



Department
for Education



Statistical First Release

Children looked after in England (including adoption and care leavers) year ending 31 March 2014: additional tables

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77% of children were placed within 20 miles of their home address

Of the 68,840 children looked after at 31 March 2014, 77% were placed in a setting within 20 miles of their home address. 17% were placed more than 20 miles and the remaining 5% were unknown or not recorded.

60% started to be looked after under a voluntary agreement

Of the 30,430 children who started to be looked after, 60% started to be looked after under a voluntary agreement under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989. This is a slight increase on 59% in 2013, but a decrease from 64% in 2010. A further 21% started to be looked after under a care order.

1,970 unaccompanied asylum seeking children at 31 March 2014

This number has increased by 2% since 2013 but decreased by 43% since 2010.

Mean duration of placements ceasing is 284 days

For placements ceasing during the year ending 31 March 2014, the average (mean) duration of placement is 284 days. This varies significantly by placement type, with placements in residential schools having the longest average duration, at 635 days.

A National Statistics publication

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What does this Statistical First Release cover?

Following the publication of the Statistical First Release (SFR) 'Children looked after in England (including adoption and care leavers) year ending 31 March 2014' on 30th September 2014, this release provides further analysis at both national and local authority level covering:

- Children who were looked after at 31 March 2014
- Children who started to be looked after during the year
- Children who ceased to be looked after during the year
- Location and providers of placements for looked after children
- Unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC)
- Looked after girls who are mothers
- Looked after children adopted during the year
- Accommodation and activity of former care leavers (now aged 19, 20 and 21)

All figures are based on data from the SSDA903 return collected each spring from all local authorities in England.

What's New?

For the first time this year data has been collected on the distance between the child's home and placement for all placements during the year, including children placed for adoption. The number of new placements by placement type and distance between home and placement is published in Table B3 and a local authority breakdown of distance is published in Table LAB2.

The cohort for former care leavers was extended this year to 20 and 21 year olds and also changed to cover all children looked after for a total of at least 13 weeks after their 14th birthday including some time after their 16th birthday. National data for care leavers was published in the main SFR in September. Local authority level data is published in Tables LAF1 and LAF2 of this release.

Key findings

1. Children who started to be looked after in the year ending 31 March 2014 (Tables C2, C3 and C4)

60% started to be looked after under a voluntary agreement	The Statistical First Release previously reported 30,430 children started to be looked after in the year ending 31 March 2014. A child can be looked after under a number of different legal statuses: care order, voluntary agreement, placement order ¹ , detained for child protection or Youth Justice legal statuses. Of these, 60% started to be looked after under a voluntary agreement under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989. This is a slight increase on 59% in 2013, but a decrease from 64% in 2010.
Proportion starting to be looked after under a care order decreases slightly to 21%	21% of children who started to be looked after did so under a care order (full or interim), compared with 24% in 2013. Chart 1 shows the full breakdown of children who started to be looked after by legal status.
78% started to be looked after in a foster placement	The majority (78%) of children who started to be looked after were placed in foster care, a slight increase from 77% in 2013 and 76% in 2010.
Numbers starting to be looked after in residential settings has decreased to 9% this year	The numbers of children who started to be looked after and placed in secure units, children's homes and hostels has steadily declined over the past 5 years. In the year ending 31 March 2014 this figure was 2,600, representing 9% of all children who started to be looked after. Chart 2 shows the number of children who started to be looked after by placement type since 2010.
36% of those who started to be looked after were taken into care	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 was taken into care was abuse or neglect at 70%.

¹ Placement orders came into force on 30 December 2005. No new applications for freeing orders may be made on or after 30 December 2005.

Chart 1: Increase in children starting to be looked after under a voluntary agreement and decrease in care orders

Children starting to be looked after in the year ending 31 March by legal status on starting

