

FOI 1876

06/09/23

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 – INFORMATION REQUEST

Question 1:

How many children under the Southern Trust, from January 2020 to present, were or are currently placed outside of the NI jurisdiction to the Republic of Ireland or Great Britain, on extra contractual referrals for respite or residential care?

Response 1:

Since January 2020 less than 5 children were placed outside of the Southern Trust on ECR for residential care (Each child came from Mainstream Looked after Children services)

None of these children were CWD.

0 for respite purposes.

Question 2:

How many children under the Southern Trust, from January 2020 to present, were or are placed outside the NI jurisdiction to the Republic of Ireland or Great Britain, under parental consent for respite or residential care?

Response 2:

As above. Each of the less than 5 children were subject to LAC procedures and included Parental consent for the Treatment.

Question 3:

Of this, how many children under the Southern Trust, from January 2020 to present, were or are placed outside of the NI jurisdiction to the Republic of Ireland or Great Britain, for treatment issues?

Response 3:

As above, all of the young people were placed on ECR for treatment issues.

Question 4:

How many children under the Southern Trust, from January 2020 to present, were or are placed outside of the NI jurisdiction to the Republic of Ireland or Great Britain because of a lack of suitable community placement in Northern Ireland?

Response 4:

As above.

Question 5:

The Statement of Purpose for Oaklands Respite Unit in Armagh, Carrickore Respite Unit in Newry and Willowgrove in Banbridge.

Response 5:

Please find attached Statement of Purpose for Willowgrove Short Breaks unit in Banbridge, Oaklands Short Breaks Unit in Armagh and Bluebell House (formerly Carrickore).

Question 6:

Have Oaklands, Carrickore and Willowgrove operated as Respite Units? If so, please provide dates from and to, and also provide current operational status.

Response 6:

Oaklands has operated as a Short Breaks unit since 1993 which remains the current operational status, whilst increasing its capacity.

Willowgrove has operated as a Short Breaks unit since August 1992 which remains the current operational status whilst increasing capacity.

Carrickore had operated as a Short Breaks unit from 2011 until February 2019. It now operates as a 5 bedded long term Residential unit for Children with a Severe Intellectual Disability (now known as Bluebell House).

Question 7:

Have Oaklands, Carrickore and Willowgrove ever been closed and if so, can dates be provided when they have been closed and please state the reason why.

Response 7:

Oaklands provides overnight short breaks for 51 weeks per year and closes one week per year for training purposes. Reasons for short term unscheduled closures in



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exceptional circumstances have included disruption caused by adverse weather conditions, closure re Covid Outbreak or severe staffing shortages due to sickness or recruitment issues which would result in unsafe service delivery.

Willowgrove is contracted to provide overnight short breaks for 48 weeks of the year and is therefore closed for 4 weeks each year. Reasons for short term unscheduled closures in exceptional circumstances have included disruption caused by adverse weather conditions, closure re Covid Outbreak or severe staffing shortages which would result in unsafe service delivery.

Carrickore, now known as Bluebell provides long term full time residential care to young people with an Intellectual Disability and has not closed.

Question 8:

Have Oaklands, Carrickore and Willowgrove ever been used for another purpose, other than respite?

Response 8:

Carrickore (now known as Bluebell House) is operating as a fulltime Residential Childrens Home. This was progressed due to the requirement to care for a number of children with complex Learning and Intellectual disabilities which could not be cared for in a family setting and to avoid out of Jurisdiction placements.

Short breaks provision has been up scaled via Fostering short breaks in excess of capacity previously provided by Carrickore

Oaklands and Willowgrove units have occasionally accepted a temporary 'shared care' arrangement (based on presenting family need) for children/young people who are already known to the service. This has not prevented Oaklands or Willowgrove from continuing to offer short breaks during the shared care arrangements, however it may have reduced the availability of placements available during this time.

Question 9:

Is Oaklands a general residential or special residential unit?

Response 9:

Oaklands is registered as a 'Children's Home' under the category of Learning Disability and the Statement of Purpose specifies Short Breaks.

Question 10:



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Is Carrickore a general residential or special residential unit?

Response 10:

Bluebell is registered as a 'Children's Home' under the category of Learning Disability and the Statement of Purpose specifies Therapeutic Long-term Care.

Question 11:

Is Willowgrove a general residential or special residential unit?

Response 11:

Willowgrove is registered as a 'Children's Home' under the category of Learning Disability and the Statement of Purpose specifies Short Breaks.

Question 12:

What has been the capacity of Oaklands, Carrickore and Willowgrove for the years 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023?

Response 12:

Year	Q.8 Bed Capacity of Oaklands and Willowgrove
2020	1739
2021	1499
2022	1504
2023 (until end June 2023)	726

Question 13:

Has the Southern Trust put forward any business cases to the Department of Health for the construction of either new respite or residential units from January 2020 to present? If so, please provide copies of details such as when they were filed and progress in relation to completion of said business case.

Response 13:

The Southern Trust CWD service has not put forward any business cases to the Department of Health for the construction of either new respite or residential units from January 2020 to present.

Qustion 14:

I request a capacity breakdown by Southern Trust of the number of places occupied by children at Oaklands respite unit, Carrickore respite unit and Willowgrove for the years 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, and where full capacity was not



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met for the listed Respite and Residential units above during these years, to state how many places were unoccupied in each care unit

Response 14:

Year	Q.9 (1) Occupied beds - % utilised.
2020	67%
2021	82%
2022	83%
2023 (until end June 2023)	92%

Question 15:

Did requests to Southern Trust for children's places at Oaklands, Carrickore and Willowgrove for the years 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023 exceed available capacity at any or all of the listed Respite and Residential units? If so, please provide a breakdown of the number of requests received for the above-listed care units for the years 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023.

Response 15:

Year	Q. 9 (3) Requests Exceeding available capacity (CYP numbers)
2020	11
2021	13
2022	19
2023 (until end August 2023)	10

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