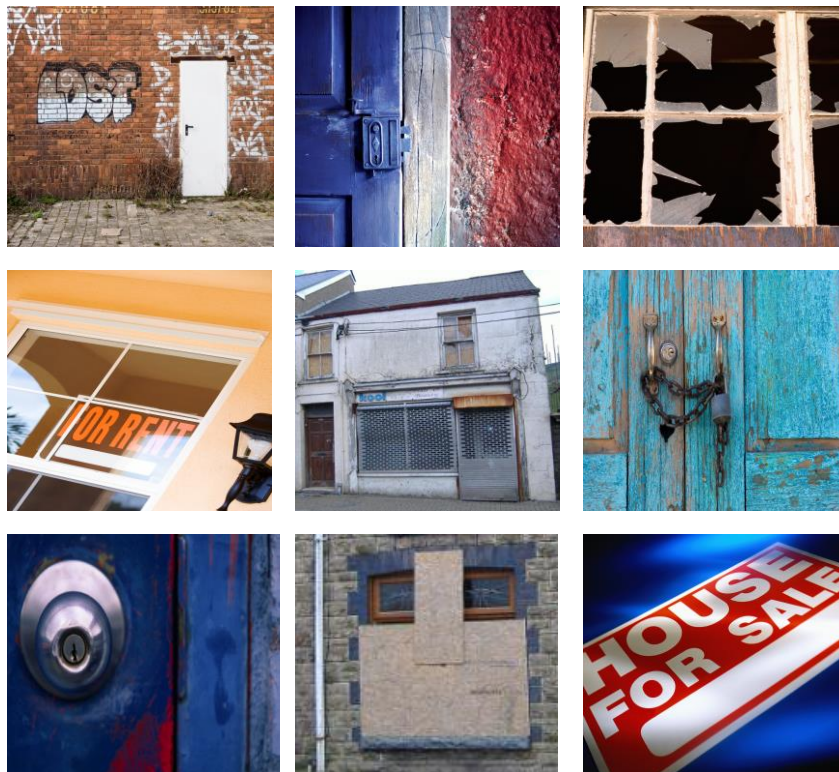


# Housing and Community Regeneration

## Empty Homes Information Pack



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol



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# Introduction

## What is an empty home?

An empty home is a dwelling that has been empty for six months or more. There can be several reasons why a property is empty and Bridgend Council is committed to working with owners to find solutions to bring empty homes back into use.

## Why bring an empty home back into use?

By bringing an empty home back into use it can:

- Increase the supply of good quality affordable housing;
- Contribute to strong balanced housing markets and community sustainability;
- Give owners' choice by improving sales potential or providing rental income rather than allowing properties to become wasted assets;
- Reduce the risk of vandalism, arson or squatting and the fear of crime;
- Enhance the viability and vitality of town centres by bringing empty flats above shops back into use.

## How can an empty home be brought back into use?

An empty home can be brought back into use by selling the property, or renting or renovating it to bring it up to a lettable standard. The Authority is looking at a number of initiatives to encourage owners to bring these empty homes back into use and may be able to provide you with advice or assistance in doing this.

We do understand that some homes are left empty because they are used as second homes or as holiday homes and assistance may therefore not be required.

If an empty home is particularly problematic and the empty home owner is not compliant and all negotiations have failed, the Local Authority will consider taking appropriate enforcement action to ensure that the empty home is returned to a habitable condition and brought back into use. Enforcement actions may include empty dwelling management orders, enforced sale, compulsory purchase orders or voluntary acquisition.

## Who can I contact if I have any queries?

If you have any queries regarding your empty home, please contact 01656 643681, or emailing [housing@bridgend.gov.uk](mailto:housing@bridgend.gov.uk). Alternatively, you can write to Housing & Community Regeneration, Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend, CF31 4WB.

# Empty Homes Grant

## What is the Empty Homes Grant?

The Empty Homes Grant forms part of the Authority's overall approach to tackling empty properties in the Borough and will assist in increasing the supply of affordable rented accommodation. The Authority will determine the works necessary to bring a property back into use, in consultation with the Public Protection Department. Works must not have commenced before the application is approved, and must be completed within 6 months of the approval.

## What is the maximum grant amount?

Where a property has been identified as being empty on the Authority's empty property register;

- £10,000 or 75% of eligible costs, whichever is the lesser amount, per unit for a like for like conversion, i.e. if a two bed house is brought back into use as a two bed house.
- £15,000 or 75% of eligible costs, whichever is the lesser amount, per unit for a conversion into more units, i.e. if a two bed house is brought back into use as two one bed flats.
- £9,000 or 75% of eligible costs, whichever is the lesser amount, per unit for a conversion into units that have shared facilities i.e. bedsit type units that share facilities, such as a kitchen, bathroom or both.

