



## The Council's Role with Empty Homes

Falkirk Council's Empty Homes Officer actively encourages owners of properties to return them to use. It is an owner's responsibility to look after their property. However, if a home gets "stuck" as an empty, the Council can play a role in helping to fix the problem. The Empty Homes Officer will work with owners in these areas, and with other services within the Council to find the best ways to bring empty properties back into use.

## Why deal with Empty Homes?

An empty property is a waste of a useful resource when so many of households are waiting for housing within the Council. They cost money to tax and maintain and represent a considerable amount of lost rental income. Long term empty homes represent a wasted resource, and cause a number of problems. They:

- are a waste of a property that could provide an additional home in an area of high housing need
- attract crime and anti-social behaviour
- reduce the value of surrounding properties
- are an eyesore in the neighbourhood
- are costly for the owner to maintain
- are costly for the local authority to investigate

When an empty property owner thinks of the benefit of a regular income, the possibility of grant assistance to help bring the property up to a habitable standard and the satisfaction of knowing that the property will become a home for a family in need, and the benefits of returning an empty property to use become hard to ignore.

## Help for Empty Homes

Your Empty Homes Officer can offer a range of advice and assistance to help you consider the options available to bring your property back into use. These include:

- Advice on **renting** out your property. The Council can assist with becoming a Private Registered Landlord and can supply a list of local letting agents.
- Assistance on **selling** the property, advice on obtaining a Home Report, how to pick an Estate Agent and general selling tips.
- **Matchmaker** Scheme - a dating agency for homes
- Help with **renovations and repairs**. The Empty Homes Project has organised a number of discounts with traders too
- The Empty Homes Officer can liaise on your behalf with the **Energy Saving Scotland advice centre (ESSac)**. Specific measures and grants may be suitable to your situation.
- There are a number of Schemes run by the Council that your property may be eligible for:
  - **Deposit Guarantee Scheme**
  - **Buy Back Scheme**

**For further information and referrals, please contact your Empty Homes Officer:**

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