

SFR 36/2013 additional

11 December 2013

Coverage: England

**Theme: Children,
Education and Skills**

Issued by
Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT

Telephone:
Press Office
020 7925 6789
Public Enquiries
0870 000 2288

Statistician
Julie Glenndenning

Email
cla.stats@education.gsi.gov.uk

Internet
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education/series/statistics-looked-after-children>

Children Looked After by Local Authorities in England, as at 31 March 2013 – Additional Tables

Following the publication of the Statistical First Release in September, this document provides further analysis for children looked after as at 31 March 2013. Figures are presented giving further information on children who started to be looked after in the year ending 31 March 2013 and those who ceased to be looked after during the same period. Information is also provided on the location and providers of placements for looked after children, unaccompanied asylum seekers, looked after girls who are mothers and children looked after under a series of agreed short term breaks (respite care). Further information on adoptions is also included.

As with the Statistical First Release, all figures are based on data from the SSDA903 return collected each spring from all local authorities in England.

KEY POINTS

Note: All of the comparisons below and in this document relate to 31 March 2013

- Of the 68,110 children looked after at 31 March 2013, 76 per cent were placed in a setting within 20 miles of their home address and 16 per cent were placed at a distance of 20 miles or more from their home address; the remainder were unknown or unrecorded.
- The majority of children (59 per cent) who started to be looked after did so under a voluntary agreement under Section 20 of the Children's Act 1989. A further 6,980 started to be looked after under a care order, an increase of 12 per cent compared to 2012.
- There were 5,660 children who were looked after under an agreed series of short term placements (respite care), a decrease of 30 per cent from 2012.
- There were 1,860 unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC), a decrease of 15 per cent from 2012.
- During the year, there were 15,300 looked after children for whom a decision was in place that they should be placed for adoption, an increase of 12 per cent from 2012.

Children who started to be looked after in the year ending 31 March 2013

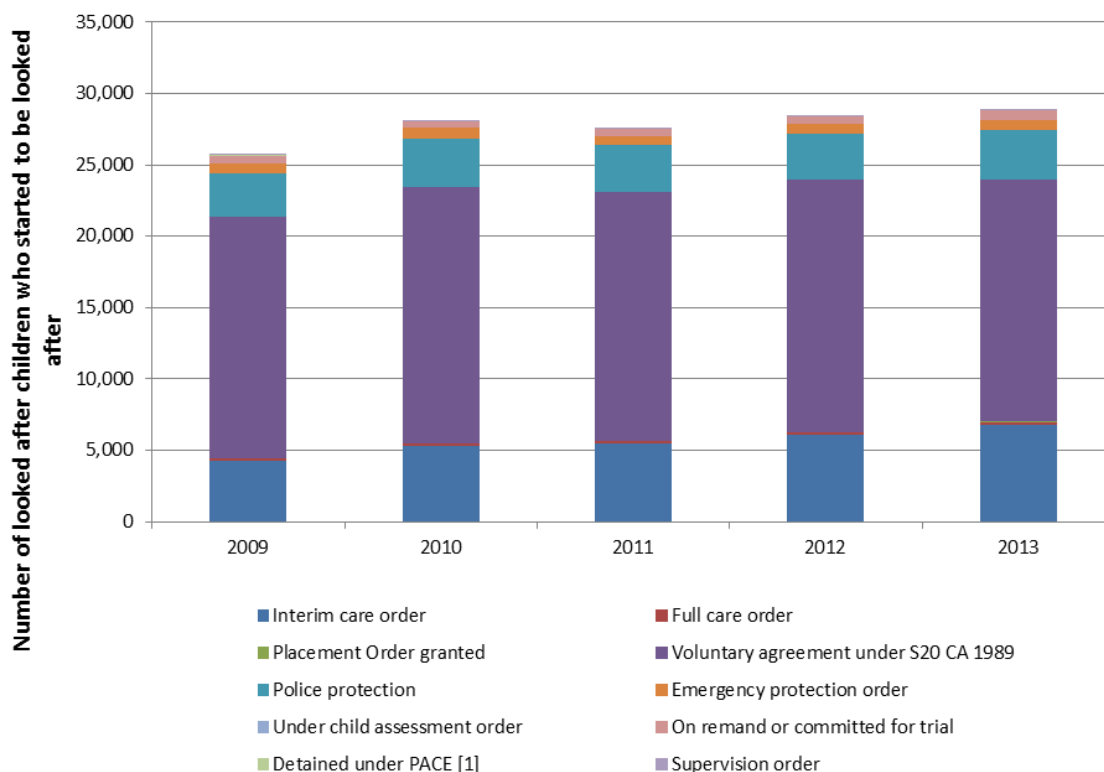
The Statistical First Release previously reported that there were 28,830 children who started to be looked after in the year ending 31 March 2013.

