

2 Bristol Avenue  
Colindale  
London  
NW9 4EW  
10 May 2022  
Our ref: 8249897

Thank you for your request received on 7 April 2022, for the following information:

**1) Please complete the following questions below about the cost of exempt provision in your local authority in 2021/22.**

**A) How much did you spend on the provision of 'exempt accommodation'?**

**B) How many HB claims did you receive under the exempt rules?**

**2) Please complete the following questions below about the providers of exempt accommodation in your local authority for each of the following years: 2021/22**

**a) Total number of providers who received exempt HB funding  
Of which were:**

**i) Registered Providers (registered with the Regulator of Social Housing).**

**ii) Registered Charities (Organisations registered with Charity Commission but not with Regulator for Social Housing)**

**iii) Community Interest Companies (registered as a CIC on the Companies House register, but not registered with the Regulator of Social Housing or the Charity Commission).**

**iv) Local Authority (including those where the Authority is also registered with the Regulator of Social Housing).**

**v) Other**

**b) Total number of units provided that received exempt HB funding for each of the following years: 2021/22**

**i) Registered Providers (registered with the Regulator of Social Housing).**

**ii) Registered Charities (Organisations registered with Charity Commission but not with Regulator for Social Housing)**

**iii) Community Interest Companies (registered as a CIC on the Companies**

House register, but not registered with the Regulator of Social Housing or the Charity Commission).

iv) Local Authority (including those where the Authority is also registered with the Regulator of Social Housing).

v) Other

3a) Could you provide a list of all providers that have provided exempt accommodation and, if possible, the number of claims they are/were responsible for? Could you please provide this data for the years 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22

4)

a) Please can you provide links to or copies of any policy/procedure or guides the council has produced regarding exempt accommodation?

b) Please could you confirm if you have a dedicated team looking into exempt accommodation or exempt accommodation claims? If so, how many people in this team?

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

## **Response**

### **S12 - Cost limit (Exceeds Appropriate Limit)**

We are refusing part of your request under section 12 because we estimate that compliance with your request will exceed the "appropriate limit" under section 12. More information is provided below.

Other parts of your request are not held. These have been identified under the relevant section.

***1) Please complete the following questions below about the cost of exempt provision in your local authority in 2021/22.***

***A) How much did you spend on the provision of 'exempt accommodation'?***

Barnet Council does not hold this information. Please make your request directly to 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,

***B) How many HB claims did you receive under the exempt rules?***

We are refusing part of 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 the time it will take to comply with your requests below:

SHBE reporting does not include claims not put into payment. Therefore to get the total number of claims received (including refused claims) manual checking of claims is required. There were 1696 claims received over the period specified, that could potentially be exempt accommodation. It is estimated it will take 5 minutes to check each claim.  $1696 \times 5 / 60 = 141$  hours.

***2) Please complete the following questions below about the providers of exempt accommodation in your local authority for each of the following years: 2021/22***

***a) Total number of providers who received exempt HB funding***

***Of which were:***

- i) Registered Providers (registered with the Regulator of Social Housing).***
- ii) Registered Charities (Organisations registered with Charity Commission but not with Regulator for Social Housing)***
- iii) Community Interest Companies (registered as a CIC on the Companies House register, but not registered with the Regulator of Social Housing or the Charity Commission).***
- iv) Local Authority (including those where the Authority is also registered with the Regulator of Social Housing).***
- v) Other***

***b) Total number of units provided that received exempt HB funding for each of the following years: 2021/22***

- i) Registered Providers (registered with the Regulator of Social Housing).***
- ii) Registered Charities (Organisations registered with Charity Commission but not with Regulator for Social Housing)***
- iii) Community Interest Companies (registered as a CIC on the Companies House register, but not registered with the Regulator of Social Housing or the Charity Commission).***
- iv) Local Authority (including those where the Authority is also registered with the Regulator of Social Housing).***
- v) Other***

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SHBE data does capture Exempt accommodation cases, and provider details, where they have been entered onto the claim. However, the type of provider is not specified on the SHBE file, so manual checking of exempt claims would be required to answer the points raised in question 2. It is estimated it would take 10 minutes per claim to answer all parts of question 2. Currently there are 246 exempt accommodation claims.  $246 \times 10 / 60 = 41$  hours per monthly SHBE extract. There are 12 monthly extracts that would require checking under the request = 492 hours.

***3a) Could you provide a list of all providers that have provided exempt accommodation and, if possible, the number of claims they are/were responsible for? Could you please provide this data for the years 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22***

We are refusing this part of 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 compiled the data for December 2021 in order to capture the time it will take to process this part of your request. It has taken 45 minutes to retrieve the SHBE extract, filter the exempt cases, and count the claims per provider. There are 65 exempt cases where the landlord / provider is not specified. Manual checking of the claims is required to obtain the information for these 65 claims. It has taken approximately 5 minutes per claim to obtain the landlord data for 5 claims. Therefore it is estimated it will take 5.41 hours to check the 65 claims where the landlord is not listed ( $65 \times 5 / 60 = 5.41$  hours). This added to 45 minutes to subtract the data, equates to 6.16 hours per month.

It is estimated therefore that to compile the information for the past 3 financial years would exceed the time limit allowed under section 12,  $36 \times 6.16 = 221.76$  hours.

***4) a) Please can you provide links to or copies of any policy/procedure or guides the council has produced regarding exempt accommodation?***

N/A

***b) Please could you confirm if you have a dedicated team looking into exempt accommodation or exempt accommodation claims? If so, how many people in this team?***

The council does not have a dedicated team dealing with exempt accommodation claims.

### **Advice and Assistance**

We may be able to assist you further if you reduce the time period your information request covers. For question 3, we would be able to comply with the request if the period covered was reduced to one financial year, and the number of claims per provider is removed. For question 1b, we could provide you the number of claims paid, instead of the number of applications. For question 2, we could look at a small sample of claims and provide information on that sample.

## **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.