For a commercial or non-residential empty property (which does not appear on the residential empty property register)

- £15,000 or 75% of eligible costs, whichever is the lesser amount, per unit where a non-residential property is converted into residential property, (subject to appropriate Planning Permission being obtained).
- £9,000 or 75% of eligible costs, whichever is the lesser amount, per unit for a conversion into units that have shared facilities i.e. bedsit type units that share facilities, such as a kitchen, bathroom or both.

It will include all costs for eligible works, specialist reports and preliminary and ancillary charges; and/or where a property has been vacant for a minimum of 6 months and eligible for an Empty Property Loan; 100% of eligible costs. It will include fees payable for Planning Application, Building Regulations, Land Registry title and title plan, reasonable RICS Valuation fee, Registering a charge at Companies House (if necessary); but excluding the Application administration Fee for the Empty Property Loan and excluding any eligible works. Only to be considered, if in the Authority's opinion, the property is suitable for social letting by nomination agreement with the Council or its appointed agent.

## To be eligible the applicant must:

- Be aged 18 or over on the date of the grant application;
- Have an owner's interest in the property and must be able to certify intent to let the dwelling to a person who is not a member of his or her family throughout the grant condition period of 3 years;
- Be (or their appointed management agents be) registered with Rent Smart Wales, under the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 (and provide documentary evidence). See page 13.

## To be eligible the property must:

- Be over 10 years old and identified as being empty on the Authority's empty homes register (except for the conversion of non-residential units into residential units). This is a list of residential dwellings that have been empty for 6 months or more and have been identified by the Authority's Taxation Department as paying an empty dwelling council tax rate;
- Be considered, in the Authority's opinion, to be suitable for social letting at the time of application, taking into account the size and location of the property.
- Be free from Category 1 hazards on completion of works (Please see page 20);
- Be rented on completion of works, at the rate of the local housing allowance, and be available for nomination by the Authority or their appointed agent for a period of 3 years (repayment conditions will apply). Local housing allowance is based on the needs of the household and not the size of the property. Local housing allowance can be paid directly to the landlord in certain circumstances, with prior agreement from the tenant. Example local housing allowance rates are below (please note that a single person under the age of 35 is only entitled to the shared room rate):

Shared room rate	£55.23 weekly;	1 bedroom need	£80.55 weekly;
2 bedroom need	£103.56 weekly;	3 bedroom need	£115.06 weekly;
4 bedroom need	£149.59 weekly;		

- Not be the subject of a demolition order under the Housing Acts; and
- Not have received assistance for the same works during the previous 10 year period.

## What works are eligible?

- Renewal or repair of defective roof coverings including all lead work and ridge tiles;
- Rebuilding or re-pointing defective chimney stacks including all appropriate lead trays, soakers and flashings where necessary;
- Renewal of fascias, soffits, bargeboards, rainwater guttering and downpipes;
- Re-point external stonework or re-render defective external rendering to prevent ingress of penetrating damp;
- Renewal of defective timber or aluminium windows with UPVC double glazed windows;
- Renewal of external doors with secure by design type UPVC doors to improve security;
- Renewal of defective electrical re-wiring to upgrade for safety purposes, (subject to suitable appropriate electrical report);
- Renewal of defective ceilings, plasterwork and skirting boards affected by penetrating dampness;
- Works to eradicate rising dampness with the injection of a chemical damp proof course by a suitable approved specialist contractor;
- Repairs to staircase for safety reasons;
- Provision of a suitable bath or shower, wash hand basin and W.C. including all necessary plumbing. (These items will only be allowed where no bathroom exists at the property);
- Provision of a sink unit and associated plumbing where no existing kitchen exists;
- Provision of suitable boiler for heating of water for hot water to all amenities within the bathroom and kitchen, (not replacement boilers).

Any other works carried out in addition to those awarded within the grant must ensure the property is eradicated from Category 1 hazards as identified within the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (Please see page 20).

All works are awarded at the discretion of the council and does mean that all the works listed will be considered within the grant, if a grant is approved. All properties will be subject to an inspection before any works commence to identify the eligible works for grant assistance. Also on completion the property will be inspected by officers of the Council and will need to meet the required standard to enable the occupants to live within the property in a safe, suitable and satisfactory environment.

