

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