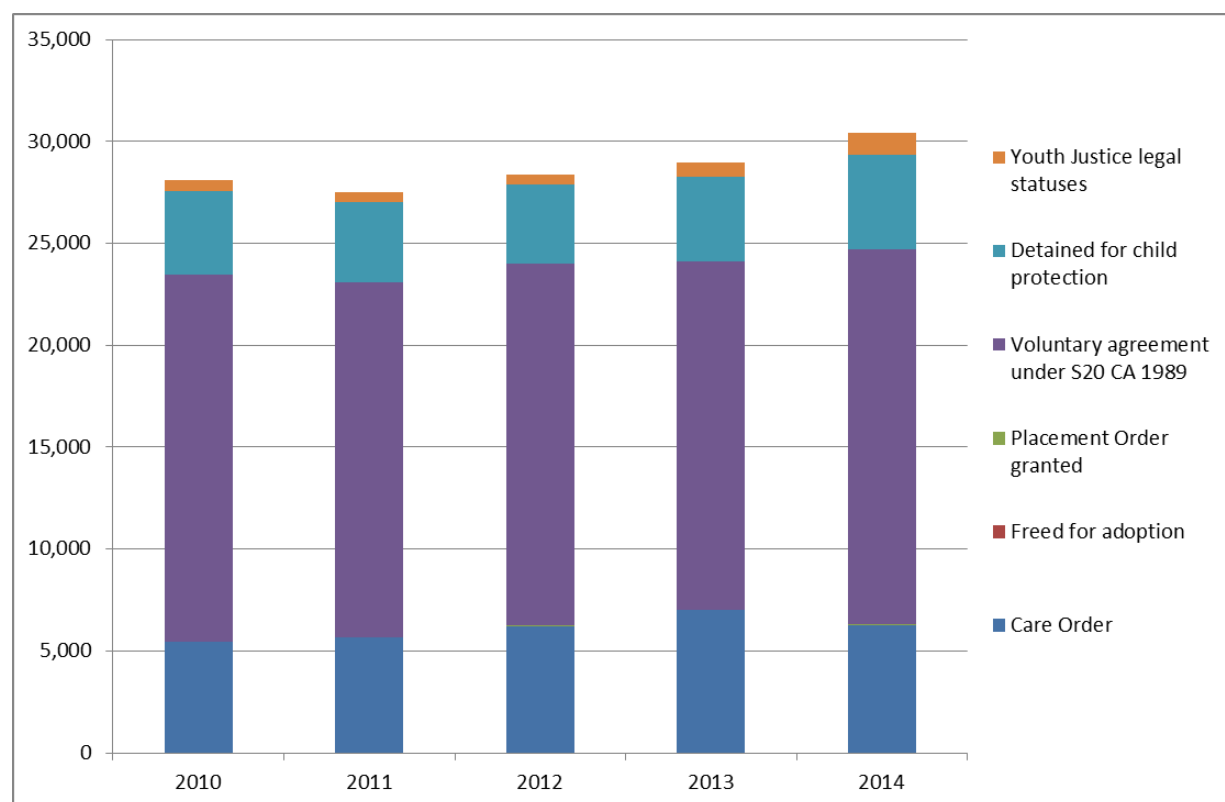
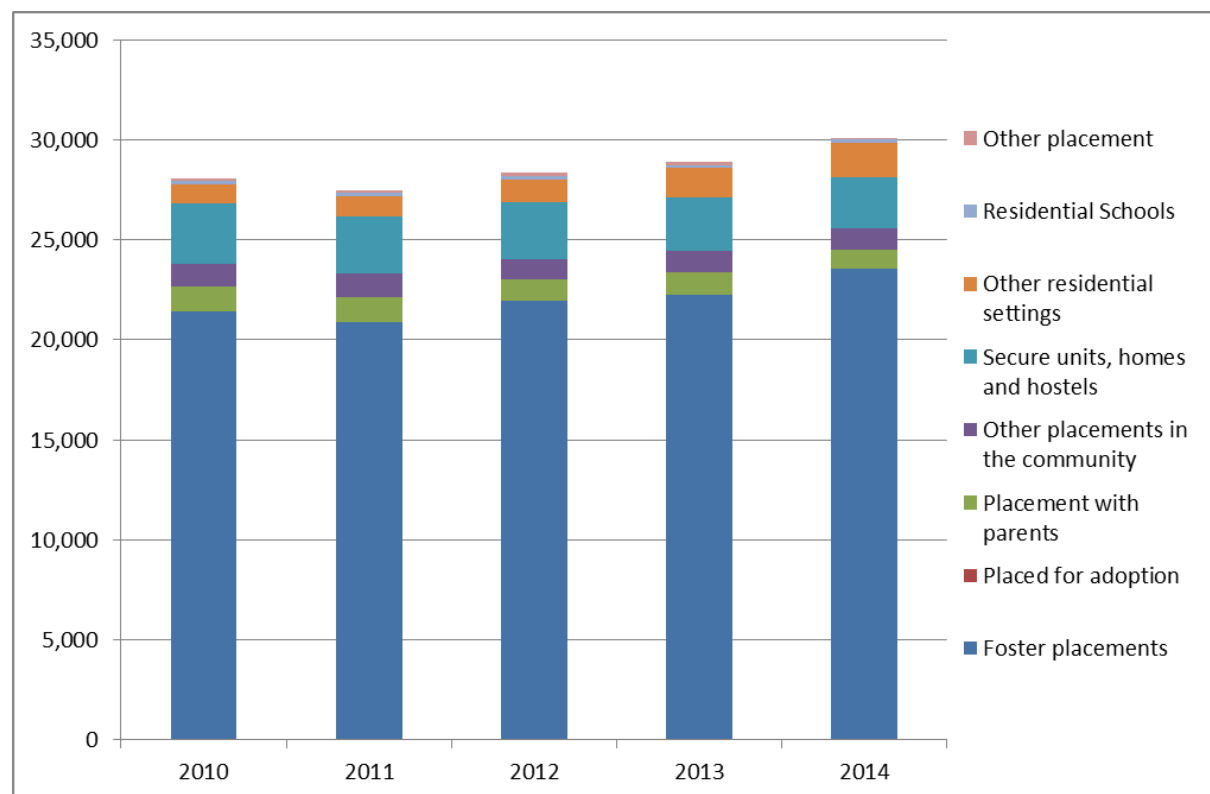


Chart 2: Increase in children starting to be looked after in foster care and decrease in those in secure units, homes and hostels

Children starting to be looked after in the year ending 31 March by placement type

