



Statistical First Release

Children looked after in England (including adoption and care leavers) year ending 31 March 2014

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Number of looked after children continues to rise There were 68,840 looked after children at 31 March 2014, an increase of 1% compared to 31 March 2013 and an increase of 7% compared to 31 March 2010. The numbers have increased steadily over the past 5 years.

More children started to be looked after There were 30,430 children who started to be looked after during the year ending 31 March 2014, an increase of 5% from 2013 and an increase of 8% from 2010.

More children ceased to be looked after¹ There were also 30,430 children who ceased to be looked after during the year ending 31 March 2014, an increase of 6% from 2013 and an increase of 20% from 2010.

Adoptions still increasing There were 5,050 looked after children adopted during the year ending 31 March 2014, an increase of 26% from 2013 and an increase of 58% from 2010. Although the number of looked after children adopted fell between 2010 and 2011, the number of these adoptions has since increased and is now at its highest point since the start of the current collection in 1992.

¹ Due to the way the statistics are generated, the number of children who were looked after at 31 March 2014 does not equate to the number at 31 March 2013, plus the number started in the year, minus those ceased in the year.

A National Statistics publication

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What does this statistical release cover?

This Statistical First Release (SFR) provides information about looked after children in England for the year ending 31 March 2014. It includes the number of looked after children, the reasons why children are looked after, their legal status and type of placement. It also includes the number of children who started to be, or ceased to be, looked after during the year ending 31 March 2014. Figures are presented for the last 5 years to enable comparisons back to 2010.

This publication also contains the number of looked after children who were placed for adoption, the number of looked after children adopted and the average time between different stages of the adoption process. The accommodation and activity of former care leavers (now aged 19 to 21) is also included.

All figures are based on data collected annually through the Children Looked After return (also known as SSDA903) which is completed each spring by all local authorities in England. This is a longitudinal data collection. Further details on which children are included in the data collection can be found in the children looked after return [2013-14 collection guide](#).

This publication is the main source of the numbers of looked after children in England; it is used to inform policy decisions which aim to improve the outcomes for this vulnerable group of children. It is also used extensively by other organisations, including charities and campaigning groups, who have an interest in this subject.

In addition to this publication, the Department for Education publishes [annual statistics](#) in December on the outcomes for children who have been looked after continuously for at least 12 months at 31 March. Outcomes covered are educational attainment, health and wellbeing, offending, substance misuse and exclusions from school. There is also information on special educational needs (SEN).

What is a looked after child?

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is legally defined as 'looked after' by a local authority if he or she:

- is provided with accommodation for a continuous period for more than 24 hours
- is subject to a care order; or
- is subject to a placement order

A looked after child ceases to be looked after when he or she turns 18 years old. On reaching his or her 18th birthday, the status of the child changes from being looked after to being a young adult eligible for help and assistance from the local authority. Such help and assistance is usually provided in accordance with the various aftercare provisions of the Children Act.

Key findings

1. Numbers and characteristics of children looked after at 31 March 2014 (Tables A1 and LAA1)

Numbers of looked after children continue to rise...	There were 68,840 looked after children as of 31 March 2014, an increase of 1% compared to 31 March 2013 and an increase of 7% compared to 31 March 2010. The number of looked after children has increased steadily over the past five years and it is now higher than at any point since 1985.
...but rates of looked after children vary widely across local authorities	Nationally the rate of looked after children per 10,000 is 60. At local authority level the rate varies significantly. The highest is Blackpool where the rate is 152 and Wokingham is the lowest, at 20. Figure 1 shows the variation in rates at local authority level.
Almost two thirds are looked after due to abuse or neglect	The majority of looked after children – 62% in 2014 - are provided with a service due to abuse or neglect. The reasons why looked after children are provided with a service have been relatively stable since 2010.
Over a third of looked after children are aged between 10 and 15 years old	The age profile of children looked after at 31 March has been relatively stable since 2010. The largest age group is 10 to 15 year olds, which made up 37% of looked after children at 31 March 2014. There has been a slight increase in the percentage of 5 to 9 year olds, from 17% in 2010, to 20% in 2014. These trends are in line with the age breakdown of all children. Chart 1 shows the ages of children looked after at 31 March.
3 in 4 looked after children are White British	The majority of children looked after at 31 March 2014 (74%) are from a White British background, the same proportion as the general population of all children ² . The ethnic breakdown for children looked after has varied little since 2010.

Table 1: Numbers of looked after children continue to rise

Number of children looked after at 31 March 2010 to 2014

Year ending 31 March	Number of looked after children
2010	64,470
2011	65,500
2012	67,070
2013	68,060
2014	68,840

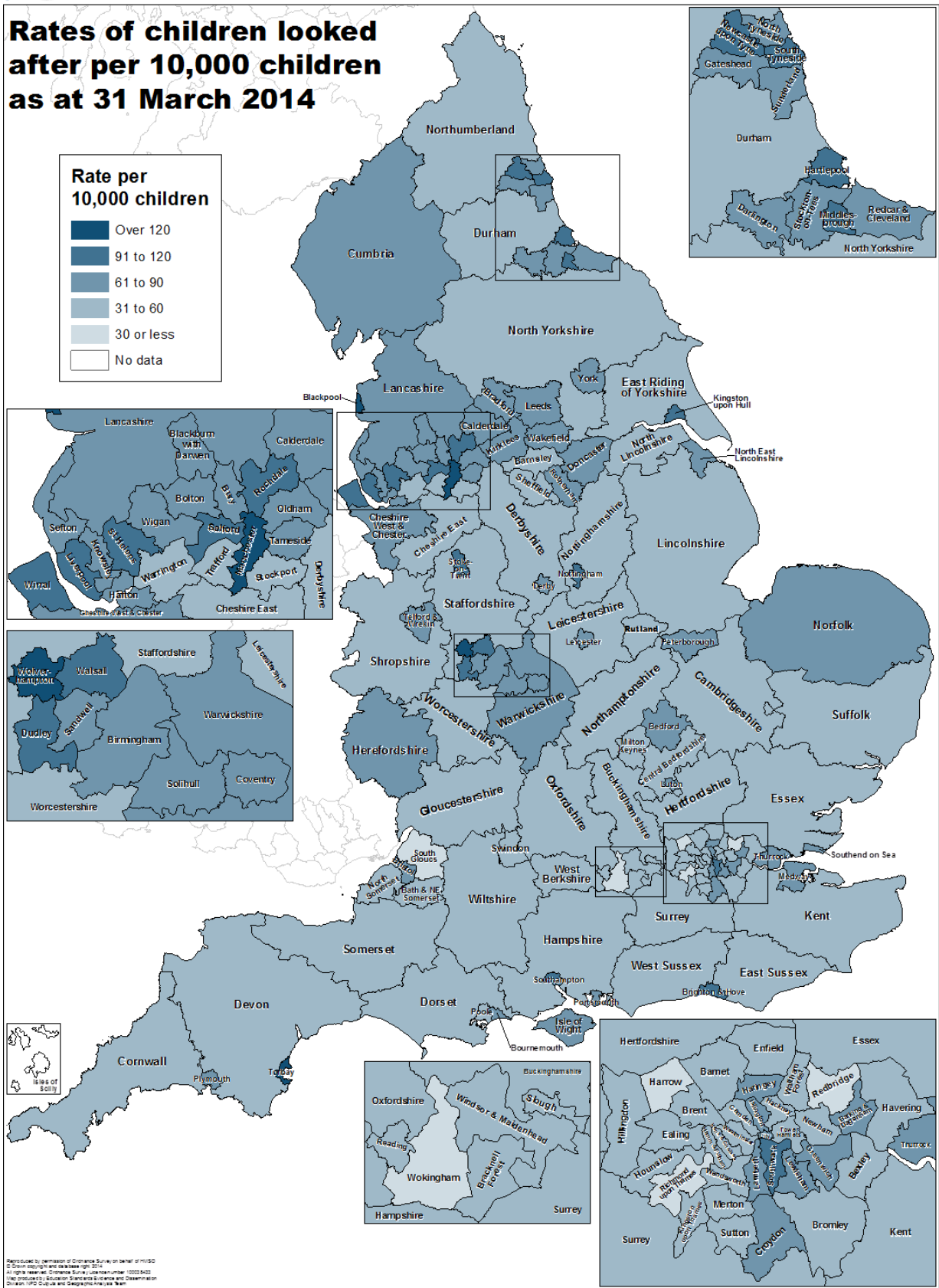
² Figures taken from the 2011 census.

