



REQUEST 18944

Would you please supply the following information under the Freedom of Information Act.

1. The number of estate agency company details who had been expelled by either property redress scheme, that were passed to you by NTSELAT for checks to be carried out to ensure they were not continuing to trade after expulsion, in the past 6 years.
2. The number of trading standards investigations carried out in relation to estate agency businesses (over and above point 1 above) in the past 6 years.

With the data please expand using the following criteria for the above:

What was the exact nature of those investigations and any outcome on a case-by-case basis and who were the alleged offending agents involved in those cases please use the following format taking note of the example below.

Example 1

- Date: xx/xxxx
- Company: ABC Agents
- Expelled agent investigation: Yes/No (Please indicate which is relevant)
- Offence/s: Breach of section xx of xxxx Act /Reg xxxx Nature of Offence: Misleading action/Omission/Money Laundering/Failure to Register for Redress Scheme:
- Action Taken: Warning Issued/Court
- Proceedings Taken (Outcome)/
- Referred to Police/SFO/CMA/ Or
- Relevant comment

RESPONSE

We are unable to provide this as our database does not have a specific code for this complaint type. It would instead be recorded via the generic code of Fair Trading. The service receives approximately 1000 Fair Trading category complaints per year.

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/aksi_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. It is not possible to retrieve the information requested without an officer manually reading the text within the complaints. An estimated minimum of 5 minutes per complaint equates over 18 hours officer time.

However, it is possible to identify those complaints where a full investigation was carried out- total 3. Membership of NTSELAT was not a feature in any of those cases. We are unable to state the name of businesses connected to the ongoing investigations.

Case 1

2019 onwards- various dates

Let Me Lettings Ltd

15 x counts of dishonestly making a false representation, regarding tenancy deposits being protected in a Government authorised, legally required scheme,
Fraud Act 2006 Section 2 – Fraud by False Representation

Outcome: Court sentence

Case 2

September 2025

Failure to register as a member of a Property Redress Scheme & a Client Money protection scheme contrary to

- The Redress Schemes for Lettings Agency Work Order 2014
- Client Money Protection Schemes for Property Agents Regulations 2019

Outcome: Ongoing

Case 3

November 2025

Failure to indicate required information

- Client Money Protection Schemes for Property Agents Regulations 2019

Outcome: Ongoing