

**COUNCIL ASSEMBLY**  
**(ORDINARY MEETING)**  
**WEDNESDAY 16 OCTOBER**  
**QUESTIONS ON REPORTS**

**Item 7.1: Children and Young People's Plan 2013-2016**

**1. QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES  
FROM COUNCILLOR CATHERINE BOWMAN**

Southwark has been named as one of the councils placing more than 80% of children in care in 'far-flung' care homes [more than 20 miles away]. What is the explanation for this approach?

**RESPONSE**

Southwark Council takes the care of our looked after children extremely seriously and we are very vigilant about monitoring their care.

We have one of the largest populations of looked after children in London and in fact the actual number of children referred to in the report as being placed far from the borough is just 10 children, or about 2% of our entire looked after children population. The vast majority of Southwark children are put in family placements either in, or close to the borough, and for the few that are moved further afield there are very good reasons for doing so. Some have very complex needs which require specialist placements which are not available nearby, while others are moved for their own personal safety. We only use homes that are rated as Outstanding or Good by Ofsted and every decision we take is in the best interests of the child involved.

The figures used by the DfE to create this report are 12 Southwark children in care homes, 10 of these are outside London (hence the 80%). This represents 2% of our entire looked after children population which currently stands at 567 children.