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|
| Responsible director: | John Goldup |
| Statistician: | Adam King |
| Public enquiries: | enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk |
| Press enquiries: | pressenquiries@ofsted.gov.uk |
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**Introduction**

This official statistics release reports on the number of children’s social care providers and places and provision of residential accommodation for children in boarding schools and further education colleges for which Ofsted had regulatory or inspection responsibility, covering the period between 1 April 2012 and 30 September 2012.[[1]](#footnote-1) Children’s social care providers include children’s homes, secure children’s homes, residential special schools registered as children’s homes, other residential special schools, residential family centres, boarding schools, further education colleges, secure training centres, adoption support services, voluntary adoption agencies, local authority adoption agencies and independent and local authority fostering services.[[2]](#footnote-2)

These statistics are based on a snapshot as at 30 September 2012. Ofsted will publish these data biannually and the next release will be on 9 May 2013.

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Key findings

National number of providers and places at 30 September 2012

* There were a total of 3,160 children’s social care providers and providers of residential accommodation for children in boarding schools and further education colleges in England. This was a decrease of four providers from 31 March 2012.
* The former North West Government Office Region (GOR) had the largest number of providers at 636 and the South East had the next largest with 492. The North East had the smallest number of providers at 169. The number of providers in individual local authorities varied from one in City of London and two in Isles of Scilly and Thurrock to 127 in Kent.[[3]](#footnote-3)

Children’s homes at 30 September 2012

* Children’s homes accounted for 66% of all providers in England (2,082 homes). The 2,082 homes were made up of the following types; children’s homes (1,976), secure children’s homes (16) and residential special schools registered as children’s homes (90). The figure of 2,082 was a decrease of eight homes from 31 March 2012.
* The former North West GOR had the largest number of children’s homes with 514 while the former North East GOR had the smallest with 108.
* The former London GOR, which had the second lowest number of homes at 31 March 2012, had the largest decrease in the number of homes, nine (7%), to 121 in total.
* The local authority with the largest number of children’s homes located within its authority boundary was Lancashire with 101 homes. Staffordshire and then Kent had the next largest number of homes, with 77 and 74 homes respectively.
* Lancashire accounted for a fifth of all the homes in the North West, and had more than twice as many as the North West authority with the next largest amount, Rochdale, which had 46 homes.
* Six local authorities did not have any children’s homes, either run by them or run by private or voluntary organisations, located within their authority boundary. The authorities are City of London, Hackney, Isles of Scilly, Richmond upon Thames, Thurrock and Westminster.
* In addition to this figure, 24 local authorities did not run any of the children’s homes located within their authority boundary. The authorities were; Barking & Dagenham, Bath & North East Somerset, Bexley, Bury, Camden, Enfield, Havering, Herefordshire, Kingston upon Thames, Lambeth, Lewisham, North Somerset, Plymouth, Poole, Redbridge, Rutland, Solihull, Southend, Sutton, Swindon, Telford & Wrekin, Torbay, Warwickshire and Windsor and Maidenhead. Almost half (10) of the authorities were in London and six were in the South West.
* There were 11,968 registered places in children’s homes in England. This was a decrease of 78 places since 31 March 2012.
* When looking at all children’s homes, the local authority with the highest average number of places per home was Dorset with an average of 23 places. This high figure for Dorset was due to four residential special schools, which are registered as children’s homes, and which had an average of over 50 places each, being found within the authority’s boundaries. The national average was 5.7 places per home. If secure homes and residential special schools registered as children’s homes were excluded, the authority with the highest average places per home was North Lincolnshire with an average of 12.7 places. The national average was 4.7 places per home.
* There were 272 places in secure homes. This was a decrease of nine (3%) since 31 March 2012.

