

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Housing Benefit changes

Your request for information has now been considered and the Council's response to your questions is shown below.

You asked:

How many accounts do you hold for tenants renting accommodation (houses or flats) from you?

As of 31/1/14 there were 21,370 accounts (this figure does not include Hostels, Travellers sites, and Supported Accommodation).

How many of your tenants were affected by the changes to housing benefit introduced in 1 April 2013, the under-occupancy charge/spare room subsidy/bedroom tax?

2,701 tenants were affected on 1st April 2013.

How many of those tenants are in arrears with their rent that were not in arrears on 1 April 2013?

At 1/4/13, out of a total of 2,701 tenants affected by the Bedroom Tax, there were 1,044 tenants in rent arrears (i.e. owing 1p or more).
By the 31/12/13 there were 1,188 out of 2,115 tenants affected in arrears.

Of those accounts that are now in arrears, and were affected by the Housing Benefit changes, how many have been served with eviction notices?

Of those tenants affected by the Bedroom Tax at 31/12/13 (2,115 cases) 318 had current Notices of Seeking Possession or Notices to Terminate. None were subject to a Bailiff Warrant.

It is not possible to say how many of these Notices were directly as a result of the changes to Housing Benefits resulting from the Welfare Reforms and how many would have been served anyway. Of the 318 cases, 137 of them had arrears prior to 1/4/13. In many cases, other payable elements of the rent such as District Heating and non-dependant charges also apply.

How many tenant accounts affected by the changes to housing benefit have moved to other accommodation and are now no longer under-occupying?

By 31/12/13, 222 accounts affected by the Bedroom Tax had terminated their tenancies. Of these, 57 had 'downsized' through mutual exchanges, and 59 had 'downsized' through transfers. The other 106 were terminated for a variety of reasons i.e. Deceased, Abandoned, Left the Country, Moved to other rental property, Moved in with Family & Friends.

As of today (28/1/2014), or the nearest date for which figures are available, how much of your discretionary housing allowance budget for 2013/14 was spent/has been allocated? (Numbers and percentage)

339 Cases - 67.90%

The legislation allows you to use the information supplied for your own personal use. Please be aware that any commercial or other use, for example publication, sale, or redistribution may be a breach of copyright under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 as amended unless you obtain the copyright holder's prior permission.

Not all the information that is supplied which is covered by copyright will be the Council's copyright, for example it may be the copyright of a government department or another Council. You should seek either the Council's consent or their consent as appropriate. The Council is willing to advise you of any such potential issues on request. In order to make a request to re-use the information please contact the Information Governance Manager using the details below.

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request please write to:

Information Governance Manager
Information and Support
Leicester City Council
FREEPOST (LE985/33)
New Walk Centre
LEICESTER LE1 6ZG
e-mail: info.requests@leicester.gov.uk

Your request for internal review should be submitted to the above address within 40 (forty) working days of receipt by you of this response. Any such request received after this time will only be considered at the Council's absolute discretion. You can also complain to the Information Commissioner at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow SK9 5AF
Telephone: 01625 545 700
www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk

Please be aware that the Information Commissioner does not normally consider appeals or complaints until the internal appeals and complaints processes of the public authority which is answering the request have been exhausted. You are therefore advised to complain or appeal to the Information Governance Manager before contacting the Commissioner.