



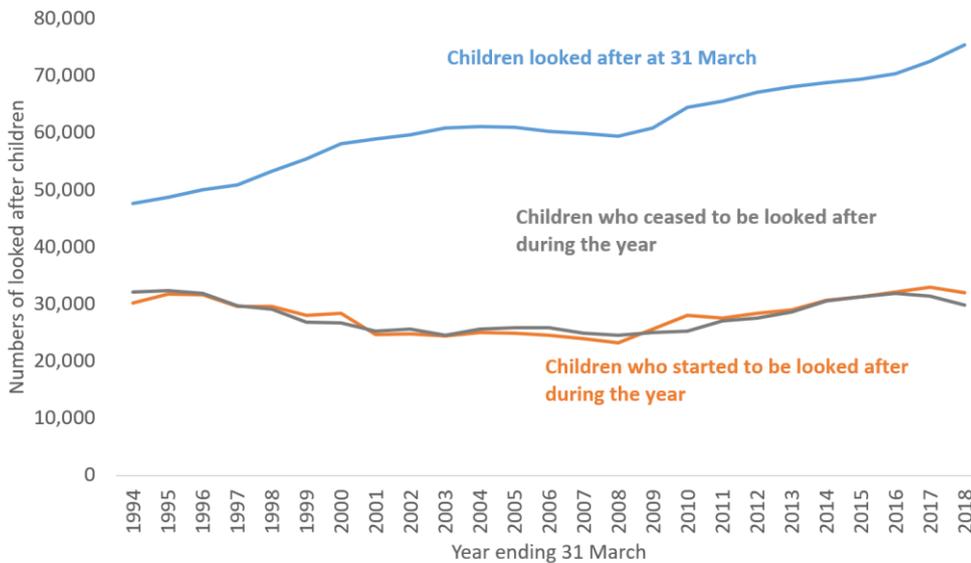
Children looked after in England (including adoption), year ending 31 March 2018



15 November 2018

The number of children looked after continue to rise...

Numbers of children starting and ceasing to be looked after in the year, and numbers at 31 March

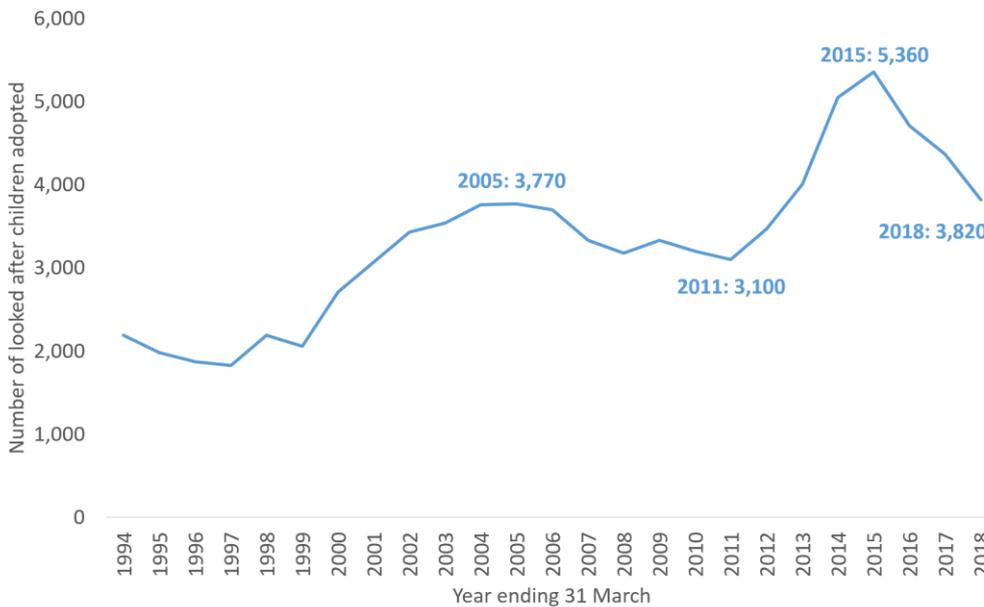


At 31 March 2018, there were 75,420 looked after children in England, up 4% on 31 March 2017.

Both the number of children starting to be looked after and the number ceasing to be looked after fell; 32,050 children started to be looked after (down 3% on last year) and 29,860 ceased to be looked after (down 5%).

Adoptions from care continue to fall...

Looked after children who were adopted during the year



3,820 children ceased to be looked after due to adoption, a decrease of 13% on 2017, continuing the drop in numbers seen last year and down from a peak of 5,360 adoptions in 2015.

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About this release

This statistics publication provides information about looked after children in England for the year ending 31 March 2018, including their placement type, their legal status, the numbers starting and ceasing to be looked after, and the numbers who go missing or are away from their placement without authorisation. Data is reported on care leavers aged 17, 18, 19, 20 and 21 years, and numbers include looked after children who were placed for adoption, the number who were adopted and the average time between different stages of the adoption process.

In this publication

The following tables are included in this publication:

- Children looked after tables (Excel .xls)
- Underlying data (open format .csv and metadata .txt) which includes local authority level figures.

The accompanying looked after children statistics guide provides information on the data sources, their coverage and quality and explains the methodology used in producing the data.

Feedback

We are changing how our releases look and welcome feedback on any aspect of this document at cla.stats@education.gov.uk.

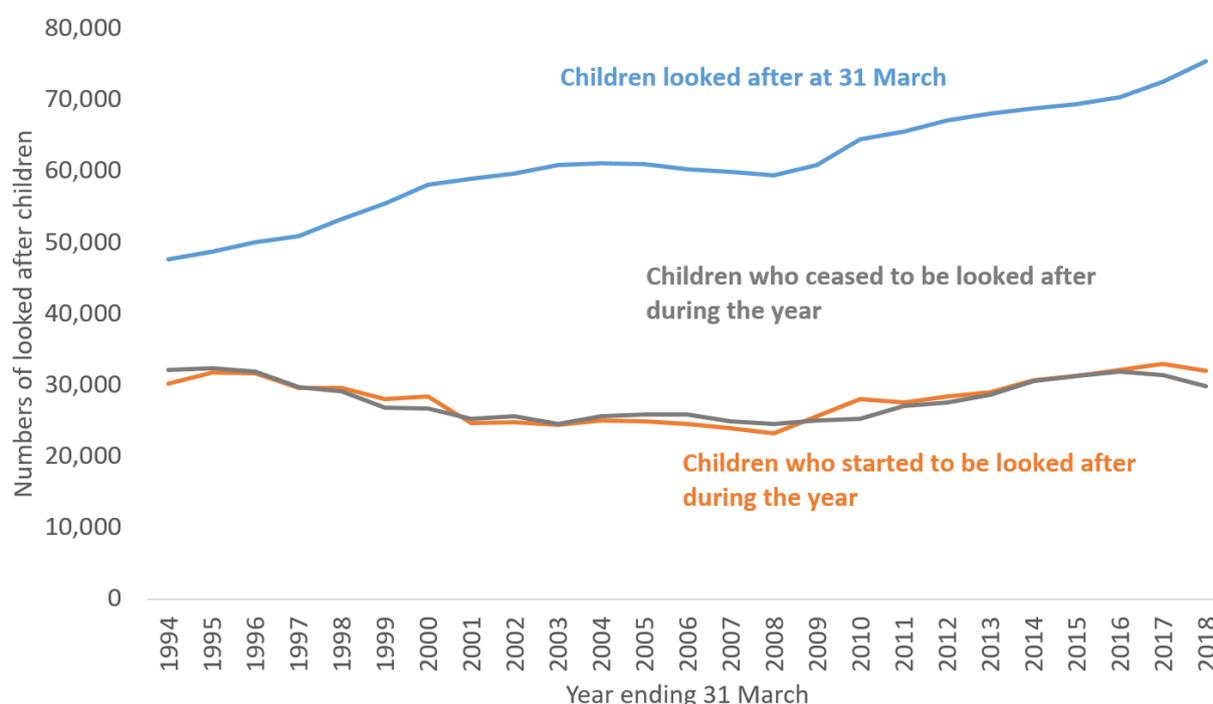
1. Children looked after by local authorities (Tables A1-A5, C1, D1, D3)

At 31 March 2018, the number of children looked after by local authorities in England increased, up 4% to 75,420 from 72,590 in 2017, continuing increases seen in recent years. This is equivalent to a rate of 64 per 10,000 in 2018, which is up from 62 per 10,000 in 2017 and 60 per 10,000 in 2016.

