



Department
for Education

CHILDREN'S HOMES IN ENGLAND DATA PACK

March 2012

Purpose of this Data Pack

Children's homes are an important placement option for looked after children. Stable effective care requires strong partnerships between local authorities and children's homes providers, so that children can benefit from planned admissions, are placed in homes best able to meet their needs where their progress is continually reviewed, and are supported to move when they have been properly prepared and feel ready to take this step.

This pack:

- includes information about the children and young people who depend on children's homes for their care;
- includes information on the quality, supply and provision of the homes themselves;
- shows how different local authorities use children's homes; and
- is intended to help local authorities understand how children's homes contribute to achieving good quality stable outcomes for the children they look after. For example, why do some authorities place more children in residential care than others?

About this pack

- The information in this pack is drawn from two sources:
 - the DfE statistical collection about looked after children (SSDA903). This version updates the information contained in the data pack published in July 2011.
 - Ofsted data on children's homes

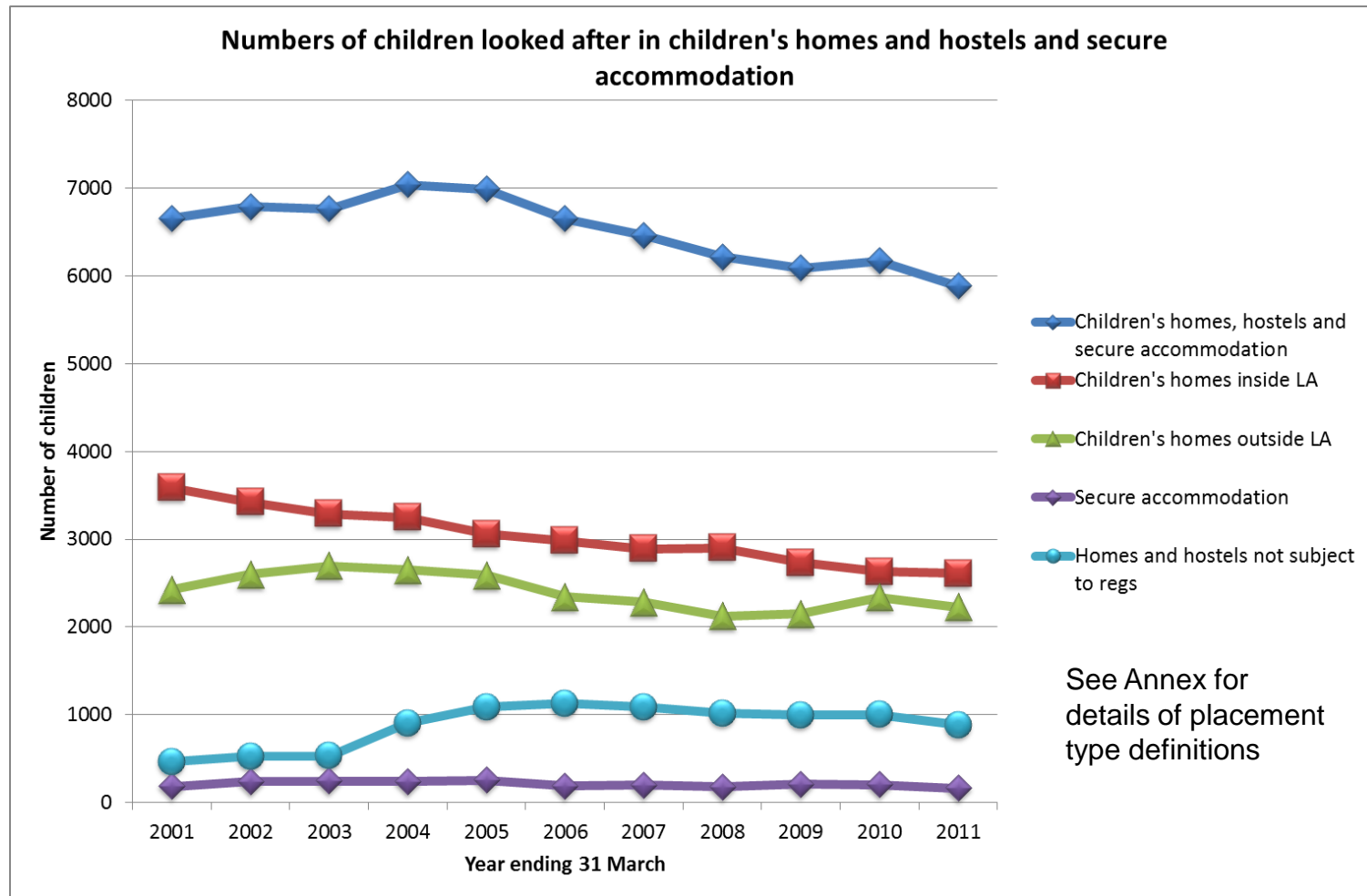
[See: <http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s001026/index.shtml> and <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report> for further information]

- The data relates only to looked after children who are placed in children's homes and so largely excludes information about children placed in unregulated settings (such as hostels or supported lodgings) which are not inspected by Ofsted. Information about children placed in children's homes settings as part of short break (respite) care arrangements is also omitted. But some contextual information is provided on children placed in other types of accommodation, such as secure accommodation and foster care.
- The placement of individual looked after children is determined by local authority policies and their arrangements for commissioning placements. But children should be matched to the placement assessed as most likely to meet their needs and should be consulted about placement choices and moves.

The Children

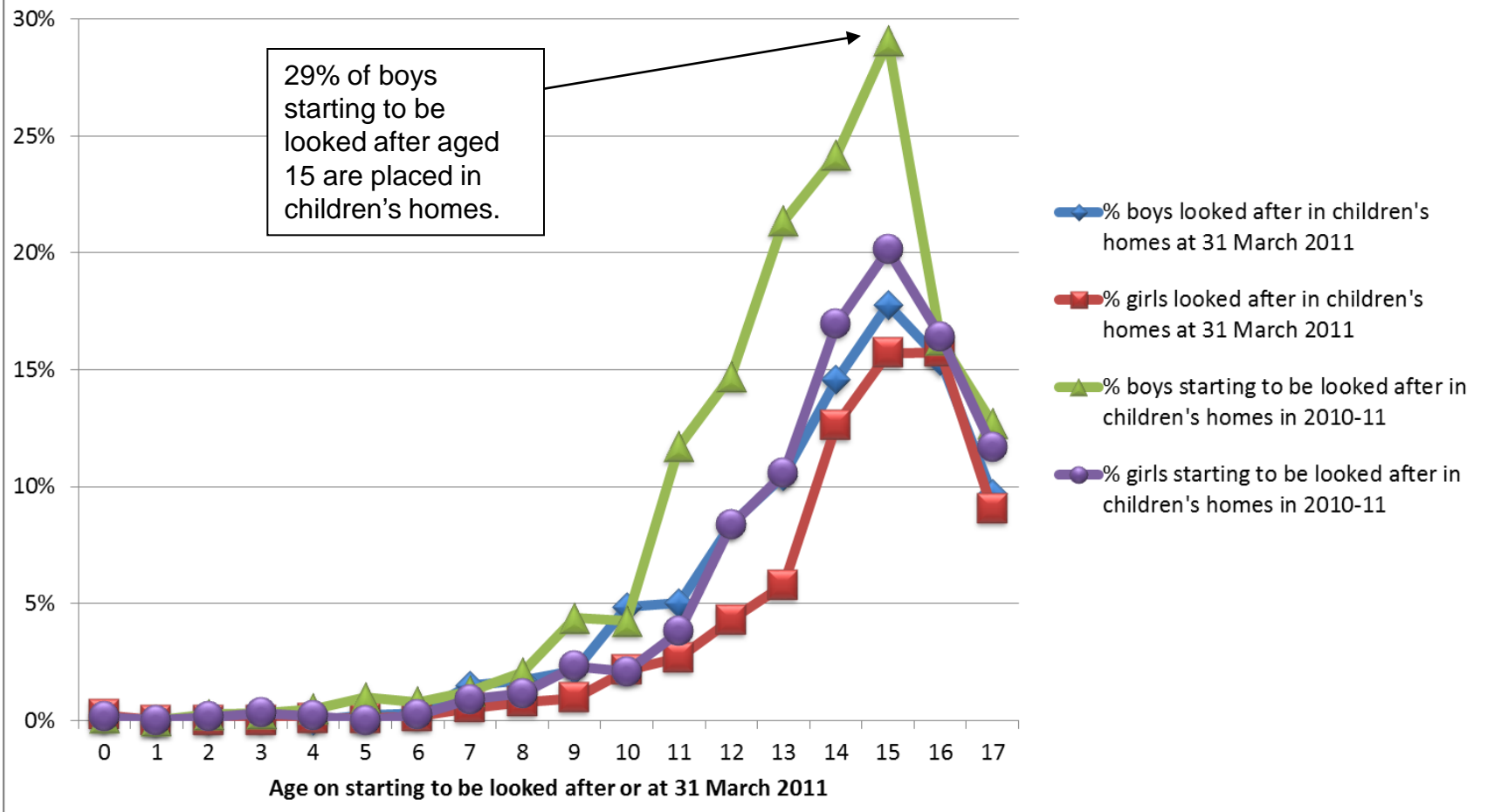
Data as at 31 March 2011

Around 9% of looked after children are in children's homes and hostels or secure accommodation: 5,890 at 31 March 2011, of whom 4,840 were in children's homes. The rest of this pack focuses on children's homes. In 2010-11 1,980 children started to be looked after in children's homes.



