



**Information Governance Team**

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Dear Sir/Madam

**Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)**

**Request ID: FOI499333667**

Thank you for your request for information relating to Specialist foster carers and disabled children in care.

You have requested the following information:

**A 2021 Ofsted report warned:**

*“The number of foster carers in England has only increased by 4% since 2014, while the number of children in foster care has increased some 11%. And while the number of fostering households and carers has gone up, Ofsted research suggests that the range of carers available aren't always able to meet children's increasingly complex needs.”*

Since the Ofsted report, the cost of living crisis has impacted particularly hard on disabled people, including children, and those who support them, partly because of additional needs, including specialist equipment which may require power.

Academic research has also found that specialist foster care for disabled children and young people reaps dividends for them, but that foster carers can struggle with increased costs of support, difficulties in navigating the benefits system and accessing appropriate care.

**1. Please provide figures for the number of children in your area in foster care who have additional needs, such as SEN, or who are described as having a disability and provide those figures from 2019-2022 inclusive.**

In the timescale 2019 – 2022, there were 360 children in foster care who are identified as having Special Educational Needs (either support or an Early Help Care Plan) and / or having a disability. Over this timescale, the additional needs were partitioned as follows:

- 87 Children had an identified disability
- 110 Children had SEN with an EHCP plan
- 246 children had SEN with support

Please Note:

Fostering / disability information has been provided for the timespan 01 January 2019 – 31 Dec 2022 inclusive; Special Educational Need (SEN) information is provided for the academic years 2019/20 – 2021/22 inclusive.

**2. Please provide figures for the number of foster carers in your area providing care for children and young people who have such additional needs from 2019-2022 inclusive.**

In the timescale 2019/22, there were 548 foster carers providing care for the children identified in response to Q1. These foster carers spanned 420 discrete households.

It is important to note that foster carers may be identified with specific skills to provide care for children with particularly complex needs. However, in the main, a foster carer household may have a mixed cohort of children with or without additional needs. The composition of these arrangements is considered on an individual fostering household basis.

**3. Please give details of the reasons that foster carers quitting the sector have given your council from 2019-2022, with particular emphasis on reasons around not enough support, financial and otherwise, for their work with children and young people with additional needs.**

We hold the information which you have asked for, but we have estimated that the cost of meeting your request would exceed the cost limit of £450 specified in the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees Regulations 2004). This represents the estimated cost of one person spending 18 hours or more, in determining whether the information is held, locating, retrieving and extracting it.

The information is not held in a reportable format and would require an officer to manually trawl through individual cases to locate and answer this part of your request. We have estimated that this will far exceed 18 hours work due to the number of records to check. Your request has therefore been refused under section 12(2) of the Act.

However, in order to fulfil our obligations under Section 16 of the FOI Act to advise and assist you, we can provide figures for carers resigning over the period. Please see the table below:

Reason	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Permanence plan for child (including Staying Put)	4	0	1
Transfer to another LA fostering service / children's trust (IFA)	1	1	0
Transfer to an independent fostering agency	0	1	1
Personal circumstances e.g., separation, bereavement, retirement	12	4	7
Decided fostering not for them		5	3
Dissatisfied with quality of service	0	1	0
Safeguarding (termination)	0	0	0
Resigned prior to quality of care and safeguarding issues	1	1	2
Other – including death	0	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>

The supply of information in response to a FOI/EIR request does not confer an automatic right to re-use the information. You can use any information supplied for the purposes of private study and non-commercial research without requiring further permission. Similarly, information supplied can also be re-used for the purposes of news reporting. An exception to this is photographs. Please contact us if you wish to use the information for any other purpose.

For information, we publish a variety of information such as: [FOI/EIR Disclosure Log](#), [Publication Scheme](#), [Facts about Coventry](#) and [Open Data](#) that you may find of useful if you are looking for information in the future.

If you are unhappy with the handling of your request, you can ask us to review our response. Requests for reviews should be submitted within 40 days of the date of receipt of our response to your original request – email: [infogov@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:infogov@coventry.gov.uk)

If you are unhappy with the outcome of our review, you can write to the Information Commissioner, who can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF or email [icocasework@ico.org.uk](mailto:icocasework@ico.org.uk).

Please remember to quote the reference number above in your response.

Yours faithfully

**Information Governance**