



# GLASGOW CITY COUNCIL ADVICE FOR EMPTY HOMEOWNERS



## Introduction

Glasgow City Council has an Empty Homes Strategy and this can be found on the Council's website here:

<https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=48787&p=0>

## Information and Advice - Keep your empty home secure

### Occupation is the best security

The best way to keep your empty home safe and secure is to keep it occupied.

#### Managing your empty home

Even if your empty home is in good condition now, empty homes are more likely to be at risk of vandalism and criminal damage. Leaving a home empty can also result in higher maintenance and repair costs than occupied properties.

There are steps you can take to help reduce deterioration while your home is empty:

- maintain gardens and exterior spaces
- check the home regularly to make sure it is secure
- repair any accidental damage or vandalism
- hang curtains or blinds
- it is also a good idea to leave a contact telephone number with neighbours

## Insurance

Many insurance policies don't cover homes that are left empty for one to three months or more. If you have a mortgage you are legally required to have home insurance. Check with your insurance company to make sure your empty home is covered.

## Property fraud

Empty Homes can be an attractive target for property fraud but there are steps you can take to help prevent this:

- Make regular inspections of your home
- Keep your ownership details up to date on the Land Register which is maintained by the Registers of Scotland. Visit their website at [www.ros.gov.uk](http://www.ros.gov.uk) for more information
- Keep your details up to date with your utility providers/ Council Tax office.

If you believe you might have already been the victim of property fraud you should immediately contact Police Scotland. You may also want to contact a solicitor or the Citizens Advice Bureau for further advice.

## Empty homes in winter

There are several increased risks during the winter months. Water pipes can freeze which can cause them to burst. When a home is empty this can go unnoticed for some considerable time.

Simply putting the heating on for short periods is not enough to guarantee a problem-free winter. Acting now could prevent future problems.

A burst pipe can cause real damage to your home. This can also be complicated and costly to fix. There are steps you can take to prevent this kind of damage. These include insulation, repairing dripping taps and checking that your stopcock can be turned off easily. If a home is likely to be vacant for a long time it is advised that you have the water and heating systems drained down.

## Selling your Empty Home

If you are considering selling your empty home, you probably want to achieve a prompt sale. It is frustrating and costly to have a property on the market for a long period, and if you are carrying out the viewings yourself, this can be very time consuming. A quick sale will reduce your costs for the property and reduce the risk of the property being vandalised or falling into disrepair.

## Setting an Asking Price

You should set an asking price that reflects the condition of the property, the location and the current housing market. You will require a Homebuyer report completed by a qualified surveyor for selling your home and this will include a market valuation. Another option to get a clear idea of what the "market value" might be, is to look at what similar type properties have sold for recently in the same area and then consider the condition of your property.

## Demonstrate the Potential

While small repair issues are ideally dealt with before marketing your property, properties can be sold with works outstanding. Where this is the case it can be useful to take some small steps to help buyers see the potential of the

property.

Where works are required, obtain quotes to show buyers the costs involved so they can factor them in. This can make the work less daunting to buyers.

## [ Statutory Consents

If the property requires major works prior to selling/occupying you may require planning permission or a building warrant. Further information can be obtained on the Council's website here: <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=16170>

## [ Selling via Estate Agents

The important thing to remember is that the Estate Agent is there to work for you and sell your property. Don't be afraid to ask them plenty of questions prior to agreeing to sell with them and throughout the process.

- How will they market your Property?
- Will they use the internet – if so, do they use other sites apart from their own? Ask if they use the big online advertisers such as Zoopla or Rightmove.
- Will they advertise in newspapers, and if so, which ones? Find out what local newspapers there are and if they will feature your property in them.
- How good is their own website, does it include both photographs and text? Is it easily accessible?

## Selecting a Shortlist of Estate Agents

Make sure the agent has experience of selling property like yours – check for properties like your own in their shop window or online. A good agent will always invest in marketing to ensure they get the best price for each property.

## Selling at Auction

Putting an empty property up for auction can be an affordable and quick way to sell and some auction companies will facilitate viewings on the owner's behalf. If the property requires major refurbishment or is a development opportunity, auction may be your best option for selling. If the property has planning permission and/or building warrants granted for required works you should disclose this information as this may attract more interest from prospective buyers.

The auction websites generally provide property information such as basic details about the location, local amenities, a description and photographs. There are auction houses who have tailored packages specifically for owners with empty homes.



## Renting your Empty Property

### Becoming a Landlord

If you are thinking of letting out your property, then you will require to ensure that it meets the 'Repairing Standard'. A checklist of what this entails is available on the Council's website here: <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=38809&p=0>

You are legally required to register as a private landlord to enable the local authority to determine if you are a 'fit and proper' person. You can apply directly on the Landlord Registration Scotland Website here: <https://www.landlordregistrationscotland.gov.uk>

The Council's Private Landlord Registration Team (PLRU) can provide guidance and support to landlords at all stages of the process of renting your property, they can also assist you to register as a landlord and to ensure your property meets



the legal requirements. Contact details for PLRU can be found here:

<https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=18308>

Glasgow City Council can provide further guidance and support for landlords. For details please see here:

<https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=21518>

## Incentives to Empty Homeowners

### Builders Merchants Discount

Empty homes practitioners have secured discounts from a few national builders merchants and companies on a range of products for empty homeowners to assist them in bringing their property back into use.

