

3 January 2025

Dear

ATISN 22136 – Request for information about children's homes in Wales.

Thank you for your request received on 25/11/2024. I apologise for the slight delay in our response to your request.

You asked for the following information:

- 1. The number of placements of individual children that have been made with children's services providers Operating Without Registration (OWR) across all 22 Welsh Local Authorities since May 2024. Broken down month-by-month and by local authority, covering all OWR placements since May 2024.**
 - **Of these placements, further broken down by how many attributable to Local Authority providers, private providers, and voluntary providers.**
- 2. The number of new children's homes registrations since May 2024 across all 22 Welsh Local Authorities. Broken down month-by-month and by Local Authority and by who has registered the provision (Local Authority, private provider, voluntary provider).**
 - **Of these new registrations, confirmation of how many are brand new children's homes operators (have not previously been OWR), and how many are services which were previously OWR and have since become registered**
- 3. Confirmation of CIW enforcement action in relation to children's homes across all 22 Welsh Local Authorities, including closures since May 2024. Broken down month-by-month and by Local Authority and provider type (Local Authority, private provider, voluntary provider).**
- 4. The percentage of staff working within Local Authority children's homes which are agency members of staff and not permanent employees, across all 22 Welsh Local Authorities since January 2022. Broken down month-by-month and by Local Authority.**

Our response

We have considered your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The information you requested held by CIW is enclosed as follows.

- 1. The number of placements of individual children that have been made with children's services providers Operating Without Registration (OWR) across all 22 Welsh Local Authorities since May 2024. Broken down month-by-month and by local authority, covering all OWR placements since May 2024.**
 - **Of these placements, further broken down by how many attributable to Local Authority providers, private providers, and voluntary providers.**

As explained in response to your previous request ATISN 19641, we are unable to provide the exact data you requested. The data we hold is not about individual placements of children, but of occurrences of care homes for children operating without registration (OWR) in Wales, which we have provided from 01/05/2024 to 30/11/2024 on **Table 1** of the enclosed Excel document. This is broken down by provider type i.e. operated by a local authority or a private company.

This data is therefore not representative of the actual number of children who have been placed in a care home for children operating without registration. We do not have unique identifiers for each child and are therefore unable to account for how many children were in each of the care homes operating without registration. To confirm, the data provided is therefore the number of occurrences of a care home for children operating without registration, rather than the number of individual children.

We must ensure any information we disclose could not inadvertently identify any individual people to which that data relates, particular vulnerable children. This means we are unable to provide a breakdown of this data on a month-by-month basis because where the numbers are low, there is a risk of individual children being identified from that data when this is put into the public domain. We have therefore provided the totals for the date range requested, however where the number of children for any individual local authority is less than 5, we have not given the specific figure but recorded it is less than 5 (<5). The overall total number of occurrences is included.

2. **The number of new children's homes registrations since May 2024 across all 22 Welsh Local Authorities. Broken down month-by-month and by Local Authority and by who has registered the provision (Local Authority, private provider, voluntary provider).**
 - **Of these new registrations, confirmation of how many are brand new children's homes operators (have not previously been OWR), and how many are services which were previously OWR and have since become registered**

Data on new children's homes registered from 01/05/2024 to 30/11/2024 by local authority and provider type at **Table 2** of the enclosed Excel document. This is further broken-down by month of registration at **Table 2a**.

Please note, we have interpreted 'new' children's homes to mean any new registrations of children's homes where the premises was not previously registered as a children's home. The data does not therefore include new registrations of existing children's homes that re-registered under a new provider.

We have included on **Table 2** the number of newly registered services that were registered subsequent to operating without registration.

3. Confirmation of CIW enforcement action in relation to children's homes across all 22 Welsh Local Authorities, including closures since May 2024. Broken down month-by-month and by Local Authority and provider type (Local Authority, private provider, voluntary provider).

