

Croí Cónaithe (Towns) Fund – Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant

The Vacant Property Refurbishment Schemes is an opportunity for homeowners of vacant property dwellings to bring vacant and underused buildings back into residential use and is ensuring that existing housing stock is being used to the fullest extent possible in order to achieve a fully functioning housing market.

The Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant, funded by the Croí Cónaithe (Towns) Fund was launched on 14 July 2022 and will benefit those who wish to turn a formerly vacant house or building into their principal private residence. In order to increase the number of vacant and derelict properties being brought back into use, the Grant has been further expanded from 1 May 2023.

When the Grant was launched it was made available to eligible vacant properties in towns and villages. Following a review, a decision has been made to expand availability of the Grant nationwide to eligible vacant properties in cities, towns, villages and rural parts of the country.

- If the property is **VACANT** for the minimum period of 2 years and built during or before 2007, a grant of up to a maximum of **€50,000** will be available for its refurbishment and the applicant's occupation as their principal private residence, including the conversion of a property which has not previously been used as residential.
- If the property is **DERELICT**, the total grant available for a derelict property is up to a maximum of **€70,000** where the property is confirmed by the applicant to be derelict (i.e. structurally unsound and dangerous). In the case of a derelict property, an independent report prepared by an appropriately qualified professional (e.g., quantity surveyor, engineer etc.) is required to be submitted along with the application confirming that the property is structurally unsound and dangerous.
- An individual may benefit from for a maximum of two grants - one property which will be the principal primary residence of the owner for a minimum of 5 years, and one property which will be made available for rent.

From 1 July 2023, additional support under the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant is available to support the refurbishment of vacant and derelict properties located on the islands to help bring them back into use.

The maximum rate of the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant payable is up to **20% higher** for eligible vacant and derelict properties on **qualifying islands**.

A list of the qualifying islands where this additional funding is available can be accessed on the [Gov.ie website](#).

This brings the maximum grant rates for refurbishing properties on islands up to **€60,000** for the refurbishment of vacant properties and up to **€84,000** where the property is confirmed to be derelict. The maximum cost limits for the individual works categories are also increased by 20%.

Those applying for the grant are required to indicate on the application form if they are applying in respect of a property that will become their principal private residence or a property that will be made available for rent. This must be indicated at the outset as different conditions apply depending on the application type.

Those applying for the grant are also required to indicate on the application form if they are applying for the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant alone or the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant including the Derelict Property Top-up Grant.

In respect of rental properties, all landlords are required by law to comply with the standards for rental housing and ensure that their properties are fully compliant with fire safety and minimum standards regulations for rental properties. The tenancy will be registered with the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB). Clawback conditions will apply if the property is not available to rent within the ten-year period from the payment of the grant.

The grant is available to individuals or households for which the property will be their principal private residence or applicants who will make the property available to rent on the private market. **It is not available to registered companies or developers. Applications can only be made by named individuals.**

The level of grant payable is contingent on the works approved by the local authority and is paid on completion of the works and based on vouched expenditure following a final inspection by the local authority.

To qualify for the scheme, properties must be:

- Vacant for at least 2 years; and
- Built before 2007. If the property is a protected structure, it must apply for planning first.

Grant Conditions:

1. Grant Applications to refurbish a Principal Private Residence

- Applicants may only apply for a maximum of two grants under this scheme - where one property will become their principal private residence and one additional grant in respect of a property made available for rent. **Only one grant will be payable in respect of a property for rent;**
- Have the grant application approved before the work commences.
- Applicants must provide evidence of tax compliance, with tax clearance from Revenue;
- Local Property Tax to be in order where applicable;

- Applicants must agree to the clawback conditions set out on Page 8;
- Applicants must provide vouched expenditure for the works undertaken;
- Once a grant application receives approval, applicants must complete works within a period of 13 months.

