

Adult and Community Services
Data Protection & Information Officer

8 April 2016

Our Ref: e18866

Re: Request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000

Your request for information which was received on 24 March 2016 has been considered. Please find our response below.

Your request:

Please accept this as a request under the Freedom of Information Act.

Can you provide answers for the financial years 2011-2012, 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2015-2015 and 2015-2016 please?

- 1. How many children were taken into care in your council area during each financial year?*
- 2. How many of these children were taken into care for substance misuse by a parent as a contributing factor?*
- 3. How many referrals were there for unborn children to be taken into care because of the mother being on drugs when pregnant/substance misuse by a parent as a contributing factor?*

Our response:

1. Numbers of children becoming looked after in the years from 2010-11 through to 2014-15 can be found in the "Local authority tables: SFR34/2015" via the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption-2014-to-2015>

2015-16 data has not yet been submitted. DfE usually publish the annual data regarding looked after children in autumn.

2 & 3. We are unable to report on this information. In order to respond a manual check of the social care records of all children who became looked after from 2011 to 2015 would be required. Unfortunately this would take considerable time and would exceed the time allowed for FOI responses.

Please see Appendix 1 for the full legal reasoning behind the decision not to respond to Q.2 & Q.3 or to provide the 2015-16 data for Q.1 and your right of appeal.

Kind regards

Data Protection and Information Officer

Appendix 1

Detailed legal reasoning for refusal

2015-16 data

Section 22: information intended for future publication

We consider this information is exempt under Section 22; information intended for future publication.

This information will be published on the DfE's website this autumn. The information was held with the intention to disclose it when your request was received and as the publication date is in the near future we consider it reasonable to not publish the information prior to this date. Therefore we consider that section 22 is engaged.

Public interest test

I have established that the information you have requested comes under the exemption stated above. Therefore I have gone on to consider the public interest test.

Public interest arguments in favour of disclosure

I acknowledge that there is strong public interest in the general principles of transparency and accountability. More specifically there is a public interest in understanding how many children are looked after by the Local Authority which is why it is published by the DfE.

Public interest arguments in favour of maintaining the exemption

Information Commissioner Decision Notice [FS50209662](#) outlines that the balance of the public interest must focus on whether in the circumstances of the case it would be in the public interest for the public authority to keep to its original timetable for disclosure or whether in the circumstances of the case the public interest would warrant an earlier disclosure.

We consider it is in the general public interest to disclose the information at the intended time and that there is no specific or pressing public interest in providing the information before the usual date. In this case the information will be disclosed alongside other Local Authority figures. We consider it would not be in the public interest to prematurely disclose information if to do so may mean it is read out of context.

Q.2 & Q.3

Section 12: Exceeds the appropriate limit

To provide the information requested would require us to manually search, review, collate and analyse the requested information. This would take considerable time.

We consider that this would exceed the appropriate limit, as specified in the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004; therefore section 12(1) of the Act applies.

The appropriate limit has been set at £450 and may include working hours of any person acting on our behalf at a rate of £25 per hour. This equates to 18 hours to locate and extract the relevant information.

In order to respond we would need to review 245 case files. We estimate it would take a minimum of 15 minutes per case. This amounts to over 60 hours work. The response therefore would exceed the limit stipulated under FOI legislation.

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 this letter acts as a Refusal Notice.

You have the right of appeal against the decision. If you wish to appeal please set out in writing your grounds of appeal and send to:

Corporate Complaints and Access to Information Manager
Community Engagement and Accountability Team
Adult and Community Services

3rd Floor Civic Centre

44 York Street

Twickenham

TW1 3BZ

E-mail: foi@richmond.gov.uk

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of the internal appeal you may appeal further to the Information Commissioner's Office at:

Wycliffe House

Water Lane

Wilmslow

Cheshire

SK9 5AF

fax: 01625 524 510

DX 20819

www.ico.org.uk