Figure 1: Rates of children looked after vary by local authority

Rates of children looked after per 10,000 children as at 31 March 2014

 Department for Education

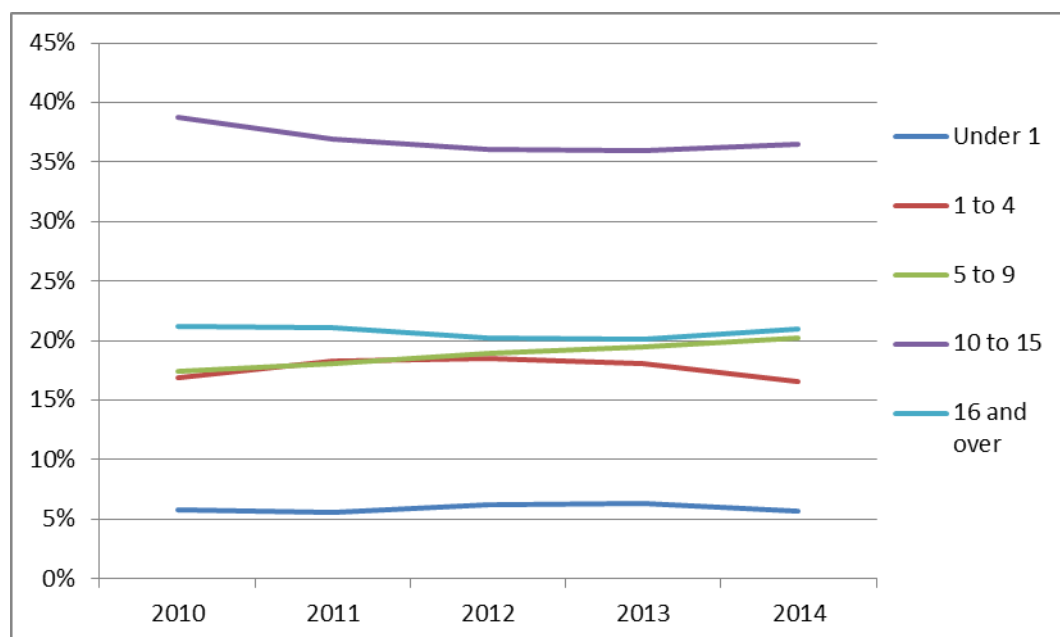
Rates of children looked after per 10,000 children as at 31 March 2014



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Chart 1: Over a third of looked after children are aged between 10 and 15 years old

Percentage of children looked after at 31 March 2014 by age group



2. Legal status of looked after children (Table A2)

Over half of looked after children were subject to a care order

At 31 March 2014, 39,930 children were looked after under a care order (either an interim or full care order); representing 58% of all looked after children. Since 2009, the percentage looked after under a care order has remained relatively stable.

Over a quarter were looked after under a voluntary agreement

There were 19,230 children looked after under a voluntary agreement under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989, 28% of all those looked after at 31 March 2014. This percentage has increased for the first time since 2010.

Proportion subject to a placement order has fallen

9,260 (13%) children looked after at 31 March 2014 had a placement order in place. This is down from 14% in 2013 and is the first time this percentage has decreased since 2010.

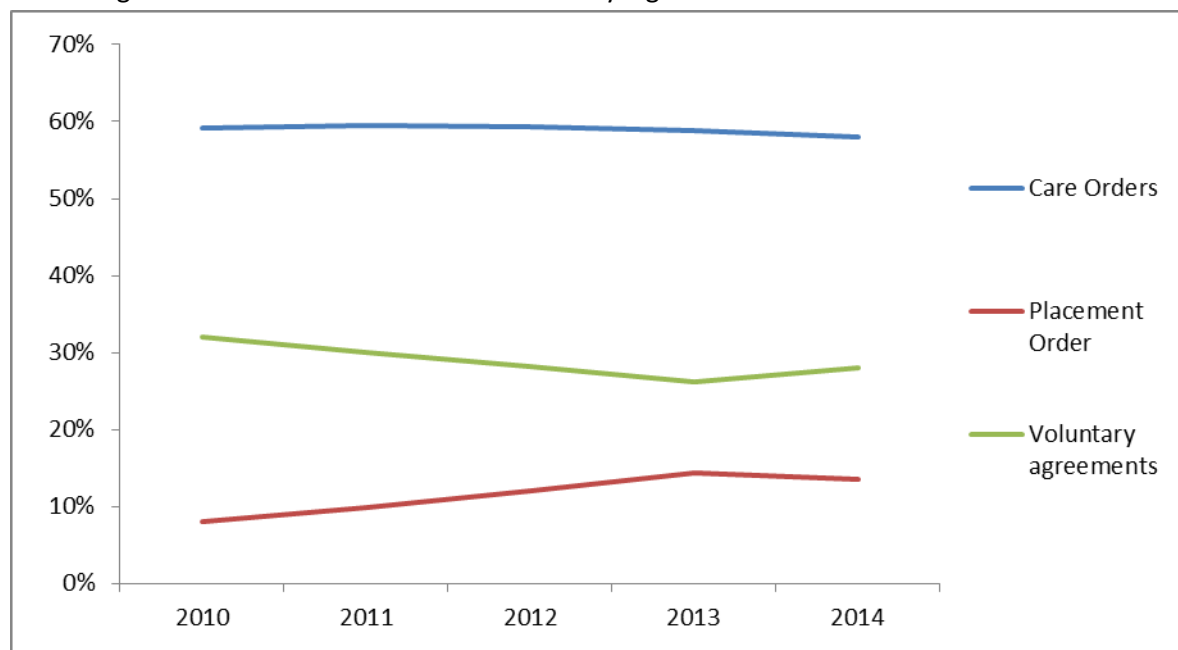
Chart 2 shows the percentage of looked after children by legal status.