2. **Grant Applications to refurbish a property that will be available to rent**

- Applicants may only apply for a maximum of two grants under this scheme - where one of the properties will become their principal private residence and one additional grant in respect of a property made available for rent. **Only one grant will be payable in respect of a property for rent. Leitrim County Council will ensure adequate checks of addresses in this regard.**
- Have the grant application approved before the work commences.
- Applicants must provide evidence of tax compliance, with tax clearance from Revenue;
- Local Property Tax to be in order where applicable;
- Applicants must agree to the clawback conditions set out on Page 8;
- Applicants must provide vouched expenditure for the works undertaken;
- A signed affidavit confirming that the Grant has not been applied for before for rental purposes;
- Once a grant application receives approval, applicants must complete works within a period of 13 months.

For rental properties, proof of registration of the tenancy with the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB) must be provided to Leitrim County Council before drawdown of the grant. Evidence of annual registration of tenancy with the RTB must be submitted to the local authority which awarded the grant.

A letter of approval will issue to applicants who are successful and will include the approved grant amount. Approval is granted from the date of issue of the letter and is valid for **13 months**. Applicants are required to sign and return the letter to the local authority after completion of the works in order to confirm that they understand the terms and conditions applicable to the grant. This signed letter in addition to the Application Form, forms part of the agreement between the applicant and the local authority. **The letter of approval in principle is not a final guarantee that the grant will be paid. It is only an indication of the intention of the Local Authority to pay the grant to the applicant. In order to receive your final approval letter, you**

must satisfy Leitrim County Council with all documentation requested along the application process.

Supporting documentation needed:

Your application will be delayed if details and documents are missing. The following documentation will be needed to process your application. **Only copied legible documentation is accepted.**

1. **Application Form filled out and signed by the applicant** (*Document must be sent back to the Vacant Homes Office with all the sections completed in order to get grant approval*).
2. **Proof of ownership** (*The grant will not be paid out until proof of ownership has been confirmed*)
 - Property Folio Document, **AND**
 - Confirmation from your solicitor (registered with the Law Society of Ireland and on company-headed paper) stating active negotiations to purchase the property, **OR**
 - By other means, the property is registered in your name, **OR**
 - Mortgage Payment, **OR**
 - First-Time Buyers Approval Letter.
3. **Proof of construction before 2007**
 - Property Folio Document, **OR**
 - Confirmation from your solicitor (registered with the Law Society of Ireland and on company-headed paper).
4. **Proof of vacancy for a minimum of 2 years**
 - ESB Networks letter to state that electricity was cut off on X date or a letter to state there has been low energy usage in the property for X years, **OR**
 - ESB connection/disconnection date, **OR**
 - Letter from estate agent (on company headed notepaper) stating that the property has been unoccupied for X years, **OR**
 - Solicitor's affidavit letter (registered with the Law Society of Ireland and on company-headed paper) by the previous owners stating that they have not lived in the property for X years.
5. **Proof of Local Property Tax (LPT)**
 - That the tax is paid, **OR**
 - Deferral of payment (Local Property Tax will be paid later), **OR**

- Exemption from Local Property Tax. (*Property will be LPT liable once refurbishment is completed. The latest LPT will be required in order to receive the grant*)

6. Proof of Tax Clearance Certificate

- Applicants' Tax Clearance Certificate from Revenue. *Please submit your tax clearance from Revenue, if you do not have this you can apply for tax clearance using Revenue's online service or you can call [1890 306 706](tel:1890306706) and they will post you an application form.*

7. If applying for the Vacant Property Derelict top-up (€70,000) please submit:

- Proof the property is on the local authority's Derelict Sites Register, **OR**
- A detailed Report prepared by an appropriately qualified and registered professional (Engineer, Architect, or QS) confirming the property is derelict - structurally unsound and dangerous to be lived in.

