

8 September 2021
Our ref: 7556736

Thank you for your request received on 11 August 2021, for the following information:

1/ The number of Osman (threat to life) warnings provided to children in care (Looked After Children) since 23rd March 2020 and the onset of the pandemic (please detail from April onwards if easier) to the date this response is supplied.

2/ The total number of children in care who have gone missing and not returned since 23rd March 2020 and the onset of the pandemic (please detail from April onwards if easier) to the date this response is supplied.

3/ The youngest age of a child in care who went missing and has not returned since 23rd March 2020 and the onset of the pandemic (please detail from April onwards if easier) to the date this response is supplied.

4/ The total number of occasions children in care who have returned from a missing episode were found to have been exploited by county lines gangs (child criminal exploitation) while missing since 23rd March 2020 and the onset of the pandemic (please detail from April onwards if easier) to the date this response is supplied. This refers to numbers of missing episodes where this occurred. LAC may have faced this multiple times.

5/ The most number of missing episodes where an individual child had been found to have been exploited by county lines gangs while missing (child criminal exploitation) since 23rd March 2020 and the onset of the pandemic (please detail from April onwards if easier) to the date this response is supplied. This refers to numbers of missing episodes where this occurred, not numbers of exploitation events within a missing episode.

6/ The monthly number of all missing episodes (including multiple episodes relating to one LAC) since 23rd March 2020 and the onset of the pandemic (please detail from April onwards if easier) to the date this response is supplied.

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

Details:

1/ The number of Osman (threat to life) warnings provided to children in care (Looked After Children) since 23rd March 2020 and the onset of the pandemic (please detail from April onwards if easier) to the date this response is supplied.

See Refusal Notice

2/ The total number of children in care who have gone missing and not returned since 23rd March 2020 and the onset of the pandemic (please detail from April onwards if easier) to the date this response is supplied.

0 - no children in care have gone missing and not returned.

3/ The youngest age of a child in care who went missing and has not returned since 23rd March 2020 and the onset of the pandemic (please detail from April onwards if easier) to the date this response is supplied.

N/A

4/ The total number of occasions children in care who have returned from a missing episode were found to have been exploited by county lines gangs (child criminal exploitation) while missing since 23rd March 2020 and the onset of the pandemic (please detail from April onwards if easier) to the date this response is supplied. This refers to numbers of missing episodes where this occurred. LAC may have faced this multiple times.

See Refusal Notice

5/ The most number of missing episodes where an individual child had been found to have been exploited by county lines gangs while missing (child criminal exploitation) since 23rd March 2020 and the onset of the pandemic (please detail from April onwards if easier) to the date this response is supplied. This refers to numbers of missing episodes where this occurred, not numbers of exploitation events within a missing episode.

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6/ The monthly number of all missing episodes (including multiple episodes relating to one LAC) since 23rd March 2020 and the onset of the pandemic (please detail from April onwards if easier) to the date this response is supplied.

Please see attached the excel spreadsheet detailing monthly missing episodes.

Refusal Notice

S12 - cost limit (exceeds appropriate limit)

We are unable to provide this information within the statutory 18-hour limit because we do not hold this data in a reportable format. To obtain this information we need to read each Looked after Child's file to ascertain if any of the children were the subject of Osman (threat to life) warnings, occasions children in care who have returned from a missing episode were found to have been exploited by county lines gangs, missing episodes where an individual child had been found to have been exploited by county lines gangs while missing

There are 479 LAC in our care. It would take at least 15 minutes to review each case to find out the information requested

479 cases x 15 minutes = 120 Hours.

We must therefore refuse your request, please see Refusal notice (Section 12) below.

Section 12 of FOIA states that the council does not have to comply with a request for information if the cost of compliance exceeds the appropriate limit of £450 calculated at £25 per hour with a limit of 18 hours. The appropriate limit relates strictly to the process of determining whether the information is held; locating, retrieving and extracting the information, or a document containing it.

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/>

It may be worth contacting the Met Police to see if they hold further information on Osman warnings issued, they can be contacted here

<https://www.met.police.uk/foi-ai/af/accessing-information/>

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.