

<b>REQUEST</b>	<b>14160 - Families accommodated under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989</b>
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I am a researcher at the housing charity Shelter. We would like to understand how many families are being provided with accommodation under section 17 of the Children Act 1989. These could be households provided with accommodation under section 17 for a range of reasons, including:

- because they did not qualify for accommodation under the 1985 and 1996 Housing Acts
- because they were not eligible for assistance
- because they were eligible for assistance but were found to be intentionally homeless.

We would **only** like to collect information on the number of families that are currently in housing provided under section 17 of the Children Act. Please note we are **not** asking for information on households housed in Temporary Accommodation under housing or homelessness legislation. It is our understanding that this information will be held at the county/unitary authority level, as that is how social services departments are configured.

We would be very grateful for your help.

### The request

I would like to request the following information under the Freedom of information Act 2000.

1. The number of households living in accommodation provided by the local authority under section 17 of the Children Act 1989 on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022 (or closest possible date)
2. (if available) The total number of adults living in these households on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022 (or the closest possible date)
3. (if available) The total number of children living in these households on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022 (or the closest possible date)

We understand that many authorities will hold some but not all the information requested. Where this is the case, we would appreciate it if you could provide the information that you do hold and to mark others as 'Not available'. For ease, please place the requested figures into the table below:

Response	Total number of households	Total number of adults in these households	Total number of children in these households
1) Living in accommodation provided by the local authority under section 17 of the Children Act 1989 <i>at the end of June 2022</i>	0	0	0

### Exemptions

#### Section 12:

I understand that one exemption that may apply to this request is that described at Section 12(1) - 12(4) of the Freedom of Information Act, where "the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit". If the Council does refuse the request by relying on Section 12, I would respectfully ask that it comply with the Information Commissioner's advice and confirm whether or not the

information is held by the Council. I respectfully ask that you advise us of any parts of the request that it would be possible to complete within the appropriate limit, and provide that information.

**Section 16:**

Further, I am available to help and assist the Council, and would be happy to refine the request, in order to reduce the time needed to provide the information requested. I would respectfully ask that the Council consider its duty “to provide advice and assistance” as set out at Section 16 of the Act. The Information Commissioner states in advice that the “a public authority should consider in these circumstances...how it can provide advice and assistance to help an applicant narrow, reform or refocus their request...”

**Section 21:**

If this information described in Questions 1, 2 and 3 of this request is already publicly available and therefore exempt under Section 21 of the Act, I respectfully request that the Council inform me to where specifically it can be found.

**Public Interest:**

I do not believe that any of the Freedom of Information Act exemptions should apply to the information requested. However, in the case that the Council argues otherwise I now present some arguments as to why it would be in the public interest - and indeed in the interests of the Council and the people it serves - to release the information I have requested.

1. There is a bias toward disclosure in the Freedom of Information Act itself, as there is a general public interest in transparency in public affairs.
2. There is a clear public interest in the efficient administration of public money and resources.
3. There is a legitimate aim in greater transparency in the inner workings and process of the management of help for households in need of housing assistance.
4. The publication of the information requested serves the interest of homeless households themselves in achieving greater transparency about their own housing situation.
5. Publication will enable charities in this sector to target resources at areas where people are in need, and where councils are having to provide assistance to many households