

Freedom of Information – Response – 26706

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I am requesting information relating to financial compensation or other monetary payouts made by Suffolk County Council in connection with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) cases.

For each of the last five financial years please provide the following information:

1. The total amount paid out by the Council in SEND-related cases, including (but not limited to) compensation payments, Ombudsman remedy payments, tribunal-ordered payments, legal settlements, ex-gratia payments, or any other form of financial redress.
The Council's Annual Reports on Compliments, Comments and Complaints contain details of the amounts paid out by Suffolk County Council in SEND-related cases. Please see the following links for the last five years' reports:

2024-25: [Meeting Documents - Committee Minutes](#)

2023-24: [Meeting Documents - Committee Minutes](#)

2022-23: [Meeting Documents - Committee Minutes](#)

2021-22: [Meeting Documents - Committee Minutes](#)

2020-21: [Meeting Documents - Committee Minutes](#)

2. A breakdown of the amounts paid by district, based on the child or young person's home local authority district at the time of the case.

Suffolk County Council does not hold this information. We do not record information regarding financial compensation or other monetary payouts broken down by local authority district.

3. A breakdown of the amounts paid by the reason or topic of the complaint that led to the payment.

Examples of complaint topics might include (but are not limited to):

- Delays in issuing, reviewing, or amending Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)*
- Failure to deliver provision specified in an EHCP*
- Lack of suitable education or school placement*
- Delays or failures in assessment*
- SEND transport issues*
- Other SEND service failures (please use internal categories where applicable)*

We can confirm that Suffolk County Council holds the information you have requested; however, it is exempt from disclosure under Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act). Section 12 allows public authorities to refuse a request where the cost of compliance would exceed the appropriate limit, which for local government is £450. This equates to an estimated 18 hours of work charged at £25 per hour (two and a half working days) for one person to determine whether the Council holds the information, and to locate, retrieve, and extract it.

Due to the way Suffolk County Council records its data, we are unable to provide the information within this cost limit. To identify, locate, and extract the requested data, an officer would need to manually review each complaint file, as there is no quicker method available.

Our sampling exercise indicates that it takes approximately 5 minutes per case to gather the relevant details. Within the timeframe specified, there were 1,698 complaints, meaning it would take over 164 hours (costing approximately £4,100) to compile the information

Advice and Assistance

The reports referred to in the answer to Q1 provide the reportable breakdowns that Suffolk County Council does hold.

You can also find some of this information on the Local Government Ombudsman website here: [SearchResult - Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman](#) searching within the organisation section for 'Suffolk County Council.'

4. A combined breakdown showing the amounts paid for each complaint topic within each district.

To be clear, this should show the total amount paid for each reason (topic) of complaint for each district separately. For example, the information could be presented in a table with complaint topics listed by row, districts listed by column, and the corresponding amounts paid shown for each combination.

Please also include the number of cases associated with each district and each complaint-topic combination.

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