No change in the number of looked after children on remand or committed for trial

In 2014, there were 300 children looked after who were on remand or committed for trial, the same as 2013 but double the number in 2012. This is due to the implementation of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act. This Act came into force on 3 December 2012; the Act states that all children remanded by the courts will now become looked after.

Chart 2: A decrease in the percentage with a placement order and an increase in the percentage looked after under a voluntary agreement

Percentage of children looked after at 31 March by legal status



Note: Children with a legal status of freed for adoption, detained for child protection and Youth Justice legal statuses are excluded from this chart as they make up less than 1% of all children looked after.

3. Placement of looked after children (Table A3)

More children in foster care - accounting for three quarters of looked after children

The number of children in foster care continued to rise. Of children looked after at 31 March 2014, 51,340 were cared for in a foster placement. This represents an increase of 9% since 2010, a larger increase than the rise in overall numbers of looked after children. The percentage of looked after children cared for in foster placements was 73% in 2010, in 2014 it has increased to 75%.

Numbers of children in residential settings stable

There were 6,360 looked after children cared for in secure units, children's homes and hostels, representing 9% of all children looked after. The numbers and percentages have remained fairly stable over the years from 2010 to 2014.

Fewer children placed with their parents

The number of children placed with their parents continues to fall – a decrease of 24% since 2010. There were 3,210 children looked after placed with their parents, this represents 5% of children looked after - a decrease from 7% in 2010.

Numbers placed for adoption have decreased very slightly

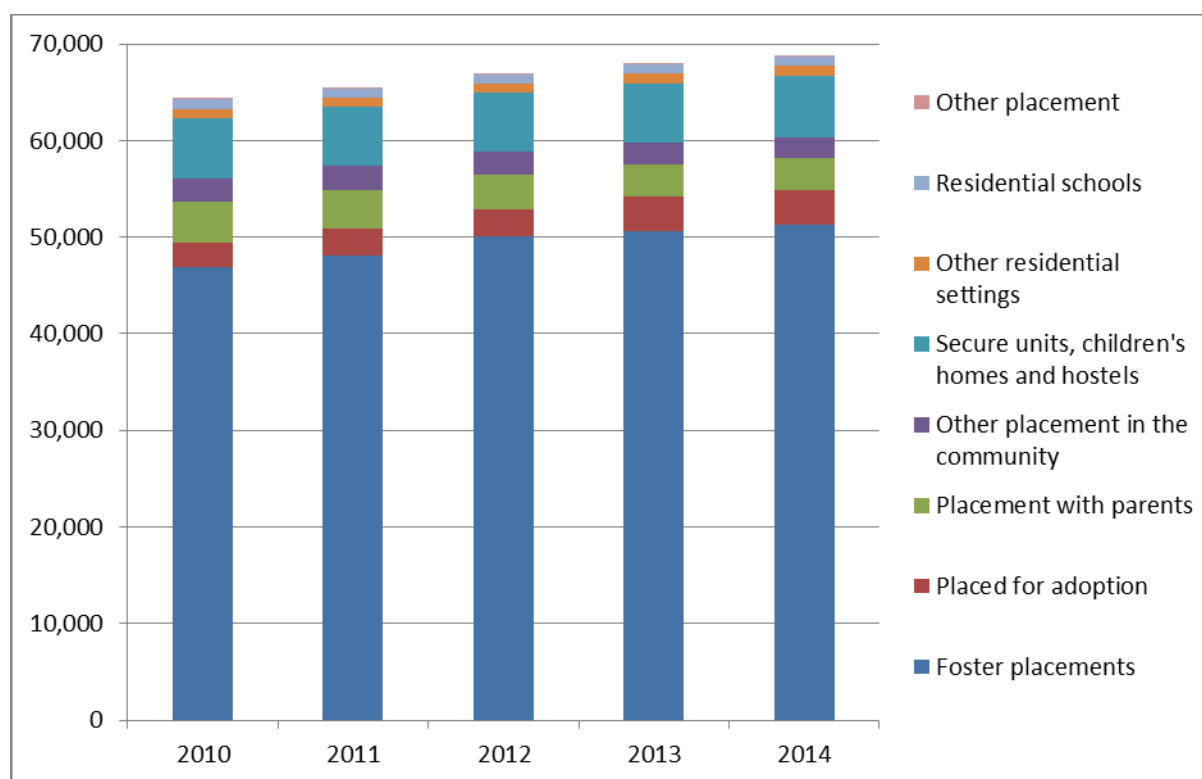
The number of children placed for adoption rose between 2010 and 2013, but has decreased very slightly in 2014. There were 3,580 looked after children placed for adoption at 31 March 2014 representing 5% of all looked after children. The numbers placed for adoption have increased by 42% from 2010.

Two-thirds of children had one placement during the year

Of all children looked after at 31 March 2014, 67% (46,150) had one placement during the year, 22% had two placements and 11% had three or more placements. The percentage with three or more placements has remained the same since 2010. However, if a child is missing from their agreed placement for a period of 24 hours or more, this is counted as a placement and will contribute towards the placement calculations. From next year missing children will not be included in these calculations.

Chart 3: More children with foster carers whilst numbers placed for adoption level off

