

Freedom of Information – Response – 26802

I'd like to make a Freedom of Information request as below:

- 1. How many hair strand tests have been ordered each year as part of family court and family drug and alcohol court proceedings for the past three years (in which the year runs from 1st April to 31st March).*
- 2. In how many cases for the past three years (in which the year runs from 1st April to 31st March) when hair strand tests were used in family court and family drug and alcohol court proceedings was a final care order put in place?*
- 3. How much money has the local authority spent on hair strand testing in family court proceedings each year for the last three years (in which the year runs from 1st April to 31st March)?*

If it is possible please answer question 4 below but only if it's possible to do so within the time/cost constraints of the FOI act

- 4. How much did the local authority spend on hair strand testing with each testing company in family court cases each year for the last three years (in which the year runs from 1st April to 31st March) Please name each company. For example: Testing company A = £500*

We can confirm that Suffolk County Council holds this information; however, it is exempt from disclosure under section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act).

Section 12 of the Act makes provision for public authorities to refuse requests for information where the cost of dealing with them would exceed the appropriate limit, which for local government is set at £450. This represents the estimated cost of one person spending two and a half working days in determining whether the Council holds the information, locating, retrieving and extracting the information.

Suffolk County Council does not hold records specifically in relation to hair strand testing. In order to identify the information an individual would need to review each case file in order to establish whether hair strand testing had been requested. Due to the number of files it would take in excess of 18 hours to provide the information requested. In addition, the companies used for hair strand testing are also used for other tests, eg DNA testing.

Advice and assistance

The companies used by Suffolk County Council to undertake testing (including hair strand testing and DNA testing) are DNA Legal, Lextox, Attolife and AlphBiolabs. Details of payments made to these companies are published on the Transparency pages of the Council's website - [Expenditure exceeding £250 - Suffolk County Council](#)

We estimate that it will take us in excess of 18 hours to determine appropriate material and locate, retrieve and extract the information in reference to your request making the total cost estimate of 18 hours x £25 = £450.