8. A quotation specifying the costs of the works proposed (including page 12 of the application form). (*The quote can be issued by multiple professionals, a builder, or a construction company, however, all must be tax compliant. Works can also be carried out by the applicant but professional fees can not be claimed on the application form. Applicants must advise Leitrim County Council whether works will be carried out by themselves or by professionals. You must KEEP all vouchers expenditure in order to claim the services by the end of the refurbishment.*)

9. Contractors' information

- Tax Reference Number of Contractor (VAT ID), **AND**
- Contractor Tax Clearance Certificate from Revenue.

10. Fill out Supplier Setup Form specifying where the grant will be paid (see form below).

11. If your property involves extension works (*the following must be presented and approved prior to the grant being paid*).

- Evidence of planning permission, **OR**
- Planning reference number, **OR**
- Certificate of exemption under the Planning Acts by a certified professional (on company-headed paper).

12. Rental Affidavit, if applicable, signed by the applicant (*Provided by Leitrim County Council - Document must be sent back to the Vacant Homes Office with all the sections signed in order to get approval*).

13. Any other relevant documentation to support your application. (*e.g., properties dated photograph*)

IMPORTANT: Where the local authority has requested that further documentation is to be submitted to support your application, failure to do so may result in your application becoming invalid.

By the end of the refurbishment, the following proof will be needed in order to receive the grant:

- Compliance with the HSA Regulations by installing at least two smoke/heat alarms and a carbon monoxide detector if you use fossil fuel heating like gas or coal.
- Vouched expenditure for the works undertaken.
- Clawback Document Signed (Provided by Leitrim County Council).
- Full Property folio proving completed property ownership.
- Annual evidence of registration of tenancy with the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB), if the application refers to rental purposes.

Types of works covered by the scheme:

1. Demolitions / Strip-out / Site Clearance (including removal of hazardous materials)
2. Substructure works (including works to foundations; rising walls; beds / slabs; damp-proofing; underpinning)
3. Superstructure works (including works to internal/external walls; chimneys; upper floors; stairs; roof structure; other structural timbers)
4. Completions (including works associated with external doors and windows; internal doors and associated frames, architraves, and ironmongery; balustrades; skirtings; roof lights; facias/soffits; rainwater goods)
 - external completions (incl. doors, windows, sills)

- internal completions (incl. doors, frames, architraves, ironmongery)
 - skirtings
 - fascia, soffits, rainwater goods
 - roof completions (incl. flashings, fascia, soffits, gutters, downpipes)
5. Finishes (including finishes to external/internal walls; ceiling finishes; tiling / waterproof finishes to wet areas; roof finishes)
 - tiling / waterproof finishes to wet areas
 - painting and decorating
 - roof finishes
 6. Services (including plumbing; heating; ventilation; power; lighting; telecommunications; smoke/ CO2 detection)
 7. Fittings (including kitchen units; sanitary / bathroom fittings)
 - kitchen units
 - sanitary ware/bathroom fittings
 8. External Works (necessary external / site works carried out within the curtilage of the site)
 9. Extension within the ambit of exempt development under planning regulations, as part of a wider refurbishment.
 10. Professional services associated with work (fees/surveys).

Demolition

In relation to the demolition of derelict properties as part of the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant, please note the following:

The refurbishment of a vacant or derelict property for the occupation may involve development that requires planning permission. Where appropriate, an applicant under the scheme will be required to submit evidence that planning permission has been attained before final grant approval. In cases where a question arises about whether a proposed development needs planning permission or is exempted development, an applicant under the scheme will be required to submit a declaration of exemption under Section 5, of the Planning Acts.

The objective of the grant scheme is to bring existing properties back into use. While demolition and extension work can form part of an application for the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant, such works must be part of a wider refurbishment of the existing dwelling in keeping with the objectives of the scheme.

Other grants available:

An SEAI Better Energy Home Scheme Grant may be available in combination with this Grant.

Works covered by SEAI Better Energy Homes Scheme will therefore not be under the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant.

Further details are available on the [SEAI website](#).