

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000

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

You asked:

How much money does your council currently hold in a suspense account where it believes money was paid automatically by the estate of a dead person, or somebody that has moved away from your area, but you have been unable to trace them or their estate to pay the money back?

ANSWER:

Leicester City Council does not hold suspense accounts for this purpose but instead manages received monies for things like Council Tax, NNDR and Rent accounts. These are managed on an 'account' for each 'customer' and as soon as the Council is made aware of such a situation, arrangements for repayment would be made directly from that 'account'.

A balance of £2,072.51 was written off as at 31st March 2012 for money held in former rent accounts (housing tenants) where the tenant was either deceased or had moved away and the Council have been unable to trace their whereabouts or their estate to pay the money back.

In the last five financial years how much money has the council credited to its account as a write-on where the council has been unable to trace the individual, estate or company that paid you in error?

£5,775.63 has been written off in the previous 5 years in relation to rent accounts where we have been unable to trace the individual, estate or company. However, the credit can be resurrected if or when they can be traced.

For Council Tax and NNDR credits, we are unable to identify the amount involved for cases exclusive to payers who are deceased or have moved away from the area because each account would need to be checked individually for each of the five years.

Section 12 of the Act makes provision for public authorities to refuse requests for information where the cost of dealing with them would exceed the appropriate limit, which for local government is set at £450. This represents the estimated cost of one person spending more than 18 hours in determining whether the department holds the information, locating, retrieving and extracting the information.

We estimate it will take approximately 228 hours to process your request just for 2007/2008 alone as for this year there were 2744 accounts.

This is therefore a Refusal Notice under section 17.1 of the Freedom of Information Act, because under the provisions of section 12.1 of the Act, the

Council estimates that to comply with your request in its current form will exceed the appropriate limit.

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: FOIA@leicester.gov.uk

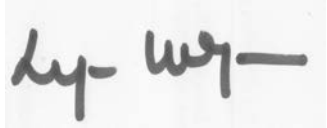
Your request for internal review should be submitted to the above address within 40 (forty) working days of receipt by you of this response. Any such request received after this time will only be considered at the Council's absolute discretion.

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.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored background. The signature appears to be 'Lynn Wyeth' written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

Lynn Wyeth
Information Governance Manager