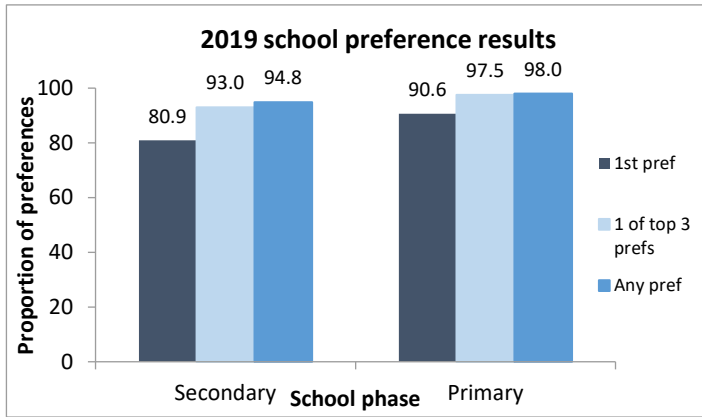




13 June 2019

## The majority of applicants for a school place received a preferred offer



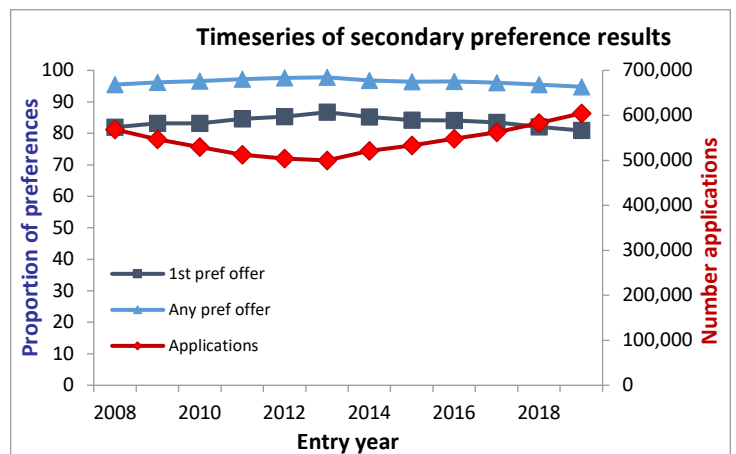
In 2019 80.9% of applicants for a **secondary** school place received an offer of their first preference school. 93.0% received an offer of one of their top three preferences.

At **primary** level, 90.6% of applicants received an offer of their first choice school, and 97.5% received an offer of one of their top three preferences.

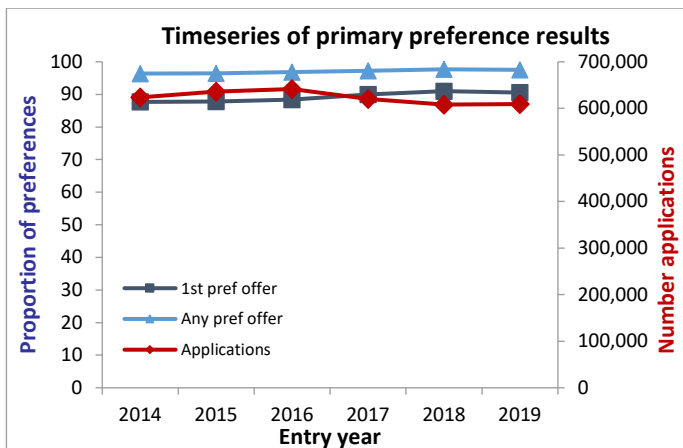
## Percentage of secondary first choice offers drops as applications continue to increase

In 2019 604,500 applications for a secondary school place were received, an increase of 3.7% on 2018 (which itself saw a 3.6% increase on 2017 application numbers), as rising births since 2002 continue to move into secondary level.

The proportion of first preference offers dropped to 80.9%, compared to 82.1% in 2018. The proportion receiving an offer of any of their preferences also dropped to 94.8% in 2019, from 95.5% in 2018.



## Primary applications and proportion received preferred offers are stable



Applications for a primary school place for 2019 were virtually unchanged from the number in 2018 with 609,000 being received (up 0.1% on 2018).

The proportion of primary applicants who received an offer of their first choice school decreased slightly from 91.0% in 2018 to 90.6%. The proportion receiving an offer of any of their preferences was stable at 98.0%.

Primary level data has only been collected since the introduction of a primary national offer day in 2014.

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## About this release

This statistical release provides the number of offers made to applicants for both secondary and primary school places and the proportion which have received preferred offers (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> preference etc).

