



Department  
for Education

# **Adoption Scorecards: year ending March 2018**

**Methodology and guidance document**

**March 2019**

# Contents

Guidance for Adoption Scorecards 2018	3
Adoption Scorecard Indicators	5
A1. Average time (in days) between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family, for children who have been adopted	5
A2. Average time (in days) between a local authority receiving court authority to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family, for children who have been adopted	6
A3. Percentage of children who wait less than 14 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family	7
Adopter Indicators	8
A11. Number of approved adoptive families waiting to be matched	8
A12. Percentage of adoptive families matched to a child who waited at least 3 months from approval to being matched	8
A13. Number of applications to become an adoptive family still to be assessed (not yet approved or rejected)	9
Related Information	10
A15. Number of new ADM decisions	10
A16. Number of new placement orders granted	10
A4. Adoptions from care (with proportion leaving care who are adopted)	11
A5. Children for whom permanence decisions has changed away from adoption	11
A9. Number of children waiting to be placed for adoption	12
A14. Number of children waiting to be placed for adoption with a placement order	12
A10. Average time (in days) between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family adjusted for foster carer adoptions	13
A17. Number of children in a Fostering for Adoption / Concurrent Planning foster placement	14
A6. Adoptions of children from ethnic minority backgrounds (number adopted with proportion leaving care who are adopted)	14
A7. Adoptions of children aged five or over (number adopted with proportion leaving care who are adopted)	15
A8. Average length of care proceedings locally (weeks)	16

# Guidance for Adoption Scorecards 2018

## Notes for all tables

1. All calculations have been derived from unrounded figures.
2. The average number of days are presented rounded to the nearest day.
3. The distance from the 2015-18 performance threshold has been derived from unrounded figures and presented rounded to the nearest day. Therefore the difference between the 3 year averages and the thresholds may differ from any calculations made using the rounded indicators presented elsewhere in the scorecard.
4. Percentages have been rounded to whole numbers but where the numerator was 5 or fewer or the denominator was 10 or fewer, they have been suppressed and replaced by a cross (x).
5. Numbers in the related information section of the scorecard are rounded to the nearest 5 children. For confidentiality purposes, numbers from one to five inclusive have been replaced by a cross (x). Where any number is shown as zero (0), the original figure submitted was zero (0).
6. Symbols used:
  - x Figures not shown in order to protect confidentiality.
  - N/A Not applicable, i.e. no children in the cohort.
  - .. Data not provided.
  - Percentages less than 0.5% but greater than 0%.
7. All figures exclude children looked after under an agreed series of short term placements.
8. Throughout this guidance, reference is made to codes used in the SSSA903 data collection (the data source for the majority of the indicators). Further information on the SSSA903 data collection and the codes can be found in its guidance at the following link:  
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/children-looked-after-return>
9. Indicators sourced from the SSSA903 data collection use a snapshot of the data taken in summer 2018.

The numbering of the indicators is the same as in the previous years. The order they are presented in this guidance notes reflects their display order in the scorecard.

## **Regional Adoption Agency figures**

Timeliness figures for the year ending 31 March 2018 have been added to the Data tab for Regional Adoption Agencies (RAAs) that went live during 2017-18. Please note the start dates for these RAAs which are provided below the table.

Adopter figures relate to RAAs or consortiums where appropriate. The RAA or consortium information will appear on the LA Scorecards tab for the relevant local authorities.

All other figures relate to local authorities.

# Adoption Scorecard Indicators

## **A1. Average time (in days) between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family, for children who have been adopted**

### **Definition**

For all the children that have been adopted during the three-year period ending 31 March, the average length of time (in days) between a child entering care and moving in with their adoptive family, i.e. being placed for adoption (placement codes A3 to A6).

### **Period covered**

The most recent indicator refers to the years ending 31 March 2016, 31 March 2017 and 31 March 2018.

Figures for RAAs that went live during 2017-18 have been included. These figures refer to the year ending 31 March 2018.

### **Calculation**

A mean average is calculated of the time (in days) between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family (i.e. being placed for adoption, placement codes A3 to A6), for all children that were adopted between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2018.

Children who were not placed for adoption prior to the adoption order are excluded.

The indicator is presented rounded to the nearest number of days.

### **Good performance**

A **low** number of days represents good performance.

## **A2. Average time (in days) between a local authority receiving court authority to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family, for children who have been adopted**

### **Definition**

For all the children that have been adopted during the three-year period ending 31 March, the average length of time (in days) between a local authority receiving court authority to place a child (i.e. a placement order being granted) and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family.

