

2 Bristol Avenue, Colindale, NW9 4EW

5 March 2026  
Our ref: 16564628

Thank you for your request received on 9 February 2026, for the following information:

**Please provide details of total expenditure incurred by the Local Authority in relation to SEND First-tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability) appeals, for the last five completed financial years:**

**2019/20  
2020/21  
2021/22  
2022/23  
2023/24**

**(If finalised figures for 2023/24 are not yet available, please provide the most recent provisional data held.)**

**Information requested**

**For each financial year listed above, please provide total spend (rounded to the nearest £1,000 if necessary) for the following categories:**

**1. External legal costs**

**Including but not limited to:**

**Payments to solicitors, barristers, or legal firms relating to SEND tribunal cases**

**Retainer arrangements for SEND/EHCP tribunal work (please state whether a retainer exists and the annual value)**

**Disbursements and associated legal expenses**

**2. Internal staffing and teams**

**Including:**

**Costs associated with dedicated EHCP tribunal teams, SEND legal teams, or casework teams whose work includes tribunal preparation or attendance**

**Where specific tribunal teams do not exist, please provide estimated staffing costs attributable to tribunal-related work (e.g. percentage of role function)**

**3. Complaints and dispute resolution linked to tribunals**

**Including:**

**Costs associated with formal complaints, dispute resolution, mediation, or pre-tribunal processes where these relate to EHCP appeals**

#### **4. Tribunal-related fees and charges**

**Including:**

**Any payments made by the Local Authority in connection with SEND tribunal proceedings, including payments to HM Courts & Tribunals Service (HMCTS), expert witnesses commissioned for tribunal purposes, or other tribunal-related charges where such costs are borne by the Local Authority**

#### **Format of response**

**Please provide the information in a tabular format, broken down by financial year and by category, preferably in Excel or CSV format.**

**Where exact figures are not held, please provide:**

**The best available estimate, and  
A brief explanation of how the estimate was calculated.**

#### **Clarifications**

**This request relates only to SEND First-tier Tribunal (SENDIST) appeals under the Children and Families Act 2014.**

**If elements of the requested information are not held, please specify which elements and why.**

**If you believe parts of this request may exceed the cost limit under section 12, please provide the remaining information that can be disclosed within the limit, rather than refusing the request in full.**

#### **Public interest**

**This information is requested in the public interest to support transparency and understanding of:**

#### **Local Authority expenditure on SEND dispute processes**

**The balance of resources between legal contest and early, lawful EHCP provision**

**System-level pressures within SEND services**

We have processed this request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

#### **Response**

The council holds the information requested and it is attached.

The Local Authority has disclosed all information it holds relating to expenditure on SEND First-tier Tribunal (SENDIST) appeals for the financial years 2022/2023, 2023/2024 and 2024/2025. Earlier financial years cannot be provided because the council's previous legal case management system was decommissioned in April 2021, and SEND Tribunal cost data from before this migration is no longer accessible within current records. The Local Authority can also confirm that it does not operate a retainer arrangement for SEND or EHCP Tribunal work, and therefore no retainer value exists to disclose.

#### **Further information**

If you are interested in the data that the council holds you may wish to visit Open Barnet, the council's data portal. This brings together all our published datasets and other information of interest on one searchable database for anyone, anywhere to access. <http://open.barnet.gov.uk/>

### **Advice and Assistance : Direct Marketing**

If you are a company that intends to use the names and contact details of council officers (or other officers) provided in this response for direct marketing, you need to be registered with the Information Commissioner to process personal data for this purpose. You must also check that the individual (whom you wish to contact for direct marketing purposes) is not registered with one of the Preference Services to prevent Direct Marketing. If they are you must adhere to this preference.

You must also ensure you comply with the Privacy Electronic and Communications Regulations (PECR). For more information follow this Link [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk)

**For the avoidance of doubt the provision of council (and other) officer names and contact details under FOI does not give consent to receive direct marketing via any media and expressly does not constitute a 'soft opt-in' under PECR.**

### **Your rights**

If you are unhappy with the way your request for information has been handled, you can request a review within the next 40 working days by writing to the Information Management Team at: [foi@barnet.gov.uk](mailto:foi@barnet.gov.uk). Or by post to Records & Information Management Service, Assurance Group, London Borough of Barnet, 2 Bristol Avenue, Colindale, NW9 4EW

If, having exhausted our review procedure, you remain dissatisfied with the handling of your request or complaint, you will have a right to appeal to the Information Commissioner at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF (telephone: 0303 123 1113; website [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk)). There is no charge for making an appeal.