The data is collected from local authorities, where it is produced as part of the annual application and offer process for applicants requiring a place to start at secondary or at primary school in September 2019.

The offers were made, and data collected, based on the national offer days of 1 March 2019 (secondary) and 16 April 2019 (primary).

## In this publication

The following documents are included as part of this statistical publication:

Local authority tables (Excel .xlsx)

Underlying data (open format .csv and metadata .txt)

An accompanying quality and methodology information document provides information on the data source, the coverage and quality and explains the methodology used in producing the data.

## Feedback

We are always interested in improving how our releases look and welcome feedback on any aspect of this document at [school.preference@education.gov.uk](mailto:school.preference@education.gov.uk).

# 1. Secondary applications and offers

These figures come from the application and offer process undertaken by local authorities to enable them to send out offers of a place in a secondary school to all applicants on the national offer day of 1 March 2019. The secondary figures have been collected since 2008 and a time series of the key figures since 2010 has been provided below.

604,500 applications were received for a place at secondary school in 2019, a 3.7% increase on 2018. This continues the increase seen since 2013, when the rise in births which began in the previous decade started to reach secondary school age, and follows an equivalent (3.6%) increase between 2016 and 2017. Since 2013, when secondary applications were at their lowest, there has been a 20.9% increase in the number of parents applying for a secondary school place for their child.

The proportion of secondary applicants receiving an offer of their first choice school has dropped from 82.1% in 2018 to 80.9% in 2019. The proportion of applicants who received an offer of any of their preferred schools also dropped to 94.8% in 2019 (from 95.5%).

**Table A: Timeseries of key secondary preference rates, England**

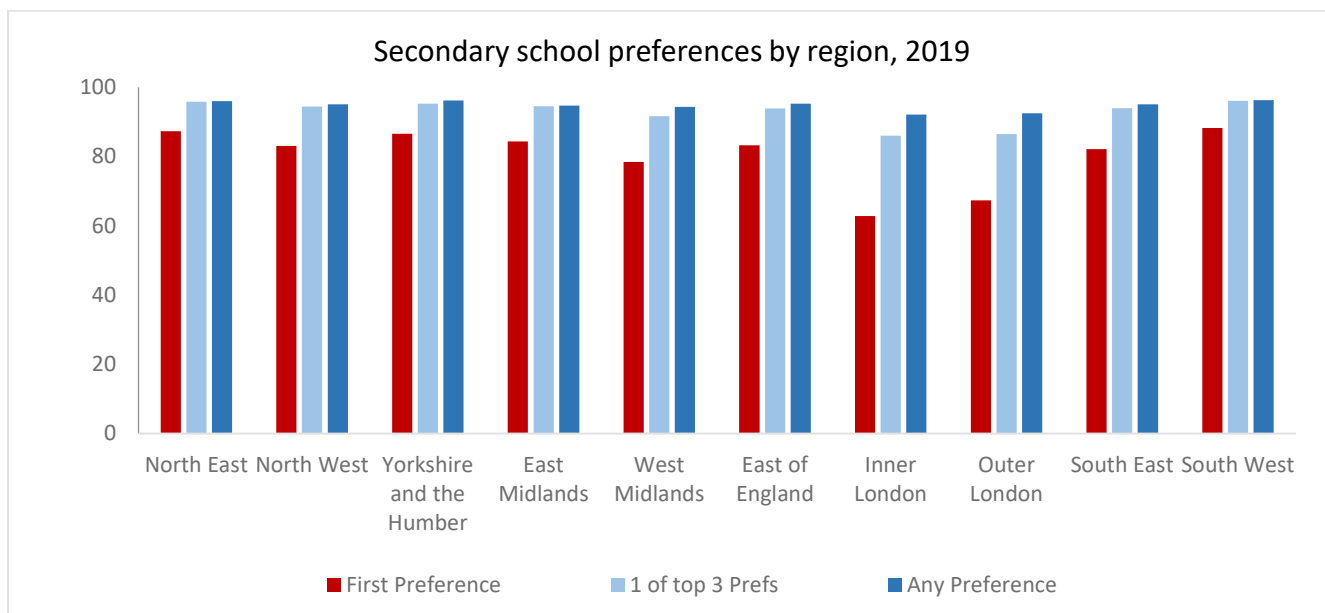
Entry into academic year	% made 1st preference offer	% made 1 of top 3 preferences	% made offer of any preferred school	Number of applications
2010/11	83.2	94.9	96.6	529,645
2011/12	84.6	95.6	97.2	512,193
2012/13	85.3	95.9	97.6	503,734
2013/14	86.7	96.5	97.8	499,968
2014/15	85.2	95.5	96.8	521,274
2015/16	84.2	95.0	96.4	533,314
2016/17	84.1	95.0	96.5	548,006
2017/18	83.5	94.6	96.1	562,487
2018/19	82.1	93.8	95.5	582,761
2019/20	80.9	93.0	94.8	604,496