The majority of children (59 per cent) who started to be looked after did so under a voluntary agreement under Section 20 of the Children's Act 1989. The number of children who started to be looked after under a voluntary agreement has increased slightly (0.3 per cent) since 2009. However this increase is lower than the increase seen in the total number of children who started to be looked after over the same period. The Statistical First Release published in September previously reported an increase of 12 per cent in the number of children who started to be looked after in the year ending 31 March 2013 when compared to 2009. The proportion of all looked after children who start to be looked after, who do so under a voluntary agreement, has therefore decreased over the same time period. In 2013, 59 per cent of all children who started to be looked after did so under a voluntary agreement; this compares with 66 per cent for 2009.

A greater proportion of children who start to be looked after now do so under a care order. In 2013, the proportion of children who started to be looked after under a care order was 24 per cent, an increase from 17 per cent in 2009. In terms of numbers, in the year ending 31 March 2013, 6,980 children started to be looked after under a care order (either an interim or full care order), an increase of 59 per cent from 2009 and an increase of 12 per cent compared to 2012.

Chart A shows the numbers of children and their legal status on starting to be looked after for each year since 2009.

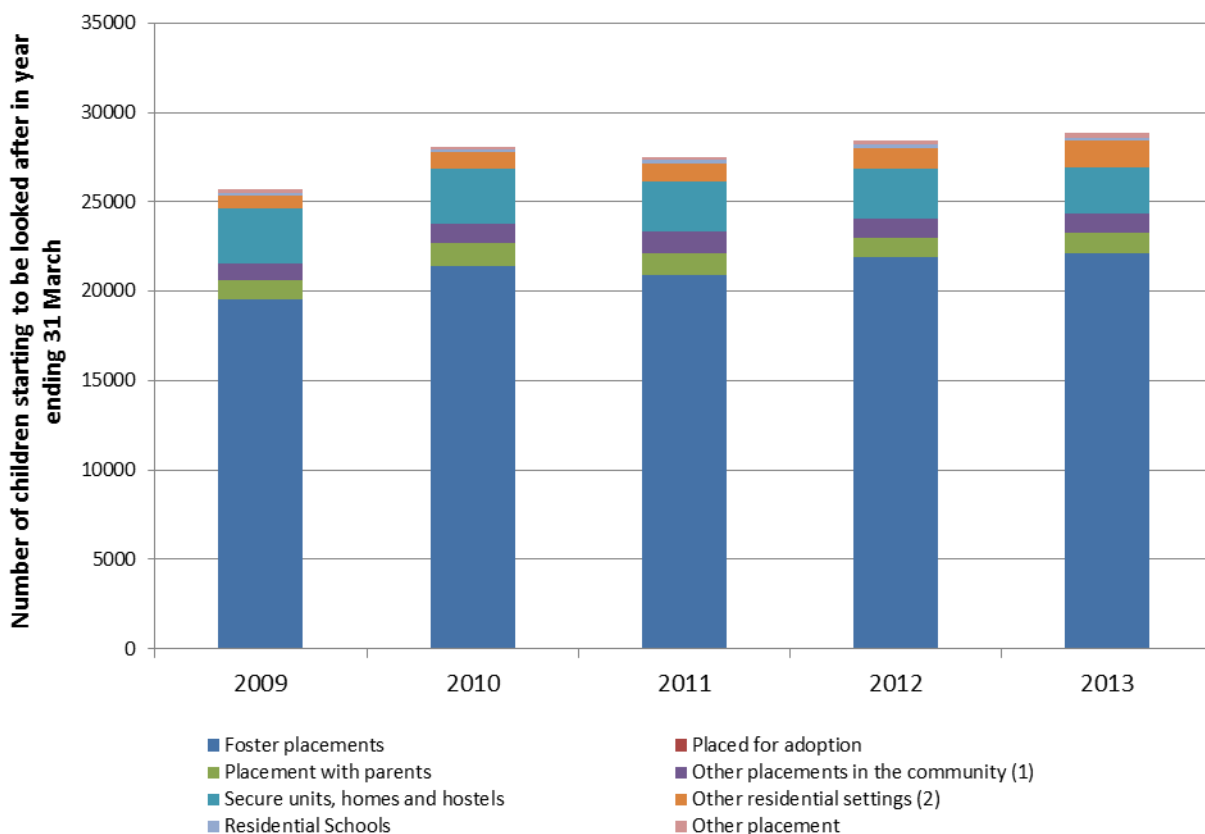
Chart A: Numbers of children who started to be looked after in the year ending 31 March by legal status on starting



