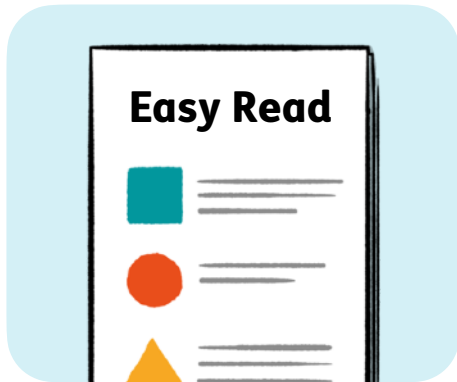




What children said about being in care in 2026



Easy Read



This is an Easy Read version of some information.

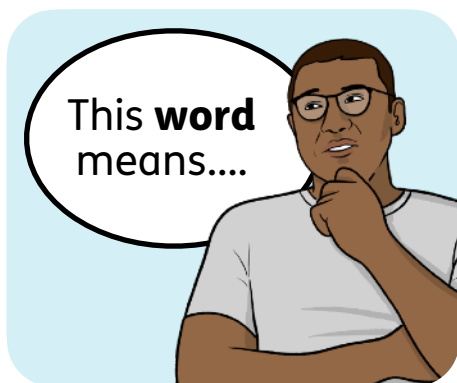
It uses easier words and pictures.



Some people may still want help to read it.



Some words are **bold** to show they are important.



We explain bold words if they are hard to understand.

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About this booklet



This booklet is from Ofsted.

We check nurseries, schools and colleges to make sure children are taught as well as possible.



We also check **children's social care services**.

Children's social care services are services that look after and help children who need extra support.



Every year, we ask children what they think about where they live.

This booklet will explain what they said.

Where children live

Children may live in:



- A **children's home** - this is a home where a few children live together and are cared for by the staff there.



- A **foster home** - this is a private home where a child lives and is cared for by a family.



- **Supported accommodation** - this is housing where children aged 16 or 17 can get support and learn how to be independent.

Children may also live in:

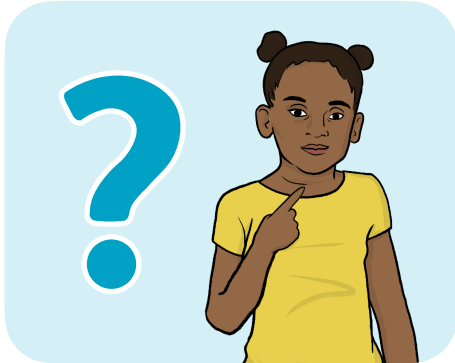


- A **residential school** - this is a school where children can live as well as learn.

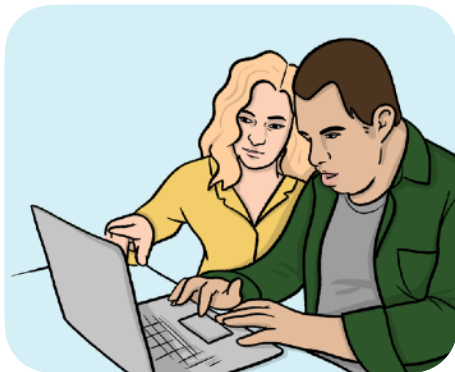


- A **residential special school** - this is a school where children who have extra learning needs or disabilities can live as well as learn.

How we asked children what they think



We asked children questions about what they think of where they live.



We asked the questions using an online survey.

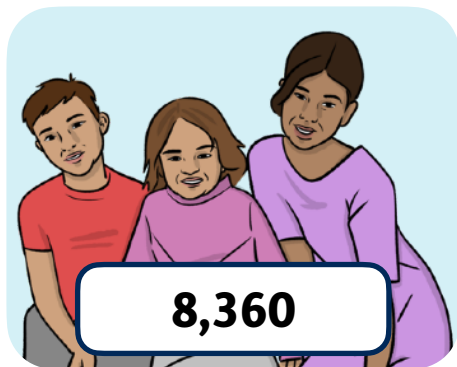
The survey included:



- Questions with answer choices for children to choose from.



- Questions where children could write their own comments.



This year, 8,360 children filled in the survey.



This is less than last year.



We use what children tell us to:

- Find out any problems with where a child is living.
- Decide which children's social care services we need to look at and when.



The main things we found out

Here are some of the main things we found out:



- Most children are happy with where they live.



- Most children feel safe where they live.



- Compared to last year, more children living in supported accommodation like where they live.



- Children living in a children's home are more likely than other children to have problems getting along with staff and other children.

