

BECOME.

THE CHARITY FOR CHILDREN IN CARE
AND YOUNG CARE LEAVERS

Press release

27/11/2024

New figures show a 500% increase in the number of vulnerable children in care placed in unregistered and illegal homes

New data released by Ofsted today shows a huge increase in the number of children in care being placed in unregistered children's homes, rising from 144 to 931 in the past three years.

This accommodation is often used for our most vulnerable children, including those under Deprivation of Liberty Orders.

Despite the significant increase, the report from Ofsted reveals these numbers are only the tip of the iceberg. Local Authorities are not legally obliged to inform Ofsted when they place children in unregistered children's homes, so the numbers are likely to be much higher than reported.

The report from Ofsted shows:

- Number of unregistered children's homes has gone up by more than 500% in the last three years, from 144 in 2021 to 931 in 2024
- Ofsted uncovered over 900 unregistered settings last year - almost three times the number of unregistered settings it found in 2021–22
- This is a national issue but the highest volumes of these illegal homes appear to be in the North West. A total of 157 were reported in that region, with 74 homes in the East of England, the lowest number in a region
- Of the children placed in unregistered settings Ofsted investigated last year, 12% were subject to a Deprivation of Liberty Order
- Following contact from Ofsted to the unregistered homes to stop operating and to register, only 6% of them did so. Of that 6%, only 8% were of a good enough quality to register successfully

Become CEO, Katharine Sacks-Jones says:

“It’s a real indictment of the current state of children’s social care that hundreds of children who’ve experienced trauma are not being provided with the specialist, quality care they need, and instead are living in illegal and often completely unsuitable accommodation with limited support.

We have a chronic shortage of homes for children, local councils on their knees financially while private providers make ever-increasing profits.

The Government’s recent proposals to address the issue of unregistered homes is welcome, but this latest data shows how urgently and robustly the Government must act. We must see stronger scrutiny and enforcement so that all children are able to live in safe homes and receive the high-quality care and support they need to thrive.”

-ENDS-

Notes to Editors

A link to the Ofsted’s stats are here [Unregistered children's homes - GOV.UK](#)

For more information or to interview Katharine Sack-Jones, please contact Become’s Press and Media Officer 07951 155246 / suzy.barber@becomecharity.org.uk

[Become](#) is the national charity for care-experienced children and young people. We put young people at the heart of everything we do, supporting them to get the help they need now and empowering them to bring about change in their own lives, the care system and society.