## Geographical variation

At local authority level Northumberland (98.4%), North Somerset (96.9%) and Central Bedfordshire (96.7%) achieved the three best first preference rates in 2019. Northumberland has been the top performer in this measure for the last four years. Central Bedfordshire is now the only local authority who submit secondary data for year 9 as their largest secondary intake.

As in previous years, the lowest first preference rates at secondary level are all in London. Omitting City of London (which has a tiny number of application and has no secondary schools), Lambeth (54.8%), Lewisham (56.9%) and Hammersmith & Fulham (57.3%) achieved the lowest rates in 2019. Hammersmith & Fulham has improved from 51.4% in 2018, when they were the worst performing local authority.

The higher number of practical options available to London applicants and ability to name six preferences may encourage parents to make more speculative choices for their top preferences. There is much less regional variation in the proportions receiving any preferred offer compared to those for receiving a first preference (see chart below).



An applicant can apply for any school, including those situated in another local authority. Their authority liaises with the requested school, to ensure the applicant is considered under the admissions criteria, and makes the offer. In 2019 92.0% of secondary offers made were of schools inside the home authority. This figure has been stable for the past few years.

This release concentrates on the headline figures for the proportion of children receiving their first preference or a preferred offer. However, the main tables provide more information such as the number of places available, the proportion of children for whom a preferred offer was not received and whether the applicants were provided with offers within or outside their home authority.

## 2. Primary applications and offers

The primary table is based on the offers made by local authorities on the primary national offer day of 16 April 2019. This national offer day was introduced in 2014, which was the first year that primary application and offer data were collected and published. A timeseries of the key figures has been provided below.

**Table B: Timeseries of key primary preference rates, England**

Entry into academic year	% made 1st preference offer	% made 1 of top 3 preferences	% made offer of any preferred school	Number of applications
2014/15	87.7	95.7	96.4	623,526
2015/16	87.8	95.9	96.5	636,279
2016/17	88.4	96.3	96.9	641,572
2017/18	90.0	97.2	97.7	620,330
2018/19	91.0	97.7	98.1	608,180
2019/20	90.6	97.5	98.0	608,957

The number of applications for a primary school place in 2019 was 609,000, virtually unchanged from the number received in 2018 (608,200). Primary school applicants this year were born between September

2014 and August 2015, when births were stable after the drop of a year or two before. These births are the main driver to demand for school places so a similar number of applications was expected.

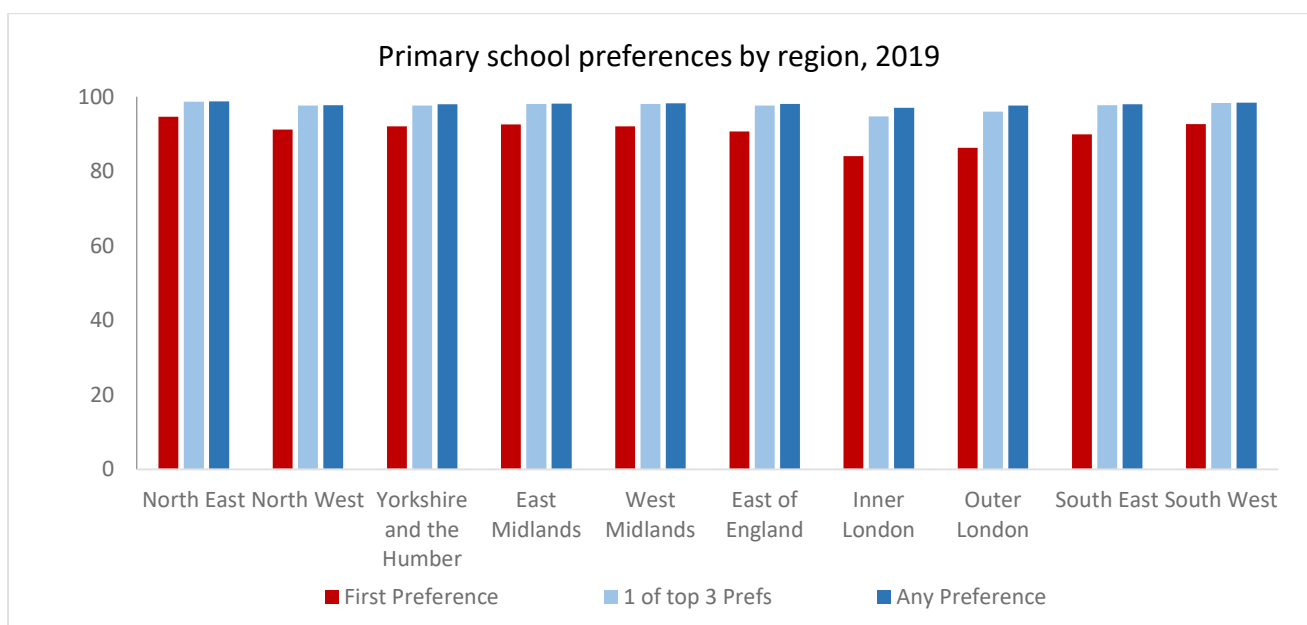
The proportion of applicants receiving their first preference offer has dropped slightly to 90.6%, down 0.4 percentage point on 2018. The proportion receiving an offer of any of their preferences was virtually unchanged at 98.0% (compared to 98.1% in 2018).

