

London Borough of Barnet  
2 Bristol Avenue  
Colindale  
London  
NW9 4EW  
19 August 2022  
Our ref: 8351317

Thank you for your request received on 25 July 2022, for the following information:

**Q. 1. i.) Please state the local authority's expenditure (including use of Government grants) on clearing the arrears of tenants in the following financial years.**

- a. 2017/2018**
- b. 2018/2019**
- c. 2019/2020**
- d. 2020/2021**
- e. 2021/2022**

**ii.) For each of the above years, please provide a breakdown of expenditure on clearing the arrears of council housing tenants, housing association tenants and private rental sector tenants.**

**Q. 2. i.) Please state the local authority's expenditure (including use of Government grants) on discretionary housing payments to assist ongoing renting costs of tenants in the following years.**

- a. 2017/2018**
- b. 2018/2019**
- c. 2019/2020**
- d. 2020/2021**
- e. 2021/2022**

ii.) For each of the above years, please provide a breakdown of expenditure on assisting the ongoing renting costs of council housing tenants, housing association tenants and private rental sector tenants.

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

## Response

I can confirm that the council holds the information you requested. However we are withholding part of the information because we consider that the following exemption exemptions and exceptions apply to it.

### 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. The appropriate limit is £450 which is equivalent to 18 hours at £25 per hour. The per hour figure is set by Regulation 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.

Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP's) are used to pay shortfalls in rent, in the form of arrears and on-going costs.

Our reporting tools do not provide a breakdown of DHP rental costs between arrears and ongoing payments. Therefore in order to provide the information under question 1 and 2, manual checking of the payments is required.

It is estimated it would take 5 minutes to check each payment to obtain this information. In 2021/22 there were 1057 payments awarded to assist with rental costs. Using these figures we have calculated that it will take approximately 88 hours per financial year to comply with your request.

The table below lists the total amount of Discretionary Housing payments made per tenancy type for the financial years requested.

Year	Total DHP paid			
	Council tenant	Housing Association	Private tenants	Total
2017/2018	£645,808.28	£317,071.07	£830,539.52	£1,793,418.87
2018/2019	£619,172.01	£257,576.28	£671,855.56	£1,548,603.85
2019/2020	£682,935.49	£270,252.43	£762,956.09	£1,716,144.01
2020/2021	£769,265.88	£285,920.70	£1,479,632.62	£2,534,819.20
2021/2022	£671,927.53	£291,472.14	£1,113,314.58	£2,076,714.25

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.

In order to obtain information for any grants / payments administered by Barnet Homes, please contact them directly.

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

### **Advice and Assistance**

Unfortunately, due to the level of manual checking required to provide a breakdown of arrears and ongoing payments, it is difficult to advise how to streamline your request to come within the 18 hour time limit. We could provide a sample of claims over a shorter period to provide a snapshot of tenancy type and payment type.

### **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.