

Official Statistics Release

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Introduction

This official statistics release reports on the numbers and profile of adopters and children, in both local authority and voluntary agencies covering the period between 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2012. It also gives data relating to types of complaints, registrations and de-registrations, and a range of other subjects.

These statistics are based on data supplied by local authority adoption agencies and voluntary adoption agencies. Ofsted will publish these data annually and the next release is currently scheduled for autumn 2013.

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Response rates

- Of the 152 local authorities (LA) in England a maximum of 150 could have responded to the 2011-12 survey. Bedford Borough and Telford & Wrekin are not included in the local authority agency data because, on the 31 March 2012, they did not have an individual local authority adoption agency, but instead were linked to the provision of another local authority. Bedford Borough with Central Bedfordshire and Telford & Wrekin with Shropshire.
- Of the 150 LAs, 147 responded to the survey - a 98% return rate.¹
- Voluntary Adoption Agencies (VAAs) are a very diverse group of organisations. Not all of the 49 agencies registered with Ofsted, at 31 March 2012, were in a position to complete the survey. Of the 16 that did not return a survey, nine could not submit a data set: one because it was a head office with no specific adoption functions; five because they were branches of one organisation that only provides adoption support; and three because they resigned in the summer of 2012. Two eligible organisations did not make a survey return; one of these had six registered branches. Consequently, the VAA return rate was 82.5%.
- The overall response rate for LAs and VAAs was 90%.²

Key findings

This is the first national publication of data collected by Ofsted, on adoptive families, from adoption providers. The data were collected via a survey in April-June 2012 and are used to inform the inspection of adoption provision.

Children and young people

- The DfE annual child-level data collection, the SSDA903, reported that between 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2012, 3,450 children and young people were adopted in England.³
- On 31 March 2012, 2,680 children were placed for adoption, but had not yet had an adoption order.⁴
- There was a limited amount of data collected on children in this survey. The data that were collected focussed on details that the DfE do not collect in the SSDA903.
- There were 351 disabled children made the subject of an adoption plan by LAs during the year. LAs placed 193 disabled children between 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2012, of which 83% (160) did not have a final adoption order as at 31 March 2012.

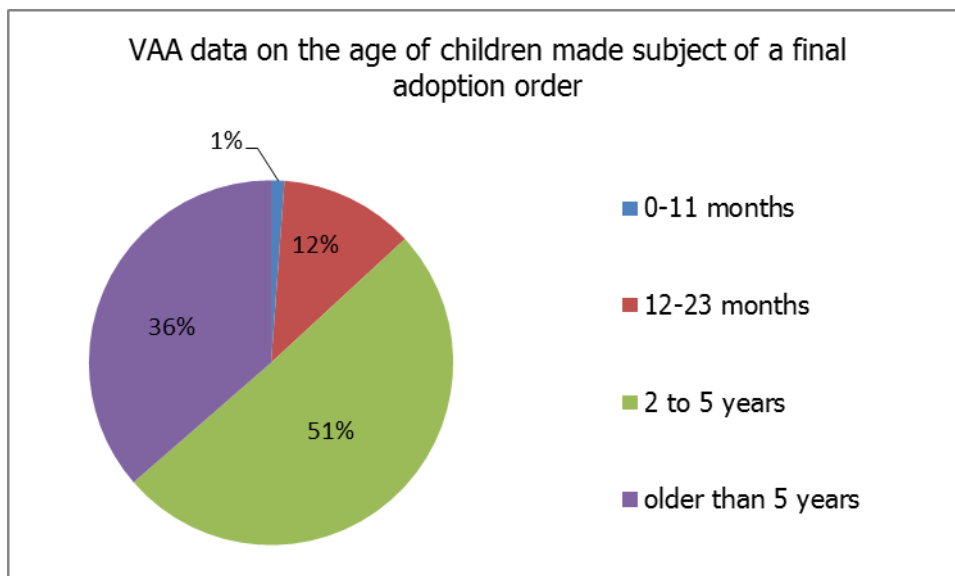
¹ Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

² Data throughout refers to only those agencies that responded to the survey and is not necessarily representative of the national picture.

³ DfE: Children Looked After by Local Authorities in England (including adoption and care leavers) - year ending 31 March 2012, table E1 (<http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s001084/sfr20-2012.xls>)

⁴ DfE: Children Looked After by Local Authorities in England (including adoption and care leavers) - year ending 31 March 2012, table A3 (<http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s001084/sfr20-2012.xls>)

