a range of ways we can help:

- We will help to identify viable one off multi-unit projects in your area
- Source funding and assist you to secure it
- Liaise with third parties and bring interested partners and groups together to make sure your project has the best chance to succeed
- Produce a project plan
- Provide assistance right through the process until the project is delivered

If you are interested in starting a project, call 03445 152237 or email

Gavin_Leask@shelter.org.uk.

Scottish Empty Homes Conference

There is an annual Scottish Empty Homes Conference which takes place in November each year. This year (2015) the conference will be held on the 17th November at the MacDonald Holyrood Hotel in Edinburgh. The one day event is useful for anyone with an interest in private sector empty homes work, especially those wishing to make connections and network with Empty Homes Officers, senior housing professionals and developers.

More information can be found [here](#).

Further Information and Advice

Scottish Empty Homes Partnership National Manager, Kristen Hubert can be contacted using the details below.

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