



Homes
England

Date: 8 December 2021

Our Ref: RFI3683

Tel: 0300 1234 500

Email: infogov@homesengland.gov.uk

Making homes happen

██████████
By Email Only

Information Governance Team
Homes England
Windsor House – 6th Floor
50 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0TL

Dear ██████████

RE: Request for Information – RFI3683

Thank you for your request for information which was processed in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

You requested the following information:

1. *The number of valuations received by Homes England or its appointed Mortgage Administrator "Target HCA" or agents acting on their behalf, **beginning 1st January 2021 to today's date (16/11/2021)** by 'HouzeCheck Limited' [Company Number: 11223619] of 42-44 Clarendon Road, Watford, England, WD17 1JJ, in regards to Help to Buy redemptions, stair-casing or otherwise related terms, **in the county of Berkshire only.***
2. *The number of these valuations that have been accepted by Homes England or its appointed Mortgage Administrator "Target HCA".*
3. *The number of these valuations that have been rejected by Homes England or its appointed Mortgage Administrator "Target HCA", and if any, for what documented reasons.*

Response

We can inform you that we do hold information that falls within the scope of your request. However, to comply with your request would exceed the appropriate limit for the cost of compliance. We therefore rely on section 12, exemption where the cost of compliance exceeds the appropriate limit under the FOIA.

The full text of the legislation can be found on the following link and we have quoted section 12 below for ease.

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/contents>

Section 12 - Exemption where cost of compliance exceeds appropriate limit

(1) Section 1(1) does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit.

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(2) Subsection (1) does not exempt the public authority from its obligation to comply with paragraph (a) of section 1(1) unless the estimated cost of complying with that paragraph alone would exceed the appropriate limit.

(3) In subsections (1) and (2) "the appropriate limit" means such amount as may be prescribed, and different amounts may be prescribed in relation to different cases.

(4) The Minister for the Cabinet Office may by regulations provide that, in such circumstances as may be prescribed, where two or more requests for information are made to a public authority:

(a) by one person, or

(b) by different persons who appear to the public authority to be acting in concert or in pursuance of a campaign, the estimated cost of complying with any of the requests is to be taken to be the estimated total cost of complying with all of them.

(5) The Minister for the Cabinet Office may by regulations make provision for the purposes of this section as to the costs to be estimated and as to the manner in which they are to be estimated.

We have considered the current wording of your request and in its current scope we have determined that to establish where all elements of the information is held, to locate the information, retrieving the information and extracting the information would exceed the appropriate limit in terms of timeframes.

Under the terms of the Act we are not obliged to provide any information compiled in the course of our searches prior to concluding section 12 is engaged.

Advice and Assistance

In compliance with the Section 45 Code of Practice (Paragraph 2.10) and to offer advice and assistance under section 16 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, we can provide the following supporting information in order to explain why the cost limit is exceeded.

As advised in our response to RFI3675, which also exceeded the cost limit for compliance, we can again confirm that Homes England does not collate or record which valuation company has undertaken valuations. Furthermore our Help to Buy team has advised that the system data held is as individual accounts, and valuations received are manually attached to these accounts. Valuation information is not a recorded field in a system and furthermore there could be multiple valuations received and recorded for one customer. The system only allows for reporting on a concluded transaction, it would not be able to provide data on valuations received against that account.

We have considered whether we would be able to pull information from the system on applications for redemption that have been received for Berkshire in the time period requested in order that we could then manually assess the valuations received on those applications and collate the information you have requested. However, the Help to Buy team have confirmed that even to provide the accounts in Berkshire for any time period where applications have been received would require a change request to the system. Any change request would exceed £450 or 18 hours.



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We note the Information Commissioner's guidance and the duty to advise a requestor how they could refine their request to not exceed the section 12 limit. However, after detailed discussion with our Help to Buy team we are unable to advise any information in relation to a specific valuer that could be provided under the cost limit. As described in fuller detail above, this is due to the fact that there is no way other than individually examining each account to extract information in relation to valuer.

Right to Appeal

If you are not happy with the information that has been provided or the way in which your request has been handled, you may request an internal review. You can request an internal review by writing to Homes England via the details below, quoting the reference number at the top of this letter.

Email: infogov@homesengland.gov.uk

The Information Governance Team
Homes England – 6th Floor
Windsor House
50 Victoria Street
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SW1H 0TL

Your request for review must be made in writing, explain why you wish to appeal, and be received within 40 working days of the date of this response. Failure to meet this criteria may lead to your request being refused.

Upon receipt, your request for review will be passed to an independent party not involved in your original request. We aim to issue a response within 20 working days.

You may also complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) however, the Information Commissioner does usually expect the internal review procedure to be exhausted in the first instance.

The Information Commissioner's details can be found via the following link:

<https://ico.org.uk/>

Please note that the contents of your request and this response are also subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Homes England may be required to disclose your request and our response accordingly.

Yours sincerely,

The Information Governance Team
For Homes England