

7 September 2021  
Our ref: 7559768

Thank you for your request received on 11 August 2021, for the following information:

**I am writing to request information under the Freedom of Information Act (2000). My questions are as follows:**

- 1. Has the council stopped accepting cash payments in any of the following areas of council business?**
  - a. Housing**
  - b. Welfare**
  - c. Tax payments**
  - d. Childcare**
  - e. Adult education & skills training**
  - f. Educational support (such as learning support or council-provided tuition)**
  - g. Leisure/sport**
  - h. Parking**
  - i. Health, social care, dentistry or mental health services (please specify)**
  - j. Payments to schools (including school meals)**
  - k. The council is completely 'cashless' (cash is not used for any payments across council business)**
- 2. If you answered yes to any question from 1(a) through 1(j), does the council have records of the number of payments made by cash prior to the cessation of accepting cash? If so, please provide these. If possible, please provide these figures for the three years prior to the cessation, in yearly intervals.**
- 3. If you answered yes to question 1(g), does the council have records of the number of people who have been refused access to leisure or sport facilities due to being unable to make non-cash payments? If so, please provide these figures for each year since the council stopped accepting cash.**
- 4. If you answered yes to question 1(j) (that the council no longer accepts cash for school meals), does the council have records of the number of students buying school meals in 12 months before and after the switch to cashless was made? If so, please provide these, broken down by month.**
- 5. If you answered 'no' to question 1(g), does your council have any plans to move toward exclusively taking non-cash payments for council services?**
- 6. Please provide a breakdown of the payment methods used for the services listed in question 1.**

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

**Response**

The council holds the information requested and the answers to your questions are below.

**1. Has the council stopped accepting cash payments in any of the following areas of council business?**

**a. Housing**

Barnet Council does not hold this information as it is held by Barnet Homes.

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. 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

**b. Welfare**

No.

**c. Tax payments**

No.

**d. Childcare**

Yes, cash has not been accepted as payment for several years.

**e. Adult education & skills training**

Yes, cash has not been accepted as payment for several years.

**f. Educational support (such as learning support or council-provided tuition)**

Yes, cash has not been accepted as payment for several years. All income would be collected by invoice.

**g. Leisure/sport**

No. See below for further information.

**h. Parking**

No, cash can be used to pay for parking via PayPoint. Parking fines can only be paid online or by phone.

***i. Health, social care, dentistry or mental health services (please specify)***

No, cash is accepted for dentistry/ mental health services but Social Care has never accepted cash payment.

***j. Payments to schools (including school meals)***

No, Schools do still accept cash but make their own decision on how to receive payment for school meals, etc - the question would need to be directed at school level. We have no record of how pupils pay for various things or the volume.

Schools (including academies) are considered under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) to be public authorities in their own rights, and are subject to the FOIA in the same way as the council (albeit with different timescales to meet) and that the individual schools would need to be contacted for this information.

[Schools | Barnet Council](#)

***k. The council is completely 'cashless' (cash is not used for any payments across council business)***

N/A

***2. If you answered yes to any question from 1(a) through 1(j), does the council have records of the number of payments made by cash prior to the cessation of accepting cash? If so, please provide these. If possible, please provide these figures for the three years prior to the cessation, in yearly intervals.***

With regard to Childcare, Adult education & skills training and Educational support this information is not held as cash has not been used as a payment method for several years.

***3. If you answered yes to question 1(g), does the council have records of the number of people who have been refused access to leisure or sport facilities due to being unable to make non-cash payments? If so, please provide these figures for each year since the council stopped accepting cash.***

N/A

***4. If you answered yes to question 1(j) (that the council no longer accepts cash for school meals), does the council have records of the number of students buying school meals in 12 months before and after the switch to cashless was made? If so, please provide these, broken down by month.***

N/A

***5. If you answered 'no' to question 1(g), does your council have any plans to move toward exclusively taking non-cash payments for council services?***

No. The Council delivers community based physical activity interventions e.g. Health Walks which accept cash payments. The Council's leisure facilities are operated by a third party operator, GLL. Leisure facilities operate and promote a cashless service,

however where a customer/ service user has no other means to pay, a cash transaction is accepted and staff will support individuals to achieve future cashless access wherever possible. Libraries also accept cash.

**6. Please provide a breakdown of the payment methods used for the services listed in question 1.**

- Direct Debit
- Payments over the phone taken by staff via paye.net
- PayByPhone
- Bank transfers
- Paypoint
- Touchtone telephone payments
- Internet payments
- Childcare vouchers
- Cheque

**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.