Children's homes cater for children of all ages, but in practice most are aged over 12. Boys are more likely than girls to be placed in children's homes, even after allowing for the fact that *more* boys are looked after than girls.

Percentage of boys and girls in children's homes by age



29% of boys starting to be looked after aged 15 are placed in children's homes.

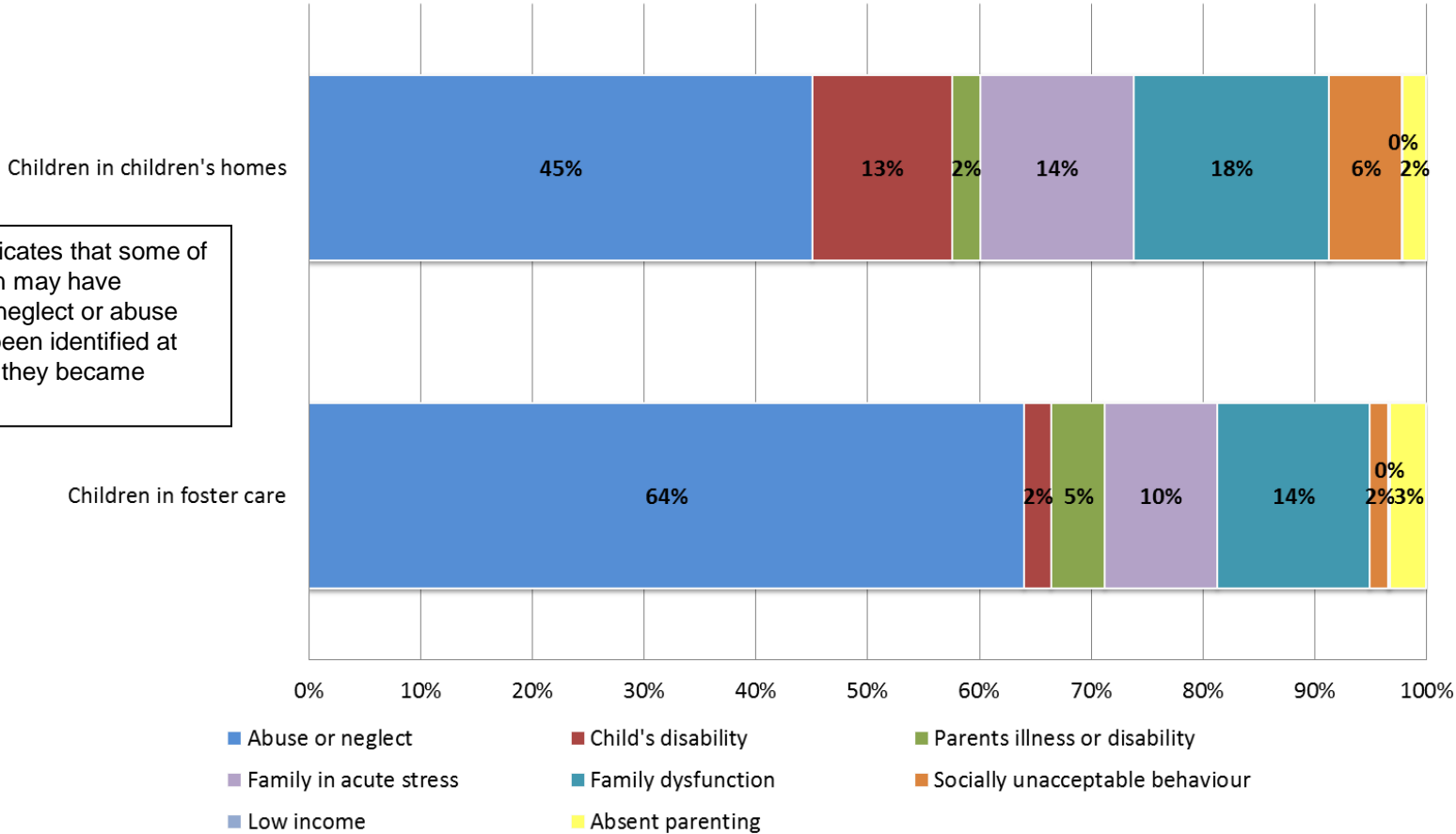
- ◆ % boys looked after in children's homes at 31 March 2011
- % girls looked after in children's homes at 31 March 2011
- ▲ % boys starting to be looked after in children's homes in 2010-11
- % girls starting to be looked after in children's homes in 2010-11

63% of children in children's homes are boys

Children placed in children’s homes are less likely to have abuse or neglect identified as their primary reason for being looked after than children in foster placements. They are more likely to have their primary reason for being looked after recorded as their disability.

Number of children looked after aged 10 or over at 31 March 2011 in children's homes or foster care by reason for being looked after (excluding UASC)

Research indicates that some of these children may have experienced neglect or abuse that has not been identified at the point that they became looked after¹



93% of unaccompanied asylum seeking children are looked after because of absent parenting. They have been excluded from this chart.

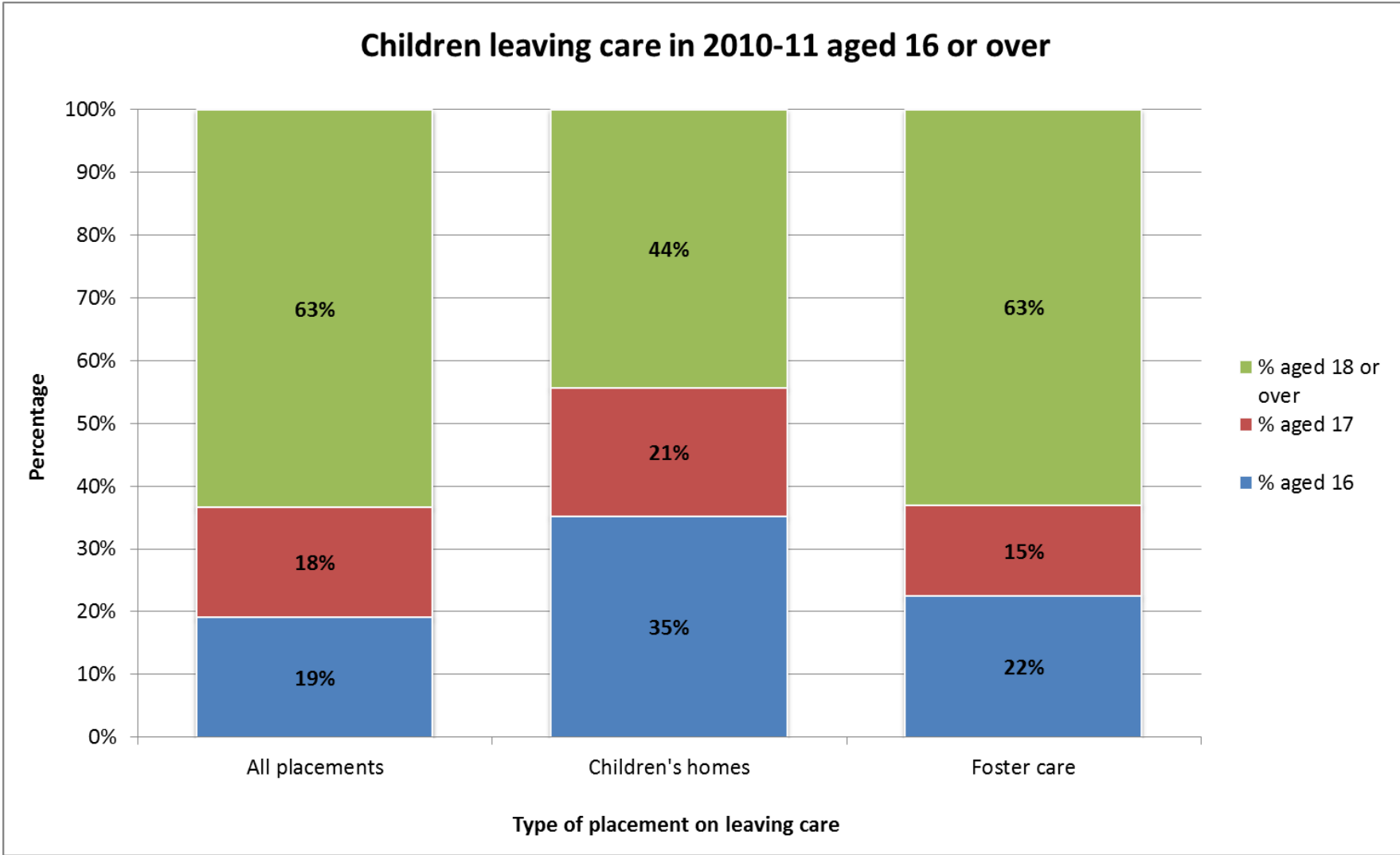
1. <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationdetail/page1/DCSF-RBX-09-04>