- Final adoption orders were granted for 144 disabled children through all agencies during the year. (A1)
- According to the survey returns, there were 115 unplanned endings of placements between 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2012 (LA A2.1 and VAA A1.3). Although the data on the number of those placed for adoption between 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2012 have yet to be published by the DfE, it seems likely that this indicates that a low percentage of placements had unplanned endings in the year.⁵
- There were 987 sibling groups that were assessed, by the LA, as needing to be adopted together.
- Of the sibling groups placed in the year, 82% (560) were placed together. Of the sibling groups assessed as needing to be placed together, 18% (120) were not placed together. (A3)
- The LAs reported they placed 535 children through VAAs and 736 children through other LAs. (A4.1 and A4.2) VAAs reported that 545 children and young people were placed with them by LAs during the year. (A1.1)
- Over three quarters (78%, 452) of the children matched or placed for adoption with VAAs were White. The next largest were Mixed (16%, 94) and Asian (4%, 20). (G1)
- Over half the children (51%, 215) who were subject of a final adoption order were aged between two and five years old. Approximately one third of the children (36%, 155) were older than five years. One per cent (5) of the children were aged less than 12 months. (G2)



- There were 37 disabled children placed for adoption with VAAs between 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2012 and there were 19 disabled children adopted during the year. (G3)

⁵ DfE announcement of forthcoming data (<http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s001084/sfr20-2012ps>).

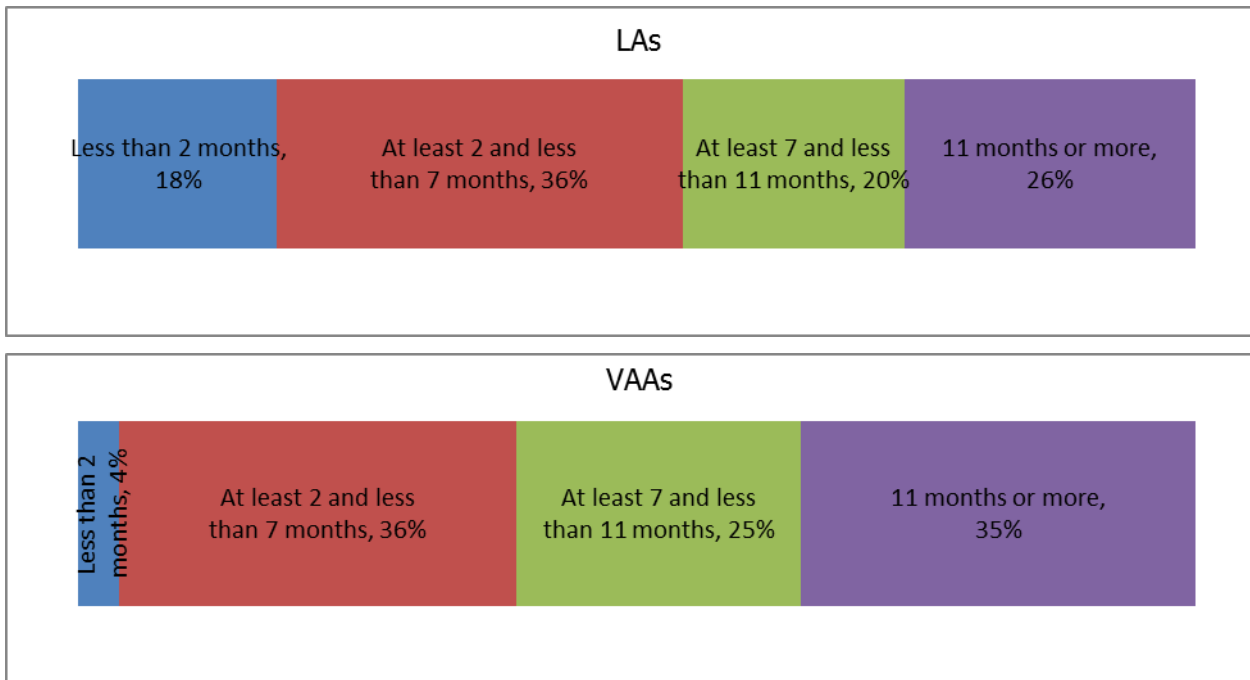
Adoptive families

- There were 4,263 approved adoptive families as at 31 March 2012; 85% (3,640) were approved by LAs and 15% (623) by VAAs. Within LAs, 47% (1,700) of these families were matched to children and 47% (1,720) had children placed with them where the final adoption order had not yet been issued. The remaining (6%) 220 did not have a child placed with them or matched to them. Within VAAs, 13% (80) were matched to children, for whom the placement had not yet started and 51% (316) had children placed with them, where the final adoption order had not yet been issued. The remaining (36%) 227 did not have a child placed with them or matched to them. (B1.1-1.3)
- During the year 280 foster carers were approved to adopt the children they were fostering. (B1.7)
- During the course of the year, 5% (212) of adoptive families withdrew – 4% (168) withdrawing prior to a placement being made and 1% (44) after a placement had been made. The percentages were very similar between LAs and VAAs. (B1.5-1.6)
- In England there were 2,751 adoptive families granted a final adoption order between 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2012; 89% (2,438) within LAs and 11% (313) within VAAs. (B1.4)

