

Contact Sarah McClinton

Telephone 020 8921 2233

Facsimile

Email Sarah.McClinton@royalgreenwich.gov.uk



Director

Health & Adult Services

The Woolwich Centre
35 Wellington Street
Woolwich, London
SE18 6HQ

09 April 2020

Main Number 0208 854 8888

Dear Ms Hurst,

Internal Review: FOI-IR-35220

Thank you for your request for an Internal Review dated 28 January 2020 regarding our response to your Freedom of Information request.

FOI Request

On 16th December 2019 you wrote to ask:

In spring 2019, Royal borough of Greenwich launched a consultation to increase care charges to Adult social care in order to alleviate the current published overspend. This affects disabled residents who use care services, like myself.

If the budget for Adult social care returned to balance (no under or overspend):

1. How much would RBG be spending per head of adult population in Greenwich
2. How much would RBG be spending per head of the disabled population in Greenwich
3. Where would Greenwich come in rankings, as an Adult social care funder, in terms of spending per head of adult population:

a. In London

b. Nationally

Our response was as follows:

If the budget for Adult social care returned to balance (no under or overspend):

1. How much would RBG be spending per head of adult population in Greenwich
- The most recent data from the Office of National Statistics (2018) estimates the adult (over 18) population in the Royal Borough of Greenwich at 217,269. Based on this, the average

spend per head would be £356. This represents spend from the Adult Social Care budget only, not any other RBG spend.

2. How much would RBG be spending per head of the disabled population in Greenwich
The Royal Borough of Greenwich does not hold data on the disabled population. We would only know of people with a disability that have made contact with social services.

3. Where would Greenwich come in rankings, as an Adult social care funder, in terms of spending per head of adult population:

a. In London 7th out of 33, with 1 being the highest

b. Nationally 48th out of 152, with 1 being the highest

Internal Review

On 28th January 2020 you wrote to ask:

I am writing to request an internal review of Greenwich Borough Council's handling of my FOI request 'How does Greenwich compare in terms of spending on Adult social care.'

Thank you for your response, however you have not answered the question that specifically asks about the situation relating to the plans to reduce the ASC spending to a NET ZERO BUDGET (i.e no under or overspend).

Also, answer you provided do not tally with nationally published data.

The Feb 19 LGA report, which use the office of National statistics data from the year you refer to 2017/18 in fact places Greenwich 115 out of 152 for spend on Adult Social Care.

These same figures actually put Greenwich council spend at a higher figure than you do of £373 (per person) but note that the national average is £410 and the London average £386.

These ranking does not take account of the fact that Greenwich had been looking to make savings on current spend of around £11m, which is the adjustment that we had asked you to apply.

1. Please therefore provide copies of the Minutes, supporting document and comments/ decision position document from the Budget Recovery Board.

2. Can you please provide your workings and the data tables you used to arrive at the answers you have given?

3. Additionally, you mentioned that your response only relates to “Adult Social Care” money - please clarify whether this includes Better Care / improved Better Care fund money or not.

4. Finally, as additional proposals have been made in the last few days to “reshape” social care - to the tune of £8m savings for adults alone - please clarify what the new spending per head is proposed to be.

Response

The Council’s response is set out below:

Thank you for your request for an internal review. The Council has reviewed the information again and have decided the following:-

1. Please therefore provide copies of the Minutes, supporting document and comments/ decision position document from the Budget Recovery Board.

The Council is withholding the information in accordance with section 36 (2)(b)(i) and (ii) and 36(2)(c).

The qualified person considers that disclosure of the requested information would, or would be likely to inhibit:-

- The free and frank provision of advice, or
- The free and frank exchange of views for the purposes of deliberation, or
- Would otherwise prejudice, or would likely otherwise to prejudice, the effective conduct of public affairs.

The qualified person’s reasons are below:-

- The qualified person considers that releasing this information would inhibit the ability of the council to engage in full and frank discussions about the information contained in the minutes, supporting documents and comments/decision position document from the Budgetary Recovery Board.
- The correspondence identified within this request relate to internal and external discussions of a formal nature and releasing the information would inhibit the ability of the council to engage in full and frank discussions with council officers and others.
- The release of this information would undermine the Council’s working relationship with other relevant parties which is dependent upon the ability of all organisations involved communicating in an open and effective manner.

- Release of this information would have a detrimental effect on our ability to conduct our statutory functions.
- The council and others must have confidence that they can share views with one another and that there is an opportunity to understand and, where appropriate, challenge issues presented to them.
- Disclosure of the information would be likely to remove the space within which council officers and others are able to discuss options freely and frankly. Key organisations would also be less likely in the future to co-operate in this way.
- There is also the added possible implication that the publication of this information may lead to a misunderstanding by the wider public which cannot be allowed to occur.
- The Qualified person accepts that disclosure of this information would be of interest to the community.
- The council acknowledges there is a public interest in openness, transparency and accountability and for members of the public having access to information which enables them to understand more clearly why certain decisions have been made and the Council's rationale and reasoning.
- The Council acknowledges there is a strong public interest in disclosure of information which would demonstrate that the relevant issues have been properly discussed and deliberated.
- There is a strong public interest in preventing a chilling effect on free and frank exchange of views about the information contained in the requested information.
- It is not unreasonable therefore for council officers to have the assurance that their views would remain confidential and not placed in the public domain.
- The Council considers the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

2. Can you please provide your workings and the data tables you used to arrive at the answers you have given?

Concerning spending per head - The most recent data from the Office of National Statistics (2018) estimates the adult (over 18) population in the Royal Borough of Greenwich at 217,269. The Finance department provided the net budget for 2019/20: £77,284,860.

Based on this, the average spend per head would be £356. This represents spend from the Adult Social Care budget only.

This figure was benchmarked against the net expenditure per 100,000 population provided by local authorities in the latest published statutory finance return (ASC-FR 2018/19). Net

expenditure takes into account income the council receives from others to help towards the cost of Adult Social Services, for example income from care charges and health. It is worth noting that we are comparing RBG net budget for 2019/20 to other local authorities net expenditure for 2018/19.

3. Additionally, you mentioned that your response only relates to “Adult Social Care” money - please clarify whether this includes Better Care / improved Better Care fund money or not.

Our gross expenditure excludes all income. The net figures do factor in additional resources such as Better care fund (BCF) and improved Better Care fund (iBCF).

4. Finally, as additional proposals have been made in the last few days to “reshape” social care - to the tune of £8m savings for adults alone - please clarify what the new spending per head is proposed to be.

Please see table below.

Please see below as requested:

	Spend	Population (mid-year 2018, 18+)	Spend per head	London spend per head
Actual gross spend ASC-FR 2018/19	£120,046,502	217,269	£553	£472
Adjusted gross spend ASC-FR 2018/19 – minus £11.489m	£108,558,000	217,269	£500	£472
Adjusted gross spend ASC-FR 2018/19 – minus £8m	£112,047,000	217,269	£516	£472
Actual net spend ASC-FR 2018/19	£86,342,255	217,269	£397	£348
Adjusted net spend ASC-FR 2018/19 – minus £11.489m	£74,853,000	217,269	£345	£348
Adjusted net spend ASC-FR 2018/19 – minus £8m	£78,342,000	217,269	£361	£348

The Council's response is upheld.

If you have any queries, please contact me, quoting the reference number.

If you are not content with the outcome of the Internal Review, you can apply directly to the Information Commissioner (ICO) for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the Internal Review procedure provided by the Council. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sarah McClinton', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Sarah McClinton
Director
Health & Adult Services