

CITY OF  
WOLVERHAMPTON  
COUNCIL

## Response to Request for Information

Reference      FOI 003473  
Date            16 April 2019

### *Unpaid/Outstanding Council Tax*

#### **Request:**

Would it be possible to request a breakdown of the amount of unpaid / outstanding council tax from the year 2013/14 to present day per council tax year?

A breakdown for the same period for the amount of unpaid council tax that has been written off per council tax year, also the number of prosecutions brought by you between 2013/14 and now for unpaid council tax.

With reference to your above questions, your request for information has now been considered and the City of Wolverhampton Council is not obliged to supply the information you requested for the reasons set out below.

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires City of Wolverhampton Council, when refusing to provide such information (because the information is exempt) to provide you, the applicant with a notice which:

- (a) states the fact,
- (b) specifies the exemption in question and
- (c) states (if that would not otherwise be apparent) why the exemption applies:

In relation to your particular request, the following exemption applies:

#### **Section 21 – Information reasonably accessible to the applicant by other means**

We can confirm that the department holds information that you have asked for in relation to the above. However, the information is exempt under section 21 of the FOI Act because it is reasonably accessible to you.

This data is provided to Government Annually at the end of each year by way of the Quarterly Return of Collection Rates for Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates. This details the amount of outstanding debt at the end of each year broken down by previous year and the relevant year and how much has been written off in that year. The published data for each year can be found at the following Government website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/council-tax-statistics>

Data for each year is listed under "Collection rates for Council Tax and non-domestic rates" There are various tables of data. The table "Quarterly return of council tax and non-domestic rates QRC4" will contain the detail you are requesting.

There have been no prosecutions regarding the non-payment of Council Tax in the years 2013 to 2018. Our procedure for enforcing the payment of council tax does not include activity that falls into the definition of prosecutions. Our procedure is detailed on our web site:

<https://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/council-tax/if-you-dont-pay-council-tax>

Section 21(1) of the Freedom of Information Act exempts disclosure of information that is reasonably accessible by other means, and the terms of the exemption mean that we do not have to consider whether or not it would be in the public interest for you to have the information.

You can find out more about Section 21 by reading the extract from the Act, available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/section/21>

Finally, can I get a break down of % of unpaid council tax per council tax band and type of property eg privately owned, social etc.

In response to your above question, Section 1 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 places two duties on public authorities. Unless exemptions apply, the first duty at:

- Section 1(1) (a) is to confirm or deny whether the information specified in a request is held.
- The second duty at Section 1(1)(b) is to disclose information that has been confirmed as being held.

In respect of your above question, it has been established after careful consideration that the Council does not hold the above information as we do not hold data as to whether the dwelling is privately or socially owned. Equally we have not recorded data as to the breakdown of Council Tax Debt by Chargeable Band at the end of each year.

Consequently, we are unable to provide any information relating to the above, and are informing you as required by Section 1(1) (a) of the Act, that states:

"Any person making a request for information to a public authority is entitled to be informed in writing by the public authority whether it holds information of the description specified in the request".

However, we can provide data regarding the outstanding debt for all years as of the 28 March 2019 as a percentage per Council Tax Band which we hope will prove useful on page 3.

[NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED]

<b>Valuation Band</b>	<b>% of Outstanding Debt</b>	<b>% of Properties in each Band</b>
A	71.91	51.23
B	17.48	21.99
C	7.32	15.21
D	1.99	6.27
E	0.69	2.75
F	0.37	1.55
G	0.21	0.90
H	0.03	0.11
Grand Total	100	100