

FOI DOF/2024-0037

Request

Would the Department of Finance be able to provide me with the following information:

A yearly breakdown of how many empty homes there are in Northern Ireland since 2016, per Council area.

Response

The Department can confirm that it holds the information requested, as below.

Land & Property Services (LPS) does not maintain a register of 'empty homes'.

For the purposes of this response, 'empty homes' is defined as properties included in the housing stock¹ and recorded as vacant², on the Land & Property Services rating system.

Information in the rating system on domestic properties recorded as vacant may not be current or complete. Since the introduction of the Rating of Empty Homes legislation on 1st October 2011, the rate liability for vacant domestic properties has been assessed at 100%. There is currently no requirement for ratepayers to inform LPS that their property is vacant, nor is there any financial advantage in doing so.

¹ In line with the Rates Order (NI) 1977, Housing Stock is defined as a count of properties which are valued as domestic or mixed for the purposes of rating. This refers to properties in the Valuation List which are used (or when next in use, will be used) for the purposes of a private dwelling. This includes properties which are temporary incapable of beneficial occupation, but excludes Caravans, Domestic Garages, Domestic Stores and Car Parking Spaces.

² Information in the rating system on domestic properties recorded as vacant may not be current or complete. Since the introduction of the Rating of Empty Homes legislation on 1st October 2011, the rate liability for vacant domestic properties has been assessed at 100%. There is currently no requirement for ratepayers to inform Land & Property Services that their property is vacant, nor is there any financial advantage in doing so.

Housing stock¹ properties recorded as vacant² on LPS rating system by District Council, 2016-2023

District Council	Year ³							
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Antrim and Newtownabbey	891	915	981	936	979	1,057	985	1,016
Ards and North Down	1,499	1,538	1,511	1,508	1,566	1,512	1,410	1,477
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	2,219	2,040	2,004	2,008	1,997	2,020	2,132	2,176
Belfast	3,746	3,545	3,480	3,319	3,289	3,387	3,291	3,355
Causeway Coast and Glens	1,841	1,850	1,769	1,750	1,776	1,841	1,825	1,886
Derry City and Strabane	1,240	1,186	1,275	1,297	1,415	1,433	1,406	1,454
Fermanagh and Omagh	2,591	2,499	2,420	2,398	2,436	2,445	2,482	2,497
Lisburn and Castlereagh	1,046	1,222	1,162	1,131	1,141	1,222	1,113	1,138
Mid and East Antrim	1,138	1,148	1,165	1,218	1,327	1,394	1,287	1,342
Mid Ulster	2,065	1,924	1,959	1,991	2,018	2,073	2,110	2,184
Newry, Mourne and Down	2,321	2,271	2,199	2,247	2,296	2,354	2,384	2,427
Northern Ireland	20,597	20,138	19,925	19,803	20,240	20,738	20,425	20,952

³ Housing stock estimates for Northern Ireland relate to the stock in April each year. See published Housing Stock data at www.finance-ni.gov.uk/topics/housing-stock-statistics