The number of children starting to be looked after has fallen slightly this year, by 3%, after a period of gradual increases. 32,050 children started to be looked after in the year ending 31 March 2018, down from 32,940 in 2017.

The number ceasing to be looked after has fallen again by 5% to 29,860, from a high of 31,850 in 2016. After falls in the last 3 years, the average duration of the latest period of care rose slightly this year, up from 758 days in 2017 to 772 days in 2018.

Chart 1: Number of children starting and ceasing to be looked after in the year and numbers at 31 March
England, year ending 31 March 1994 to 2018



Source: SSDA903

Under the Children Act 1989, a **child is looked after** by a local authority if he or she falls into one of the following:

- is provided with accommodation, for a continuous period of more than 24 hours [Children Act 1989, Section 20 and 21],
- is subject to a care order [Children Act 1989, Part IV], or
- is subject to a placement order.

Further details can be found on page 7.

Characteristics of children looked after at 31 March (Table A1)

The broad characteristics of looked after children have remained similar to previous years; just over half (56%) are male, 44% are female.

The largest age group (39%) of looked after children are aged 10-15 years; 23% are aged 16 years and over, 19% are aged 5-9 years, 13% are aged 1-4 years and 6% are aged under 1 year.

In the year ending 31 March 2016 there was a large increase in the number of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. This sub group are generally older (aged 16 years +), boys, and are in need due to absent parenting. In many cases, the patterns seen in figures throughout this release are influenced by this

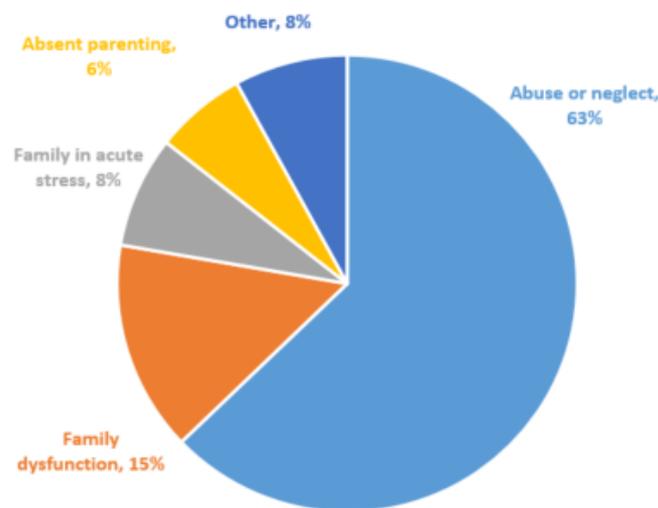
homogeneous group, some of whom are now of an age to leave care. More information on unaccompanied asylum-seeking looked after children can be found in section 2.

The majority of looked after children are of white ethnicity (75%). 9% were of mixed ethnicity and 7% were of Black or Black British ethnicity. Since 2014, the proportion of looked after children of white ethnicity has decreased steadily from 78% to 75%, whilst the proportions of 'Asian or Asian British' and 'Other' have increased slightly. It is likely this slight change is due to the broadly non-white make up of unaccompanied asylum seeking children, a group which has grown in numbers in recent years.

Reason for being looked after (Table A1)

When a child is assessed by children's services their primary need¹ is recorded. 47,530 children were identified as having a primary need of 'abuse or neglect' - the most common reason identified. 11,270 were in need due to 'family dysfunction' and 5,980 were due to the 'family being in acute stress'. 4,860 were identified as in need due to 'absent parenting', almost all of whom are unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

Chart 2: Proportions of looked after children by primary need
England, 31 March 2018



Source: SSDA903

Legal status of looked after children (Tables A1, C1)

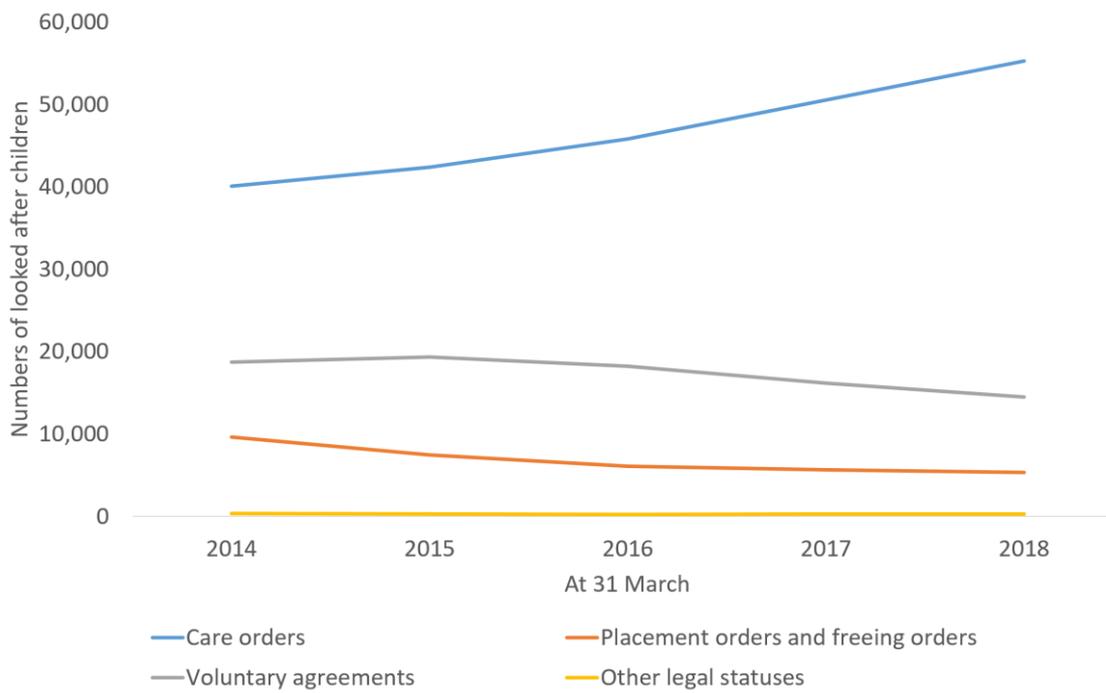
Most children are looked after under a care order; the numbers and proportions of children looked after under a care order continue to increase and the number who are looked after through a voluntary arrangement continue to decrease. At 31 March 2018, 55,240 (73%) children looked after were looked after under a care order, up from 40,090 (58%) in 2014. 14,500 (19%) were looked after under a voluntary agreement, down from a peak of 19,320 (28%) in 2015.

This growth in numbers of children looked after under a care order, at a point in time, reflect the changes seen for the legal status of children starting to be looked after. In recent years, the number of children starting to be looked after under a voluntary agreement has fallen and the number starting to be looked after under a care order have increased.

In addition, the numbers of children with a placement order have fallen steadily over the last five years. In 2014 there were 9,590 children looked after (14%) who were being looked after under a placement order; in 2018 there were 5,360 (7%), a decrease of 44%.