### **Period covered**

The most recent indicator refers to the years ending 31 March 2016, 31 March 2017 and 31 March 2018.

Figures for RAAs that went live during 2017-18 have been included. These figures refer to the year ending 31 March 2018.

### **Calculation**

A mean average is calculated of the time (in days) between a local authority receiving court authority to place a child, i.e. granting a placement order or a freeing order (legal status codes E1 and D1, respectively) and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family, for all children that were adopted between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2018.

Children who were not placed for adoption prior to the adoption order are excluded. Children with no placement order or freeing order are also excluded (legal status codes E1 and D1, respectively).

The indicator is presented rounded to the nearest number of days.

### **Notes**

A time of zero is assigned to children who were matched before court authority was received.

### **Good performance**

A **low** number of days represents good performance.

## **A3. Percentage of children who wait less than 14 months<sup>1</sup> between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family**

### **Definition**

The proportion of all the children that have either been adopted during the year ending 31 March or those still going through the adoption process (i.e. with an agency decision maker's decision that they should be adopted) who have waited less than 14 months (426 days)<sup>1</sup> between entering care and a) moving in with their adoptive family (if adopted or placed for adoption) or b) up to 31 March 2018 (if still waiting to be placed).

### **Period covered**

The most recent indicator refers to the years ending 31 March 2016, 31 March 2017 and 31 March 2018.

### **Calculation**

The indicator is calculated by determining the number of children, who either:

- were adopted between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2018 and waited less than 14 months<sup>1</sup> between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family; or
- were going through the adoption process at 31 March 2018 and had waited less than 14 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family (if placed for adoption); or
- were going through the adoption process at 31 March 2018 and had been looked after for less than 14 months (if still waiting to be placed).

This is divided by the sum of children adopted between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2018 and all children going through the adoption process at 31 March 2018.

Children adopted who were not placed for adoption first are excluded.

### **Good performance**

A **high** percentage represents good performance.

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<sup>1</sup> This threshold was 14 months (426 days) during the period between 1 April 2014 and 31 March 2017 and 1 April 2013 and 31 March 2016, 16 months (487 days) for the period between 1 April 2012 and 31 March 2015, 18 months (547 days) for the period between 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2014, 20 months (608 days) for the period between 1 April 2010 and 31 March 2013, and before that it was 21 months (639 days).

## Adopter Indicators

Data for the adopter indicators (A11, A12 and A13) is collected via the Adoption and Special Guardianship Leadership Board (ASGLB) quarterly survey following its alignment with the Ofsted adoption collection. Reports from this collection are published at the following link:

<http://www.cvaa.org.uk/asglb/data-on-adoption/>

### **A11. Number of approved adoptive families waiting to be matched**

#### **Definition**

The number of approved adoptive families as at 31 March.

#### **Calculation**

The indicator counts the number of adoptive families returned as having a Stage 2 complete date (if through the 2-stage process) or approval date (if through the old process) that have not yet been matched with children.

#### **Period covered**

The most recent indicator refers to 31 March 2018.

#### **Note**

The adopter recruitment practice of some local authorities (for example, a local authority outsourcing their recruitment) will impact this indicator. Where an authority is part of a consortium or RAA, this has been highlighted above these indicators in the scorecard.

### **A12. Percentage of adoptive families matched to a child who waited at least 3 months from approval to being matched**

#### **Definition**

All the adoptive families matched to a child during the year ending 31 March 2018 are considered.

Of these children, we are interested in the subset of adoptive families that waited more than 3 months (91 days) between approval and being matched to a child.

#### **Calculation**

The indicator is calculated by determining the number of adoptive families matched to a child during the year ending 31 March 2018 that waited more than 3 months between

approval and being matched and then dividing by the number of adoptive families that were matched to a child during the year ending 31 March 2018.

### **Note**

The adopter recruitment practice of some local authorities (for example, a local authority outsourcing their recruitment) will impact this indicator. Where an authority is part of a consortium or RAA, this has been highlighted above these indicators in the scorecard.

### **Good performance**

A **low** percentage represents good performance.

## **A13. Number of applications to become an adoptive family still to be assessed (not yet approved or rejected)**

### **Definition**

The number of applications to become an adoptive family still to be assessed (not yet approved or rejected) as at 31 March.

### **Calculation**

The indicator counts the number of adoptive families returned as having a Stage 1 start date (if through the 2-stage process) or application submitted date (if through the old process) but no further dates are provided.

### **Period covered**

The most recent indicator refers to 31 March 2018.

### **Note**

The adopter recruitment practice of some local authorities (for example, a local authority outsourcing their recruitment) will impact this indicator. Where an authority is part of a consortium or RAA, this has been highlighted above these indicators in the scorecard.

