

18 March 2025

**Our Ref: FOI 680**

## Request

We received your request on 18 February 2025 for the following information:

- 1. Budget allocated for Discretionary Housing Benefit in each of the last 5 financial years.*
- 2. Spend against the allocated budget for Discretionary Housing Benefit in each of the last 5 financial years.*
- 3. Number of applicants for Discretionary Housing Benefit in each of the last 5 financial years.*
- 4. Number of applicants refused a Discretionary Housing Benefit payment in each of the last 5 financial years.*
- 5. In 2023-2024 the Housing Executive made cutbacks to the Discretionary Housing Payment scheme whereby after 2 years an award of Discretionary Housing Payment would stop. The weekly amount was also reduced. How many people have since then presented as homeless to the Housing Executive as a result of these cutback decisions?*
- 6. We are just over a month away from the end of the current financial year so what is the current estimated spend out turn for Discretionary Housing Payment spend at present against the allocated budget for current financial year?*

Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

## Our response

### Questions 1 – 4:

	<b>DHP Budget</b>	<b>DHP Spend</b>	<b>Applicants</b>	<b>Refusals</b>
<b>2019/20</b>	£7,290,000	£4,680,000	19,701	1,720
<b>2020/21</b>	£6,100,000	£4,200,000	18,785	760
<b>2021/22</b>	£6,100,000	£4,230,000	21,730	1,189
<b>2022/23</b>	£6,490,000	£6,440,000	12,017	853
<b>2023/24</b>	£6,490,000	£5,900,000	15,264	1,939

### **Question 5**

The Housing Executive holds information within the scope of your request. However, it will not be possible to make this available to you without exceeding the 'appropriate limit' as defined by the FOI Act.

The Housing Executive records the number of households who have presented and the number of households who have also been accepted as statutorily homeless due to Loss of Private Rented Accommodation: Affordability.

During 2023/24, a total of 237 households presented as homeless to the Housing Executive citing Loss of Private Rented Accommodation: Affordability. In addition, a total of 118 households were accepted as statutorily homeless due to this reason in 2023/24.

To establish if those households presenting and/or who have been accepted as statutorily homeless for this reason is as a result of any reductions to Discretionary Housing Payments would require a case-by-case examination of each file to determine if information relevant to your request can be retrieved and therefore this would go beyond the 'appropriate limit.'

Section 12 of the Act makes provision for public authorities to refuse requests for information where it is estimated that the cost of dealing with them would exceed the appropriate limit, which for the Housing Executive is set at £450. This represents the cost of one or more individuals spending 18 hours collectively in determining whether the Housing Executive holds the information, locating, retrieving, and extracting it.

The Housing Executive may be able to provide some information if you reduce or narrow the scope of your request and be more specific about the information required so that it might bring it under the cost limit.

### **Question 6**

The total spend against budget for Discretionary Housing Payments in 2024/25 will be included in the Housing Executive's annual report, which will be published following year end.

This concludes our response.