

## Response to Request for Information

Reference      FOI 002302  
Date            16 May 2018

### ***Looked after Children***

#### **Request:**

I am writing to make an open government request for all the information to which I am entitled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Please release the following information relating to looked after children in the care of your authority for the period **1 January 2017 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017**:

1. The total number of looked after children in the care of your authority that have been:
  - a. Identified as having been trafficked or a victim of modern slavery – including, but not limited to those identified through the National Referral Mechanism. [14](#)
  - b. Suspected of having been a victim of trafficking or modern slavery<sup>1</sup>, if not included in a. [same as above](#).
  - c. Identified as an unaccompanied asylum seeking child (UASC) or a separated child<sup>2</sup>. [14](#)
  
2. The total number of looked after children in the care of your authority:

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<sup>1</sup> i) Trafficking is defined in Article 4 of the Council of Europe Convention Against Trafficking in Human Beings as “*the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation.*” However, for the purposes of trafficking in the case of a child there is no requirement to meet the ‘means’ component within that definition as a child is not able to give informed consent. Therefore, any child who is recruited, transported, transferred, harboured or received for the purposes of exploitation is considered to be a trafficking victim, whether or not they have been forced or deceived.

ii) ‘Modern slavery’ includes human trafficking, slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour for the purpose of exploitation.

<sup>2</sup> “Separated children” are children, as defined in article 1 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, who have been separated from both parents, or from their previous legal or customary primary caregiver, but not necessarily from other relatives. These may, therefore, include children accompanied by other adult family members.

- a. Identified or suspected as having been trafficked/victim of modern slavery and that have gone missing or absent. 6\*
  - b. Identified as an UASC or separated child and that have gone missing or absent. 3\*
3. The total number of individual incidents (which could involve the same child on more than one occasion) of looked after children in the care of your authority:
- a. Identified or suspected as having been trafficked/victim of modern slavery and that have gone missing or absent. 31\*
  - b. Identified as an UASC or separated child and that have gone missing or absent. 5\*
4. The total number of looked after children in the care of your authority that are still missing or absent (including those that subsequently turned 18 without being found) that were identified or suspected as having been trafficked or identified as an UASC or separated child. 0\*
5. *For all of the above please provide a breakdown of these numbers by gender and nationality of the child (e.g. British, Vietnamese, etc.) If identification is a concern due to small numbers involved please give the total figures and specify whether the child is British / an EU national / non EU national. For Q3 & Q4, please add the length of time the child was missing during each incident. Nationality is not a mandatory or statutory data item therefore we are unable to provide an accurate list for the cohorts identified.*

*\*Numbers for these question's relate to missing episodes only, data on absences is not accurately recorded within our social care systems.*

Please note that statutory duties include collecting and recording the following:

- Whether a child is a victim of trafficking/modern slavery, or whether there is reason to believe they may be a victim<sup>3</sup>
- Whether a child is an unaccompanied asylum seeking child (UASC)<sup>4</sup>
- Data on children reported missing from care<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The Care Planning and Care Leavers (Amendment) Regulations 2014; Home Office: 'National Referral Mechanism: Guidance for Child First Responders'.

<sup>4</sup> The Care Planning and Care Leavers (Amendment) Regulations 2014; Home Office: 'National Referral Mechanism: Guidance for Child First Responders'.

<sup>5</sup> Department for Education, 'Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care', (2014).