

17 February 2021

Our ref: 6964476

Thank you for your request received on 21 January 2021, for the following information:

1/ The number of Looked After Children (children in care) who have gone missing for at least a week since March 23rd 2020 (when the UK went into its first lockdown)?

2/ The number of Looked After Children who went missing for over a month since March 23rd 2020?

3/ The number of Looked After children who went missing for over a week since March 23rd 2020 who have not been not found or returned? If no-one has not returned, or been found, please state the longest period an LAC went missing. Please state the month they went missing and the ages of all those going missing in any such cases.

4/ The number of occasions Looked After children are believed to have been a) sexually abused or exploited (including grooming where logged) or b) criminally exploited (e.g. involved in county lines) while missing from care since March 23rd 2020?

5/ The number of children who are believed to have been sexually abused or exploited (including grooming where logged) on multiple occasions (at least two) while missing from care since March 23rd 2020?

For clarification, this is a definition of an LAC:

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/children-and-families-at-risk/looked-after-children>. Local authorities are duty bound to record missing episodes.

We have processed this request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Response

The council holds the information requested and the answers to your questions are below

1/ The number of Looked After Children (children in care) who have gone missing for at least a week since March 23rd 2020 (when the UK went into its first lockdown)?

12 children

2/ The number of Looked After Children who went missing for over a month since March 23rd 2020?

None

3 / The number of Looked After children who went missing for over a week since March 23rd 2020 who have not been not found or returned? If no-one has not returned, or been found, please state the longest period an LAC went missing. Please state the month they went missing and the ages of all those going missing in any such cases.

All of the above have returned – the longest missing episode was for 19 days (in July), age 16

4/ The number of occasions Looked After children are believed to have been a) sexually abused or exploited (including grooming where logged) or b) criminally exploited (e.g. involved in county lines) while missing from care since March 23rd 2020?

It is not possible for us to provide the number of occasions Looked After children are believed to have been sexually or criminally exploited while missing from care, however we can say how many of these missing children we have had CSE and/or CCE concerns about within this time period.

a) 2 children

b) 7 children

5/ The number of children who are believed to have been sexually abused or exploited (including grooming where logged) on multiple occasions (at least two) while missing from care since March 23rd 2020?

We are unable to provide this information.

Further information

If you are interested in the data that the council holds you may wish to visit Open Barnet, the council's data portal. This brings together all our published datasets and other information of interest on one searchable database for anyone, anywhere to access. <http://open.barnet.gov.uk/>

Advice and Assistance : Direct Marketing

If you are a company that intends to use the names and contact details of council officers (or other officers) provided in this response for direct marketing, you need to be registered with the Information Commissioner to process personal data for this purpose. You must also check that the individual (whom you wish to contact for direct marketing purposes) is not registered with one of the Preference Services to prevent Direct Marketing. If they are you must adhere to this preference.

You must also ensure you comply with the Privacy Electronic and Communications Regulations (PECR). For more information follow this Link www.ico.org.uk

For the avoidance of doubt the provision of council (and other) officer names and contact details under FOI does not give consent to receive direct marketing via any media and expressly does not constitute a 'soft opt-in' under PECR.

Your rights

If you are unhappy with the way your request for information has been handled, you can request a review within the next 40 working days by writing to the Information Management Team at: foi@barnet.gov.uk. Or by post to Information Management Team (FOI) London Borough of Barnet, 2 Bristol Avenue, Colindale, NW9 4EW

If, having exhausted our review procedure, you remain dissatisfied with the handling of your request or complaint, you will have a right to appeal to the Information Commissioner at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF (telephone: 0303 123 1113; website www.ico.org.uk). There is no charge for making an appeal.