

Allotment waiting lists 'up to 15 years'

By Daily Telegraph Reporter

HOUSEHOLDERS face waiting lists of up to 15 years to get their hands on an allotment, research has shown.

And the cost of the precious plot of land can also vary wildly, from 1p per square metre to 55p.

Demand is such that some councils have closed their waiting lists altogether, according to researchers at the University of Leicester.

A Freedom of Information request revealed that the average cost of an allotment has risen by 21 per cent in the past three years.

Britain's dearest allotments are in Runnymede, Surrey, where the local council charges 55p per square metre. Bolsover in Derbyshire had Britain's cheapest plots, at just 1p per square metre. The average allotment plot measured around 250 sq metre and cost 15p per sq metre.

The FOI request yielded information about allotments from 216 councils across England, including rents, water charges, discounts and changes to tenancy agreements.

The findings revealed that between 2008 and 2011, 91 councils raised rents by up to a fifth, while 60 increased them by one fifth or more. Seven councils – including Chesterfield, Derbyshire, Hertsmere, Herts, and the London boroughs of Lambeth and Brent – increased rents by double or more.

And the booming popularity of allotments means some councils had waiting lists of over a decade, while 32 of those who provided information said they had closed their waiting lists altogether.

Dr Farida Vis, the study's author, has enjoyed her own allotment for 11 years. She said: "When I got mine, I waited two months – now our waiting list is 15 years. We see this as the first step in opening up allotment data and making it freely available."

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