



Homes
England

The Housing and Regeneration Agency

Date: 20 September 2024

Our Ref: RFI4871

Tel: 0300 1234 500

Email: infogov@homesengland.gov.uk

[REDACTED]
By Email Only

Dear [REDACTED]

RE: Request for Information – RFI4871

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 on 28 August 2024:

Under the Freedom of Information Act, I would please like to request the following information:

- 1. The number of complaints received per year for each year to date since 2018 as broken down by the complaint categories used on your complaint record management system.**
- 2. The outcome of those complaints, that is, the number of complaints that were substantiated/ upheld, partially substantiated /upheld, or unsubstantiated/ rejected, for each year to date since 2018, as broken down by the complaint categories used on the complaint record management system.**
- 3. The average amount of time taken to resolve those complaints for each year to date since 2018 as broken down by the categories used on the complaint record management system and any relevant service standards concerning the timeliness of complaint-handling.**
- 4. The remedies provided in the case of complaints that were upheld or partially upheld (e.g. apology, financial payment) for each year to date since 2018 as broken down by the complaint categories used on the complaint record management system.**
- 5. Any information concerning learning from complaints, such as (but not necessarily exclusively limited to): changes made to systems, processes, and policies, training and staff development, and other service improvements.**
- 6. Any information you possess as regards the satisfaction levels of complainants whose complaints you have considered.**
- 7. Any information concerning the early resolution of complaints through informal methods, as defined at paragraphs 8.7 – 8.10 of the Parliamentary and Health Services Ombudsman’s Model Complaint**

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Handling Procedure for UK Central Government - <https://www.ombudsman.org.uk/organisations-we-investigate/complaint-standards/uk-central-government-complaint-standards/model-complaint-handling-procedure-uk-central-government> - such as the number of such early resolutions for each year to date since 2018 as broken down by the complaint categories used on the complaint record management system.

8. Any internal policies or guidance concerning how you handle and consider complaints.

9. Any information or assessment concerning whether your handling of complaints is in line with the "UK Central Government Complaint Standards" which have been issued by the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman: <https://www.ombudsman.org.uk/organisations-we-investigate/complaint-standards/uk-central-government-complaint-standards>

10. Any information or assessment concerning whether the way in which you capture complaint data is line with the guidance issued by the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman, the Cabinet Office, the Treasury.

11. Do you prepare and/ or publish an annual report on complaints (whether standalone or as part of a more general annual report)? If so, please provide copies of any annual report on your handling of complaints prepared and/ or published since 2018.

Response

We can inform you that we do hold some of the information that you have requested. 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 Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004 provides for the appropriate limit referred to in section 12(1). Section 3(3) of this Regulation provides that the appropriate limit is £450, which equates to 18 hours of staff time.

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

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(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.

(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

We have a duty to provide advice and assistance in accordance with Section 16 of the FOIA. To comply with this duty, we advise you may wish to consider narrowing the scope of your request.

Homes England have had multiple methods of recording complaints since 2018, meaning the information you have requested is contained within multiple systems, some of which cannot be easily retrieved. In

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relation to your request for information regarding outcomes and handling times, to retrieve this information would require the individual interrogation of each complaint file.

Please note that due to the broad scope of your request we cannot confirm that any further request would not also exceed the section 12 cost limit at this time.

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

Information Governance Team
Homes England
The Lumen
2nd Floor
St James Boulevard
Newcastle Helix
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE4 5BZ
United Kingdom

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:

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<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

