

Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee

Review of Protection of Property

SBC Housing & A Fairer Stockton on Tees response to the key lines enquiry

Your department's awareness / experience of this legal duty

- Across the full Housing & Fairer Stockton-on-Tees Service awareness is limited.
- **However** there is awareness within the Private Sector Housing Team (PRS), specifically the teams Empty Homes Officer.
- The service may find out about such properties when carrying out searches to track down a property owner.

How eligible individuals to have their property protected whilst receiving care / support away from their home are identified

- The PRS, specifically the Empty Homes Officer responds to public complaints regarding properties that have become empty, fallen into disrepair, or are unsightly (for example overgrown gardens / dumped rubbish), or are open to access.
- Where complaints are significant and issues directly impact the use and enjoyment of a neighbouring property, the Council has a range of legal powers that can be used against the owners to improve conditions. The PRS team will trace property owner(s) to make them aware of the complaints and act as necessary to improve or comply with any legal requirements.
- The PRS team are aware of the key contacts within ASCTS to contact for such cases. In such cases ASCTS may be asked to carry out such property improvements on behalf of the owner or to provide contact information to family members managing the estate for example.
- If there are no available funds to carry out works and where legally appropriate, the PRS team may complete works under notice and pay for associated costs and then put a charge against the property.
- *The PRS team involvement in empty properties of this type is infrequent.*

Communication with SBC Adult Social Care (prior to and during property being protected)

- The service is not notified prior to a property being protected or as a matter of course when a property is protected.
- As referenced above should a complaint come in regarding the condition of an empty property (complaint relating to the dwelling and or garden areas for example) the Empty Homes Officer may contact the ASCFS Team if they suspect that the property is being protected.

Any other views relating to this scrutiny topic from a Community Safety perspective:	
No.	
Key contacts:	
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