

## **For Immediate media release**

**Over 260,000 homes officially empty long-term:**

# **Government data released today shows long-term empty homes rise in every region of England while over 100,000 families are homeless**

The Council Taxbase 2023<sup>i</sup> data released by the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities and analysed by Action on Empty Homes shows a rise of 12,556 (or 5%) to 261,189.

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:

- **Rise of over 12,000 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**

Highlights:

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

**Regionally the biggest rise was in the housing crisis hit South 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.**

**The largest percentage rise was in the London borough of Harrow where long-term empties rocketed up 1,256% from a mere 61 to over 800 (827)**

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

“It beggars belief that while children are growing up sharing beds in temporary accommodation, our nation has over a quarter of a million homes sitting empty.

“To say this is a national disgrace is a profound understatement.

“After more than a decade of intense housing crisis it is shocking to see long-term empty homes in England rise to over 261,000 – another 12,500 more wasted empties, while nearly 100,000 families are trapped in Temporary Accommodation, costing the nation over £1.7 billion pounds a year.”

“A new national empty homes programme is long overdue – government needs to step up to the plate and offer funding and incentives to get these homes back into use”

“Long-term empties are a huge missed opportunity to invest in green retrofit and create new jobs”

“Action on Empty Homes calls on Government to introduce a new national empty homes programme to create additional housing supply for those in most housing need, utilising properties currently left vacant or in need of renovation.”

National Campaign Manager Chris Bailey said,

“The recent Crisis report ‘[End Homelessness With Homes](#)’ to which we contributed, argued for a new National Empty Homes Programme with £345.5m a year funding over 4 years to bring 40,000 additional homes back into use in ways that contribute to alleviating homelessness.

Action on Empty Homes believe this is a viable if conservative approach and that additional incentives and improvement to local council powers could increase this number, in the context of overall vacancy being recorded in Government data at around a million and recently suggested to be even higher by the ONS at over 1.3million in England:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/bulletins/numberofvacantandsecondhomesenglandandwales/census2021>

**Media enquiries: Chris Bailey on 07979 647 237 [chris.bailey@actiononemptyhomes.org](mailto:chris.bailey@actiononemptyhomes.org)**

**References and Notes To Editors:**

<sup>i</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/council-taxbase-2023-in-england/local-authority-council-taxbase-in-england-2023>

<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.actiononemptyhomes.org/facts-and-figures>