



Department
for Education

Children Accommodated in Secure Children's Homes 31 March 2014

Quality and Uses of Data

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Description

This document outlines the use made of statistics covering children accommodated in secure children's homes and the types of decisions they inform. It provides information on the quality and reliability of these statistics overall, and in relation to the range of potential uses.

Users and Usage

Department for Education and Central Government

The Children Accommodated in Secure Children's Homes Statistical First Release (SFR) includes:

- The number of secure children's homes in England and Wales
- The number of places approved
- The number of children by age, gender, length of stay and type of placement

For more information on the items included in the SFR and how they have been calculated, please refer to the accompanying methodology note which is available on the publication webpage.

The purpose of this publication is to provide the latest information on the number of children accommodated in secure children's homes and the number of places approved for use. In 2004 the number of welfare placements in secure children's homes began to decline leading to the closure of several homes and concerns among the sector about the future of the remaining homes. The information in this SFR is used by officials in the Department for Education (DfE) to monitor trends and places in secure homes in case intervention by the DfE is required. The Department is particularly interested in information on welfare places.

By having information available on secure homes, the Department can be assured that there is sufficient flexibility in the market to allow local authorities to place young people in secure children's homes when they feel this is the most appropriate action for that young person.

Other Users

We are very familiar with the uses made of the data within the Department for Education and by the UK Government. However we have less clarity of the uses made of this data by other organisations and external parties.

A user consultation was carried out in 2011 but no responses were received. We will continue to engage with users to ensure that the publication best meets their needs and welcome feedback or suggestions from any new or previously unknown users which we will take on board. Would you like to feed in your views? If so, please see contact details in the publication.

Data Quality

The 2014 figures for children accommodated in secure children's homes are the latest in a regular series. Data are collected on the SA1 statistical return, which provides the Department for Education with aggregate data on children accommodated in secure children's homes in England and Wales.

The figures presented at 31 March 2014 are based on data reported by the 17 secure children's homes that were open at this time. The 2014 data has gone through the validation checks described in the accompanying methodology note which is available on the publication webpage and there are no known quality issues with this data. The data collection which is the source for this publication is unchanged and has been stable for many years.

Red Bank secure children's home has three units (Vardy, Willows and Newton House) but is counted as a single home. Before 2004, each unit was counted in the total count of homes. The number of approved places for Red Bank in 2013 has been updated due to an error reported and resubmitted after publication last year. The number of approved places and occupancy rates have been updated for 2013 accordingly. Red Bank is due to close in May 2014.

Data for 2010 was previously published with figures rounded to the nearest 5. We have published the actual figures for 2010 here for the first time.

Table 2 has been expanded to show the secure children's home level data as a time series from 2010 to 2014.



Department
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