



Information Governance Team

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Dear Sir/Madam

Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) Request ID: FOI795499684

Thank you for your request for information relating to Debt collection practices in relation to victims of economic abuse.

You have requested the following information:

1. Council tax arrears

(a) What is the total value (£) of council tax arrears currently held by the authority?

£27,902.27

(b) How many individual accounts are currently in council tax arrears?

29,262 accounts.

c. How many council tax accounts were referred to enforcement agents (e.g. bailiffs) in the last 24 months?

21,436 accounts.

2. Support to Victim-Survivors of Domestic Abuse

(a) In the last 24 months, how many residents experiencing domestic abuse has the council supported with debt-related relief or support (e.g. council tax reductions, payment plans, discretionary hardship payments, write-offs)?

(b) Does the authority record or monitor whether a resident requesting debt relief has experienced domestic abuse? If so, how many such cases have been recorded in the last 24 months?

We confirm that we do not hold this information and are advising you as per Section 1(1) of the Act.

3. Debt Recovery and Domestic Abuse Policies

(a) Does the authority have any policies, procedures, or guidance documents that refer to domestic abuse as a consideration in debt recovery processes (including enforcement, recovery pauses, or alternative arrangements)? Please provide a copy or link.

The Council does not have a specific policy however, we will consider writing off accrued empty charges where the individual fleeing due to domestic violence is in receipt of council tax support.

(b) Does the authority have any policies, procedures, or guidance that include domestic abuse as a factor in determining eligibility for council tax write-offs or reductions under Section 13A(1)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992?

Following careful consideration, the information you requested falls under the exemption(s) in Section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, which relates to 'information reasonably accessible to the applicant by other means.'

The exemption applies as the information is published and publicly available to view by accessing the Council website, please use the following link:

<https://www.coventry.gov.uk/counciltaxdiscretionaryreliefpolicy>

This exemption is not subject to the public interest test.

4. Discretionary Write-Off Monitoring

(a) Does the authority monitor or record the use of discretionary council tax write-offs granted under Section 13A(1)(c)?

Yes.

(b) If yes: How many discretionary council tax write-off requests were (i) received and (ii) approved and (iii) not approved in the last 24 months?

Since 1 April 2024:

i. 99 applications

ii. 39 approved

iii. 14 declined however 46 are in progress.

(c) In how many of those (i) received (ii) approved and (iii) not approved cases was domestic abuse recorded as a contributing factor or reason for the request?

We confirm that we do not hold this information and are advising you as per Section 1(1) of the Act. This information is not recorded.

(d) Does the authority monitor and record the decision maker and decision-making time scale for council tax write offs? If yes: (i) Who was the decision maker for these cases and (ii) what was the average time taken to make a decision and (iii) were individuals given a written explanation when a request is refused?

i - All decisions are approved by the Head of Revenues & Benefits.

ii - We do not hold the average decision time and therefore advising you as per Section 1(1) of the Act. To assist, we can advise that they are often very time consuming as each case is considered on its own merits.

iii. Yes, reasons for refusal are provided in writing.

5. Approaches to Other Public Sector Debts

(a) Does the authority have policies or guidance in place relating to recovery of other public sector debts (e.g. housing arrears, benefit overpayments, social care charges)?

(b) Do any of these policies explicitly reference domestic abuse as a relevant factor in debt recovery or relief decisions?

(c) Please provide copies or links to these policies.

We do not hold the requested information and therefore advising you as per Section 1(1) of the Act. A corporate debt strategy is currently being written for Cabinet's consideration.

6. Enforcement Agents

(a) Are external enforcement agents used for council tax recovery? If yes, please provide the name(s) of current suppliers.

Yes, Equita Ltd & Newlyn Plc.

(b) Did your procurement or process for selection of external enforcement agents consider vulnerability in relation to domestic abuse?

Vulnerability was considered however, it was not broken down into specific categories.

(c) Do your contracts with these suppliers set out requirements on vulnerability in relation to domestic abuse?

Each Enforcement Agent has a welfare team to manage debts where vulnerability is identified.

(d) Do you share vulnerability relating to domestic abuse with enforcement agents, and if so under what policy or data sharing agreement? Please provide copy of the applicable data sharing agreement, if available.

Data sharing is part of the procurement contract. Cases sent to Enforcement Agents do not automatically highlight if domestic violence exists but if an individual case is highlighted it can be shared with the Enforcement Agent as appropriate.

7. Training and practice

(a) Are your staff required to undertake training that include identifying signs of domestic abuse?

(b) Are your staff required to undertake training that includes identifying signs of economic abuse?

No specific training is required.

The supply of information in response to a FOI/EIR request does not confer an automatic right to re use the information. You can use any information supplied for the purposes of private study and non-commercial research without requiring further permission. Similarly, information supplied can also be re used for the purposes of news reporting. An exception to this is photographs. Please contact us if you wish to use the information for any other purpose.

For information, we publish a variety of information such as: [FOI/EIR Disclosure Log](#), [Publication Scheme](#), [Facts about Coventry](#) and [Open Data](#) that you may find of useful if you are looking for information in the future.

If you are unhappy with the handling of your request, you can ask us to review our response. Requests for reviews should be submitted within 40 days of the date of receipt of our response to your original request – email: infogov@coventry.gov.uk

If you are unhappy with the outcome of our review, you can write to the Information Commissioner, who can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF or email icocasework@ico.org.uk.

Please remember to quote the reference number above in your response.

Yours faithfully

Information Governance