Research on Children's Homes

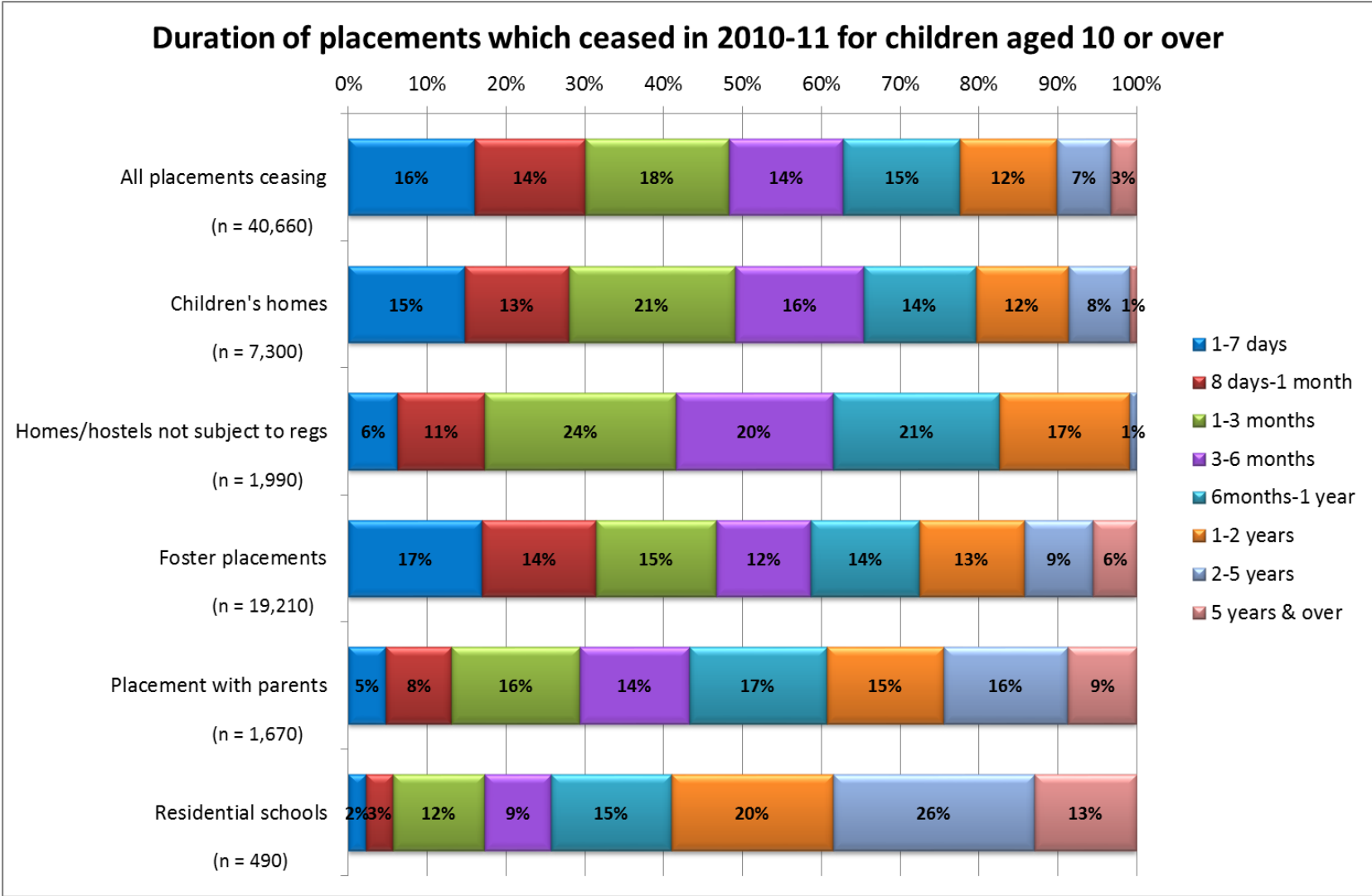
- Most children were complimentary about the care they received in children's homes, generally felt safe where they were living and said that there was an adult who would stand up for them.
- But a third said they had considered killing themselves at some stage during the previous month, nearly half of whom were confirmed by their social workers as having self-harmed or attempted suicide.
- Most children showed improvement across general measures of behavioural, emotional and social difficulties as well as education.
- The benefits that accrued during residence did not necessarily persist on departure
- If residential care is positioned as a residual service for young people with the greatest difficulties, it is unsurprising if this is how it operates and that outcomes are mixed. At present, the consequences are mitigated to some degree by the high staffing levels.

(Sinclair and Gibbs, 1998; Clough *et al.*, 2006; Berridge *et al.*, 2008; Stein, 2009; Berridge *et al.*, 2012).

More than half the children in children’s homes leave care before they turn 18, compared with around a third of children in foster care.

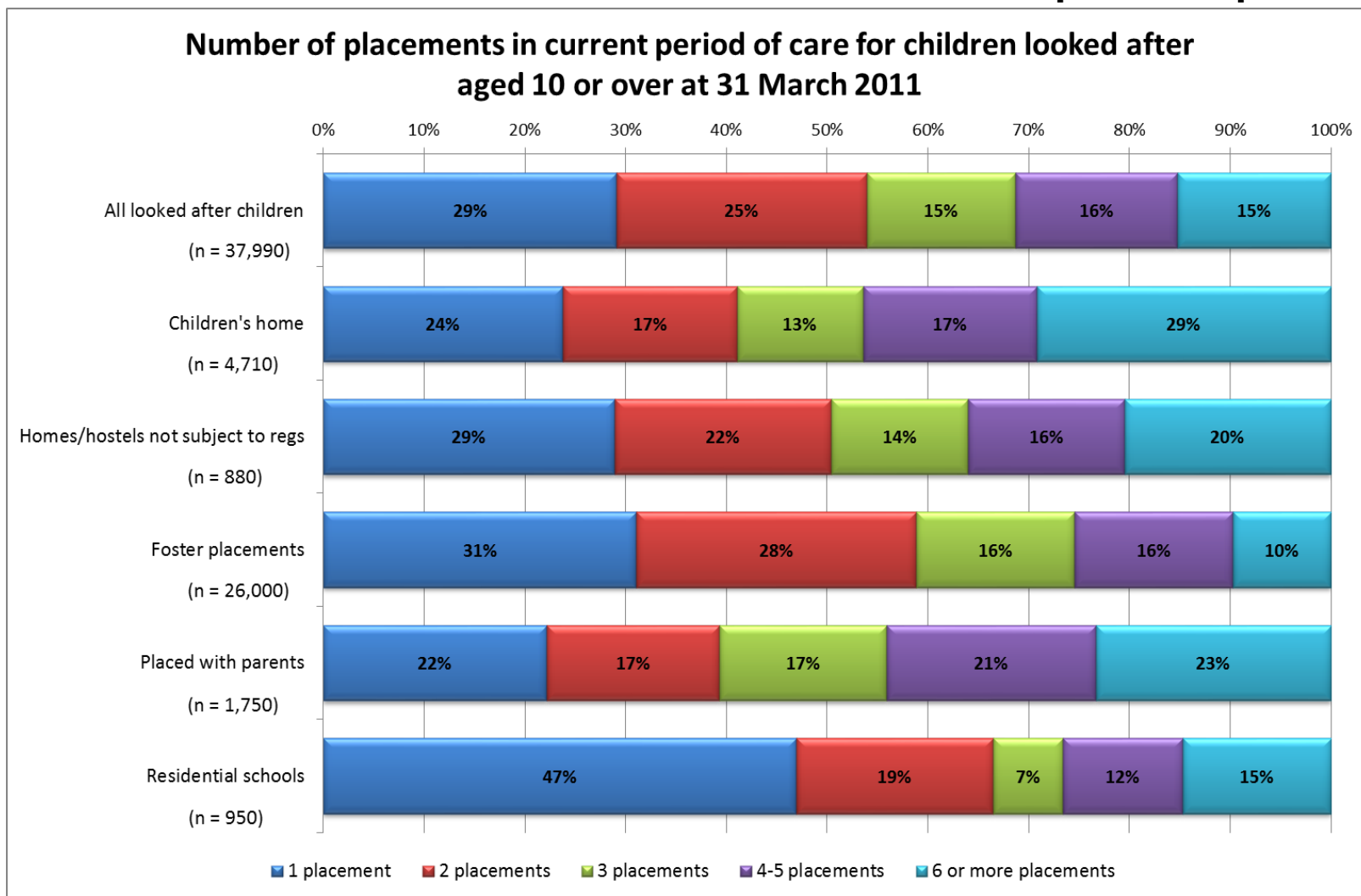


The duration of placements in children's homes is quite similar to foster placements though fewer last longer than a year – 20% compared with 28%.



Only a selection of placement types is shown in this chart.

For some children being placed in a children's home is their first placement. But 29% of children in children's homes have had at least 5 previous placements.

