

Dear

I am writing to you in reply to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request to Nottinghamshire County Council. I have the following information.

1) *How many children were Missing/Found from your local authority from 1st January 2017 – 1st January 2018?*

Q4 17/18 = 304 individuals went missing

Q1 18/19 = 374 individuals went missing

Q2 18/19 = 345 individuals went missing

Q3 18/19 = 321 individuals went missing

Missing = any child going missing or 'missing – no apparent risk' in that quarter. Children may be duplicated across the year if they went missing in more than one of the four quarters.

2) *How many of the children that were Missing/Found from your local authority from 1st January 2017 – 1st January 2018 were Looked After Children?*

Q4 17/18 = 62 of the 304 above were LAC

Q1 18/19 = 92 were LAC

Q2 18/19 = 67 were LAC

Q3 18/19 = 71 were LAC

3) *How many of the children that were Missing/Found from your local authority from 1st January 2017 – 1st January 2018 were open to Social Care?*

Other than being able to identify those who went missing as LAC or not, we do not hold the social care involvement of these children in a reportable format and so cannot provide this information within the appropriate limit as set out under Section 12 of FOIA.

4) *How many of the children that were Missing/Found from your local authority from 1st January 2017 – 1st January 2018 were open to Early Help?*

Other than being able to identify those who went missing as LAC or not, we do not hold the social care involvement of these children in a reportable format and so cannot provide this information within the appropriate limit.

5) *How many of the children that were Missing/Found from your local authority from 1st January 2017 – 1st January 2018 were offered an 'independent' Return Home Interview?*

RI's are offered for each episode of a child going missing so we can provide data on the number of return interviews offered, not the number of children offered a RI. Data on the number of children being offered a RI is not available in a reportable format.

Number of RI offered (any episode leading to a RI not being offered is due to the referral/episode being inappropriate or threshold not being met)

Q4 17/18 = 425 (73% of 580 missing episodes)

Q1 18/19 = 617 (78% of 786 missing episodes)

Q2 18/19 = 554 (78% of 706 missing episodes)

Q3 18/19 = 500 (78% of 639 missing episodes)

6) *How many of the children that were Missing/Found completed their 'independent' Return Home Interview with a non-independent worker e.g. Social Worker/Early Help Worker/regular worker known to the child?*

It depends how you interpret "independent"; children are missing from home or care, therefore we say our RI's are ALL conducted by an independent worker i.e. social worker, RAW, family service and YOT etc. Some Local Authorities claim that a Social Worker isn't independent as they are known to the child, but we see that relationship as a positive, as opposed to speaking to a stranger etc.

7) *Does the local authority/service/s responsible for the 'independent' Return Home Interviews coordinate 'independent' Return Home Interviews for all of its children (including those out of the local authority/area i.e. LAC child/ren placed out of the local authority/area)?*

Yes, if we know about the missing episode then we will co-ordinate and monitor the completion of the RHI. Our children's missing officer (CMO) is alerted to all children reported missing to

Nottinghamshire Police. When our LAC children placed out of County go missing, we depend on the child's social worker informing the CMO of the incident as Nottinghamshire Police will not always be aware of when a child has gone missing within another force area.

8) *Does the local authority/service/s responsible for the 'independent' Return Home Interviews coordinate 'independent' Return Home Interviews for children who are placed in its area from other local authorities?*

Our CMO is alerted to all children reported missing to Nottinghamshire Police. Where a child is looked after by another local authority but residing in Nottinghamshire, the CMO will request a RHI/multi-agency meeting if required from the responsible LA and the CMO will monitor the response and escalate if necessary.

9) *How many of the children that were Missing/Found from your local authority from 1st January 2017 – 1st January 2018 were offered an 'independent' Return Home Interview within 72 hours?*

All RIs are offered within 72 hours.

10) *How many of the children that were Missing/Found from your local authority from 1st January 2017 – 1st January 2018 completed an 'independent' Return Home Interview within 72 hours?*

The following are numbers of episodes where a RI was required, and it was completed within 72 hours:

Q4 17/18 = 150

Q1 18/19 = 180

Q2 18/19 = 173

Q3 18/19 = 177

11) *How many of the children that were Missing/Found from your local authority from 1st January 2017 – 1st January 2018 did not complete an 'independent' Return Home Interview?*

The following are numbers of episodes where a RI was required (see Q5) but not completed at all (child refused, did not engage or RI did not take place for another reason):

Q4 17/18 = 204

Q1 18/19 = 355

Q2 18/19 = 325

Q3 18/19 = 252

12) *How many of the children that were Missing/Found from your local authority from 1st January 2017 – 1st January 2018 did not complete an 'independent' Return Home Interview within 72 hours?*

The following are numbers of missing episodes where a RI was completed but it was not within 72 hours:

Q4 17/18 = 72

Q1 18/19 = 80

Q2 18/19 = 58

Q3 18/19 = 75

13) *How many of the children that were Missing/Found from your local authority from 1st January 2017 – 1st January 2018 were not offered an 'independent' Return Home Interview?*

These are numbers of episodes where a RI was not offered as it was not required:

Q4 17/18 = 155

Q1 18/19 = 169

Q2 18/19 = 152

Q3 18/19 = 139

14) *How many of the children that were Missing/Found from your local authority from 1st January 2017 – 1st January 2018 declined an 'independent' Return Home Interview?*

These are numbers of episodes where the YP refused a RI:

Q4 17/18 = 36
Q1 18/19 = 80
Q2 18/19 = 66
Q3 18/19 = 39

15) *How many of the children that were Missing/Found from your local authority from 1st January 2017 – 1st January 2018 had 3 or more Missing Episodes within 28 days?*

Total number of children between 1/1/18 and 31/12/18, with 3+ missing episodes within 28 days = 183

16) *What is the name of the service that offered/completed the 'independent' Return Home Interviews for Missing/Found children from your local authority from 1st January 2017 – 1st January 2018?*

This is done in-house.

