

INFORMATION  
ANALYSIS  
DIRECTORATE



# Northern Ireland Care Leavers 2018/19



Department of  
**Health**

An Roinn Sláinte

Máinnystrie O Poustie

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- *Provide up-to-date, quality information on children and adult social services and community health;*
- *to disseminate findings widely with a view to stimulating debate, promoting effective decision-making and improvement in service provision; and*
- *be an expert voice on social care information.*

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The purpose of Community Information Branch (CIB) is to promote effective decision making in children and adult social services by providing quality information and analysis.

We collect, analyse, and publish a wide range of community information that is used to help monitor the delivery of personal social services policy. Information collected by CIB is used to assess HSC Trust performance, for corporate monitoring, policy evaluation, and to respond to parliamentary/assembly questions.

Information is widely disseminated through a number of regular key statistical publications and ad hoc reports, details of which are available online.

## KEY FINDINGS

### There were 293 care leavers **aged 16-18** in 2018/19

- Just under two thirds (63%) of care leavers aged 16-18 had GCSEs or other qualifications. The proportion of care leavers who had 5 GCSEs (A\*-C) or higher at the time of leaving care was 20%.
- Care leavers continue to have a higher proportion of young people with disability (12%) than the general population (6%). In terms of education, higher proportions of care leavers had a Statement of Educational Need (21%) compared with the general school population (5%).
- Of care leavers aged 16-18 for whom information was available, 71% were in education, training or employment and 29% were unemployed or economically inactive.

### There were 216 care leavers **aged 19** in 2018/19

- Some 94% of care leavers aged 19 were in contact with Health and Social Care Trusts; with 65% in contact at least once a month.
- Of the care leavers for whom information was available, 63% were in education, training or employment; a lower proportion than in 2017/18 (65%) however similar to that of 19 year old care leavers in England (62%).
- In terms of becoming a parent, 13% of all care leavers aged 19 were parents, with 21% of female care leavers aged 19 becoming mothers on or before their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday.

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# 1. Northern Ireland Care Leavers

## 1.1. BACKGROUND

Children are taken into care for a variety of reasons, the most common being to protect them from abuse or neglect. In other cases their parents could be absent or may be unable to cope due to disability or illness. Children who become looked after by the Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust have often suffered many disadvantages in their lives and many of them attain low educational achievements which are likely to impact on their future lives and chances for employment.

The *Children (Leaving Care) Act (Northern Ireland) 2002* came into force in 2005. It aims to improve the life prospects of young people who are looked after by HSC Trusts as they make the transition to independent living and become care leavers. To achieve this, the Act placed new and enhanced duties on HSC Trusts to support young people who are leaving care.

The main aims of the Act are to prevent premature discharges from care, improve preparation, planning and consistency of support for young care leavers, and to strengthen arrangements for financial assistance. Central to the Act are duties to assess and meet individual's needs, provide Personal Advisers and develop pathway planning for young people up to the age of 21 (or beyond if they are continuing in education)<sup>1</sup>.

*Standards for Leaving Care Services in Northern Ireland* were published by the Department of Health in 2012 which establish minimum standards for leaving and aftercare services. The Standards specify the arrangements, services and procedures that need to be in place and implemented to ensure the delivery of quality services for young people leaving care. These Standards apply to HSC Trusts and those other agencies commissioned by a HSC Trust to deliver leaving and aftercare services.

The *Going the Extra Mile (GEM) scheme*<sup>2</sup> was launched in 2006. The aim of this scheme is to promote continuity and stability of living arrangements in post-care life for young people living with foster carers by ensuring that financial support is available to assist carers to continue to meet the care, accommodation and support needs of these young people until they reach the age of 21. Allied to this, the scheme also



<sup>1</sup> The Children (Leaving Care) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005 set out in more detail the matters to be taken into account by HSC Trusts when assessing and meeting the needs of those preparing to leave care and those who have left care.

<sup>2</sup> The scheme is facilitated under the Children (Leaving Care) Act (NI) 2002, the Children (Leaving Care) Regulations (NI) 2005 and Volume 8 of the Children (NI) Order 1995 Guidance – Leaving and Aftercare.

aims to promote better outcomes for young people leaving care in relation to training, employment and education.

The Department recognises the importance of giving young people the best start in life, helping those in need, and in particular improving outcomes for children in care. A new indicator has been included in the Programme for Government 2016 – 2021 to Improve Support for Looked After Children, with a related measure (percentage of 19 year old care leavers in employment, training or education) which will be monitored and reported on annually.

## 1.2. OC COMMUNITY INFORMATION RETURNS

The community information returns OC1, OC2 and OC3 collect data relating to children in care and care leavers in Northern Ireland, which together are designed to monitor and assess outcomes for children while they are in care and after leaving care. The OC1 return collects information on educational attainment of care leavers aged 16 to 18, the OC2 return collects information relating to the educational qualifications and health of children looked after continuously for 12 months and the OC3 return collects information on the economic activity of care leavers aged 19. This bulletin reports findings from the OC1 and OC3 surveys relating to the year ending 31 March 2019.

## 1.3. CARE LEAVERS

Children admitted to care may be discharged, if appropriate, at any age. *Care Leavers* in this bulletin cover young people aged 16-18 who left care during the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019 as well as young people who turned 19 years of age during the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019 and who had been looked after on 1<sup>st</sup> April three years previously. It excludes those young people who had been looked after under an agreed series of short-term placements (respite care).

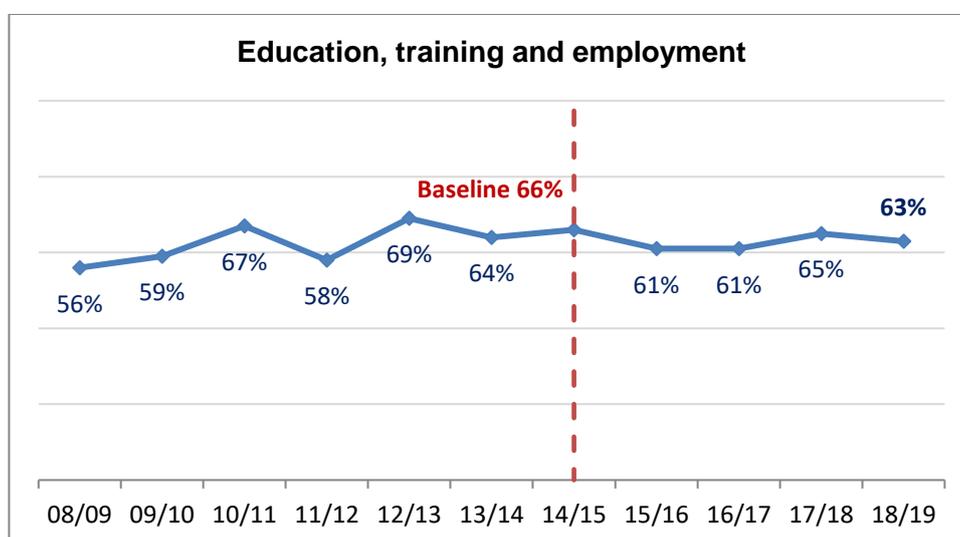
Due to the small number of care leavers in Northern Ireland, some caution should be taken when interpreting figures presented in this bulletin, especially when the figures are broken down into sub categories. It is also worth noting, when comparing yearly figures, that each year has an individual cohort of young people which may differ in characteristics to other years. For example, a given year may include a higher number of young people with special educational needs which could impact on the educational attainment figures for that year. As such, yearly variations in outcomes may be a reflection on the different cohorts of people in addition to actual trends or social care intervention.

## 1.4. PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT

Outcome 12 of the Draft Programme for Government 2016-2021, states that “*We will give our children and young people the best start in life*”. Care leaver data informs a population indicator for this outcome:

**“Care leavers who, aged 19, were in education training or employment.”**

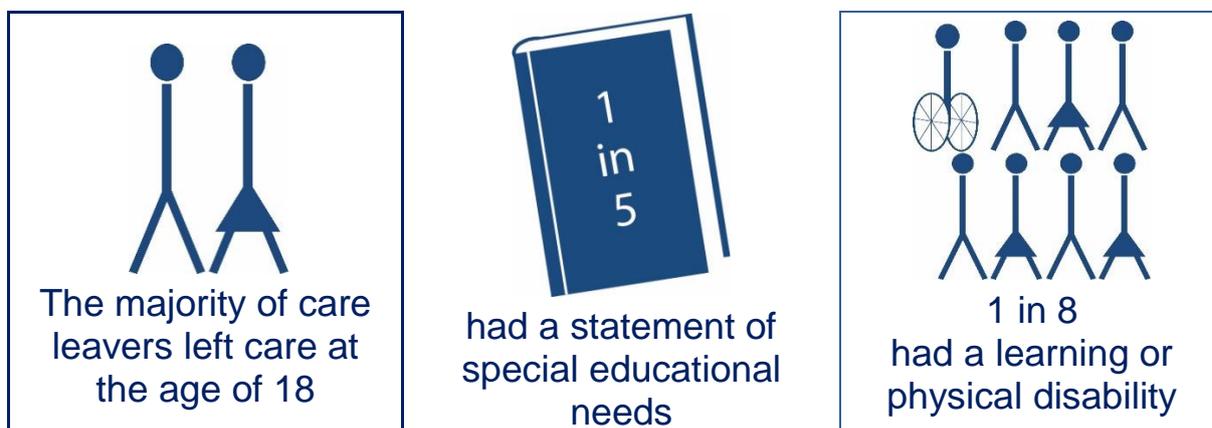
The baseline for the above indicator relates to year 2014/15, when 66% of care leavers aged 19 were in education training or employment. Since then, the percentage has reduced and in 2018/19 it was 63%. Further discussions on this can be found in section 3.3.4 of this publication.



The outcome indicator is supported by eight actions set out in the Outcomes Delivery Plan, which target children either in pre-care, in-care, or post-care. These eight actions may not be reflected in the indicator for some time as they may relate to young children who will not be included in the cohort of 19 year old care leavers for many years to come.

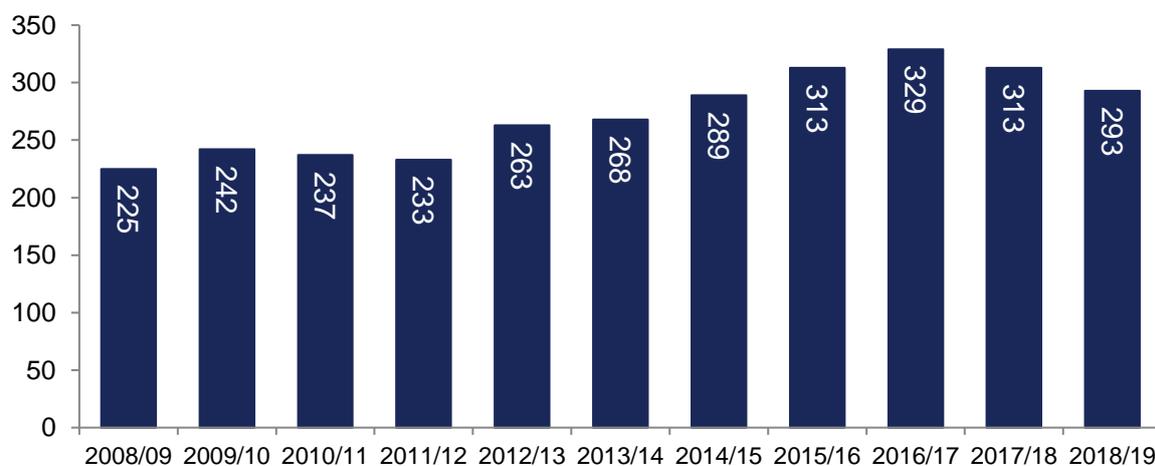
## 2. Care leavers aged 16-18

### 2.1. WHO ARE THE CARE LEAVERS AGED 16-18?

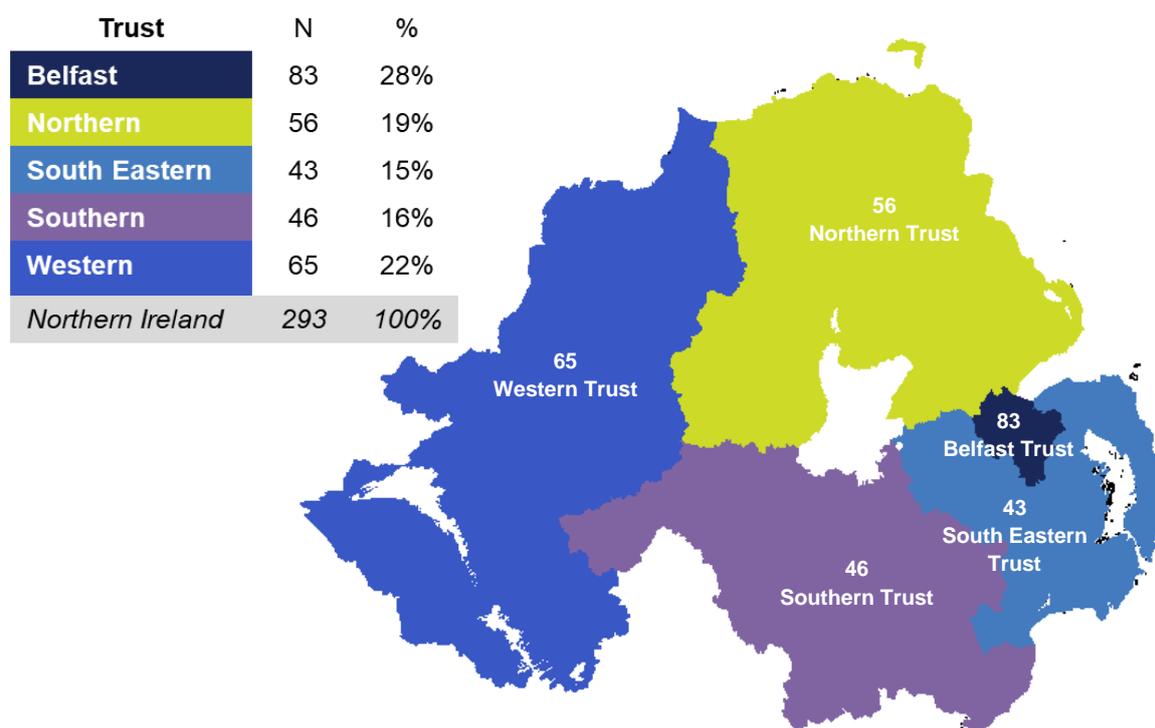


During the year ending 31 March 2019, 293 young people aged 16–18 left care in Northern Ireland. The number of care leavers steadily increased between 2011/12 and 2016/17, after a period of relative stability in the preceding years. However, consistent with 2017/18 figures, there was a small drop in figures in 2018/19 (by 6% from the previous year).

