

Response to Request for Information

Reference FOI 002021
Date 2 March 2018

Looked After Children 2017

Request:

Please supply the following information for financial years:

1. How many children became 'looked after' in your local authority in 2017?
166
2. Of the children in Q1, how many were in a group of siblings of two or more (I would like the number of children, not the number of groups)?
91
3. How many of the children that became 'looked after' in your local authority in 2017 were initially placed in Kinship Care/Connected Persons care?
9
4. How many looked after children in your local authority are currently placed following care proceedings:
 - a) with long term LA foster carers 101
 - b) in kinship care foster placements 73
5. a. How many applications to be a kinship carer did you receive in 2017 in respect of children subject to Care Proceedings?
5. b. How many of those (5.a.) applications were successful?

With reference to question 5a. and 5b., 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 gather the information would require a full scale look into all individual records. 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).

Excess cost removes the City of Wolverhampton Council's obligation under the Freedom of Information, however under Section 16 – (the duty to provide advice and assistance, the Council may be able to provide answers to the request, should you wish to submit a refined request.

6. How many children in your local authority were made the subject of Special Guardianship Order following Care Proceedings in 2017?

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7. How many of your local authority's current foster carers are prepared and approved to be long term foster carers of sibling groups of:

- a) 2 58 carers, 6 of which are vacant*
- b) 3 or more 20 carers, none of which are vacant*

* NB All foster carers are approved for short and long term care.