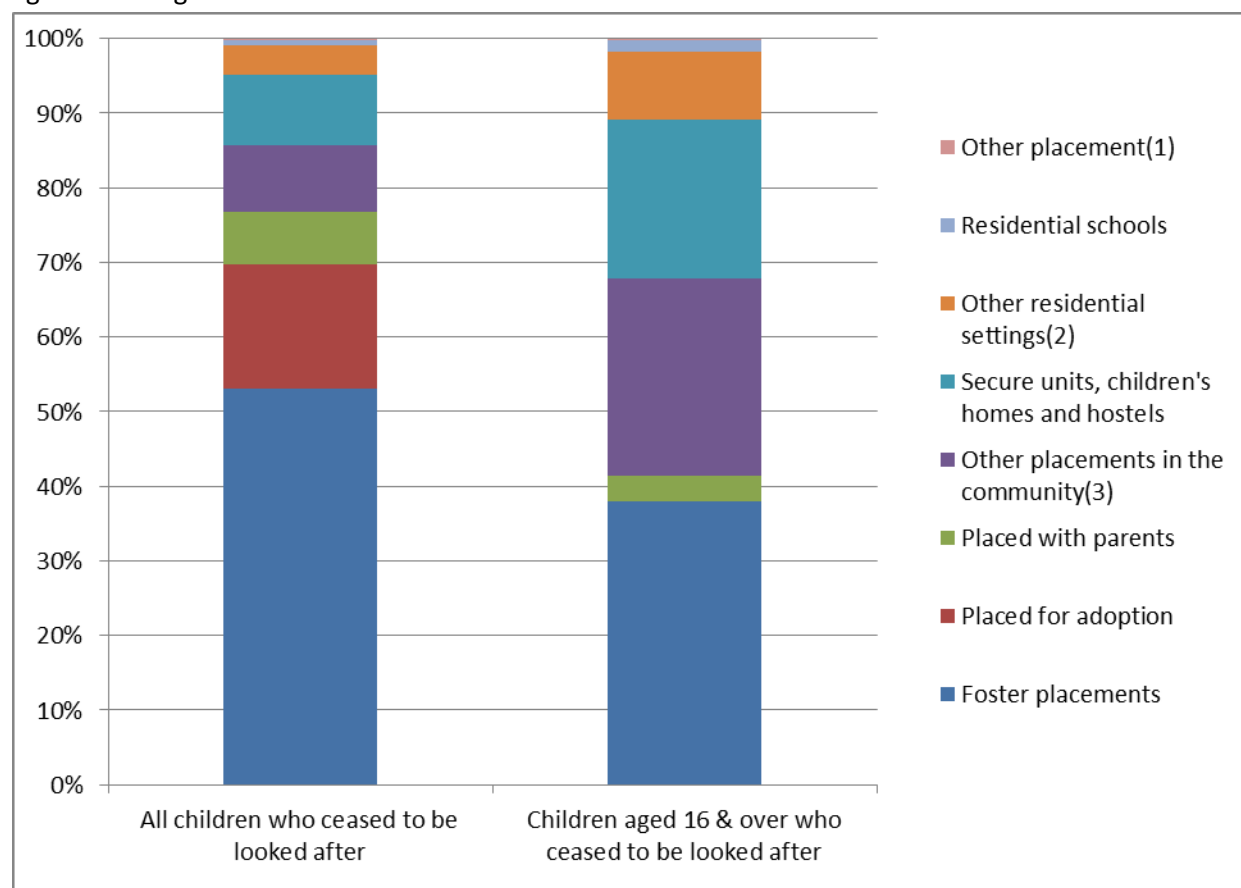


2. Children who ceased to be looked after during the year ending 31 March (Tables D2 to D5)

53% in foster care as final placement...	The Statistical First Release previously reported 30,430 children ceased to be looked after in the year ending 31 March 2014. Of these, 16,040 (53%) were in foster care during their final placement prior to ceasing to be looked after. This percentage has been relatively stable over the past 5 years. For children who ceased to be looked after aged 16 and over, 37% were in foster care prior to ceasing.
...17% were placed for adoption prior to ceasing and...	5,030 children were placed for adoption prior to ceasing to be looked after, representing 17% of those ceasing to be looked after. This has increased from 3,190 (13%) in 2010.
...30% were in other settings for their final placement	7% were placed with parents, 9% were placed in the community, 9% were in secure units, homes and hostels, 4% in other residential settings and 1% were in residential schools.
Mean duration of latest period of care is 793 days	51% of children who ceased to be looked after had a final period of care less than 1 year. 37% had a final period of care between 1 year and less than 5 years and 12% had a final period of care of 5 years or more.
83% had one period of care	Of the 30,430 children who ceased to be looked after 25,190 (83%) had one period of care and 5,240 children (17%) had more than one period of care in their care history.
37% had one placement in their care history	Of the children who ceased to be looked after 37% had one placement, 26% had two placements and 37% had three or more placements in their care history.

Chart 3: Older children ceasing to be looked after are less likely to be in foster care

