

**(CCC) Data on statutory overcrowding**

I am writing to make an open government request for all the information to which I am entitled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 - related to council houses that are in breach of statutory overcrowding rules.

This request refers to statutory overcrowding by both the 'space standard' (determining how many people may occupy a dwelling with regard to the number of sleeping accommodation rooms in the dwelling and floor area of the rooms) and the 'room standard' (determining how many non-cohabiting people aged 10 and over of the opposite sex may share sleeping accommodation) as defined by the Housing Act 1985.

For the calendar years 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020 (separately), please tell me:

- 1) How many statutory overcrowding breaches did the council record for households housed by the council in each year? Please provide a breakdown of breaches by a) space standard and b) room standard, and specify whether households may be captured as both a room and a space standard breach.
- 2) The number of breaches of the space standard where more than two people have lived in a home with one room
- 3) The number of breaches of the space standard where more than three people have lived in a home with two rooms
- 4) The number of breaches of the space standard where more than five people have lived in a home with three rooms
- 5) The number of breaches of the space standard where more than 7.5 people have lived in a home with four rooms
- 6) The number of breaches of the space standard where more than 10 people have lived in a home with five rooms
- 7) For breaches of the room standard, the maximum number of people sleeping in one room as recorded by the council
- 8) How many households who have applied for council housing are living in temporary accommodation
- 9) Please list all the types of temporary accommodation the council has placed households in (including but not limited to: shipping containers, caravans, B&Bs, converted office buildings, and any other kind of accommodation).

## Response

Your request refers to statutory overcrowding by both the 'space standard' (determining how many people may occupy a dwelling with regard to the number of sleeping accommodation rooms in the dwelling and floor area of the rooms) and the 'room standard' (determining how many non-cohabiting people aged 10 and of the opposite sex may share sleeping accommodation) as defined by the Housing Act 1985.

Space standards apply to new planning applications, not existing social housing stock. Extract below from National Described Space Standards Guidance ([publishing.service.gov.uk](http://publishing.service.gov.uk)):

- o This standard deals with internal space within new dwellings and is suitable for application across all tenures. It sets out requirements for the Gross Internal (floor) Area of new dwellings at a defined level of occupancy as well as floor areas and dimensions for key parts of the home, notably bedrooms, storage and floor to ceiling height.

- o The requirements of this standard for bedrooms, storage and internal areas are relevant only in determining compliance with this standard in new dwellings and have no other statutory meaning or use.

Therefore, there is no 'statutory breach' applicable to space standards as it only relates to planning of new builds, not current social housing accommodation. Any new social housing built in Cambridge will be in line with the described space standards. References to space standards are disregarded in the response below.

## Overcrowding

All properties let via the Housing Register have the appropriate bedroom entitlement for the household at the time of letting. We do not house households in properties that are too small for them. The majority of overcrowding is a result of families growing after they are housed.

Overcrowded households can apply for rehousing with priority given for lacking bedrooms, they then bid for suitable properties via the Home-Link choice-based lettings system.

People are free to choose if they pursue larger accommodation via choice-based lettings, so it is not a statutory breach as such. Some households choose to remain overcrowded because they are otherwise happy with their properties. We do not hold data on these households, only for those who are on the housing register for lacking bedrooms.

Figures for those who have a banding for lacking bedrooms can be found in section HL4 of our quarterly Key Facts publication. This can be found here <https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/housing-research>

For the calendar years 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020 (separately), please tell me:

1) How many statutory overcrowding breaches did the council record for households housed by the council in each year? Please provide a breakdown of breaches by a) space standard and b) room standard, and specify whether households may be captured as both a room and a space standard breach.

- Key Facts publications for the years 2016 – 2019 are attached, the remainder are available online <https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/housing-research>
- See section HL4 for numbers on the housing register as lacking bedrooms.

2) The number of breaches of the space standard where more than two people have lived in a home with one room

Data not held

3) The number of breaches of the space standard where more than three people have lived in a home with two rooms

Data not held

4) The number of breaches of the space standard where more than five people have lived in a home with three rooms

Data not held

5) The number of breaches of the space standard where more than 7.5 people have lived in a home with four rooms

Data not held

6) The number of breaches of the space standard where more than 10 people have lived in a home with five rooms

Data not held

7) For breaches of the room standard, the maximum number of people sleeping in one room as recorded by the council

Data not held

8) How many households who have applied for council housing are living in temporary accommodation

Households are not placed in temporary accommodation as part of the process of applying for council housing. Households are placed in TA because they have no accommodation available to them and are under a statutory homelessness duty, or under investigation to determine their eligibility for a statutory duty.

Placement in TA does not mean a passport to a council house, some homeless applicants find housing in the private rented sector, some are found not to be owed a duty.

FOI Ref

Response sent

**9342**

**20 July 2021**

Bearing this in mind, there are currently 103 households in TA as of the 20th July 2021

9) Please list all the types of temporary accommodation the council has placed households in (including but not limited to: shipping containers, caravans, B&Bs, converted office buildings, and any other kind of accommodation).

- Cambridge City Council's own self-contained housing stock
- Hostels
- Hotels
- RSL stock

Further queries on this matter should be directed to [foi@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:foi@cambridge.gov.uk)