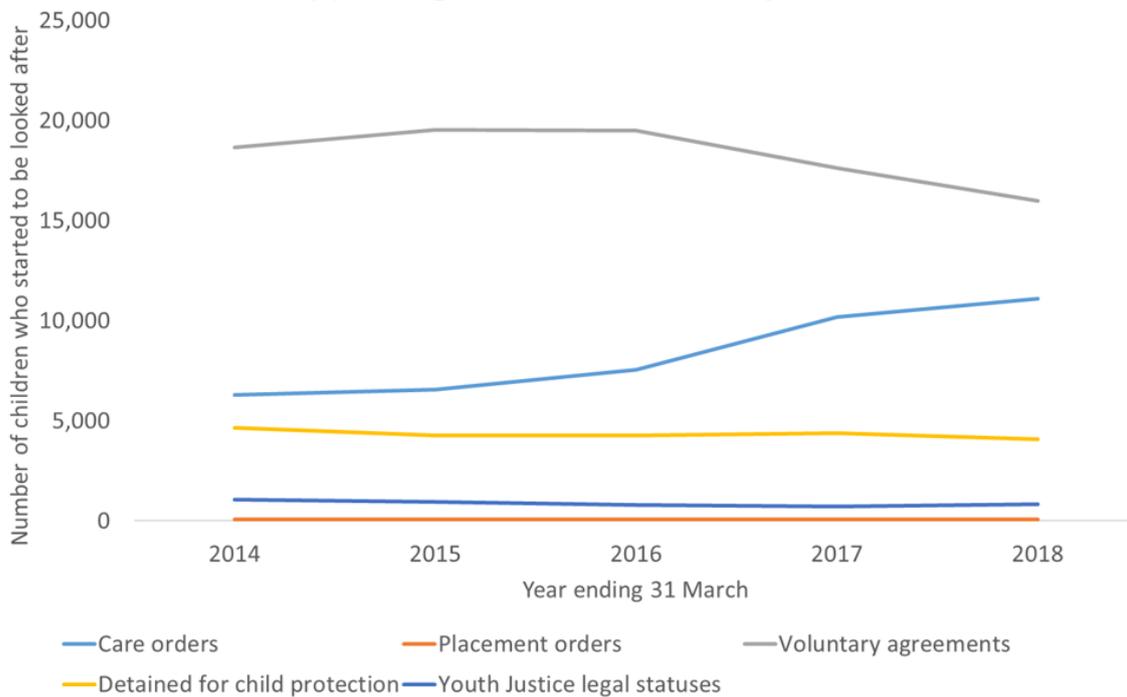
¹ Further detail of the primary need codes can be found in [appendix A](#) of the children in need census collection guide.

Chart 3: Legal status of children looked after:
 England, 2014 to 2018
(a) at 31 March



Source: SSDA903

(b) starting to be looked after in the year



Source: SSDA903

A **voluntary agreement** under section 20 of the Children Act 1989 enables a local authority to provide accommodation for any child in need if they consider that to do so would safeguard or promote the child's welfare. Such an arrangement requires the consent of those with parental responsibility where a child is under 16 or the child themselves where the child is over 16. A local authority is required to provide accommodation for a child within their area under section 20 as a result of:

- (a) there being no person who has parental responsibility for him
- (b) his being lost or having been abandoned; or
- (c) the person who has been caring for him being prevented (whether or not permanently, and for whatever reason) from providing him with suitable accommodation or care.

Under the Children Act 1989, a **care order** is defined as an order made by the court on the application of any local authority or authorised person to:

- (a) place a child with respect to whom the application is made in the care of a designated local authority; or
- (b) put him under the supervision of a designated local authority.

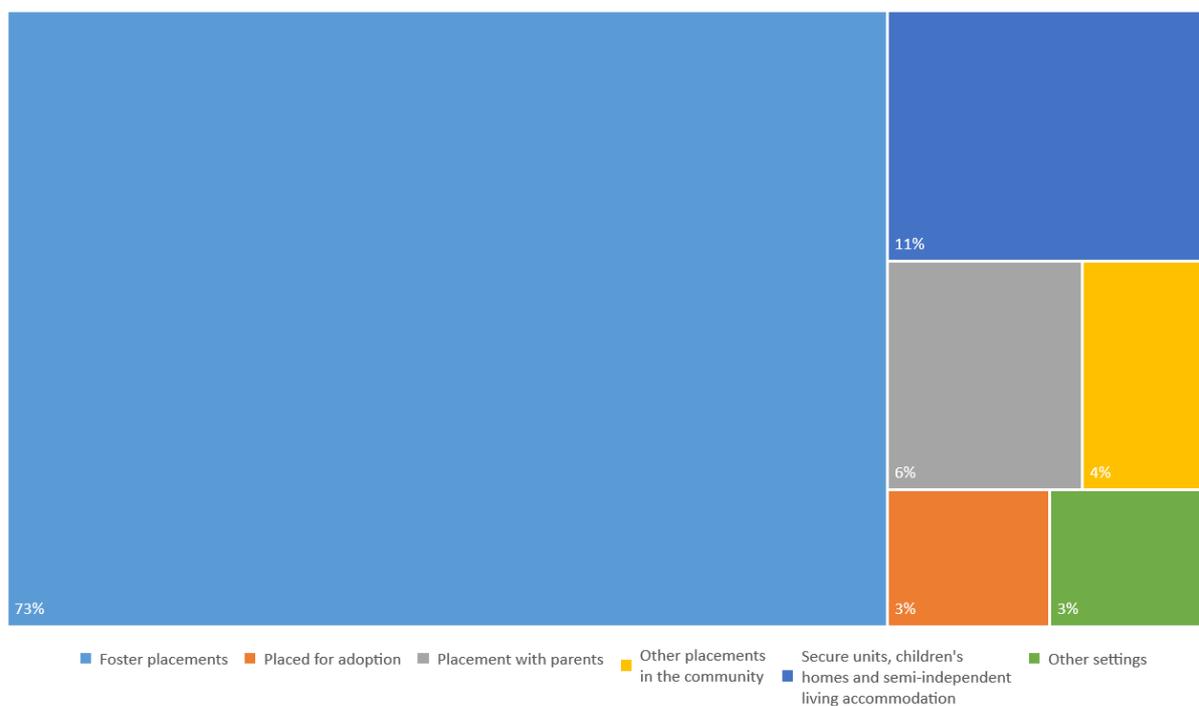
A **placement order** is a court order which gives a local authority the legal authority to place a child for adoption with any prospective adopters who may be chosen by the authority. Only local authorities may apply for placement orders. The order continues in force until it is revoked, an adoption order is made in respect of the child, the child marries, forms a civil partnership or the child reaches 18.

Placement of children looked after (Table A2)

Most looked after children are accommodated in foster placements. 55,200 (73%) children looked after at 31 March 2018 were in foster placements, an increase in numbers from 53,010 in 2017, but similar proportions to previous years. An increasing proportion of those children in foster care have been placed with relative or friends, up steadily from 14% in 2014 to 18% in 2018.

11% of children looked after are placed in secure units, children homes and semi-independent living arrangements and 6% are placed with parents.

Chart 4: Proportions of looked after children by placement type
England, 31 March 2018



Source: SSDA903

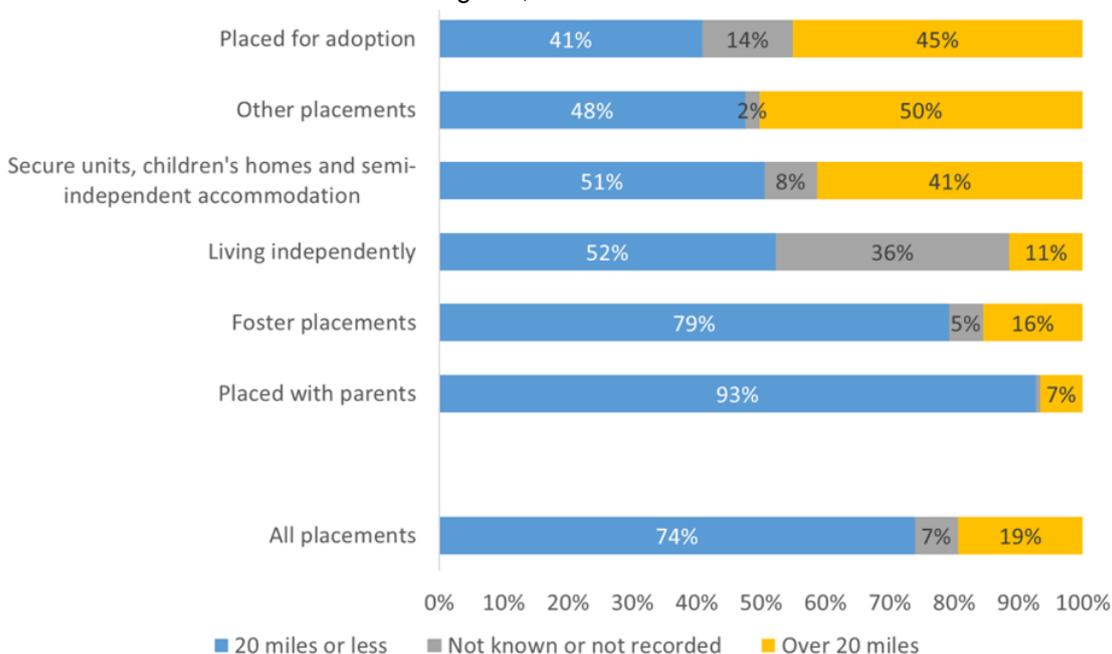
There has continued to be a fall in children placed with prospective adopters. 2,230 children were placed for adoption at 31 March 2018, down 18% on the 2,710 children placed for adoption at 31 March 2017. This mirrors the decrease seen in all children looked after with a placement order.