Children’s homes sector data at 30 September 2012

* In England, 26% of the children’s homes were run by local authorities.[[4]](#footnote-4) The other 74% were run by either private or voluntary organisations.[[5]](#footnote-5)
* The number of homes run by local authorities had decreased by 16 (3%) since 31 March 2012. Over the same period, the number of homes run by private or voluntary providers had increased by eight.
* There were clear regional differences with regards to the percentages of homes which were run by local authorities. In the Yorkshire and the Humber and North East former GORs it was 49% and 46% respectively while in the West Midlands and North West former GORs it was 17% and 22% respectively.
* At local authority level, the percentage of homes run by local authorities varied widely. There were six authorities, who had small numbers of homes, which were all run by the authority itself. Conversely there were 24 authorities who did not run any of the homes within their authority boundary. In addition there were some authorities which had large numbers of homes, the vast majority of which were run by private or voluntary organisations. Examples of such authorities are Shropshire which had 63 homes of which three (5%) were local authority run and Stockport which had 36 homes of which two (6%) were local authority run.
* The percentage of places in children’s homes followed the same general split as the number of homes, with regards to sectoral breakdown. In England, 29% of the places were in children’s homes run by local authorities. The other 71% of places were in homes run by either private or voluntary organisations.
* The number of places in local authority run homes decreased by 124 (3%) from 31 March 2012 while the number of places in homes run by private or voluntary providers increased by 46.
* In all the former GORs, except the South East and East Midlands, the number of places in homes run by the authorities themselves decreased. The largest decreases were in London (11%), South West (8%) and East of England (8%).
* At local authority level, there had been some substantial changes in the number of places in homes run by the authority itself. Haringey, Croydon and North Lincolnshire had each reduced the number of homes they run by two and had consequently reduced the number of places by 70%, 65% and 50% respectively. Buckinghamshire had reduced the number of homes by one and the places by 57%. Warrington and Rochdale still ran the same number of homes but had reduced the places in these homes by 40% and 23% respectively.

Other social care providers as at 30 September 2012

* The number of residential family centres had decreased by three (5%) since 31 March 2012 and the number of places offered had decreased by seven.
* The number of independent fostering services had increased by seven (2%) since 31 March 2012.
* The number of voluntary adoption agency branches had decreased by five (10%) since 31 March 2012.
* Previously where a shared local authority adoption or fostering service was in operation, the service was shown only once. The presentation of the data has now been revised to show each service separately for each local authority. Consequently the number of local authority fostering services and adoption agencies both increased to 152 over the period.

Methodology

The data in this publication are taken from Ofsted’s Regulatory Support Application (RSA) database, which holds information about all registered social care providers, and the Inspection Tracking System (ITS) which hold information about secure training centres. Data relate to the position as at the end of each month, up to 30 September 2012.

Information about the number of places is collected at different intervals for different providers which will affect the changes seen in the number of places when looking at quarterly or biannual data.

For the first time, this release includes sector data for children’s homes. Sector data are the ownership type for each home (local authority, private, voluntary and health authority). Ofsted’s data are currently grouped into a single private and voluntary category for reporting purposes. Additional information is being collected to enable a more nuanced sectoral split in future releases.

Also for the first time, Ofsted have separated out residential special schools that care for pupils for more than 295 days a year, from the other type of children’s homes. New tables 1b and 2b have been added which show the three types of children’s homes and the sectoral breakdown.

For more information on how Ofsted regulates and inspects children’s social care, please go to the Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Forms-and-guidance/Browse-all-by/Care-and-local-services/Children-s-social-care](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Forms-and-guidance/Browse-all-by/Care-and-local-services/Children-s-social-care).

# Additional information

All the tables and charts shown in this release, along with additional analysis by month and at regional and local authority level, are available in Excel format on the Ofsted website in the same location as this document. Underlying data are also available in Excel and comma separated values (.csv) formats.

Please see data tables listed below:

Table 1a: Active children's social care providers and maximum registered places in the period 31 March 2012 - 30 September 2012 (national or Government Office Region or local authority)

[Please see Table 1a in the Excel workbook in the same zip file as this document]

Table 1b: Active children's homes and maximum registered places, by sector, in the period 31 March 2012 - 30 September 2012 (national or Government Office Region or local authority)

[Please see Table 1b in the Excel workbook in the same zip file as this document]

Table 2a: Active children's social care providers and maximum registered places in the period 31 March 2012 - 30 September 2012 (national and Government Office Region and local authority)

[Please see Table 2a in the Excel workbook in the same zip file as this document]

Table 2b: Active children's homes and maximum registered places, by sector, in the period 31 March 2012 - 30 September 2012 (national or Government Office Region or local authority)

[Please see Table 2b in the Excel workbook in the same zip file as this document]

