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For immediate release

Empty Homes responds to Halifax Empty Homes Survey

The charity Empty Homes says it is too early to celebrate an apparent drop in the number of empty homes as reported in this weeks Halifax Empty Homes survey.

The Halifax survey (published yesterday) reported that numbers of long term empty homes had dropped by 6% in the last 12 months. However analysis of the source data (the government Housing Strategic Statistical Appendix) shows numerous errors that may well account for the apparent drop.

Empty Homes Chief Executive David Ireland said "The statistics show several local authorities including Kensington and Chelsea, Lewisham, Oxford and Merton as having no long term empty homes at all. It would be great if that were the case, but a quick walk through any of these places will tell you otherwise."

He continued, " We believe that the right measures are being introduced to help create more homes out of empty property, but these new figures do not show that numbers are dropping yet. A similar error last year caused people to conclude that empty homes numbers were falling, our analysis then showed that actually they were rising."

Notes

The corresponding set of statistics in 2009 appeared to show nationally vacancy levels had dropped to 651,993. "Empty Homes" identified 103 errors with those government figures that, when corrected, caused the total to be corrected to 707,751. An apparent drop was in fact a small rise in vacancy.

<http://www.emptyhomes.com/usefulresources/stats/amended-stats-08-09.xls>

Yesterday's Halifax press release

http://www.lloydsbankinggroup.com/media/pdfs/halifax/2010/20122010_EmptyHomes.pdf

The Source government data

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/housing/xls/1782853.xls>

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