**Figure 1** Number of care leavers aged 16-18 in Northern Ireland (2008/09 – 2018/19)



**Figure 2** Number of care leavers aged 16-18 – HSC Trust profile (2018/19)



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There were fewer female than male care leavers in 2018/19 (47% and 53% respectively). This breakdown is similar to the general population of that age group in Northern Ireland, (49% female and 51% male)<sup>3</sup>.

As in previous years, the Belfast Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust had the highest number of care leavers aged 16-18. The number of care leavers in each HSC Trust can vary year on year. Between 2017/18 and 2018/19, the Western HSC Trust saw a 20% increase in care leavers (from 54 to 65 young people). Conversely, the South Eastern and Southern HSC Trusts had a 28% and a 22% reduction in the number of care leavers (17 and 13 less care leavers respectively).

The care leaver’s individual geographical location was linked with the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2017<sup>4</sup> to identify the deprivation quintile rank of home location before last entry into care and after leaving care<sup>5</sup>. For the children where geographical information was available<sup>6</sup>, equal proportions had been living in the most deprived areas of Northern Ireland before the last entry into care as after leaving care (39%). Further analysis showed that just under half (48%) of the care leavers were living in an area of same deprivation rank when leaving care as before last entry into care. Almost a quarter (24%) had moved into an area ranked of higher deprivation, while 28% had moved into areas ranked as less deprived.

<sup>3</sup> 2018 Mid-Year Population Estimate (NISRA 2019).

<sup>4</sup> Source: Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, 2017 (<https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/deprivation/northern-ireland-multiple-deprivation-measure-2017-nimdm2017>).

<sup>5</sup> These analyses were only carried out for care leavers with Northern Ireland geographical location.

<sup>6</sup> Northern Ireland geographical information prior to entering care was available for 92% of the care leavers and information was available for 95% upon leaving care. Information was supplied for 88% of the care leavers for both prior to entering care and after leaving care.

### 2.1.1. Age Profile

As in previous years, the majority of care leavers in 2018/19 had stayed in care until they reached the age of 18 years of age (88%). Some 13% left care at 16 or 17 years of age. At HSC Trust level, there was some variation in the age profile of the care leavers, with the proportion of young people leaving care at 18 ranging from 78% in the Southern HSC Trust to 95% in the Northern HSC Trust.

**Figure 3** Age of care leavers (2018/19)



### 2.1.2. Religion and Ethnicity

Information on religion and ethnicity of care leavers is collected for equality monitoring purposes. There were lower numbers of care leavers from a Protestant community background (39%) than a Catholic community background (45%) in 2018/19, with 5% originating from Muslim community background and a further 11% from 'Other' denominations, including those with no religion, or whose religion was unknown or not recorded. The proportions of Protestant and Catholic care leavers was similar to that recorded during 2017/18 (41% and 47% respectively).

The vast majority of care leavers in 2018/19 had a White ethnic background (89%). This is an 8 percentage points decline in comparison to the figures recorded in 2017/18 (97%). Of those with non-white ethnic background, 3% were Black, and the remaining 8% were of Other, Mixed or unknown ethnic backgrounds.

### 2.1.3. Disability

Having a disability can have an impact upon a person's life chances. People with disabilities can suffer from multiple disadvantages, being more likely to live in poverty, less likely to have educational qualifications and more likely to be economically inactive. Of the care leavers in 2018/19, 12% (34) had a disability. Of these, close to half (44%) had a learning disability, almost a quarter (24%) were on the autistic spectrum and 18% had a mental health condition<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> Please note that some of the children had multiple disabilities. For example, a small number of the children with a learning disability were also included in the percentage of children with mental health or physical disabilities.

There are no directly comparable disability figures for this age group for all of Northern Ireland, however; the 2011 Census reported that just over 6% of all young people of this age (16-18) in Northern Ireland had a long-term limiting illness<sup>8</sup>. Furthermore, 4% of 16-17 year olds received a Personal Independence Payment in August 2019<sup>9</sup>. These comparisons continue to suggest that a disproportionate number of young care leavers are living with disabilities.

#### 2.1.4. *Special Educational Need*

Children have special educational needs if they have a difficulty which calls for specific educational provision to be made for them. Further definitional and background information on this is detailed in the 'Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Need', which is available from the Department of Education for Northern Ireland<sup>10</sup>.

Over 1 in 5 care leavers in 2018/19 (21%) had a statement of Special Educational Need, a slightly smaller proportion than that in 2017/18 (23%). Although not directly comparable, 5% of the general school population in Northern Ireland<sup>11</sup> had a statement of Special Educational Needs. Furthermore, 5% of school leavers in Northern Ireland had a statement of Special Educational Need in 2017/18 (5%)<sup>12</sup>. As indicated in respect of proportion of young people living with disabilities, again the above comparison suggests that a disproportionate number of young care leavers have specific educational needs compared with the general population.

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.nisra.gov.uk/census/2011Census.html>.

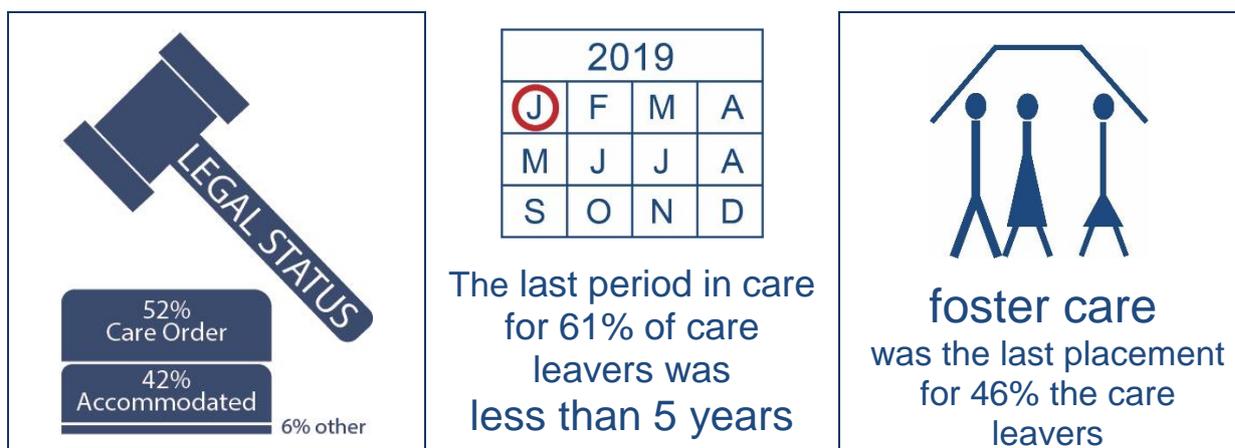
<sup>9</sup> Figures supplied by the Department for Communities – Personal Independence Payment is a new benefit replacing Disability Living Allowance.

<sup>10</sup> DENI, <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/special-educational-needs-code-practice>

<sup>11</sup> DENI, 'Annual enrolments at schools and in funded pre-school education in Northern Ireland 2018/19', <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/school-enrolments-201819-statistical-bulletins>

<sup>12</sup> DENI, 'Qualifications and destinations of Northern Ireland school leavers 2017/18', <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/school-leavers-201718-statistical-bulletin>

## 2.2. WHAT WAS THEIR LAST PERIOD IN CARE?



### 2.2.1. Legal Status

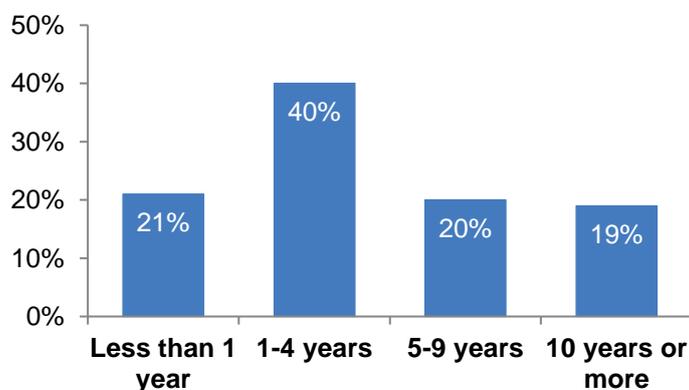
In regards to the legal status<sup>13</sup> of care leavers aged 16-18, just over half had been placed in care under a Care Order (52%), with two-fifths (42%) Accommodated (Article 21). The remaining 6% of care leavers had other legal statuses including Interim Care Orders while in care.

### 2.2.2. Length of Most Recent Period in Care

Every child's care history is unique and some children may experience more than one episode of care. For this publication, only information on the duration of the last period of care is collected.

Two-fifths (40%) of care leavers had been looked after for between 1 and 4 years in their last period of care, and almost a fifth (19%) for more than 10 years. On average, a girl's last period of care was shorter (4 years 8 months) than a boy's (5 years 6 months).

**Figure 4** Care leavers aged 16-18 – Length of most recent period of care (2018/19)

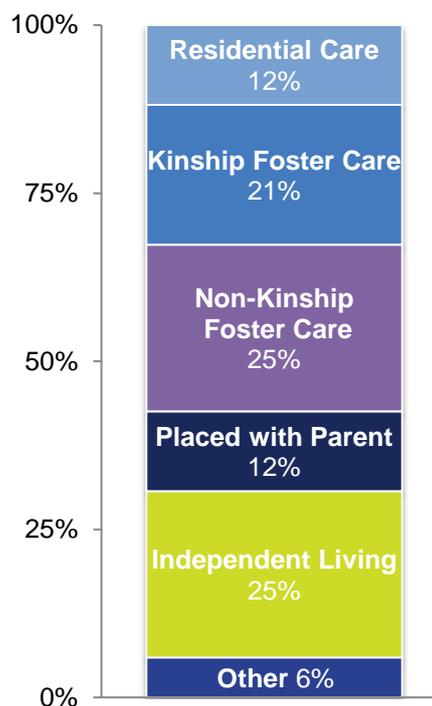


<sup>13</sup> Definitions of the different legal statuses are set out in Appendix B.

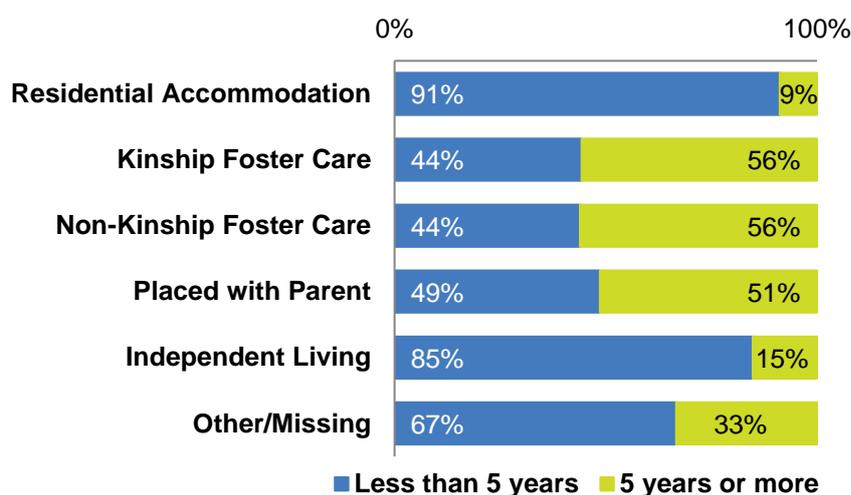
### 2.2.3. Last Placement

As in previous years, the majority of care leavers in 2018/19 had been in foster care prior to leaving care (46%); 25% in non-kinship foster care and 21% in kinship foster care (placed with relatives or a person known to the child)<sup>14</sup>. A quarter (25%) had been in independent living arrangements, this was divided between those with formal support (23%) and those without (2%). Some 6% had been in 'other' placement types which included placements such as bed & breakfast, hospital and friends.

**Figure 5** Care leavers aged 16-18 – Last placement type (2018/19)



**Figure 6** Care leavers aged 16-18 – Last placement by time in care (2018/19)



Young people, whose last placement was foster care (kinship or non-kinship), were more likely to have been in care for 5 years or more, compared with all other placement types.

Please note that these figures do not represent the length of time spent in the placement type.

<sup>14</sup> Please see appendix B for placement definitions.

#### 2.2.4. Reasons for Leaving Care

Of the 293 care leavers aged 16-18 years in 2018/19, the majority (88%) left care because they had reached 18 years of age, with a further 8% leaving to return home to live with their birth parents.

Almost all of those who left care to return to their birth parents (96%) were 16 or 17 years of age. Furthermore, this age group's last period of care was typically shorter, with an average duration of 8 months. Those who left care due to reaching the age of 18 years had on average a last period of care lasting 5 years. This may indicate that those who leave care prior to turning 18 may be a cohort of children with different care needs to those who stay in care until they reach adulthood.

