

London Borough of Barnet,
2 Bristol Avenue,
Colindale, NW9 4EW
14 March 2024
Our ref: 11621745

Thank you for your request received on 19 February 2024, for the following information:

Dear Barnet Borough Council,

From April 2013 local authorities were given responsibility by Public Health England for providing drug and alcohol services.

This FOI request relates only to those patients who have become addicted or dependent upon tranquilising medications prescribed by their doctors. They do not abuse these or other substances, and were not previously dependent on these or other substances. This group is therefore distinct from illicit drug users.

Can I please request the following information:

- 1. How many referrals have there been to drug and alcohol services in your local authority in the years 2021, 2022, 2023 for treatment for addiction to benzodiazepines, z drug tranquillisers, gabapentinoids and opioids prescribed by their GPs? Please break this down by year, gender and drug.**
- 2. How many Involuntary Tranquilliser Addicts are currently in treatment provided by your local authority's drug and alcohol services for addiction to benzodiazepine, z drug tranquillisers, gabapentinoids and opioids prescribed by their GPs? Please break this down by gender and drug.**

**Could you please supply your answer in an excel spreadsheet.
Please confirm receipt of this email.**

Many thanks,

Robert Boyd

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

The council holds the information requested, please see below the answers to your questions.

Response

We have reviewed the data available to us and can provide the following information:

- It is not possible to ascertain from the data whether a resident has an addiction to a “prescription only medication” or whether their addiction is to one of these medications obtained in an illicit way. Some people that use such medications have never been prescribed these medications by their GP or other health practitioner. These are not coded differently on our database.
- Prior to full assessment the data captured in referrals is limited. The current referral data captures broad categories and does not include prescription only medication as a category.
- For those in treatment, there are various different ways the drugs mentioned in the request could be coded on NDTMS and furthermore not distinguish whether the drug was prescribed by a GP or obtained through other means.
- Where a resident is referred to treatment for POM, the service will work with the GP or local pain management service to provide the appropriate package of support.

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

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 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). There is no charge for making an appeal.