



REQUEST 19461

I am requesting the following information:

For the financial years 2024-2025, 2025-2026, and the projected year 2026-2027:

1. Please provide a breakdown of the total number of children in care and care leavers for each year.
2. For each financial year, please provide a breakdown of the total spend on private residential homes, including the total number of children in care under private provision. Additionally, please provide a separate breakdown of the total spend on council-run children's homes and the associated number of children in care in these homes.
3. Were there any overspends on children's social care budgets for these years, and if so, what were they?

RESPONSE

1. This information is published nationally
[Statistics: looked-after children - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/statistics/looked-after-children)
2. (All figures shown are net of joint funding contributions from external bodies)

External Residential:

2024-2025: £24,165,573 (76 children as at 31.03.25)

*2025-2026: £24,720,782 (76 children as at 01.03.26)

**Outturn projection generated 01.03.26*

Internal Residential:

(Homes that provide respite care and outreach support alongside residential provisions are excluded, as running costs cannot be solely apportioned to residential care placements accurately).

2024-2025: £873,658 (<5 children as at 31.03.25)

**2025-2026: £1,242,528 (<5 children as at 01.03.26)

***Outturn projection generated 01.03.26*

3. 24/25 overspend on Children Services & Families Directorate was £14.112m
25/26 Projected overspend is £12.044m as per Quarter 3 budget monitoring report to Wigan Council Cabinet.

4. What was the total cost of agency or temporary social workers for each of these years? Please also provide any recorded information, such as business cases, meeting minutes, or internal memos, that details the rationale and decision-making process behind this expenditure, particularly the choice to use these funds instead of recruiting permanent social workers directly through the council.

4. 2024-2025 spend £324,715
2025-current spend £222,000
2026-2027 – unknown

Focused recruitment and retention efforts have resulted in permanent social worker workforce for the CIC teams being at 100%.

As a last resort agency is used short term to cover temporary absence or vacancies as they arise. These decisions are scrutinised individually via our delegation process. Officer names and signatures have been redacted under Section 40(2) as they constitute third-party personal data.

DELEGATION INFORMATION

(Record of decision to make changes to the establishment or requests to recruit to agency workers)

Please ensure you read the relevant prompts below regarding the reason for delegation before proceeding. Examples of reason for Delegation includes but is not limited to:

<p>Regrade:</p> <p>Considerations to be given to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you discussed the business case with your HR link before proceeding? • Are there any other roles impacted? • Are there any individuals that are already completing the work? • Engagement of other staff and whether the job should be advertised to ensure a fair and transparent process. • Formal re-evaluation must have occurred via the job evaluation team and result received. 	<p>Movement of position/s to another directorate / service:</p> <p>Considerations to be given to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you discussed the business case with your HR link before proceeding? • Rationale for the move - have you consulted with affected individuals? • Appropriate induction / support provided for the individual/s moving to the new directorate / service. 	<p>Increasing / Decreasing hours of position:</p> <p>Considerations to be given to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the relevant flexible working process been followed where appropriate? • How have increases / decreases in hours been allocated? Has there been a fair process?
<p>Establishing a new position:</p> <p>Considerations to be given to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you do something different? E.g. Can work be distributed to other posts or another post be regraded to accommodate additional work? • Please confirm you have discussed and got agreement from the apprenticeship team at apprenticeships@wigan.gov.uk for any apprenticeships as part of this role (more information can be found at: Recruiting an apprentice and from the Learning Team via HRLearning@wigan.gov.uk for any other learning associated with this role. • Ensure the position is advertised in line with usual process, see the following link for further information: Recruitment. • Is this a politically restricted post? Have you referred to the relevant guidance in the first instance? Please see the following link for further information: Politically Restricted Posts (PoRPs) 	<p>Organisational change / mutual agreements:</p> <p>Considerations to be given to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You should not continue with any organisational change / mutual agreement delegations without first ensuring you have discussed the business case with your HR Link before proceeding. • Do any positions need to be disestablished because of any of the above actions? If so, please list position numbers and the effective dates. 	<p>Recruit to an existing position / External recruitment request:</p> <p>Considerations to be given to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the position is still occupied and the current employee is due to leave the council, please ensure the Leaver Form is submitted to HR Employment Service Centre • Appointment / Transfer • Can you do something different? E.g. Can work be distributed to other posts or another post be regraded to accommodate additional work? • Is the post still within budget? • Has the position been previously advertised internally within the last 12 weeks (external requests)? • Is the role a unique role requiring a specific qualification / skill set that cannot be obtained internally (external requests)? • Are there a multiple number of the same roles being advertised (external requests)? <p>Please note in the first instance all roles should be advertised internally first regardless of the duration of the role. It is only under exceptional circumstances that the roles can go straight externally first in consideration of the above points and appropriate approval from the job adverts team.</p>

