



My Ref: FOI 6559
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: -

Under the Freedom of Information Act, please provide the information below regarding the public health yearly report:

- Cost of the externally produced illustrations in the Barnsley Council 2025 public health yearly report, "Billy - Our Barnsley Baby".

After some consideration I am going to apply Section 43(2) – commercial interest, which is a prejudice-based exemption which says that information is exempt if its disclosure under FOIA would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any legal person (including the public authority holding it). Disclosure would harm our commercial interest or that of the third parties in a competitive environment and to release information would undermine our ability to maintain a competitive position.

There is public interest in allowing public authorities to withhold information which if disclosed, would reduce providers' ability to compete in a commercial environment. Agencies operate in a competitive market. If prejudicing the commercial interests of the successful tenderers in the market would distort competition in the market, this in itself would not be in the public interest.

There is a public interest in protecting the commercial interests of individual companies and ensuring they are able to compete fairly. Disclosure of the information may cause unwarranted reputational damage or loss of confidence in the Council.

Disclosure of the specific price paid to the named supplier would be likely to cause commercial prejudice and could undermine the Council's ability to secure best value in future procurements by affecting suppliers' willingness to engage in competitive pricing arrangements.. This would also have a detrimental impact on the Council on other contracts and procurements by distorting the market for the reasons stated above.

- Information showing how topics are chosen for inclusion in the public health yearly report. I'm hoping this includes:

- How potential topics are raised and progress for potential inclusion in the yearly report.

- Governance/input from Councillors and the public.

(Possibly a procedure document and/or a process flow diagram exists?)

The annual Director of Public Health report is a statutory report that provides an opportunity to describe the health and wellbeing of the local population, highlight important public health issues, and make recommendations for action across the local system. It is an independent report, meaning it is written from the professional perspective of the Director of Public Health and is not a council policy document or a statement of political position, although the local authority has a duty to publish it. Directors of Public Health usually select the topic by considering the evidence on local health needs, inequalities and emerging risks; listening to communities and partners; reviewing local data and intelligence such as the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment; and identifying where a focused annual report could add value, influence wider action, or draw attention to an issue that needs collective leadership.

Recent Barnsley examples show how the annual report has been used to focus attention on locally important public health priorities. The 2025 report, *Billy – Our Barnsley Baby*, focuses on the first 1,001 days of life and uses an illustrated storybook format to highlight how early development shapes lifelong health and wellbeing. The 2024 report focused on health inequalities and homelessness, showing how safe, affordable and suitable housing is closely connected to physical and mental health. The 2023 report highlighted the significant impact of rising living costs on Barnsley residents' health and wellbeing, explaining how pressures on household income can affect essentials such as nutritious food, heating and medication, with particular risks for low-income households and wider health inequalities. The 2022 report addressed the cost-of-living crisis and its impact on residents' health and wellbeing, particularly for lower-income households. The 2021 report, *What Matters to Me, Now*, centred on the voices of Barnsley children and young people following the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting how their experiences and priorities should inform local action.

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:

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

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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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