



request-430151-72721aaa@whatdotheyknow.com

Dear Mr Hartley

Freedom of Information Request 556353

Thank you for your recent request received 26 September 2017. Your request was actioned under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 in which you requested 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.

2) The number of:

- a. Residential properties*
 - b. Business properties*
- that fall within this local authority area.*

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?

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)

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

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

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

Response:

Liverpool City Council's responses are as follows –

1. Response as follows –

	Fund type	No. of cases
1	Council Tax	27730
2	Parking fines	787
3	Housing Benefit Overpayment	1074
4	Business Rates	2778
5	Commercial Rents	78
6	Other debts	11

2. As at 6 October 2017 there are 226,116 residential properties and 18,656 commercial properties within the Liverpool City Council boundaries.

3. Liverpool City Council signposts customers via our website and literature issued with Council Tax, Business Rates and Housing Benefit Overpayment notices to the following agencies:

- Money Advice Service
- National Debt Line
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Liverpool Citizens Advice Partnership

Customers are also signposted to local advice agencies.

4. We have not yet adopted the Standard Financial Statement however we are currently reviewing our processes for assessing a customer's ability to pay. As part of this we are considering how the Standard Financial Statement can be incorporated in to these processes.

5. Vulnerability is contained within our Recovery and Enforcement policy. Detailed working practices are provided to staff on how to handle such cases as well as clear guidance to Enforcement Agencies that act for the City Council.

6. Liverpool City Council does not issue Council Tax accounts or Housing Benefit overpayments to Enforcement Agencies where a customer is in receipt of Council Tax Support.

7. Liverpool City Council has adopted the 2013 protocol. It is our intention to adopt the 2017 protocol also and we will be working with our local CAB colleagues to achieve compliance with this.

Any further information required regarding Liverpool BID should be gained by contacting them directly.

This concludes our response.

The City Council will consider appeals, referrals or complaints in respect of your Freedom of Information Act 2000 and you must submit these in writing to Informationrequests@liverpool.gov.uk within 28 days of receiving your response.

The matter will be dealt with by an officer who was not previously involved with the response and we will look to provide a response within 40 days.

Liverpool City Council Information Team
Cunard Building, Water Street, Liverpool, L3 1DS
E: informationrequests@liverpool.gov.uk

If you remain dissatisfied you may also apply to the Information Commissioner for a decision about whether the request for information has been dealt with in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

The Information Commissioner's website is www.ico.gov.uk and the postal address and telephone numbers are:-

Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK95AF. Fax number 01625 524 510, DX 20819, Telephone 01625 545745. Email – mail@ico.gsi.gov.uk (they advise that their email is not secure)

I trust this information satisfies your enquiry.

Yours sincerely

A Lewis

Angela Lewis
Information Team