

Essex County Council
PO Box 11, County Hall
Chelmsford
Essex CM1 1LX



Ms Sheila Hersom
xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Our Ref: ECC-018678-12
Date : 01 March 2012

Dear Ms Hersom

Your Freedom of Information Request:

I am pleased to enclose the following information in respect of your recent Freedom of Information request. You requested:

This FOI relates to any professional employed by the LA that has access to children such as children's social workers, health visitors etc.

1. Would any convictions, cautions, criminal activity or police records etc. recorded against a person in any county, other than the UK, show up on CRB checks? If so what country(s) share records with the UK CRB Records?

The CRB check only covers the UK.

2. How many social workers/professionals do you employ that have got a different birth place to the UK?

We can confirm that we do hold this information. However from our preliminary assessment, we estimate that compliance with your request would exceed the appropriate costs limit under section 12 of the Freedom of information Act 2000. This is currently £450. This limit is calculated 18 hours of work at a cost of £25 per hour. The information you have requested is not available because it is not held in a reportable format. In order to collate the information we would have to manually trawl through 3,296 personnel files at an approximate time of 10 minutes per file. Therefore we will not be complying with this part of your request. In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, this letter acts as a Refusal Notice in respect of this part of your request.

3. How many social workers/professionals do you employ that have a different country of residency previous to becoming resident of the UK?

We do not hold this information.

4. Have all social workers listed in Q2 & Q3 had CRB checks made against them?

All social workers we employ have had a CRB check made against them.

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5. Can you confirm that CRB records / checks only go back to when a person arrives in the UK?

This is correct.

6. Can you confirm that past criminal convictions, police records etc. from other countries will or will not show up on CRB checks?

In most cases there is no information from other countries, although we do sometimes receive information from Australia and New Zealand where we reciprocal arrangements.

7. For all social workers / professionals in Q2 & Q3, what procedures/safeguarding measures have the LA put in place to ensure that social workers / professionals have no previous convictions, cautions, criminal activity or police records, fraud or anything that has been made against them in their birth country or previous country of residence that may or may not jeopardise the safeguarding of children or adults?

Where a CRB check cannot be made we ask for a certificate of good conduct from their country of origin.

8. How does the LA contact other countries for social workers/professional's previous records? What are the time scales?

It is the individual's responsibility to provide us with the certificate of good conduct. We do not contact other countries. Timescales vary.

9. With regards to Q8, if the LA does not get a response from the country which the records are sought, would the social worker/ professional be employed by the LA or would employment only commence when the LA has evidence that social workers/professionals have a clean record.

We would look at all the other information collected as part of the pre-employment process i.e. references before making a decision.

10. If this FOI has highlighted concerns or failing of obtaining previous records from birth countries / previous residence of another countries would the LA seek to amend policies to ensure social workers/professionals have clean records.

Our policies are in line with Department for Education guidance and legislation. However, if there are any concerns or failings we would amend our policies.

11. Does the LA carry out random drug tests or alcohol tests on social workers/ professionals? Were there any to be found negative and what were the outcomes?

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We do not carry out random drug tests or alcohol tests.

You may reuse all or part of this information free of charge in any format or medium. You must reuse it accurately and not in a misleading context.

Please contact me if you would like further advice or assistance about your request or your right to access information held by Essex County Council.

If you are not satisfied with my response to your request, please let me know. If I am unable to resolve the issue immediately, I will explain our complaints procedure. If, after following our complaints procedure, you are still not satisfied, you are entitled to ask the Information Commissioner to review our decision. You can contact him at Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF, telephone 01625 545700.

Yours sincerely

Lauri Almond

Information Governance Officer
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