

Poppy Damon

request-558232-a38b961a@whatdotheyknow.com

Our ref FOI 08288

Your ref.

Date. 23rd April 2019

Dear Poppy Damon

Freedom of Information Request – FOI 08288

I am writing regarding your request for information, which was received on **4th March 2019**. In that request you asked us the following questions and I can confirm that the search for the information you requested has been completed and our responses are given below.

- 1. How many recorded instances of missing then returned children did you have in your authority per year between Jan 1st 2014-Jan 1st 2019? If you can provide a per month break down please do.**

| 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | Total |
|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| 123 | 172 | 300 | 136 | 180 | 911 |

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | Total |
|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| 2014 | * | 13 | 16 | * | * | * | * | * | 13 | 14 | 12 | 15 | 123 |
| 2015 | 13 | 15 | 11 | 12 | 15 | 10 | 13 | * | 20 | 21 | 15 | 20 | 172 |
| 2016 | 22 | 25 | 16 | 31 | 34 | 28 | 29 | 21 | 31 | 28 | 22 | 13 | 300 |
| 2017 | 11 | 10 | 18 | * | 11 | * | 14 | * | * | * | 17 | 27 | 136 |
| 2018 | 17 | * | 20 | 21 | 22 | 16 | 12 | 21 | * | 11 | 13 | 10 | 180 |
| Total | 70 | 72 | 81 | 77 | 90 | 71 | 72 | 57 | 78 | 79 | 79 | 85 | 911 |

* This information is exempt from disclosure under Section 40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act. Due to the small number of persons to whom answering this request would relate, a member of the public could, on the balance of probabilities, identify individuals by cross-referencing the anonymised data with other information that was available to them. This means that the requested information is to be classed as personal data and under the terms of the Data Protection Act we consider it would be unfair to the persons concerned to disclose that data. We consider that the public interest in protecting the privacy of the children concerned outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

2. How many of these instances were children who had runaway more than once? If possible can you send a break down which shows a numbered list to indicate individual children and a second column with how many times they ran away? This would of course not include their name or any details.

| 2014 | | 2015 | | 2016 | | 2017 | | 2018 | |
|-------|----------|-------|----------|-------|----------|-------|----------|-------|----------|
| Child | Instance | Child | Instance | Child | Instance | Child | Instance | Child | Instance |
| 19 | 113 | 20 | 159 | 27 | 301 | 25 | 134 | 22 | 209 |

3. A summary of the recorded outcomes or actions taken for all completed Return Home Interviews (for example a safeguarding referral, report to the police or to another service). I would like a breakdown of these for Jan 2014-Jan 2019. Ideally this would be laid out by outcome, beside a number of times this was taken. This would sit along side a number of how many RHIs were carried out in total per year. Excel or PDF formats are fine.

Unfortunately due to system changes and the way that the information is recorded on both of the systems this information is only held within individual client records

This means that the only record we hold of such information is in the individual paper files of our clients This would have to be looked into manually for the 911 missing cases

We estimate it would take approximately 3 minutes per file to examine it to check these outcomes.

Therefore, if these files were examined, I estimate that fulfilling your request would take a minimum of 45 hours

The appropriate cost limit for handling a Freedom of information request is specified in regulations and for local government it is set at £450, the equivalent of one member of staff working on a request for 18 hours at a fixed rate of £25 per hour

Based on the foregoing, your request would take a minimum of 45 hours and therefore it will cost more than the appropriate limit

Consequently, the Council is not obliged by the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to respond your request (see section 12(1))

I have considered how to narrow the scope of your request (so that we may be able to provide information free of charge because it would cost less than the appropriate limit to do so) but given the way in which the information is held in our records, I am unable to offer any meaningful advice concerning how to refine your request and I have concluded that no information is therefore available below the appropriate limit

If however you can see an alternative please let me know Any reformulated request the Council receives from you will be treated as a fresh FOI request

4. How many of these return interviews contained content about child exploitation?

Please see our answer to Question 3.

5. How many times were the police notified of potential child exploitation, following a RHI?

We share the RHI with the police, but we don't record how many evidence exploitation

6. Can you send me the hiring requirements for staff employed in-house to carry out RHIs? If you outsource this service please respond with who does this for you.

The role of RHI completion is undertaken by the Adolescent Intervention and Prevention team

7. If you do not outsource and complete RHIs yourself - could you please provide the aide memoire/guidelines/checklist that you use when completing Return Home Interviews?

The RHI form is part of the recording system, the RHI looks at time missing, push / pull factors, risks of exploitation, if the young person felt safe and if any other support is needed.

If you wish to discuss any of the above, please contact me. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request and wish to request a review of our response, you should write to the Knowledge and Information Manager, PO Box 6, Civic Centre, Victoria Avenue, Southend-on-Sea, Essex, SS2 6ER.

If you are not content with the outcome of your review, you can make a complaint under the Council's complaints process by writing to Corporate Complaints Officer, Office of the Chief Executive, PO Box 6, Civic Centre, Victoria Avenue, Southend-on-Sea, Essex, SS2 6ER.

You can also apply directly to the Information Commissioner (ICO) for a decision although generally the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the Council's complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

Yours sincerely



Department for People
Business Support Administration

T: 01702 215007

E: peoplebusinesssupportgeneral@southend.gov.uk