

## Vacant properties in Fermanagh and Omagh

### 1. How many vacant properties have been reported in Fermanagh and Omagh?

The tables below sets out the total number of cases that were registered as being potentially vacant on the Abandonment/Non-Occupation module of our Housing Management System (HMS), for the last 5 financial years in Fermanagh and Omagh\*.

#### Fermanagh Cases

| Year        | Abandonment | Non Occupation | Uncategorised | Grand Total |
|-------------|-------------|----------------|---------------|-------------|
| 2017/18     | 31          | 4              | 1             | 36          |
| 2018/19     | 22          | 5              | 1             | 28          |
| 2019/20     | 12          | 1              | 0             | 13          |
| 2020/21     | 7           | 0              | 0             | 7           |
| 2021/22     | 10          | 1              | 0             | 11          |
| Grand Total | 82          | 11             | 2             | 95          |

#### Omagh Cases

| Year    | Abandonment | Non Occupation | Uncategorised | Grand Total |
|---------|-------------|----------------|---------------|-------------|
| 2017/18 | 11          | 3              | 0             | 14          |
| 2018/19 | 6           | 6              | 1             | 13          |
| 2019/20 | 11          | 1              | 1             | 13          |
| 2020/21 | 5           | 0              | 0             | 5           |

| Year        | Abandonment | Non Occupation | Uncategorised | Grand Total |
|-------------|-------------|----------------|---------------|-------------|
| 2021/22     | 7           | 2              | 0             | 9           |
| Grand Total | 40          | 12             | 2             | 54          |

## 2. How many of these have been investigated?

Local office staff are expected to investigate every report of suspected tenancy fraud. If a genuine suspicion of fraud is established they must continue to investigate and take action if necessary. I would note that, owing to the Covid-19 pandemic, staff were unable to conduct site based investigations from the onset of the pandemic in March 2020 until the resumption of site visits in April 2022. They were instructed to report every instance of alleged fraud across this period for later investigation.

## 3. How many court cases have arisen out of these?

The figures above relate to abandonment or non-occupation of NIHE dwellings. Articles 41 & 19a of The Housing Order (NI) 1983 (the 1983 Order) allow for recovery of properties that have been abandoned without the need for court action. Non-occupation cases are treated as a breach of tenancy conditions for which the Housing Executive can serve a Notice to Quit and a Notice Seeking Possession under Ground 1 of Article 28 of the 1983 Order. Our Legal Department advise that two non-occupation cases were contested in court in the period in question.

## 4. How many convictions have been handed down?

Abandonment and non-occupation of NIHE properties are not criminal acts and therefore would not lead to a conviction.