Number of children looked after at 31 March by placement

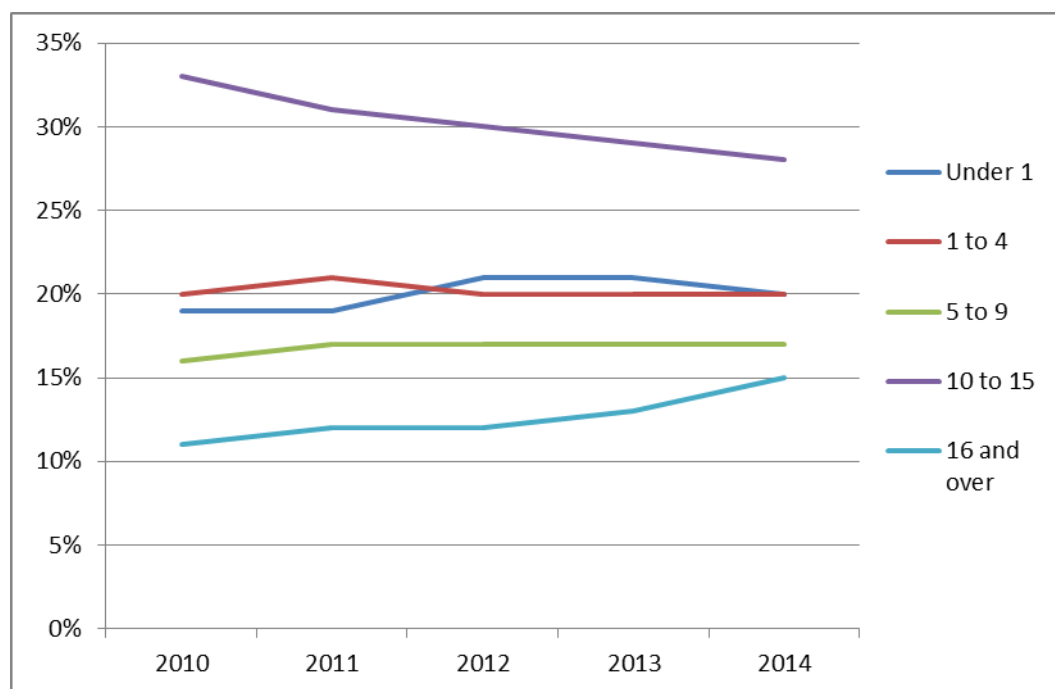


4. Children who started to be looked after (Tables C1 and LAC1)

More children started to be looked after	There were 30,430 children who started to be looked after during the year ending 31 March 2014, an increase of 5% from the previous year's figure of 28,960 and an increase of 8% from 2010.
Of these, over a quarter are aged 10 to 15 but this has decreased since 2010	<p>In 2014, 28% of children starting to be looked after were 10 to 15 years old. This percentage has decreased from 33% in 2010. 20% were babies aged under 1.</p> <p>Chart 4 shows the percentage of children who started to be looked after in each year since 2010 by age group.</p>
Largest increase in those aged 16 and over	<p>Much of the increase in 2014 is due to the rise in the number of children aged 16 and over who started to be looked after. In the year ending 31 March 2014, 4,510 children in this age group started to be looked after, representing an increase of 21% from 2013.</p> <p>Whilst the proportion of children who started to be looked after aged 16 and over has increased from 11% to 15% since 2010, the proportion of all children (including those not looked after) in this age group has declined from 12% to 11% over the same time period.</p>
More than half started to be looked after due to abuse or neglect	Of the children who started to be looked after during the year ending 31 March 2014, 55% were provided with a service due to abuse or neglect. The reasons why looked after children are provided with a service have been relatively stable since 2010.
36% were taken into care	<p>Of the 30,430 children who started to be looked after, 36% were taken into care. This is a decrease on a previous steady rise from 34% in 2010 to 38% in 2013.</p> <p>Children who were taken into care are children who started to be looked after under a care order, police protection order, emergency protection order or child assessment order.</p>
1% had a previous permanence option	1% of children who started to be looked after in the year ending 31 March 2014 had returned to care having previously been adopted, granted a residence order or a special guardianship order. This data has been collected for the first time this year. See Technical Note 14.

Chart 4: Increase in 16 and overs and decrease in 10 to 15 year olds starting to be looked after

Percentage of children who started to be looked after by age group



5. Children who ceased to be looked after (Table D1)

More children ceased to be looked after

There were 30,430 children who ceased to be looked after during the year ending 31 March 2014, an increase of 6% from 2013 and an increase of 20% from 2010.

Proportion aged 1 to 4 increasing and aged 10 to 15 decreasing

In 2014, 8,500 children aged 1 to 4 ceased to be looked after. The percentage of 1 to 4 year olds ceasing to be looked after has increased from 23% in 2010 to 28% in 2014. In contrast, the percentage of 10 to 15 year olds has decreased over the same time period, from 22% to 16%.

Chart 5 shows the ages of children ceasing to be looked after from 2010 to 2014.

One third return to their parents or relatives

Returning home to parents or relatives remains the most common reason for ceasing to be looked after, although this has decreased from 39% of children ceasing in 2010 to 34% in 2014.

Increases in special guardianship orders and adoptions

The percentage of children ceasing care with a Special Guardianship Order (SGO) has increased over the period 2010 to 2014. In 2014 there were 3,330 children leaving care with a SGO, 11% of all children ceasing to be looked after, up from 5% in 2010.

There was also an increase in the percentage of children ceasing to be

looked after because they were adopted from 13% in 2010 to 17% in 2014.

Chart 6 shows the reasons why children ceased to be looked after in each year since 2010.

Chart 5: 1 to 4 year olds ceasing to be looked after increasing whilst 10 to 15 year olds decreasing