**Table 3: National number of children’s social care providers at the end of each quarter, by provision type**

[See Table 3 below]

**Map 1: Number of children’s homes (all), by former Government Office Region, at 30 September 2012**

[See Map 1 below]

**Map 2: Number of children’s homes places (all), by former Government Office Region, at 30 September 2012**

[See Map 2 below]

**Map 3: Percentage of all children’s homes run by local authorities and health authorities, by former Government Office Region, at 30 September 2012**

[See Map 3 below]

**Map 4: Percentage of all children’s homes run by private and voluntary organisations, by former Government Office Region, at 30 September 2012**

[See Map 4 below]

**Map 5: Percentage of places in all children’s homes run by local authorities and health authorities, by former Government Office Region, at 30 September 2012**

[See Map 5 below]

**Map 6: Percentage of places in all children’s homes run by private and voluntary organisations, by former Government Office Region, at 30 September 2012**

[See Map 6 below]

Table 3: National number of children’s social care providers and places at the end of each quarter, by provision type



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| 1. The decrease in the overall number of children’s social care providers and boarding schools between 30 June and 30 September 2011 is due to most boarding schools moving to having their welfare inspections carried out by the Independent Schools Inspectorate rather than Ofsted and therefore no longer being included in the data.  2. The decrease in the overall number of children’s homes providers and places from 31 March 2012 onwards, is due to the separation of the two different types of children's homes.  3. Residential special schools that care for pupils for more than 295 days per year must register as children’s homes. They are separated from other children's homes for reporting purposes. The data have been available since 31 March 2012 and therefore this date is where the distinction is made in the table above. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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Map 1: Number of children’s homes (all), by former Government Office Region, at 30 September 2012

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**Map 2: Number of children’s homes places (all), by former Government Office Region, at 30 September 2012**



**Map 3:** Percentage of all children’s homes run by local  **Map 4: Percentage of all children’s homes run by private and** authorities and health authorities, by former **voluntary organisations, by former Government Office**

# Government Office Region, at 30 September 2012 **Region, at 30 September 2012**

# Map 5: Percentage of places in all children’s homes run Map 6: Percentage of places in all children’s homes run by

# by local authorities and health authorities, by former private and voluntary organisations, by former

# Government Office Region, at 30 September 2012 Government Office Region, at 30 September 2012

 

Glossary

**Adoption agencies**

The focus of all adoption agencies is on placing children successfully into adoptive families who the agency recruits, assesses, prepares and supports, so they will meet the children’s needs and enable them to develop and achieve throughout their lives. The services maintained by local authorities are described in section 3(1) of the Adoption and Children Act 2002. Local authorities place children with adoptive families recruited and approved by themselves, by other local authorities or by voluntary adoption agencies who must register with Ofsted. Adoption agencies may also provide birth records, counselling and intermediary services to adoptees and birth relatives. There are three branches of voluntary adoption agencies in Wales which are inspected by Ofsted because their head offices are in England. These are not included in this publication.

**Adoption support agencies**

Adoption support agencies are defined by section 8 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 and provide services to anyone touched by adoption and are registered with Ofsted. This includes counselling and help for children and adults to gain information about their adoption or to trace birth relatives. Adoption support agencies can be either organisations or individuals, and may be contracted by a local authority to provide support services.

**Boarding Schools**

The majority of boarding schools are independent and belong to associations which are members of the Independent Schools Council. As both education and welfare in these schools are inspected by their own inspectorate, Ofsted does not inspect these schools and so they are not included in the data. The remainder are maintained boarding schools where both education and the welfare of boarders are the subject of Ofsted inspection and independent boarding schools which are members of the Bridge Schools Inspectorate or Schools Inspection Service and who receive their education inspections by these organisations and their welfare inspections by Ofsted.

**Children’s homes**

A children’s home is defined in section 1 of the Care Standards Act 2000, and is an establishment that provides care and accommodation wholly or mainly for children. Children’s homes vary in size and nature. They fulfil a range of purposes designed to meet the different needs of those children and young people who are assessed as needing a residential care placement. Some homes, for example, provide short breaks which are needed to help support children and their family. Residential special schools that care for pupils for more than 295 days per year must register as children’s homes. These schools, and secure children's homes, are recorded separately in this publication.

