

## **Empty Homes FAQ's**

### **What powers does the council have?**

Where an owner persistently leaves a property empty, we have a range of powers, including:

- Legal action – We can take legal action where owners fail to improve the condition of the property themselves. We can carry out the work and recharge the owner for any costs plus additional expenses
- Enforced sale – Where we are owed money for works carried out in default, we can force the sale of the property to recover the debts
- Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) – Used as a last resort where an owner has resisted all voluntary attempts to bring the property back into use, we can apply to the courts to purchase the property
- Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMO) – If granted by a Residential Property Tribunal, we can take over the management of a property for a period of up to seven years when a property has been empty for more than six months.

### **I have an empty property what are my options?**

Blaby District Council's Empty Homes Team can assist you with bringing your property back into use via one of our Loans to carry out remedial works in order to secure a sale on the property or via one of a Grant to carry out remedial work to secure a tenancy for the property.

Our Housing Options Team will also assign you a personal Housing Support Officer who will guide you through the process of becoming a landlord and sourcing a suitable tenant.

### **Are there grants available to bring properties back into use?**

Yes – we can offer a Grant or Loan of up to £10,000 to help get properties back into use.

### **Why are the Empty Homes Team contacting me about my empty property?**

Blaby District Council's Empty Homes Team has been tasked with bringing empty properties within the District back into use. This is part of a national priority to make better use of the existing housing stock. This means that empty properties are monitored on an ongoing basis and action is taken to bring them back into use using a variety of methods. We aim to bring properties back into use to prevent empty properties from being seen as an "easy target" for antisocial behaviour (such as; crime, squatters & vandalism)

## **My property is in need of structural repairs and uninhabitable, will I be entitled to any reduction?**

You can contact the Council Tax Department at Blaby District Council or contact the local Valuation Office Agency for Leicester at The Valuation Office Agency, Ground Floor, Enkalon House, 92 Regent Road, Leicester LE1 7DD, telephone number 03000 501501 for information on any reductions that may be available.

## **I own an empty property, what are my responsibilities?**

It is recommended that if the property is left empty that you provide any contact information to our Empty Homes Team or the Council Tax Department. Any problems can then be reported to you directly to be acted upon.

You should visit the property regularly to ensure the following:

- It is secure
- Any gardens are maintained in a reasonable standard
- The external appearance of the house is kept in good order
- The property is not in a condition so as to cause defects to neighbouring homes.

## **How can I tell if a property is empty?**

The following signs usually indicate that a property may have been empty a long time:

- windows boarded up
- large amount of uncollected post
- garden is not being maintained
- disrepair or external damage e.g. broken window, vandalism
- information from neighbours
- no one registered to vote at the address

## **How do I report an empty property?**

Contact your Empty Homes Team on 0116 272 7555 or by email to [Emptyhomes@blaby.gov.uk](mailto:Emptyhomes@blaby.gov.uk)