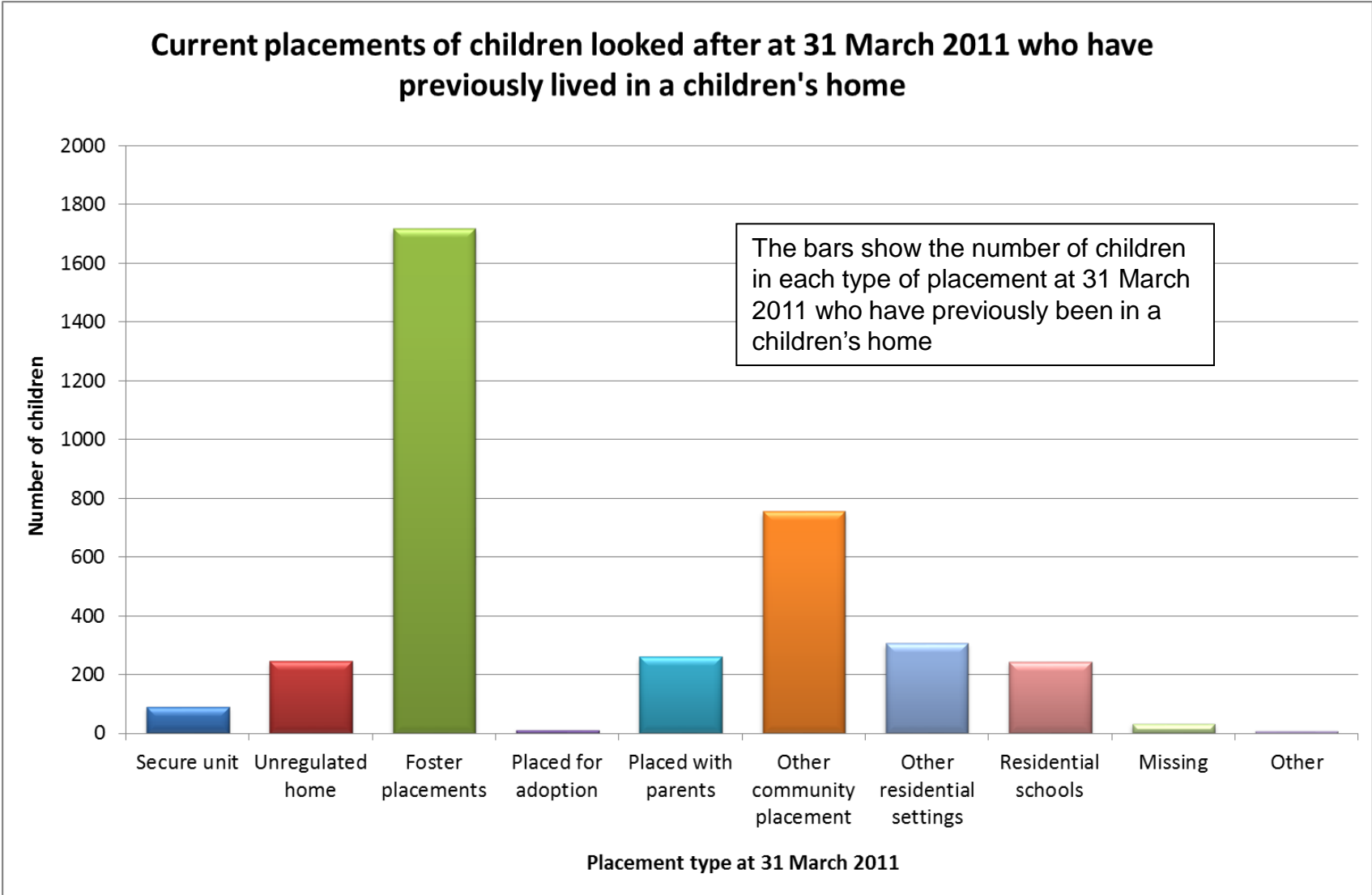


Only a selection of placement types is shown in this chart.

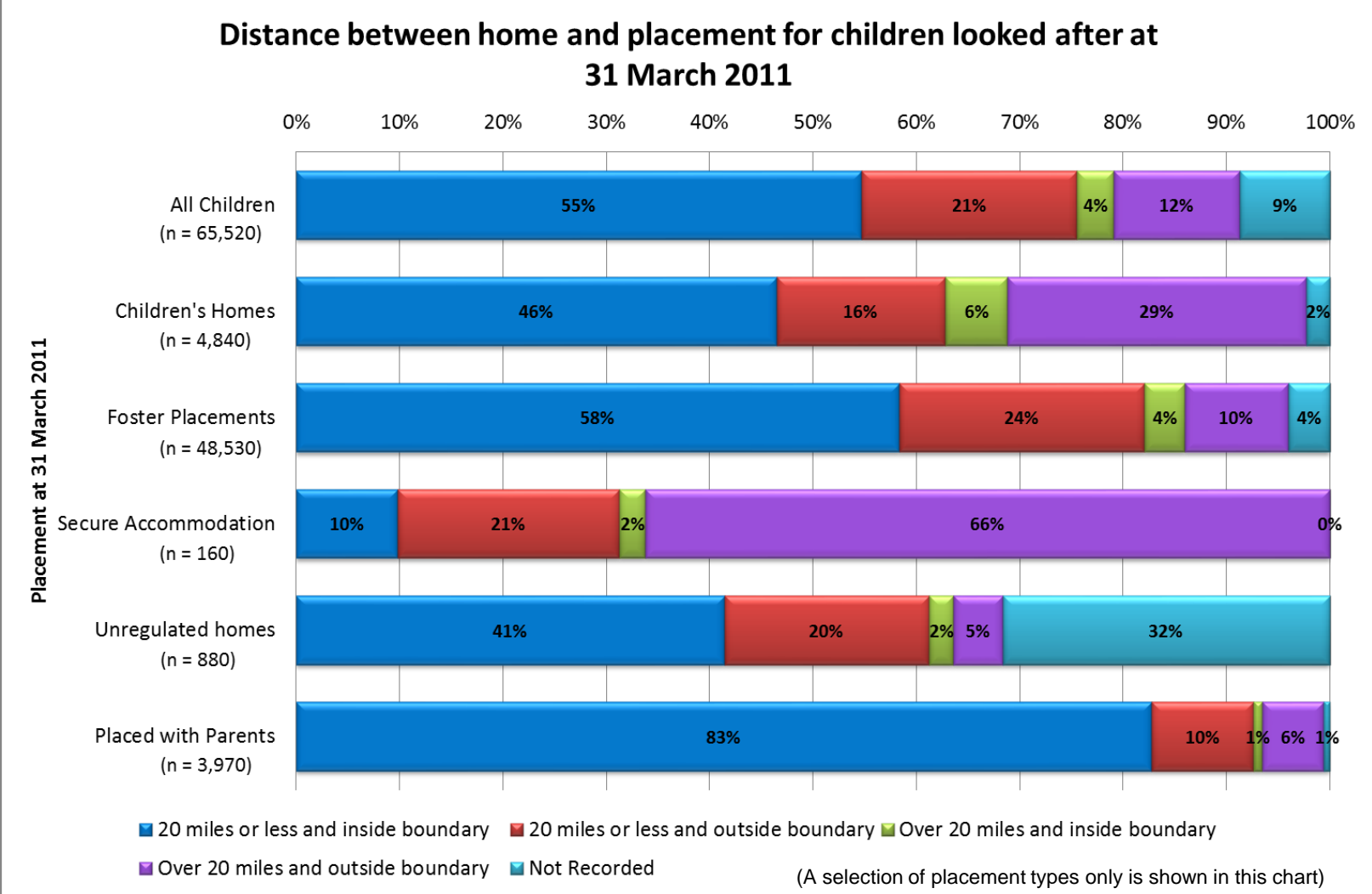
31% of children in foster placements are on their first placement, compared to 24% of children in children's homes.

This chart does not show when children were **first** placed in a children's home.

As at 31 March 2011, 13% of looked after children had lived in a children's home at some point: 3,670 (6%) had since left that placement.

