

Freedom of Information – Response – 27179

I am writing to request information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 regarding the Council's expenditure on placements for children and young people under the age of 16 during the 2025/26 financial year (to date).

Specifically, I am seeking information regarding placements that are unregistered with Ofsted (often referred to as "unregulated" or "emergency bespoke arrangements") where staffing was provided by recruitment or staffing agencies.

Please provide the following information:

1. Total Expenditure: The total amount spent by Children's Services on unregistered/unregistered-bespoke placements for children under the age of 16.
 £2,469,325.24

2. Agency Breakdown (Property vs. No Property): Of the total spend identified in Question 1, please itemize the spend with recruitment/staffing agencies according to the following two categories:

o Category A (Staffing Only): Total spend where the agency provided staffing only (e.g., to support a child in a council-owned property, a hospital setting, air bnb or a pre-existing foster/residential placement).

o Category B (Staffing & Property): Total spend where the agency provided both the staffing AND the accommodation (e.g., the agency provided private property as part of the "wraparound" crisis package).

Category A: £2,243,313.04

Category B: £226,012.20

3. Supplier List: A list of every recruitment or staffing agency used for these U16 placements in the 2025/26 period, and the total amount paid to each.

We are unable to release the names of providers as this is considered commercially sensitive. We have anonymised the names with the total amounts paid to each below.

Provider 1	£2,063,537.65
Provider 2	£386,563.89
Provider 3	£2,472.90
Provider 4	£16,750.80

Please note we are withholding the provider names under Freedom of Information act exemptions, section 38 Health & Safety, and section 43 Commercially sensitive. Suffolk County Council cannot provide the list of all children's home within the local authority area as DfE have implemented the following protocol for managing this type of information. Security of data Ofsted can disclose the names and addresses of children's homes from its register to local authorities, the police and the DfE. Disclosure of that information must

be made in accordance with the Care Standards Act 2000 (Registration) (England) Regulations 2010 ('the Registration Regulations') as well as in accordance with the wider legal obligations contained in common law, the Data Protection Act 2018 and sector specific legislation.

The Joint protocol children's homes – procedures for disclosing names and addresses provides a joint framework of expectations and understanding in relation to the disclosure of details of the names and addresses of children's homes which have been requested under the Registration Regulations. It sets out how the receiving public authorities will be expected to receive and process this information. Under this protocol, receiving public authorities will be expected to have due regard for the appropriate level at which the information is shared within their organisation and how this is effectively managed, in line with their responsibilities under the Data Protection Act 2018. The data will be stored safely and securely in line with data assurance principles and will be protectively marked according to its level of sensitivity. A public authority can only disclose personal data which has been received in accordance with the Registration Regulations where to do so is consistent with their responsibilities under the Data Protection Act 2018 and any specific relevant legislation relating to the exercise of their functions.

4. Team/Budget Line: Please confirm which service area or budget team this spend was authorized under (e.g., Placements Budget, Social Work Staffing Budget, or Emergency/Crisis Fund).
Placements Budget