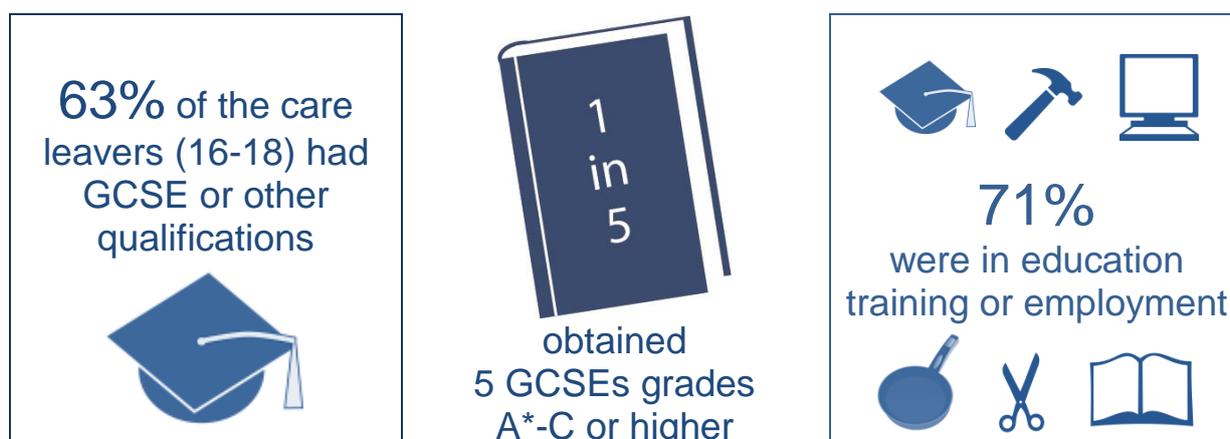
**Figure 7** Care leavers aged 16-18 – Reason care ceased (2018/19)



Note: "Left for other reasons" includes "Moved into supported accommodation", "Transferred to adult social services" and "Other".

Note: "Reached 18 years of age" includes a small number of care leavers aged 17 whose 18<sup>th</sup> birthday was within one week of leaving care.

## 2.3. HOW ARE THEY DOING NOW?



### 2.3.1. Current Accommodation

After leaving care, some 29% of the care leavers aged 16-18 were still living with their former foster carers (kinship and non-kinship). Most of these (80 of 85) were in GEM placements<sup>15</sup>. Almost a quarter (23%) were living in some form of supported accommodation, 19% were living with their parents, and 13% were living independently. The remaining 15% of care leavers were divided between living with friends or family, were in custody, or other accommodation.

### 2.3.2. Personal Education Plan

A Personal Education Plan (PEP) should be completed for every looked after child. It is a continuous running record of a child's educational history, identifying actions needed to enable the individual to fulfil his or her potential by establishing targets for the child relating to learning achievements. Just over half (51%) of care leavers aged 16-18 in 2018/19 had a completed PEP, and of those, 46% had a review of their education plan during the previous 12 months.

**51%**  
of care leavers  
aged 16-18  
had a Personal  
Educational Plan

<sup>15</sup> The *Going the Extra Mile* scheme was launched in 2006 and aims to promote continuity and stability in post care life for young people living with foster carers

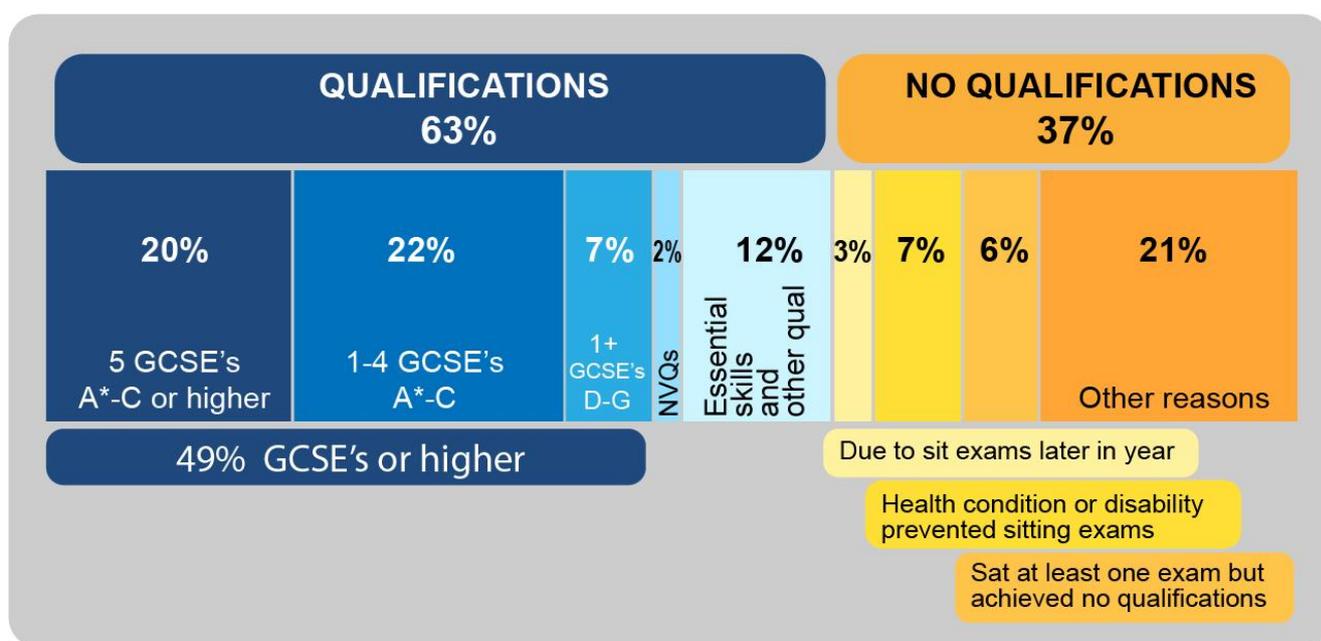
### 2.3.3. Educational Attainment

Educational attainment can be an important predictor of success in later life; low educational achievements may impact on future lives and chances for employment.

At the time of leaving care, 63% of the care leavers aged 16-18 had educational qualifications<sup>16</sup>; 49% had at least 1 GCSE or higher qualifications and 15% had non-GCSE qualifications. Some 37% of the care leavers did not have any qualifications at the time of leaving care.

The 37% with no qualifications represented 106 care leavers aged 16-18. Some 60 of these did not sit any examinations, even though they had reached an appropriate age to do so; 18 sat examinations but did not obtain any qualifications and 9 were due to take examinations after leaving care. A further 19 had health conditions or disabilities preventing them from sitting exams.

**Figure 8** Care leavers aged 16-18 – Care leavers’ educational qualifications at time of leaving care (2018/19)

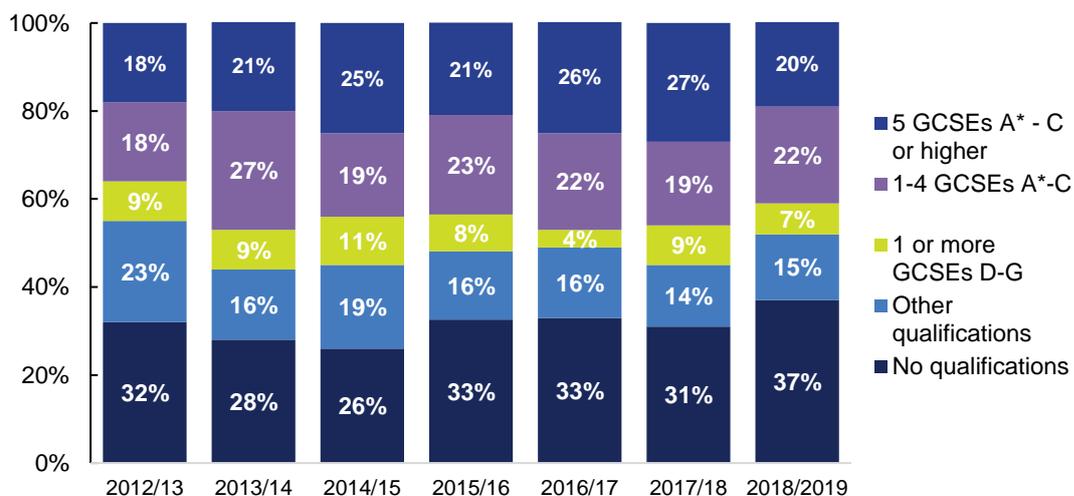


Note: Excludes a small number of care leavers who either had severe learning disability or missing values.

Note: Some young people had both GCSE and NVQ or essential skills qualifications. These have been grouped in the appropriate GCSE category.

<sup>16</sup> Figures exclude 5 care leavers who either had severe learning difficulties or missing values.

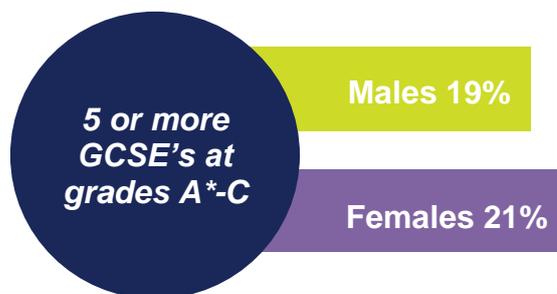
**Figure 9 Care leavers aged 16-18 – Care leavers’ educational qualifications at time of leaving care (2012/13 - 2018/19)**



*Note: Excludes a small number of care leavers who either had severe learning disability or missing values.*

In 2018/19 a higher proportion of young people left care without any qualifications (37%) in comparison to the figures collected over the previous 5 years. Please note, as the characteristics of the cohort of care leavers can vary each year, the educational outcomes may also vary. In addition, due to the small numbers involved, these figures may be subject to high volatility.

Unlike previous years’ figures where females have performed better than males, a similar proportion of females and males obtained 5 GCSE’s grades A\*-C in 2018/19 (21% and 19% respectively). Furthermore, similar proportions (37%) left care with no qualifications (see Tables in Appendix C for details).



## Care leavers and Northern Ireland school leavers

The Department of Education publish annual statistics on qualifications for the general school leaver population in Northern Ireland. These figures are not directly comparable to the care leaver qualifications, as the care leavers information includes all care leavers (whether in education or not) and is captured at the time of leaving care, not when leaving school.

To best match the school leaver population, a sub-cohort of care leavers was created, covering those who **had GCSE qualifications or who sat exams but did not achieve any qualifications (total of 158 young people)**. The qualifications of the sub-cohort has been compared to the school leaver population in the table below.

As can be seen, some 97% of school leavers achieved at least 5 GCSEs A\*-G compared to 77% of care leavers who sat exams. Furthermore, 37% of care leavers achieved 5 or more GCSEs at A\*-C compared to almost 85% of the school leaver population.

In this context it is worth noting that 15% of the care leavers in this cohort had a statement of special educational needs (SEN). Some 5% of the general school population had a SEN statement. It is expected that this would influence and inflate the difference in the level of qualifications between the two groups.

	Care leavers aged 16-18 who sat exams* 2017/18	School leavers 2016/17**	Care leavers aged 16-18 who sat exams* 2018/19	School leavers 2017/18**
At least 5 GCSEs A*-G	64.3%	96.6%	76.6%	96.6%
At least 5 GCSE A*-C	45.4%	83.8%	36.7%	85.2%
No formal qualifications	8.7%	0.3%	11.4%	0.6%

*\*Excludes care leavers aged 16-18 with non-GCSE qualifications (eg NVQs or essential skills); those who did not sit exams due to health conditions, disability or learning disability; those who were due to sit exams after leaving care and those who did not engage in school/education.*

*\*\*Year 12, 13 or 14 pupils leaving mainstream, grant aided post-primary schools.*

Please note that this way of comparing the two cohorts (care leavers and NI school leavers) was introduced in 2017/18 and is different from previous publications. The methodology behind capturing the information has not changed, only the way it is presented. Please note, the above will still not allow like-for-like comparison, however; it is the best possible match based on the data available.

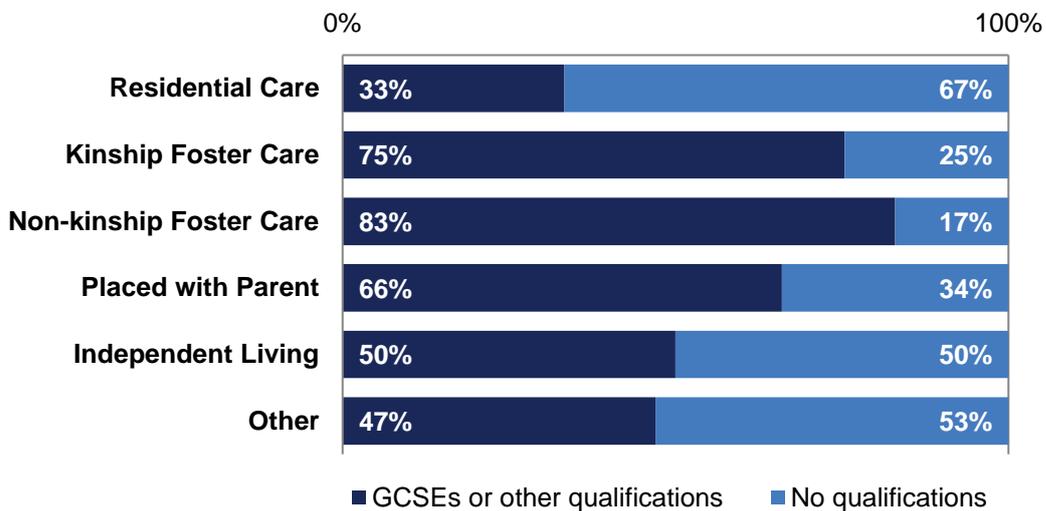
DENI, "Qualifications and destinations of Northern Ireland school leavers 2017/18"  
<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/school-leavers-201718-statistical-bulletin>  
 Note: 21% of all care leavers had a SEN statement but only 15% of the sub-cohort

The following analyses compare those care leavers aged 16–18 with GCSE’s or other qualifications (182, 63%) and those with no qualifications (106, 37%)<sup>17</sup>.

