

Response to Request for Information

Reference FOI 000441
Date 14 September 2016

Foster Parents Being Refused a Child

Request:

1. How many foster parents have been refused a child because of a dog in their home in 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016?

With reference to question 1, and following careful consideration, the Council regrets to inform you that it has decided not to disclose this information.

The information you have requested above has been withheld from disclosure. The exemption engaged is Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act (FOI).

Section 12 of the FOI exempts Public Authorities from providing information where the estimated cost of compliance exceeds the appropriate limit. Any estimate must be undertaken in accordance with the limits set in fees regulations made under Section 12(5) of the FOI.

These Fees Regulations (SI 2004/3244 Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations) allow for a refusal where the cost of compliance, for local authorities such as the Council, would exceed £450. As a guide, staff time to identify and extract this information is charged at a rate of £25 per hour.

In summary, as we do not record this type of information you have requested centrally, we would need to scrutinise thousands of records as the likelihood is that if dogs were a mitigating factor in the removal of children or the refusal to approve carers this will be recorded on observations.

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”.

2. Do you have a specific policy on foster parents owning dogs
No, but there is a list of dangerous dogs that when completing an assessment would automatically rule someone out for fostering. Special caution would also be observed when assessing households with a certain criteria of dogs which includes pack of dogs ie., more than two. All of the above would be addressed/considered within the assessment process when we would complete a pet questionnaire/obtain a vet assessment where concerns are raised.
3. How many children have been taken in to care because of concerns about a dog in the family home in 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016?
4. If possible, could you supply the age of the child and the breed of dog in the years requested?

With reference to questions 3 and 4 above, and following careful consideration, the Council regrets to inform you that it has decided not to disclose this information.

The information you have requested above has been withheld from disclosure. The exemption engaged is Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act (FOI).

Section 12 of the FOI exempts Public Authorities from providing information where the estimated cost of compliance exceeds the appropriate limit. Any estimate must be undertaken in accordance with the limits set in fees regulations made under Section 12(5) of the FOI.

These Fees Regulations (SI 2004/3244 Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations) allow for a refusal where the cost of compliance, for local authorities such as the Council, would exceed £450. As a guide, staff time to identify and extract this information is charged at a rate of £25 per hour.

In summary, we do not record this information centrally as a child would not be taken into care because of a dog. There would be cumulative factors that would result in neglect and be recorded as such which include requesting families to rehome their dogs otherwise their children would be removed but again the reason for removal would not be down to dogs in isolation it would be recorded as neglect. Therefore, we would need to scrutinise thousands of records in order to answer your above questions.

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(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*

[NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED]

(d) extracting the information from a document containing it”.