## What works are NOT eligible?

- Replacement of internal doors;
- Renewal of existing bathroom suites, kitchen sink and kitchen base/wall units;
- Replacement of internal and external decoration;
- Renewal of light fittings, internal window cill boards;
- Renewal of existing central heating boilers and radiators;
- Any other works considered as day to day maintenance and the responsibility of the house owner;

## What are the repayment conditions?

100% of the grant is repayable for up to 3 years following the date of certification if:

1. The property is vacant for a period of 6 months or more;
2. The property is disposed of;
3. The nomination agreement with the Council or its appointed agent is not being met.

The applicant, together with any joint owner, will be required to agree to a legal charge being taken on the property, or any other form of security as the Authority deems appropriate in order to ensure repayment of the grant.

## How do I apply?

You will need to complete an “Empty Homes Grant Expression of Interest Form”. On receipt of the completed form the Authority will check that you and the property comply with the eligibility criteria, and specifically check if the property, in the Authority’s opinion, is suitable for social letting, taking into account the size and location of the property. If you or the property does not comply with the eligibility criteria, you will be notified of this in writing and the reasons why.

If you and the property do comply with the eligibility criteria, we will contact you to arrange for a surveyor to visit the property. The surveyor will visit the property at a pre-arranged time together with yourself or your agent, and will be able to answer any specific questions you may have about the work or the application. The eligible works will be identified and the schedule of grant aided works will be produced. If for any reason the works are not eligible for grant assistance, you will be informed at the time of the survey being carried out.

Following this you will be sent an Empty Homes Grant Application Form, a Certificate of Intended Lending and a Supplementary Questionnaire for you to complete. You will also be sent a copy of the schedule of grant aided works.

# Homes in Town Grant

## What is the Homes in Town Grant?

The Homes in Towns Grant (HIT) is designed to encourage town centre living to breathe life and vitality back into the area and to increase the supply of affordable accommodation and forms part of the Authority's overall approach to tackling vacant space in the Bridgend Town Centre.

The HIT grant will be prioritised in the target area that mirrors the Townscape Heritage Initiative grant area in the first instance, however key buildings will also be considered in the wider town centre area that demonstrate a business case to attract additional grant aid. These areas are outlined in the map on page 9. An application will only be considered, if in the Authority's opinion, the property is suitable for letting through a referral agreement with the Council or its appointed agent.

The Authority will determine the works necessary to bring a property back into use. Works must not have commenced before the application is approved, and must be commenced within 6 months and completed within 12 months of the approval. This grant can be combined with other grants such as Townscape Heritage Initiative and Empty Property Loans available from the Council, to a combined maximum value of £150,000, per applicant, per annum.

## What is the maximum grant amount?

Where a property has been identified as having empty or vacant space, a grant to assist the conversion or create residential premises will be made up in the following ways;

- 85% of the cost, up to a maximum of £10,000, to create a separate access (if one is not already present) to the residential premises; and
- 85% of any works identified/recommended as the result of an Acoustic survey; and
- 60% of the cost, up to a maximum of £30,000 per unit of accommodation, for the conversion of vacant space into a residential unit.

Assistance to pay professional fees, e.g. Planning and Building Regulations at 100%. Any grant assistance will include all costs for eligible works, specialist reports and preliminary and ancillary charges, if not already funded through a separate grant.

In addition, an applicant may apply for an Empty Property Loan if the property has been vacant for a minimum of 6 months. If approved, the applicant can receive 100% of eligible costs of works not included in any other grant works.

This grant can be combined with any other grants such as Townscape Heritage Initiative and Empty Property Loans available from the Council, to a combined maximum value of €500,000, per applicant (s), over any three year fiscal period as it relates to a particular applicant, subject to this being in compliance with European Union de Minimis State Aid Regulations including procedural requirements.



### To be eligible the applicant must:

- Be aged 18 or over on the date of the grant application;
- Have an owner's interest in the property and must be able to certify intent to let the dwelling to a person who is not a member of his or her family throughout the grant condition period of 3 years (or 4 years if receiving assistance for a separate access);
- Be (or their appointed management agents be) registered with Rent Smart Wales, under the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 (and provide documentary evidence). See page 13.

### To be eligible the property must:

- Be over 10 years old and identified as being suitable for conversion into residential use;
- Be considered, in the Authority's opinion, to be suitable for letting at Local Housing Allowance at the time of application;
- Be free from Category 1 hazards on completion of works;
- Be rented on completion of works, at the rate of the Local Housing Allowance and be made available under the any specific Council Lettings Policy in place at the time of referral for a minimum period of 3 years where 1-5 units are created and 5 years where 6 or more units are created;
- Not be the subject of a demolition order under the Housing Acts; and
- Not have received assistance for the same works during the previous 10 year period.

