

Freedom of information request questions

Dear FOI Officer

I am looking for information concerning the effectiveness of local authorities' enforcement activities in the private rented sector. I am keen to understand what happens to complaints about private landlords once received by the local authority and if there are any issues taking action against landlords who do not comply with enforcement action.

We appreciate that local authorities are structured differently and will have various routes for different kinds of complaints to be handled. The departments that may deal with these complaints include: Housing Advice, Housing Options, Homeless Persons Unit, Environmental Health, Private Sector Housing, Trading Standards, Tenancy Relations, Customer Services, Legal.

We have therefore broken down complaints by type in questions 1 – 5, and if different departments in your authority follow through each of these types of complaint you may wish to send questions 7 – 11 to each of those departments to get their response.

If it is too arduous to get some of the earlier years' data, we would be happy with the past 3 years.

I would be grateful if you could tell me:

- 1) How many complaints against private landlords concerning illegal eviction have you received in each financial year since 2006/07?

	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Illegal eviction	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil

[Dealt with by legal](#)

- 2) How many complaints against private landlords concerning harassment have you received in each financial year since 2006/07?

	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Harassment	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil

[Dealt with by legal](#)

3) How many complaints concerning category I or II hazards under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) against private landlords have you received in each financial year since 2006/07?

	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Category I			<u>13</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>35</u>
Category II					

Unable to distinguish between cat 1 or cat 2 complaints

4) How many complaints concerning unlicensed Houses in Multiple Occupation have you received in each financial year since 2006/07?

	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Unlicensed houses in multiple occupation			<u>7</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>3</u>

5) How many complaints concerning financial scams (such as unfair charges, withheld deposits), against private landlords have you received in each financial year since 2006/07?

	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Financial scams (e.g. unfair terms, withheld deposits)			<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>

6) Roughly, how many private landlords have you repeatedly dealt with that give you continued cause for concern? 0

7) How many cases against private landlords in total have you taken pre-enforcement action (such as a letter or verbal warning to the landlord) and in how many cases were you able to resolve the issue in each financial year since 2006/07?

	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11

Number of cases where pre-enforcement action taken			<u>8</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>18</u>
Number of cases where pre-enforcement action resolved the issue			<u>8</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>15</u>

8) On how many cases have you taken formal enforcement action (such as injunctions or court orders) against private landlords in each financial year since 2006/07 and how many have been complied with?

	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Number of enforcement actions initiated against private landlords			<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
Number of enforcement actions complied with			<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>

9) How many prosecutions have you brought against private landlords in each financial year since 2006/07 and how many were successful?

	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11

Number of prosecutions brought against private landlords			<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Number of successful prosecutions against private landlords			<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>

10) Of all the successful prosecutions made against private landlords since 2006/07, what costs were awarded to the local authority, and what was the penalty made against the private landlord?

	Less than £500	£500 - £999	£1000- £2999	£3000- £4999	£5000 or more	Jail sentence
Number of successful prosecutions by penalty type and cost awarded						

11) How many full-time equivalent staff have you had working on enforcing standards in the private rented sector in each financial year since 2006/07?

	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Number of full-time staff			<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>

12) Is there anything else you would like to tell us about how you deal with problem landlords in your area? We hold a well attended Countywide landlords forum and have a successful accreditation scheme. SDC tries to work with landlords and enforcement is a

last resort. The main difficulty is that this is a high demand area with very little privately rented property available particularly to those on benefits, fear of eviction prevents a lot of tenants from making an initial complaint or wanting the council to follow through if they do contact us.