Children who ceased to be looked after by final placement and age on ceasing



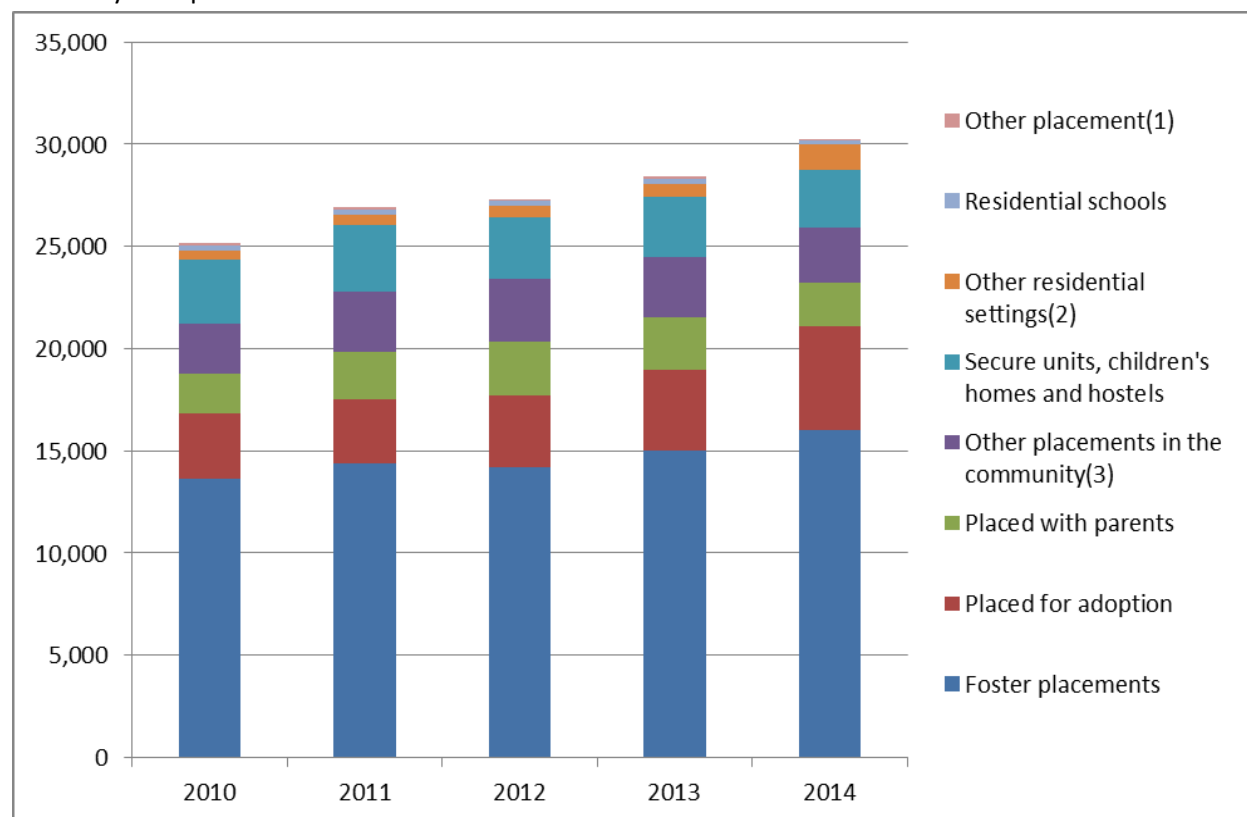
(1) Other placement not specified

(2) Includes residential care homes, NHS/Health Trust or other establishments providing medical or nursing care, Family Centre or Mother and Baby Units and Young Offender Institutions or prison.

(3) Includes living independently and residential employment

Chart 4: Increases in foster placements and placed for adoption as final placements, but decrease in secure units, children's homes and hostels

Children who ceased to be looked after in the year ending 31 March by final placement



(1) Other placement not specified

(2) Includes residential care homes, NHS/Health Trust or other establishments providing medical or nursing care, Family Centre or Mother and Baby Units and Young Offender Institutions or prison.

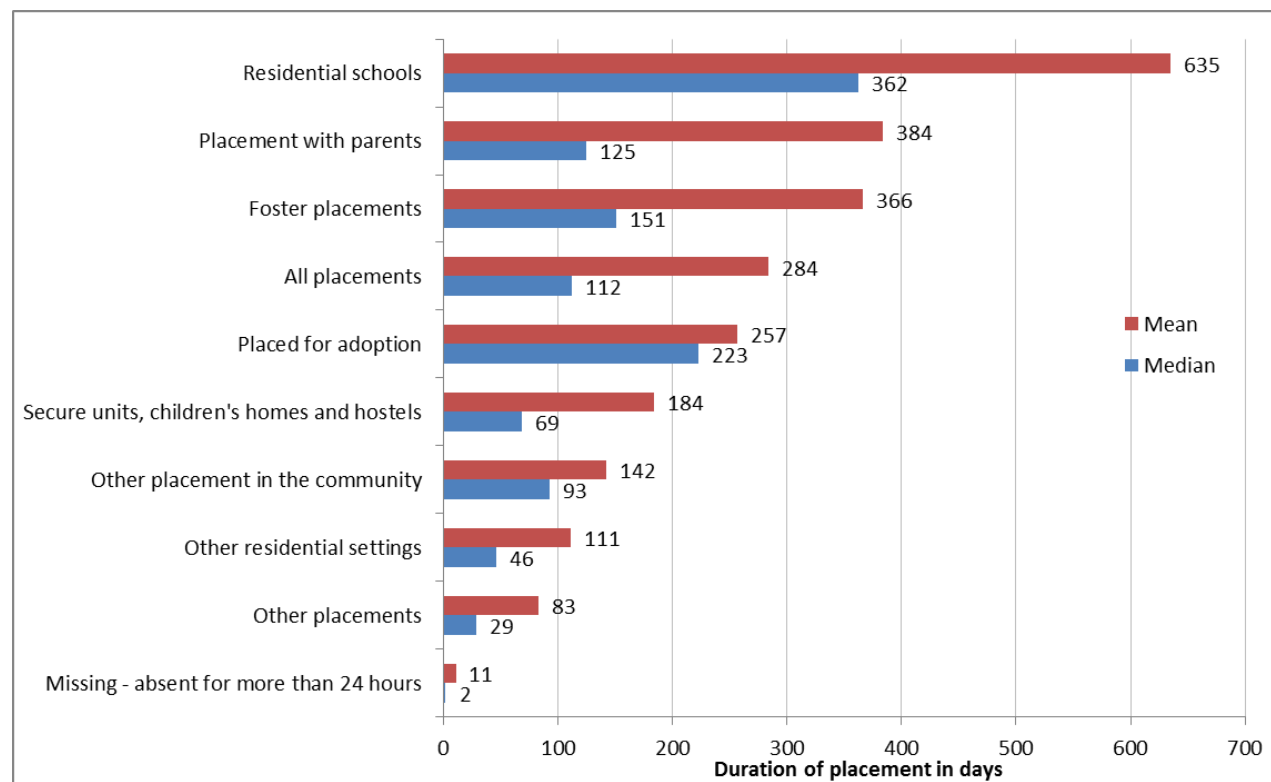
(3) Includes living independently and residential employment

