

Reference: RFI 1709078

Request:

FOI request – use of bailiffs/enforcement agents in 2016/17

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, we would like to request the following information.

- 1) The number of times between 1st April 2016 and 31st March 2017, or the nearest available twelve month period, that private bailiffs/enforcement agents have been instructed to enforce debts to the local authority relating to each of the following;
 - a. Council tax
 - b. Parking
 - c. Housing Benefit overpayments
 - d. Business Rates
 - e. Commercial Rents
 - f. Any other debt types, including any other overpayments

By “private bailiffs/enforcement agents” we mean those who are self-employed or who work for private companies, including as high court enforcement officers. Please include cases where local authority employees have visited a property to execute a warrant.

There is no report that can be produced or created to identify the information so the only way it could be gathered would be to manually examine each of the systems then accounts individually and verify the recovery process undertaken.

Therefore this part of the request is refused under s12 (1) Freedom of Information Act 2000, since the cost of complying would exceed the appropriate limit set out in the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004.

In assessing the cost of complying, the costs attributable to officer time involved in complying have been taken into account. Such costs are limited to £450.00 under the Regulations, which equates to eighteen hours of officer time.

- 2) The number of:
 - a. Residential properties
 - b. Business propertiesthat fall within this local authority area.

There are currently 97123 banded Council Tax properties and there are 5607 rated Business properties.

- 3) Do you signpost residents to one or more free debt advice agencies as part of your collections process? (Yes/No) If so, which charities?

Yes. The Citizens Advice Bureau, Civil Legal Advice, Step Change Debt Charity, Money Advice Service and the National Debt Line.

The information supplied to you is owned by the council unless otherwise stated and may be protected by copyright. You are free to use it for your own purposes, including any non-commercial research or for the purposes of news reporting. Any other re-use of a commercial nature will require the permission of the Council. Further enquiries in this respect should be directed to Head of Law and Governance, North Tyneside Council, Quadrant The Silver Link North, Cobalt Business Park, North Tyneside, NE27 0BY



North Tyneside Council

Reference: RFI 1709078

- 4) Have you adopted the Standard Financial Statement (or Common Financial Statement) as a tool for objectively assessing income and expenditure as part of your collections process? (Yes/No)

No

- 5) Do you have a formal policy in place for dealing with residents in vulnerable circumstances as part of your collections process? (Yes/No)

No. Although the local authority is currently reviewing the Financial Inclusion Policy.

- 6) Do you currently have a policy of exempting recipients of Council Tax Support from the use of bailiff action? (Yes/No)

No

- 7) Have you adopted the Citizens Advice/Local Government Association [Council Tax Protocol](#)? (Yes/No)

No. The local authority hasn't formally signed to adopt the protocol but works closely with the local CAB around debt issues

The information supplied to you is owned by the council unless otherwise stated and may be protected by copyright. You are free to use it for your own purposes, including any non-commercial research or for the purposes of news reporting. Any other re-use of a commercial nature will require the permission of the Council. Further enquiries in this respect should be directed to Head of Law and Governance, North Tyneside Council, Quadrant The Silver Link North, Cobalt Business Park, North Tyneside, NE27 0BY

Date: 19/10/2017

Page 2 of 2