Examples of establishment changes includes but is not limited to:

- Regrade
- Movement of position/s to another directorate / service
- Increasing / Decreasing Hours of a position
- Establishing a new position
- Organisational change / mutual agreements
- Recruit to an existing position / External recruitment request.
- Extend Temporary Contract

DELEGATION PROCESS

Please ensure you follow the process below when completing the form.

- The submitting officer should fill in all applicable fields on the delegation form
- They should link in with Finance and Apprenticeship Team contacts before proceeding.
- Job Evaluation requests should be actioned prior to submitting the form

Submitting Officer Submits Delegation

Discussion with Service Manager

- Once the submitting officer has completed the delegation, they should have a discussion with the relevant service manager and update the form accordingly.

- Following the discussion with the Service Manger the submitting officer will send the updated form to their relevant Finance Link who will input their approval, cost code and comments

Finance Approval

AD / Director Approval

- Following Finance Approval the submitting officer will obtain AD / Director Approval.
- This is the final approval required, please see below for the next steps and directorate breakdown

The Submitting Officer must have all the approvals / information above before taking the next step:

Adults and Childrens Directorates

- Once Submitting Officer has AD approval the Delegation Form **must** be sent to peoplesestabpanel@wigan.gov.uk. You will be copied into the response which is forwarded from panel to HR Systems to action hrrsystems@wigan.gov.uk

Environment, Place, Customer, Resources and Contracts, Strategy and Innovation

- Once Submitting Officer has all approvals the Delegation Form must be sent to HR Systems hrrsystems@wigan.gov.uk to action.

Agency Requests

- Once Submitting Officer has all approvals the Delegation Form **must** be sent to hrrandodagency@wigan.gov.uk. Agency delegations **do not** need to go to the HR Systems Team.

DELEGATION FORM – 8359

Name and job title of submitting officer: (Mandatory)

Name: exemption under Section 40(2)

Job Title: Business Support Manager

Reason for delegation:

- Regrade
- Movement of Position/s to another directorate / service
- Increasing / Decreasing hours of position:
- Establishing a new position
- Disestablishing position/s
- Recruiting to an existing position *(If the current occupant is due to leave, please ensure the Leaver Form is submitted to HRESC as soon as possible)*
- Extend a temporary contract
- Making a position permanent
- Organisational change / mutual agreements
- External recruitment request
- Agency Request

Please include relevant information to support your request:

POS 1057096 – exemption under Section 40(2)

Seeking approval to extend the above contract for a further 12 weeks, 06.04.2026 to 26.06.2026. exemption under Section 40(2) is currently covering exemption under Section 40(2) POS, and exemption under Section 40(2) is covering POS 1054112, exemption under Section 40(2) who is currently on mat leave. exemption under Section 40(2)

Is this a politically restricted position?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> / NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Effective date of changes	As above
Name and job title of Senior Manager / Service Manager supporting the request and date of discussion: (Discussions should take place with appropriate senior / service manager prior to obtaining Finance and AD / Director approval)	Name: exemption under Section 40(2) Job Title: Service Manager Date of Discussion: 23.03.2026
Position number/s If this is an existing position, please provide position number and name of last occupant (where applicable)	As above
Job Title Job title of new / existing position/s	Social Worker
Directorate / Service / Team (where the position needs to sit on iTrent) (If you have a structure chart please attach or indicate which team the positions need to sit within the structure)	People Children's Social Care Children First Partnership Hub
Contracted Hours: (Mandatory)	37
Grade: (Mandatory)	Agency
Work Location / Base: (Mandatory)	WLCS
Please provide name and job title of the reporting manager for iTrent purposes: (Mandatory)	Name: exemption under Section 40(2) Job Title: Team Manager
Job Evaluation number (mandatory for any new roles or regrades):	JE Reference Number:
Employment Type - Permanent or Temporary (If temporary specify duration and reason) Requests for temporary posts to be made permanent should have considered the following prior to the request being made: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has the role previously been advertised, did the individual secure the post via interview? 	<input type="checkbox"/> Permanent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Temporary