Locality of placements (Tables A4, A5)

44,450 (59%) of children looked after at 31 March 2018 were placed inside the local authority boundary and 30,670 (41%) were placed outside, similar to last year.

55,740 (74%) children looked after at 31 March 2018 were within 20 miles of their home. This value varies, as we would expect, depending on the type of placement the child is in, for example, 79% of foster placements were within 20 miles but only 41% of those placed for adoption were. For 7% of children, the home address was not known or the distance between home and placement was not recorded².

Chart 5: Proportions of looked after children placed 20 miles or less, or over 20 miles from home, by placement type
England, 31 March 2018



Source: SSDA903

² This could be for example because the child is an asylum-seeking child. However also for reasons of confidentiality, distance and LA of placement are not recorded for some children including some placed for adoption.

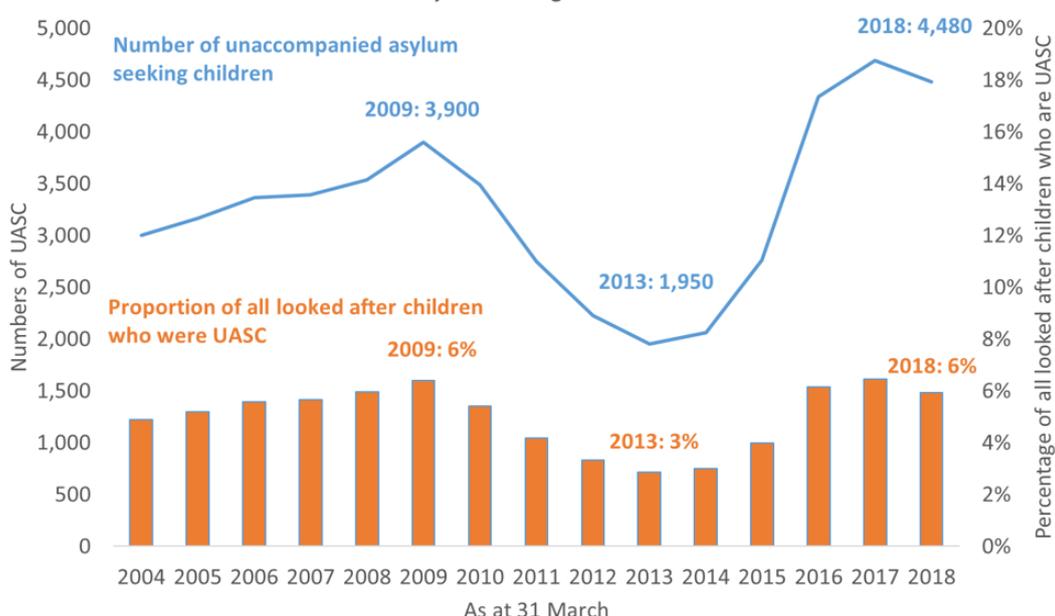
2. Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (Table A3)

An **unaccompanied asylum-seeking child** is an individual, who is under 18, who has applied for asylum in his/her own right, is separated from both parents and is not being cared for by an adult who by law or custom has responsibility to do so.

In 2016 there was a large rise in the numbers of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children being looked after by local authorities. After a more modest increase in numbers last year, the numbers have fallen slightly in 2018.

At 31 March 2018 there were 4,480 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, down 4% on the number at 31 March 2017. In 2018, unaccompanied asylum-seeking children continue to represent around 6% of all children looked after in England.

Chart 6: Numbers and proportions of looked after children who were unaccompanied asylum-seeking children
England, 2004 to 2018



Source: SSDA903

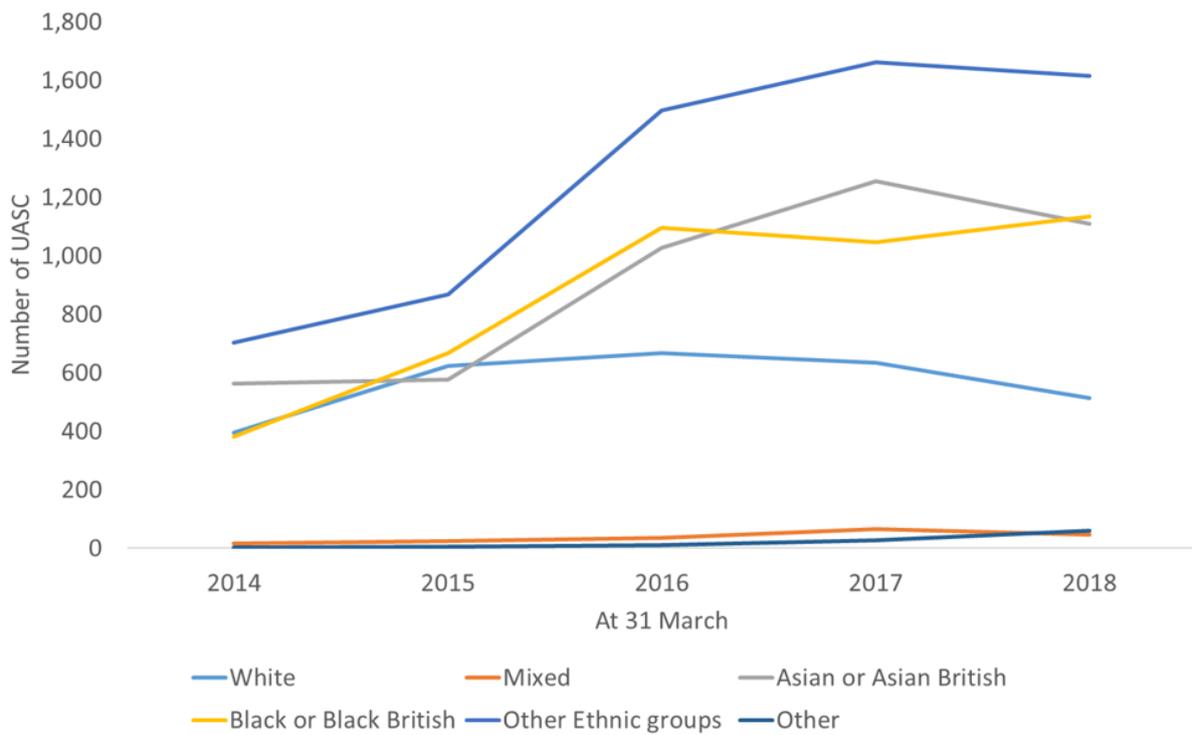
The fall in numbers is due to a decrease in children under 16 years, which stand at 820, down 22% on 2017; whereas the number of children aged 16 years and over have increased 1% to 3,660.

Table 1: Numbers and proportions of children looked after who were unaccompanied asylum seeking children, by age:
England, at 31 March

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total children	2,060	2,760	4,340	4,690	4,480	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
<i>Of which:</i>										
<i>Under 16 years</i>	520	730	1,080	1,050	820	25%	26%	25%	22%	18%
<i>16 years and over</i>	1,540	2,040	3,260	3,630	3,660	75%	74%	75%	78%	82%

Source: SSDA903

**Chart 7: Numbers of looked after children who were unaccompanied asylum-seeking children by ethnicity
England, 2014 to 2018**



Source: SSDA903

Whilst we do not collect information on the nationality of looked after children³, we do collect information on the child stated ethnicity. The recent increases in numbers of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children is mainly down to increases in numbers from an 'African' background.

³ Statistics on asylum *applications* from unaccompanied asylum-seeking children by nationality are [published](#) by the Home Office.

3. Children who ceased to be looked after (including adoption) (Tables D1-D3)

29,860 children ceased to be looked after in the year ending 31 March 2018, which is a fall of 5% on the 31,410 ceasing to be looked after in the year ending 31 March 2017. 57% were male and 43% were female (reflecting the large numbers of older unaccompanied asylum-seeking children who started being looked after in 2016 who are now likely to have reached 18 years).