Here are some more of the main things we found out:

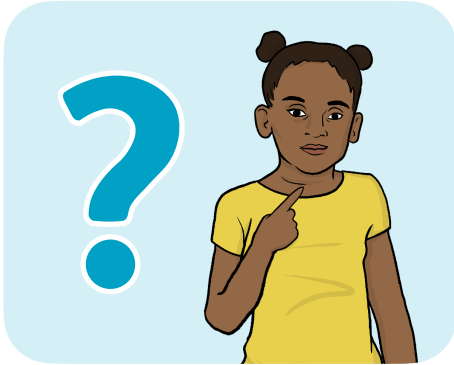


- Children living in a foster home are most likely to feel listened to and take part in decisions about their lives.



- Compared to last year, more children in further education colleges say they do not feel safe.

What children said



Our survey asked children different questions about where they live.



For each question, we will tell you what we asked and what the children answered.

Question 1



We asked children whether they feel safe in the place where they live.



Almost all of the children said they feel safe where they live.



Almost all children living in foster care said they always feel safe where they live.



The number of children saying they always feel safe has gone up in boarding schools and residential special schools.

Here are some comments that some of the children made:

“It’s kinda changed my life and helped me to get out of a lot of trouble and risks in my hometown and it’s learning me how to live on my own in the future.”

Child in supported accommodation.

“I feel safe, as staff know me well. I am listened to and cared for well.”

Child in a residential special school.

Question 2



We asked children how they feel about the staff or carers.



Almost all of the children said they feel happy with the staff or carers.



A lot more children living in boarding schools said they always get along with the staff.



The number of children saying they only get along with the staff sometimes or never stayed around the same as last year.

Here are some comments that some of the children made:

“I want to stay here until I go to university and after that I will visit for holidays and take my carer out for nice things like she has done for me. She is family, not just a foster carer to me now because I have been here for over half my life now.”

Child in foster care.

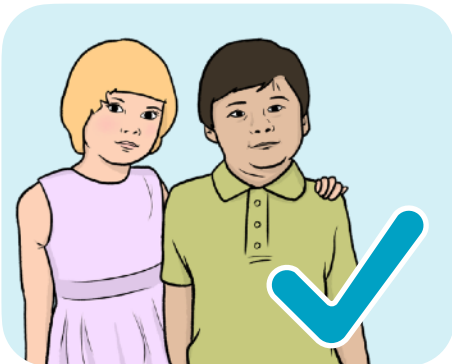
“It’s good. It’s lovely. Staff care about me and we have good food. Staff speak with a nice tone. It’s a wonderful and amazing home.”

Child in a children’s home.

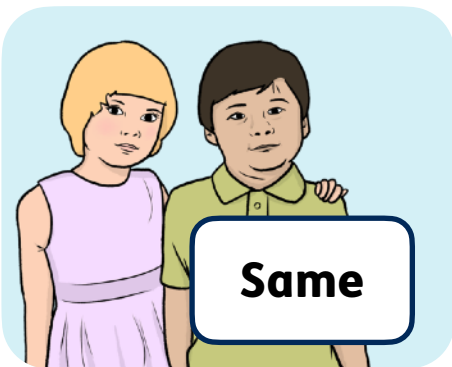
Question 3



We asked children how they feel about the other children they live with.



Almost all of the children said they feel happy with and get along with the other children they live with.



This is the same as last year.



Children living in a foster home were most likely to get along with the other children they live with.



More children living in a group setting, like a boarding school, said they get on with other children always or most of the time.



Children living in a children's home were less likely than other children to get along with each other.

Here are some comments that some of the children made:

“The place I stay is a friendly and sometimes calming place because we laugh and play games. I get to hang out with friends and other people who I enjoy being around.”

Child in a residential special school.

“I feel very happy with this family because I feel very safe and I feel like the people that I live with always support me and I can trust them. If there is something wrong then I can tell them.”

Child in foster care.

Question 4



We asked children whether staff or carers ask about the things that are important to them.



Almost 9 out of 10 of the children said staff or carers ask about things that are important to them.



This is more than last year.



Children living in a foster home or supported accommodation were most likely to say staff or carers asked them about things that are important to them.



This year, more children living in boarding schools said staff or carers asked them about things that are important to them.



Only 3 out of 5 children in further education colleges said that staff always or most of the time asked them about what is important to them.

Here are some comments that some of the children made:

“The staff take me out to nice places that I enjoy, whereas the last places I lived staff wouldn’t take me out. The staff listen to me and care for me all the time and make sure I am happy.”

Child in a children’s home.

