

FOI 3363

9th October 2025

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 – INFORMATION REQUEST

1. How many young people under 18 years in care of your trust have been held in unregulated accommodation in the past five years?

Response:

13 short term unregulated placements

2. What were the ages of the children/young people involved

Response:

16 & 17 years

3. What type of unregulated accommodation was used?

Response:

Hotel

Bed & Breakfast

Air BnB

4. Were there any instances where accommodation was deemed unsuitable or unsafe after a young person had been placed in that accommodation? If so, please provide further detail on same.

Response:

Options were suitable and safe in the short term pending transfer to regulated placement, as intensive wrap around was provided for the duration of the stay.

5. Please provide a list of those companies, businesses and individuals who have received a payment from the trust for provision of unregulated accommodation in each of the last 5 years

Response:

This information is exempt under FOI Section 38 Health and safety. (1) Information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to — (a)

endanger the physical or mental health of any individual, or (b) endanger the safety of any individual.

The Trust is unable to provide this information as this is exempt from release for health and safety reasons, due to the risk of endangering the safety of the young people and staff residing at this accommodation. The Trust is mindful of its duty of care in protecting patients and staff and considers this information to be exempt from release into the public domain under section 38 of the FOI Act (Health and Safety exemption).

Section 38 - 'Health & Safety'

(1) Information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to—

(a) endanger the physical or mental health of any individual, or (b) endanger the safety of any individual.

See Appendix 1 below for further details of this exemption.

6. Please provide information on the amount spent by the trust on unregulated accommodation in each of the last 5 years, with individual breakdown for each supplier where available.

Response:

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Provider	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Provider 1	-	-	15	24	25
Provider 2	-	12	4	4	-
Provider 3	-	15	7	-	-
Provider 4	-	1	2	-	-
Provider 5	-	-	2	-	3
Provider 6	-	-	2	-	-
Provider 7	-	-	1	1	-
Provider 8	-	-	-	-	3

*Please note for 2025 (2025/26 financial year) this includes amounts up to August 2025.

As per response to question 5, the provider names have been exempted under FOI Section 38 Health and safety. (1) Information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to — (a) endanger the physical or mental health of any individual, or (b) endanger the safety of any individual.

The Trust is unable to provide this information as this is exempt from release for health and safety reasons, due to the risk of endangering the safety of the young people and staff residing at this accommodation. The Trust is mindful of its duty of care in protecting patients and staff and considers this information to be exempt from release into the public domain under section 38 of the FOI Act (Health and Safety exemption).

Section 38 - 'Health & Safety'

(1) Information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to—

(a) endanger the physical or mental health of any individual, or (b) endanger the safety of any individual.

Appendix 1

EXEMPTION CLAIMED IN RESPECT OF SECTION 38 (1) (a) HEALTH AND SAFETY

Arguments in favour of disclosing Information	Arguments in favour of not disclosing Information
Openness, transparency and accountability in Trust decision making and procedures.	The Trust believes the disclosure of details about B&B, long-term rental and hotel accommodation used by Social Services to accommodate both those under-18 receiving care and staff would pose a safety and security risk to the young residents and staff. This could be detrimental to the mental health of these individuals.
To ensure that service provision is carried out and managed in an open and honest way	Release of these details may adversely affect the young people and staff resident in this accommodation. Their privacy and their right to confidentiality may be compromised.
	Due to the often sensitive nature of these services and the circumstances leading to these placements, there is a significant risk that disclosure of this information would result in a lack of public confidence in the Trust.

Having considered the public interest arguments in relation to this information, it is the Trust view that the balance lies in favour of non-disclosure of all available information, There is a greater public interest in withholding this information and not releasing into the public domain under the FOI Act. It is the Trust view that the public interest is met in the release of the information disclosed with this response.

Email: foi.team@southerntrust.hscni.net