

Request

Please could you provide me with:

- 1) The total spent providing homelessness relief and prevention duties to residents within your authority area as a result of a section 21 eviction (please provide both totals);
- 2) For each of the last 4 financial years (2019-2020, 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23)

Response

We do not hold the information that you have requested in an easily retrievable format. Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA) relieves a public authority from the obligation to comply with a request for information where the estimated time required to locate, review and extract the information exceeds a certain threshold set out in Regulations.

The Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004 (SI 2004/3244) set out the rules in relation to the cost limit (otherwise called the "appropriate limit"). These Regulations are published by the Office of Public Sector Information (OPSI) and are viewable on their web site from this link: http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2004/uksi_20043244_en.pdf

The Regulations set out the cost limit for Government departments and for other public authorities. For local government, Regulation 3 states that the cost limit is £450 and Regulation 4(4) states that the prescribed hourly rate is £25. Regulation 4(4) further provides that where the local authority estimates the time taken to gather the information would exceed this limit (which based on the prescribed hourly rate, equates to 18 officer hours), it may refuse the request under section 12 of FoIA.

I am satisfied the cost limit applies to your request and will explain why this is the case.

There have been well over 2000 Homeless duties accepted since 2019 for cases who became Homeless due to service of a notice (the system does not report which type of notice or report the financial costs). To answer this request we would need to interrogate each of the 2000 cases manually and then separately look to match individuals against invoices to extract costs which would be repeated week on week until the duty was ended for each individual. It could take up to an hour trying to work out costings associated to one case alone – taking in total potentially in excess of 2,000 hours this being far in excess of the 18 hour officer time stipulated in the FOI Act.