

Information Governance Team

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Dear Sir/Madam.

**Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)
Request ID: REQ07286**

Thank you for your request for information relating to The Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020.

You have requested the following information:

- 1. Please could you a) provide a statement of the overarching approach that you have taken to utilising the legislative flexibilities provided by The Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 and b) confirm who signed this off within both the local authority and any providers that you commission to run children's social care services?**
- 2. With reference to the need to record any use of the legislative flexibilities provided by The Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 as well as the 'reasons for doing so' and 'local circumstances that have given arise to the need to use the flexibilities' – as set out in the Government's Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance for children's social care services as per 6 May 2020 – please confirm how many of each specific flexibility has been utilised in total and in each month since the regulations came into force, and summarise the reasons and local circumstances which made the use of each type of flexibility necessary?**

In your answer, please include both the specific regulation that has been utilised and a description of the flexibility (it may be helpful to make reference to the Children's Commissioner for England's summary of each of the

regulations), and, as far as possible, present the information as per the following table:

Regulation
Description of flexibility
Total number of uses
Number of uses in May
Number of uses in June
Summary of reasons and local circumstances

3. What information relating to your use of the legislative flexibilities provided by The Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 has been a) requested by or b) provided to Ofsted, and what, if any, further action are you aware of Ofsted taking in response?

Following careful consideration, the Council regrets to inform you that it has decided not to disclose this information. Information you have requested has been withheld from disclosure. The exemption engaged is Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI).

With regard to providing the data it is not possible to advise as many virtual visits have taken place, as there is currently no reporting mechanism in place. Coventry currently has 3607 pieces of active work and each would need to be manually accessed to provide the required information. It has been estimated therefore that to investigate each record, this would take an officer approximately 902 hours which is above the 18-hour threshold.

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 advise that the Children's Services Leadership Team has considered all the 'flexibilities' in the reconfigured regulations. It does not accept the need to use the flexibilities defined by the regulations excepting virtual visits once a full and child focused assessment has taken place. This approach was signed off by the Senior Leadership team and ratified by both the Lead member from Children's Services and the Children's Services Improvement Executive Board. Ofsted has also been advised of this approach and the Children's Services leadership team continues to oversee this as the service return to 'business as usual.'

The supply of information in response to a freedom of information 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

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 casework@ico.org.uk.

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

Yours faithfully

Information Governance