### What are the repayment conditions?

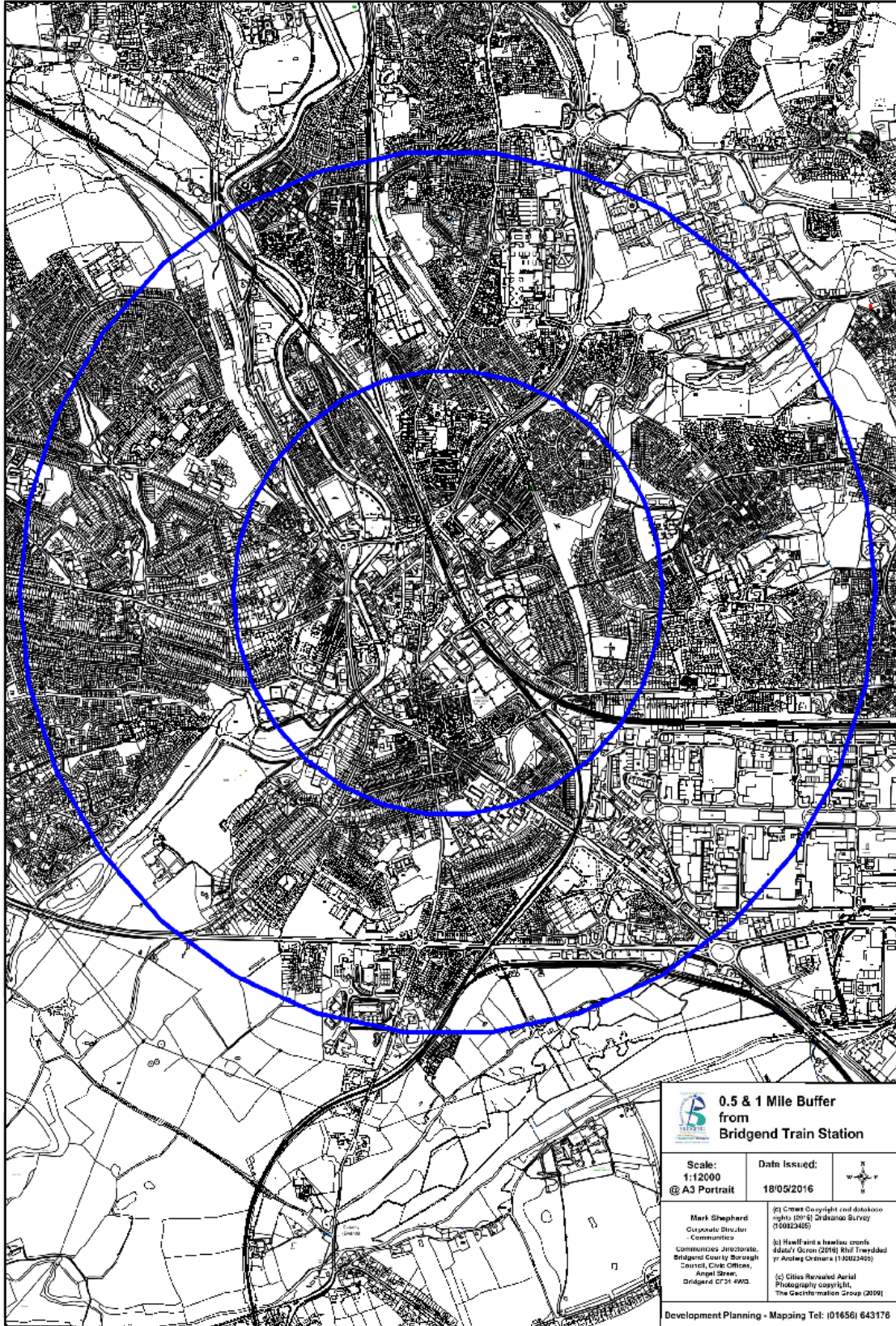
100% grant is repayable following the date of certification if:

1. The property is vacant for a period of 6 months or more;
2. The property is disposed of;
3. The referral agreement with the Council or its appointed agent is not being met.

This will apply for the following length of time;

- Be free from Category 1 hazards on completion of works;
- 3 years where the grant payable was up to £150,000
- 5 years where the grant payable was £150,001+

The applicant, together with any joint owner, will be required to agree to a legal charge being taken on the property, or any other form of security as the Authority deems appropriate in order to ensure repayment of the grant.



# Houses into Homes Empty Property Loans

## What are Empty Property Loans?

Empty Property Loans are loans being made available through the Houses into Homes Initiative to enable the renovation and improvement of single properties or the conversion of empty properties into a number of units, so that they are suitable for use as residential accommodation.