## Related Information

### A15. Number of new ADM decisions

#### Definition

The number of new agency decision maker decisions made during the year ending 31 March that a child should be adopted.

#### Period covered

The most recent figures refer to the years ending 31 March 2017 and 31 March 2018.

#### Calculation

If a child receives more than one ADM decision during the year (following a reversal of the previous decision), they are counted only once. If a child receives a decision in more than one year are counted once in each year.

#### Note

**THIS IS NOT A PERFORMANCE INDICATOR.**

This indicator has been included to provide contextual information to help agencies understanding how decision making has changed within their own area and across others.

### A16. Number of new placement orders granted

#### Definition

The number of new placement orders granted by the courts during the year ending 31 March.

#### Period covered

The most recent figures refer to the years ending 31 March 2017 and 31 March 2018.

#### Calculation

A child is counted when their legal status changes to placement order granted (legal status code E1).

#### Note

**THIS IS NOT A PERFORMANCE INDICATOR.** See note under A15.

## **A4. Adoptions from care (with proportion leaving care who are adopted)**

### **Definition**

The number of children adopted from care and the proportion of all children who ceased to be looked after during the year ending 31 March who were adopted.

### **Period covered**

The most recent indicator refers to the years ending 31 March 2016, 31 March 2017 and 31 March 2018.

### **Calculation**

The indicator is calculated by summing all children who ceased to be looked after who were adopted (children with a reason episode ceased code E11 or E12) in the years ending 31 March 2016, 31 March 2017 and 31 March 2018. This total is then divided by the total children who ceased to be looked after in the years ending 31 March 2016, 31 March 2017 and 31 March 2018.

Figures exclude children looked after under an agreed series of short term placements.

Only the last occasion on which a child ceased to be looked after in the year has been included. Children who ceased to be looked after in more than one year will be counted more than once.

### **Good performance**

A **higher** percentage represents good performance, but percentages should not reach 100%.

## **A5. Children for whom permanence decisions has changed away from adoption**

### **Definition**

The number of children who have had their agency decision maker decision that they should be adopted reversed. A proportion of all children who had been on an adoption plan during the period is also provided.

### **Period covered**

The most recent indicator refers to the years ending 31 March 2016, 31 March 2017 and 31 March 2018.

## Calculation

To calculate the percentage, the number of children who had their decision reversed during that same period is divided by the number of children with an adoption decision at any point between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2018 (including those whose decision occurred before this period).

The reversal is determined by whether a “Date of decision that the child should no longer be placed for adoption” or “Reason why the child should no longer be placed for adoption” has been provided.

If a child receives more than one reversal during the year, they are counted only once. If a child receives more than one reversal during the three year period, they are counted only once.

## A9. Number of children waiting to be placed for adoption

### Definition

The number of children looked after with an adoption plan at 31 March who had not yet been placed for adoption.

When adoption is the preferred option for permanence this is referred to as the adoption plan. An adoption plan is made by an agency decision maker.

### Period covered

The most recent indicator refers to the year ending 31 March 2018.

## A14. Number of children waiting to be placed for adoption with a placement order

### Definition

The number of children with an adoption plan and a placement order in the year ending 31 March who had not been placed for adoption at 31 March.

When adoption is the preferred option for permanence this is referred to as the adoption plan. An adoption plan is made by an agency decision maker.

### Period covered

The most recent indicator refers to the year ending 31 March 2018.

### Notes

This is a subset of indicator A9.

## **A10. Average time (in days) between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family adjusted for foster carer adoptions**

### **Definition**

For all the children that have been adopted during the three-year period ending 31 March, the average length of time (in days) between a child entering care and moving in with their adoptive family, i.e. being placed for adoption (placement codes A3 to A6).

The indicator is adjusted for foster carer adoptions, in that if a child was adopted by their foster carer, the time considered is stopped at the date the child moved in with the foster family.

### **Period covered**

The most recent indicator refers to the years ending 31 March 2016, 31 March 2017 and 31 March 2018.

Figures for RAAs that went live during 2017-18 have been included. These figures refer to the year ending 31 March 2018.

### **Calculation**

A mean average is calculated of the time (in days) between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family (i.e. being placed for adoption, placement codes A3 to A6) or if adopted by a foster carer (placement codes A3 and A5), until they had moved in with the foster carer, for all children that were adopted between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2018.

Children who were not placed for adoption prior to the adoption order are excluded.

The indicator is presented rounded to the nearest number of days.

### **Note**

This indicator includes the same children as indicator A1.

