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25th April Digital Day of Action calls for candidates to end the empty homes scandal

Campaign calls for candidates to combat empty homes and stop developers building 'The Wrong Housing'

As local elections approach the Campaign Against Empty Homes coalitionⁱ which unites housing campaigners across political parties, homelessness and tenant organisations and trade unions call on supporters to seek local election candidate commitments to address the housing crisis.

25 April 'Digital Day of Action' will see supporters contact candidates to call for support of a Manifesto of demands that centre on growing numbers of empty homes and action to combat housing policy which leads to tens of thousands of new homes being sucked out of residential use as second homes and Airbnbs, as affordable options for those on average incomes decline to zero across the country.

Key Points:

Coalition members call on supporters and members of the public to ask local election candidates to directly address the housing crisis and support action to end the waste of hundreds of thousands of empty homes.

Long-term empty homes numbers have risen to nearly a quarter of a million and stand 20% higher than 5 years ago despite an intensifying housing crisisⁱⁱ.

Numbers of families in Temporary Accommodation continue to rise with 100,000ⁱⁱⁱ placed in Temporary Accommodation by councils, increasing numbers housed in unsuitable accommodation distant from families and local support networks.

The Manifesto calls on candidates to support:

- Funding local council work to bring empty homes back into use for those who need genuinely affordable, decent and permanent homes to live in.
- Campaigning for national government action through investment and stronger powers to bring wasted homes back into use
- Greater regulation of Airbnb to stop low-cost housing being sucked out of residential use.
- Vacancy Taxes on homes not in residential use, to discourage second home purchases.
- Local and national registers of residential property ownership and use.
- Retrofit First model for social housing to prevent demolitions and help tackle the climate crisis.
- Fair redevelopment to prioritise low-cost homes and council houses to meet demand - not corporate developments that break up local communities.

Will McMahon, Director of Action on Empty Homes, said “We support the Campaign Against Empty Homes Day of Action because it is time we had a frank conversation about vacancy levels. Over half a million homes are out of residential use long-term in England. Without change these homes won’t house anyone any time soon. We need to stop pretending that a quarter of a million second homes in England are really homes at all. We need to get wasted empty homes back into use for those 100,000 families who desperately need them. We must also stop building the wrong housing to end the housing crisis and instead force developers to address the falling numbers of social and genuinely affordable homes available to those in desperate housing need.”

Tanya Murat, Homes for All, said “We think the empty homes scandal should be a major election issue. No political party should be able to sweep this under the carpet any longer. There are over half a million empty or underused homes in the UK whilst every day developers continue building housing for profit not for people. Local government should play a role in challenging that – making sure every empty home is filled with people who need housing.”

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Notes to Editors:

[The Campaign Against Empty Homes](#) is a cross-party coalition calling for action and involving community organisations, trade unions and homelessness projects, as well as members of many different political parties - it calls for everyone concerned about the intensifying housing crisis across the country will call on local politicians to adopt the policies in its Manifesto for the upcoming local elections.

List of Campaign Coalition, supporters: Action on Empty Homes, The Big Issue, Disabled People Against Cuts, Fuel Poverty Action, The Green Party, Homes for All, Labour Homelessness Campaign, Renters’ Rights London, Peace & Justice Project, People Before Profit, Radical Housing Network, Social Housing Action Campaign, Southwark Defend Council Housing, Streets Kitchen, Street Storage, Unite the Union London and Eastern Region, Unite Community London and Eastern Region, Yes to Fair Development.

Link to the Manifesto [here](http://bitly.ws/oxGh): <http://bitly.ws/oxGh>

For data on empty and second homes collected by every local council in England [CLICK HERE](#)

References and data sources:

ⁱ Link to the Campaign Against Empty Homes Local Election Manifesto Leaflet [HERE](#)

ⁱⁱ **Action on Empty Homes Facts and Figure** (based on Government data): <https://www.actiononemptyhomes.org/factsand-figures>

HM Government data Dwelling Stock and Vacants: See Table 615: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-datasets/live-tables-on-dwelling-stock-including-vacants> ⁱⁱⁱ **House of Commons Library, Households in Temporary Accommodation (England) Feb 2022:** <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn02110/>