**Fostering services**

Local authority fostering services are defined by section 4 of the Care Standards Act 2000. Local authority fostering services and independent fostering services recruit, prepare, assess, train and support foster carers. Independent fostering services (IFSs) are private companies or charities, which are registered with Ofsted and provide placements to children and young people with foster carers approved by them. IFSs work closely with local authorities to deliver these placements.

**Places**

The term ‘places’ used in this report refers to the number of places for which the social care provider has capacity. This number usually will not, therefore, be the same as the actual number of children who are receiving services from the provider. Ofsted holds data relating to places for: children's homes; secure children's homes; residential special schools; residential family centres; boarding schools; and further education colleges. For some of these providers Ofsted does not hold data relating to places. Where this is the case, the number of places has been estimated. For all other provision types, and aggregated provision types, places data are not available.

**Providers**

Children’s social care providers are those institutions or organisations or agencies that provide services to the relevant children and young people. The providers commented on within this report include children’s homes, secure children’s homes, residential special schools, residential family centres, boarding schools, residential further education colleges, secure training centres, adoption support agencies, voluntary adoption agencies, local authority adoption agencies, independent fostering services and local authority fostering services.

**Residential accommodation in further education colleges**

The welfare provision of further education colleges that provide, or arrange, residential accommodation for one or more students under the age of 18 years.

**Residential family centres**

Residential family centres are defined in section 4(2) of the Care Standards Act 2000 as establishments at which: a) accommodation is provided for children and their parents; b) the parents’ capacity to respond to the children’s needs and to safeguard their welfare is monitored and assessed; and c) the parents are given such advice, guidance and counselling is considered necessary.

**Residential special schools**

Residential special schools are defined in section 59 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006. They vary in size and nature. The sector includes large non-maintained special schools which make provision for very specific needs and take children as full boarders from all over the country, to smaller more local providers catering for children with a range of different special needs and disabilities who may be resident at the school only during the week. Residential special schools that care for pupils for more than 295 days per year must register as children’s homes and are included separately in this release.

**Sector**

Sector refers to the type of provider that owns the children’s social care provision.

*Local Authority*

These are public bodies responsible for the children’s home.

*Private*

These are for-profit organisations mostly with limited company status. These can also though be individually owned children’s homes and run for profit.

*Voluntary*

These are mostly not-for-profit organisations, mainly with charitable status. These can also be individually owned children’s homes and run on a not-for-profit basis.

*Health Authority*

These are NHS Trust-run.

**Secure children’s homes**

Secure children’s homes, as defined in section 25 Children Act 1989, accommodate children and young people who are remanded or have been sentenced for committing a criminal offence. They also accommodate children and young people who are placed there by a court because their behaviour is deemed to present a significant and immediate threat to their safety or the safety of others, unless they are placed in a secure environment.

**Secure training centres**

Secure training centres are defined in section 43(1) (d) of the Prison Act 1952. Ofsted inspects both the care and educational provision for children in four secure training centres[[6]](#footnote-6). They accommodate young people between the ages of 12 and 17 who have been remanded or sentenced by the courts. The centres are under contract to the Youth Justice Board, which monitors their compliance with requirements. Ofsted does not regulate secure training centres but has an agreement with the Youth Justice Board to inspect care twice a year and education once a year.

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1. The boarding schools data relate only to boarding schools which have their welfare inspections carried out by Ofsted. These include maintained boarding schools; independent boarding schools that are not members of an association; and a small number of independent schools that are members of an association, other than the Independent Schools Association. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Residential special schools that care for pupils for more than 295 days per year must register as children’s homes. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Some local authorities share services with a neighbouring authority and some have their services physically based in another local authority’s boundary. Where this is the case they will be included in the figures for the neighbouring authority. Full details of these can be found in the footnotes under table 2a. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. All data for local authority run homes include those run by health authorities. Currently, in England, there are eight children’s homes run by health authorities. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Data are currently grouped into a single private and voluntary category for reporting purposes. Additional information is being collected to enable a more nuanced sectoral split in future releases. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The last inspection cycle of secure training centres (STC) was completed on 31 March 2012. The Youth Justice Board have commissioned an annual joint inspection of each STC by Ofsted, HMI Prisons and the Care Quality Commission, beginning September 2012 and completing by 31 March 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)