

29 April 2025

Freedom of Information Request, Oxford City Council – Reference: **FOI2025/00374**

Further to our acknowledgement, we can confirm that Oxford City Council can advise as follows in response to your Freedom of Information Request received on 31 March:

Request

Dear Sir/Madam

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT (FoIA) REQUEST DATED 31 MARCH 2025

This FoIA request relates to the £150 energy bill support payments (sometimes called a 'council tax rebate') issued to Council Tax band A-D households in your area as at 1 April 2022. Further information is here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-council-tax-rebate-2022-23-billing-authority-guidance/support-for-energy-bills-the-council-tax-rebate-2022-23-billing-authority-guidance>

On 2 September 2022, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities reminded local authorities in England to place any unclaimed "core" £150 payments onto council tax accounts for eligible households. This allowed for payment after the "core" scheme closed. See the section titled "Crediting council tax accounts" here:

https://web.archive.org/web/20221116231926/https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1102995/220902_Final_CT_Rebate_CTIL-next_steps_for_Sept_2022_update.pdf

The questions below only relate to the "core/main" £150 scheme. No information is required concerning the separate "discretionary" schemes.

1) For properties where you are the local council, how many properties have an unclaimed "core" £150 on their council tax account?

2,183.

2) How many of the properties in "1)" had at least one individual in council tax exemption class N as at 1 April 2022?

686 - (164 of these are identified as Non UK resident/students from overseas).

3) For properties where you are the local council, how many were recorded as a Home in Multiple Occupation (HMO) for planning purposes but not for council tax purposes as at 1 April 2022? If such data are not available, how many are currently classed as such?

Data not available.

4) How many of these properties in "3)" have an unclaimed "core" £150 on their council tax account and had at least one individual in council tax exemption class N as at 1 April 2022?

Data not available.

5) What decision(s) has the council made regarding distribution of these unclaimed "core" £150 payments to the eligible 1 April 2022 occupants?

We have contacted these customers many times to invite them to claim the rebate as a refund. Our council-wide financial policies regarding fraud and money laundering require that we check the bank details provided and therefore we use an online refund form system that will perform these checks at the point of application.

In 2024/25 FY we undertook a credit sweep to transfer, with the customers permission, the credit to cover other council debts including council house rent accounts and housing benefit overpayments. This has resolved a few hundred more of these accounts.

Another issue is that 105 of these cases are for persons who are now deceased, and we have not been contacted by the executor of the estate with any details.

We will continue to try to refund or transfer these credits until 2029 where we will review what can be done with the remainder of these cases and it will be a councillor decision if these will be written on as un-refundable credits (this action can always be reversed should the entitled person comes forward after this).

If you disagree with any part of the response to your request, you are entitled to ask the Council for an internal review of the decision(s) made. You may do this by writing to the Monitoring Officer, by either email monitoringofficer@oxford.gov.uk – or by post to Monitoring Officer, Oxford City Council, Town Hall, St Aldate's, Oxford, OX1 1BX. After the result of the internal review, if you remain dissatisfied, you may ask the Information Commissioner to intervene on your behalf. You may do this by writing to the Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

Yours sincerely,

Freedom of Information Officer

| Freedom of Information Team | Law & Governance | Oxford City Council | Town Hall | St Aldate's
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