



REQUEST 18929

1. In relation to your collection of council tax for the 2023/2025 council tax period please provide the total number of referrals/debts passed to enforcement agents.

RESPONSE

1. 2023-24 – 11,101 CTAX cases
2024-25 – 18,552 CTAX cases

Please note that cases are recorded based on Liability Orders issued, not by individual Council Tax accounts. An account may have multiple Liability Orders, so the figures provided may not represent the exact number of accounts referred to enforcement agencies during the stated periods.

Additionally, the figures may include duplicate counts of some Liability Orders. For example, if a Liability Order is initially sent to an Enforcement Agent but later returned (e.g., due to the debtor absconding), it may be re-referred at a later date if the debtor is traced and does not engage. In such cases, the same Liability Order could appear more than once in the figures.

2. Please confirm the name of the enforcement company used by the council for the recovery of council tax debt.
3. Please confirm if accounts which are part of the council tax reduction/support scheme are passed to enforcement companies and if so how many such cases were passed on for the 2023/25 council tax period.
4. Please confirm if accounts of people on health/disability related benefits such as

2. Marstons, Bristow & Sutor and Rundles.
3. We do not separate customers out based on circumstance therefore these numbers are not recorded. We operate a welfare collection framework, that encompasses multiple discretionary contact attempts and pathways for residents to seek support to maximise their incomes, ensure they are in receipt of all available income and agree affordable, sustainable repayment arrangements should there be difficulty in making payment - all in an attempt to remove the need to take recovery action.
4. We do not separate customers out based on circumstance therefore these

Disability Living Allowance, Employment Support Allowance and Personal Independence Payment are passed to enforcement companies and if so how many such cases were passed on for the 2023/25 council tax period.

5. Please confirm if an assessment of vulnerability is done prior to a debt being passed to an enforcement company and if so provide a brief description of what the assessment involves.

Please also confirm how many cases of people assessed as being vulnerable or potentially vulnerable were passed on to an enforcement company for the 2023/25 council tax period.

6. Please confirm what protocols are in place between the local authority and enforcement companies regarding the approach that should be taken when someone is assessed as being vulnerable as per the assessment referred to in Q5.

Please also confirm the kinds of cases which should be raised with, or referred back to, local authorities for further consideration when encountered.

7. Please confirm:
 - a. How many requests the council received to bring a council tax debt back from an enforcement agent due to vulnerability reasons during the 2023/25 period and
 - b. How many times the council agreed to bring an account back due to vulnerability reasons during the 2023/25 period.

numbers are not recorded. We operate a welfare collection framework, that encompasses multiple discretionary contact attempts and pathways for residents to seek support to maximise their incomes, ensure they are in receipt of all available income and agree affordable, sustainable repayment arrangements should there be difficulty in making payment - all in an attempt to remove the need to take recovery action.

5. We do not record these figures.

However, please visit www.wigan.gov.uk/counciltaxrecovery where you will find a copy of our Corporate Debt Policy which details the additional measures we may take to support vulnerable customers maintaining liabilities due.

6. Enforcement agencies have their own welfare teams to support customers. In addition, we work closely with both internal and external agents to ensure they are aware of the support available for vulnerable residents.

Within the Council, we have an Income Maximisation Team that proactively identifies residents who may need additional support and contacts them directly to help maximise their income. We also have a Welfare Support & Rights Team, which provides advice and assistance to residents to help them access income-related support and other services they may require.

7. We do not record this information for 7a or 7b.