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

## To be eligible the applicant must:

- be aged 18 or over on the date of the loan application;
- not be an owner occupier;
- be present at the time of the survey and submit all relevant information requested by Bridgend County Borough Council;
- be individuals or companies who already own an empty property or are considering buying an empty property in Bridgend County Borough;
- provide for individuals (3 months pay slips), charities (3 years accounts), and companies/businesses (3 years accounts);
- not have an outstanding debt to Bridgend County Borough Council or outstanding charges against the property; and
- must pay Bridgend County Borough Council the relevant application Fee on submission of the final application.

## To be eligible the property must:

- have been vacant for a minimum of 6 months;
- be in receipt of planning permission if the loan is to convert empty commercial properties into residential accommodation;
- be considered, in the Authority's opinion, to be suitable for social or private letting; or sale at the time of application;
- be renovated to a reasonable standard, comply with all relevant Building Regulations and Planning Permissions, be free from serious hazards and comply with the Houses into Homes Standard on completion of the works;
- be suitable for immediate occupation, whether by for sale (loan to sell) or to let (loan to let) on completion of the works;
- not be the subject of a demolition order under the Housing Acts;
- not have received assistance for the same works during the previous 10 year period;
- not be under an insurance claim or third party claim;
- not include works outside the curtilage of the property unless they relate to the provision of essential services such as water, gas or electricity; and
- not be used by the applicant and/or his family as their home.

## What is the maximum amount of loan I can apply for?

£25,000 per property or unit, up to a total maximum of £250,000 per applicant. It will include all costs for eligible works, specialist reports and preliminary and ancillary charges. Where the cost of the works exceed the value of the loan, then the applicant must be able to show that they have adequate funds to complete the development.

There will be a maximum of 80% loan to value, based on the current value and condition of the property offered as security, supported by an independent valuation by the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors and local authority land search.

Therefore, if you have an existing mortgage of £65,000 on a property with a current market value of £100,000, then the maximum loan that can be approved is £15,000; £65,000 & £15,000 = £80,000 (Maximum 80% Loan to value).

It is possible in certain cases for another property to be used as security for the loan. Where the cost of the works exceeds the value of the loan, then the applicant must be able to show that they have adequate funds to complete the development.

Funding will be available in two instalments: 50% up front to provide working capital; 50% when reasonable progress is considered to have been made.

## What do I have to do with the property or units after completion of the works?

You can either let the property/units or you can sell the property/units to a new owner. Loans are not available for people wanting to renovate the property and live in it as their principal home.

## Does the works/conversion have to be carried out to any sort of standards?

Yes. All work must be carried out in accordance with any planning permissions or building regulation approvals made in respect of the property. Additionally the property/units must comply with the Houses into Homes Standard on completion of the works. Further details about the standard are contained in the loans terms and conditions booklet that will be provided to you by the surveyor.

## Are there any conditions attached to approving the loan?

- You must carry out the conversion/repair works within an agreed time period.
- The property/units must be made available for sale or for let within a reasonable period of time after completing the works (12 weeks), and if they are not then the loan may become repayable.
- The loan must be repaid either on or before the date as specified in your Loan Facility Agreement.
- A financial charge will be made on the property for the lifetime of the loan.

## When will I have to repay the loan?

- If you are renovating a single property, which is to be sold, the loan must be repaid when the property is sold or up to 2 years from the date of the loan approval, whichever is the sooner.
- If you are converting a property into a number of units, which are to be sold on completion of the works, it is expected that the loan must be repaid on sale of the first unit, or 2 years, whichever is the sooner. However we will endeavour to arrange a mutually agreeable repayment schedule.
- If the property/units are to be made available for letting the loan must be repaid within 5 years from the date of the loan approval.
- All loans can be repaid earlier if the applicant wishes to do so.

## Are the loans secured loans?

Yes. All loans approved must be secured by a first or second financial charge being secured against the property. If there is an existing mortgage on the property we will need the lenders consent to secure our charge.

## Are there any fees associated with the loan being issued?

Yes. There will be an administration fee based on the loan amount (£295 for up to £50,000, £395 for loans between £50,001-£100,000 and £495 for loans over £100,000). There will also be a Land Registry fee of £50 for loans up to £100,000, £70 for loans between £100,001 and £200,000 and £90 for loans over £200,000. In addition, if you are applying as a Company there is an additional Land Registry fee of £45.

## What is the interest rate for the loan?

The loans are interest free, providing there is no default on the loan. Where any sum is required to be paid, but is not repaid in accordance with the loan conditions, a breach of conditions will have occurred. In such instances Bridgend County Borough Council may demand immediate repayment of the loan and this may result in interest being incurred.