1. Children detained in local authority accommodation under section 38(6) of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984.

The majority of children who started to be looked after in 2013 were placed in foster care (77 per cent). The proportion of children placed in foster care when starting to be looked after has risen slightly since 2009, when 76 per cent of children were placed in foster care or starting to be looked after. Chart B shows the number of children who started to be looked after by their type of placement.

Chart B: Children who started to be looked after in the year ending 31 March by type of placement



1. Includes living independently and residential employment.
2. Includes residential care homes, NHS trusts providing medical/nursing care, family centre or mother and baby unit, youth treatment centres and young offenders institution or prison.

In 2013, 39 per cent of children who started to be looked after were taken into care, compared to 32 per cent in 2009. Children taken into care are those whose legal status on starting to be looked after is that of care order, police protection order, emergency protection order or child assessment order. The most common reason why a child would be taken into care was abuse or neglect: 71 per cent of children taken into care were for this reason.

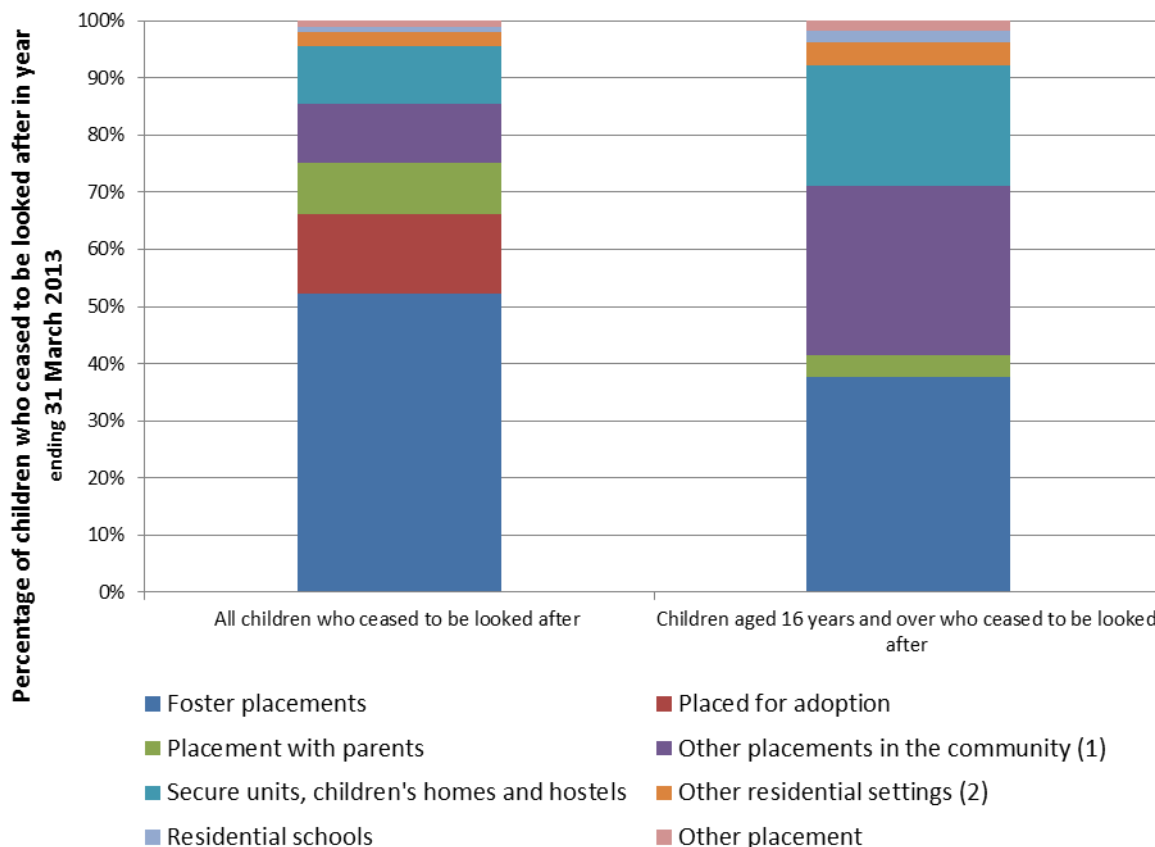
Children who ceased to be looked after during the year ending 31 March

