

Title: Quality and Uses of Data: *Children Accommodated in Secure Children's Homes at 31 March 2012: England and Wales*

Description: This document outlines the use made of these statistics and the types of decisions they inform, provides information on the quality and reliability of these statistics overall, and in relation to the range of potential uses.

Publication: SFR16-2012

<http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s001078/index.shtml>

Users and Usage

Department for Education and Central Government

1. 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

2. 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 at:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s001078/index.shtml>

3. 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 to monitor trends and places in secure homes in case intervention by the DfE is required. The department is particularly interested in information on age of children placed, and the length of stay.

4. 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

5. 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.

6. A user consultation was recently carried out 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 contact us through:

Data Quality

7. The 2012 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.

8. The figures presented at 31 March 2012 are based on data reported by the 17 secure children's homes that were open at this time. Redbank children's home has four units (Vardy, Willow, Newton House North, and Newton House South) but is counted as a single home. Before 2004, each unit was counted in the total count of homes.

9. There are no known quality issues with the data in this publication. The data collection which is the source for this publication is unchanged and has been stable for many years. Data at secure home level are checked for comparability with previous years.