Percentage of children who ceased to be looked after by age group

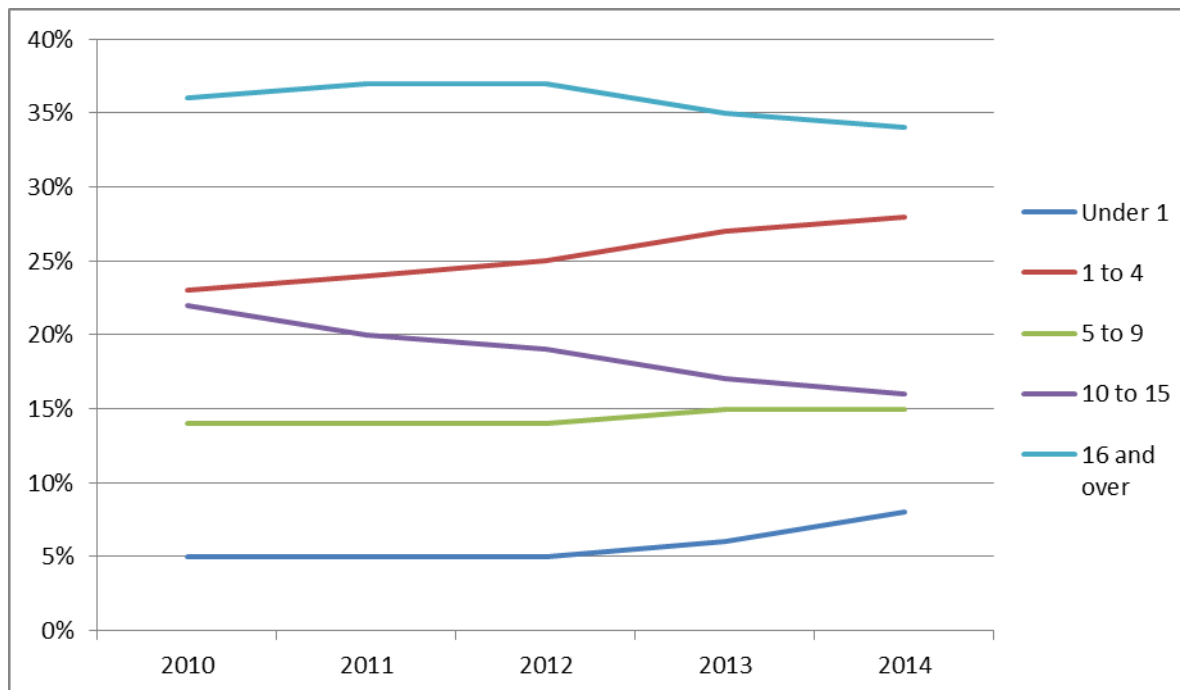


Chart 6: Increase in Special Guardianship Orders and adoptions

Number of children who ceased to be looked after by reason for ceasing

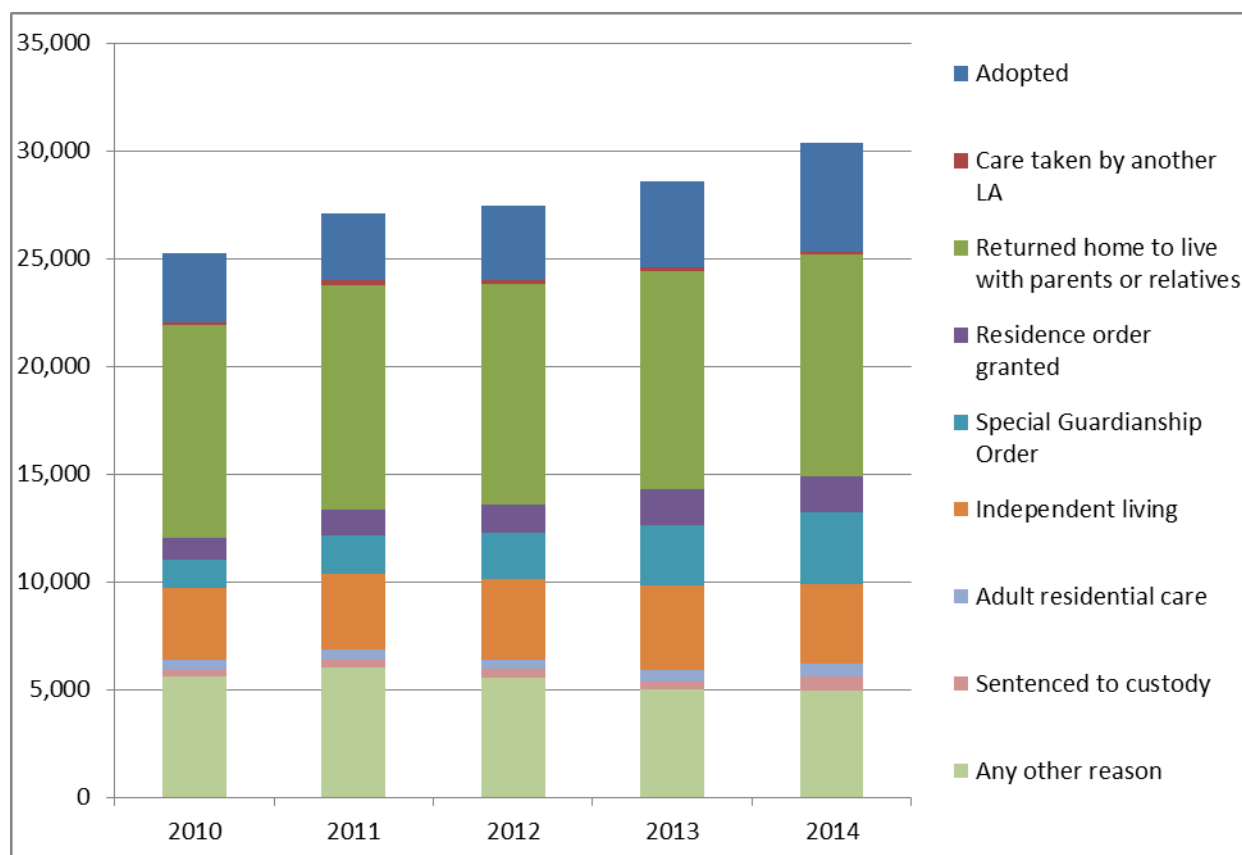


Table 2: Increase in Special Guardianship Orders and adoptions

Number of children who ceased to be looked after by reason for ceasing

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Adopted	3,200	3,100	3,470	4,010	5,050
Care taken by another LA	170	200	190	170	150
Returned home to live with parents/relatives	9,870	10,430	10,200	10,130	10,300
Residence order granted	1,010	1,190	1,310	1,670	1,690
Special Guardianship Order	1,290	1,780	2,150	2,770	3,330
Independent living	3,360	3,500	3,740	3,920	3,680
Adult residential care	480	470	470	540	570
Sentenced to custody	320	410	410	370	640
Any other reason	5,630	6,040	5,560	5,080	5,020

6. Looked after children who were adopted (Tables E1, E2, A2 and A3)

Adoptions continue to rise	<p>There were 5,050 looked after children adopted during the year ending 31 March 2014, an increase of 26% from 2013 and an increase of 58% from 2010. Although the number of looked after children adopted fell between 2010 and 2011, the number has since increased each year and is now at its highest point since the start of the current data collection in 1992.</p>
Numbers placed for adoption have decreased very slightly	<p>The number of looked after children placed for adoption at 31 March, which rose from 2010 to 2013, has decreased very slightly in 2014 (table A3).</p> <p>The number of looked after children with a placement order in place at 31 March peaked in 2013, but has since fallen by 5% (table A2).</p> <p>Chart 7 shows the numbers of children with a placement order in place, the numbers who are placed for adoption and the numbers who have been adopted each year since 2010.</p>
Three quarters of adopted children are aged 1 to 4	<p>Of all looked after children adopted in 2014, the majority (76%) were aged 1 to 4. The rise in the number of adoptions is largely due to the increase in 1 to 4 year olds adopted, an increase of 70% from 2010 to 2014. The average age at adoption is 3 years 5 months – 3 months younger than in 2013, and 6 months younger than in 2010.</p> <p>Chart 8 shows the age of children adopted during the year from 2010 to 2014.</p>
Average length of time for the adoption process has decreased	<p>The average time between entry into care and adoption order is 2 years 4 months. This has reduced by 2 months since 2013.</p> <p>This comes after the Action Plan on Adoption that was published in March 2012 by the Department for Education which set out aims for reducing the time taken for a child to be adopted.</p>
Adoption process shorter for younger children	<p>For children aged under 1 (on entering care) the average time between entering care and adoption was 2 years 1 month. For children aged 6 (on entering care) the average time was 3 years 7 months.</p>

Chart 7: Increase in adoptions but placement orders fall and numbers placed for adoption level off

Number of looked after children with a placement order in place at 31 March, number adopted in the year and number placed for adoption at 31 March