3. Children looked after during the year ending 31 March and their placements (Tables B2 to B4)

More children looked after during the year	As reported in the main Statistical First Release, during the year ending 31 March 2014, 97,950 children were looked after, an increase of 3% from 2013.
255 care days provided per child during the year remains stable	The average (mean) number of days spent in care per child has remained relatively stable over the past 5 years
71% of new placements are within 20 miles of the child's home	<p>Of the 84,090 new placements during the year ending 31 March 2014, 59,700 (71%) were 20 miles or less from the child's home, 13,120 (16%) were over 20 miles, and for the remaining 13%, the distance was not known or not recorded. The percentage of new placements that are 20 miles or less is higher (84%) for foster placements and lower (65%) for placements in secure units, children's homes and hostels.</p> <p>A lower proportion of new placements made during the year are within 20 miles of the child's home (71%) compared with children in placements at 31 March (77%). However, the opposite is the case for new foster placements (84% compared with 83%) and secure units, children's homes and hostels (65% compared with 59%).</p> <p>This is new data; distance between home and placement was collected for all placements for the first time this year. Previously this was only collected for placements at 31 March.</p>
Average duration of placement is 284 days	<p>For placements ceasing during the year ending 31 March 2014, the average (mean) duration of placement is 284 days. This varies significantly by placement type.</p> <p>As the mean values are skewed by the large range of durations for some placement types, Chart 4 shows the mean and median duration of placements ceasing in the year by placement type. Table 1 also shows the upper and lower quartiles.</p>

Chart 5: Placements in residential schools have longest duration

Duration of placements ceasing during the year ending 31 March 2014



There are known data quality issues with data on children missing from their agreed placement. For more information see Technical Note 9 of the [main SFR](#).

Table 1: Duration of placements ceasing during the year ending 31 March 2014

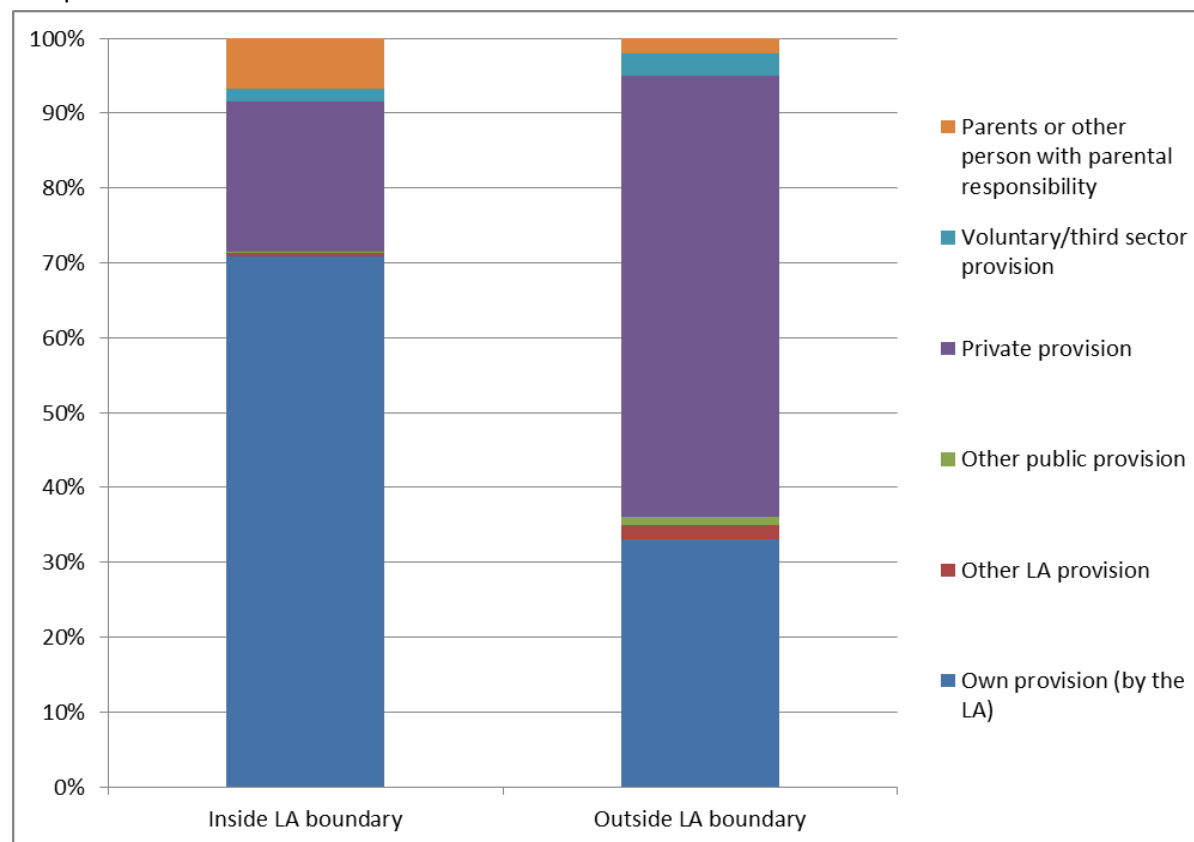
	Lower quartile	Median	Mean	Upper quartile
All placements	16	112	284	299
Residential schools	28	362	635	961
Placement with parents	55	125	384	336
Foster placements	25	151	366	393
Placed for adoption	175	223	257	287
Secure units, children's home and hostels	15	69	184	211
Other placement in the community	30	93	142	205
Other residential settings	12	46	111	113
Other placements	7	29	83	91
Missing - absent for more than 24 hours	1	2	11	5

4. Children looked after at 31 March 2014 (Tables A6 and A7)

77% of children were placed within 20 miles of their home address	The main SFR reported 68,840 children looked after at 31 March 2014. Of these, 77% were placed in a setting within 20 miles of their home address, 17% were placed more than 20 miles and the remaining 5% were unknown or not recorded.
Foster placements more likely to be within 20 miles	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% of the 51,340 children in foster placements were within 20 miles compared with 59% of the 6,360 children placed in secure units, children's homes and hostels.
38% of children placed for adoption within 20 miles of their home address	38% of the 3,580 children placed for adoption at 31 March were placed 20 miles or less from home, 25% were placed more than 20 miles and a further 37% did not have a distance recorded. This is the first year in which information on the whereabouts of children placed for adoption has been collected.
Majority of children placed in local authorities' own provision	57% of children looked after at 31 March were placed in the local authorities' own provision. The placements for a further 33% were supplied by private providers and a further 3% by voluntary or third sector providers.
Private provision more likely to be used when child is outside LA boundary	Of those children looked after in placements supplied by a private provider, 64% were outside the local authority's boundary. Chart 5 shows the percentage of children looked after by placement provision and location.