The Statistical First Release previously reported that 28,460 children ceased to be looked after in the year ending 31 March 2013. Of these children, 9,990 were aged 16 or over.

For all children who ceased to be looked after, 52 per cent were in foster care during their final

placement prior to ceasing. For children who ceased to be looked after aged 16 and over, 38 per cent were in foster care during their final placement prior to ceasing. Chart C shows the final placement of children who ceased to be looked after during the year ending 31 March 2013.

Chart C: Final placement for children who ceased to be looked after in the year ending 31 March 2013



1. Includes living independently and residential employment,
2. Includes residential care homes, NHS trusts providing medical/nursing care, family centre or mother and baby unit, youth treatment centres and young offenders' institution or prison.

Of the 9,990 young people who ceased to be looked after when aged 16 or over, 16 per cent ceased to be looked after when 16 years old, 15 per cent when 17 years and 68 per cent ceased to be looked after on their 18th birthday. This is consistent with a general trend for children to leave care at a later age. In 2009, 61 per cent of children who ceased care when aged 16 or over ceased to be looked after on their 18th birthday.

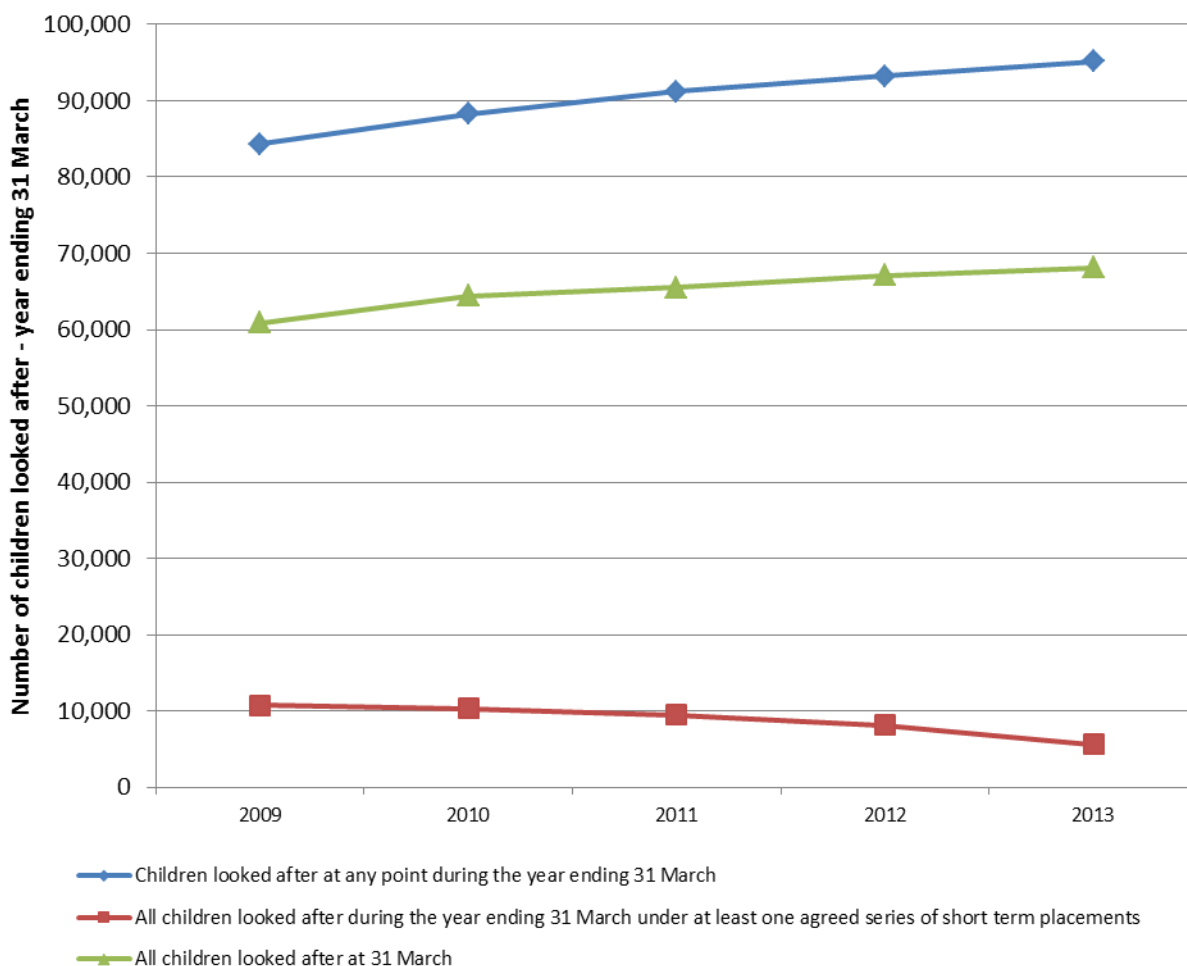
Children looked after during the year ending 31 March