### Geographical variation

At local authority level Redcar & Cleveland (98.4%), Northumberland (98.2%) and Hartlepool (97.5%) achieved the best first preference rates in 2019. All these authorities are in the North East region.

The local authorities with the worst first preference rates in 2019 were Kensington & Chelsea with 65.7%, Hammersmith & Fulham (75.2%) and Wandsworth (75.4%). Both Kensington & Chelsea and Hammersmith & Fulham have been in the bottom three performers in this measure for the last four years.

Although overall results are better at primary level than at secondary in all regions, for London local authorities the improvement is much more marked. In 2019, for London as a whole, the first preference rate at primary level was 85.6% (86.6% in 2018), compared to 65.9% at secondary level (66.0% in 2018).



As in previous years, at primary level a smaller proportion of offers were made of schools outside the applicant's local authority compared to secondary level. In 2019 97.0% of offers were inside the home authority. This has remained stable for the six years for which primary data is available.

### 3. List of Tables

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

- 1 Applications and offers for entry to secondary schools in England for the start of academic year 2019/20.
- 2 Applications and offers for entry to primary schools in England for the start of academic year 2019/20.

When reviewing the tables, please note that:

- The 'total places' figure tells us how many places the local authority had available in the first year of entry of either primary schools or secondary schools. This covers places in mainstream schools only (for example, not places in Pupil Referral Units), for either reception year (for primary schools) or for the main entry year (usually year 7, but sometimes year 9) for secondary schools.
- The percentages in the tables for those applicants provided with any preferred offer, those offered a non-preferred school and those made no offer together sum to 100 per cent of the applicants. Offers made to non-applicants are not included in any of these rates.
- Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole local authorities are recorded as they existed prior to their reorganisation in April 2019, as these are the identities and codes they used throughout the running of the 2019/2020 application and offer process.
- The Code of Practice for Official Statistics requires we take reasonable steps to ensure that our published or disseminated statistics protect confidentiality. The tables in this statistical publication have been analysed and we are satisfied that no suppression is required to preserve the confidentiality of the applicants for school places.

### 4. Further information

The main tables provide the number of school places available and applications, and the proportion of preferences met or not met (by rank). The underlying data available on the department's statistics [website](#) provides the numbers for those who received an offer of their first preference, second preference etc. It also provides information on each local authority's national curriculum (NC) year of admission (reception for primary school places and either year 7 or year 9 for secondary places), the number of preferences that each local authority permits and the number and proportion of applications which were made online.

The underlying dataset now contains a time series of data back to 2014.

The application and offer data is gathered at pupil level and aggregated by the department into the local authority level data provided in this publication. The original data being at pupil level allows us to produce school level figures of the number of applications received and the preference level of offers made. Contact the department at [school.preference@education.gov.uk](mailto:school.preference@education.gov.uk) for more information about accessing this dataset.

### 5. Technical information

A quality and methodology information document accompanies this release. This provides further information on the data sources, their coverage and quality and explains the methodology used in producing the data, including how it was processed.

## 6. Official Statistics

These are Official Statistics and have been produced in line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

This 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;
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as Official 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.

## 7. Get in touch

### Media enquiries

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<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-preference-data-collections>

Reference: [2019 Apps and Offers]



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