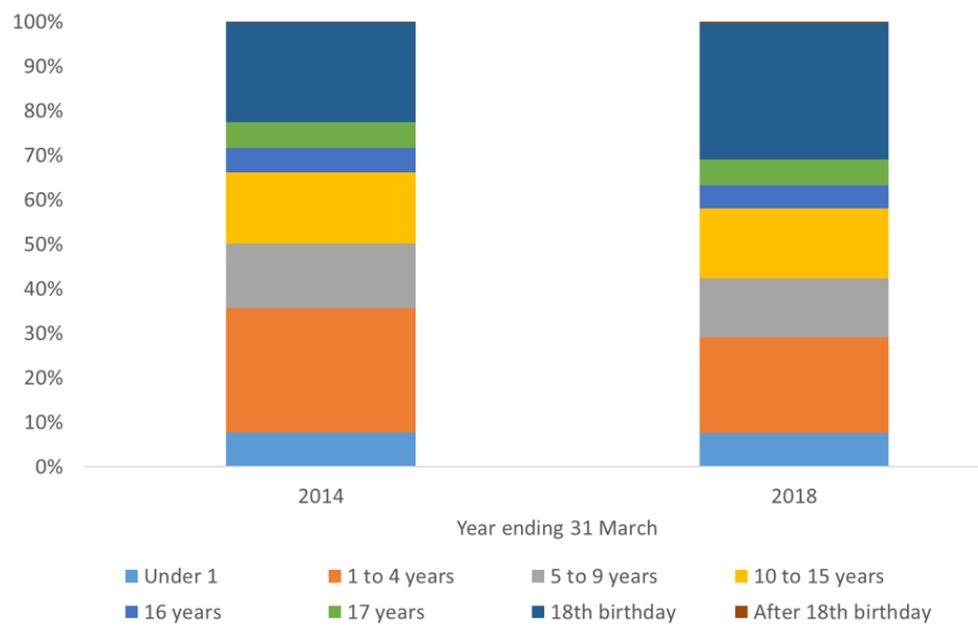
Reasons for ceasing to be looked after

31% of children ceasing to be looked after returned home to their parents. 13% were adopted (down from 17% in 2014) and 11% ceased to be looked after with a special guardianship order.

Age on ceasing to be looked after

Those leaving care are more likely to be aged 18 or aged 1 to 4. In the year ending 31 March 2018, 9,200 (31%) children ceased to be looked after on their 18th birthday, up from 6,830 (22%) in 2014. Over the same time period, the number of children aged 1 to 4 years ceasing to be looked after has fallen from 8,550 in the year ending 31 March 2014 to 6,430 in 2018. This corresponds to the age when most children who are adopted leave care and the fall reflects the drop in the number ceasing with a placement order (down from 4,930 in 2014 to 3,730 in 2018).

Chart 8: Children ceasing to be looked after, by age:
England, years ending 31 March 2014 and 2018



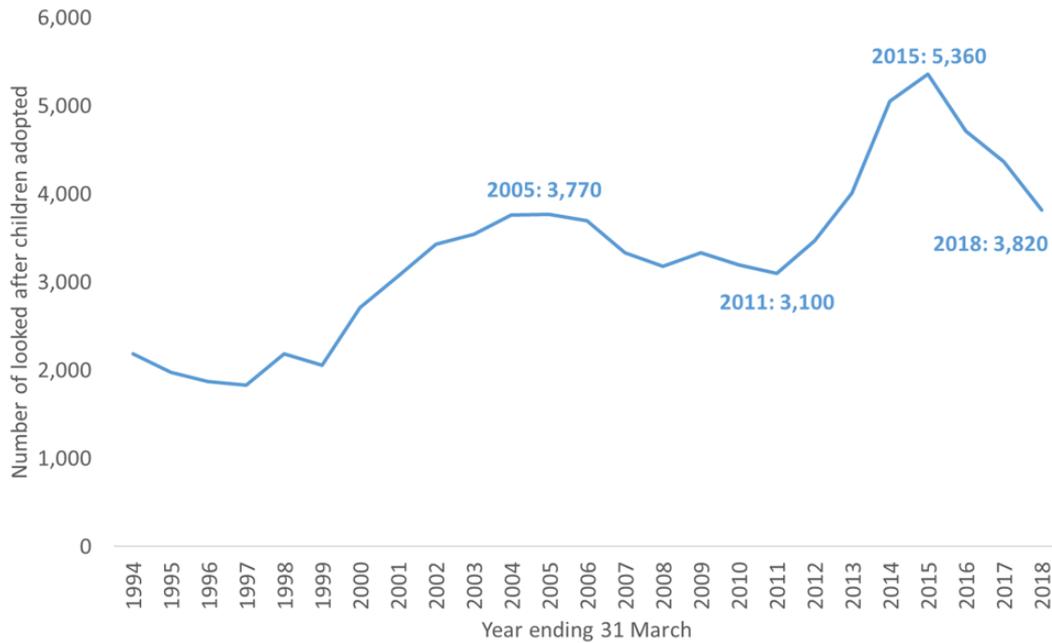
Source: SSDA903

The average duration of the latest period of care has increased slightly this year, to 772 days, up from 758 days in 2017. Prior to 2017, it had been falling steadily (from 791 in 2014).

Children looked after who were adopted (Tables E1-E4)

The number of children looked after who were adopted peaked in 2015 at 5,360 and has since been falling. In 2017, 4,370 children looked after were adopted and this has decreased further by 13% to 3,820 in 2018. This is in line with the decrease in the number of looked after children with a placement order seen over recent years, which has fallen from 9,590 in 2014 to 5,360 in 2018.

Chart 9: Children looked after who were adopted:
England, years ending 31 March 1994 to 2018



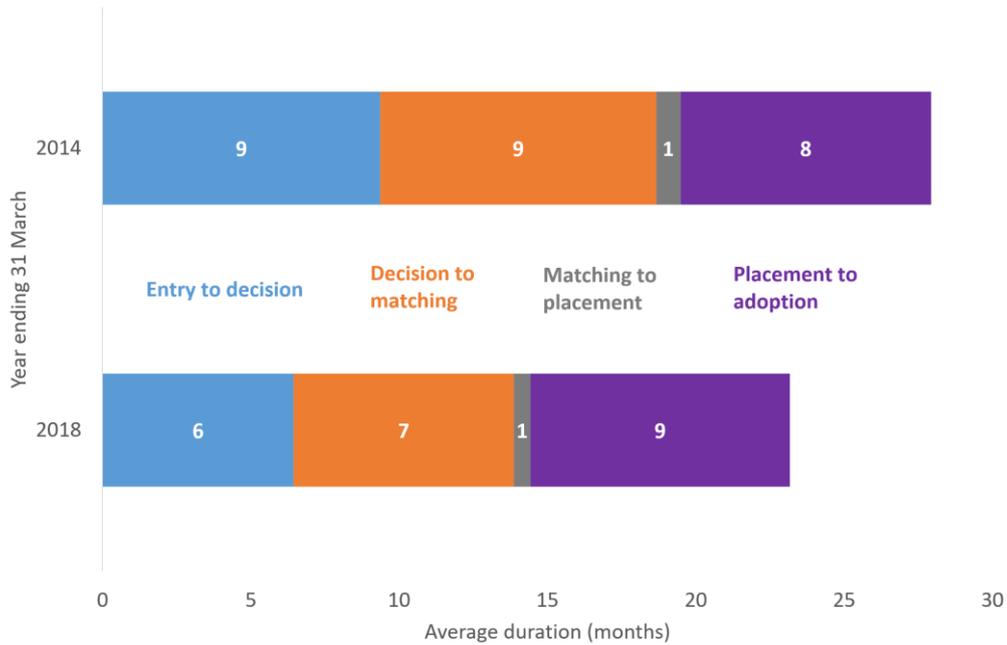
Source: SSDA903

The average duration of final period of care for children adopted has decreased from 2 years 4 months in 2014, to 2 years in 2017 and has reduced again in 2018 to 1 year 11 months. The reduction has been at two stages:

- The time to decision to place a child for adoption following entry to care has fallen from 9 months in 2014 to 6 months in 2018
- The time between the decision to place for adoption and matching of child and adopters has fallen from 9 months in 2014 to 7 months in 2018.

The average time between date of matching and date placed for adoption has remained at 1 month over this time period, however, the time between the date placed for adoption and the date the child was adopted has increased slightly by one month, from 8 months to 9 months. 67% of looked after children who were adopted had a final period of care lasting less than 2 years, compared to 46% in 2014.

