

PROTECT PERSONAL

Our Ref: 87.2016-17

Your Ref:

Date: 25 May 2016

Gavin Chait
request-325277-
b194cd61@whatdotheyknow.com



Police and Crime
Commissioner
North Yorkshire



Joint Corporate Legal Services

Dear Mr Chait,

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: 87.2016-17

I write in connection with your request for information which was received by North Yorkshire Police on 21 April 2016. I note you seek access to the following information:

Between 1 January 2011 and 31 December 2015:

Total number of reports of business premises affected by squatting (including retail, office and industrial), with a breakdown of whether they were empty or occupied at the time.

Clarification received 24/05/16:

Thank you for your request for clarity. I can limit the search terms to the following:

*Commercial
Financial
Hospitality
Medical
Shop*

For these terms, I'm not too sure how to interpret them. If they are for places where business occurs (e.g. small hotels, B&Bs, or entertainment centres) then please include them. Otherwise, not.

*Travel
Leisure*

I'm interested in the variation between "occupied" and "unoccupied" no matter the time-frame of lack of occupation, but it would help to know how long "long-term" means?

Extent and Result of Searches to Locate Information

To locate the information relevant to your request searches were conducted within North Yorkshire Police.

I can confirm that the information you have requested is held by North Yorkshire Police.

Decision

I have today decided to disclose the located information to you.

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Jane Wintermeyer BSc (Hons) Acting Force Solicitor & Head of Legal Services
Police Headquarters | Newby Wiske Hall | Northallerton | North Yorkshire | DL7 9HA
DX No 68810 NORTHALLERTON 2 | Telephone 01609 789297 | Fax 01609 789987

Non-emergency
Number



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Squatting in a non-residential property is neither a crime nor an offence, therefore the police may not be called to a squatting occurrence. However, other crimes and offences may be linked to a squatting situation, for example criminal damage, theft etc.

There have been five reports received by North Yorkshire Police relating to people squatting in commercial properties between 1 January 2011 and 31 December 2015. Please see table below for details:

Type of Business	Occupied/Unoccupied
Caravan Site	Unoccupied
Hotel	Occupied
Hospital	Unoccupied
Family Services centre	Occupied
Driving test centre	Unoccupied

By referring to a property as being unoccupied on a 'long term basis', it may be reasonable to consider that it would have been empty for more than a year. I would only class one of the above properties as being unoccupied on a long term basis, as the building was derelict.

You may find the following link useful for more information on squatting:

<https://www.gov.uk/squatting-law/overview>

Please note that systems used for recording information are not generic, nor are the procedures used locally in capturing the data. It should be noted therefore that this force's response to your questions should not be used for comparison purposes with any other responses you may receive.

Complaint Rights

Your attention is drawn to the attached sheet which details your right of complaint.

If you have any queries concerning this request, please contact me quoting the reference number above.

Yours sincerely

Liz Fryar
Legal Officer (Civil Disclosure)
Joint Corporate Legal Services
Enc

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COMPLAINT RIGHTS

Are you unhappy with how your request has been handled or do you think the decision is incorrect?

You have the right to require the North Yorkshire Police to review their decision.

Prior to lodging a formal complaint you are welcome and encouraged to discuss the decision with the case officer that dealt with your request.

Ask to have the decision looked at again –

The quickest and easiest way to have the decision looked at again is to telephone the case officer that is nominated at the end of your decision letter.

That person will be able to discuss the decision, explain any issues and assist with any problems.

Complaint

If you are dissatisfied with the handling procedures or the decision of the North Yorkshire Police made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act) regarding access to information you can lodge a complaint with the North Yorkshire Police to have the decision reviewed. North Yorkshire Police must be notified of your intention to complain within 2 months of the date of its response to your Freedom of Information request. Complaints should be made in writing and addressed to:

Force Solicitor and Head of Legal Services
North Yorkshire Police
Newby Wiske Hall
Northallerton
North Yorkshire
DL7 9HA

In all possible circumstances the North Yorkshire Police will aim to respond to your complaint as soon as practicable but within 20 working days.

The Information Commissioner

After lodging a complaint with the North Yorkshire Police if you are still dissatisfied with the decision you may make application to the Information Commissioner for a decision on whether the request for information has been dealt with in accordance with the requirements of the Act.

For information on how to make application to the Information Commissioner please visit their website at www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk. Alternatively, phone or write to:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire SK9 5AF
Phone: 01625 545 700