

EMPTY PROPERTY GRANTS

Empty property grants are available from the Council for bringing empty residential properties back into use under the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) Order 2002. This information applies to the financial year April 2007 to March 2008.

COULD YOU GET A GRANT?

You can apply for a grant if:

- Your property has been empty for one year or more.
- You are the owner or leaseholder of the property and are responsible for all structural repairs (there must be at least three years or more outstanding on your lease).
- Your property does not meet the [Decent Homes Standard](#) . To be 'decent' the property must be in reasonable repair, have reasonably modern facilities and services and have a reasonable degree of thermal comfort.
- You intend to rent out the property for five years either on a Private Sector Rent Deposit Scheme or a Private Sector Leasing Scheme to house people in housing need nominated by the Council.
- You have planning permission for your proposed works or an established use certificate.

HOW MUCH GRANT WILL YOU GET?

- Any grant to be a maximum of £11,000 per unit of accommodation or 50% of the reasonable cost, whichever is the lesser amount. An applicant can apply for a maximum of six units.
- No grants are available to Right to Buy leaseholders if they bought directly from the London Borough of Barnet / Barnet Homes
- The Council will fund 50% of the reasonable cost of conversion and improvement of the property to the Decent Homes Standard
- All Grants are subject taking up one of the Private Sector Schemes running at Barnet Council for private landlords, one is the Rent Deposit Scheme and the other is the Leasing Scheme. If an owner is prepared to manage the property and the tenancy themselves then they should contact the Rent Deposit Scheme: 020 8359 4807 for further information. If an owner prefers Barnet Council to manage the property on their behalf then they should contact the Council's Private Sector Partnerships Section, for information on the Leasing Scheme: 020 8359 6016.
- All grants are subject to availability

WHAT IS THE PROCEDURE?

Contact 020 8359 7997 to ensure your property qualifies for a grant. Your property will need to be visited and approved for inclusion on the scheme before an application form can be sent to you. Once returned fully completed, the Council will consider your application, approve or refuse it and confirm the amount of grant you will receive all within five weeks of receipt.

You will need to provide a complete application form with all necessary paperwork before your application can be considered.

WHAT CONDITIONS APPLY TO THE GRANT?

The grant is available subject to the following conditions (if they are contravened during a period of three years following the completion of the works the full grant will have to be repaid to the Council):

- A certificate of availability for letting, stating that the current owner will let all dwellings for three years from the date of completion of the grant-aided works
- The Decent Homes Standard and the Council's Energy Efficiency and Security Standard (see below) must be met on completion of the works and maintained for three years thereafter.
- The property (and its fixtures, fittings and furniture) must be fully insured; a copy of the current insurance certificate to be sent with the claim for payment of grant.
- Dwellings on main roads must have secondary glazing to front windows upon completion.
- The builder who estimated for the works on application must carry out the works, if you need to change the builder contact 020 8359 7997
- We would advise all applicants to employ an architect or surveyor to assist in the process.
- The owner and agent, if any, must be accredited under the [London Landlords Accreditation Scheme](#) before final payment of the grant.
- If let through the rent deposit scheme, owners must sign up to Barnet's Landlords Promise – an undertaking to appropriately manage and maintain the property; copies will be sent to all tenants.
- Owners will need to demonstrate a satisfactory track record of renting property, if they have such experience, and
- Meet the standards of management required by temporary accommodation schemes run by the Council's Private Sector Partnerships section.
- Tenancy Agreements to be approved by the council.
- Rents will be determined by the Rent Officer as a Pre-Tenancy Determination.
- On completion of the works an inspection will be carried out to ensure all works have been satisfactorily completed. Although the Council officer will check the works for grant purposes, it is important that you, as the owner of the property, are satisfied. If not you must discuss your concerns with your builder or agent.
- **You must ensure that all works are started within 3 months, and completed within six months of approval, with the grant claimed.** To claim the grant you will need to provide a copy of the builder's final account and all relevant completion certificates, e.g. building control, gas, electrical and fire alarm test certificates and guarantees.

TO APPLY FOR AN EMPTY PROPERTY GRANT, contact:

The London Borough of Barnet
Residential Environmental Health
Building 4
North London Business Park
Oakleigh Road South
LONDON N11 1NP
Tel: 020 8359 7997

Energy Efficiency and Security Standard

Central heating – Dwelling to have gas central heating with a programmer, room thermostat and thermostats on all radiators. Where a new boiler is installed, it should be a condensing boiler (discounts may be available, contact the Energy Centre below). Consideration should be given to replacement of any boiler over fifteen years old. Combination condensing boilers should be installed, unless there are more than three occupiers.

Insulation – to be provided to all lofts or flat roofs any cavity walls and to any hot water tank; level of insulation to be to the Building Regulation Standard. Where roof covering is replaced, insulation to be installed to the Building Regulation Standard.

Windows – Any replacement windows, except wooden double-hung sash windows, which are replaced, are to be double glazed and all windows and external doors to be draught stripped. (Please note that building control approval is needed and planning permission will probably be needed for replacement of windows, unless replacement is identical to existing.)

Windows on the ground floor, or accessible from the ground, flat roof or a wall, are required to have key-operated locks. Where possible they are to be lockable in an open position to allowing ventilation (Maximum of 100mm). Any louvre windows in accessible locations must be replaced.

Front entrance doors (including internal entrance doors to flats) to have a rim automatic deadlock, a snib mortice lock and a cowl to the letterbox. Any rotten doors are to be replaced.

Smoke alarms – all dwellings to contain a minimum of one smoke alarm per floor connected to the mains electricity supply positioned centrally to all rooms.

A complete application is:

- i) A fully completed, signed and dated application completed by the owner(s) of the property.
- ii) A Certificate of Future Occupation, (Intended Letting), fully completed, signed and dated by all owners (one form for each unit of accommodation provided).
- iii) Two copies of itemised estimates from different builders for the cost of carrying out the renovation of the works. (Non itemised estimates are not acceptable).
- iv) Two copies of a scaled drawing showing the existing and proposed layout of the property, where necessary.

- v) A statement of any fees incurred by the employment of an Architect/Surveyor and fees incurred under building regulations or planning legislation.
- vi) If VAT is being claimed, the estimates must show clearly the amount of VAT. The VAT registration number must be shown, otherwise, no VAT will be allowed.
- vii) Ownership will be sought from the land registry by Barnet Council.
- viii) Letter of confirming your acceptance on the leasing or rent deposit schemes.
- ix) Planning permission or established use certificate for the proposed use of the property.
- x) A completed signed and dated 'Landlord's Promise'.
- xi) If you have a mortgage you may need your mortgager's consent to carry out the works.

If you do not have all the following information relevant to your application, it will not be considered.

YOU SHOULD NOT START ANY WORKS BEFORE YOU ARE GIVEN WRITTEN GRANT APPROVAL BY THE COUNCIL. NO GRANT CAN BE PAID IF YOU DO SO.