Chart 10: Children looked after who were adopted, duration of stages of adoption (in months)
 England, years ending 31 March 2014 and 2018



Source: SSDA903

The number of children with a placement order, but who were not placed for adoption at 31 March rose by 6% from 2,610 in 2017 to 2,760 in 2018.

Children looked after who left care through a special guardianship order (Table E5)

3,430 (11%) of children who ceased to be looked after ceased through a special guardianship order⁴ in 2018, down from 3,720 in 2017. 54% of these were special guardianship orders made to former foster carers. The average age at special guardianship has increased from 5 years and 2 months in 2014 to 5 years and 10 months in 2018.

⁴ See [special guardianship statutory guidance](#) for more information.

4. Children looked after who were missing or away from placement without authorisation (Table G1)

11,530 looked after children had a missing incident in the year ending 31 March 2018, which was 11% of looked after children during the year. These children had 70,250 missing incidents, an average of 6.1 missing incidents per child. 48% of these missing incidents were from secure units, children's homes and semi-independent living arrangements and 29% were from foster placements.

3,880 children had an away without authorisation incident, 4% of looked after children during the year.

Missing from care definition: A looked after child who is not at their placement or the place they are expected to be (for example school) and their whereabouts is not known.

Away from placement without authorisation definition: A looked after child whose whereabouts is known but who is not at their placement or place they are expected to be and the carer has concerns or the incident has been notified to the local authority or the police.

Comparability of data over time

This information on children missing from care was collected in this way for the first time in 2015. Initially there were improvements to the collecting and reporting of this information. However, in the last two years we have seen an increase in the number of local authorities not using the away without authorisation category, to align their figures with information collected locally by the police. We believe this could mean the figures for missing are over reported by about 8% (as some of those reported are actually away without authorisation incidents). We continue to work with local authorities to improve the quality of the data.

5. Health and behavioural outcomes for looked after children (Tables I1-I5)

Offending rates (Table I1)

The proportion of looked after children who were convicted or subject to youth cautions or youth conditional cautions during the year has remained stable. In the year ending 31 March 2018, 4% of children aged 10 years or over (1,510 children) who were looked after for at least 12 months were convicted or subject to youth cautions or youth conditional cautions during the year, similar to 2017 and 2016 (both 5%). Looked after children (who have been looked after for at least 12 months) are five times more likely to offend than all children⁵.

Substance Misuse (Table I2)

Substance misuse is defined as 'intoxication by (or regular excessive consumption or and/or dependence on) psychoactive substances, leading to social, psychological, physical or legal problems'. It includes problematic use of both legal and illegal drugs (including alcohol when used in combination with other substances). 'Substance' refers to both drugs and alcohol but not tobacco.

The percentage of children looked after who were identified as having a substance misuse problem has remained the same since 2016. Of the 52,180 children looked after for at least 12 months in the year ending 31 March 2018, 4% were identified as having a substance misuse problem. 46% of these received an intervention for their substance misuse problem, down slightly from 49% last year and 50% in 2016.

Substance misuse is slightly more common in males and is more common in older looked after children. 4% of males were identified with a substance misuse problems compared to 3% of females. 10% of 16 to 17 year olds were identified with a substance misuse problem in the year ending 31 March 2018, compared to 4% of 13 to 15 year olds.

⁵ Taken from: [Criminal Justice System statistics quarterly: December 2017 - GOV.UK](#).

Health and development outcomes (Tables I3, I4)

Immunisations up to date reports whether the child has had all the immunisations that a child of their age should have received. It includes immunisations which should have been given before the child became looked after.

All children covered in this cohort can be expected to have their **teeth checked by a dentist**, even very young children. Children who have declined to have their teeth checked are recorded as not having received a dental check.

Health assessments must be carried out by a doctor or other suitably qualified professional twice a year for those under 5 years of age. Both these assessments must be carried out in order for the annual assessment requirement to be satisfied for under 5s. For those aged 5 or over, a single annual assessment fulfils the requirement. Children who decline to have a health assessment are reported as not having received an annual assessment.

For more information see the [children looked after data collection guide](#).

Most looked after children are up to date with their health care. Of the 52,180 children looked after continuously for 12 months at 31 March 2018:

- 85% were reported as being up to date with their immunisations, compared to 84% in 2017 and 87% in 2016,
- 88% had their annual health check, compared to 90% in 2017 and 2016,
- 84% had their teeth checked by a dentist, compared to 83% in 2017 and 84% in 2016.

Older children were less likely to be up to date, with 77% of those aged 16 years and over being up to date with immunisations, an increase from 75% in 2017. 82% had their annual health check and 75% had their teeth checked – similar to previous years.

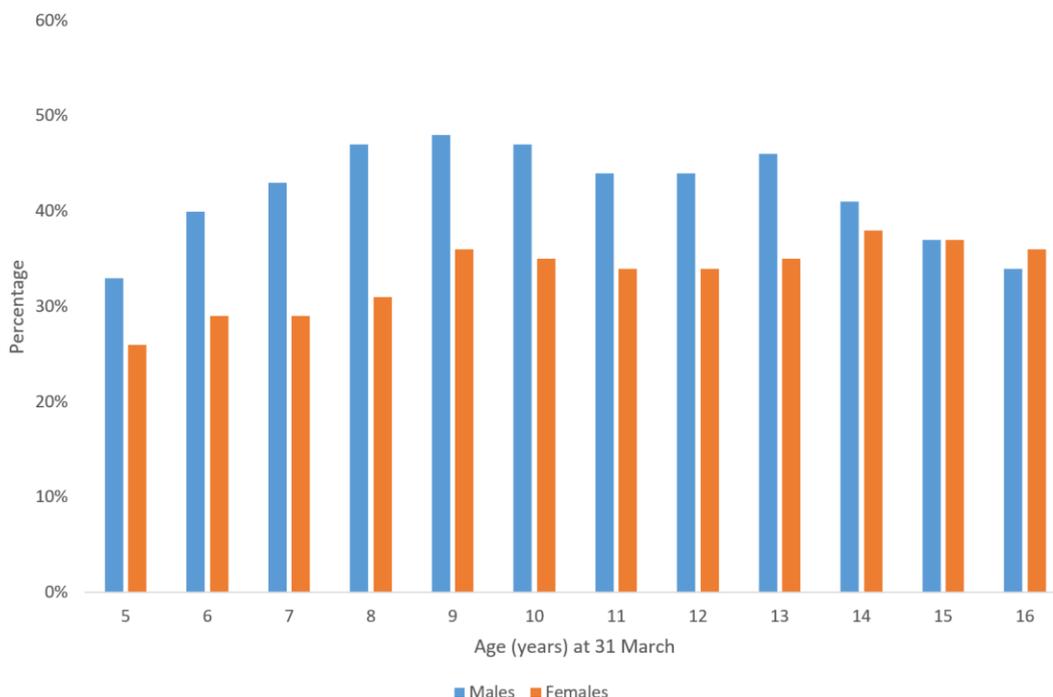
Of the 5,390 children looked after aged 4 years and under, 4,580 had development assessments up to date which is 85%. This is slightly up on the 82% reported in 2017.

Emotional and behavioural health (SDQ scores) (Tables I5a, I5b)

Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) scores This data item covers the emotional and behavioural health of children looked after, as recorded by a main carer in the strengths and difficulties questionnaire (SDQ), a short behavioural screening questionnaire. Its primary purpose is to give social workers and health professionals information about a child's wellbeing. A score of 0 to 13 is considered normal, 14 to 16 is borderline, and 17 to 40 is a cause for concern. For further information see the [children looked after data collection guide](#).

Of the 39,590 children aged 5 to 16 years, who were looked after at 31 March 2018 for at least 12 months, 30,730 (78%) had a SDQ score reported, up from 76% in 2017 and 75% in 2016. Almost half (49%) of children looked after continuously for at least 12 months had 'normal' emotional and behavioural health, 12% had 'borderline' scores and 39% had scores which were a cause for concern. These figures have remained fairly stable over recent years. The proportion of children with scores that were cause for concern were lowest for children aged 5, 6 and 16 years at 30%, 35% and 35%. For almost all ages, males have higher percentage of children who are cause for concern.

