



Department
for Education

Adoption Leadership Board headline measures and business intelligence

Quarter 2: 2016 to 2017 update

August 2017

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Summary

Adoption Leadership Board (ALB) Headline Measures

2,030 children waiting at 30 September 2016 This is a 8% decrease from 30 June 2016 when there were 2,190 children waiting with a placement order not yet placed with an adoptive family.

29% of children waiting at 30 September 2016 had been waiting 18 months or more.

Child timeliness has improved The time taken between a child entering care and being placed with a family for children who have been adopted (Adoption Scorecard indicator A1) has decreased by 4 months since 2012-13, from 22 months to 18 months in 2015-16, this is unchanged since 2014-15. The latest quarterly data suggests there has been an improvement to 16 months during the first two quarters of 2016-17. This decrease may be down to quarterly variation.

At 8 months, the average number of days between placement order and match for children who have been adopted (Adoption Scorecard indicator A2) in 2015-16 has remained the same as in 2014-15. The latest quarterly data suggests that this has decreased to 7 months during the first two quarters of 2016-17.

Adopter timeliness is declining The latest quarterly data suggests adopter timeliness for local authorities has been declining. In quarter 2 2013-14, 50% of approvals made by local authorities were made within 6 months of registration, while in quarter 2 2016-17 this had decreased to 29% of approvals. However this was an improvement on the 25% low in quarter 4 2014-15.

The timeliness of matches has declined. In quarter 4 2013-14, 80% of matches were made within 6 months of approval, compared to 43% in quarter 2 2016-17. Further to this, 26% of matches were made within 3 months of approval in quarter 2 2016-17.

Other Key Headlines

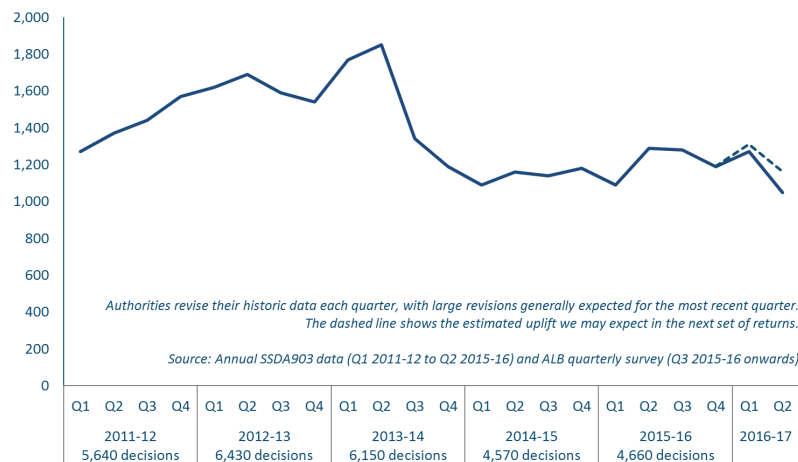
New ADM decisions and placement orders granted have fallen

Quarterly data suggests that the number of new decisions has continued to fall from 1,850 in quarter 2 2013-14 to 1,050 in quarter 2 2016-17, a decrease of 44%.

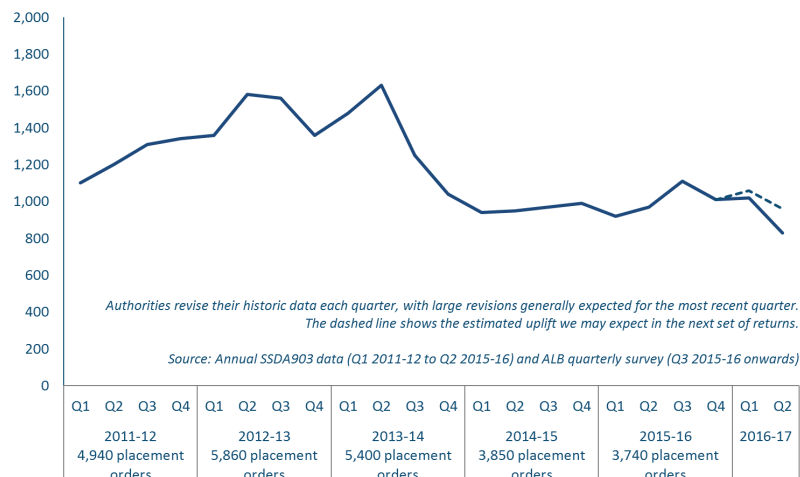
The number of new placement orders have also continued to fall from 1,630 in quarter 2 2013-14 to 830 in quarter 2 2016-17, a decrease of 49%.

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 the number of new decisions and placement orders granted may have plateaued, but there has been noticeable quarterly variation in the number of new decisions and placement orders granted in recent quarters.

Number of new ADM decisions in each quarter since 2011-12



Number of new placement orders granted in each quarter since 2011-12



Children adopted from care has decreased

In 2015-16, there were 4,690 adoptions, an increase of 35% from 2011-12, however, this was a decrease of 12% from 2014-15. Quarterly data suggests that there were 1,060 children adopted in quarter 2 2016-17, a small decrease from 1,070 in quarter 1 2016-17.

Adoptive family approvals have increased slightly and registrations have decreased

Registrations to become an adopter have increased by 8% from 740 in quarter 1 2016-17 to 800 in quarter 2 2016-17. The number of adopter families approved for adoption has decreased slightly from 710 in quarter 1 2016-17 to 700 in quarter 2 2016-17.

Our most recent estimate for the “adopter gap” suggests that the gap has closed, and we now have more adoptive families than children waiting. However, there were still 1,770 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 the first two quarters of 2016-17, 34% were due to the court not making a placement order, a further increase on 2015-16. However, the proportional increase has been driven by a fall in the number of prospective adopters not being found.

Matching timeliness

The table below shows the average time between placement order and match¹ for children with a placement order in 2014-15 and 2015-16.

	Harder to place ²	Non-harder to place
Number with a placement order made in 2014-15	2,440	1,650
- Of those, the number who are matched by end of Q1 2016-17	2,100 (86%)	1,520 (92%)
- Mean timeliness for those matched (months)	5.9	3.3
Number with a placement order made in 2015-16	2,260	1,770
- Of those, the number who are matched by end of Q1 2016-17	1,520 (67%)	1,420 (80%)
- Mean timeliness for those matched (months)	4.2	2.9

Source: Adoption Leadership Board Quarterly Collection

Note

1. This differs from the Adoption Scorecard indicator A2 which measures the average number of days between placement order and match for children who have been adopted.

2. "Harder to place" is defined as a child who is any of the following: waiting 18 months or more since entering care, 5 years or over, BME, disabled, or part of a sibling group.

Harder to place children with a placement order made in 2014-15 were waiting on average 5.9 months between placement order and match, this decreased to 4.2 months for those with a placement order made in 2015-16. Non-harder to place children also saw a small decrease from 3.3 to 2.9 months over these two time periods.

The figures in the table refer to children that have been matched with a family. The timeliness figures may be an under-estimate as the match could break down at any point before the final adoption order has been granted.

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 second quarter of 2016-17 (July to September 2016).

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 2016.

ALB quarterly survey In quarter 2 2016-17 the response rate from local authorities was 92% for both the child and adopter level sections of the return. 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 2015-16 (from the SSDA903 data). The response rate for the adopter level section from Voluntary Adoption Agencies was 75%.

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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