Educational achievement for care leavers from Catholic and Protestant community backgrounds were fairly similar, with 64% of Protestants compared to 63% of Catholics leaving care with GCSEs or other qualifications.

Some 79% of care leavers previously in foster care placements had GCSEs or other qualifications at the time of leaving care (83% in non-kinship and 75% in kinship), followed by 66% of those placed with parents and half (50%) of those living independently. A third (33%) of those in residential care had GCSEs or other qualifications when leaving care.

**Figure 10** Care leavers aged 16-18 – Qualifications achieved by last placement type (2018/19)



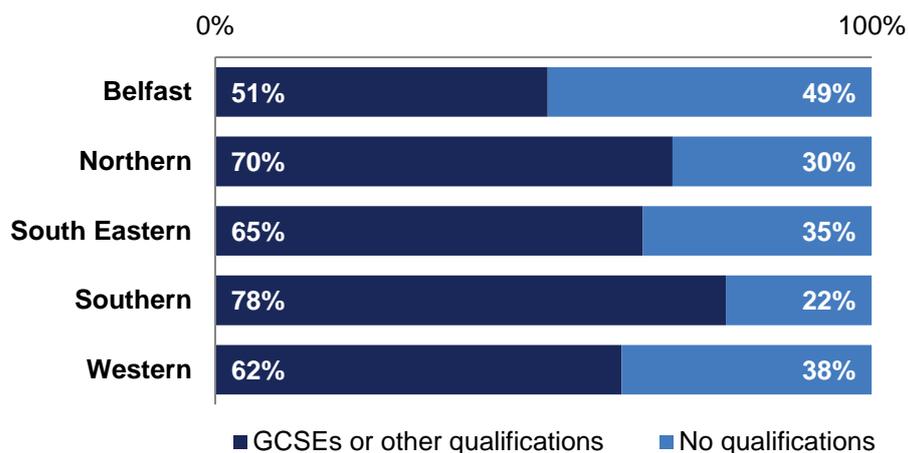
*Note: Excludes a small number of care leavers who either had severe learning disability or missing values.*

Length of time of the last period of care also appeared to be important in terms of educational attainment. Children in care for 5 years or more tended to do better academically than those in care for less than 5 years; 77% of care leavers in care for 5 years or more had obtained GCSE’s or other qualifications, compared with 55% of those in care for less than 5 years. However, this difference may also be related to different placement types experienced by these groups of care leavers.

At the time of leaving care, the 16-18 year old care leavers from the Southern HSC Trust performed best academically with 78% leaving care with educational qualifications. Please note that due to the small numbers involved, these figures may be subject to high volatility.

<sup>17</sup> Excludes a small number of care leavers who either had severe learning disability or missing values.

**Figure 11 Care leavers aged 16-18 – Qualification achieved by HSC Trust (2017/18)**



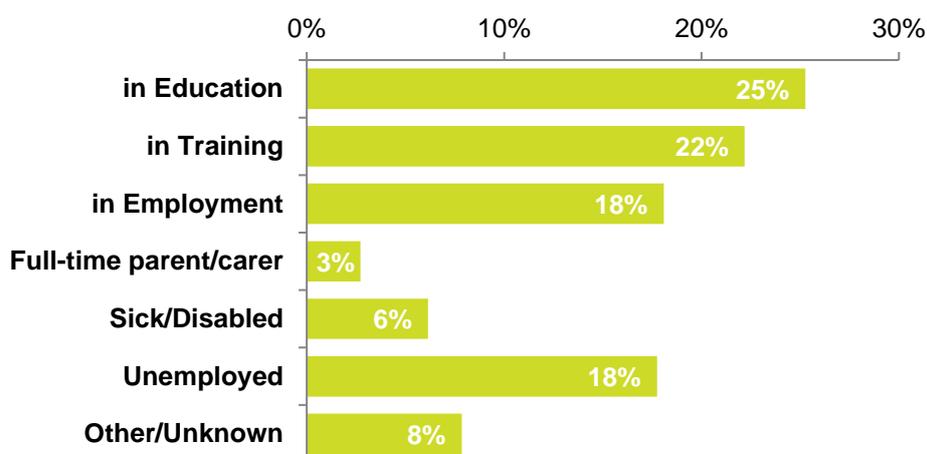
*Note: Excludes a small number of care leavers who either had severe learning disability or missing values.*

### 2.3.4. Economic Activity

Figure 12 below details economic activity for care leavers aged 16-18 for 2018/19. Most of the young people were in education or training at the time of leaving care (25% and 22% respectively). Some 6% were economically inactive due to sickness or disability and a further 3% were economically inactive due to caring/parental responsibilities. Most of the 18% who were unemployed when leaving care, were either lacking motivation to engage in education, training or employment, or actively seeking employment.

Economic activity amongst care leavers compared less favourably with that for young people of similar age; for example, 25% of young people in the general population aged 16-18 years were employed, compared with 18% of young care leavers<sup>18</sup>.

**Figure 12 Care leavers aged 16-18 – Economic activity (2018/19)**



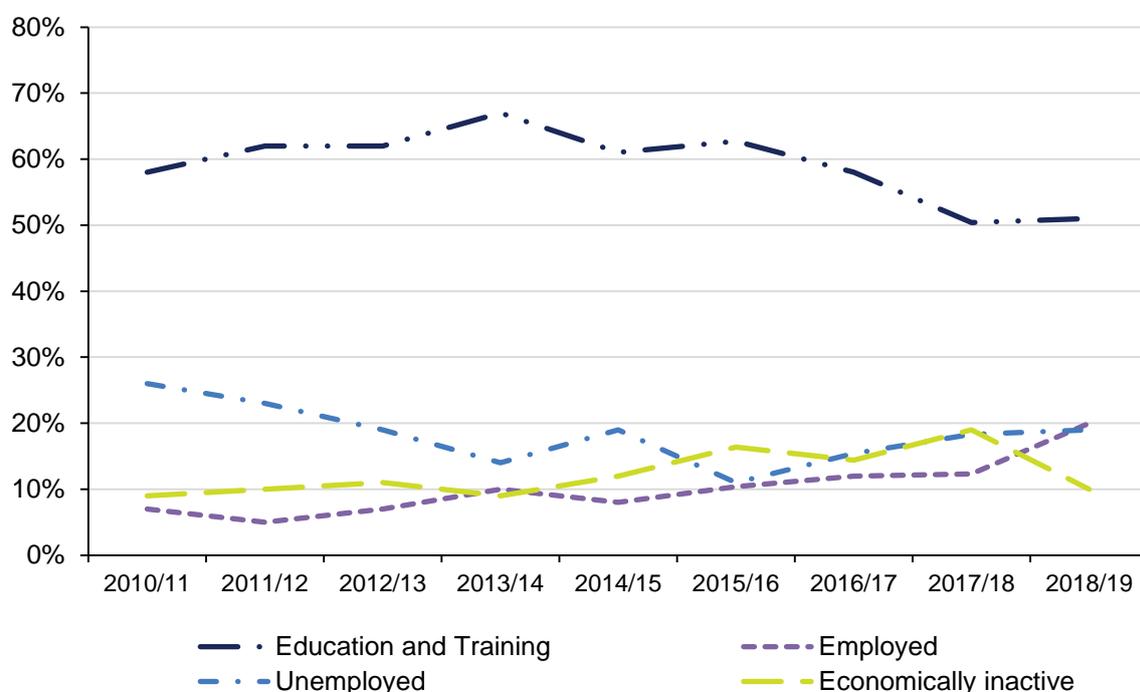
<sup>18</sup> Labour Force Survey July-September 2019, NISRA.

**The findings of this section relate only to those for whom economic activity was reported<sup>19</sup>**

Of the 270 care leavers aged 16-18 in 2018/19, whose economic activity was reported, 71% were in full time or part time education, training or employment. Some 19% were unemployed and 10% were economically inactive because of caring responsibilities or sickness/disabilities.

Although the proportion of care leavers in education or training is still substantially larger than the other categories, the gap has narrowed the last few years (see figure below).

**Figure 13 Care leavers aged 16-18 – Economic activity on leaving care (2018/19)**

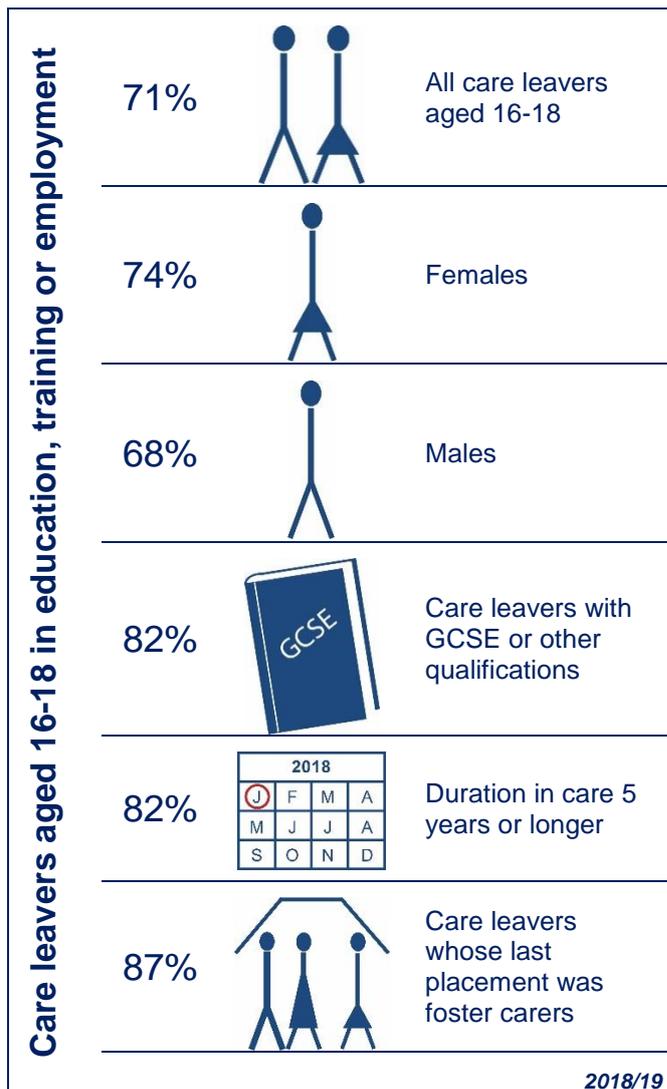


*Note: Excludes care leavers where economic activity was not known.*

Looking at the HSC Trusts individually, in 2018/19, the proportion of care leavers in education, training or employment at the time of leaving care ranged between 62% (the Northern Trust) and 75% (Belfast and Southern Trusts).

The proportion of care leavers from a Catholic community background in education, training or employment was slightly lower than those from Protestant community backgrounds (70% and 75% respectively).

<sup>19</sup> Economic activity was not known/not reported for 23 of the care leavers aged 16 – 18 in 2018/19 (8%)



*Excludes care leavers where economic activity was not known.*

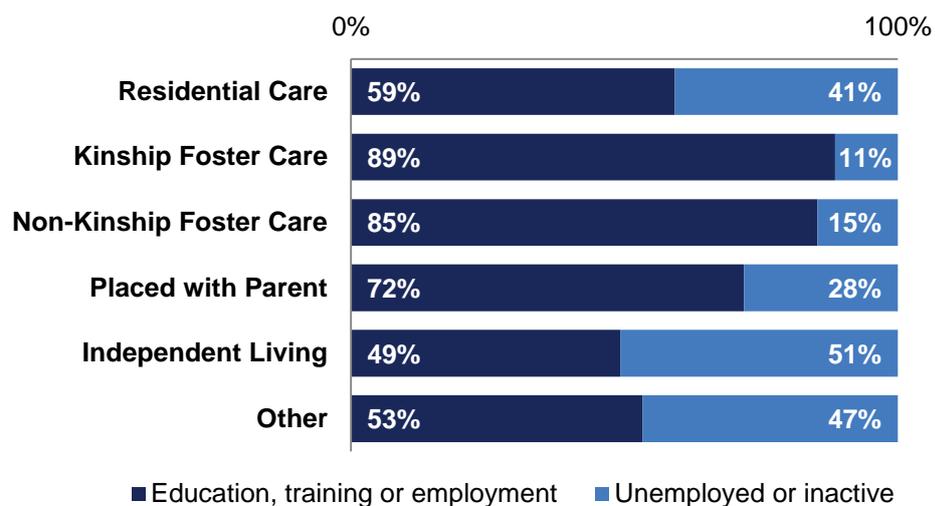
A higher proportion of female care leavers were in education training or employment compared to males (74% and 68% respectively), however a slightly higher proportion of females were economically inactive due to caring responsibilities or disability /ill health (8% compared to 5%). Some 27% of male care leavers were unemployed compared to 17% of females.

As can be expected, having qualifications correlated highly with economic activity, with 82% of those with GCSEs or other qualifications in education, training or employment compared with 50% of those without qualifications.

Some 82% of care leavers whose last period of care was 5 years or longer were in education, training, or employment. The corresponding figure for those in care for less than 5 years was 64%.

Care leavers whose last placement was foster care (both kinship and non-kinship) fared better in terms of economic activity on leaving care, with 87% in education, training or employment. This compares to 49% of those living independently. Please see figure below for details.

