



Homes
England

The Housing and Regeneration Agency

Date: 18 October 2024

Our Ref: RFI4874

Tel: 0300 1234 500

Email: infogov@homesengland.gov.uk

[REDACTED]
By Email Only

Dear [REDACTED]

RE: Request for Information – RFI4874

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:

I was wondering whether you would be able to supply me with monthly figures which run from the start of the first Help to Buy scheme up to today showing:

- The number of requests received to let a home that had been bought using a Help to Buy Equity Loan.
- The reason for the request (i.e. moving temporarily, financially struggling, cladding etc).
- The average length of time between purchasing the property and requesting consent to let.
- The proportion of these requests which are granted.

Response

We can inform you that we do hold 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 full text of the legislation can be found on the following link and we have quoted section 12 below for ease.

2nd Floor
The Lumen
St James' Boulevard
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE4 5BZ

0300 1234 500
@HomesEngland
www.gov.uk/homes-england





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<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.

(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.

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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, you may wish to consider narrowing the scope of your request. In particular, the reason for the request to let a property is recorded in each individual record. Our staff would need to open each record individually to ascertain the reason for the request.

We estimate it would take at least 5 minutes to identify the reason in each record. In many cases the reason is recorded in a photocopied or scanned letter attached to the record, so each letter would need to be read and a new spreadsheet created to capture the information. Additionally, the time between purchasing the property and requesting consent to let is also not centrally recorded and would require manual retrieval of records to calculate the average time

As there are in excess of 3500 requests for letting a property on our system this would take many weeks of work to compile.

It may be of some assistance to you to know that the Help to Buy: Equity Loan programme helped over 380,000 households into home ownership. You can access guidance using the link below for information about consent to let, including the situations in which we may provide consent to let.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-sublet-your-help-to-buy-home>

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
2nd Floor
The Lumen

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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,

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For Homes England

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