

**REQUEST AND RESPONSE**

1. Who deals with all queries related to the Empty Homes?

**Answer: Private Sector Housing department (Life Opportunities) – Tel 01255 686617. They are currently based at Clacton Town Hall.**

2. For those who work with Empty Homes, what are the name of the staff member(s) and their contact details?

**Answer: This may be any member of the team (all are Technical Officers or qualified Environmental Health Officers), but predominantly Chris Smetherham-James (Technical Officer)). The published number for any queries/complaints is via our Administration Team on 01255 686617. Email address: [PSHousing@tendringdc.gov.uk](mailto:PSHousing@tendringdc.gov.uk) or [emptyhomes@tendringdc.gov.uk](mailto:emptyhomes@tendringdc.gov.uk).**

3. Do the Empty Homes department need to trace the owners and/or next of kin of these properties?

**Answer: Sometimes, this will depend on the circumstances and the information currently on file/reported.**

4. For those staff member(s) who need to locate the owner and/or next of kin of these properties, what are their names and contact details?

**Answer: This may be any member of staff within the department.**

5. What steps do the council take in order to locate owners and/or next of kin of these empty properties?

**Answer: Searches on records already held by TDC e.g. Council Tax Systems; previous service requests; visiting the property; writing to any responsible parties; land registry searches; possibly other Local Authorities.**

6. How many of these homes are considered "empty homes" due to the fact a public health funeral is taken place?

**Answer: We do not keep a record of this information.**

7. How many public health funerals have taken place within the past year? (From January 2015)

**Answer: 18**

8. Of these public health funerals that have occurred, please provide:

a) Name of deceased

b) Date of birth and date of death

c) Last residential address

d) Have the next of kin/family members been traced?

e) What date have the details been referred to the QLTR, Bona Vacantia, Treasury Solicitor, Government Legal Department, NUHU, Duchy or Farrer & Co?

**Answer:**

**In relation to persons dying with no known next- of-kin the Authority holds the information requested, but is unable to provide this information because it is exempt under section 31(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act (Law Enforcement) and is therefore being withheld.**

**Section 31(1) states that Information which is not exempt information by virtue of section 30 is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice —**

**(a) the prevention or detection of crime**

**We are applying this exemption because the release of personal details of a deceased individual with no known relatives and no will may make the assets of that person vulnerable and disclosure of the information may lead to the commission of offences and cause loss to the unsecured estates.**

**The Authority has applied the public interest test and determined that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.**

9. Which other organisations have details of the deceased been referred to and why?

**Answer: The Treasury Solicitors to deal with the estate.**