

## Fraudulent Claims

1. Could you please confirm the number of instances in the last 10 years where a fraudulent claim for a business rates refund has been made?
2. Could you please confirm the number of instances where a refund has been paid to an incorrect entity due to a fraudulent claim?
3. Could you please confirm the total value (£) over the last 10 years where a Ratepayer has had to be compensated due to a fraudulent claim for a business rates refund?

We do not record any of this data and the time limits would be in excess to check every refund over the past 10 years.

We do not hold the information that you have requested in an easily retrievable format. Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA) relieves a public authority from the obligation to comply with a request for information where the estimated time required to locate, review and extract the information exceeds a certain threshold set out in Regulations.

The Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004 (SI 2004/3244) set out the rules in relation to the cost limit (otherwise called the "appropriate limit"). These Regulations are published by the Office of Public Sector Information (OPSI) and are viewable on their web site from this link: [http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2004/uksi\\_20043244\\_en.pdf](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2004/uksi_20043244_en.pdf)

The Regulations set out the cost limit for Government departments and for other public authorities. For local government, Regulation 3 states that the cost limit is £450 and Regulation 4(4) states that the prescribed hourly rate is £25. Regulation 4(4) further provides that where the local authority estimates the time taken to gather the information would exceed this limit (which based on the prescribed hourly rate, equates to 18 officer hours), it may refuse the request under section 12 of FoIA.

I am satisfied the cost limit applies to your request and will explain why this is the case.

Over 350 refunds in 10 years at approx. 10 minute per check =

$350 \times 10 = 3500 \text{ minutes}$   
 $3500 / 60 = 58.3 \text{ hours}$

4. The total value of credits held on business rates accounts within the billing authority as of today's date.

Value of credits across all historic accounts (open and closed) is £609,429.16 as at 25.06.2024