

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 - Social Housing Fraud

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

You asked:

I would like to make a freedom of information request on the topic of social housing fraud [1-3].

- 1. Please provide a copy of your most recent social housing fraud strategy**

No such document currently exists. Leicester City Council is in the process of developing an interdepartmental approach to housing fraud.

Therefore, this letter acts as a refusal notice under section 17.1 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 because, in accordance with this section of the Act, this information is not held.

Additionally, could you please answer the following questions

- 2. How many housing officers do you employ?**

The Housing Services Division has an establishment of 50 (full time equivalent) Estate Management Officers working from the decentralised Neighbourhood Housing Offices. In addition, there are 34 Tenancy Management Officers working city-wide, in the Income Management and Property Lettings teams.

- 3. Do you have a specialist team for social housing fraud? If so, how large is this team?**

Not at present. It is envisaged that two specialist investigating officers will soon be appointed.

- 4. How many cases of social housing tenancy fraud did you confirm in 2011?**

Social housing fraud, although widely debated, is poorly defined. In Leicester, 11 cases of sub-letting were confirmed in the 2011 calendar year.

- 5. How many of your confirmed cases led to a recovered property?**

11

- 6. How many of your confirmed cases led to a court action?**

1

7. Please categorise your confirmed cases – unlawful subletting, key selling, non-occupation as principle home, wrongful succession, other

Between January and December 2011 there were 70 cases of potential housing fraud, as it is now understood, investigated. Of these, there were:

13 failed successions (cannot be called fraud – the people involved have been open & honest in all their dealings)

11 confirmed sub-lets (see above – these are clearly fraud)

3 family members / carers left in occupation when tenant departed (again, the people involved are usually open & honest. Tenant usually been taken into residential care)

35 cases where no sub-letting was found on investigation of reports from neighbours, other agencies, etc.

1 squatter (not fraud – separate body of law pertains).

7 relationship changes (not fraud - new partner or other person joined the household. Neighbours often see a new face coming and going, and assume sub-letting has taken place).

Abandoned properties – where no-one is actually in occupation - have not been included.

8. Excluding the National Fraud Initiative (NFI), did you undertake a data matching exercise for social housing fraud with a third party in 2011?

Yes.

9. If you undertook a data matching initiative, how many homes did you assess?

Approximately 22,000.

10. If you undertook a data matching initiative, how many homes were identified as requiring further investigation?

Approximately 1,000.

11. If you undertook a data matching initiative, did it also include ALMO stock?

No.

12. If you undertook a data matching initiative, did it also include housing association stock?

No.

13. What is the average annual cost of housing a family in temporary accommodation, when social housing stock is not available?

On average £18,887 per annum in 24 hour hostel accommodation.

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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: FOIA@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.

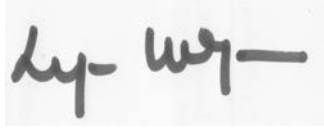
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**Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow SK9 5AF
Telephone: 01625 545 700
www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk**

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.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lynn Wyeth', is written on a light-colored rectangular background.

Lynn Wyeth
Information Governance Manager