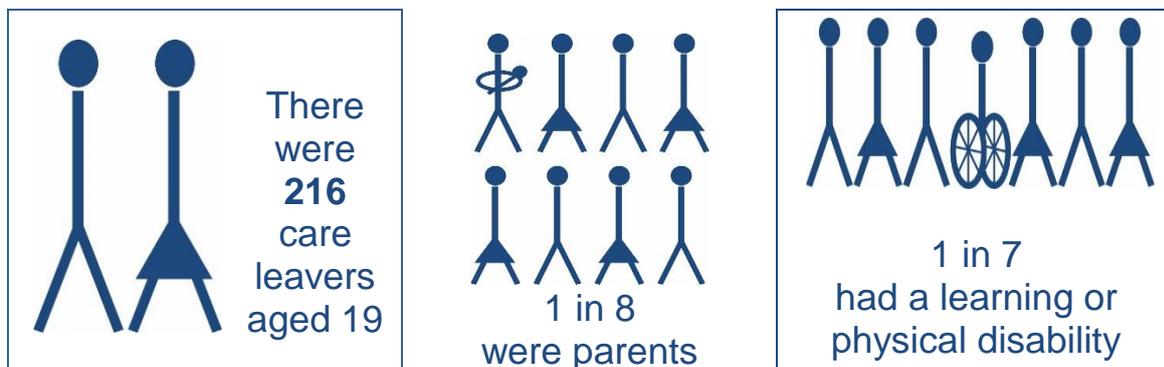
**Figure 14 Care leavers aged 16-18 – Economic activity by latest placement type (2018/19)**



*Note: Excludes care leavers where economic activity was not known.*

# 3. Care Leavers Aged 19

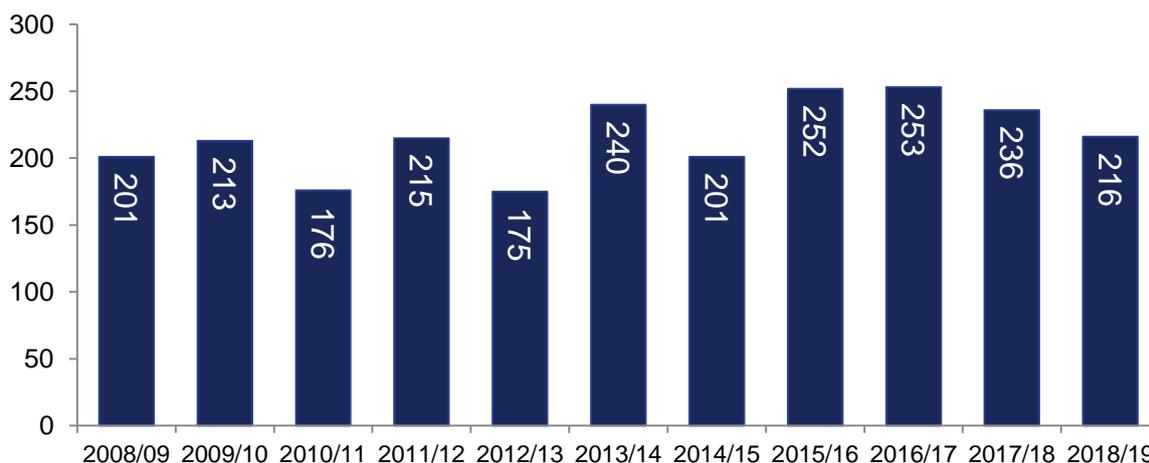
## 3.1. WHO ARE THE CARE LEAVERS AGED 19?



During the year ending 31 March 2019, there were 216 young people in Northern Ireland, who had been in care on 1 April 2016, and who reached their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday during the year ending 31 March 2019. This was 8% less than the previous year.

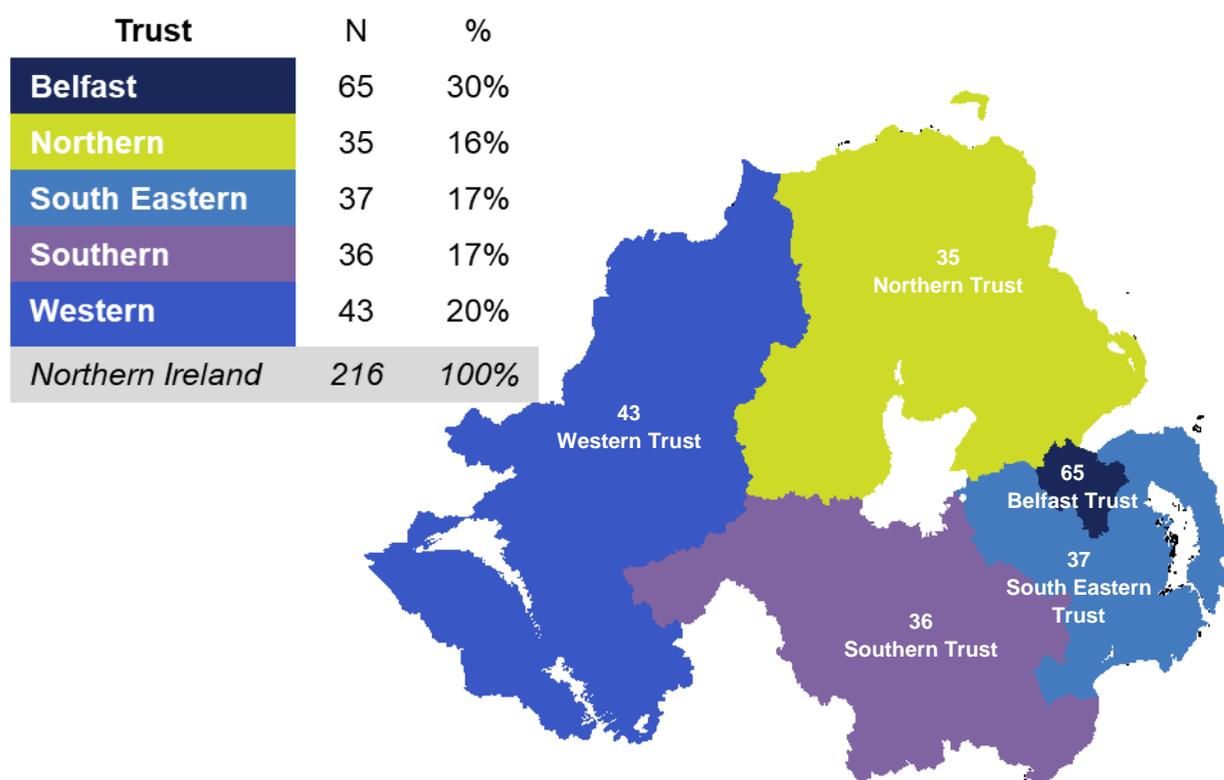
Of the 216 care leavers aged 19, 117 (54%) were male and 99 (46%) were female. This gender split was similar to the general population of that age group in Northern Ireland, where 52% were males and 48% females<sup>20</sup>.

**Figure 15** Number of care leavers aged 19 in Northern Ireland (2008/09 – 2018/19)



<sup>20</sup> 2018 Mid-Year Population Estimate (NISRA 2019).

**Figure 16** Number of care leavers aged 19 by HSC Trust (2018/19)



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The highest proportion of care leavers aged 19 were in the Belfast Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust (30%) compared to 16% in the Northern HSC Trust.

The care leavers' geographical location was linked with the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2017<sup>21</sup> to identify the deprivation quintile rank of home location before last entry into care and after leaving care<sup>22</sup>. For the children where geographical information was available<sup>23</sup>, a higher proportion had been living in the most deprived areas of Northern Ireland before the last entry into care (42%) than after leaving care (38%). Further analysis showed that almost half of the care leavers (49%) were living in an area of the same deprivation rank when leaving care as before their last entry into care. Some 23% of care leavers were living in a more deprived area after leaving care. The same proportion (23%) were now living in area of lower deprivation.

<sup>21</sup>Source: Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, 2017 (<https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/deprivation/northern-ireland-multiple-deprivation-measure-2017-nimdm2017>).

<sup>22</sup> These analyses were only carried out for care leavers residing in Northern Ireland.

<sup>23</sup> Northern Ireland geographical information prior to entering care was available for 96% of the care leavers and information was available for 94% upon leaving care. Some 90% had geographical information for both prior to entering care and upon leaving care.

### 3.1.1. Religion and Ethnicity

Information on religion and ethnicity of care leavers is collected for equality monitoring purposes. In terms of religion, the proportion of care leavers aged 19 from a Catholic community background (50%) was higher than those from a Protestant community background (42%). Some 8% were of 'Unknown', 'None' or 'Other' religious backgrounds, which was similar to the previous year.

Almost all of the care leavers aged 19 had a white ethnic background (98%).

### 3.1.2. Disability

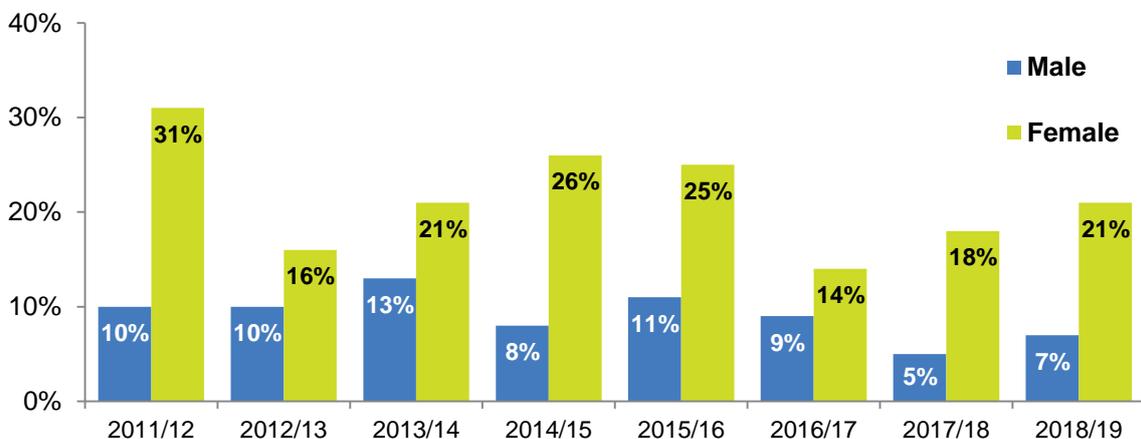
Of those care leavers aged 19, 32 had a disability (15%), and of that, just over half (53%) had a learning disability<sup>24</sup>. Although not directly comparable, figures from the 2011 Census indicated that 7% of 18-19 year olds in Northern Ireland had a disability<sup>25</sup>. This suggests that a disproportionately high number of care leavers have a disability.

### 3.1.3. Dependants

Some 13% of care leavers aged 19 were parents, 21 young women and 8 young men. The proportion of care leavers with dependent children can fluctuate extensively year on year. This can be seen in Figure 17 below which sets out the proportion of care leavers who had dependants by gender.



**Figure 17** Care leavers aged 19 with dependants by gender (2011/12 – 2018/19)



In 2018/19, 21% of female care leavers aged 19 became mothers on or before their 19th birthday. During 2018, 1% of 15-19 year old females in the general population in Northern Ireland became mothers<sup>26</sup>. Although these figures are not directly comparable, it does indicate a higher prevalence of teenage mothers in the cohorts of care leavers.

<sup>24</sup> Please note that the care leavers may have had multiple disabilities with other disabilities alongside learning disability.

<sup>25</sup> Census 2011 – 18 to 19 year olds with long term health problem limiting day to day activities.

<sup>26</sup> Source: Registrar General Annual Report 2018 Births, Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency 2019; 2018 Mid-Year Population Estimate (NISRA 2019). Please note, the figure has been calculated using the number of live births and therefore, may be an overestimation as it does not take account of multiple births.

## 3.2. WHAT WAS THEIR LAST PERIOD IN CARE?



### 3.2.1. Age when leaving care

The majority of care leavers aged 19 left care on reaching 18 years of age (97%)<sup>27</sup> with 3% leaving at 16 or 17 years of age.

### 3.2.2. Legal Status

The former legal status<sup>28</sup> of care leavers aged 19 showed that three quarters (75%) had been looked after under a Care Order, 24% voluntarily accommodated (Article 21) and a further 2% of young people were in care under an Interim Care Order.

In terms of the length of time spent in the last period of care, 51% of those who had been looked after for less than 5 years had a Care Order; this rose to 94% for those who had been in care 10 years or more.

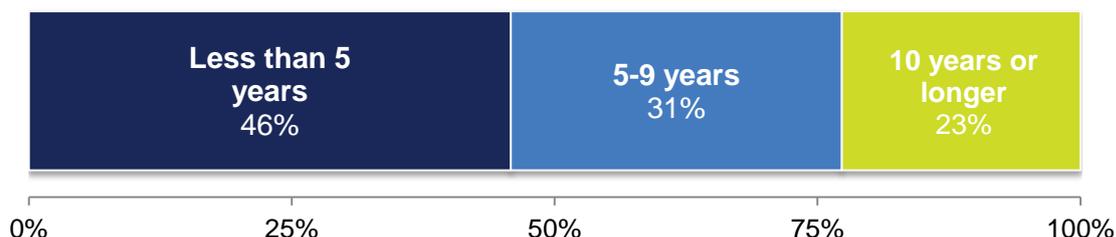
### 3.2.3. Last period in care

Every child's care history is unique and some children may be in care for only a short period whereas others may be in long-term care for most of their lives. For the care leavers aged 19 in 2018/19, the average length of time in care was 6 years 6 months prior to leaving care. This was similar to that in 2017/18 (6 years 7 months). In 2018/19, the average last period in care was shorter for females than for males (6 years 3 months and 6 years 8 months respectively). For just under half (46%) of care leavers, the duration of the last period in care was less than 5 years, whereas for 23% of care leavers it lasted for 10 years or longer.

<sup>27</sup> This figure includes a small number of care leavers aged 19 when leaving care.

<sup>28</sup> Description of legal statuses is included in the appendix.

