



National Audit Office

The UK's independent public spending
watchdog

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CONDITION OF SCHOOL BUILDINGS

Thank you for your request of 14 August 2025 where you asked us for the following information under the Freedom of Information Act:

1. *Details of Current or historical audits/studies/reports/papers/commentaries concerning Free Schools and in particular, the proclivity for operating from inner city buildings, etc*
2. *Documents concerning NHS Hospitals in respect to the features of their buildings, whether purpose built or converted and linked to this, their suitability in reference to the provision of care and treatment.*
3. *Any recorded information concerning Independent Hospitals (receiving NHS funded patients), for example the types of buildings, whether purpose built or converted etc.*

We have considered your request in accordance with the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and I can confirm that the NAO holds some information relating to your request, but we do not hold any information pertaining to our [Condition of school buildings](#) report published on 28 June 2023 or the [Capital funding for schools](#) report published on 22 February 2017.

Enclosed with this response are two documents: **'Key findings from previous (2017)'** and **'Summary of PAC Conversations,'** and a Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet: **'1.4.1 Recommendations – Capital Funding Study.'** This information may be helpful.

- The document titled **'Key findings from previous (2017)'** contains notes that reference the report published in 2017. However, any information we held about the report would have been destroyed in accordance with our records retention and disposal schedules, which for this type of material is six years following publication of the report.
- The **'Summary of PAC Conversations'** is a panel briefing note. Most of the note has been redacted, except for the section covering Capital funding for schools, as this may be relevant to your FOI request. The remainder of the document contains representations regarding other topics, which are none related. In accordance with the FOI Act, only information that is requested should be released or withheld, and the redacted information does not fall within the scope of your request.
- The spreadsheet is additional notes and observations pertaining to the 2017 report.

Finally, it is worth noting that we have recently commenced work examining how the Department for Education (DfE) supports local authorities in planning for school places. This may encompass free schools,

but we are currently in the fieldwork phase and have not yet received any evidence or information from DfE. However, it should be noted that any evidence provided by DfE is likely to fall under Section 33 Public Audit Functions of the FOIA exemption, which permits public authorities conducting audits or audit-related activities to withhold information if its release could prejudice their ability to carry out these functions effectively.

We have not yet obtained information regarding points 2 and 3. Further checks are in progress, and I will provide an update on these aspects shortly.

I hope this information is helpful and you are happy with the way we have handled your request. Our policy is to respond to requests as helpfully and promptly as possible. If you are not happy with this response, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days by writing to the NAO FOI Team at FOI@nao.org.uk. If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The primary way of escalating your concerns to the Information Commissioner is at: <https://ico.org.uk/foicomplaints>.

Yours sincerely,

NAO FOI Team