Chart 6: Private provision more likely to be used for placements outside local authority's boundary

Children looked after at 31 March 2014 by placement provision and placement location

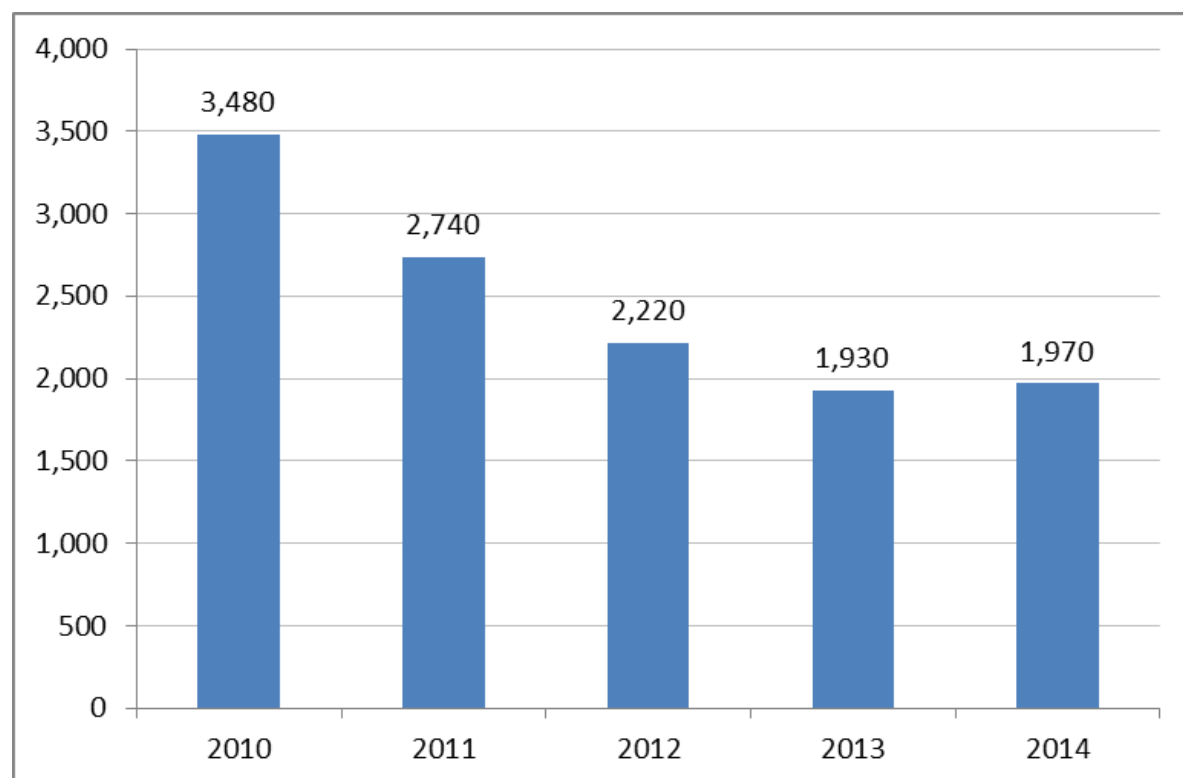


5. Unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) (Table A4)

1,970 unaccompanied asylum seeking children at 31 March 2014	This number has increased by 2% since 2013 but decreased by 43% since 2010. Chart 6 shows the number of UASC looked after from 2010 to 2014.
Majority of UASC are male	Of all the UASC in 2014, 89% were male. This is an increase from 87% in 2013 and the same as in 2010.
3 in 4 UASC are aged 16 and over	76% of UASC are aged 16 and over, an increase of 2 percentage points from 74% in 2013.
37% from other ethnic groups	The largest proportion are from other ethnic groups (excludes White, Mixed, Asian and Black).
Large increase in those of other White background	The proportion of UASC from other White background (excludes White British, White Irish, Traveller of Irish heritage and Gypsy/Roma) has increased from 11% in 2013 to 18% in 2014.