Chart 11: Percentage of looked after children whose SDQ score was a cause for concern, by age and gender: England, year ending 31 March 2018



Source: SSSA903

The average SDQ score was 14.2 in 2018, similar to 2017 when it was 14.1 and 2016 when it was 14.0. For males, the average SDQ score was 14.8 and for females, the average SDQ score was 13.4.

6. Former care leavers (Tables F1-F4)

Data collected on care leavers

Local authorities provide the department with information about the cohort of children who have turned 17, 18, 19, 20 or 21 in the year who were previously looked after. The cohort covers children looked after for a total of at least 13 weeks after their 14th birthday, including some time after their 16th birthday.

Information for children age 17 and 18 is published as **experimental statistics**. It was collected for the first time in 2016 and so figures should be treated with caution. For further information see the [children looked after data collection guide](#).

'In touch'

Local authorities are expected to stay in touch⁶ with care leavers and provide statutory support to help the care leaver transition to living independently. In the year ending 31 March 2018, local authorities were in touch with 88% of 19 to 21 year olds care leavers, although in touch rates vary by age group.

Table 2: Local authorities 'in touch' with care leavers:

England, year ending 31 March 2016 to 2018

Age of care leaver	Numbers of care leavers:			Percentage in touch:		
	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018
17 year olds	920	620	620	81%	79%	76%
18 year olds	8,350	10,070	10,460	94%	93%	94%
19 to 21 years olds	26,330	26,990	28,510	87%	88%	88%

Source: SSSA903

⁶ To be counted as 'in touch', there should be contact between the local authority and the young person around 3 months before and one month after the young person's birthday.

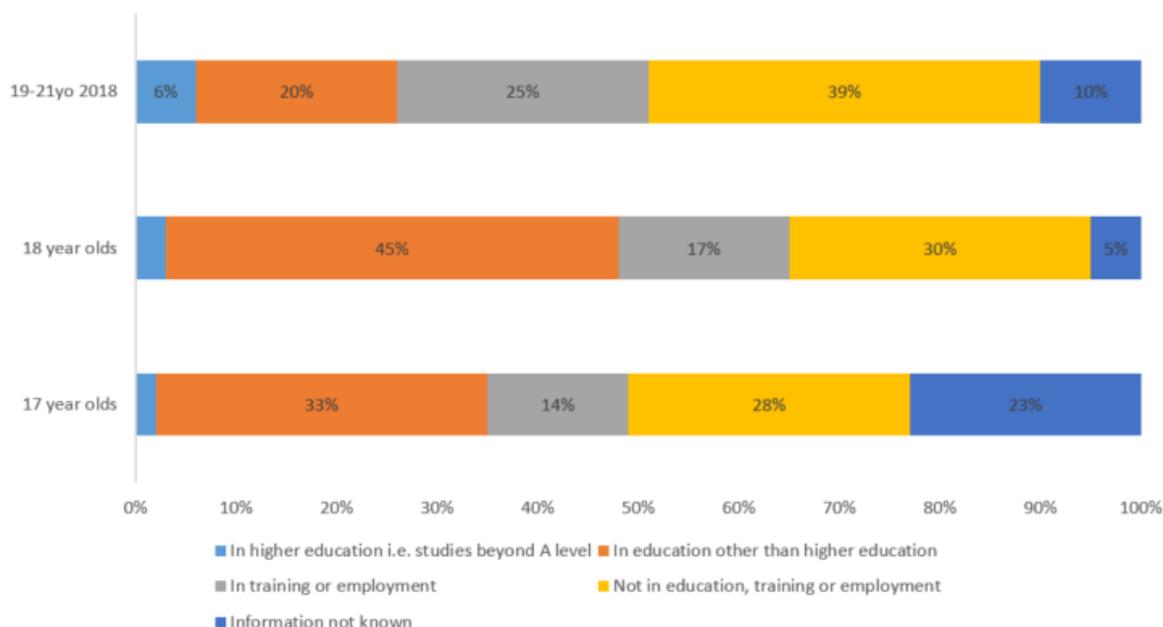
'Activity' of care leavers

Information on the activity of care leavers was known for 77% of 17 year olds, 95% of 18 year olds and 90% of 19 to 21 year olds.

For 19 to 21 year old care leavers, 6% were known to be in higher education, 20% were in other education, 25% were in training or employment and 39% were known to be not in education, employment or training (which is compared to around 12%⁷ of all young people aged 19 to 21 years).

For 17 year olds, 35% were in education, 14% in training or employment and 28% were not in employment, education or training and for 18 year olds the figures were 48%, 17% and 30%⁸.

Chart 12: Care leavers, by activity and age:
England, year ending 31 March 2018



Source: SSDA903

Accommodation of care leavers

For 19 to 21 year old care leavers, 35% were living independently, 12% were living in semi-independent transitional accommodation, 12% were living with parents or relatives and 8% were living with former foster carers, similar to last year.

Experimental statistics for 17 and 18 year olds show that:

- For 17 year olds, 43% were living with parents, 9% were in semi-independent transitional accommodation and 9% were in custody (however, for 23% the information was not known).
- For 18 year olds, 26% were in semi-independent transitional accommodation, 19% were with former foster carers, 13% were in independent living and 12% were living with parents or relatives.

In 2018, 84% of care leavers now aged 19, 20 or 21 years were in accommodation considered suitable⁹; as were 90% of 18 year olds and 67% of 17 year olds. However, information is not known for 9% of 19 to 21 year olds, 5% of 18 year olds and 23% of 17 year olds (which helps to explain the low proportion in suitable accommodation).

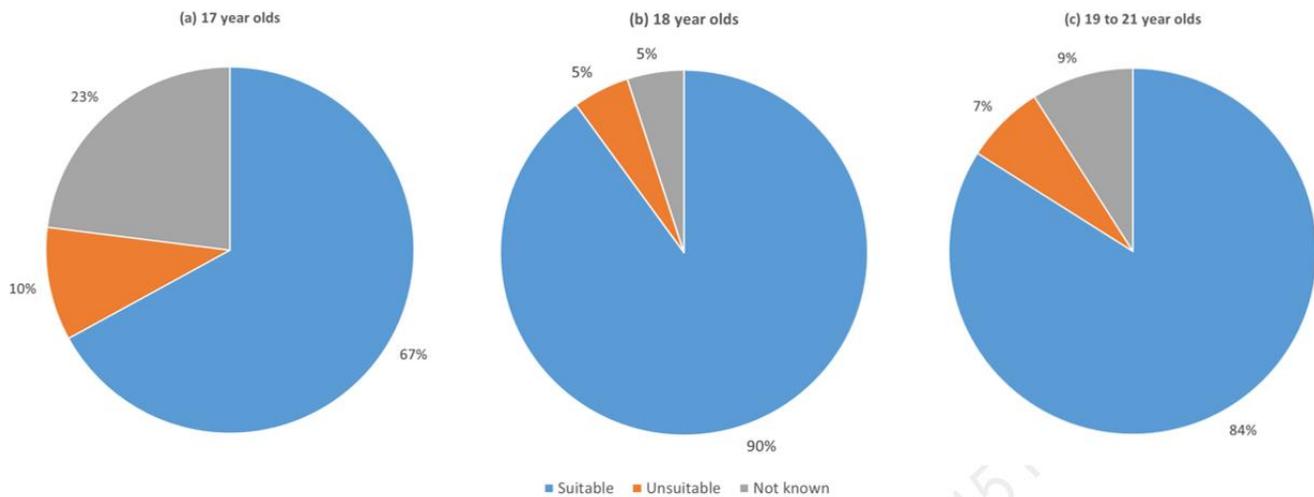
⁷ Taken from [NEET statistics quarterly brief](#).

⁸ Figures for 17 and 18 year olds are experimental.

⁹ Accommodation is to be regarded as suitable if it provides safe, secure and affordable provision for young people.

Accommodation that clearly exposes the person to risk of harm or social exclusion by reason of its location or other factors should be classed as 'unsuitable'.

Chart 13: Care leavers, by suitability of accommodation and age:
England, year ending 31 March 2018



Source: SSDA903

“Staying Put”

The number and proportion of 19 and 20 year olds who ceased to be looked after on their 18th birthday and who were still living with their former foster carers (‘Staying Put’) increased slightly from 25% in 2017 to 26% in 2018.

In 2018, 1,800 (55%) children who ceased to be looked after in a foster placement aged 18 remained with their foster carers 3 months after their 18th birthday. This is up from 51% last year.

