



Wigan
Council

Request

1. How many hair strand tests have been ordered each year as part of family court and family drug and alcohol court proceedings for the past three years (in which the year runs from 1st April to 31st March).
2. In how many cases for the past three years (in which the year runs from 1st April to 31st March) when hair strand tests were used in family court and family drug and alcohol court proceedings was a final care order put in place?
3. How much money has the local authority spent on hair strand testing in family court proceedings each year for the last three years (in which the year runs from 1st April to 31st March)?

If it is possible please answer question 4 below but only if it's possible to do so within the time/cost constraints of the FOI act

4. How much did the local authority spend on hair strand testing with each testing company in family court cases each year for the last three years (in which the year runs from 1st April to 31st March) Please name each company. For example: Testing company A = £500

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/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.

The information requested is not held in a reportable format. In order to provide this information, the authority would be required to conduct a manual review of more than 300 individual records and a manual review of a significant number of invoices. It is estimated that this work would take far in excess of the 18 officer hours stipulated in the Freedom of Information Act.