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the individual been in the role for 12 months? If not, how long have they been in the role and have they adequately demonstrated their ability to undertake the duties and responsibilities of the role during this period? • Are there any other individuals completing the same work on a temporary role. If so, has there been a fair selection process? • Is there appropriate funding to make the role permanent and where has this been identified? <p>For any temporary extensions, where appropriate please also consider the above points.</p>	
<p>Agency requests (where applicable):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please provide the position numbers that the agency request relates to and the number of posts you wish to recruit to via agency. • You will need to include the period being requested for an agency worker e.g. number of weeks or dates to and from. • For agency extensions please provide names of Agency Workers and duration of the extension. e.g. 12 weeks with timescales of the latest date the extension should end. <p>Once the vacant position has been recruited to, notice should be given immediately to the agency worker, even if the delegation approves agency staff beyond this date.</p>	<p>As above</p>
<p>Financial Implications, including confirmation that budget is available:</p> <p>Directorate Accountant to sign off. (Mandatory)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please consider if there is a temporary / fixed term post required and an individual has continuous service of 2 years or more then redundancy costs may be applicable. • Is there an overall increase / decrease in cost due to the request? • For all new starters there is a requirement to put aside £1,000 for all new IT Equipment out of the existing budget 	<p>Is the budget available YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> / NO <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Approved <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> / Not Approved <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Comments (include any additional costs affected):</p> <p>Ask is to support the social work post (POS1057096) during period of maternity leave. Post is built into the budget for 2026/2027 and will be used to support the agency costs alongside statutory maternity leave.</p> <p>Approx weekly costs of agency is £1,507 & for the 12 week ask, the costs will accumulate to circa £18k</p> <p>In the event of the substantive post holder returning to work before the 12-week timeframe expires, we recommend that this temporary agency contract is</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that you have confirmed with the Apprenticeship Team and/or Learning Team (if applicable) for any required funding from the apprenticeship levy or corporate learning budget <p>Further consideration should be made for providing budget for training needs across new and existing staff</p>	<p>ended immediately to avoid escalating costs and adding to the unfunded pressures of the Directorate.</p> <p>Cost Code: EY031</p> <p>Name of Accountant: exemption under Section 40(2)</p> <p>Signed by Accountant: exemption under Section 40(2)</p> <p>Date: 23rd March 2026</p> <p>Funding agreed from the Learning or Apprenticeship team:</p> <p>Date agreed:</p> <p>Ref number:</p>
<p>Director / AD Confirmation (Mandatory)</p>	<p>Approved <input type="checkbox"/> / Not Approved <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Comments:</p> <p>Name of AD / Director:</p> <p>Signed by AD / Director:</p> <p>Date:</p>
<p>HR Systems Confirmation (Mandatory)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agency Requests Do NOT require HR Systems Confirmation please send to hrandodagency@wigan.gov.uk. 	<p>Name:</p> <p>Date:</p> <p>Delegation Number:</p>
<p>EC Number (To be completed by People's Establishment Panel)</p>	<p>EC</p>

Recruitment Protocol: Your advertisement must be placed within 12 weeks from the date of approval. If this is not achieved a new delegation form must be submitted and approved.

Once the delegation is approved please send to HR Systems Team hrrsystems@wigan.gov.uk It can take up to 72 working hours for HR Systems to provide Position Number/s and action the relevant changes.

For Agency Approvals:

Once you have received this approval, you will need to extend any existing assignments on the XMS system and recruitment tracker.

For any new orders, please place these on the XMS system.

More information about how to do this can be found at the following: [Agency workers](#)