**Figure 18** Care leavers aged 19 – Length of last period of care (2018/19)

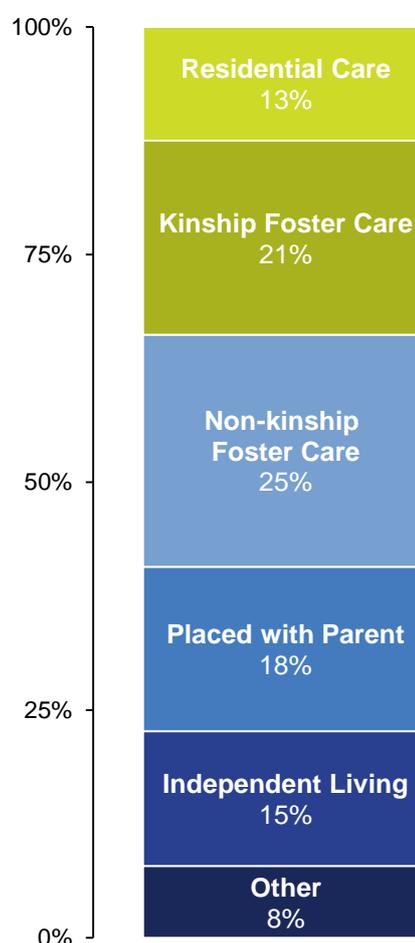


Appendix B sets out definitions of the different types of placements of care that are covered below. Before leaving care, just under half (47%) of care leavers aged 19 had been in foster care (25% non-kinship and 21% kinship foster placements), with 18% placed with parents, 15% had been living independently<sup>29</sup>, 13% in residential care and 8% had been in Other<sup>30</sup> placement types.

Foster care had been the most common placement for both males and females prior to leaving care. A larger proportion of males were living in residential care as their last placement compared with females (15% and 9% respectively). A larger proportion of females were placed with their parents as their last placement compared with males (20% and 16% respectively).

A higher proportion of those who had been in care for 10 years or longer had foster care as their last placement prior to leaving care (72%). This compared to 30% of those whose last period of care lasted 5 years or less. For the latter group, 21% were in independent living placements and 20% were in residential care<sup>31</sup>.

**Figure 19** Care leavers aged 19 – Last placement prior to leaving care (2018/19)



<sup>29</sup> Independent living includes living with and without formal support.

<sup>30</sup> Other placement types include; supported accommodation, hospital and living with friends/ relatives.

<sup>31</sup> See Tables for further details.

### 3.3. HOW ARE THEY DOING NOW?

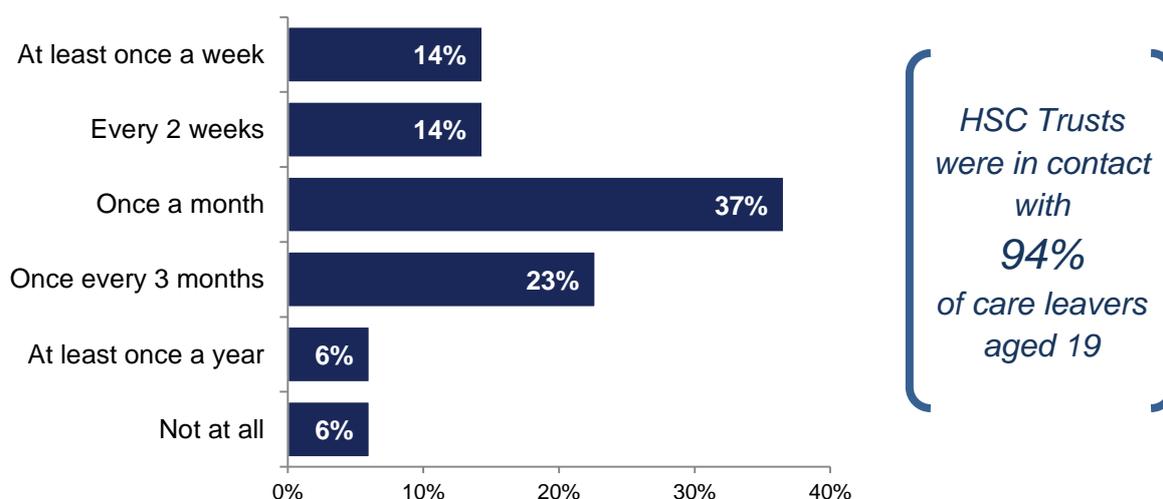


#### 3.3.1. Contact with Social Services

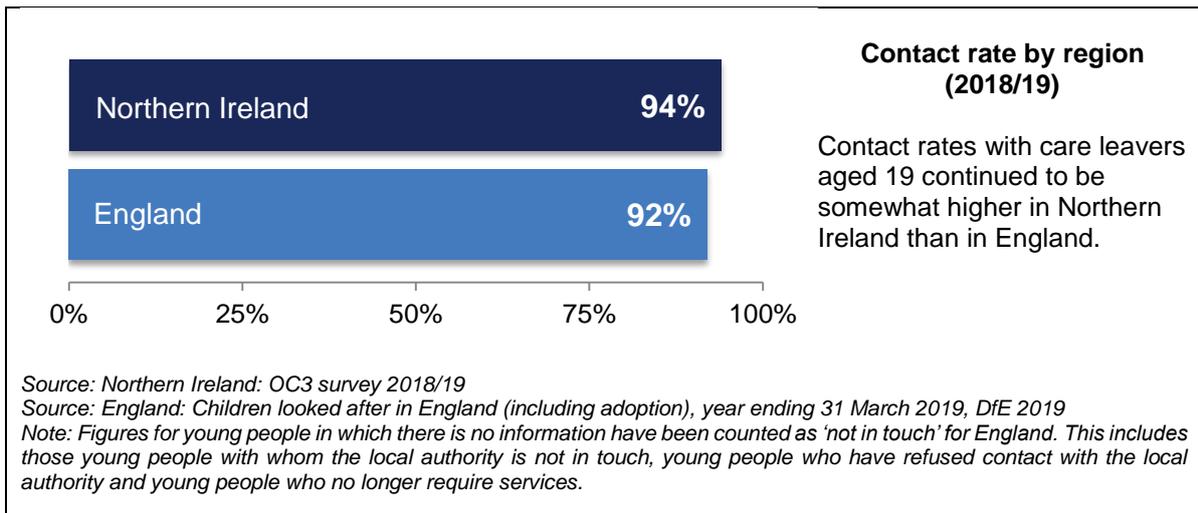
The 'Children (Leaving Care) Act (Northern Ireland) 2002' requires HSC Trusts to take reasonable steps to maintain contact with care leavers. For 2018/19, HSC Trusts reported contacts with 203 (94%) of the 216 care leavers aged 19. This is an increase of 22 percentage points since 2003/04<sup>32</sup> when the contact rate was 72%. In 2018/19 Social Services were in contact with 65% of the care leavers at least once a month.

In regards to the last placement of the care leavers, contact rates ranged between 87% and 97% across all placement types.

**Figure 20** Care Leavers aged 19 – Contact Rates by Frequency of Contact (2018/19)

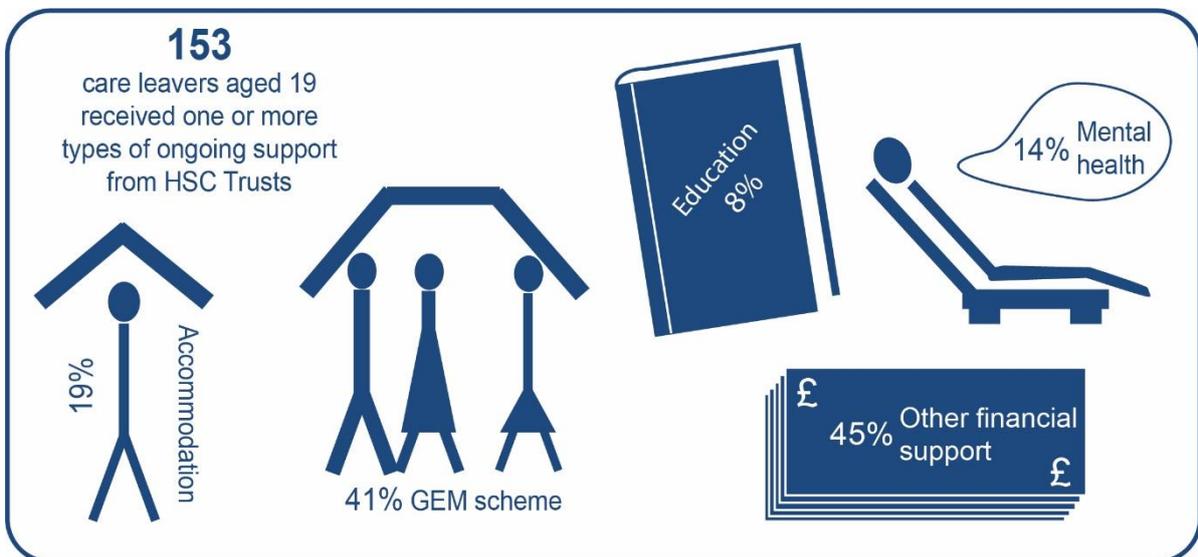


<sup>32</sup> Former Care Leavers in Northern Ireland 2003/04, DHSSPS 2006.



### 3.3.2. Support from Social Services

Some 153 (71%) of the 216 care leavers aged 19 were receiving some form of ongoing support from social services<sup>33</sup>. Of those young people receiving support, 69 (45%) were receiving financial support<sup>34</sup>, 63 (41%) were receiving support for a 'Going the Extra Mile' (GEM) placement<sup>35</sup>, 29 (19%) were receiving financial support towards accommodation, 21 (14%) were receiving support for mental health issues, 12 (8%) were receiving financial support for their education and 9 (6%) were receiving other forms of support.



*Note: Care leavers may receive more than one service. Some 6% were getting other forms of support.*

<sup>33</sup> Care leavers may be receiving more than one service.

<sup>34</sup> Financial support towards travel, groceries, leisure etc.

<sup>35</sup> The Going the Extra Mile scheme was launched in 2006 and aims to promote continuity and stability in post care life for young people living with foster carers.

A slightly lower proportion of males (69%) than females (73%) were receiving support from social services after leaving care. Care leavers with a disability were more likely to be receiving support (84%) than those without a disability (69%).

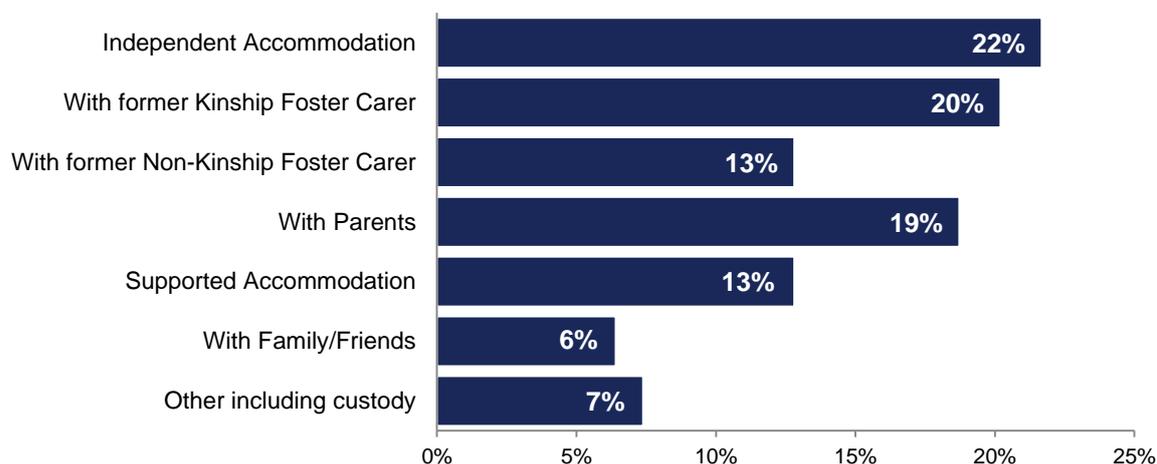
The length of the last care placement would appear to have an impact on whether or not a young person is receiving support. Of those care leavers who had been looked after for 10 years or longer, 88% were being supported by social services, compared to 61% of those who had been in care for less than 5 years.

The support received will depend on the young person’s needs, and hence the needs of the cohort of 19-year-olds in 2018/19 may differ from 2017/18. Overall, the number of care leavers receiving support decreased from 75% to 71%, the same proportion as in 2016/17. Compared with the previous year there was a decrease amongst those receiving support who got educational support (from 15% to 8%). The proportion receiving accommodation support also decreased, from 30% to 19%. All other categories of support were at similar levels as the previous year.

### 3.3.3. Accommodation

Care leavers were living in a variety of types of accommodation on their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday. A third (33%) were living with their former foster carers (20% with kinship foster carers and 13% with non-kinship foster carers). Furthermore, 59 of the 67 former foster care placements were GEM arrangements. A further 22% of care leavers were living in independent accommodation, while 19% were living with their parents, and 13% were in supported accommodation<sup>36</sup>.

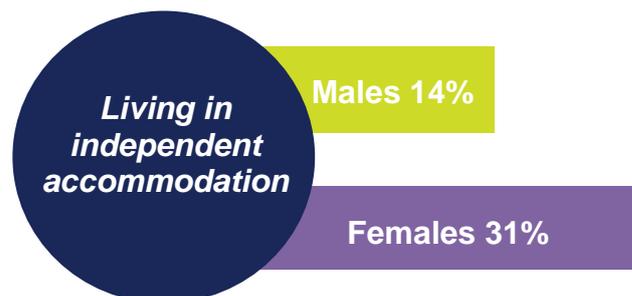
**Figure 21 Care leavers aged 19 – Type of accommodation**



*Note: Excludes care leavers who were not in contact with their HSC Trust.*

<sup>36</sup> Figures relate to those care leavers in contact with their HSC Trust.

