

Freedom of Information Request – Response – 27865

This query is in relation to the ban on puberty blockers for transgender minors, which was made on 3 June 2024 and extended indefinitely on 11 December 2024.

Cite: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ban-on-puberty-blockers-to-be-made-indefinite-on-experts-advice>

Please provide the following information for the 2 year period between June 2024 and May 2026,

- 1) Number of safeguarding concerns received by your social services team regarding possible use of puberty blockers by transgender minors?*
- 2) Number of investigations by your social services team with regards to the above?*
- 3) Relationship of person raising the concern to the minor the safeguarding concern was about, if recorded*

In the event that the information cannot be indexed and manual retrieval would exceed cost limits, please could you search your records for the keywords "puberty blocker" and / or "gonadotrophin" for the same period?

We can confirm that Suffolk County Council (SCC) holds this information; however, it is exempt from disclosure under section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act). Whilst this information is held, it is held against each individual's file, so it is not recorded centrally or in a format that allows SCC to extract and provide the information quickly.

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.

Therefore, this level of detail is not recorded within our reporting and would involve a manual trawl to retrieve.

It is not possible to do a mass search in our records for the keywords "*puberty blocker*" and / or "*gonadotrophin*" as these are not recordable and filed under these terms so they would be recorded, if noted, in free text which requires manually searching individual records.

From 01-06-2024 to 31-05-2026 there were 12,000 referrals received.

We have carried out a sampling exercise to find out a reasonable estimate for how long it would take to locate and extract the information requested.

The process that would need to be carried out and the time each step would take is as follows:

1. Run a report from our social care case management system (LCS) to identify children who were a new referral for the time period requested – 5 minutes.
2. Search for each individual child's file in LCS – 30 seconds per record
3. Search Case Notes, to see if puberty blocker or gonadotrophin is mentioned. – 5 minutes per record
4. Total time to locate and extract the information for one individual – 5 minutes 30 seconds (5 minutes 30 seconds x 12,000 /60 = 1,100 hours

Therefore, based upon our sampling exercise SCC estimate that it will take us in excess of 1,100 hours to determine appropriate material and locate, retrieve and extract the information in reference to your request making the total cost estimate of 1,100 hours x £25 = £27,500