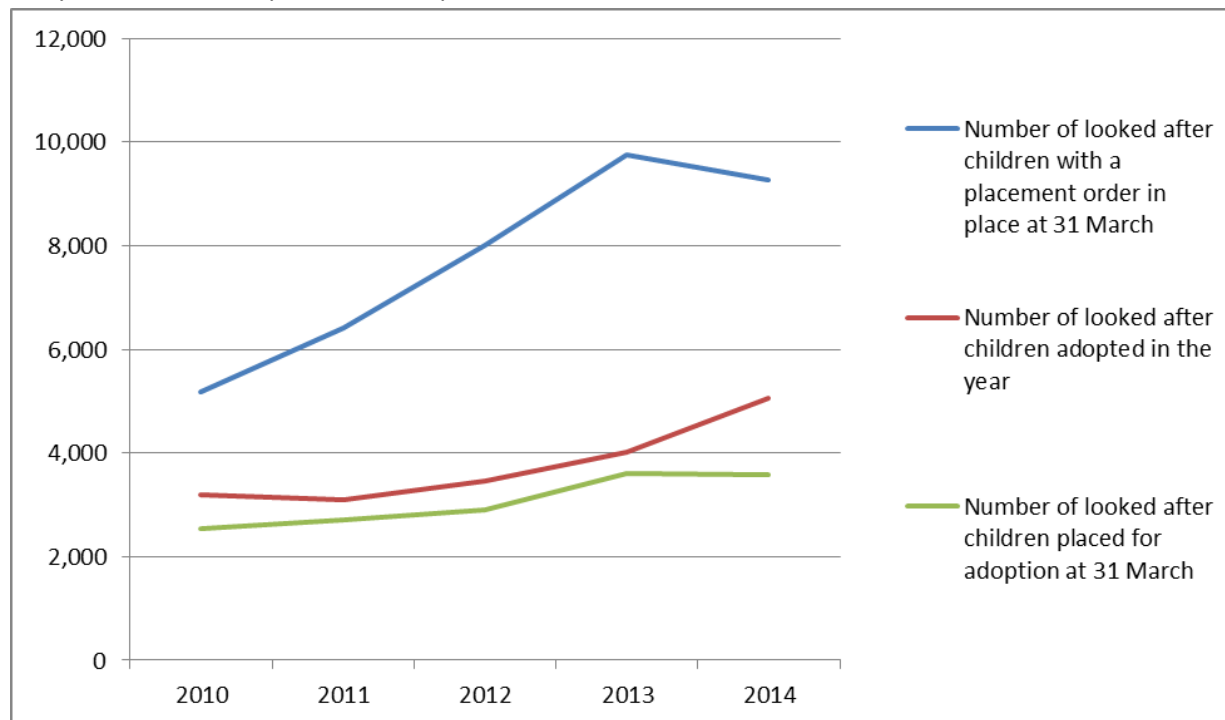
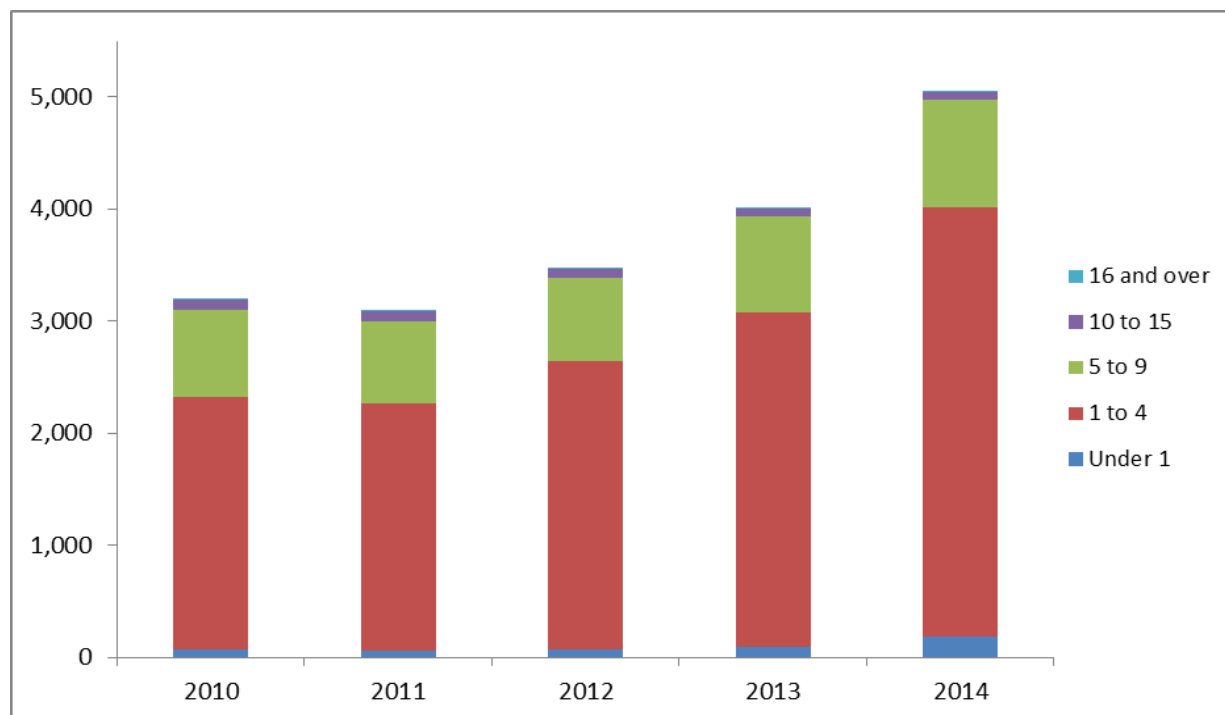


Chart 8: More children aged 1 to 4 adopted

Number of children adopted in the year ending 31 March by age group



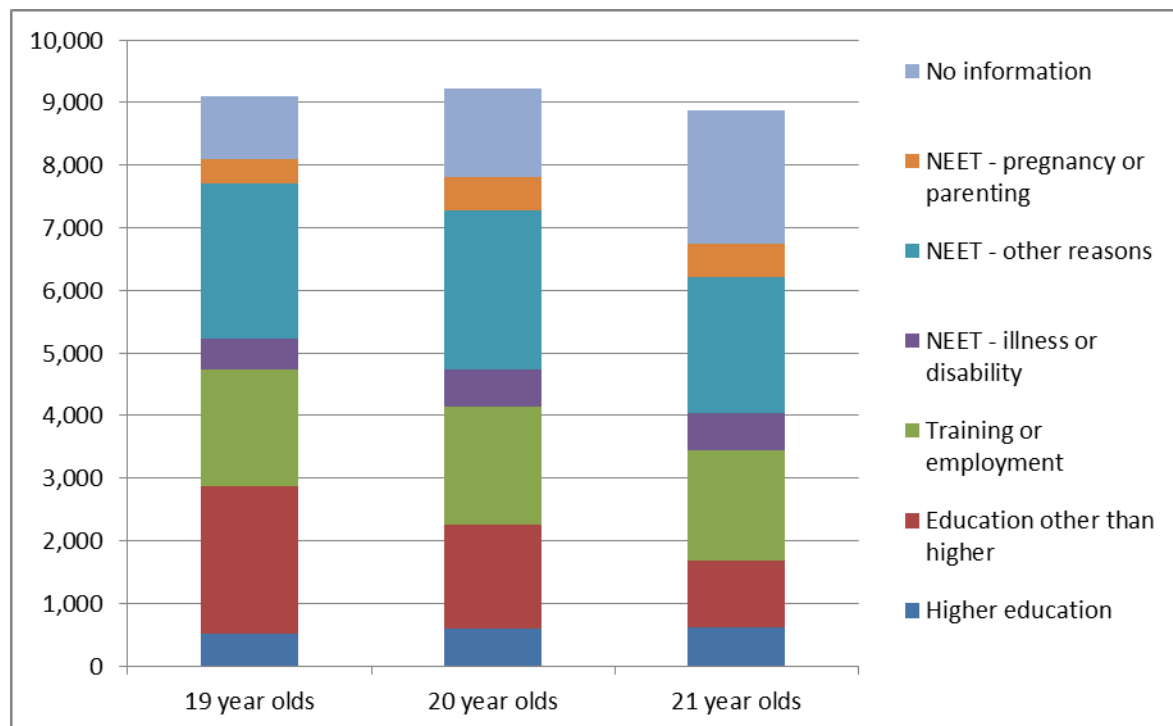
7. Former care leavers aged 19, 20 and 21 (Table F1)

