



My Ref: FOI 6470
Enquiries to: Information Requests
E-Mail: informationrequests@barnsley.gov.uk

Dear Requester,

Re: Request for Information – Freedom of Information Act 2000

I wish to confirm that the council has completed its search for the information which you requested.

The information requested and our findings are as follows: -

I am writing to request information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 concerning credit balances held on non-domestic rating accounts.

Please provide your most recent available report of business-rates accounts that currently have a credit balance.

For each account, please provide the following information where held:

- 1. Billing Authority property reference number;**
- 2. VOA assessment reference number;**
- 3. Property address;**
- 4. Property postcode;**
- 5. Ratepayer name, limited to incorporated companies, limited liability partnerships, public authorities, registered charities and other legal persons;**
- 6. The amount of the credit balance;**
- 7. The financial year or years to which the credit relates;**
- 8. The date the credit first arose;**
- 9. The reason for the credit, using any category or description already held within your system;**
- 10. Whether the account remains active or has been closed;**
- 11. Whether a refund has been requested;**
- 12. Whether a refund has been authorised;**
- 13. Whether the authority has attempted to contact the ratepayer;**
- 14. Whether the balance has been written on, written off, transferred or otherwise adjusted;**
- 15. The date of the most recent refund or credit-balance review.**

I do not request:

- bank account details;**
- payment-card details;**
- authentication information;**
- security questions or answers;**
- personal telephone numbers;**
- personal email addresses;**
- copies of refund forms;**

- signatures; or
- any other information that could be used to impersonate a ratepayer.

Where you consider disclosure of the exact credit amount to engage section 31, please provide the remaining fields and replace the exact amount with one of the following bands:

- £0.01 to £99.99;
- £100 to £499.99;
- £500 to £999.99;
- £1,000 to £4,999.99;
- £5,000 to £9,999.99;
- £10,000 to £49,999.99;
- £50,000 and above.

For information relating to credit balances, we are not obliged to provide information if its release would prejudice law enforcement. In this case, we believe that releasing the information would be likely to prejudice the prevention or detection of crime and apply section 31(1) (a) of the FOI Act 2000. The releasing of this information could cause a possible threat that would allow potential fraudsters to use the information to identify business entities which were entitled to claim credits on their accounts.

In line with the terms of this exemption, we have also considered whether it would be in the public interest for us to provide you with the information, despite the exemption being applicable. In this case, we have concluded that the public interest favours withholding the information, as on balance, the public interest is better served by withholding this information under section 31(1)(a) crime prevention; as releasing the information will prejudice the prevention of crime by facilitating the possibility of a criminal offence being carried out.

If you consider that property-level disclosure would still engage section 31, please provide aggregated information showing:

1. the total number of accounts in credit;
2. the total value of all credits;
3. the number and value within each of the above bands;
4. the number and value relating to active accounts;
5. the number and value relating to closed accounts;
6. the number and value outstanding for:
 - less than three months;
 - three to twelve months;
 - one to three years;
 - three to six years;
 - more than six years;

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You can also write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 4DU

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7. the number and value of credits refunded during each of the previous three financial years;

8. the number and value of credits written on, written off or transferred during each of the previous three financial years.

Answer

- 1) 7
- 2) £2,458.84
- 3) £0.01 to £99.99 - 3
£100 to £499.99 – 2
£500 to £999.99 – 2
- 4) 2 accounts, amount £54.27
- 5) 5 accounts, amount £2,404.57
- 6) Less than three Months – 7 accounts £2,458.84
- 7) 2023/2024 1127 accounts, amount £2,523,470.65
2024/2025 795 accounts, amount £3,626,195.91
2025/2026 986 accounts, amount £2,530,358.97
- 8) 2023/2024 Written on 16 accounts, amount £1,233.30
Written off 4 accounts, amount -£3,672.46
Transferred – unknown
2024/2025 Written on 6 accounts, amount £1,004.58
Written off 0 amounts, amount £0
Transferred - unknown
2025/2026 Written on 3 accounts amount £1061.09
Written off 1 account, amount -£1060.83
Transferred – unknown

The council holds minimal credit balances, as any credits identified are normally refunded directly to the payer/source as soon as practicable. Consequently, credits are not generally retained on the system for extended periods.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact Information Requests Via email.

Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are unhappy with the way the Directorate has handled your request, you may ask for an internal review. Please clearly mark your correspondence 'Complaint' and address it to:

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PO Box 634, Barnsley, South Yorkshire S70 9GG

Barnsley MBC
Information Requests Team
PO Box 634
Barnsley
S70 9GG
email: informationrequests@barnsley.gov.uk

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: -

Customer Services Team
Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Email: <http://www.ico.org.uk/foicomplaints>

Kind regards,

Information Requests Team, Barnsley MBC

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