



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref: ATISN13966

3 June 2020

Dear

### **ATISN13966: NON-DOMESTIC RATES**

Thank you for your request which I received on 7 May about non-domestic rates and fraud.

You asked for information which the Welsh Government holds about allegations made regarding owners of second homes in Wales defrauding Welsh Councils by moving onto business [non-domestic] rates when they have not met, or will not be meeting in the future, the strict criteria required to move onto business rates.

You specifically requested:

- How many cases have been uncovered in Wales of second home owners fraudulently moving onto business rates?
- What action has been taken against these people?
- How much have Welsh councils lost by these frauds?
- How many cases are currently under investigation?
- How many suspected cases are there?
- What is the evidence for these suspected cases?

In response to your request, the Welsh Government is not aware of any cases of dwelling owners whose properties have been moved onto the non-domestic rating list in fraudulent circumstances. Therefore, we do not hold any information in answer to the questions you have raised. However, the following information outlines the relevant process.

The Valuation Office Agency (VOA) is responsible for assessing properties in Wales for local taxation purposes and for determining whether a property should be recorded on the council tax list or the non-domestic rating list. The VOA is also responsible for maintaining the lists, including making any changes to the lists and transferring properties between the lists. The VOA is independent of the Welsh Government.

Owners who wish to move their property from the council tax list to the non-domestic rating list, or vice versa, must submit a formal request to the VOA. For listing as self-catering accommodation, owners must also provide supporting evidence that their property meets

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

the statutory criteria for letting (available for let for at least 140 days in a twelve-month period and actually let for at least 70 days). The VOA reviews this evidence before determining whether the property should be recorded on the council tax list or the non-domestic rating list.

The Welsh Government has been working closely with the VOA to monitor recent changes to the council tax and non-domestic rates legislation. We have invited all local authorities to submit any examples of properties which they believe to be wrongly listed. Authorities have provided a small number of examples of list transfers. The VOA has reviewed all the examples provided to date and has concluded that they were supported by evidence that the properties met the letting criteria for treatment as self-catering accommodation.

If you are dissatisfied with the Welsh Government's handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response. Requests for an internal review should be addressed to the Welsh Government's Freedom of Information Officer at:

Information Rights Unit  
Welsh Government  
Cathays Park  
Cardiff  
CF10 3NQ  
or Email: [Freedom.of.information@gov.wales](mailto:Freedom.of.information@gov.wales)

Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF.

However, please note that the Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process.

Yours sincerely