7. Accompanying tables

The following tables are available on the [department's statistics website](#):

National tables

- A1 Children looked after at 31 March by gender, age at 31 March, category of need, ethnic origin, legal status and motherhood status, 2014 to 2018
- A2 Children looked after at 31 March by placement, 2014 to 2018
- A3 Children looked after at 31 March, who were unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) during the year, by gender, age, category of need and ethnic origin, 2014 to 2018
- A4 Children looked after at 31 March 2018 by distance between home and placement and locality of placement
- A5 Children looked after at 31 March 2018 by placement, placement location and placement provider
- B1 Children looked after at any time during the year ending 31 March and those looked after continuously for at least 12 months at 31 March by gender, age at 31 March, placement and ethnic origin, 2014 to 2018
- B2 Number of new placement for children looked after during the year ending 31 March 2018 by locality of placement and distance between home and placement
- B3 Duration of placements ceasing in the year ending 31 March 2018
- B4 Reason for placement change for children who moved placement in the year ending 31 March 2018 – Experimental statistics
- C1 Children who started to be looked after during the years ending 31 March by gender, age on starting, category of need, ethnic origin, legal status and previous permanence arrangement, 2014 to 2018
- C2 Children who started to be looked after during the years ending 31 March by placement, 2014 to 2018
- D1 Children who ceased to be looked after during the years ending 31 March by gender, age on ceasing, reason episode ceased, legal status, category of need and ethnic origin, 2014 to 2018
- D2 Children who ceased to be looked after during the years ending 31 March by placement on ceasing, 2014 to 2018
- D3 Children who ceased to be looked after during the years ending 31 March by duration of latest period of care and average duration of latest period of care in days, 2014 to 2018
- D4 Children who ceased to be looked after during the year ending 31 March 2018 by number of periods of care in care history, number of placements in period of care and age on ceasing
- E1 Children looked after who were adopted during the year ending 31 March by gender, age at adoption, ethnic origin, category of need, final legal status, duration of final period of care and age on starting final period of care, 2014 to 2018
- E2 Children looked after who were adopted during the year ending 31 March by average time between the different stages of the adoption process and age at start of period of care, 2014 to 2018
- E3 Children looked after who were adopted during the years ending 31 March by number of adopters, legal status of adopters and by gender of adopters, 2014 to 2018
- E4 Children for whom the local authority has made the decision that the child should be placed for adoption, those placed and waiting for adoption and children where the decision to place for adoption has been reversed, 2014 to 2018
- E5 Children looked after who were the subject of a special guardianship order during the years ending 31 March by gender, age on ceasing to be looked after, ethnic origin, category of need, final legal status, duration of final period of care and age on starting final period of care, 2014 to 2018
- F1 Care leavers now aged 19, 20 and 21 years old by gender, contact with the local authority and activity and former UASC status, 2016 to 2018
- F2 Care leavers now aged 19, 20 and 21 years old by accommodation, 2016 to 2018
- F3 Care leavers aged 17 and 18 years old by gender, contact with the local authority and activity and former UASC status, 2016 to 2018 – Experimental Statistics
- F4 Care leavers aged 17 and 18 years old by accommodation, 2016 to 2018 – Experimental Statistics

- G1 Children looked after who were missing or away from placement without authorisation, 2016 to 2018 – Experimental Statistics
- H1 Children looked after at 31 March and children who started, ceased and were adopted during the years ending 31 March, 1992 to 2018
- I1 Offending by children who have been looked after continuously for at least twelve months, by age and gender, 2016 to 2018
- I2 Substance misuse by children who have been looked after continuously for at least twelve months, by age and gender, 2016 to 2018
- I3 Health care of children who have been continuously looked after for at least twelve months, by age and gender, 2016 to 2018
- I4 Development assessments for children aged 4 or under who have been looked after continuously for at least twelve months, by age and gender, 2016 to 2018
- I5a Emotional and behavioural health of looked after children - average score for children looked after at 31 March for whom a Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) score was received, 2018
- I5b Emotional and behavioural health of looked after children for whom a strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) was received, by gender, 2016 to 2018

Local authority and regional tables

- LAA1 Children looked after at 31 March, 2014 to 2018
- LAA4 Children looked after at 31 March, who were unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) during the year, 2014 to 2018
- LAB1 Children looked after at any time during the year ending 31 March and those looked after exclusively under a series of short-term placements, 2014 to 2018
- LAC1 Children who started to be looked after during the year ending 31 March, 2014 to 2018
- LAD1 Children who ceased to be looked after during the year ending 31 March, 2014 to 2018
- LAE1 Children who ceased to be looked after and the number and percentage adopted during the year ending 31 March, 2014 to 2018
- LAF2a Care leavers now aged 19, 20 and 21 by activity, 2018
- LAF2b Care leavers aged 17 and 18 by activity, 2018 – Experimental Statistics
- LAF4a Care leavers now aged 19, 20 and 21 by suitability of accommodation, 2018
- LAF4b Care leavers aged 17 and 18 by suitability of accommodation, 2018 – Experimental Statistics
- LAG1 Children looked after who were missing or away from placement without authorisation, 2018 – Experimental Statistics

When reviewing the tables, please note that:

- **Rounding Conventions**

The National Statistics Code of Practice requires that reasonable steps should be taken to ensure that all published or disseminated statistics produced by the DfE protect confidentiality. National figures have been rounded to the nearest 10. For confidentiality purposes, numbers from one to five inclusive have been replaced in the published tables by a cross (x). To ensure the suppressed number cannot be identified by simple arithmetic secondary suppression may be required. Where any number is shown as zero (0), the original figure submitted was zero (0). The following convention has been used:

“.” means not applicable

“..” means not available

“-” means negligible – used to represent a percentage below 0.5%

- **UK Comparability of Looked-After Children’s Statistics**

Data is collected and published independently by each of the 4 countries in the UK. Although there are similarities between the data collected by the 4 nations, there are also differences, which may be down to different policies and legislation, and differing historical data collections.

- **Population Estimates**

Population estimates are used to calculate rates per 10,000 children under the age of 18 published in Table A1 and LAA1. These are calculated using the appropriate mid-year population estimates supplied by the [Office for National Statistics](#) (ONS).

8. Further information is available

- **Outcomes for looked after children in England:** Information on [outcomes for looked after children](#) is available for children looked after at 31 March 2017. Outcomes include educational attainment, special educational needs (SEN), absence and exclusions from school.
- **Children in need and child protection statistics for England:** Information on [referrals, assessments and children who were the subject of a child protection plan](#) (taken from the Children in Need census) is available for 2017. Statistics for 2018 will be published in November 2018.
- **Information on care proceedings in England:** The Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS) publish information on care proceedings applications made by local authorities where CAFCASS has been appointed by the court to represent the interests of children.
- **Adoption and special guardianship leadership board (ASGLB):** [Quarterly reports](#) were published by DfE up to 31 March 2017, and following this they have been published on the [Consortium of Voluntary Adoption Agencies](#) website.
- **Local authority expenditure:** Information on local authority [planned expenditure](#) on schools, education, children and young people’s services is available for the financial year 2016-17. This data is returned to DfE by local authorities via the Section 251 Budget Return.
- **Ofsted:** [Ofsted](#) publish inspection outcomes for local authority children’s services and children’s social care providers in England as well as data on the placements of children looked after and fostering in England.
- **Devolved administrations:** [Scotland](#), [Wales](#) and [Northern Ireland](#) publish their own information on children social care on their websites.

9. National Statistics

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

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods, and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

The Department has a set of [statistical policies](#) in line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

10. Technical information

A [children looked after statistics guide](#) accompanies this publication. This provides further information on the data sources, their coverage and quality and explains the methodology used in producing the data, including how it is validated and processed.

11. Get in touch

Media enquiries

Press Office News Desk, Department for Education, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BT.

Tel: 020 7783 8300

Other enquiries/feedback

CLA data team, Data Insight and Statistics Division, Department for Education, Level 2, Bishopsgate House, Darlington, DL1 5QE.

Email: CLA.stats@education.gov.uk



Department
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write to Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London, TW9 4DU

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enquiries CLA data team, Data Insight and Statistics Division, Department for Education, Level 2, Bishopsgate House, Darlington, DL1 5QE.

Email: CLA.stats@education.gov.uk

Reference: Children looked after in England, year ending 31 March 2018



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