

Response to Request for Information

Reference FOI 000153
Date 18 May 2016

Council Tax

Request:

I am requesting the following information under the Freedom of Information Act. Please note - all questions are net of awarded benefits, discounts and exemptions. This request relates to net collectible debts:

1. The total council tax charged to all council tax payers (including Council Tax Support claimants) during the course of 2015/16 (2015/16 tax only)?
[£94,425,844](#)
2. The total council tax collected from all council tax payers (including Council Tax Support claimants) during 2015/16, as of 31st March 2016 (2015/16 tax only)?
[£89,104,118](#)
3. The total council tax charged to all “non-protected” Council Tax Support claimants (excluding pensioners) during the course of 2015/16 (2015/16 tax only)?
[£4,947,247](#)
4. The total council tax collected from all “non-protected” Council Tax Support claimants (excluding pensioners) during 2015/16, as of 31st March 2016 (2015/16 tax only)?
[£3,515,130](#)
5. The total number of council tax accounts that were in receipt of working age Council Tax Support at some point during 2015/16 (if known)?
[20,846](#)

In questions 3 and 4, “protected” means those claimants who are entitled to a maximum of 100% support (prior to income-based means testing) under the council’s 2015/16 Council Tax Support scheme – this will include pensioners, and may include disabled people, lone parents etc, depending on the council’s CTS scheme. Note – this includes claimants who are required to pay some council tax due to the income means test, but are nevertheless “protected” groups under the council’s CTS scheme (needless to say, a claimant who is ineligible for CTS once the means test has been carried out is not considered a claimant). “Non-protected” means those falling outside protected groups – this will essentially mean most working age claimants.

If data is not held (or is not obtainable within the section 12 cost limit) for questions 3 and 4, please provide data for the following questions 6 and 7:

6. The total council tax charged to all working age Council Tax Support claimants (excluding pensioners) during the course of 2015/16 (2015/16 tax only)?
7. The total council tax collected from all working age Council Tax Support claimants (excluding pensioners) during 2015/16, as of 31st March 2016 (2015/16 tax only)?

I am also requesting the following information, which the council need not respond to if doing so would contravene the section 12 cost limit:

8. The number of working age Council Tax Support claimants with current attachments to benefits for the payment of outstanding council tax?
2530
9. The number working age Council Tax Support claimants with pending attachments to benefits for the payment of outstanding council tax, where the pending attachment is "queued" behind a previous year's ongoing attachment?
898

10. The total amount of council tax charged to Council Tax Support claimants covering 2013/14, 2014/15 and 2015/16?
The figures provided are our best estimate of the council tax charged to recipients of council tax support; however these amounts are net of any written off amounts.

Year	Council Tax Charged
2013/14	£5,467,444.76
2014/15	£5,724,824.05
2015/16	£6,762,950.74

11. Of the question 10 figure, how much has to date been written off?
In response to your question, we can confirm that following careful consideration, the Council regrets to inform you that it has decided not to disclose this information.

Information you have requested has been withheld from disclosure. The exemption engaged is Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI).

Section 12 of the FOI exempts Public Authorities from providing information where the estimated cost of compliance exceeds the appropriate limit. Any estimate must be undertaken in accordance with the limits set in fees regulations made under Section 12 (5) of the FOI.

These Fees Regulations (SI 2004/3244 Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations) allow for a refusal where the cost of compliance, for local authorities such as the Council, would exceed

[NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED]

£450. As a guide, staff time to identify and extract this information is charged at a rate of £25 per hour.

In summary, we cannot easily gather this information via a report as it is not held centrally. In order to determine the information you have requested, we would need to manually interrogate various systems. This would be a manual exercise and as such we believe the aggregated time it would take to collate the information would be in excess of 18 hours (equivalent to a notional cost of £450).