

1. Please provide copy of all material held (i.e. guidance accessible to social workers on the specific subject and template referral forms) relating to the subject of dealing with: parents who potentially may have issues with drugs/substance misuse including criteria for when it is indicated that a toxicologist should be instructed to carry out an expert assessment.

Expert assessments are instructed as part of the Public Law Outline or in Proceedings and on a case by case basis.

2. Number of expert assessments the Local Authority were involved in the instruction of in the annual year of 2022 relating to Drug and Alcohol testing
3. If possible, in consideration of Re Y (Private Law: Fact Finding) [2014] EWHC 486 (Fam) in which a child underwent drug testing, please provide the number of under 16s who were subject to drugs testing in the annual year of 2022

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/uk/si_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 2022 there were 6,138 Children & Family Assessments completed. To extract the information requested would require a manual search of these assessments. A minimum allowance of 10 minutes per record would take over 120 hours – this being far in excess of the 18 hour officer time stipulated in the Act.