

East Lothian Council

FOI Ref: 2018/014(13077)

It would be much appreciated if you could provide me with the following information:

1) *The number of evictions within the council area in 2017, 2016 and 2015.*

The total number of evictions has been as follows:

2014/15	15
2015/16	19
2016/17	8
2017/18 (to December 2017)	12

For your information, details of the number of evictions is reported within the Annual Return of the Charter which is published within The Scottish Housing Regulator's website: www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk.

2) *Information on the extent to which universal credit has been rolled out in the area.*

The Universal Credit (UC) Live Service was introduced in East Lothian on 27th April 2015. Under the Live Service, volumes were relatively small with only limited numbers of single claimants moving onto UC.

East Lothian was the first area in Scotland to be moved to the Universal Credit 'Full Digital' Service on 27th March 2016. The gateway conditions within Full Service were extended to include not only single claimants but all claimant groups from the start, for example couples and families. As well as new claims being in scope, certain changes in circumstances for those already in receipt of DWP benefit could also trigger a move to UC. As expected, there has been a rapid increase in claims, across all areas of East Lothian since 2016/17.

3) *Any data on benefits which the people/households were in receipt of at the time of eviction.*

There has been one eviction in the last 3 years where a tenant has been in receipt of UC at the time of the eviction.

4) *Any comment from the council on the impact of universal credit on evictions or any other issues.*

The Council has not seen a significant rise in evictions due to the introduction of Universal Credit.

Finally, it may help to explain that Freedom of Information legislation only applies to information which is held or recorded by a public authority. It does not apply to views, opinions, intentions or questions which simply require a yes/no answer. In view of this, some of the questions asked are not technically valid for the purposes of this legislation as they are not requests for specific recorded information that East Lothian Council may or may not hold.

In order to assist you, however, colleagues have addressed the questions posed to the best of their knowledge. For future reference, a link to the "Tips for Requesters" page of the Scottish Information Commissioner's website has been provided which you may find useful:

<http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/YourRights/Tipsforrequesters.aspx>