As part of the SSDA903 return, local authorities also provide the Department with information about the cohort of children who have turned 19, 20 or 21 this year who were previously looked after. The cohort for former care leavers was extended this year to 20 and 21 year olds and also changed to cover those looked after for a total of at least 13 weeks after their 14th birthday including some time after their 16th birthday. Due to this change, trends over time are not available. Further information on the quality of this data can be found in Technical Note 13.

Over a third of former care leavers are NEET	Of the 27,220 former care leavers aged 19, 20 or 21, 38% were not in education, employment or training (NEET). A higher proportion of 20 year olds were NEET (40%) than 19 and 21 year olds (both 37%).
1 in 5 are in education other than higher education	In addition, 19% of former care leavers were in education other than higher education and a further 20% in training or employment. A higher proportion of 19 year olds (26%) are in education other than higher education than either 20 or 21 year olds (18% and 12% respectively).
Over three-quarters are in suitable accommodation	78% of former care leavers aged 19, 20 and 21 are in accommodation classed as suitable (see Technical Note 13).
39% are living independently	The most common type of accommodation was independent living (39%) followed by living with parents or relatives (10%). 4% remain with their former foster carers.

Chart 9: Over a third of former care leavers are NEET

Former care leavers by activity at ages 19, 20 and 21



List of tables

The following tables are available in excel format on the [department's statistics website](#).

Children looked after at 31 March 2014

Table A1: All children looked after at 31 March by gender, age at 31 March, category of need, and ethnic origin, 2010 to 2014

Table A2: Children looked after at 31 March by legal status, 2010 to 2014

Table A3: Children looked after at 31 March by placement, 2010 to 2014

Table LAA1: Children looked after at 31 March, by Local Authority, 2010 to 2014

Children looked after during the year ending 31 March 2014

Table 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, category of need, placement and ethnic origin, 2010 to 2014

Table 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, by Local Authority

Children who started to be looked after during the year ending 31 March 2014

Table C1: Children who started to be looked after during the years ending 31 March by gender, age on starting, category of need, ethnic origin and previous permanence arrangement, 2010 to 2014

Table LAC1: Children who started to be looked after and the number and percentage taken into care during the years ending 31 March, by Local Authority, 2010 to 2014

Children who ceased to be looked after during the year ending 31 March 2014

Table D1: Children who ceased to be looked after during the years ending 31 March by gender, age on ceasing, reason episode ceased, category of need and ethnic origin, 2010 to 2014

Table LAD1: Children who ceased to be looked after during the years ending 31 March, by Local Authority, 2010 to 2014

Children looked after who were adopted during the year ending 31 March 2014

Table E1: Looked after children who were adopted during the years 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, 2010 to 2014

Table 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, 2010 to 2014

Table LAE1: Children who ceased to be looked after and the number and percentage adopted during the years ending 31 March, by Local Authority, 2010 to 2014

Former care leavers aged 19, 20 and 21

Table F1: Care leavers aged 19, 20 or 21 years old by gender, activity and accommodation, 2010 to 2014

Technical Notes

Data Collection

1. The 2013-14 figures for looked after children are the latest in a regular series. Data is collected annually via the SSDA903 return, which provides the Department for Education with data on looked after children in England. It also covers adoptions of looked after children and the activity and accommodation of former care leavers aged 19 to 21.
2. All references made to “year” relate to the standard financial year which runs from 1 April to 31 March (for example 2014 should be understood as 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014).
3. The figures presented for the year ending 31 March 2014 are based on data reported by all 152 local authorities in England, with the exception of Isles of Scilly who are not required to submit a return as they do not have any looked after children within their care.
4. The database used to collect this information is longitudinal with one record for every child. As local authorities are continually updating the database every year, previous years’ figures have also been amended where there have been changes (see footnotes on historical changes in the relevant tables). The information collected contains details about the child (for example gender, date of birth, unique pupil number) and details about the child’s episodes in care (for example category of need, legal status under which the child is looked after and type of placement). When a change in legal status or placement (or both) occurs, a new episode of care is started and the date and reason for the change are recorded. Information is supplied to the Department for Education annually, and these records are then linked (by a unique identifier for each child) to any supplied by the same local authority in preceding years (from 1992 onwards).
5. Between 1997-98 and 2002-03 local authorities were required to submit a CLA100 return along with the SSDA903 return. The CLA100 was an aggregate return completed for all children looked after at 31 March while the SSDA903 was a one-in-three sample survey. From year ending 31 March 2004, the SSDA903 covered all children looked after and so the CLA100 was not required. Between 1997-98 and 2002-03, the AD1 return was completed for all children looked after who were adopted during the year; the OC1 return collected data on the qualifications achieved at the point of leaving care for young people leaving care in the year aged 16 and over; and the OC3 return collected data on the activity and accommodation of former care leavers. From year ending 31 March 2004, these returns were collected as part of the SSDA903 data collection.
6. Further information on the data items collected in this return can be found in the local authority return guide. This and other documents useful for the completion of the SSDA903 return can be found on the DfE children’s [statistical returns website](#).
7. In addition to the parts of the collection listed above, information is also collected on a range of outcome indicators for children looked after at 31 March. This outcome indicators (OC2) return was a separate return, but was then added into the SSDA903

for the first time in 2008-09. The information collected included data on offending, health promotion checks, immunisations, dental checks, health assessments, and substance misuse problem identification and intervention. This will form part of the Outcomes for Looked After Children Statistical First Release which will be published in December.

8. The number of looked after children at 31 March 2014 (Table A1) does not always equate to the number at 31 March 2013 plus the number who started (Table C1) minus the number who ceased to be looked after in the year (Table D1). The reason for this is that a child is only ever counted once as starting to be looked after during the year, and once as ceasing to be looked after during the year, but in some circumstances a child may enter care and/or leave care more than once during the year. There are also a small number of children who move in and out of respite care during the year for whom the same will apply.

