

Freedom of Information – Response – 26887

Please would you provide details of the Local authority's expenditure on unregulated care arrangements for children. For this request, "unregulated care" refers to placements or services that are not registered with the appropriate regulatory body (including unregulated or bridging care arrangements).

Specifically, I request the following information:

1. The total expenditure incurred by the local authority on unregulated or bridging care services for each of the last three years (or the most recent data held)

** For the purposes of this FOI response, "unregulated/bridging care" is considered as either not registered with Ofsted <18yr olds or "unlawful" i.e. children placed with connected carers that do not have the full positive assessment already in place.

2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026
£7,858,803.71	£5,336,045.10	£3,551,285.11

2. The number of individuals whom unregulated or bridging services were commissioned.

Assuming for last 3 financial years (2023-2026)

73

3. Where available, the average weekly cost per individual for such services.

Assuming for last 3 financial years (2023-2026)

2023-2024	£16,838.58
2024-2025	£12,479.89
2026-2027	£10,524.55

4. The average duration of unregulated care arrangements, where this information is recorded.

Assuming for last 3 financial years (2023-2026)

66 Days

5. The circumstances under which unregulated or bridging care is commissioned (e.g. hospital discharge delays, lack of regulated provision, emergency placements).

- Provider is actively awaiting Ofsted Registration whilst child is placed in the home awaiting registration
- Short Term Emergency/ bridging placement
- Emergency, leading to a lack of registered provision to meet the child's needs and risk profile
- Health Provision (CQC Regulated) – Adult social care transition (considered as being in the best interest for the individual)
- Lack of registered provision to meet the child's needs and risk profile (non-emergency)
- Step down from remand or secure unit
- Unlawful - With Connected Carer (e.g. family member)

6. *Any internal guidance, or criteria used by the authority when commissioning unregulated/bridging care.*

Any unregistered placement care arrangement must be agreed by the Director for Children's Social Care and only when it has been demonstrated that no safe alternative arrangement can be found within the timescales needed and if there is serious risk of harm to the child or others by not doing so.

-Providers that supply crisis care are contracted off a small "select list" of providers who have met minimum standards set by the LA.

-There is an internal Suffolk County Council policy that clearly sets out the procedures, roles and responsibilities for arranging, oversight and monitoring of unregistered care.