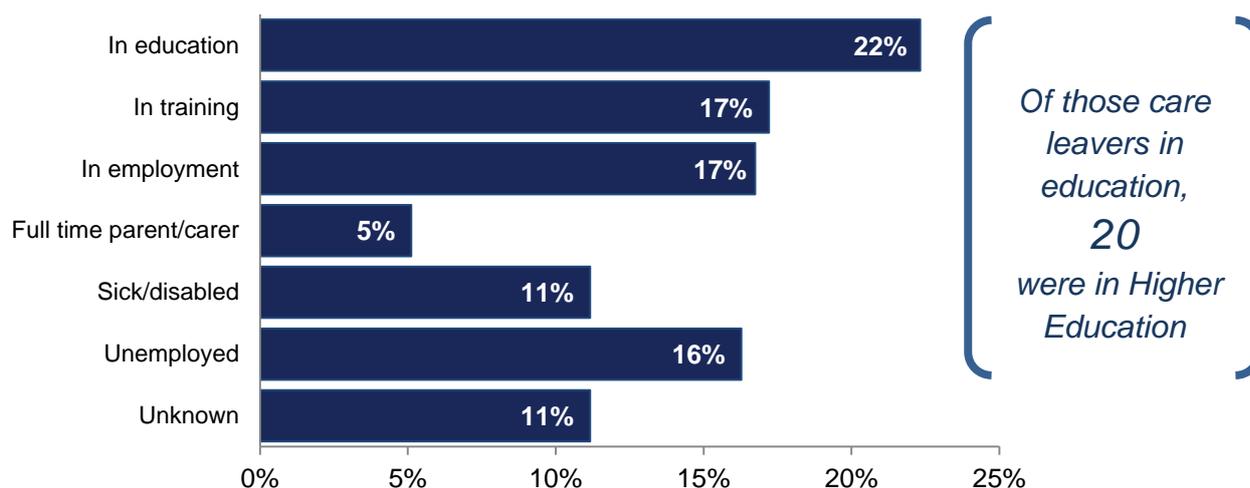
When comparing the types of accommodation in which care leavers aged 19 were living, a higher proportion (31%) of young women than young men (14%) were living in independent accommodation. In contrast, similar proportions of young men and women were living with their parents (19% and 18% respectively).



### 3.3.4. Economic Activity

Of all care leavers aged 19 in 2018/19, 22% were in education, 17% were in training<sup>37</sup> and 17% were employed. A quarter of the care leavers were economically inactive either from being unemployed (16%), having ill health or a disability (11%) or due to being a full time carer (5%). The economic activity was not known for 11% of the care leavers<sup>38</sup>.

**Figure 22** Care leavers aged 19 – Proportion of care leavers by current activity<sup>39</sup>



<sup>37</sup> “Training” includes a small number of non-Governmental training programmes

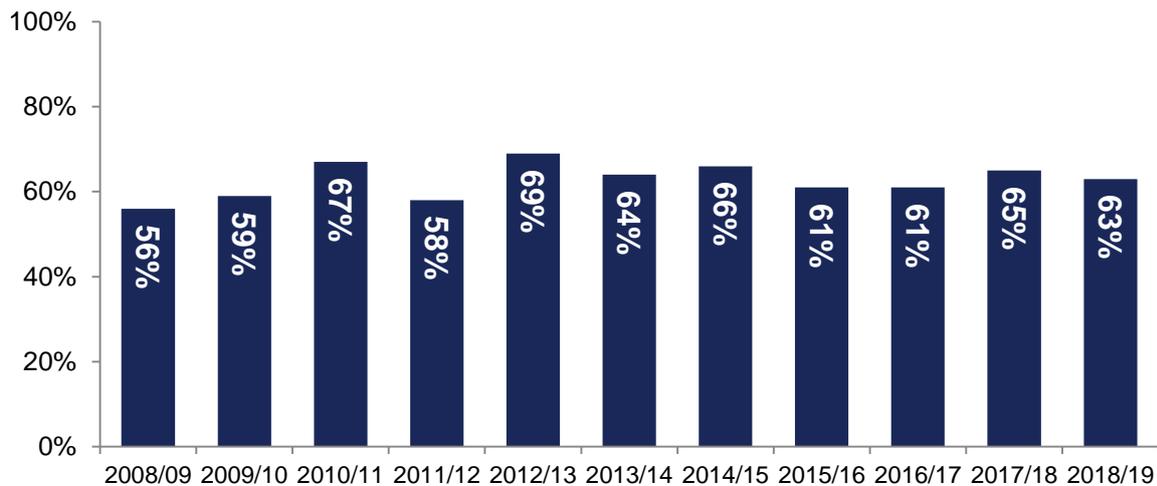
<sup>38</sup> Includes care leavers who were not in contact with their HSC Trust

<sup>39</sup> Higher education is defined as studies beyond A Level, leading to a degree or higher qualification. This includes diplomas in higher education, teaching and nursing qualifications, HNDs, ONDs and BTEC. This includes full-time and part-time study if it is considered the main activity.

All information below referring to the economic activity of care leavers aged 19, relates to care leavers who had been in contact with social services during the 12 months prior to 31 March 2019, and whose economic activity was known.

In 2018/19, 63% of all care leavers aged 19 in contact with HSC Trusts, and whose economic activity was known, were in education, training or employment, and 37% were unemployed or economically inactive.

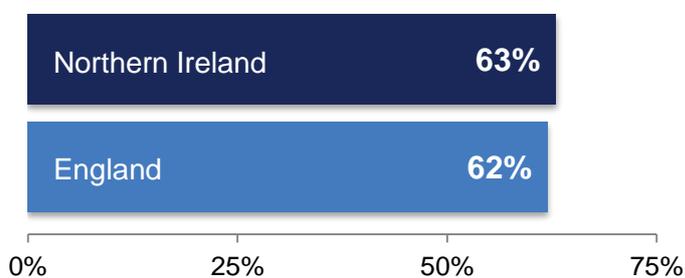
**Figure 23** Care leavers aged 19 – Proportion of care leavers in education, training or employment (2008/09 – 2018/19)



Note: Excludes care leavers who were not in contact with their HSC Trust and whose economic activity was not known.

The proportion of care leavers aged 19 in education, training or employment was 2 percentage points lower in 2018/19 than in 2017/18. Over the last 10 years, the highest proportion of care leavers in education, training, or employment was in 2012/23 (69%), and the lowest proportion was in 2008/09 (56%).

**Proportion of care leavers in education, training or employment by region (2018/19)**



The proportion of 19 year old care leavers **in touch with local authorities** who were in education, training or employment in Northern Ireland was similar to that in England.

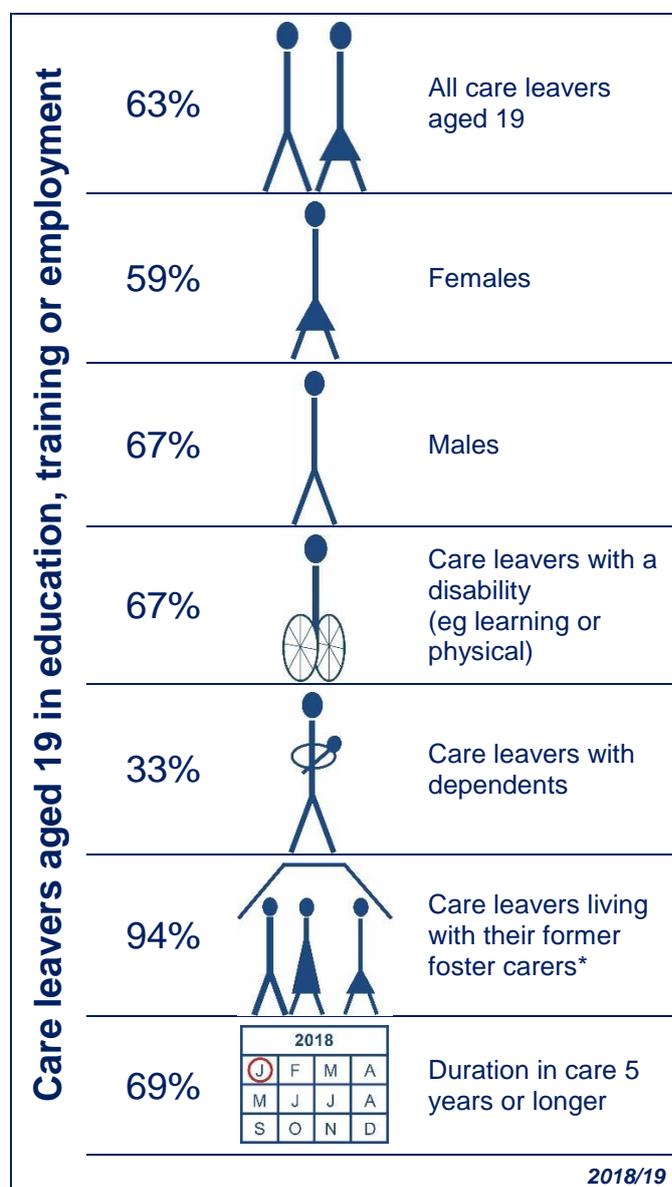
Sources:

Northern Ireland - OC3 survey 2018/19.

England - Children looked after in England (including adoption), year ending 31 March 2019, DfE 2019.

Note: Care leavers aged 19 who were in contact with HSC Trusts/Local Authorities and where information was known.

In 2018/19, the Western HSC Trust had the highest proportion of care leavers in education, training or employment (78%) whereas the Northern HSC Trust had the lowest (45%). There were increases in the proportion of care leavers in education, training or employment in the Southern and Western HSC Trusts from the previous year. Please note however, that the number of care leavers in each Trust is small, and therefore large year on year variability may occur (see Tables for details).



A higher proportion of male (67%) than female (59%) care leavers aged 19 were in education, training, or employment in 2018/19. This was the opposite to that in 2017/18 (see tables for details).

A care leaver is categorised as economically inactive if they are not in employment, training, or education due to caring responsibilities or disability. Therefore, it can be expected that a lower proportion of care leavers in those cohorts are economically active. However, in 2018/19, 67% of those with a disability (e.g. learning or physical disability) were in education, training or employment. This was higher than the overall average, and 11 percentage points higher than the previous year.

A third (33%) of the care leavers aged 19 who had dependent children, were in education, training or employment; a similar proportion to that in 2017/18.

*Excludes care leavers who were not in contact with their HSC Trust or where economic activity was not known..*

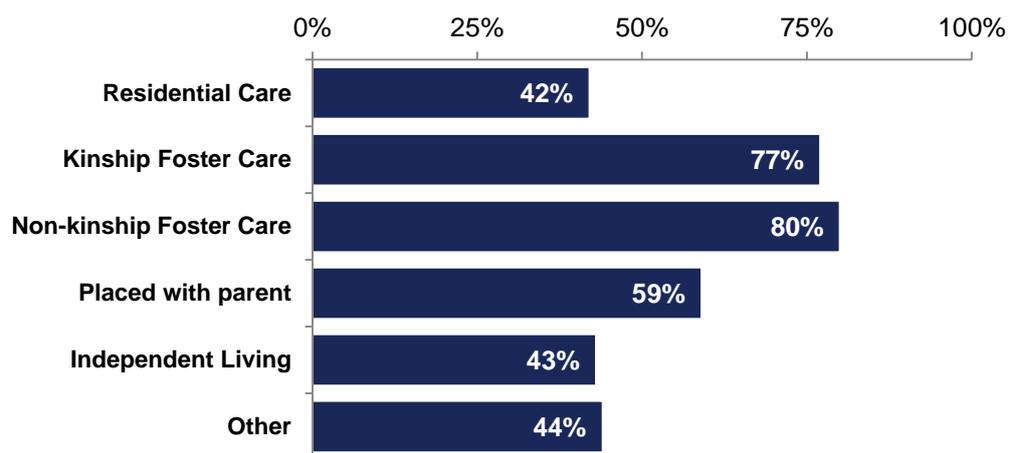
*\* Please note that 88% of those living with their former foster carers were in a GEM placement. One of the requirements for the GEM placement is that the care leaver must be in education.*

Please note that due to small numbers of care leavers with dependants and with disabilities, these figures may be subject to high year on year volatility.

Some 69% of young people who had been in care for 5 years or longer were in education, training or employment, compared with 55% of those in care for less than 5 years. This trend is similar to previous years.

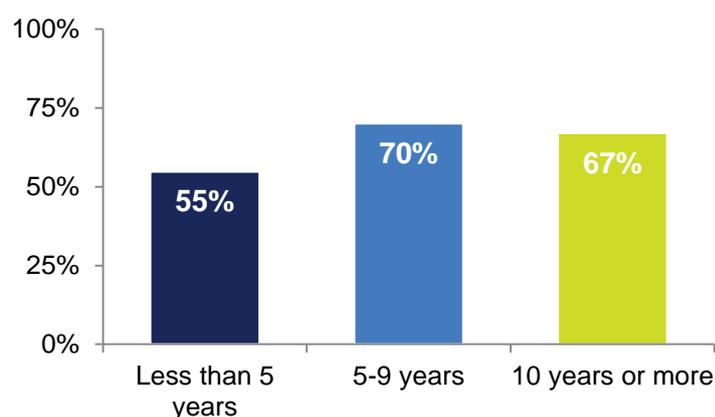
For care leavers aged 19 whose final placement was foster care, 79% were in education, training or employment (80% for non-kinship foster care and 77% for kinship foster care). In comparison, the range of those care leavers from other placement types who were in education, training or employment was 42%-59%. Due to small numbers of care leavers in each placement group, trend figures have been somewhat variable; however those with foster care as last placement have consistently shown better outcomes.

