

Request

I would like to submit a request under The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI) to the Council Social Services team. I would like to know please:

- 1) How many children have been taken into care because their primary caregiver (in this case, the mother) was remanded into custody? This could either be the number of children in total or the number of instances when it has happened (whichever data is held or if possible, both)
- 2) Out of these, how many were returned to their primary caregiver within 1 week (in this case, the mother) upon release?

Can this be broken down to reflect the numbers across 2021, 2022, 2023 - (present day, if the data is held)?

Response

We do not hold the information that you have requested in an easily retrievable format. Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA) relieves a public authority from the obligation to comply with a request for information where the estimated time required to locate, review and extract the information exceeds a certain threshold set out in Regulations.

The Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004 (SI 2004/3244) set out the rules in relation to the cost limit (otherwise called the "appropriate limit"). These Regulations are published by the Office of Public Sector Information (OPSI) and are viewable on their web site from this link: http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2004/uksi_20043244_en.pdf

The Regulations set out the cost limit for Government departments and for other public authorities. For local government, Regulation 3 states that the cost limit is £450 and Regulation 4(4) states that the prescribed hourly rate is £25. Regulation 4(4) further provides that where the local authority estimates the time taken to gather the information would exceed this limit (which based on the prescribed hourly rate, equates to 18 officer hours), it may refuse the request under section 12 of FoIA.

I am satisfied the cost limit applies to your request and will explain why this is the case.

- In total there are 525 care periods starting within the timescale in the FOI. Using a minimum of 5 minutes per case it would take over 43 hours finding time to look at all records.