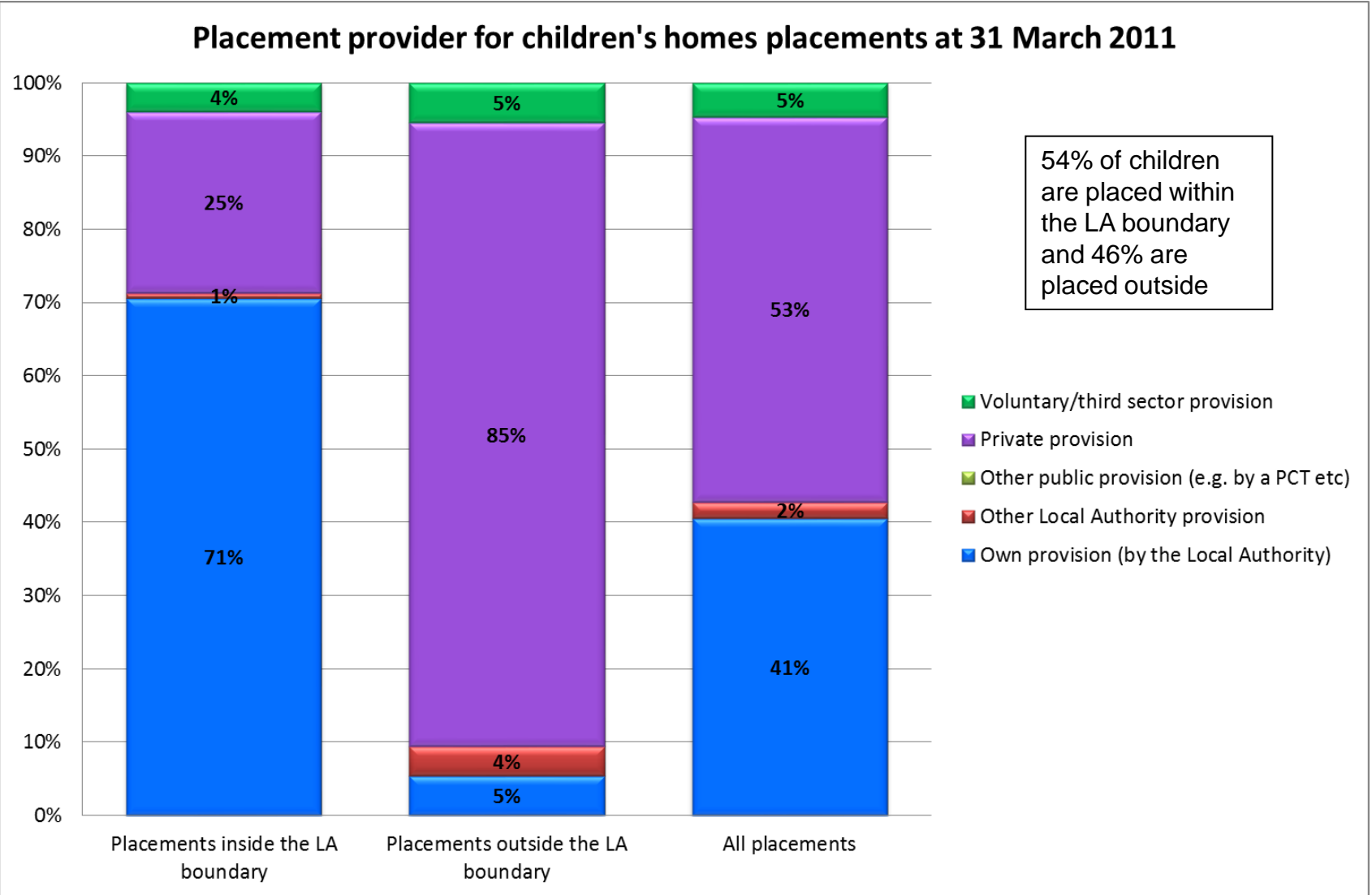


Children in children’s homes are more likely to be placed over 20 miles from their local communities than those in foster care (35% vs. 14%). They are also more likely to be placed outside the local authority boundary (45% vs. 34%).



46% of children in children’s homes live within the Local Authority and fewer than 20 miles from home, but 29% live outside the LA and over 20 miles from home. This compares with 58% (in LA <20 miles) and 10% (outside LA >20 miles) for children in foster care.

57% of the children in children's homes are in private or voluntary provision, but this varies by whether the child is placed inside or outside the LA area.

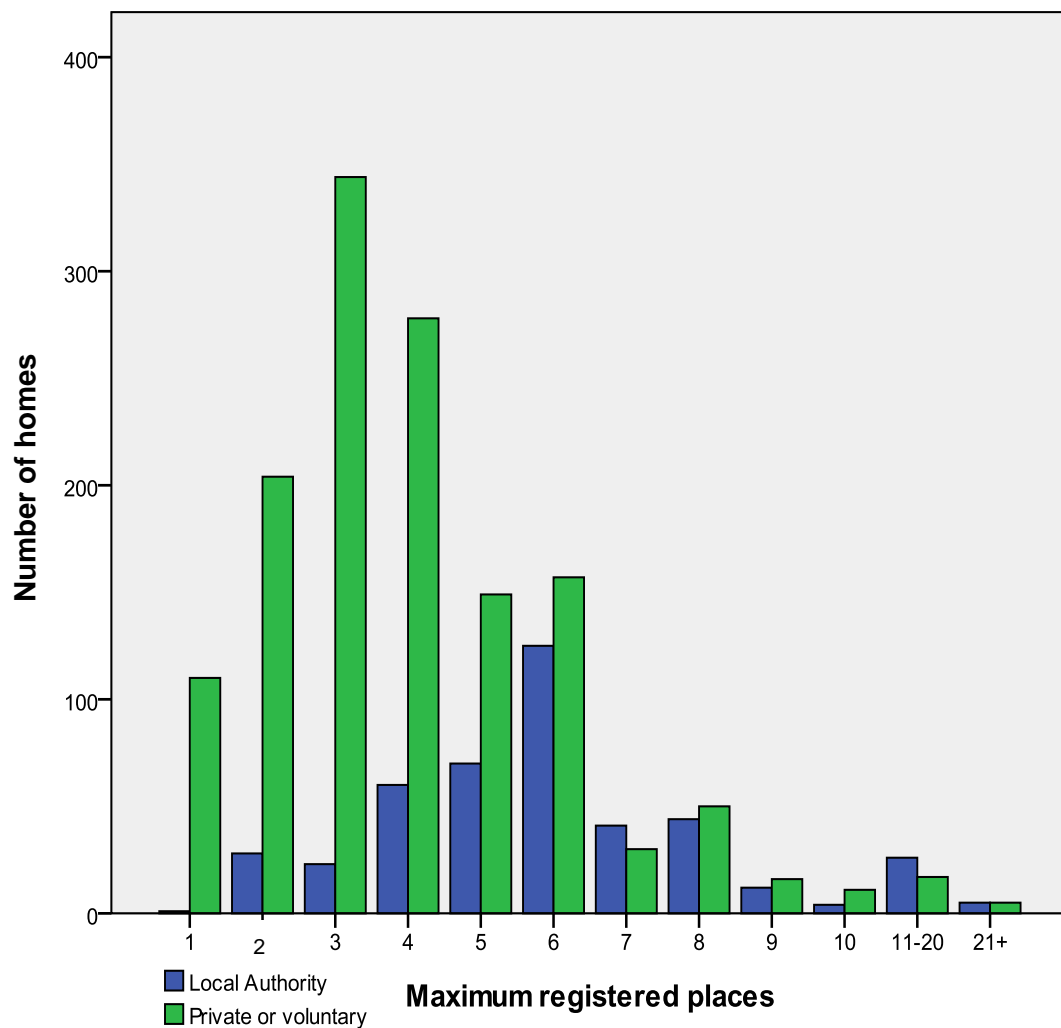


91% of children placed outside the LA are in private or voluntary provision but 71% of children placed inside the LA boundary are in the LA's own provision.

The Homes and their use

Data as at 30 September 2011

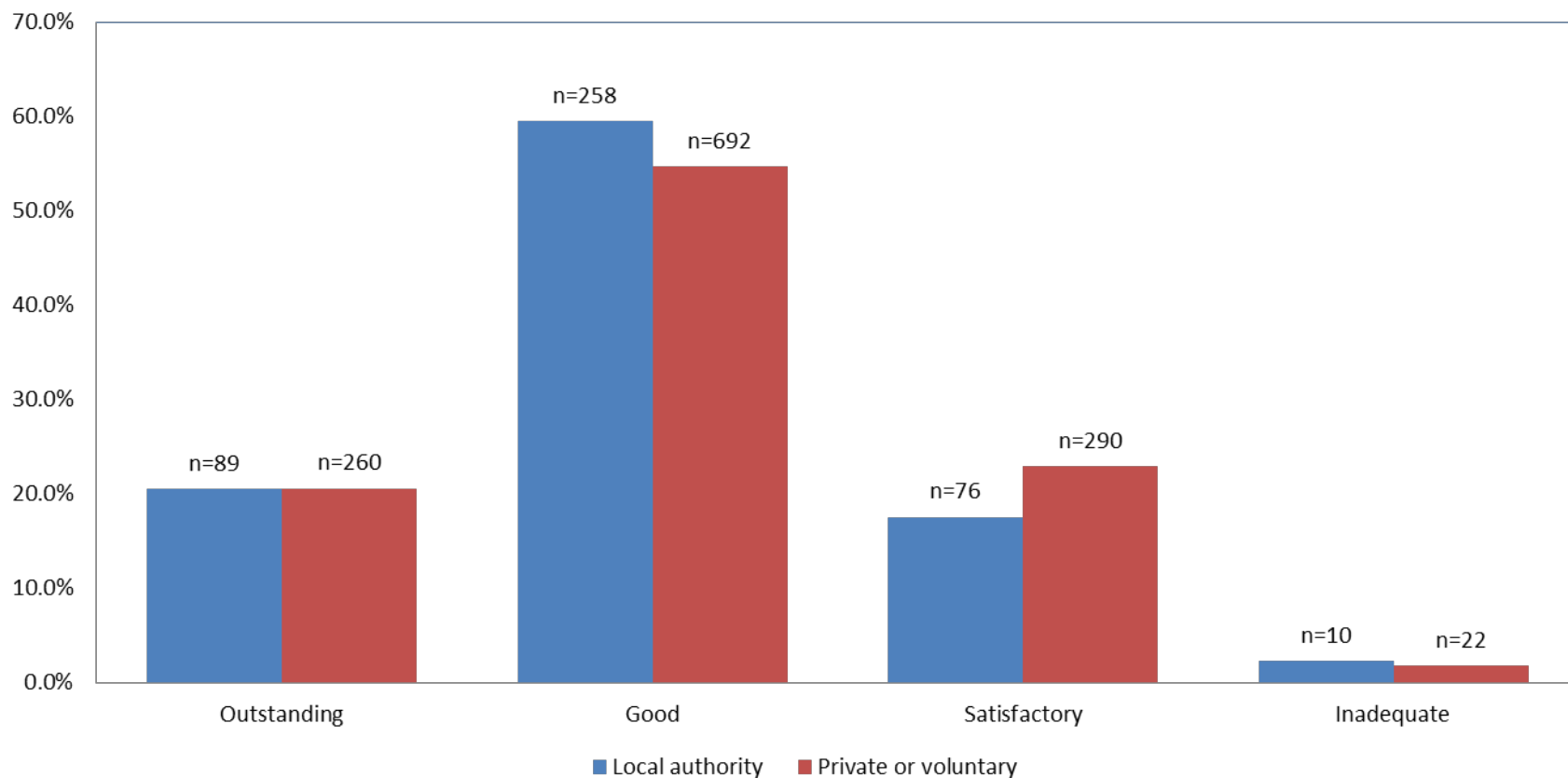
1,810 children's homes were registered with Ofsted on 30 September 2011. Of these, 439 (24%) were local authority run¹ and 1,371 (76%) were in the private or voluntary sector.