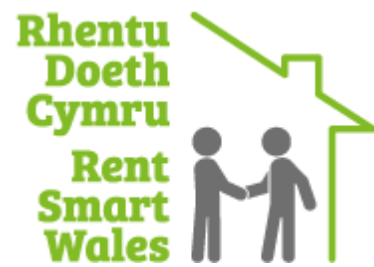
## I am interested in applying for a loan, what do I do next?

You will need to complete the enclosed "Houses into Homes Initial Application Form". On receipt of your completed Initial Application Form we will contact you to arrange for a surveyor to visit the property. If you are deemed eligible, the surveyor will determine the works necessary to bring the property back into use in consultation with you and a schedule of works will be agreed prior to the offer of any loan.

**Any works that have been carried out prior to the surveyor visiting the property are not eligible for loan assistance. Only works that the surveyor includes in the schedule of works will be eligible for assistance. It is advised not to begin any of the works identified until you have received confirmation that the loan has been approved.**

### Rent Smart Wales

Under the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, there are new legal obligations on landlords who have rental property in Wales. The Rent Smart Wales website [www.rentsmart.gov.wales](http://www.rentsmart.gov.wales) explains these obligations and will help you to understand the process.



Landlords operating anywhere in Wales can comply with the new law by completing the appropriate application on the website. To start the process, you must create an account.

#### Landlord Registration

Any landlord who has a rental property in Wales which is rented on an assured, assured shorthold or regulated tenancy is required to register. Depending on how a property is owned will determine who needs to register it. All registrations are completed with Rent Smart Wales. Registration costs £33.50 online, however a paper application is also available and registration lasts 5 years.

#### Landlord Licensing

Landlords who are not involved in setting up tenancies and managing their rental properties do not need a licence; however they must use a licensed agent and register as a landlord declaring their agent on the registration. Landlords who do undertake letting and management tasks at their rental properties in Wales are required to apply for a licence. Such landlords are often described as 'self-managing'. This licence also lasts for 5 years and costs £187.

For more information on how the new law applies to you please go to the Rent Smart Wales website at [www.rentsmart.gov.wales](http://www.rentsmart.gov.wales).

If you are a Landlord, or an employee of a landlord, who completed training with LAW before the 6th August 2015, you will need to complete the online top up course "Part 1 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014: An Overview". You can book this now by accessing your Training Record in your personal user account. If you completed LAWs training on or after the 6th August 2015 then your training record is sufficient for your Licence. Your training course will have included all the information about the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, so you will not need to complete the further top up training course.

## Selling your property by auction

### What are the advantages of selling my property at auction?

As the auctioneers require as many bidders as possible to turn up to the event, good advertising is of utmost importance. By selling at auction you can be assured that your property will achieve maximum marketing exposure across a wide range of media.

Unlike selling via an estate agent, once the gavel falls the purchaser has a legal obligation to complete the sale of the property. This eradicates the complication of a prospective purchaser withdrawing from the sale as can happen when a property is sold subject to contract via the estate agency method.

There is also the added benefit of speed of sale by selling at auction. Once the sale has been agreed, it usually only takes 20 working days for completion.

With realistic guide prices it is also the best way to achieve a good sale price.

### How do I decide which auctioneer to use?

There are numerous auctioneers that provide services across Bridgend County Borough. Most auctioneers cover South Wales or the whole of Wales and hold auctions on a monthly or quarterly basis in various locations. This list is not exhaustive and Bridgend County Borough Council does not have an affiliation with any of these auctioneers.



**Paul Fosh Auctions**  
87 Church Road  
Newport  
NP19 7EH  
Tel: 01633 254044



**Seel & Co**  
The Crown House  
Wyndham Crescent  
Canton, Cardiff  
CF11 9UH  
Tel: 02920 370100



**All Wales Auction**  
Ty Croes Cwrlwys  
Cophorne Way  
Valegate Retail Park  
Culverhouse Cross  
CF5 6EH  
Tel: 0800 905 905



**Property Auctions Wales**  
3 Kings Road  
Llandovery  
Carmarthenshire  
SA20 0AW  
Tel: 01550 720440



**Watts & Morgan**  
1 Nolton Street  
Bridgend  
CF31 1BX  
Tel: 01656 644288  
(ARLA)

### Renting or selling your property through the Bridgend Housing Options website

The Bridgend Housing Options website aims to help those looking for a home to make choices about the most suitable housing options available to them. It offers information about private renting, social renting (housing associations), affordable housing and older persons housing in Bridgend County Borough. It is therefore an ideal location for landlords and owners of empty properties to advertise their properties for rent or for sale, completely free of charge.



