

FOI Reference Number: FOI/293/1819

Date: 19/09/2018

Request:

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is [REDACTED]

I am working on a story looking into the use of civil enforcement agents (commonly known as bailiffs) by local authorities in England and Wales to collect debts.

In late July the Treasury Select Committee published a report rebuking councils for "overzealous" use of bailiffs, stating that debts (very often council tax arrears) were collected with "routine recourse" to bailiffs as opposed to them only being used as a last resort.

There have been several, tragic cases in recent years where bailiff action on behalf of councils is thought to have contributed to people taking their own lives.

Now some councils are considering, or have already decided, to phase out the use of private bailiff companies to collect debts altogether.

I'm trying to get an accurate picture of how many councils this applies to.

As such I would be grateful if you could answer the following questions as part of a Freedom of Information request...

1. Does your local authority use bailiffs to collect council tax arrears owed to the council by residents? (yes/no)
2. In how many cases has your local authority used bailiffs in each of the last 5 years?
3. Is your local authority considering stopping the use of bailiffs altogether? (yes/no)
4. If so by when do you hope to achieve this? (month/year)

Many thanks...

**Response:**

Thank you for your information request which Mid and East Antrim Borough Council received on 18/09/2018.

Please find below Mid and East Antrim Borough Council's response to the information you requested in relation to the use of civil enforcement agents (commonly known as bailiffs) by local authorities in England and Wales to collect debts.

Please note that this is not applicable to Northern Ireland.

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of part of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. Internal review requests should be submitted within two months of the date of receipt of the response to your original letter and should be addressed to the Chief Executive at the Braid Ballymena Town Hall, 1-29 Bridge Street, Ballymena, BT43 5EJ.

Please remember to quote the reference number FOI/293/1819 in any future communications.

If you are not content with the outcome of an internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

Please be advised that Mid and East Antrim Borough Council may release the response to this information request into the public domain via our website at <https://www.midandeantrim.gov.uk/>.

If we publish our response to your request, your personal data will be removed to protect your privacy.