

Response to Request for Information

Reference FOI 003367
Date 18 March 2019

Adoption Contact Statistics

Request:

Can you please provide the following information with regards to contact arrangements for adopted children who are placed by yourselves:

1. The number of adopted children with active letterbox contact arrangements (i.e. where there are one or more letters due to be sent during the year). An arrangement would still be considered active even if the scheduled letters are not being sent for any reason (e.g. the birth relative is unresponsive)? 400
2. The number of active, unique letterbox contact arrangements (e.g. an adopted child with separate arrangements for two birth relatives would be considered to be two unique arrangements)?

Your request for information has now been considered and the City of Wolverhampton Council is not obliged to supply the information you requested for the reasons set out below.

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires City of Wolverhampton Council, when refusing to provide such information (because the information is exempt) to provide you, the applicant with a notice which:

- (a) states the fact,
- (b) specifies the exemption in question and
- (c) states (if that would not otherwise be apparent) why the exemption applies:

In relation to your particular request, the following exemption applies:

Section 12 - Exemption where cost of compliance exceeds appropriate limit

We can confirm that the Council holds information falling within the description specified in your request. However, Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 allows a public authority to refuse a request if the cost of providing the information to the applicant would exceed the 'appropriate limit' as defined by the Freedom of Information.

The Regulations provide that the appropriate limit to be applied to requests received by local authorities is £450 (equivalent to 18 hours of work). In

estimating the cost of complying with a request for information, an authority can only take into account any reasonable costs incurred in:

- (a) Determining whether it holds the information,
 - (b) Locating the information, or a document which may contain the information,
 - (c) Retrieving the information, or a document which may contain the information,
- and
- (d) Extracting the information from a document containing it.

For the purposes of the estimate the costs of performing these activities should be estimated at a rate of £25 per hour.

The information appertaining to your request is not easily accessible and as such this information is not held as a distinct set able to be retrieved or reported on. To get the information we would need to go through every arrangement, some can have arrangements including two parents and siblings. This would be a manual exercise and as such we believe that the aggregated time it would take to collate the information would be in excess of 18 hours (equivalent to a notional cost of £450).

3. How long an archived copy of letters are held on record for by yourselves? **100 years**
4. A breakdown of the number of arrangements which are reviewed by yourselves in order to ensure that they are appropriate and approved/rejected before being sent on to the recipient versus those which aren't reviewed and are just forwarded on irrespective of the content? **All letters are reviewed.**
5. The methods used for delivering the letters to the recipients (e.g letters posted or delivered via courier, letter collected from your offices, letters viewed at your office but not taken away, letters sent via email, letters viewed online in a self service electronic system)? **Letters posted recorded delivery, collected from office.**
6. The number of adopted children with active direct contact arrangements with a birth relative? **Eight, not all known as adopted siblings contact is arranged by adoptive parents.**
7. The number of active, unique direct contact arrangements? **As above.**
8. A breakdown of the number of direct contact arrangements which are facilitated by yourselves (e.g. arranging a time/date, place etc.) versus those which are arranged directly between the parties (if known)? **Three.**
9. A breakdown of the number of direct contact arrangements which are supervised by yourselves versus those which are unsupervised? **Five, however not all are known as adopters arrange direct contact.**