

Request:

I am making a Freedom of Information request to Wigan Borough Council under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2000. The subject area is “Concerns over child safety reported to Wigan Borough Council in 2022 and related matters”.

- 1) Is training provided to social workers to identify children who have been psychologically manipulated to reject a parent (parental alienation)? If such training is given, please provide an electronic copy of the training manual.
- 2) In 2022, how many concerns over child abuse / neglect (separate cases) were reported to Wigan Borough Council?
- 3) Are concerns over child abuse / neglect dealt with by Wigan Borough Council if reported anonymously?
- 4) For 2022, please provide a breakdown of where the concerns over child abuse/ neglect reported to Wigan Borough Council came from (eg school, police, a parent etc)
- 5) For 2022, please provide a breakdown of who the allegations of child abuse / neglect were made AGAINST (eg a teacher, a parent of the child etc)
- 6) For each case, reported to Wigan Borough Council in 2022, in which a parent had been accused of abusing / neglecting their own child, who reported the concern to the local authority, (for example, the child’s school, the police, the other parent, the child them self)?
- 7) Of all the cases reported to Wigan Borough Council in 2022 in which a parent had been accused of abusing / neglecting their own child, in how many cases did the assigned social worker recommend that the child(ren) be removed (or remain removed) from the accused parent? In how many cases was this recommendation complied with? In the cases where this was not complied with, what, if any, action did Wigan Borough Council take?
- 8) In 2022, of all the cases reported to Wigan Borough Council in which a parent was accused of abusing their own child, how many cases subsequently went to the Family Court? Of these, in how many cases were the central allegations of child abuse / neglect (against the parent accused in the report to Wigan Borough Council) found to be false? What had the initial council investigation (section 47) concluded in each of these cases in which the central allegations were found to be false in court (where there was a section 47 investigation)?

Response:

- 1) We do not provide training specifically in relation to parental alienation at the current time.
- 2) 4348 referrals starting with this reason.
- 3) We would make relevant enquiries before determining whether or not the child/young person requires an assessment.

4)

Source	Number
a) Individual	279
b) Schools	716
c) Education services	91
d) Health services	529
e) Housing	96
f) LA services	452
g) Police	1407
h) Other legal agency	217
i) Other	447
j) Anonymous	114

5-8) 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.

This is not recorded in a reportable format. To manually look through the 4348 records, it would take a minimum of 5-10 minutes each. This in excess of 18 hours officer time stipulated in the Act.