“I love it because I can shower whenever I want. I like that I can have my friends stay overnight. This is important to me.”

Child in supported accommodation.

Question 5



We asked children whether staff or carers listen to them.



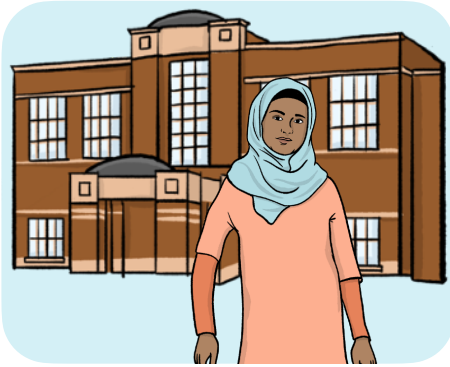
9 out of 10 children said staff or carers listened to them always or most of the time.



This is more than last year.



Children living in a foster home or supported accommodation were most likely to say staff or carers listened to them.



The number of children in residential special schools who said staff and carers listen to them is higher than last year.



Children in further education colleges and boarding schools were more likely to say staff listen to them sometimes or never.

Here are some comments that some of the children made:

“It is an amazing, beautiful place to study but can often have bad organisation and my friends and I often end up quite fed up by the end of the week due to the lack of organisation and when we speak up about it we don’t always get listened to.”

Child in a further education college.

“I feel so understood where I am and having someone listening to me really helps my emotions. The staff have helped me get back into school and show how proud they are of me. I love when they pick me up and ask about my day. It really makes me feel listened to and heard.”

Child in a children’s home.

Question 6



We asked children whether they get to spend time with the people who are important to them.



Nearly 4 out of 5 of the children said they get to spend time with the people who are important to them.

This is the same as last year.



More children in further education colleges said they get to spend time with the people who are important to them.



Children in supported accommodation were less likely than other children to say they get to spend time with the people who are important to them.

Here are some comments that some of the children made:

“I like to spend time with the staff and my friends in residence. I feel comfortable here and like the activities.”

Child in a residential special school.

“Good. I get on with the people I live with, my carers are nice, we have nice food, I’m allowed to see my friends, they support me at school, and they’ve helped me to see my mum.”

Child in foster care.

Question 7



We asked children whether they had done something fun in the last week.



Almost 9 out of 10 of the children said they had done something fun in the last week.



Children in foster care were the most likely to say they had done something fun in the last week.



But slightly fewer children living in residential schools and supported accommodation had done something fun in the last week.



Compared to last year, more children said they had done something fun in the last week.

Here are some comments that some of the children made:

“There’s always something to do and new activities or events take place.”

Child in a boarding school.

“We always eat dinner together and have daily chats and we go out and do fun things like going to zoos, parks and walks together.”

Child in a children’s home.

Question 8



We gave children the chance to make any more comments about where they live.



Many of the children used words like good, nice or great to describe where they live.



Many of the children also used words like nice, helpful and supportive to describe the staff or carers where they live.

But some children made comments about problems where they live, like:



- Long school days and not enough free time in boarding schools.

Some children also made comments about problems where they live, like:



- The food not being very nice.



- Not getting on with other children.



- Not being listened to when complaining about something.



- Wanting to spend more time with their families.



We looked into any problems that children brought up in their surveys.



Our staff then made decisions about what should happen next in order to make sure every child was safe.

Find out more



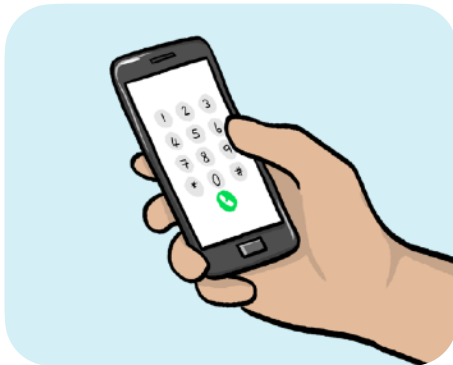
Thank you to everyone who filled in our survey.



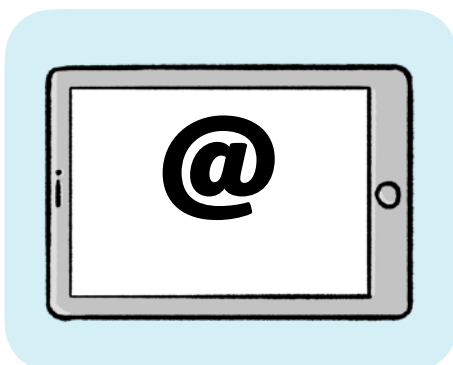
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