

**Request:**

**Under the freedom of information act I would like to know the following information, if you hold it for a couple of research projects I am working on.**

**1. What is the burden of proof in child abuse cases? are there any specific guidelines that need to be followed or is this worked on probability of the reporters beliefs?**

**\*\*The Local Authority base recommendations on assessments. If abuse is alleged and investigated by the Police and the Criminal Court then the burden of proof is the criminal threshold of "beyond all reasonable doubt". If a case is heard in Family Court the "balance of probabilities" threshold is used.\*\***

**2. Do child social services follow the same guidelines or process when investigating child abuse when the child is in the care of the local authority as it does when a child is still living with their parent/s?**

**\*\*Yes\*\***

**3. How many complaints have been raised each year since 2010 in regards to Cafcass or other child experts such as psychologists, psychiatrists. This can be either calendar or financial year, whichever you use for statistics.**

**\*\*Information not held - to be requested from the relevant Governing body for Cafcass or other child experts such as psychologists, psychiatrists\*\***

**4. Do child social services do background checks on the experts they use in cases such as criminal convictions, credentials etc.**

**\*\*Yes\*\***

**5. Does the family court use the same judge throughout cases in family court or can the judge change during cases? Are there any statistics on this for each year since 2010 in either calendar or financial period?**

**\*\*Information not held - this will need to be requested from the Family Court\*\***

**6. Are there any statistics for non return of children by non-residential parent to residential parent for each year since 2010 by either calendar or financial year? if so, are these statistics separated by male / female parent not returning child from contact?**

**\*\*No\*\***

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**7. Does the gender of the parent making a custody application have any bearing on the outcome of the custody dispute? Is there any statistics or evidence to back this up? Again since 2010 by either calendar or financial year.**

**\*\*Information not held - this will need to be requested from the Court Service\*\***

**8. Does the distance or interim decision in custody disputes affect the outcome of the case? Again if there are any statistics on this please use statistics since 2010 per calendar or financial year.**

**\*\*Information not held - this will need to be requested from the Court Service\*\***

**9. (a) How many allegations made to child social services are upheld without a full investigation or professional proof?**

**\*\*None\*\***

**9. (b) How many are immediately investigated. Any statistics from 2010 by calendar or financial year are appreciated.**

**\*\*All allegations of concern are investigated\***

**10. How often, if at all do child social services close a case without investigating? statistics if available since 2010 by calendar or financial year.**

**\*\*Children's Social Care investigated all situations where child abuse allegations are made\*\***

**11. At what age should an adult explain death to a child and under what circumstances would this be deemed appropriate? Any reports of evidence of this would be lovely.**

**\*\*As this would fall under opinion, the Authority is unable to answer\*\***

**12. If a male has a pattern of behaviour of becoming involved with single mum's with children or moving in with a female with children within 3 months of first meeting her would child social services regard this as a risk factor? if so, how and are there any reports or documents to back this up?**

**\*\*This would depend upon individuals involved and their specific circumstances, therefore we cannot answer this question\*\***