

CITY OF
WOLVERHAMPTON
COUNCIL

Response to Request for Information

Reference FOI 001203
Date 6 June 2017

Children's Services

Request:

1. Number of section 37 Children Act 1989 investigations you have been directed to undertake by the Family Courts per year from January 2011 - December 2016.
2011 - **
2012 - **
2013 - 12
2014 - 18
2015 - 19
2016 – 12

With reference to our responses marked **, following careful consideration the Council regrets to inform you that it has decided not to disclose this information.

Information you have requested has been withheld from disclosure. The exemption engaged is Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (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 to provide the information you have requested it would take us at least 20 hours to compile, as this information was not recorded during the years 2011 and 2012 and therefore a manual trawl would have to be carried out in order to collate this information to produce the detailed analysis you require.

2. Whether you have been directed to undertake more than one section 37 Children Act 1989 investigation in relation to the same child between January 2011 - December 2016.

Yes

3. Recorded outcomes of section 37 Children Act 1989 investigations you have undertaken between January 2011 - December 2016., e.g. application for a care order, supervision order, supporting a special guardianship order, child arrangements order, child in need plan, child protection plan or no further action.

With reference to the years 2011 and 2012, following careful consideration the Council regrets to inform you that it has decided not to disclose this information.

Information you have requested has been withheld from disclosure. The exemption engaged is Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (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.

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2013 – Residence Order
Children in Need Plan
Local Authority to Issue Care Proceedings
Contact Order
No Contact
No Order Principle
Child Protection Plan
Child Protection Plan and Contact Order

2014 - Residence Order
No Order Principle
Children in Need Plan
Residence Order to Mother
Child Arrangement Order to Mother
Twelve Month Family Assistance Order
Supervision Order to Local Authority
Child Arrangement Order

Section 37 Order with Child Arrangement Order
Contact Order
Child Protection Plan

2015 - Child Arrangement Order
Child Protection Plan
No Order Principle
Children in Need Plan
Insufficient Information Provided
Support Services
Further Information Required
Contact Order
Supervised Contact Plan

2016 - Child Arrangement Order
Contact Order
Shared Care Arrangement
Out of Jurisdiction
Care Proceedings
No Order Principle

4. The duration (in weeks) of the section 37 investigations you have undertaken between January 2011 - December 2016.

In respect of your above question, it has been established after careful consideration that the Council does not hold the above information. Consequently, we are unable to provide any information relating to the above, and are informing you as required by Section 1(1) (a) of the Act, that states:

"Any person making a request for information to a public authority is entitled to be informed in writing by the public authority whether it holds information of the description specified in the request".

5. The total duration (in weeks) of your involvement in private proceedings where section 37 investigations have been directed between January 2011 - December 2016.

In respect of your above question, it has been established after careful consideration that the Council does not hold the above information. Consequently, we are unable to provide any information relating to the above, and are informing you as required by Section 1(1) (a) of the Act, that states:

"Any person making a request for information to a public authority is entitled to be informed in writing by the public authority whether it holds information of the description specified in the request".

6. How work required for a section 37 investigation is allocated to your staff, for example, whether it is initially given to a social worker with a certain level of experience, or whoever has availability. Whether there is an internal policy on work allocation for section 37 investigations.

Cases are allocated to suitably experienced and skilled social workers who have the capacity to complete the section 37 investigation. There is no specific policy for the allocation of section 37 investigations.

7. The process followed when undertaking section 37 investigations e.g. interviews with children, parents, third parties. The decision making process when deciding what to recommend to court e.g. any internal meetings with the practice manager, the legal department, senior management.
Once the case is allocated to the team a date of submission is confirmed to ensure enough time is allocated to complete the request. The case is assigned as a Children in Need case which allocated to a social worker to completed a section 37 investigation.

The social worker in preparation to writing the report will speak to both parents or carers, the children, school, health and anyone else who is involved or part of the children's lives. The social worker will discuss the findings with the manager through out to ensure the investigation is on track.

Once the worker has gathered all the information required they would discuss this with their line manager in supervision and look at any gaps before jointly agreeing a final recommendation to court that will be in the best interest of the child. The manager will undertake a quality assurance check of the section 37 investigation report before it is shared with Legal Services and filed with the court.