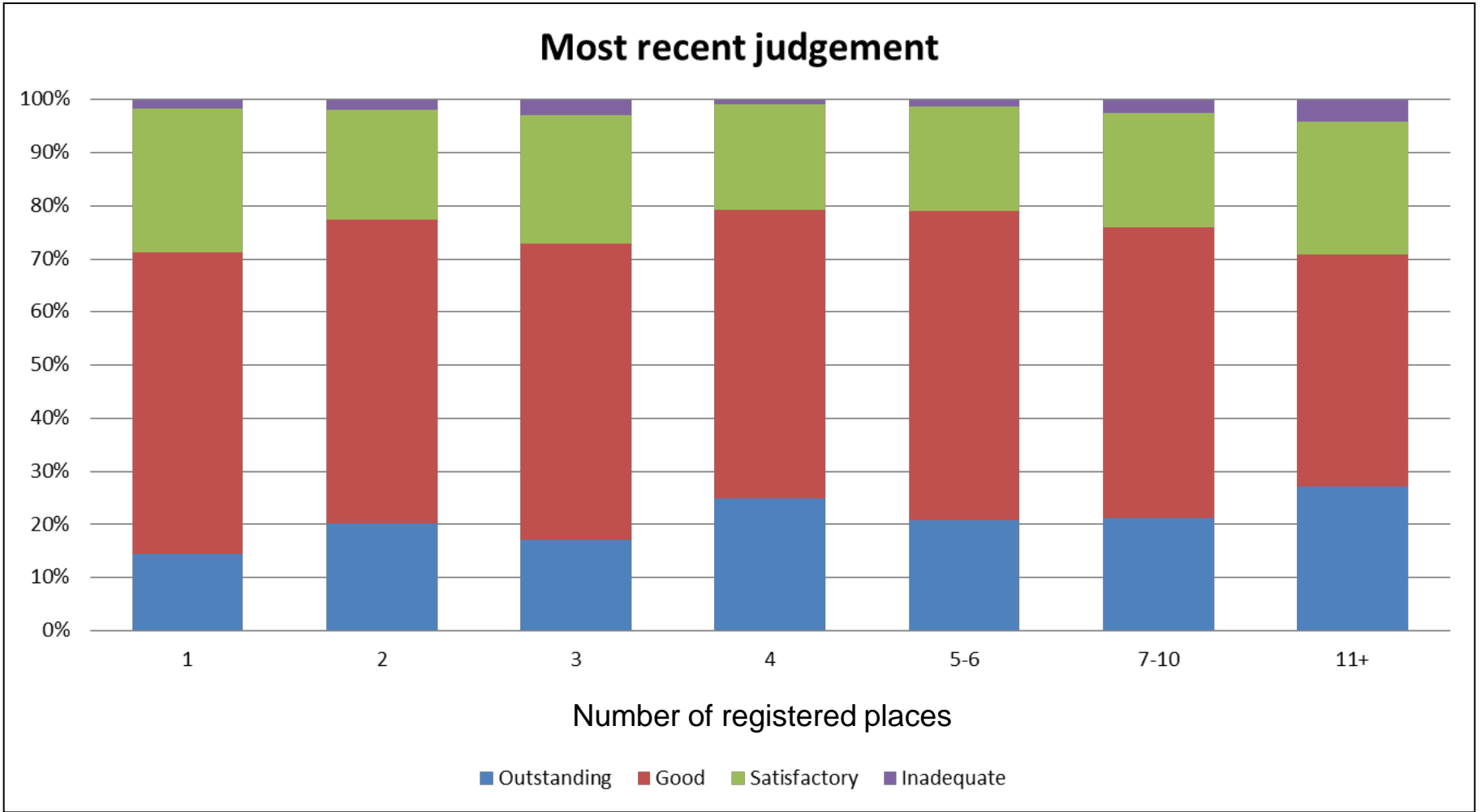


- In total there were 8,333 registered places, 2,771 in local authority homes¹ and 5,562 in private or voluntary homes.
- Private/voluntary homes had an average of 4.1 places, but LA homes tended to be slightly bigger, with 6.3 places on average.
- 111 children's homes (6%) were registered for just one place; 232 (19%) were registered for two places. Only 10 had more than 20 places.
- The maximum number of places was 43

Ofsted rated the quality of homes on a 4-point scale: 349 (21%) were rated outstanding, 950 (56%) rated good, 366 (22%) rated satisfactory and 32 (2%) rated inadequate in their most recent inspection. There is no clear difference between the performance of homes by sector.

Most recent judgement

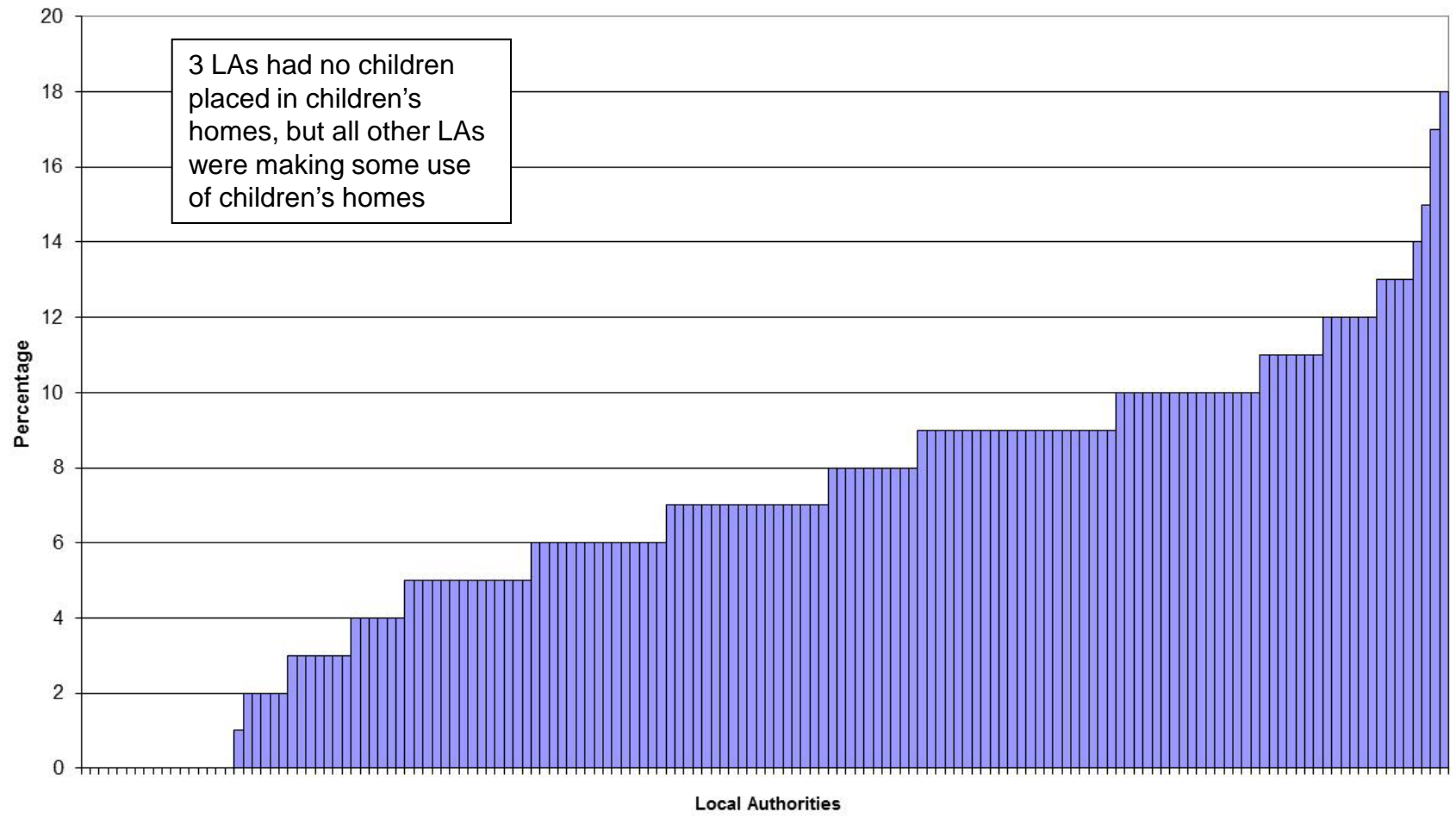




This is based on inspections carried out between 1 April and 30 September 2011, under the new children's home framework that began on 1 April 2011. 113 homes had yet to be inspected.