### **Good performance**

A **low** number of days represents good performance.

## **A17. Number of children in a Fostering for Adoption / Concurrent Planning foster placement**

### **Definition**

The number of children in a Fostering for Adoption (FfA) or concurrent planning foster placement at 31 March.

A Fostering for Adoption (FfA) placement relates to when a looked after child is placed in a foster placement with carers who are foster carers who are also approved prospective adopters and adoption is likely to be the outcome. The local authority are considering adoption for the child or are satisfied that the child ought to be placed for adoption but do not have a placement order or parental consent to place the child for adoption, but are seeking to obtain the order or consent.

Concurrent planning is where the local authority is trying to rehabilitate the child with the birth parents, but at the same time, the local authority is planning for adoption, in the event that rehabilitation fails.

### **Period covered**

The most recent indicator refers to the year ending 31 March 2018.

### **Calculation**

The indicator is calculated by summing all children in care on a Fostering for Adoption (FfA) or concurrent planning foster placement at 31 March (placement type codes U2 or U5).

## **A6. Adoptions of children from ethnic minority backgrounds (number adopted with proportion leaving care who are adopted)**

### **Definition**

The number of children adopted from care and the proportion of all children who ceased to be looked after during the year ending 31 March who were adopted, for those classified as being from a Black, Asian, Mixed or Other ethnic background.

### **Period covered**

The most recent indicator refers to the years ending 31 March 2016, 31 March 2017 and 31 March 2018.

### **Calculation**

The indicator is calculated by summing all the children from an ethnic minority group who ceased to be looked after who were adopted (children with a reason episode ceased E11

or E12) in the years ending 31 March 2016, 31 March 2017 and 31 March 2018. This total is then divided by the total of all children from an ethnic minority group who ceased to be looked after in the years ending 31 March 2016, 31 March 2017 and 31 March 2018.

Children from minority ethnic backgrounds are those classified as being from a Black (ethnic origin codes BCRB, BAFR or BOTH), Asian (AIND, APKN, ABAN or AOTH), Mixed (MWBC, MWBA, MWAS or MOTH), Chinese (CHNE) or Other ethnic background (OOTH).

Only the last occasion on which a child ceased to be looked after in the year has been included. Children who ceased to be looked after in more than one year will be counted more than once.

Figures exclude children looked after under an agreed series of short term placements.

### **Note**

Percentages show the proportion of all ethnic minority children leaving care who are adopted. Therefore if a local authority has a low proportion of black and ethnic minority children in their care population then the denominator will reflect this low number.

### **Good performance**

A **high** percentage represents good performance.

## **A7. Adoptions of children aged five or over (number adopted with proportion leaving care who are adopted)**

### **Definition**

The number of children adopted from care and the proportion of all children who ceased to be looked after during the year ending 31 March who were adopted, for those aged 5 or over when adopted.

### **Period covered**

The most recent indicator refers to the years ending 31 March 2016, 31 March 2017 and 31 March 2018.

### **Calculation**

The indicator is calculated by summing all the children who ceased to be looked after aged five or older who were adopted (children with a reason episode ceased E11 or E12) in the years ending 31 March 2016, 31 March 2017 and 31 March 2018. This total is then divided by the total of all children who ceased to be looked after aged five or older in the years ending 31 March 2016, 31 March 2017 and 31 March 2018.

Only the last occasion on which a child ceased to be looked after in the year has been included. Children who ceased to be looked after in more than one year will be counted more than once.

Figures exclude children looked after under an agreed series of short term placements.

### **Good performance**

A **high** percentage represents good performance.

## **A8. Average length of care proceedings locally (weeks)**

Figures are provided from the Cafcass National Case Management Systems (CMS and ECMS) and are published at the following link:

<https://www.cafcass.gov.uk/about-cafcass/research-and-data/public-law-data/>

### **Definition**

The average length of care and supervision (s31) applications, in calendar weeks, calculated by applications closing within the period, for the three-year period ending 31 March.

### **Period covered**

The most recent indicator refers to the years ending 31 March 2016, 31 March 2017 and 31 March 2018.

### **Notes**

The unit of measurement is a care or supervision order application. An application can involve multiple children.

Average care duration is calculated from date of care application to the court to date application completed on CMS/ECMS in the selected time period. Averages are based on care applications completed in the period.

The average length of care proceedings locally includes all care proceedings which the local authority has initiated, including care proceedings which take place in courts outside of the local authority area.

All data updated on the 11 July (CMS snapshot on day it was shut down) and 15 November (ECMS). Please note ECMS is a live database and subject to change at the point of further update.



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Reference: [DFE-00064-2019]



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