Our approach to taking enforcement action is set out in our [Securing Improvement and Enforcement Policy](#). Actions we may take to support providers to improve include issuing Priority Action Notices where failings are identified. If we do not see improvement following this, we may then take enforcement action e.g. cancelling a provider's registration.

Data on Priority Action Notices issued in respect of children's homes from 01/05/2024 to 30/11/2024 by local authority and provider type is at **Table 3** of the enclosed Excel document. This is further broken-down by month of issue at **Table 3a**.

CIW did not close any care homes for children under its enforcement powers between 01/05/2024 and 30/11/2024.

4. The percentage of staff working within Local Authority children's homes which are agency members of staff and not permanent employees, across all 22 Welsh Local Authorities since January 2022. Broken down month-by-month and by Local Authority.

The only data we hold about staff working in children's homes is from the Annual Returns submitted to us by service providers. Data from the 2023 Annual Returns is available on our online data tool here: [Adults and Children's Services Data Tool](#).

You can find the data on agency staff for Local Authority children's homes as follows:

- Select the '**Workforce – Care Homes Services**' tab
- Go to the filter option, scroll down to the '**Service Type and Subtype**' filter option and select '**Care Home Service – Children's Home**'. Then go to the '**Service Provider Type and Subtype**' option and select '**Local Authority**'
- Scroll down to the '**Contractual Arrangements**' data where you will find the number of agency or bank staff for each role.

This data represents the self-reported information submitted by service providers as of census day 31 March 2023. CIW do not hold data on the total number of agency staff employed over the period specified, only as at this annual collection date.

Data collected within the 2024 Annual Return is currently being prepared for publication within the online data tool in early 2025. The data requested for 2024 is therefore exempt from disclosure under **Section 22(1) 'Information intended for future publication'** of the Freedom of Information Act. Our reasons for applying this exemption are set out at **Annex 1** to this response.

Next steps

If you are dissatisfied with the Welsh Government's handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response.

Requests for an internal review should be addressed to the Welsh Government's Freedom of Information Officer at:

Information Rights Unit,
Welsh Government,
Cathays Park,
Cardiff,
CF10 3NQ

or Email: Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales

Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office,
Wycliffe House,
Water Lane,
Wilmslow,
Cheshire,
SK9 5AF.

However, please note that the Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process.

Yours sincerely

Annex 1

Application of exemptions

The Freedom of information Act provide a right for anyone to ask a public authority to make requested information available to the wider public. As the release of requested information is to the world, not just the requester, public authorities need to consider the effects of making the information freely available to everybody. Any personal interest the requester has for accessing the information cannot override those wider considerations.

We have decided to withhold the following information:

Information being withheld	Section number and exemption name
Data on agency staff working within Local Authority children's homes collected by CIW within the 2024 Annual Returns.	Section 22(1) of the Freedom of Information Act - 'Information intended for future publication'

Section 22: Information intended for future publication

Section 22(1) of the Freedom of Information Act (FoIA) states:

(1) *Information is exempt information if -*

- (a) the information is held by the public authority with a view to its publication, by the authority or any other person, at some future date (whether determined or not),*
- (b) the information was already held with a view to such publication at the time when the request for information was made, and*
- (c) it is reasonable in all the circumstances that the information should be withheld from disclosure until the date referred to in paragraph (a).*

Data collected from the 2024 Annual Returns from providers is intended to be published by CIW in early 2025. We believe it is reasonable to withhold the requested information from this Annual Return until its intended publication, to allow time for the data to be collated from the individual Annual Returns, analysed, and then checked prior to publication.

Public Interest Test

We do not believe any public interest in earlier disclosure of this data would outweigh the interest in withholding it as this data is scheduled for publication in the very near future and it forms only a small part of the overall data that will be published. The resource needed for CIW to separately extract, collate, check and disclose this part of the data any earlier would not therefore be an effective use of public resource and so would not be in the public interest to do so.

We therefore consider Section 22(1) is engaged and the data is withheld.