



London Borough of Barnet,  
2 Bristol Avenue  
Colindale , NW9 4EW  
13 April 2021  
Our ref: 7141308

Thank you for your request received on 15 March 2021, for the following information:

I wish to make the below Freedom of Information Request.

- 1. Does the local authority have employees engaged in income maximisation activities i.e. focussing on identifying additional benefit entitlements that will increase a citizen's household income or improve their financial resilience?**
- 2. If yes, are these activities carried out by dedicated income maximisation resources, or are these activities combined with additional duties e.g Debt Advice, homelessness support?**
- 3. Which department within the local authority is responsible for the administration of income maximisation activities?**
- 4. What is the estimated level full time employee resource engaged specifically in income maximisation activities?**
- 5. Does the local authority conduct any take-up campaigns aimed at increasing benefit maximisation, i.e. Council Tax Reduction, Discretionary Housing Payment or Pension Credit campaigns?**
- 6. Does the local authority use any third party data sets to proactively identify and support citizens who may be eligible for additional benefit entitlements or other financial support, for example Income Max or Policy in Practice?**
- 7. Does the local authority complete and submit claims on behalf of citizens or does it signpost the citizen to the organisation administering the support e.g other local authority department / DWP etc?**
- 8. If the authority does not provide a dedicated income maximisation service, does it have arrangements in place with third parties such as Citizens Advice Bureau or other Third Sector or Voluntary and Community Sector organisations to support citizens with maximising their income?**
- 9. If the local authority does not currently have a dedicated income maximisation team, does it have plans to develop one in the next 12-24 months?**

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

## **Response**

I am writing to inform you that we have searched our records and although we hold some of the information requested, some is not held by London Borough of Barnet because Barnet Homes holds this information.

Please make your request directly to Barnet Homes where indicated below.

Housing services (including homelessness, allocations, housing repairs and so forth) are provided by Barnet Homes who are an Arm's Length Management Organisation (ALMO) who manage the council's housing stock and associated services on the council's behalf.

Barnet Homes also operate Boost and The Welfare Reform Task Force, who manage income maximisation activities on behalf of the Council. They are a public authority under Freedom of Information Act 2000 and so you may make a FOI request to them. Their contact details are:

Email: [talk2us@barnethomes.org](mailto:talk2us@barnethomes.org)

Post: The Data Controller  
Barnet Homes  
2 Bristol Avenue,  
Colindale,  
London NW9 4EW

We have provided answers to your request below showing where we do not hold the information requested by asking you to refer to Barnet Homes.

***1. Does the local authority have employees engaged in income maximisation activities i.e. focussing on identifying additional benefit entitlements that will increase a citizen's household income or improve their financial resilience?***

Housing Benefit staff engage in income maximisation when reviewing claims for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support. Referrals are often made to the Welfare Reform Task Force for additional support with Discretionary Housing payments, and crisis fund payments. Please also refer to Barnet Homes for income maximisation activities conducted by their staff.

***2. If yes, are these activities carried out by dedicated income maximisation resources, or are these activities combined with additional duties e.g Debt Advice, homelessness support?***

Housing Benefit staff are not resourced to focus solely on income maximisation activities. Please refer to Barnet Homes.

***3. Which department within the local authority is responsible for the administration of income maximisation activities?***

Welfare Reform Task Force / Boost Team which come under Barnet Homes so please refer to them.

**4. What is the estimated level full time employee resource engaged specifically in income maximisation activities?**

Please refer to Barnet Homes as this information is not held by London Borough of Barnet.

**5. Does the local authority conduct any take-up campaigns aimed at increasing benefit maximisation, i.e. Council Tax Reduction, Discretionary Housing Payment or Pension Credit campaigns?**

Take up campaigns for benefit maximisation are promoted on the Council's social media accounts. Please refer to Barnet Homes for take up campaigns promoted by the Welfare Reform Task Force / Boost.

**6. Does the local authority use any third party data sets to proactively identify and support citizens who may be eligible for additional benefit entitlements or other financial support, for example Income Max or Policy in Practice?**

Universal Credit data is used to invite claims for Council Tax Support. Atlas records are also used to identify undeclared child care costs to maximise Housing Benefit entitlement. HMRC income records (via WURTI/ VEP) are used to identify income changes that will increase benefits or invite claims for new entitlements. Please also refer to Barnet Homes for third party data used.

**7. Does the local authority complete and submit claims on behalf of citizens or does it signpost the citizen to the organisation administering the support e.g other local authority department / DWP etc?**

Please refer to Barnet Homes.

**8. If the authority does not provide a dedicated income maximisation service, does it have arrangements in place with third parties such as Citizens Advice Bureau or other Third Sector or Voluntary and Community Sector organisations to support citizens with maximising their income?**

Please refer to Barnet Homes.

**9. If the local authority does not currently have a dedicated income maximisation team, does it have plans to develop one in the next 12-24 months?**

The Council has the Welfare Reform Task Force / Boost operated by Barnet Homes.

## **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 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](http://www.ico.org.uk)). There is no charge for making an appeal.