



Our ref: 74913001
03/07/2025



I can confirm that the information requested is held by Birmingham Children's Trust. I have detailed below the information that is being released to you.

1) How many residential mother and baby placements (i.e. residential family centres or mother and baby units/mother and baby foster placements) were commissioned by your authority in that period?

For the 12 - month period June 2024 to May 2025, there were 18 residential assessments commissioned by Birmingham Children's Trust.

2) What was the average time taken from identification of need to confirmation of a placement?

Identification of need is not something that is recorded and would be difficult to determine. We can provide the average time taken from date of referral for a residential assessment to point of Social Worker confirmation of acceptance of placement: average time is two days.

3) How many referrals for residential mother and baby units were unsuccessful, either due to:

- a) Lack of availability**
- b) Placement refusal by the provider**
- c) Withdrawal due to court or case pressures**

The referral log for the last 12 months has not recorded any referrals where we were unable to place.

4) Do you hold any data on instances where court proceedings were delayed due to the unavailability of a suitable placement, resulting in children remaining in local authority care for an extended period until a placement was identified?

No, the Trust does not hold any data specifically in relation to instances of this nature.

5) Do you currently use any digital platform or database to identify or manage live availability of mother and baby residential placements?

Yes

6) If yes, please name the system and whether it is commissioned locally or regionally.

The current West Midlands Placement Portal is a solution provided by Pengower / Antser.

7) Which team(s) or individuals are responsible for sourcing these placements (e.g. placements team, commissioning, children's social care)?

The Commissioning Service is responsible for sourcing the placements.

8) Please provide data on the number of foster placements made in the following emergency circumstances:

a) Following the making of an Emergency Protection Order (EPO)

≤5

Some information has been withheld. This information is exempt under Section 40(2) (Personal information) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act). Where the number is 5 or less, the Trust has replaced the figure with 'equal to or less than 5' ("≤5"). The numbers have been withheld to prevent individuals being identified; this is in line with the Information Commissioners guidance of anonymization, which mitigates the risk of individuals being identified. The Trust considers that individuals could potentially be identified from the very low numbers and that such identification would constitute a breach of one of the principles set out under the Data Protection Act 2018. This is on the basis that it could be combined with other reasonably available information to identify individuals. As this is personal data, disclosure under Freedom of Information is conditional upon

satisfying the First Data Protection Principle, that processing be fair, lawful and transparent. We recognise that there is a public interest in transparency and accountability in public decision making. We have balanced this against the privacy rights of the individual data subjects.

On balance, we consider the detriment to privacy through disclosure outweighs the interest that would be served. Accordingly, disclosure would be in contravention of the First Data Protection Principle. It is therefore appropriate for us to withhold this information under section 40(2) (Personal information) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act) by virtue of section 40(3A)(a). We are therefore exempting this part of the request under section 40(2) of the Act by virtue of section 40(3A)(a) of the same Act.

b) Following the making of an Interim Care Order (ICO)

330

c) Under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989 where the child was placed within 24 hours of parental consent

269

d) Where placements broke down within the first 7 days and required re-placement

185

9) If possible, please indicate whether these placements were with:

a) Local authority foster carers

360 of the placements were with local authority foster carers

b) Independent fostering agencies

242 of the placements were with independent foster carers

c) Emergency beds (e.g. bridging placements)

This information is not held by the Trust in a readily accessible format. I can confirm that the Trust has kept a manual record (i.e. outside of case management systems).

From undertaking a sampling exercise in respect to similar FoI requests in the past, we estimate that it takes approximately 10 minutes to locate the file and locate specific information contained in the file, dependent on the size and complexity of the file.

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act) requires us to comply with a request, unless it would be too expensive to do so. Under s.12 (Cost of compliance exceeds appropriate limit) of the Act, the cost limit for the Trust is £450 i.e. 18 hours at the rate of £25 per person per hour.

The cost limit allows us to consider when estimating the cost of complying with a request, time spent determining whether we hold the information requested; identifying, locating and retrieving it and extracting the information from the relevant documents.

In order for us to answer this question, there are 602 records to review and we estimate that each one would take 10 minutes to review which would take 100 hours. We are therefore unable to process your request as to do so would exceed the cost limit as set out in s.12 of the Act.

In cases where the time involved in dealing with requests for information would exceed 18 hours, the Trust normally offers individuals the option to pay for the additional work over and above 18 hours, at a subsidised rate of £25 per hour. However, where the resources involved in dealing with a request would have detrimental impact on the Trust's ability to provide its core services, the Trust is entitled not provide this option, and accordingly, refuse the request outright.

In this case due to the amount of work and resources required to comply with this element of your request, the Trust is of the view that the resources involved in responding to your request, even if you were to pay the subsidised statutory rate of £25.00 per hour, would interfere significantly with the Trust's ability to provide its core services, as such, the Trust considers that it is appropriate to refuse this part of the request on the basis of Section 12 of the Act.

10) Please provide the average weekly cost paid by your local authority for the following placement types:

a) Residential Family Centres (mother and baby units)

£4,598

b) Local authority foster placements

The average internal fostering unit cost for 2024 / 2025 is £673 per week.

c) Independent/private foster placements

£955

d) Residential children's homes (non-MBU)

£6,185

11) If possible, please also provide: The highest and lowest weekly cost for each category

Residential Family Centres:

Highest cost: £5,505

Lowest cost: £4,209

12) Whether the figures include or exclude VAT

VAT is not included.

13) Does your local authority have any current or upcoming projects to develop or pilot digital solutions for:

a) Commissioning children's placements (foster, residential, MBU)?

Yes

b) Real-time matching of children to providers?

Yes

- c) If yes, please provide brief details, including: Project name or working title Delivery partner (if external) Funding source (e.g. DfE grant, LGA, regional project) Expected implementation time line**

Project name – West Midlands Placement Portal.

Delivery partner – NEC

Funding Source – Each partner / LA are sharing the cost of the project

Please quote the reference number **74913001** in any future communications.

If you are dissatisfied with our response to your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. Internal review requests should be submitted within 40 working days from the date this authority issued its initial response. Please outline which part of the response you are not happy with setting out your reasons. This request should be addressed to:

Corporate Information Governance Team
PO Box 16366
Birmingham
B2 2YY
Email: infogovernance@birmingham.gov.uk

If you are still dissatisfied with the Birmingham Children's Trust's response after the internal review you have a right of appeal to the Information Commissioner at:

The Information Commissioner's Office

Website: www.ico.org.uk

I will now close your request as of this date.

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Disclosure Officer

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