

25 March 2020
Our ref: 6133388

Thank you for your request received on 25 February 2020, for the following information:

I am aware that sometimes when people close their council tax account, they are often left with money in that account. This results in a closed council tax account being in credit.

I am also aware that some people still choose to pay their council tax by cash or by cheque.

I would like to know, for each of the following tax years: 2016/17, 17/18, 18/19, 19/20 (up to now if possible): How many council tax accounts paid for their council tax by cash/cheque? How much was this as a proportion of total active accounts?

Separately, I am aware that many councils automatically refund closed accounts where the account holder has paid by certain methods, which make it possible to refund them (such as direct debit), whereas with other payment methods this would not be possible:

Can you list the payment methods (if any) that would result in you automatically refunding an account if it were closed in credit? NB automatically here means, without the customer having to take any form of action whatsoever (so you don't have to contact them to confirm payment details or anything similar)

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

Response

The council holds the information requested and it is attached/ the answers to your questions are below

I would like to know, for each of the following tax years: 2016/17, 17/18, 18/19, 19/20 (up to now if possible): How many council tax accounts paid for their council tax by cash/cheque? How much was this as a proportion of total active accounts?

2016-17

2017-18

2018-19

2019-20

Total Number of Payment Transactions	1,234,734	1,269,666	1,323,274	1,363,958
Number of Cash/CHQ Payments	10,432	9,215	10,585	11,988
Percentage of all Payments Received	0.84%	0.73%	0.80%	0.88%

Separately, I am aware that many councils automatically refund closed accounts where the account holder has paid by certain methods, which make it possible to refund them (such as direct debit), whereas with other payment methods this would not be possible:

Can you list the payment methods (if any) that would result in you automatically refunding an account if it were closed in credit? NB automatically here means, without the customer having to take any form of action whatsoever (so you don't have to contact them to confirm payment details or anything similar)

If an account is closed and a credit is due, Direct Debit is the only payment method which would result in an automatic refund being issued back to the originating bank account. **is**

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

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. Or by post to Information Management Team (FOI) 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). There is no charge for making an appeal.