The Statistical First Release previously reported that 68,110 children were looked after on the 31 March 2013.

During the year ending 31 March 2013, there were 95,170 children who were looked after at some point during the year 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013. There were 5,660 children who were looked

after under an agreed series of short term placements (respite care). The number looked after under an agreed series of short term placements in 2013 has fallen by 30 per cent from 2012 and by 47 per cent from 2009. The majority of children looked after under a series of agreed short term breaks are provided with a service due to the child's disability (84 per cent). This proportion has increased slightly since 2009 when the figure was 82 per cent. Children provided with such short term breaks are most likely to be placed in secure units, children's homes and hostels; in 2013, 58 per cent were placed in these settings. Chart D shows the trends in numbers of children looked after since 2009.

Chart D: Trends in numbers of children looked after, year ending 31 March

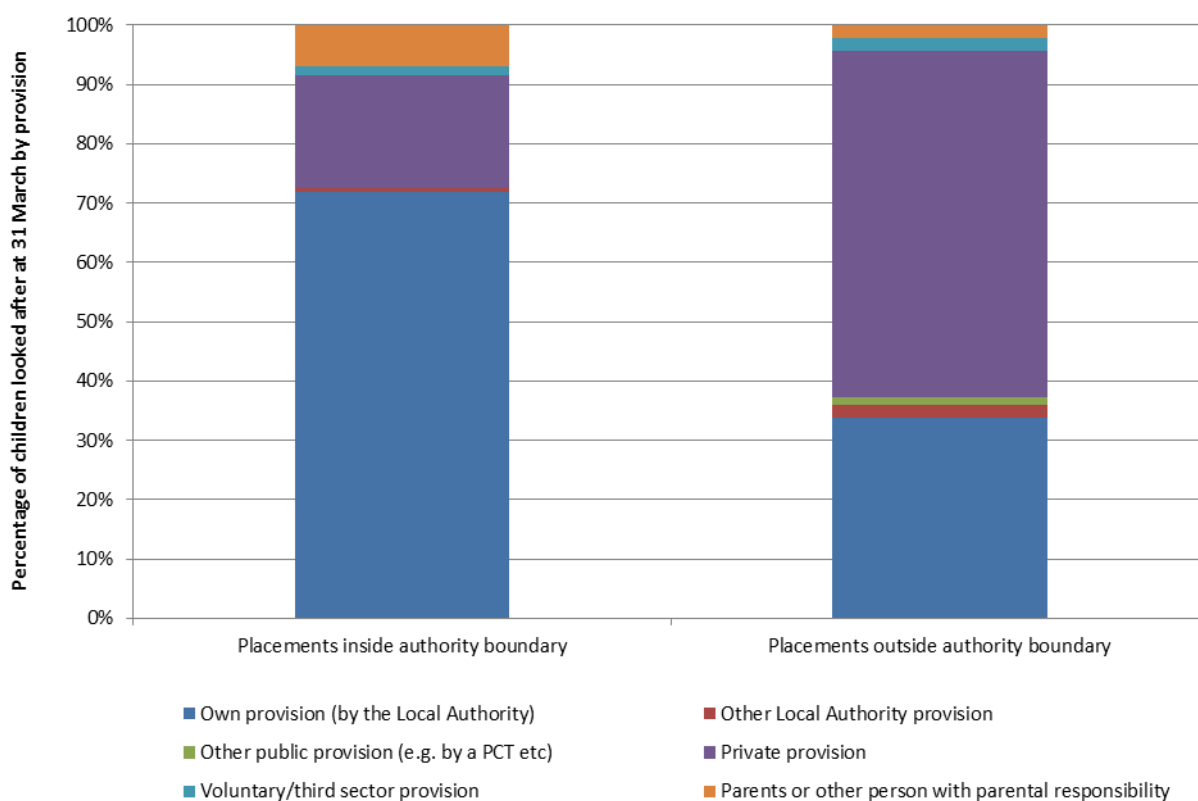


Of the 68,110 children looked after at 31 March, 76 per cent were placed in a setting within 20 miles of their home address, 16 per cent were placed at a distance of 20 miles or more from their home address. The placements for the remainder are unknown or unrecorded. For reasons of confidentiality, distance is not recorded for children who were placed for adoption.

Children placed in foster care were more frequently placed within 20 miles of their home address compared with other placement types (with the exception of placements with parents). 83 per cent of looked after children placed in foster care were placed within 20 miles of home compared to 62 per cent of children placed in secure units, children's homes or hostels.

For children looked after at 31 March 2013, 58 per cent were placed in the local authorities' own provision. The placements for a further 32 per cent were supplied by private providers and a further 2 per cent by voluntary or third sector providers. Private provision is more likely to be used where the child is placed outside of the authority's boundaries. There were 14,210 children placed outside of the authorities' boundaries in private provision. Chart E shows the percentage of children looked after by placement provision and location.

Chart E: Percentage of looked after children at 31 March 2013 by placement provision and location



Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

There were 1,860 looked after unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) at 31 March 2013. The number of these children has fallen each year since 2009; in 2013 the number fell by 15 per cent from 2012 and by 52 per cent from 2009.

