

# At least 1.5 million taken to court over council tax last year



At least 1.5 million people were taken to court over unpaid council tax debt last year, an investigation by GMB has found.

The union sent a freedom of information to all local authorities in Britain with responsibility for collecting council tax, with almost 200 replying within the statutory deadline.

The results showed 1,430,726 people had been summoned to court in the financial year 2024/25 - although as many councils didn't answer, the true number is likely to be far higher.

The findings will be discussed as part of a Local Government special report, which will be delivered to GMB's annual congress in Blackpool today [Tuesday].



Other results from the investigation include:

- At least 4,593,838 accounts are in council tax arrears
- At least 3,231,480 accounts have had debt management proceedings launched against them
- At least £4.6 billion is owed to councils in unpaid council tax

**Rachel Harrison, GMB National Secretary, said:**

“These horrifying figures show our council tax system is completely broken

“Not only is the banding system woefully out of date, but forcing cash-strapped councils to pursue one and a half million people through the courts just to make ends meet can’t be the right way to do business.

“Austerity left deep scars on all our public services, which will last a generation or more.

“Meanwhile the lack of authority funding often means low pay for the people we rely on to look after our loved ones, to take our rubbish, to keep our towns and cities running.

“To fix all this, we need more guaranteed central government funding, progress on council tax reform so the richest pay their share and changes to Business Rates so that authorities get more to regenerate our high streets.”

[1] Breakdown of figures by region and nation:

Region/Nation	Total owed	Arrears	Debt Mgmt	Court 24/25
London	625449441	678795	440790	25873
West Midlands	490737743.4	182736	154807	239116
North West	589658164.1	482622	256095	176375
South West	126651836.1	71892	105888	54877



Wales	110884885.4	31452	14792	34437
South East	550192268.3	468701	339893	146010
Yorkshire	257574693.1	262314	150888	105839
Scotland	989,081,529	1,610,863	1,231,640	245,299
North East	160406771.4	165004	79924	46395
East Midlands	351895247.1	387572	272708	103209
East of England	354626312.4	251887	184055	94842
TOTALS	4607158891	4593838	3231480	150512

### Press office

07958 156846

[press.office@gmb.org.uk](mailto:press.office@gmb.org.uk)

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[info@gmb.org.uk](mailto:info@gmb.org.uk)

