

Department of Policy & Performance

Policy Development Service

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Date: 31st October 2008

Wendy Worsley

request-3323-402f7d21@whatdotheyknow.com

Dear Ms Worsley

FOI request relating to the Council's Use of Potential Violent Markers

I am considering your email of the 22nd October as a request for an internal review regarding our initial response to your FOI request of the 1st October 2008 regarding the use by Bradford Council of "Potential Violent Warning markers (or similar description) against its citizens in any of its databases."

1. How many databases are they used in?

On our Environmental Health system we use a marker which is held against a property. Environmental Health Officers often visit premises in relation to potentially contentious enforcement matters, and this marker is used to advise them of an increased risk so as to inform their risk management and allow additional measures to be taken. This marker is not a "potential violent persons" marker but is a marker used to inform risk assessments and will include matters such as:

- to indicate the presence of aggressive and/or large dogs;
- notifications from officers where they have had experience of verbal and/or physical abuse;
- information about high risk areas e.g. where cars have been damaged, where drug dealing is known about etc

Our Children's and Adult Services also hold a marker on two databases. These markers are held against the individual client and are used when the child or elderly person, is deemed to be at risk of violence from a third party.

I have consulted with the managers of our Customer Services CRM system, and also of the separate Planning and Building Control Systems. I can confirm that, as previously stated, none of these systems use a potential violent warning marker field against an individual. Any notifications entered will be from officers that have had experienced verbal and/or physical abuse and will be entered on these systems as part of the individual officer's case notes which are associated with that record.

2. Who is the senior nominated person in the council who makes the decision that a person should have such a marker added to his/her records?

Such decisions are made by the service operations manager on a case by case basis

3. What is the mean time to review the presence of these markers, also what is the shortest and longest times between reviews?

I am unable to supply this information as it is not held by the Council.

4. How many such markers are current at the present time (or if a date is required, 1/9/08)?

There are:

- 303 markers held against individual properties on the environmental health system
- 12 markers held against client's records on our Children's and Adult Services databases who are deemed to be at risk of violence from 3rd parties

To be able to state how many instances officers have experienced verbal and/or physical abuse which they have subsequently logged on the Customer Services CRM system or separate Planning and Building Control Systems would require me to examine each individual case record held on those systems. I am therefore refusing this information under Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act as to do so would exceed the 18 hour cost limit set by that Act.

5. How many of the persons with such markers have you written to, to inform them that a marker exists against their personal record?

As markers are held on our Environmental Health system against properties we do not write to individuals informing them that such a marker exists.

Under the Children's Act we are obligated to protect children and we also have a duty of care to those staff that provide services to these children. Our Children's and Adult Services do not therefore write to individuals to inform them that there is a potential violent marker recorded against a client, as to do so might further expose that child or elderly person to further abuse from the third party.

To be able to state how many instances officers have experienced verbal and/or physical abuse which they have subsequently logged on the Customer Services CRM system or separate Planning and Building Control Systems would require me to examine each individual case record held on those systems. I am therefore refusing this information under Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act as to do so would exceed the 18 hour cost limit set by that Act.

6. If/when you have written to them, on how many occasions have you explained the reason(s) why they have a marker against their record?

I refer you my response at 5

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of this internal review you have the right of appeal to the Information Commissioner who can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
Tel: 01625 545700
URL: <http://www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk>

Yours sincerely

John Ellis
Senior Policy Officer (Governance)