Data quality

9. As part of their SSDA903 return, local authorities record all children missing from their agreed placement for 24 hours or more. Data on children missing from their placement are presented in this publication in Tables A3 and B1. Comparisons with other data sources, including numbers of missing children reported to the police, indicate that the figures presented in this publication may be an undercount of the true figure and should be treated with caution. Extensive work on improving the quality of this data has been undertaken during the past two years' data collections. The number of children missing from their agreed placement shown in Table B1 is therefore unlikely to be a true increase in number but likely reflects the more accurate data which has been received. From 2015, the information will be collected differently to improve the quality.
10. The 2014 data shows that there are still children subject to freeing orders even though applications for freeing orders could not be made on or after 30 December 2005 as they were replaced by placement orders. Further guidance on the use of freeing orders has been included in our local authority return guide.
11. Prior to 2013, grossing factors were applied to the data in order to compensate for records with errors in their episodes. As the quality of data returned improved, the grossing factors applied became very close to 1. We therefore reviewed the use of grossing factors in 2013 and, after review, decided to discontinue their use. Further information about the grossing methodology, the decision to discontinue and the impact can be found in the methodology document published with this release.
12. This publication is produced using a final version of the 2014 dataset and we do not plan to make any revisions to this publication. If we later discover that a revision is necessary, this will be made in accordance with our [revisions policy](#).
13. The cohort for former care leavers was extended this year to 20 and 21 year olds and

also changed to cover all children looked after for a total of at least 13 weeks after their 14th birthday including some time after their 16th birthday. These are 'former relevant children' as defined in the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010. Once the SSDA903 data collection had closed it became apparent some local authorities had returned care leavers information for 172 children who had no care history (i.e. had not been previously looked after), most of whom may have been 'qualifying children' rather than 'former relevant children'. Additionally, several new accommodation categories were added this year and some local authorities judged some types of accommodation as suitable where it would not be expected to be e.g. residence unknown, child in custody etc. Work will be undertaken with local authorities to assess and improve the quality of the data going forward. Regulation 9(2) of the Care Leavers Regulations defines what is meant by 'suitable accommodation'. Accommodation is regarded as suitable if it provides safe, secure and affordable provision for young people. Further information can be found in Volume 3: Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers. Due to these data quality issues and the fact this is the first year data has been collected for this cohort of children, this data should be treated with caution.

14. For the first time this year data was collected on whether children who started to be looked after were returning to care from a previous permanence option (adoption, special guardianship order or a residence order). As this is the first year this data has been collected is should be treated with caution.

Rounding Conventions

15. The National Statistics Code of Practice requires that reasonable steps should be taken to ensure that all published or disseminated statistics produced by the Department for Education protect confidentiality. National figures have been rounded to the nearest 10 and Local Authority figures have been rounded to the nearest 5. 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. In this case the next smallest number less than 20 is also suppressed. 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 negligible – used to represent a percentage below 0.5%

16. Percentages have been rounded to whole numbers but where the numerator was five or less or the denominator was 10 or less, they have been suppressed and replaced by a cross (x). Note that percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

UK Comparability of Looked-After Children's Statistics

17. 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. A review of the comparability of statistics of children looked after by local authorities in the different countries of the United Kingdom was published on 30 May 2014 on the Welsh Government [website](#).

Population Estimates

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

Want more?

Additional information	Further information on looked after children, including detailed local authority level analysis will be released in December 2014.
	<p>This will be arranged into 6 themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children looked after at 31 March • Children who started to be looked after during the year ending 31 March • Children who ceased to be looked after during the year ending 31 March • Children looked after who were adopted during the year ending 31 March • Children now aged 19, 20 or 21 years who were formerly looked after • A long term time series showing the number looked after at 31 March, number who started to be looked after, number who ceased to be looked after and number of looked after children adopted for all years since 1997 <p>The exact publication date of this additional information is yet to be announced. A full schedule showing which tables are included under each theme and their publication date is shown on the website for this publication.</p>
Outcomes for looked after children in England	Information on outcomes for looked after children is available for children looked after at 31 March 2013. Outcomes include educational attainment, special educational needs (SEN), exclusions from school, health including emotional and behavioural health, offending and substance misuse. Statistics for 2014 will be published in December 2014 on the looked after children statistics website .
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 2013. Statistics for 2014 will be published in October 2014 on the children in need statistics website .
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.
Local authority adoption statistics	Children in care and adoption performance indicators for 2013 show how local authorities and looked after children's services compare with others in England. Data for 2014 will be published later this year.
Local authority	Information on local authority planned expenditure on schools, education, children and young people's services is available for the

expenditure	financial year 2013-14. This data is returned to DfE by local authorities via the Section 251 Budget Return.
Ofsted statistics	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.
Scotland	Statistics on children's social work in Scotland are available for 2012-13 on the Scottish Government website .
Wales	Statistics on children looked after in Wales are available for the period up to 31 March 2014 on the Welsh Government website .
Northern Ireland	Statistics on children looked after in Northern Ireland are available for 2012-13 and are published on the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety website .

A National Statistics publication

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. This publication has been designated as National Statistics following assessment by the United Kingdom Statistics Authority.

Looked after children data user group:

This is a group which aims to seek feedback on whether these statistics are meeting users' requirements and to consult on any future changes to this data collection and the timing and format of our outputs. If you would like to participate in this group then please register your interest via [email](#).

Glossary

Special guardianship order

A special guardianship order is defined under the Children Act 1989 as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's "special guardian" (or special guardians). It is an alternative legal status for children for whom adoption is not appropriate. Special guardianship provides greater security than long term fostering but without the absolute legal severance from birth parents that stems from an adoption order. Special guardians have parental responsibility for the child to the exclusion of all others with parental responsibility, but they cannot consent to the child being adopted. Further information can be found in [The Special Guardianship Regulations 2005](#).

Residence order

Under the Children Act 1989, a residence order is defined as an order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom a child is to live. The holder of a Residence Order has equal status with everyone else who has parental responsibility.

Placement order

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.

Placed for adoption

Placed for adoption is an arrangement whereby a looked after child goes to live with the prospective adopters who will adopt them. It does not mean that the child has been adopted. It is a placement, not a legal status. Placement of a child for adoption may only occur if the local authority has decided that the child should be placed for adoption. A child cannot be placed for adoption unless the adoption agency has 'authority' to place i.e. either through parental consent or a placement order from the court. (Sections 19 and 21 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002).

Taken into care

Children taken into care are defined as children who started to be looked after under a care order (full or interim), or who are detained on child protection grounds (police protection, emergency protection orders or child assessment orders).

Got a query? Like to give feedback?

If from the media Press Office News Desk, Department for Education, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BT. 020 7925 6789

If non-media Jessica Vickerstaff, Department for Education, 1st Floor Area G, Mowden Hall, Staindrop Road, Darlington, DL3 9BG. 01325 735768
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Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at cla.stats@education.gsi.gov.uk

This document is also available from our website at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-looked-after-children>