

Freedom of Information – Response – 27297

Please provide the following information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000

1) *How many children has the local authority placed in accommodation that is not Ofsted-registered / approved since 2023? By this, we mean strictly accommodation that operates as a children's home (for example, defined as Class C2 residential institutions in planning terms), not foster care or any placement with relatives who may have guardianship orders.*
101 placements involving 52 Children.

Children may have had multiple placements during this timeframe.

2) *Please indicate how many of these placements were in-area or out-of-area.*
88 placements - in county, 13 placements out of county

3) *What was the length of the longest single placement in such accommodation?*
358 days

4) *What has been the total cost of all such placements over the period?*
£14,225,026.41

5) *How many children has the local authority placed in Ofsted-registered / approved accommodation in the same period?*

This has been interpreted as Ofsted Registered children's homes due to the following question and excludes children that have been placed in Ofsted foster care during that time period.

6) *How many Ofsted-registered / approved children's home places are available in-area in total?*

Suffolk County Council's understanding of availability:

According to Ofsted, there are 200 registered beds in Suffolk.

The home finding team is aware of 6 vacancies at this time (03/06/26), in children's homes that have already been inspected by Ofsted.

7) *How many children's homes are operated by the local authority?*
6

8) *Ofsted is clear that any accommodation that operates as a children's home without registration is illegal, and the people running it are committing a criminal offence. Please provide information as to what risk assessment is undertaken when the authority decides to place a young person in such accommodation, and why a decision to do so would be made by the authority. Please note we are requesting a general position statement, not a response in relation to each individual placement.*

The decision to place a child in an unregistered setting is only carried out when it is considered the only safe option to accommodate a child, within the timeframe the placement is required, after it has been demonstrated all potential opportunities from within

the child's trusted network and all other registered options have been comprehensively explored first.

The Service Director and DCS both have to give agreement for an unregistered placement.

Risk assessments relating to the child are completed by the social worker and provider. Location risk assessments are provided on the properties used.

Unregistered placements are monitored via weekly visits to the settings by staff from the in-house service, the child's social worker and weekly multi-agency meetings. Daily reporting from the provider is required.