#### Advertise your private rented property for free!

To register your interest in advertising your available private rented properties on the Bridgend Housing Options website go to [www.bridgendhousing.co.uk](http://www.bridgendhousing.co.uk). Your application will require approval which may involve us calling or emailing you to confirm your details. Once your property is rented it is your responsibility to remove the property from the website.

#### Advertise your property for sale for free!

If you own a property that is currently empty and want to sell it you can register and advertise it free of charge on the website. Your personal details or the address of the empty property will never be advertised. They will remain completely confidential. However, the general area, property type and property size will be advertised, including any photos you add. These details will only be available to view by people who have registered on the site as looking to buy an empty property. If someone is interested in buying your property you will be sent a message via the website. Your personal details or the address of the empty property will not be provided unless you choose to respond to the message and provide these details.

If your property is sold it is your responsibility to remove the property from the site. You should also advise your estate agent, if you have one. We do not get involved in any way with the sale of the property and do not offer any advice to sellers or buyers. To register your interest in advertising your properties for sale on the Bridgend Housing Options website go to [www.bridgendhousing.co.uk](http://www.bridgendhousing.co.uk).

#### What other information can I find on the website?

There is also information on legislation and regulation as well as rents and bonds. If there is any other information you would like to see on the Bridgend Housing Options website, please complete the "contact us" form included in the website. All comments and suggestions will be gratefully received.



## Renting your property through a private letting agent

### How do I decide which letting agent to use?

There are a number of lettings agents in the County Borough that can assist you in letting and managing a private rented tenancy. Further details of these, including contact information, can be found below. This list is not exhaustive and Bridgend County Borough Council does not have an affiliation with any of these letting agents. Letting agents who have signed up to a scheme such as Rent Smart Wales, the National Approved Letting Scheme Scheme (NALS) or the Association of Residential Letting Agents (ARLA) will provide professional standards of service to both landlord and tenant. It is always advisable to check if the letting agent has signed up to any of these and other relevant schemes.

### What services can a letting agent provide?

The services letting agents provide may include: advising you on rent levels and insurance; finding tenants and checking references; collecting rent and holding the money in a separate client account; providing a monthly statement; arranging utilities safety checks and transferring bills into the tenants' name; arranging routine maintenance work; arranging regular inspections of the property; and dealing with all legal and administrative paperwork between tenant and landlord. Fees vary from agency to agency. As landlord you would be responsible for insuring the building and major repairs and maintenance.

### Who are the letting agents that operate in Bridgend County Borough?



**Abode Lets**  
PO Box 217  
Bridgend  
CF31 9DS  
Tel: 01656 667606



**A1 Lettings**  
Unit 6, Bowrington  
Arcade, Neath Road  
Maesteg, CF34 9EE  
Tel: 01656 737 773  
(NALS)



**The Letting Company**  
35 Oxford Street,  
Pontycymer, Bridgend  
CF32 8DD  
Tel: 0330 999 1010  
(ARLA)



**Chris Packer**  
20 Dunraven Place  
Bridgend  
CF31 1JD  
Tel: 01656 656551  
(ARLA)



**Payton Jewell Caines**  
8 Dunraven Place  
Bridgend  
CF31 1JD  
Tel: 01656 654328  
(RICS & LAW)



**Watts & Morgan**  
1 Nolton Street  
Bridgend  
CF31 1BX  
Tel: 01656 644288  
(ARLA)



**Ferriers**  
29 Llynfi Road  
Maesteg  
CF34 9DS  
Tel: 01656 733291  
(ARLA)



**Gareth L. Edwards**  
4-6 Dunraven Place  
Bridgend  
CF31 1JD  
Tel: 01656 653274  
(ARLA)

## Selling your property

### Who are the estate agents that operate in Bridgend County Borough?

There are a number of estate agents that operate in Bridgend County Borough. Further details of these, including contact information, can be found below. This list is not exhaustive and Bridgend County Borough Council does not have an affiliation with any of the estate agents.

An estate agent with this symbol next to their logo also auction properties.