### Products

The companies offering discounts supply a wide range of products, for example:

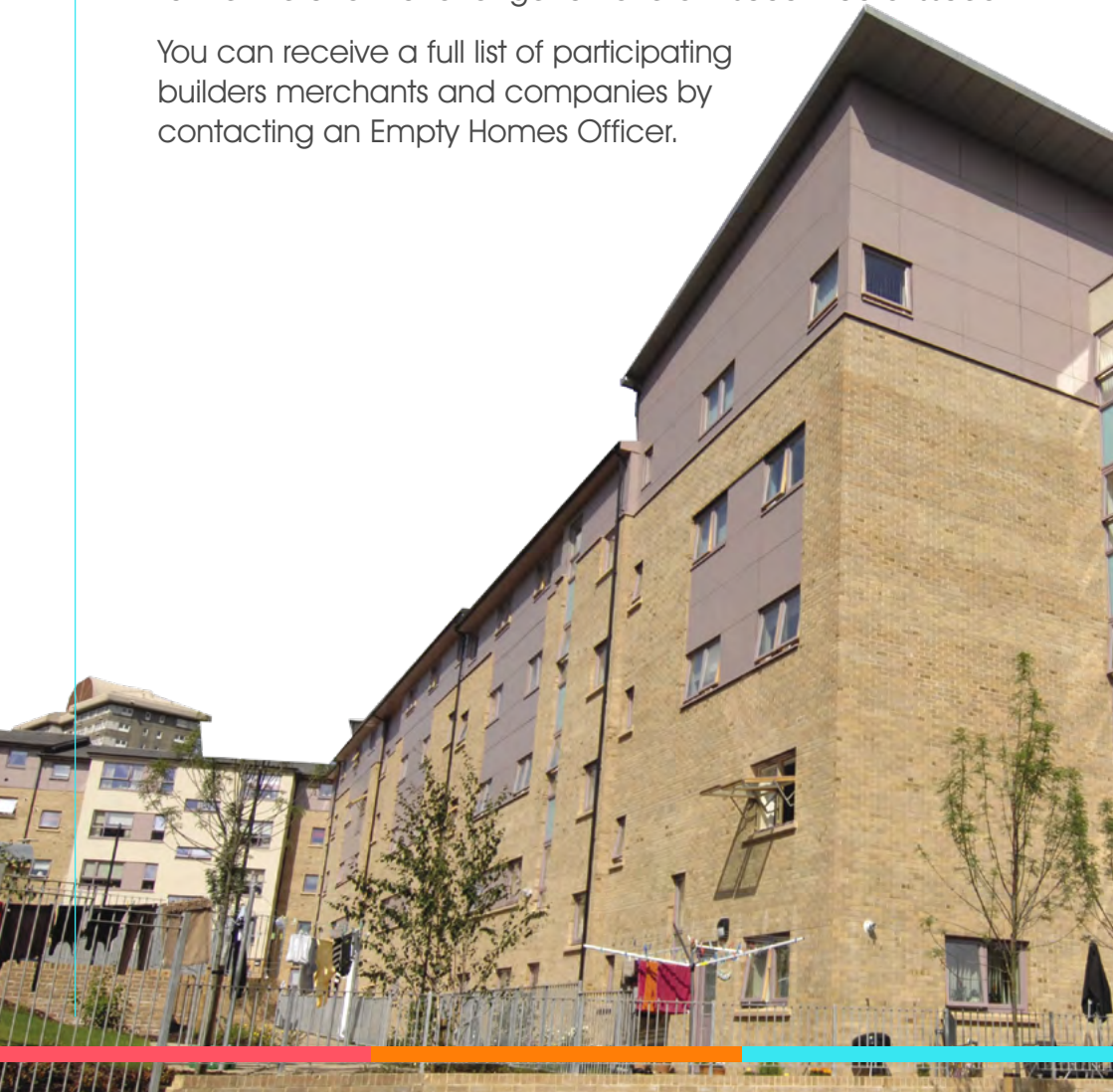
- Building materials: bricks, cement etc.
- Painting and decorating
- Kitchens and bathrooms
- Flooring and tiles
- Timber and sheet materials
- Insulation
- Property Security



## How can you access these discounts?

If you are an empty homeowner who would like to explore the benefits of purchasing goods from a participating company, you should contact an Empty Homes Officer to discuss your plan for bringing the empty property back into use. The officer can then contact the company giving the owner's details, and either issue a letter for the owner to take to the merchant or arrange to have a Discount card issued.

You can receive a full list of participating builders merchants and companies by contacting an Empty Homes Officer.



## VAT Reductions

If your property has been empty for over two years and you are having work carried out by a VAT approved contractor, you may qualify for a discounted rate of 5% VAT on building supplies. If your property has been empty for more than 10 years, you may be eligible to pay zero VAT on building supplies.

To access these discounts and obtain further information, please contact an Empty Homes Officer who can verify how long your property has been empty and issue the evidence letter for your contractor.

## Owner(s) Responsibility

Empty properties are still liable for council tax charges. You may be eligible for a discount/exemption to cover a period of time the property is empty. For further information on Council Tax Exemptions and Discounts, please see the Council's website here:

<https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=17353>



Please note that a 'premium' charge may be applied to your property if it has been lying empty for more than 12 months. For further information please see the Council's website here: <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=17169>

For any advice on the above please contact an Empty Homes Officer

Glasgow City Council - Empty Homes Officers

By Email - [emptyhomes@glasgow.gov.uk](mailto:emptyhomes@glasgow.gov.uk)

By Phone - Alison McLavin 0141 287 1373

Anne Robinson 0141 287 7994

<https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/emptyhomes>

For impartial advice on repairs and maintenance for flat owners in Scotland please go to Under One Roof website - <http://www.underoneroof.scot/>





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