



EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

THE GRANGE, NUTHOLT LANE,
ELY, CAMBRIDGESHIRE CB7 4EE

Telephone: Ely (01353) 665555

www.eastcambs.gov.uk

Further to your information request FOI/EIR 23/24-315, please find your question and our response below.

Request:

East Cambridgeshire Council use of bailiffs/enforcement agents in 2022/2023

1. The number of times between 1st April 2022 and 31st March 2023, 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 enforce a warrant of control.

2. Before seeking a liability order for a resident for Council Tax arrears, do you take any of the following steps? Please indicate the steps you take.
 - Assessment of their income and expenditure,
 - Assessment of whether the resident (or anyone else) in their household is vulnerable,
 - Referral to your Council Tax Reduction / Support scheme,
 - Referral to income maximisation,
 - Referral to a free debt advice organisation.
3. Do you signpost residents to one or more free debt advice agencies as part of your Council Tax collections process? (Yes/No) If so, which charities?
4. Have you adopted the [Standard Financial Statement](#) as a tool for objectively assessing income and expenditure as part of your Council Tax 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 for Council Tax arrears? (Yes/No)

If so, please may you provide a copy of the policy if it is for public consumption.
6. Do you currently have a policy of exempting recipients of Council Tax Support / Reduction from the use of bailiff action? (Yes/No)
7. Have you adopted the Citizens Advice/Local Government Association [Council Tax Protocol](#)? (Yes/No)

Response:

1.
 - a. Council Tax - 1246
 - b. Parking - 0
 - c. Housing Benefit overpayments - 27

- d. Business Rates - 53
- e. Commercial Rents - 0
- f. Any other debt types, including any other overpayments - 0

2. Letters and council's website include information on how to apply for Council Tax Reduction and signposts to free debt advice organisations. Other steps would be discussed, if customer makes contact.

3. Yes - Citizen's Advice, Christian's Against Poverty, Consumer Credit Counselling Service, Payplan, Business Debt Line, National Debt Line, The Money Advice Service, Step Change Debt Charity.

4. No, we have designed our own Income & Expenditure form

5. Policy document attached

6. No

7. No - But we already adhere to many of the protocols listed

This concludes your request FOI/EIR 23/24-315.

If information has been refused, please treat this as a Refusal Notice for the purposes of the Act.

If you disagree with our decision or are otherwise unhappy with how we have dealt with your request in the first instance you may approach foi@eastcambs.gov.uk and request a review. A request for review must be made in no more than 40 working days from the date of this email.

Should you remain dissatisfied with the outcome you have a right under s50 of the Freedom of Information Act to appeal against the decision by contacting the Information Commissioner, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow SK9 5AF.