The majority of UASC are boys; of all UASC in 2013, 87 per cent were boys. The proportion of boys has decreased slightly since 2010 when this figure was 89 per cent. Most UASC are aged over 16. In 2013, 75 per cent of all UASC were in this age group, compared to 65 per cent in 2009.

Of all UASC, 32 per cent are from a background of other Asian (please note that this group does not include children from Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi backgrounds). A further 16 per cent were from a Black African background. The proportion of UASC from other Asian backgrounds has decreased since 2010, when the figure was 44 per cent, while the proportion of Black African background has increased since 2010.

Adoptions of looked after children in year ending 31 March 2013

At 31 March 2013, there were 15,300 looked after children for whom a decision was in place during 2013 that they should be placed for adoption. Please note that this does not reflect the number of adoption decisions made in 2013 but the number of children looked after in 2013 where a decision had been made – for a proportion of these children the decision that they should be placed for adoption will have been made in an earlier year.

Of these 15,300 children, 22 per cent had been placed for adoption and a further 45 per cent were waiting to be placed for adoption at 31 March 2013; 27 per cent had ceased to be looked after during the year (mainly due to adoption)

In addition, there were 970 children (6 per cent) where the original decision to place for adoption has been reversed. 61 per cent of these children were aged between 5 and 9 years old when the reversal decision was made, 28 per cent were aged between 1 and 4 years and 2 per cent were aged under 1.

There are various reasons why a decision to place a child for adoption would be reversed. For 37 per cent of children the decision was reversed as no prospective adopters could be found. For 27 per cent of children the decision was reversed due to the child's needs changing following the decision.

The majority of children, where the decision to place for adoption was reversed, were looked after with the original decision to place for adoption being in place for more than 1 year. For 34 per cent the decision to place for adoption was in place for between 1 and 2 years, for 15 per cent it was in place for between 2 and 3 years and for 16 per cent of children the decision was in place for 3 or more years prior to being reversed.

The Statistical First Release previously reported that there were 3,980 adoptions of children looked after in the year ending 31 March 2013. Of these children 90 per cent were adopted by a couple, with 77 per cent by a married couple.