17) *Is the service that offered/completed 'independent' Return Home Interviews for Missing/Found children from your local authority from 1st January 2017 – 1st January 2018 a council-run/based service? If so, please provide details of the service e.g. the local authority's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub.*

If the child is known to children's social care (either open to a social worker at Tier 4 of family service worker at Tier 3) then the child's allocated worker will complete/arrange the completion of the RHI. If not known to the Local Authority, then the RHI is completed by a team of Rapid Assessment Workers based within the family service.

18) *Is the service that offered/completed 'independent' Return Home Interviews for Missing/Found children from your local authority from 1st January 2017 – 1st January 2018 outsourced?*

Not outsourced

19) *Does the local authority use a mixture of internal and external agencies to coordinate its 'Independent' Return Home Interviews?*

Internal arrangements only

20) *What is the total amount spent on coordinating 'Independent' Return Home Interviews from 1st January 2017 – 1st January 2018? Please provide a full breakdown of costs.*

This is a difficult question to respond to specifically. We calculate that an average RHI costs £107 when factoring in professional hours and travel etc. We have two full time CMO's at NJE Scale 5 who coordinate the RHI.

21) *Is the service that offered/completed 'independent' Return Home Interviews for Missing/Found children from your local authority from 1st January 2017 – 1st January 2018 a profit or not-for-profit service?*

N/A

22) *If the service/s that offered/completed 'independent' Return Home Interviews for Missing/Found children from your local authority from 1st January 2017 – 1st January 2018 was outsourced, how much did you pay for each 'independent' Return Home Interview that was offered/completed within 72 hours?*

N/A

23) *If the service/s that offered/completed 'independent' Return Home Interviews for Missing/Found children from your local authority from 1st January 2017 – 1st January 2018 was outsourced, how much did you pay for each 'independent' Return Home Interview that was offered/completed out of the 72 hour timeframe?*

N/A

24) *If the service/s that offered/completed 'independent' Return Home Interviews for Missing/Found children from your local authority from 1st January 2017 – 1st January 2018 was outsourced but the Missing/Found later declined or did not engage in the 'independent' Return Home Interview, how much did you pay for each 'independent' Return Home Interview that was incomplete?*

N/A

25) *Did the local authority cover all the expenses (including: mileage, transport costs i.e. buses, taxis, trains, parking, travel time and accommodation etc.) for the service that offered/completed 'independent' Return Home Interviews for Missing/Found children from your local authority from 1st January 2017 – 1st January 2018?*

Yes

26) *If the expenses were not covered; what did you cover and what did you not cover in terms of 'expenses'?*

N/A

27) *On average, how far did those that offered/completed 'independent' Return Home Interviews travel for Missing/Found children from your local authority from 1st January 2017 – 1st January 2018? For example, 60 miles one way/120 miles return journey.*

It is not possible to respond to this question as we would have to view children's individual case files of all LAC placed outside the Local Authority for whom we outsourced RHI's to.

28) *On average, what is the timeframe in which the outcome of the offered/completed 'independent' Return Home Interviews for Missing/Found children from your local authority from 1st January 2017 – 1st January 2018 shared with the relevant local authority team/s and the relevant police representative/s e.g. within 7 working days?*

Information on all children reported missing to Nottinghamshire Police is shared via Compact with Nottinghamshire's CMO daily. Missing reports over the weekend are picked up on Monday mornings and any emergencies are responded to by our out of hours duty team.

29) *Are 'independent' Return Home Interviews for Missing/Found children from your local authority from 1st January 2017 – 1st January 2018 coordinated via telephone?*

All return interviews are carried out in person.

30) *Are 'independent' Return Home Interviews for Missing/Found children from your local authority from 1st January 2017 – 1st January 2018 coordinated via video call?*

All return interviews are carried out in person.

31) *Are 'independent' Return Home Interviews for Missing/Found children from your local authority from 1st January 2017 – 1st January 2018 coordinated by any other method e.g. online questionnaire, paper questionnaire, etc.*

All return interviews are carried out in person.

32) *What technology and software do those that offered/completed 'independent' Return Home Interviews for Missing/Found children from your local authority from 1st January 2017 – 1st January 2018 utilise for the 'independent' Return Home Interviews?*

All return interviews are carried out in person.

33) *In the last 5 years, please provide the outcome of Ofsted's findings with regard to the local authority's 'Independent' Return Home Interview/s and its services overall?*

Good

34) *What credentials, skills and experiences do those that offered/completed 'independent' Return Home Interviews for Missing/Found children from your local authority from 1st January 2017 – 1st January 2018 have?*

RHI's are completed by qualified social workers or family service practitioners who have relevant training and 3+ years' experience of working with children and families.

35) *How would an external agency approach the local authority to offer an 'independent' Return Home Interview service for its Missing/Found children?*

Tender/bid, however there are no plans to outsource at this stage.

If you have any queries or concerns then 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 make a complaint or request a review of our decision, you should write to the Team Manager, Complaints and Information Team, County Hall, West Bridgford, Nottingham, NG2 7QP or e-mail foi@nottscc.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely

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