



London Borough of Camden
Information and Records
Management
Judd Street
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Date: 20/04/2023

Case reference: CAM5023

Dear Requester

Thank you for your request for information dated 31/03/2023 about **the £150 energy bill support, unclaimed, exemption class N, HMOs and distribution of those unclaimed**. We have dealt with this under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Response

The council holds the information requested. However, we are withholding some of the information because it is exempt as explained below. We have explained where we are withholding information and what exemption applies. Please see the refusal notice below which explains how and why it applies.

This FoIA request relates to the £150 energy bill support payments (sometimes called a 'council tax rebate') issued to Council Tax band A-D households in your area as at 1 April 2022.

The questions below only relate to the "core/main" £150 scheme. No information is required concerning the separate "discretionary" schemes.

- 1) For properties where you are the local council, how many properties have an unclaimed "core" £150 on their council tax account?*
- 2) How many of the properties in "1)" had at least one individual in council tax exemption class N as at 1 April 2022?*
- 3) For properties where you are the local council, how many are recorded as a Home in Multiple Occupation (HMO) for planning purposes but not for council tax purposes?*
- 4) How many of these properties in "3)" have an unclaimed "core" £150 on their council tax account and had at least one individual in council tax exemption class N as at 1 April 2022?*

We are not processing the above parts of this request as it would require a disproportionate amount of time, effort, and expense. Please see the exemption notice set out below.

5) *What decision(s) has the council made regarding distribution of these unclaimed "core" £150 payments to the eligible 1 April 2022 occupants*

Any 'unclaimed' £150 payments allocated to Council Tax accounts can be requested by refund at any time, even where it was used to reduce their 2023/24 instalments as a result of it going unclaimed.

As we do not hold BACs details for these households (or they would have automatically received the payment directly initially) there is no other proactive means for us to issue the payment. Therefore, they have to apply for a refund of the credit on their Council Tax account in line with normal refund procedures.

Refusal Notice

The exemption that applies is:

section 12: cost of compliance exceeds appropriate limit

We are refusing your request under section 12 on cost grounds because we estimate that compliance with your request will exceed the "appropriate limit". This is £450 which is equivalent to 18 hours at £25 per hour. The per hour figure is set by Regulations 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.

We have calculated that it will take approx. 386.2 hours (minimum) to comply with your Q1 alone because:

- We cannot calculate Q1 as where eligible residents did not claim the money as a direct payment it was paid onto their Council Tax account.
- Some households subsequently claimed refunds from the Council Tax account
- Others used it towards 2022/23 instalments due or arrears and:
- Those who did not claim it and had paid their Council Tax in full for 2022/23 would have seen it rolled forward to the 23/24 bill and included in the remaining amount due (i.e. £150 less to pay in 2022/23)
- This was 11,586 households and to identify which of those claimed refunds or not would require each account to be checked manually.
- This would take 386.2 to do using a conservative 2 minutes minimum per case to check

The remaining questions would take additional time:

Q2 relates to the outcome of question 1. We had 4,509 households with Class N on 1st April but it is unclear without pulling together the data from question 1, how many of these would fall out of that subset of data.

Q3 We would need to match HMO licensing / planning data against Council tax records. Every property indicated as HMO on both lists would need to be checked.

Q4 Every property identified from Q3 would need to be checked manually as per Q1

Advice and Assistance

We have provided a response to Q5 above. It would be difficult to refine the request so that it would take less than 18 hours. We may be able to spot check a limited number of cases for a small defined subset - but this is unlikely to provide a representative sample that would be meaningful.

Further Information

We do not give our consent for any names and contact details provided in this response to be sent marketing material. Any such use will be reported to the ICO as a breach of General Data Protection Regulations and the Privacy and Electronic Communication Regulations.

Why not check our Portal [Open Data Camden](#) before making a new request as your question may already be answered by a previous [FOI response](#) or in one of our many useful and interesting datasets.

Your Rights

If you are not happy with how your response was handled you can request an Internal Review within 2 months of this letter by email to foireviews@camden.gov.uk or post: Information and Records Management Team, London Borough of Camden, Town Hall, Judd Street, London WC1H 9JE. Please quote your case reference number. If you are not satisfied with the Internal Review outcome you can complain to the Information Commissioner's Office at icocasework@ico.org.uk, Telephone: 0303 123 1113, live chat <https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us/live-chat/> or webform <https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us/>. The ICO website <https://www.ico.org.uk> may be useful.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Williams
Information Rights Officer