**Figure 24** Care leavers aged 19 – Care leavers in education, training and employment by last placement in care (2018/19)



*Note: Excludes care leavers who were not in contact with their HSC Trust.*

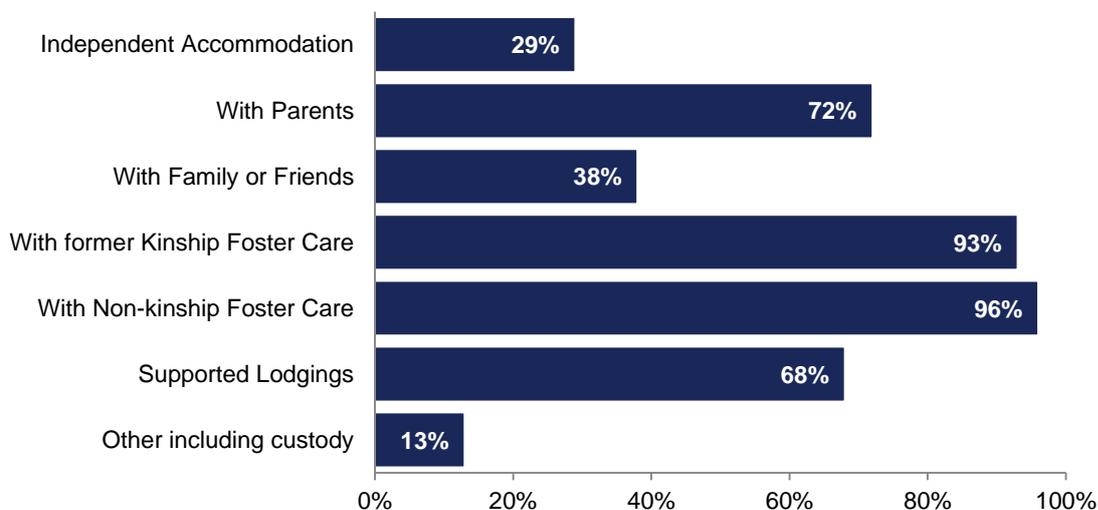
**Figure 25** Care leavers aged 19 – Care leavers in education, training and employment by time in care (2018/19)



*Note: Excludes care leavers who were not in contact with their HSC Trust.*

The care leaver's current accommodation at age 19 also seems to be linked to economic activity. Some 94% of the 19 year olds who were living with their former foster carers (kinship and non-kinship) were in education, training or employment. This was considerably higher than all other accommodation types. Please note the Going the Extra Mile (GEM) scheme, which supports a young person to continue to live with their former foster carers, is only available when the young person is in education. Hence, there will naturally be a high rate of economically active care leavers in those accommodation types.

**Figure 26 Care leavers aged 19 – Care leavers in education, training and employment by current accommodation (2018/19)**



*Note: Excludes care leavers who were not in contact with their HSC Trust.*

### NEET

The term NEET refers to young people not in education, employment or training. The term was first used in the 1990s and is now in common use.

Calculating NEET is dependent on the information sources available. As such, there may be some difference, for example, between NEET figures for Northern Ireland in general and that of care leavers in this survey.

In this survey, care leavers who are NEET refers to those who were not in part- or full time education, training<sup>A</sup> or employment. Those care leavers whose activity was not known were excluded from the calculations.

In general, care leavers defined as NEET were either economically inactive, due to illness/disability or full time caring responsibilities, or they were unemployed.

<sup>A</sup> Includes a small number of non-Government supported training programmes.

*In 2018/19,  
**37%**  
of care leavers  
aged 19  
were NEET.*

## Appendix A Technical Notes

### Care Leaver Statistics for Northern Ireland

Statistics on care leavers have previously been published in two separate publications; “Care leavers Aged 16-18 in Northern Ireland” and “Care Leavers Aged 19 in Northern Ireland”. Due to the similarities of topic and to allow for better use of resources producing the publications, these two publications were merged to the bulletin “Northern Ireland Care Leavers” in 2013/14. Historic publications on care leavers in Northern Ireland can be downloaded from the Department of Health’s (DoH) website:

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/doh-statistics-and-research>

### OC1 and OC3 Surveys

The information presented in this bulletin derives from the eleventh OC1 information collection of care leavers aged 16-18 in Northern Ireland and the tenth OC3 information collection of care leavers at the age of 19. These information returns were provided by each of the five Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts in Northern Ireland to Community Information Branch (CIB) in the DoH.

OC1 and OC3, together with its companion return OC2 (children in care for 12 months or longer at 30 September), provide a comprehensive series of data on looked after children in Northern Ireland. It is a stated aim of DoH to improve outcomes for children in care, by improving the quality and stability of placements and improving educational opportunities for young people as they make the transition to adulthood. These publications help to measure the Department’s progress in meeting these stated aims.

The OC1 return, introduced in 2002, reports the circumstances of young people at 31 March aged 16-18 who had left care during the previous financial year. It collects a range of information, including educational achievement, economic activity, disability, duration in care and placement prior to leaving care.

The OC3 return, introduced in 2004, reports the circumstances of care leavers at the time of their 19th birthday. It collects information on frequency of contacts with social services, economic activity and accommodation.

To help put some figures within their wider social context, comparative information with, for example, the general school population and looked after children in other countries in the United Kingdom have been included where possible. Users of these statistics find such comparisons interesting; though it should be stressed that they are not like-for-like comparisons and may merely reflect differences between different cohorts of children.

### Data Collection

The returns used to collect this information has one record for each young person fitting the parameters of the collection. The returns are completed online by nominated HSC Trust staff using a secure web-based application. All records are anonymised to protect the confidentiality of these young people.

For inclusion in OC1, care leavers had to be aged 16-18 years when leaving care and left care during the period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019. The information collected related to the last period in care.

The OC3 return relates to care leavers at the time of their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday. It provides data on all care leavers at age 19, who had been looked after on 1 April, 3 years previously.

All references made to 'Year' refer to the financial year, 1 April to 31 March, i.e. for the 2018/19 collection the reference period was 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019.

Guidance notes and other documents associated with the completion of the OC surveys are available to view or download from the DoH website:

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/care-leavers-returns-and-quality-reports>

## Rounding/Disclosure Conventions

Percentages have been rounded to whole numbers and as a consequence some percentages may not sum to 100. It has been necessary to suppress other figures whenever it would be possible to calculate the value of a suppressed number by means of simple arithmetic. The rule applied in these circumstances has been to suppress the next smallest data item.

## Data Quality

All information submitted by HSC Trusts was validated at the point of entry, where Trust staff correct or amend data as required, and provide appropriate explanations if information is missing. Community Information Branch, within DoH, perform further checks, using historical data to monitor annual variations and emerging trends.

## A National Statistics Publication

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Services Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- are trustworthy;
- have high quality; and
- are of value to the public.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed. The most recent assessment of these statistics, Report 265, can be found at the following link:

<https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/publications-list/?type=assessment-report>

If you have any comments on this publication, please contact:

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## Related Publications

Details of statistics on looked after children published by other countries in the UK (United Kingdom) can be found as detailed below.

### *Scotland*

Children's Social Work Statistics 2016/17 published in March 2018, further information can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/childrens-social-work-statistics-2017-2018/>

### *Wales*

Children Looked After by Local Authorities 2017/18 are produced by the Local Government Data Unit and the Welsh Assembly Government. Data for the period up to the end of March 2018 were released in November 2018 and can be found at:

<https://gov.wales/children-looked-after-local-authorities-april-2018-march-2019>

### *England*

Statistics on Children Looked After in England (including adoption) are produced annually by the Department of Children, Schools and Families. Figures for the year ending 31 March 2017 were published in September 2017, and are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption-2018-to-2019>

Other statistics produced by the DoH relating to looked after children and other areas of children's social care with relevant web links are detailed below:

### *Children's Social Care Statistics for Northern Ireland*

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/childrens-social-care-statistics-northern-ireland>

### *Children in Care in Northern Ireland*

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/articles/looked-after-children>

### *Child Protection Register*

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/articles/child-protection-register>

### *Children Adopted from Care in Northern Ireland*

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/articles/children-adopted-care>

A further source of information on issues relating to children and young people in care and care leavers is the virtual library hosted by the Voice of Young People in Care (VOYPIC) charity. This virtual library can be accessed via the following link:

[www.libraryinthesky.org](http://www.libraryinthesky.org)

## Appendix B Definitions

### Placement

*Foster care* is when a child is placed by a Trust, or by its parents (or those with parental responsibility), with other persons who will care for, and rear the child. Foster Carers are approved by a Health and Social Care Trust and receive an allowance for their caring responsibilities from the approving Trust.

*Kinship foster care (approved)* is when a looked after child is placed by a Trust with a relative, friend, or other person with a prior connection to the child, who will care for and rear the child. A person with a prior connection could be someone who knows the child in a professional capacity such as a childminder, a teacher, or a youth worker, although these are not exclusive categories. Kinship Foster Carers are approved by a Health and Social Care Trust and receive an allowance for their caring responsibilities from the approving Trust.

*Placed for adoption* refers to a child that has been approved to be adopted and is placed with their prospective adoptive parents pending affirmation from the courts. It can be distinguished between children who are placed for adoption with their former foster carers and those who are placed for adoption with 'others' (not former foster carers).

*Residential care* is when a looked after child is placed by a Trust in a Children's Home. Residential care for children/Children's Homes are there to ensure that the needs of children are met when they cannot live with their own family. They are a place for children to develop and grow, as well as providing food, shelter, and space for play and leisure in a caring environment. Children's Homes look after children with many different needs.

*Secure accommodation* is provided for children on a short term basis when it is likely that the child, in any other setting, will injure him/herself or abscond and is likely to suffer significant harm when absconding.

*Placed with parent* (in previous publications called "Placed with Family") refers to children for whom a Care Order exists and who are placed with their parents, a person who is not a parent but who has parental responsibility for the child or where a child is in care and there was a residence order in force with respect to him/her immediately before the care order was made, and who are placed with a person in whose favour the residence order was made.

*Emergency foster care* is when a looked after child is placed by a social worker in an emergency (short term) arrangement, for example emergency kinship foster care. Emergency kinship foster carers would normally not have been previously approved by a Health and Social Care Trust as foster carers.

*Independent living arrangements* refers to children placed in independent accommodation. This would refer to young people between 16-18 years old. Independent living arrangements can further be categorised into with or without formal support from Trust.

*Other placements* refers to any placement reported that are not covered by other categories given. This may include children in assessment centres, boarding schools etc, and also special arrangements relating to a Trust. The categories included may change from year to year.

## Legal Status

The legal framework for compulsory intervention in the care and upbringing of children. If more than one legal status is indicated or in force for the child at 31 March, the latest one only is recorded.

*Emergency Protection Order (Article 63 & 64):* An Emergency Protection Order (EPO) is intended for use in urgent cases to protect a child in the short-term. Almost anyone with a concern can apply for an EPO, although in most circumstances a Trust will seek one. Where the applicant is a Trust or the NSPCC they must show that in the course of fulfilling their duty to investigate they are being unreasonably frustrated in gaining access to the child. Anyone else applying for an EPO they must show that the child is likely to suffer significant harm unless removed to, or allowed to remain, in a safe place.

An EPO lasts for eight days but can be extended on one occasion for a further seven days. An application to discharge the order cannot be made within the first 72 hours giving a Trust sometime to decide what actions to take in respect of the child. The person to whom the order is addressed also gains parental responsibility for the child for the duration of the order.

*Accommodated (Article 21):* Children with this legal status have been accommodated by a HSC Trust if there is no one who has parental responsibility for them, they have been lost or abandoned or if the person who has been caring for them has been prevented, for whatever reason, from providing them with suitable accommodation or care. Children are often accommodated with the permission of their parents.

*Care Order (Article 50 or 59):* A Care Order accords the HSC Trust parental responsibility and allows for the child to be removed from the parental home. This does not extinguish the parental responsibility of the child's parents but means that they cannot exercise this responsibility while the Care Order is in place. For a Court to make a Care Order it must be satisfied that the child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm and that the harm or likelihood of harm is attributable to the care given to the child, or likely to be given to the child, not being what it would be reasonable to expect a parent to give or the child being beyond parental control.

*Interim Care Orders (Article 57):* An Interim Care Order is put in place following an adjournment of proceedings for a Care Order or in any family proceedings in which a Court orders a Trust to investigate the circumstances of a child. An Interim Care Order can be in place for up to eight weeks initially and for a further four weeks upon renewal and subsequent occasions that Court deems an Interim Order necessary.

*Supervision Order:* This order requires the Trust to advise, assist and befriend the supervised child and can only be granted if the same threshold conditions that apply for Care Orders are met. This Order does not give the Trust parental responsibility. It does allow a social worker to issue directions about the child's upbringing including place of residence and involvement in certain programmes. Schedule 3 of the Children Order sets out the full range of matters that may be addressed in a Supervision Order.

*Interim Supervision Orders (Article 57):* An Interim Supervision can be put in place following an adjournment of proceedings for a Supervision Order or in any family proceedings in which a question arises with respect to the welfare of any child, it appears to the court that it may be appropriate for a supervision order to be made with respect to him, the court may direct the appropriate authority to undertake an investigation of the child's circumstances.

## Appendix C Tables

*The tables are available in excel format on the DoH website*

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/articles/care-leavers>

- Table 1: Care leavers aged 16 – 18: Profile
- Table 2: Care leavers aged 16 – 18: Last Placement Type
- Table 3: Care leavers aged 16 – 18: Length of Time in Care
- Table 4: Care leavers aged 16 – 18: Reasons for Leaving Care
- Table 5: Care leavers aged 16 – 18: Educational Attainment
- Table 6: Care leavers aged 16 – 18: Current Activity
- Table 7: Care leavers aged 16 – 18: Economic Activity
- Table 8: Care leavers aged 16 – 18: Health & Social Care Trust
- Table 9: Care leavers aged 19: Profile
- Table 10: Care leavers aged 19: Length of Time in Care
- Table 11: Care leavers aged 19: Last Placement Type
- Table 12: Care leavers aged 19: Legal status prior to Leaving Care
- Table 13: Care leavers aged 19: Contact Rates
- Table 14: Care leavers aged 19: Current Activity
- Table 15: Care leavers aged 19: Education, Training or Employment
- Table 16: Care leavers aged 19: Current Accommodation
- Table 17: Care leavers aged 19: Accommodation by Gender
- Table 18: Care leavers aged 19: Support from Social Services
- Table 19: Care leavers aged 19: Health & Social Care Trust

This statistical bulletin and other statistical bulletins published by  
Community Information Branch are available to download from

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/dhssps-statistics-and-research-social-services/social-care-statistics>