Chart 7: Unaccompanied asylum seeking children decreased over past 5 years

Unaccompanied asylum seeking children looked after on 31 March 2010 to 2014

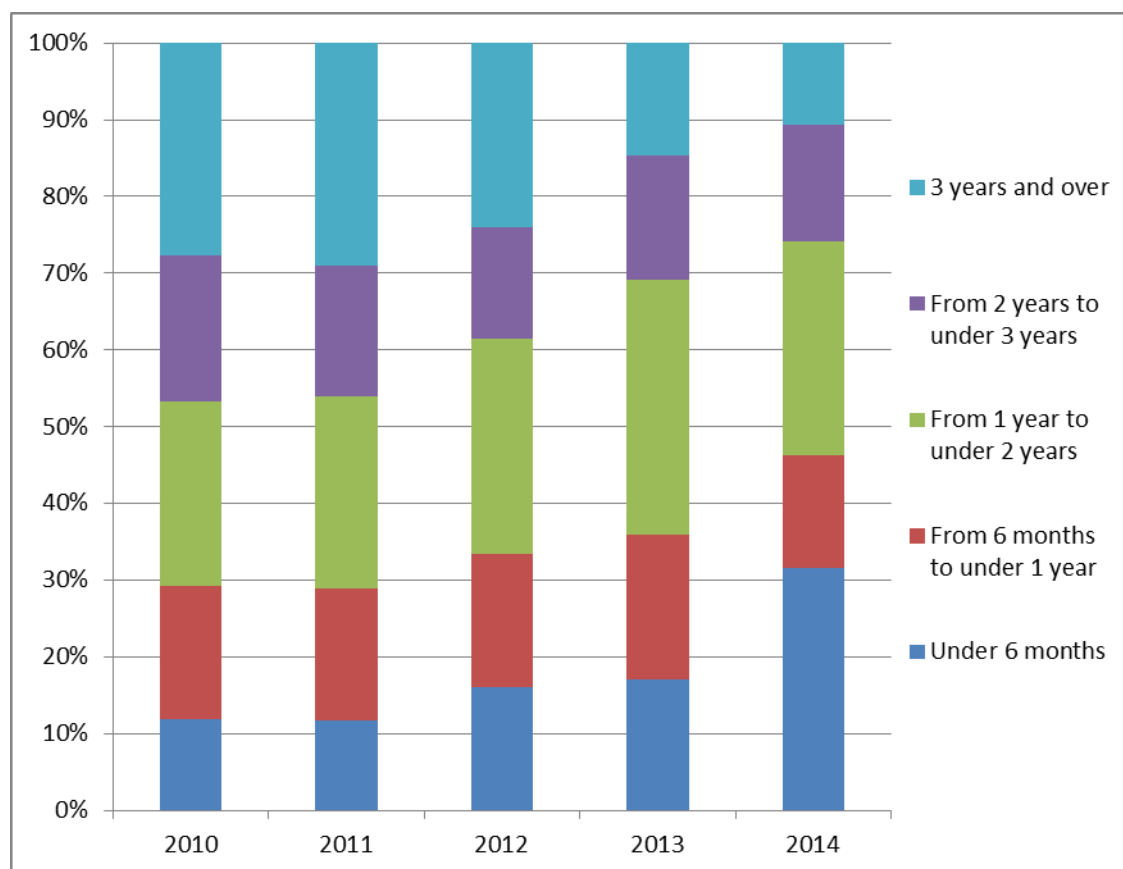


6. Adoptions of looked after children (Tables E3 and E4)

16,540 children had a decision in place	There were 16,540 looked after children for whom a decision was in place during the year ending 31 March 2014 that they should be placed for adoption. This does not reflect the number of adoption decisions made in 2014 but the number of children looked after in 2014 where a decision has been made – for a proportion of these children the decision that they should be placed for adoption will have been made in earlier years.
38% were waiting to be placed for adoption	Of these 16,540 children, 38% were still waiting to be placed for adoption at 31 March 2014. 22% were placed for adoption at 31 March and a further 31% had ceased to be looked after during the year (mainly due to adoption).
1,450 children had their original adoption decision reversed	A further 9% of children had their original decision to place for adoption reversed. The majority (52%) were aged 5 to 9.
Most common reason for reversal was adopters could not be found	There are various reasons why a decision to place a child for adoption would be reversed. Of the 1,450 children whose original decision to place for adoption was reversed, prospective adopters could not be found for 35%. The proportion of reversals where the court did not make the placement order has increased from 9% in 2013 to 16% in 2014. In 2010 this figure was 11%.
Majority looked after with decision for 1 year or more before decision reversed	The majority (54%) 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 1 year or more.
Increase in decisions reversed within 6 months	In 2013, 190 children had their decision to be placed for adoption reversed within 6 months. This more than doubled to 460 in 2014, representing 32% of all reversals. Chart 7 shows the percentage of children who had their original decision to place for adoption reversed by duration of decision before reversal.
91% adopted by a couple	Of the 5,050 children adopted during the year ending 31 March 2014, 91% were adopted by a couple and 76% were adopted by a married couple.

Chart 8: Increase in decisions reversed within 6 months

Percentage of children who had their original decision to place for adoption reversed by duration of decision before reversal

**7. 18 year old care leavers**

Alongside the SSDA903 return, the Department ran a voluntary data collection on 18 year old care leavers. Local authorities were asked to return (i) the number of care leavers who have turned 18 and left care in the year ending 31 March 2014, who are eligible for care leaver support and (ii) of those, the number who remained with their former foster carers at age 18. Data received from 120 local authorities (representing a 79% response rate) showed 25% of 18 year old care leavers remained with their former foster carers.

List of tables

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

Children looked after at 31 March 2014

Table A4: Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children looked after at 31 March by gender, age at 31 March, category of need and ethnic origin, 2010 to 2014

Table A5: Mothers aged 12 years old and over looked after at 31 March by age at 31 March, age at birth of first child, category of need, ethnic origin, placement and region, 2010 to 2014

Table A6: Children looked after at 31 March 2014 by distance between home and placement and locality of placement

Table A7: Children looked after at 31 March 2014 by placement, placement location and placement provider

Table A8: Children looked after at 31 March by method of participation at the last review, 2010 to 2014

Table LAA2: Children looked after at 31 March 2014 by legal status and local authority

Table LAA3: Children looked after at 31 March 2014 by placement and local authority

Table LAA4: Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children looked after at 31 March by local authority, 2010 to 2014

Table LAA5: Children looked after at 31 March 2014 by age, gender and local authority

Table LAA6: Children looked after at 31 March 2014 by distance between home and placement and locality of placement, by local authority

Table LAA7: Children looked after at 31 March 2014 by placement provider and local authority

Table LAA8: Children looked after at 31 March 2014 by ethnic origin and local authority

Table LAA9: Children looked after at 31 March 2014 by placement in or out of local authority's area and local authority

Children looked after during the year ending 31 March 2014

Table B2: Number of days of care provided by placement during the year ending 31 March, 2010 to 2014

Table B3: New placements for children looked after during the year ending 31 March 2014 by locality of placement and distance between home and placement