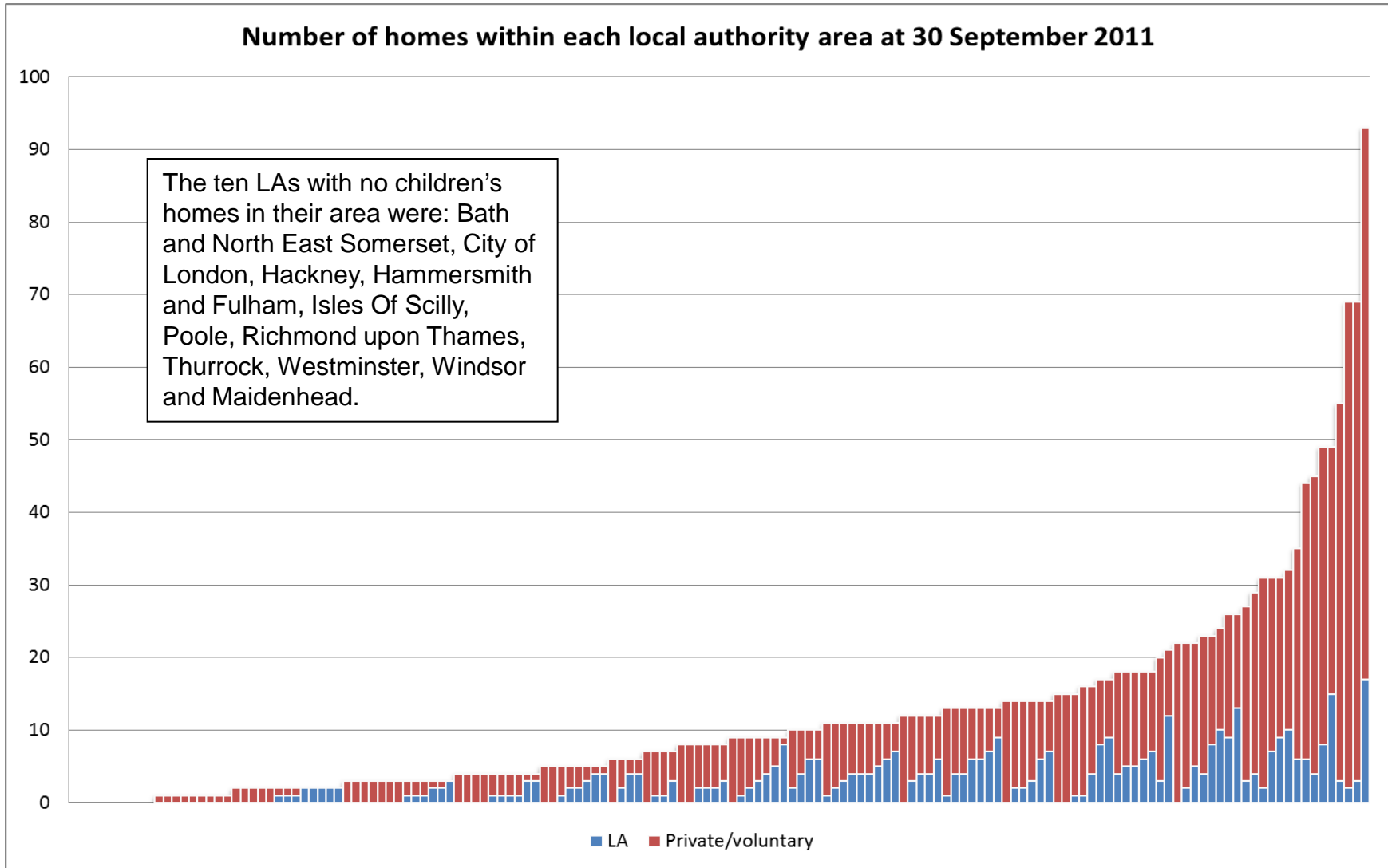
Local authorities make very different use of regulated children's homes – some place no children while one authority places 18% of its children in children's homes.

Percentage of children looked after placed in regulated children's homes at 31 March 2011



One LA had 190 children placed in children's homes at 31 March 2011. On average, LAs had 32 children in children's homes on that date.

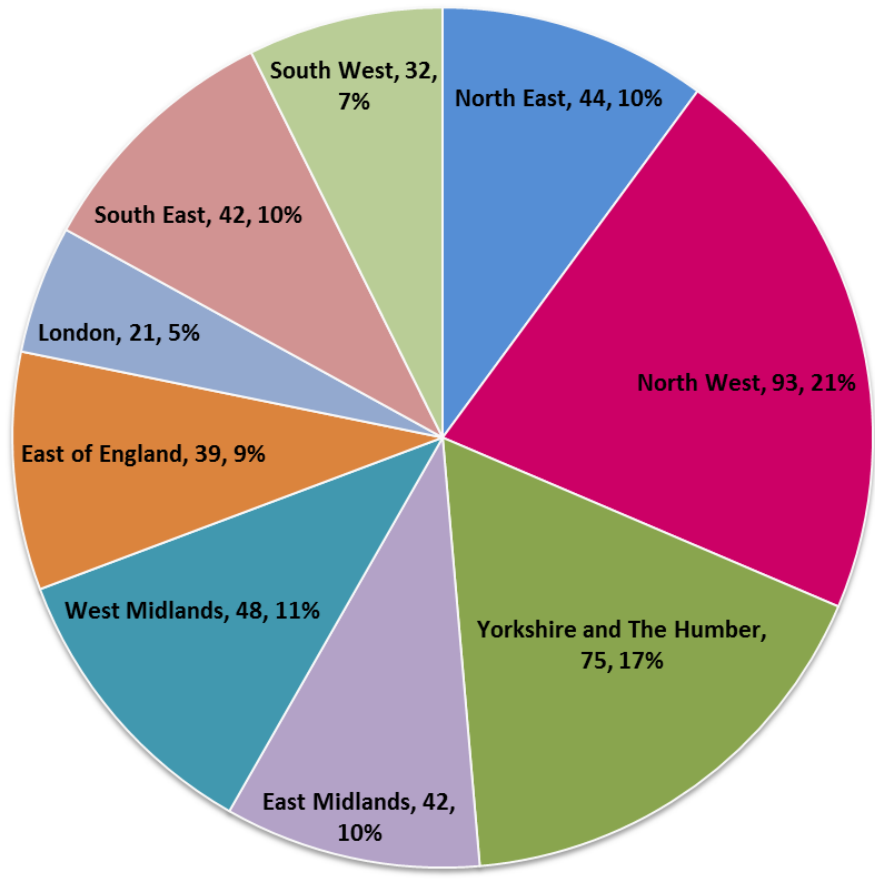
Of 152 local authorities in England 142 had children's homes in their area and 105 had local authority run homes in their area.



The maximum number of homes in one local authority area was 93: 17 were local authority run and 76 private or voluntary run.

There are also more LA run children's homes in some regions than others: the North West (88) and Yorkshire and the Humber (75) contain the most LA run homes and London has the fewest (22).

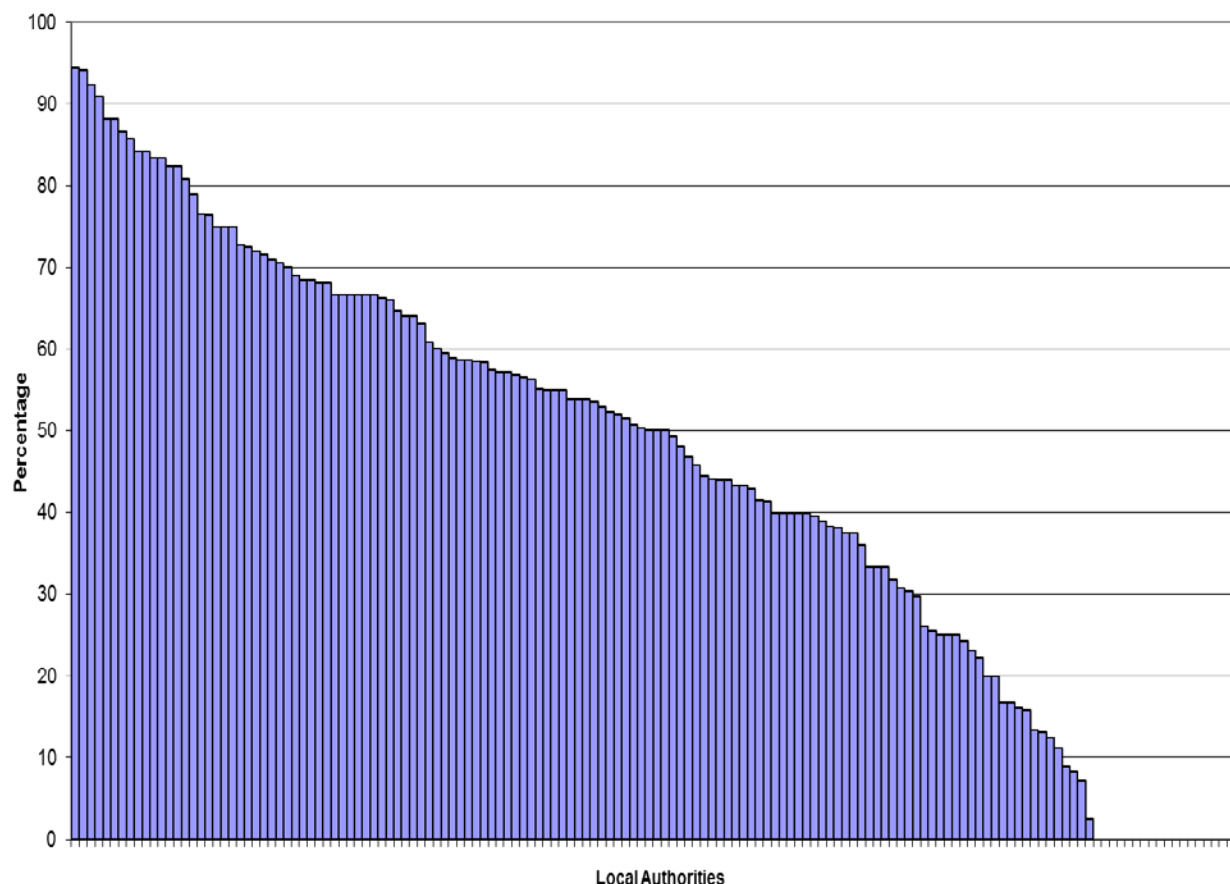
Number of local authority run children's homes by region at 30 September 2011



The North West also has the most private and voluntary run homes (375), followed by the West Midlands (257).
Nearly half the homes in the North East and Yorkshire and the Humber are LA run.

