



[www.actiononemptyhomes.org](http://www.actiononemptyhomes.org)

**Action on Empty Homes**

Empty Homes Agency

Community Benefit Society Number 27697R

**Recognised by HMRC as having charitable status: Ref number: XR28505**

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**National Empty Homes Week 2024 4<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> March**

**Council's rise to housing challenge as long-term empty homes increase<sup>iii</sup> amidst housing crisis**

National Empty Homes Week takes place annually and involves hundreds of local councils across England.

The Week sees councils to share success stories and highlight housing initiatives designed to make sure more empty homes are brought back into use as vitally needed homes more quickly.

**Participating local councils will:**

***Promote information and assistance available to owners of empty homes – some offering grants and incentives***

- *such as the £80,000 on offer from [Camden](#) or the £20,000 on offer in [Barnet](#)*

***Offer local residents advice on reporting empty homes causing concern in their neighbourhoods.***

- *Online reporting is an increasingly common route though [Westminster](#) is one of many councils that have launched phone reporting lines*

***Highlight successful local housing initiatives***

- *Examples will range from councils enforcing sales of property to those compulsory purchasing long-term empty homes, like [Derby](#), which can then contribute to council housing stock*

**For Empty Homes Officers it is also an excellent opportunity to underline the value and importance of their work, both within their local authority and to the local community they serve.**

In 2024 we celebrate **local authorities' work and initiatives** through one key theme: 'Powers in Action' and during the week will share stories that demonstrate councils using their powers to bring empty homes back into use.

**Powers in Action** will demonstrate what councils can do to bring empty homes back into use – **and support our campaigns to strengthen and expand on these powers as councils face pressure on budgets from the costs including the provision of Temporary Accommodation<sup>iii</sup>.**

**The Local Government Association will also be supporting Empty Homes Week 2024** at national level following their [recent work on the issue](#) with empty homes practitioners' organisation the [Empty Homes Network](#) and accompanying media work.

**Cllr Darren Rodwell, Housing spokesperson for the LGA said:**

“At a time when we face a housing shortage across the country it is wrong for so many homes to be left empty.

“Councils share a collective national ambition to tackle local housing challenges and this Week is a great opportunity to highlight the excellent work councils are doing to bring empty homes back into use.

“Another way to tackle the issue is by building more genuinely affordable homes. We encourage the Government to implement our six-point plan\* which will give local government the powers and funding to deliver thousands of social homes a year.” [see footnote [iii] below]

**Rebecca Moore, Director of Action on Empty Homes, said:**

“Just last week we saw the number of families in unsuitable, insecure and overcrowded Temporary Accommodation hit a new high of 109,000 including over 140,000 children. This underlines why every empty home matters. And why it is so concerning to see numbers of empties rising in every region of the country, despite an acute national housing crisis.

“Action on Empty Homes is keen to support and celebrate all the councils taking action now and to showcase the great work done by specialist empty homes officers around the country. But we are also campaigning for Government to offer councils improved tools to allow faster and more consistent action across the whole of England.

“Bringing our empties into use makes a difference and can help meet local housing needs. But in the latest data we are seeing homelessness rise in lockstep with emptiness. This is why making best use of the homes we already have has never been more important and why National Empty Homes Week is a vital wake-up call.”

**Notes to Editors and Data References**

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<sup>i</sup> Council Taxbase 2023 Dept Levelling Up Homes and Communities (updated 28 February 2024): <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/council-taxbase-2023-in-england>

<sup>ii</sup> The Council Taxbase 2023 data released by the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities and analysed by Action on Empty Homes shows a rise of 12,841 (or 5%) to 261,474.

This is the highest level in over a decade, outside of the height of the pandemic (when the housing market was closed). It represents the highest non-pandemic-related number since 2011:

Highlights of the 2023 data:

- **Rise of nearly 13,000 on 2022**
- **Numbers rose in EVERY REGION (this only previously occurred during the pandemic)**
- **16% on pre-pandemic numbers**
- **Rise of over 30% since the end of the last national Government Programme to address the issue**
- **Second homes not in residential use also rose to over 263,000**

**Key Points:**

**Every region of Britain saw rises [full data available<sup>ii</sup>]:**

**Regionally the biggest rise was in the housing crisis hit Sluth West where long-term empties rose 9%**

**Rises of 7% were recorded in the South East, East Midlands and Eastern Region**

**Long-term empties in London were up 5% to over 36,000 while a further 49,000 furnished empties or second homes were also recorded as empty.**

Government Data (Dept Levelling Up Homes & Communities: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/council-taxbase-2023-in-england>)

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iii LGA Spring Budget Submission (Jan 2024): <https://www.local.gov.uk/parliament/briefings-and-responses/spring-budget-2024-lga-submission>