

Unlocking the Potential of England's Empty Homes

Dear Matthew Pennycook MP,

We collectively call on government to create a national strategy to bring empty homes back into use.

With unaffordable rents, rising homelessness, record levels of temporary accommodation use and long waits for social housing, more than a million properties in England stand unoccupied, with over 309,000 classed as long-term empty. Each empty home represents a missed opportunity to provide settled housing, revitalise communities, and make efficient use of existing stock, whilst the government continues to work towards its target of building 1.5m new homes.

Giving empty buildings a new lease of life is one of the quickest, greenest and most cost-effective ways to increase housing supply. Refurbishing existing properties costs less than building new, stimulates employment, and contributes directly to Net Zero objectives. It can also address the country's social rent housing shortfall and meet the need of society's most vulnerable people, such as people with disabilities, families experiencing homelessness, and survivors of domestic abuse.

Complementing new build construction, bringing a fraction of long-term empty properties back into use would deliver thousands of homes and regenerate neighbourhoods. Everybody wins.

With local authorities facing increased housing challenges, our recommendation is the creation of a new, standalone national empty homes strategy, including:

- A fully-funded local authority duty to investigate and act on long-term empty homes complaints
- National initiatives, such as a loan scheme, a national acquisition fund, and an enforcement fund
- Replacing the New Homes Bonus system with rewards for successful empty homes interventions
- Ringfencing Council Tax Premium revenue for local housing initiatives
- Developing empty homes-specific enforcement powers
- Reducing stamp duty for purchasers, where properties are used to meet local demand for social housing, and who provide homes for those on a pathway out of temporary accommodation

We urge you to champion this agenda in Parliament, to ensure that no property stands empty. Together, we can turn empty buildings into homes, and build a fairer, more sustainable housing system.

Signed,

Adam Cliff
Secretary, **Empty Homes Network**

Daniel Brewer
CEO, **Resonance**

Lord Bird
Founder and Editor-in-Chief, **Big Issue**

Sarah Elliot
CEO, **Shelter**

Gemma Sherrington
CEO, **Refuge**

Farah Nazeer
CEO, **Women's Aid**

Gemma Bourne
Managing Director - Head of Property, **Better Society Capital**

Rosie Phillips
CEO, **DHI (Developing Health and Independence)**

Rosie Cade
Founder, **Rising Tide**

Helen Berresford
Director of Engagaement, **Nacro**

Trystan Jones
CEO, **Community Impact Initiative**

Maria José Anitua Trevijano
CEO, **Empty Homes Collaborative**

Christopher Watkins
Leader, **Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council**

Neil Fraser
Partner, **Fraser & Fraser**

Muhammad Uddin
Business Development Manager, **Finders International**

Simon Taylor
Founder, **Empty Property Hunters**

Nick Kalms
Founder, **YouSpotProperty**

Russell Taylor
Founder, **Probate.Auction**

Oliver Prior
Director, **Auction House**

Cllr Paul King, **No Use Empty: Kent**

Ben Tibbetts
CEO, **Land Attic**

Jo Widdop
Operations Manager, **The Empty Homes Doctor**

Ben Radstone
Founder, **Hyjan Investments**

Aidan Hutchings
Managing Director, **Estate Research**

Ben Brown
Partner, **Taylor Emmett**



About the Empty Homes Network

The Empty Homes Network supports practitioners (in local authorities, housing strategy, environmental health, regeneration partnerships, housing associations and the private sector) who are actively working to bring empty property back into use.

Its aims include:

- Fostering mutual support and shared learning among empty-property practitioners;
- Raising the status and profile of empty homes work;
- Promoting policies, practices and tools (e.g. enforcement, financial incentives) that effectively address empty property challenges.
- Supporting local authorities, governments, policymakers and practitioners to ensure their operational processes instil best practice, based on experience and knowledge.

In short, the Empty Homes Network is a hub, advocate, coordinator, and knowledge-base for those who are on the front line of converting unused housing stock into homes.



About Resonance

Resonance is a pioneer of social impact fund management, which has been connecting capital to social enterprise since 2002. We are proud of our 24-year track record of impact investing, and B Corp certification.

We provide life changing homes and solutions for people and communities facing crisis.

Through our social impact residential property funds, we work with institutional investors and expert housing partners to provide safe, affordable homes with appropriate support. Since our first property fund launched in 2013, we have helped to provide homes for almost 4,000 adults and children, in 1,393 properties in major cities across the UK.

With peoples' homes at the heart of what we do, our Impact Labs team develops the ecosystem around our impact property funds, so we can innovate new solutions, pilot systemic change, increase supply and scale opportunity.

Through our Impact Labs, we develop solutions to help grow social enterprises, build and enable community resilience and innovate social impact.