



London Borough of Barnet,
2 Bristol Avenue
Colindale , NW9 4EW
10 September 2021
Our ref: 7616948

Thank you for your request received on 18 August 2021, for the following information:

- 1. A list of all companies that are or have been landlords to temporary housing residents in Barnet borough since 6 April 2018 (the council should hold this information from Housing Benefit applications)**
- 2. For each of those companies, the total amount the council paid to them (via their tenants) in Housing Benefit, from 6 April 2018 to 5 April 2021**
- 3. Confirmation Housing Benefit is paid to the tenant who then gives it to the landlord company**

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

Response

We are refusing your request under section 12 because we estimate that compliance with your request will exceed the "appropriate limit" under section 12. The appropriate limit is £450 which is equivalent to 18 hours at £25 per hour. The per hour figure is set by Regulations rather than actual salary paid to any officers handling requests. The appropriate limit includes the time it will take the council to discover if it holds the information requested, to locate it, extract it and collate it as well as putting it into any particular format requested by the requester.

We have calculated that it will take approx 439.75 hours to comply with your request. Our calculation is as follows:

1) To obtain a list of companies providing temporary housing, we would need to check the monthly SHBE returns. Since the 6 April 2018 there have been 41 SHBE returns. It is estimated it will take approximately 30 minutes to access the SHBE returns and collate the information. In addition to this, only the last 12 files are held on our systems. Older SHBE returns are placed in archive. It is estimated it will take a further 15 minutes to request and process the return of each file from archives.

$12 \times 30 / 60 = 6$ hours.

$29 \times 45 / 60 = 21.75$ hours

Total = 27.75 hours.

2) Landlords providing temporary accommodation also provide standard accommodation. This isn't distinguished in payment schedules. The only way to obtain the correct level of

benefit paid for temporary accommodation is to check the individual cases. It is estimated this would take approximately 15 minutes per case. There are currently 1236 temporary accommodation cases. $1236 \times 15 / 60 = 309$ hours.

3) Each case would need to be checked and reported on individually. It is estimated this would take 5 minutes per case. $1236 \times 5 / 60 = 103$ hours

Advice and Assistance

Manual checking of cases is needed to subtract the information you have requested. This combined with a large sample of temporary accommodation claims, means providing the information for one month would exceed the cost limits outlined above. Therefore we are unable to advise on altering your request to fit within the time limits. We could provide a list of suppliers over a shorter period, but we would be unable to provide information on total benefit paid for temporary accommodation, or confirm who the Housing benefit was paid to in every case.

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.