Table B4: Duration of placements ceasing during the year ending 31 March 2014

Table LAB2: New placements for children looked after during the year ending 31 March 2014 by locality of placement, distance between home and placement and local authority

Children who started to be looked after during the year ending 31 March 2014

Table C2: Children who were taken into care during the years ending 31 March by gender, age on starting, category of need and ethnic origin, 2010 to 2014

Table C3: Children who started to be looked after during the years ending 31 March by legal status on starting, 2010 to 2014

Table C4: Children who started to be looked after during the years ending 31 March by placement, 2010 to 2014

Table LAC2: Children who started to be looked after during the year ending 31 March 2014 by gender, age on starting and local authority

Table LAC3: Children who started to be looked after during the year ending 31 March 2014 by legal status on starting and local authority

Table LAC4: Children who started to be looked after during the year ending 31 March 2014 by category of need and local authority

Children who ceased to be looked after during the year ending 31 March 2014

Table D2: Children who ceased to be looked after during the years ending 31 March by placement on ceasing and local authority, 2010 to 2014

Table D3: Children aged 16 years and over who ceased to be looked after during the years ending 31 March by gender, age on ceasing, ethnic origin and final placement, 2010 to 2014

Table D4: Children who ceased to be looked after during the years ending 31 March by legal status on ceasing, duration of latest period of care and average duration of latest period of care in days, 2010 to 2014

Table D5: Children who ceased to be looked after during the year ending 31 March 2014 by number of periods of care in care history, number of placements in period of care and age on ceasing

Table LAD2: Children who ceased to be looked after during the year ending 31 March 2014 by reason episode ceased and local authority

Table LAD3: Children who ceased to be looked after during the year ending 31 March 2014 by gender and age on ceasing

Looked after children who were adopted during the year ending 31 March 2014

Table E3: Children looked after who were adopted during the years ending 31 March by number of adopters, legal status of adopters and by gender of adopters, 2010 to 2014

Table E4: Children for whom the local authority has made the decision that the child should be placed for adoption, those placed and waiting for adoption and children where the decision to be placed for adoption has been reversed, by gender, age at reversal of decision, reason for reversal of decision, duration of decision before reversal, 2010 to 2014

Former care leavers aged 19, 20 and 21

Table LAF1: Care leavers aged 19, 20 and 21 by activity and local authority

Table LAF2: Care leavers now aged 19, 20 and 21 by accommodation and local authority

Time series

Table G1: Children looked after at 31 March and children who started, ceased and were adopted during the years ending 31 March, 1997 to 2014

Want more?

Outcomes for looked after children in England	Information on outcomes for looked after children is available for children looked after at 31 March 2014. Outcomes include educational attainment, special educational needs (SEN), exclusions from school, health including emotional and behavioural health, offending and substance misuse.
Children in need and child protection statistics for England	Information on referrals, assessments and children who were the subject of a child protection plan (taken from the Children in Need census) is available for 2014.
Information on care proceedings in England	The Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS) publish information on care proceedings applications made by local authorities where CAFCASS has been appointed by the court to represent the interests of children.
Local authority adoption statistics	Children in care and adoption performance indicators for 2013 show how local authorities and looked after children's services compare with others in England. Data for 2014 will be published later this year.
Local authority expenditure	Information on local authority planned expenditure on schools, education, children and young people's services is available for the financial year 2013-14. This data is returned to DfE by local authorities via the Section 251 Budget Return.
Ofsted statistics	Ofsted publish inspection outcomes for local authority children's services and children's social care providers in England as well as data on the placements of children looked after.
Scotland	Statistics on children's social work in Scotland are available for 2012-13 on the Scottish Government website .
Wales	Statistics on children looked after in Wales are available for the period up to 31 March 2014 on the Welsh Government website .
Northern Ireland	Statistics on children looked after in Northern Ireland are available for 2013-14 and are published on the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety website .

A National Statistics publication

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. Designation 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, and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that The Code of Practice shall continue to be observed. This publication has been designated as National Statistics following assessment by the United Kingdom Statistics Authority.

Looked after children user group

This is a group which aims to seek feedback on whether these statistics are meeting users' requirements and to consult on any future changes to this data collection and the timing and format of our outputs. If you would like to participate in this group then please register your interest via [email](#).

Glossary

Special guardianship order

A special guardianship order is defined under the Children Act 1989 as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's "special guardian" (or special guardians). It is an alternative legal status for children for whom adoption is not appropriate. Special guardianship provides greater security than long term fostering but without the absolute legal severance from birth parents that stems from an adoption order. Special guardians have parental responsibility for the child to the exclusion of all others with parental responsibility, but they cannot consent to the child being adopted. Further information can be found in [The Special Guardianship Regulations 2005](#).

Residence order

Under the Children Act 1989, a residence order is defined as an order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom a child is to live. The holder of a Residence Order has equal status with everyone else who has parental responsibility.

Placement order

Placement order is a court order which gives a local authority the legal authority to place a child for adoption with any prospective adopters who may be chosen by the authority. Only local authorities may apply for placement orders. The order continues in force until it is revoked, an adoption order is made in respect of the child, the child marries, forms a civil partnership or the child reaches 18.

Placed for adoption

Placed for adoption is an arrangement whereby a looked after child goes to live with the prospective adopters who will adopt them. It does not mean that the child has been adopted. It is a placement, not a legal status. Placement of a child for adoption may only occur if the local authority has decided that the child should be placed for adoption. A child cannot be placed for adoption unless the adoption agency has 'authority' to place i.e. either through parental consent or a placement order from the court. (Sections 19 and 21 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002).

Taken into care

Children taken into care are defined as children who started to be looked after under a care order (full or interim), or who are detained on child protection grounds (police protection, emergency protection orders or child assessment orders).

Got a query? Like to give feedback?

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