



Department  
for Education

# **Adoption Leadership Board headline measures and business intelligence**

**Quarter 4 2014 to 2015 update**

**August 2015**

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# Summary

## Adoption Leadership Board (ALB) Headline Measures

**2,810 children waiting at 31 March 2015** This is a 40% decrease from 31 March 2014 when there were 4,680 children waiting with a placement order not yet placed with an adoptive family.

**Child timeliness has improved** In 2013-14, the average number of days between entering care and placement was 594 days, an improvement from 656 days in 2012-13. Latest quarterly data suggests there has been a further improvement to 533 days during 2014-15. These improvements have been driven by an increase in the proportion of children placed within a year, from 27% in 2013-14 to 36% in 2014-15.

At 216 days, the average number of days between placement order and match in 2013-14 was a slight improvement on 2012-13. However, the latest quarterly data suggests that this has increased to 234 days during 2014-15.

**Adopter timeliness is declining** The latest quarterly data suggests timeliness is beginning to decline. In quarter 2 2013-14, 50% of approvals made by local authorities were made within 6 months of registration, while in quarter 4 2014-15 this had decreased to 28% of registrations.

The timeliness of matches has also declined. In quarter 4 2013-14, 80% of matches were made within 6 months of approval, compared to 58% in quarter 4 2014-15.

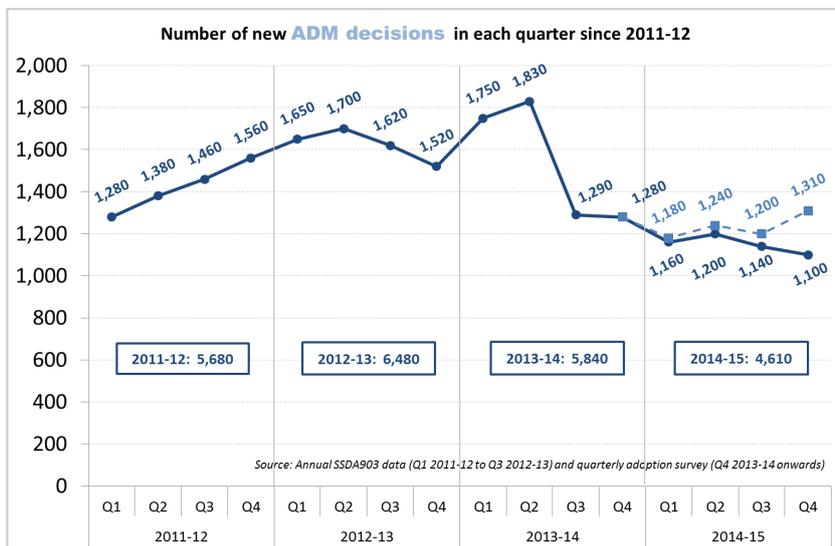
## Other Key Headlines

### New ADM decisions and placement orders granted have fallen

Quarterly data suggests that the number of new decisions has continued to fall from 1,830 in quarter 2 2013-14 to 1,100 in quarter 4 2014-15, a decrease of 40%.

The number of new placement orders have also continued to fall from 1,550 in quarter 2 2013-14 to 850 in quarter 4 2014-15, a decrease of 45%.

The charts below show the number of ADM decisions and placement orders over time. The estimated figures on the charts are based on the uplift seen in previous quarters when local authorities revise their figures the following quarter. When we apply this uplift our estimates suggest that decisions and placement orders may have increased between Q3 2014-15 and Q4 2014-15.



**Children adopted from care has increased**

2013-14 saw the highest number of adoptions from care since the current data collection began in 1992, with 5,050 children adopted from care. Quarterly data suggests that the number of children adopted fell slightly between quarters 3 and 4 (from 1,330 to 1,240). However, there were a total of 5,340 children adopted from care in 2014-15.

**Adopter approvals and registrations have decreased**

Registrations to become an adopter have decreased by 23% from 7,450 in 2013-14 to 5,740 in 2014-15. The number of adopter families approved for adoption has increased by 1% from 5,190 in 2013-14 to 5,260 in 2014-15.

Our most recent estimate for the “adopter gap” suggests that the gap has closed, and we now have more adopters than children waiting. However, there are still 2,480 children with a placement order not yet matched and the relevance of this measure assumes that matching is working effectively.

**Reversal of decision**

Of the children reported to have had their decision reversed during 2014-15, 24% were due to the court not making a placement order, a further increase on 16% in 2013-14.

## Data Sources

**New data** This document has been updated with new data from the ALB quarterly survey providing information on children and adopters in the fourth quarter of 2014-15 (January to March 2015).

**SSDA903 data** Local authorities provide data on their looked after children using the SSDA903 collection. Data are collected from all local authorities. The information is collected at child level and includes information about the child's characteristics and their dates for each stage of the care process, including adoption. The data goes through thorough quality assurance and local authorities are able to update their historic data annually. We therefore view this as the most robust source of information on adoption. It is used to produce the Looked After Children statistical first release (SFR) and the Adoption Scorecards. The most recent data covers the year ending 31 March 2014. The SFR can be found [here](#).

**ALB quarterly survey** In quarter 4 2014-15 the response rate for the child and adopter level sections of the return was 95%. Therefore national and regional figures on adoptions and adopters include estimates made for non-responses. Estimates are made by scaling to the regional level based on the number of adoptions in each LA during 2013-14 (from the SSDA903 data). All 2014-15 figures have been revised since the last pack due to revised historical information being provided in the quarter 4 returns. Due to the high response rate estimates have not been made for the child level section of the return in quarters 1 to 3 2014-15.

**Ofsted data** Ofsted have previously published annual data on the recruitment of adopters and the children placed with them. From quarter 4 2014-15 the Ofsted data collection became part of the quarterly survey.



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