

Request:

1. How many children went into the care of your local authority as result of their mother, as sole caregiver, being sent to prison? Broken down for the following time periods:
 - a) January - May 2023
 - b) January - December 2022
 - c) January - December 2021
2. For every child who went into care for the above reason, of what crime was their mother convicted and sentenced?

Response:

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/ukxi_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. This information is not recorded in a reportable format.

In total there are 549 care periods starting within the timescale in the FOI. Using a minimum of 5 minutes per case it would take over 45 officer hours to locate and retrieve the information. This is far in excess of the 18-hour cost limit in the Act.