



Reference: FOI-891

Request:

I would like to request the following data under the Freedom of Information Act.

1) As of 3rd May 2023 (or the most recently available date), please could you tell me how many private and council homes have been vacant in your authority for the following numbers of financial years*:

- a. Less than one year (i.e. current financial year)
- b. One year
- c. Two years
- d. Three years
- e. Four years
- f. Five years
- g. Six years
- h. Seven years
- i. Eight years
- j. Nine years
- k. Ten years
- l. 11 - 19 years
- m. 20 or more years

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*Please treat 'years' as financial years. If a home has been listed as empty within the current financial year, I would expect this to be listed as 'less than one year'.

Please could you break this information down by:

Column a) The 'number of years'

Column b) 'Private' or 'council' home - a separate count for private, and council, if available

Column c) The number of vacant homes

2) For the financial years (2016/2017 - 2021/2022 and any data available for 2022/2023), how much money has your council raised from charging extra council tax on homes that have been vacant for two or more years?

Please could you break this information down by:

Column a) The year

Column b) The amount raised via council tax paid on vacant dwellings

Response:

1. On 1 April 2023 there were 2306 unoccupied or second homes in North Tyneside, however, to provide a response for each year specified in the request would take more than 18 hours. Therefore, this request is refused under s12 (1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, since the cost of complying would exceed the appropriate limit set out in the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004.

This is because there is no report that can be produced or created to identify the information. The only way it could be gathered would be to manually examine each unoccupied property, of which there are 2306, to determine the date the property

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became unoccupied. For each property this could take between 1 and 5 minutes to determine, depending on the number of accounts per property.

In assessing the cost of complying, the costs attributable to officer time involved in complying have been considered. Such costs are limited to £450.00 under the Regulations, which equates to eighteen hours of officer time.

All private and council owned properties are treated the same. On 1 April 2023 the number of properties unoccupied for 10 years (in receipt of a Premium 300) was 28, unoccupied for 5 years (in receipt of a Premium 200) was 44 and unoccupied for 2 years (in receipt of a Premium 100) was 180. Please be aware other unoccupied discounts maybe awarded and which allow the property to be unoccupied for a period greater than the 2, 5 or 10 years without a Premium 100/200/300 being applied.

2. This part of the request is refused under s12 (1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, since the cost of complying would exceed the appropriate limit set out in the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004.

There is no report that can be produced or created to identify the information so the only way it could be gathered would be to manually examine each unoccupied property since 2016, of which there are 2184 on 31 March 2022 and 2306 on 31 March 2023. To determine the information requested we would need to check date the property became unoccupied, period the property was unoccupied for, the charge accrued for the unoccupied period and the collection of council tax during the period. For each property this could take between 5 and 10 minutes to determine, depending on the number of accounts per property. In assessing the cost of complying, the costs attributable to officer time involved in complying have been considered. Such costs are limited to £450.00 under the Regulations, which equates to eighteen hours of officer time.

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