



Reference: FOI1550

Request:

I am writing to you under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to request the following information from your council/local authority:

1. What were the total rent arrears from council maintained/owned housing for the financial year 2018-2019: (Please supply as both a monetary figure, and a percentage of council homes rental income collectable)
 - £2,625,556.15 = 3.99%
2. For the financial year 2018-19, what was the average level of arrears, in monetary value, of tenants receiving:
 - a. Universal Credit
 - £777.45
 - b. Legacy benefits (the old Housing Benefits).
 - £215.41
3. What is the current average level of arrears, in monetary value, of tenants receiving:
 - a. Universal Credit
 - £811.74
 - b. Legacy benefits (the old Housing Benefit)
 - £198.40
4. In your housing accounts, have you had to increase your bad debt provision because of the introduction of Universal Credit? Are you able to express this as a monetary value? If possible I would like information on this since Universal Credit was introduced in 2016.
 - Universal Credit was only rolled out in North Tyneside in May 2018, therefore any changes to the bad debt provision prior to this was mainly as a result to the general rent arrears position, since May 2018 the changes to bad debt provision were not solely due to Universal Credit

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- 16/17 - £290,000 increase
 - 17/18 - £96,000 increase
 - 18/19 - £606,000 increase
5. To mitigate the financial risks to the HRA through potential losses in collection and increased bad debt impairment, have you had to invest more funding into tackling rent arrears since the introduction of Universal Credit? If so, can you express how much as a monetary value?
- The council is currently recruiting additional resource to assist in tackling rent arrears. To date the spend is £4,587.26
6. What was the total number of evictions from council properties (with rent arrears being the primary reason) for the financial year 2018 - 19?
- 55
7. Have you undertaken any assessment of the impact of Universal Credit on your current or future finances and services? (E.g. the ability to build new homes, or offer tenant welfare support) If so, then please disclose it.
- An assessment of the additional impact of increasing arrears has been made across the life of the 30-year HRA Business Plan. We estimate that approximately £15m in additional Bad Debt Provision will be required over a 30 year period due to arrears generally. However, not all of this will be due to Universal Credit particularly during the roll-out phase.