All LAs with children in children's homes placed at least some of these children outside the LA boundary. This may be because of the specific needs of individual children and indicate demand for more specialised services unavailable locally.

Percentage of children placed in children's homes inside the LA boundary at 31 March 2011



Forty LAs did not have sufficient children's home places in their area to meet their need for places; eight of these had no registered children's homes in their areas.

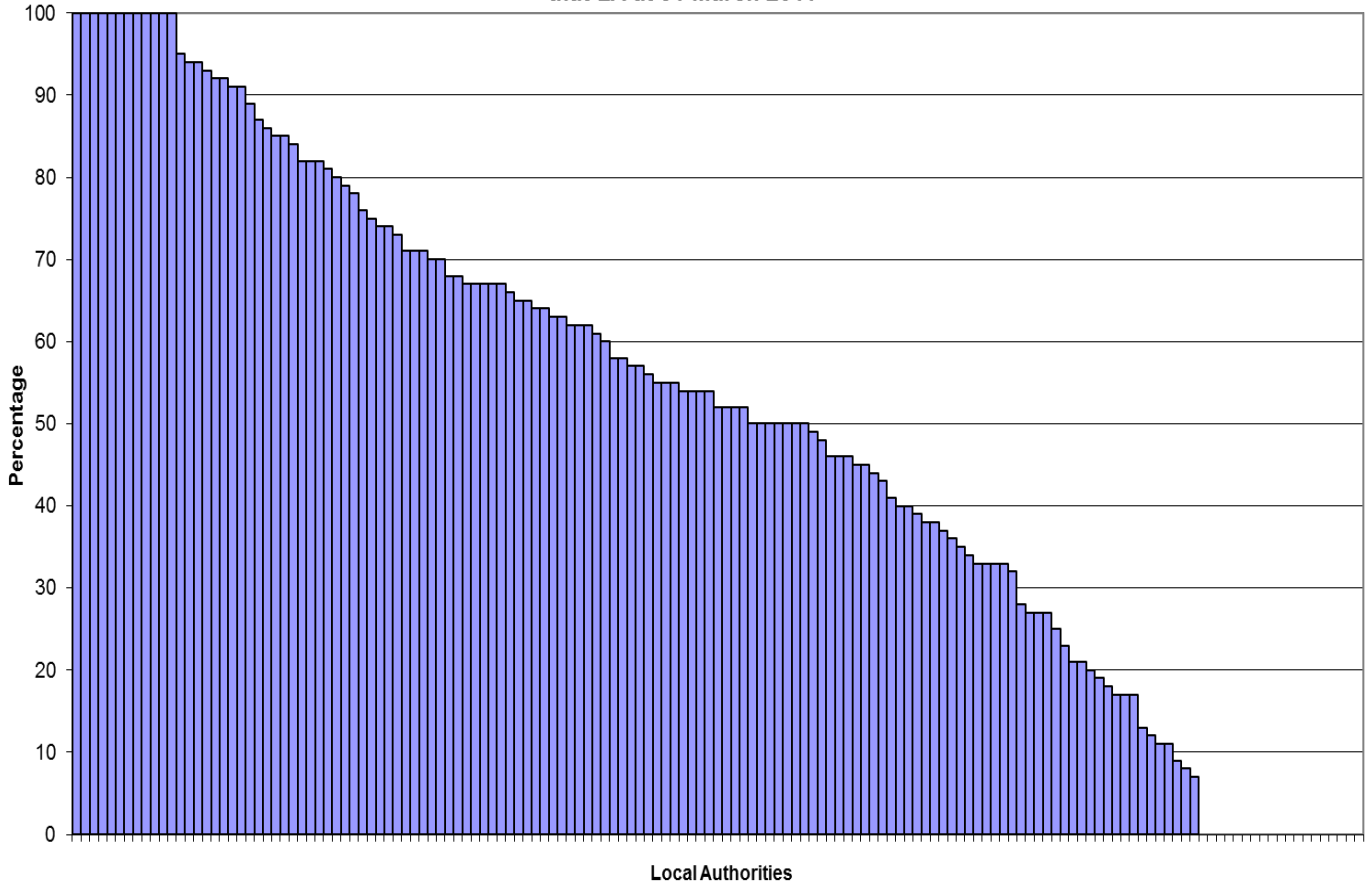
Twenty-two LAs had spare capacity in the children's homes they provided, yet still placed children outside the LA area.

One LA, with at least one LA-run children's home in its area, placed all its children outside the LA boundary.

Thirteen other LAs with private/voluntary run children's homes in their area made no placements within these homes: all the placements they made in children's homes were outside the LA boundary.

On average, 45% of the children living in children's homes in a LA area were the responsibility of another LA. Most LAs (132: 87%) both placed children in children's homes outside their area and had children placed within their area in children's homes from other LAs.

Percentage of children in children's homes inside the LA boundary who were the responsibility of that LA at 31 March 2011



Twelve LAs with children's homes in their area had no children placed in their areas by other LAs. (10 of these had LA-run homes and 9 had private or voluntary homes, 7 had both.)

In fifteen LAs, the only children living in children's homes in their area were the responsibility of other LAs.

Costs of Children's Home care

See - *Unit Costs of Health and Social Care* - PSSRU (2011)

<http://www.pssru.ac.uk/uc/uc2011contents.htm>

Cost implications

- The cost of care in a local authority children's home is estimated at £2,767 per resident week (£2,965 including external services).
- In comparison, the cost of care in the non-statutory sector is estimated at £2,472 per resident week (£2,557 including external services).
- These costs include capital costs (buildings, land, equipment) and revenue costs (salary and other revenue costs).
- The average cost of foster care is estimated at £694 per child per week. This is much less than the cost of a children's home placement but children's homes have a higher proportion of older children who are likely to have more complex needs which increases costs.

Conclusions

The data in the pack suggests a range of questions for individual local authorities to consider in reviewing their placement and commissioning strategies and in deciding on placements for individual children. These include:

- **Are there groups of children whose assessed needs are such that placement in a children's home is likely to be the best option; and how is this understanding reflected in the range and numbers of children's homes placements commissioned by the authority?**
- **Does the authority have access to sufficient children's homes placements in their region, so that a move to residential care enables young people to continue to be supported by suitable local services?**
- **Where children are placed at a distance from their local community how will the local authority support them, to make a planned transition when they are ready for the next move in their lives?**
- **What arrangements are in place between the placing authority, the children's home and services in the area where the home is located to promote children's emotional health and well being, so that the child can access to additional mental health support where necessary?**
- **Does the authority maximise sustained outcomes for individual children so that the costs of placement represent real value for money?**
- **Should the authority consider a children's home placement earlier in a child's life so as to avoid multiple fostering placements?**

Next steps and future publications

- This data pack emphasises the continuing contribution children's homes make to supporting looked after children, who will often be older and have many previous placements behind them.
- Statistics on children looked after for 2011-12 will be published in autumn 2012.
- We very much welcome feedback and suggestions on how the pack might be developed.
- Please send any ideas for further analysis that we may be able to include in future publications to Isabella.Craig@education.gsi.gov.uk
- For policy questions please contact
- Mark.Burrows@education.gsi.gov.uk or Shelley.Stewart-Murray@education.gsi.gov.uk

Annex: Placement type definitions

K1 : Placed in secure accommodation.

This code is used for all instances of placement in secure accommodation, either where section 25 of the Children Act applies (or would apply after 72 hours), or where the child is subject to a court ordered secure remand. It is not used for Detention and Training Orders *under s73 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998*, or for detention under *s53 of the CYPA 1933*.

K2 : Placed in homes

This code is used for all children's homes which fall within the meaning of section 1 of the Care Standards Act 2000 and the *Children's Homes Regulations 2001* (as amended 2011) (except where the child is placed in a secure children's home where K1 should be used). This code should be used for children placed in schools that are dual-registered as children's homes, as defined in section 1 (6) of the *Care Standards Act 2000*.

H5 : Hostels and other supportive residential settings not subject to the Children's Homes Regulations

This code is used for residential accommodation not subject to the *Children's Homes Regulations*, but where some supervisory or advice staff are employed (although they do not have to live on the premises). This placement code includes hostels, foyers and YMCAs; and lodgings, flats and bedsits where supervisory staff or advice workers are specifically employed and available to provide advice and support to the residents. These support staff do not have to live on the premises, but must be an integral part of a formal support service provided by the place of residence. Placements in category H5 are therefore distinguished from those in P2 (independent living where no formal support structure is provided as part of the accommodation).