

Empty Property (Owner Occupation) Grant 2019-20

The grant is intended to help people get onto the property ladder in Islington and directed to those who have no other property and are first time buyers (including those who live with family/friends, in social housing or the private rented sector).

Eligibility

- The applicant must have found/purchased an Empty property in Islington.
- The property purchase value must not exceed £600,000 to qualify for a grant.
- The property must have been empty for one year or more. Proof must be provided. (Council tax confirmation or utility bills showing unused energy may be accepted as proof). The property should not be left empty for any time in order to qualify for a grant.
- The applicant can only apply if responsible for all structural repairs.
- The condition property does not meet the decent homes standard.
- The applicant must have planning permission or an established use certificate for any proposed or existing conversion (as necessary).
- The property must be the applicant's primary home after renovation (see grant conditions)

Grant Funding

The owner/s can apply for a grant of up to a maximum of £25,000 (subject to reasonable cost).

Key workers and people who work in Islington earning a maximum of £30,000 (single income) or £60,000 (joint income) can apply for a grant of up to a maximum of £50,000 (subject to reasonable cost).

Please note there is limited funding for this scheme, therefore applications will be processed on a first come basis, if discussions have taken place with the Council, this will not guarantee any funding until a full application is received and funding is still available. You should not rely upon the grant funding when purchasing a property.

Procedure

- Contact the grant team (020 7527 3104) with your enquiry who can confirm if your property qualifies for a grant. You will be asked to complete an initial enquiry form'.
- If you qualify, a grant officer will contact you and arrange an inspection at the property and a full application form will be sent or given to you.
- Once you provide a complete application form with all necessary paperwork, the Council will approve (or refuse) your application and confirm the amount of grant approved within four weeks of receipt.

Grant Conditions

- You must own the property before you can apply for a grant.
- You must start works within 3 months, and complete within six months of grant approval or it may be cancelled.
- The decent homes standard and additional energy efficiency measures including solid wall or cavity wall insulation must be met on completion and before payment can be made.
- The Grant funding has 5 year grant condition, therefore if you sell the property, transfer the deeds within this time, or do not reside at the property throughout the conditions the grant will have to be re-paid.
- If you allow the property to fall vacant unreasonably*, the grant will have to be repaid. (*unreasonably* reference from The Housing (Empty Dwelling Management Orders) Prescribed Exceptions and Requirements (England) Order 2006).
- Applicants should consider employing an architect or surveyor to supervise the project due to the complex nature of the process.
- The builder who estimated for the works on application must carry out the works. If you change the builder or alter the works, you must notify the grant team.
- The grant can only be paid on satisfactory completion of the works. No interim payments will be made. You will therefore have to arrange your own finance to complete the works.
- When the works are fully complete, an inspection will be carried out to ensure all works have been satisfactorily carried out. Although the grant 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 before payment.
- To claim the Grant, you will need to provide a copy of the builder's final invoice/s and all approval certificates, e.g. Building control, gas, electrical, roof/damp-proof guarantees within 2 weeks of completion. Payment cannot be processed until all documents have been supplied.
- Grants will not be approved if you start works without prior approval.
- Do not assume you have funding until you are given written approval by the Council.
- All grants are subject to the availability of funding.

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INFORMATION REQUIRED FOR A COMPLETE APPLICATION

Your application cannot be processed or approved, if you do not submit all of the following information relevant to your application.

- A fully completed, signed and dated application completed by the owner(s) of the property.
- A Certificate of Future Occupation, fully completed, signed and dated by all owners for each unit of accommodation provided. (Photographic proof of identity must be provided). Passport / photo driving licence.
- Two itemised estimates from different builders for the cost of carrying out the renovation works. (Non itemised estimates are not acceptable).
- A copy of a scaled drawing showing the existing and proposed layout of the property, where necessary.
- A statement of any fees incurred by the employment of an Architect/Surveyor and fees incurred under building regulations or planning legislation.
- If VAT is being claimed, the estimates must show clearly the amount of VAT with the VAT registration number must be shown, otherwise, no VAT will be allowed.
- An up to date Proof of property ownership from the land registry.
- Proof of property being empty for at least 1 year.
- Planning permission or established use certificate for the proposed use of the property.
- If you have a mortgage you may need your mortgagor's consent to carry out the works.
- You must inform the Grant support team once works commence on site.

Sustainability

The Council supports the use of sustainable technologies. Dwellings on main roads must have secondary glazing fitted to front windows, if double glazing is not fitted.

We encourage contractors to dispose/recycle waste at approved registered sites and to use green transport options (e.g. hybrid and electric vehicles) and encourage workers to use public transport. The council encourages the use of sustainable materials and "green" electricity.

Exceptional Cases

If you are not eligible for a grant under this grants policy and you feel you should be, you can apply to be considered as having an exceptional need. Other grants are available for registered disabled people and vulnerable households. You can contact grant support services 0207 527 3104 for further information.

Islington Council Main Switchboard
0207 527 2000

Grant Team

Islington Council, Public Protection
222 Upper Street
London N1 1XR
Tel: 020 7527 3104
E: grants.residential@islington.gov.uk

Building Control Services

Islington Council
Town Hall
London N1 2UD
Tel: 020 7527 5999
Email: building.control@islington.gov.uk

Planning Enquiries

Islington Council
222 Upper Street
London N1 1XR
0207 527 6743
Email: planningenquiries@islington.gov.uk

Energy Team

222 Upper Street
London N1 1XR
Tel: 0800 512 012
E: energy.advice@islington.gov.uk

Energy (advice, energy doctor, switching etc.)

Money (FIT Money/debt income max, WHD/ Watersure)

Housing (handyperson service referrals)

Health & Well-being (smoke alarms, security check, befriending, OT/ telecare, stop smoking, health checks etc.)

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