**Chris Packer**  
20 Dunraven Place  
Bridgend  
CF31 1JD  
Tel: 01656 656551



**Elite Property**  
2 Walters Road  
Ogmore Vale  
CF32 7DN  
Tel: 01656 841271



**Evans Jones**  
23 Bridge Street  
Kenfig Hill  
CF33 6DB  
Tel: 01656 742363



**Ferriers**  
29 Lynfi Road  
Maesteg  
CF34 9DS  
Tel: 01656 733291



**Gareth L. Edwards**  
4-6 Dunraven Place  
Bridgend  
CF31 1JD  
Tel: 01656 653274



**Herbert R. Thomas**  
59 High Street  
Cowbridge  
CF71 7YL  
Tel: 01656 772911



**Pencoed Property**  
3a Penybont Road  
Pencoed  
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**Peter Morgan**  
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**Prestons**  
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**Reed Evans**  
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CF31 1JF  
Tel: 0845 2246392



**T. Elwood Deere & Son**  
44 John Street  
Porthcawl  
CF36 3BB  
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**Thompsons**  
69 John Street  
Porthcawl  
CF36 3AY  
Tel: 0845 4745736



**Watts & Morgan**  
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**Wisemove**  
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Pontycymmer  
CF32 8DD  
Tel: 0845 4636518



**Clee Tompkinson Francis**  
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# VAT discounts for empty homes

## What VAT discounts can I obtain?

If you are bringing an empty property back into use that has not been lived in during the 2 years immediately before your work starts and is intended for use solely for a 'relevant residential purpose' you may be eligible for a reduced rate VAT.

## How can the Local Authority assist?

The Local Authority can write an official letter to the developer / house owner confirming how long the property has been empty if required. This is the developers or house owners' evidence if Customs need to check. If you require this letter to be sent to you, please contact the Housing Strategy Team using the contact details on page 2 of this information pack.

## Who do I contact for further information?

Telephone the Customs and Excise National Advice Service on 0845 010 9000. Alternatively view the Customs and Excise website at [www.hmrc.gov.uk](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk) and search for Public Notice 708, Buildings and Construction.

### Category 1 hazards

#### What is the Housing Health and Safety Rating System?

The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) is a risk based evaluation tool to help local authorities identify and protect against potential risks and hazards to health and safety from any deficiencies identified in dwellings. It was introduced under the Housing Act 2004 and came into effect on 6 April 2006. It enables authorities to take action against a range of housing conditions, from very severe hazards to more minor hazards. The HHSRS assessment is based on the risk to the potential occupant who is most vulnerable to that hazard.

#### What are the 29 categories of housing hazard?

The HHSRS assesses 29 categories of housing hazard. Each hazard has a weighting which will help determine whether the property is rated as having Category 1 (serious) or Category 2 (other). The hazards that can be assessed are those associated with or arising from:

Physiological Requirements	Protection Against Accidents
Damp and mould growth	Falls associated with baths etc.
Excess cold	Falling on level surfaces etc.
Excess heat	Falling on stairs etc
Asbestos and manufacture mineral fibres (MMF)	Falling between levels
Biocides	Electrical hazards
Carbon monoxide & fuel combustion products	Fire
Lead	Flames, hot surfaces
Radiation	Collision and entrapment
Uncombusted fuel gas	Explosions
Volatile Organic Compounds	Position and operability of amenities
	Structural collapse and failing elements
Psychological Requirements	Protection Against Infection
Crowding and space	Domestic hygiene, pests and refuse
Entry by intruders	Food safety
Lighting	Personal hygiene, sanitation & drainage
Noise	Water supply for domestic purpose

# Enforcement Action

## What enforcement action can the Council use?

Bridgend County Borough Council is pro-active in returning empty properties to use. We wish to work with owners of empty properties for the benefit of the community. If, however, people continue to leave their properties empty and derelict, the Council will consider using powers such as:

- Environmental Protection Act 1990 Section 80 and the Building Act 1984 Section 76 to deal with nuisance;
- Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949 Section 4 to deal with infestations of rats and mice;
- Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 Section 29 and the Building Act 1984 Section 79 to deal with unsecure or dilapidated properties;
- Building Act 1984 Section 77 & 78 to deal with dangerous properties;
- Town & Country Planning Act 1990 Section 215 to deal with unsightly Properties;
- Housing Health and Safety Rating System in the Housing Act 2004 to improve housing conditions;
- Compulsory purchase under Section 17 of the Housing Act 1985;
- Enforced sale in the Law of Property Act 1925.

We do, however, consider this to be a last resort, and prefer to work with owners to find the best solution in bringing empty properties back into use.

## What is the Enforced Sale Scheme?

The Enforced Sales Scheme is a process by which the Council brings about the sale of a privately owned house. It is used as a means to "sell on" a long-term vacant house to a new owner, in circumstances where the present owner is either unwilling or unable to deal with the house and its associated problems.

An initial assessment will need to take place to consider which of these properties are suitable for inclusion into the Enforced Sales Scheme.

The use of the Enforced Sales Scheme should be seen as a last resort. It is expected that all informal and formal action will have been taken and exhausted by the council in order to resolve the existence of the empty property and its associated problems.