Recruitment of adopters

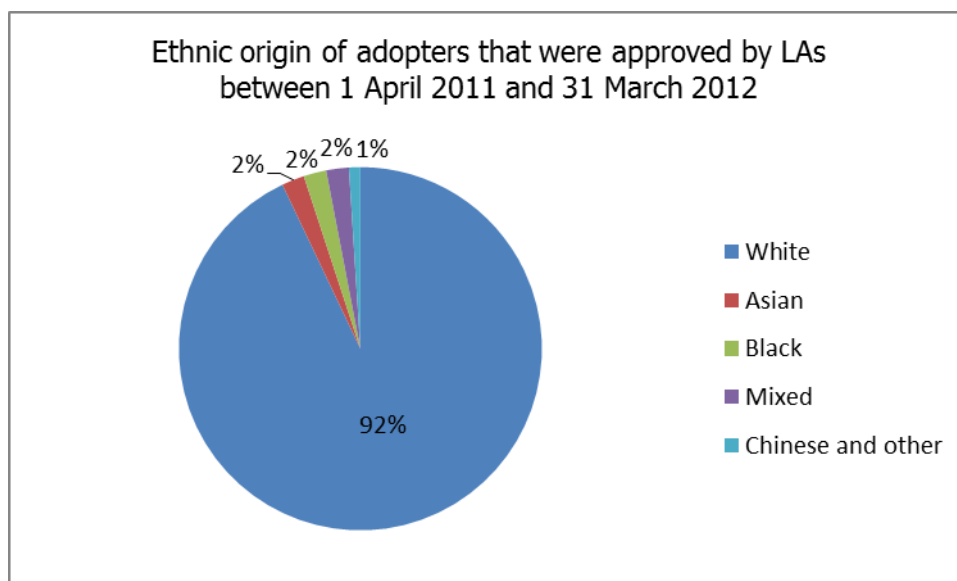
- There were 25,380 initial enquiries to become adopters in England during the year; 74% made to LAs and 26% made to VAAs. Of these enquiries 16% (4,145) went on to become applications for adoption; 85% (3,516) of the applications were made to LAs, a rate of one application for every five enquiries, and 15% (629) were made to VAAs, a rate of one application for every ten enquiries. (B2.1-2.2)
- The number of applications received prior to 1 April 2011, and not decided by that date, was 2,007. The number of applications still being assessed, by 31 March 2012, stood at 2,633. (B2.3-2.4)
- Between 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2012, 3048 applications were approved, 23 were refused and 478 applications were withdrawn. (B2.5-2.7)
- There were 10 applications referred to the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM) between 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2012, of which eight resulted in the IRM making recommendations for LAs to review their decisions. In some cases the IRM recommended that LAs should complete the full assessment before making a decision to turn down an application. None of the referrals made during the year related to VAAs. (B2.9-2.10)
- For those applications to adopt that were approved or refused, the decision was made within 8 months for 54% (1,432) of the families applying through LAs and 53% (208) for families applying through VAAs. (B2.8)

- Of those families approved as at 1 April 2011, 52% (1,314) were matched in less than seven months; a further quarter (697) were matched after 10 months. (B3.1-B3.4) The timescales for LAs and VAAs differ as follows:



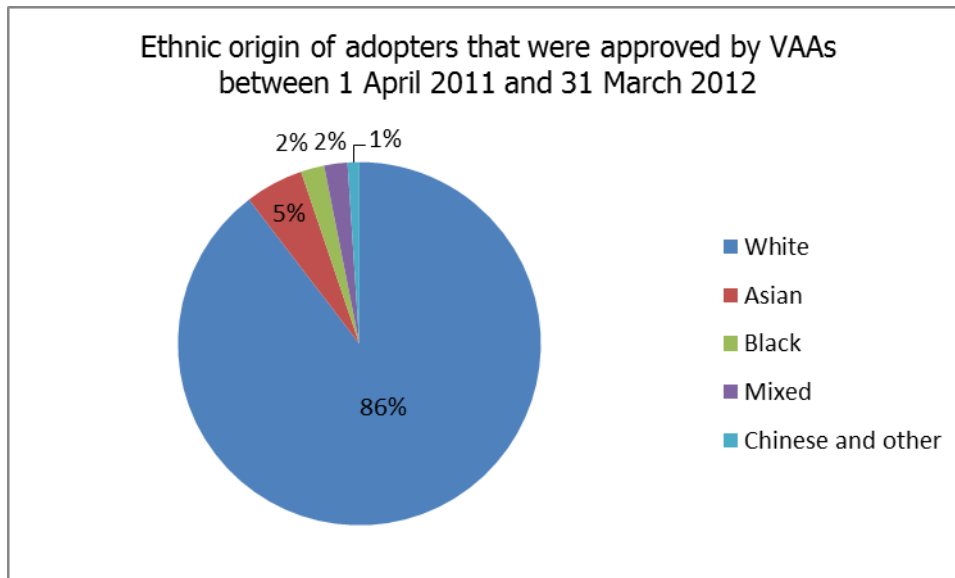
Characteristics of adopters

- The largest ethnic origin, of all adopters approved by LAs during the year, was White at 92% (4,528), with Asian, Black and Mixed with 2% each (120, 104 and 83 respectively).⁶ (C1)

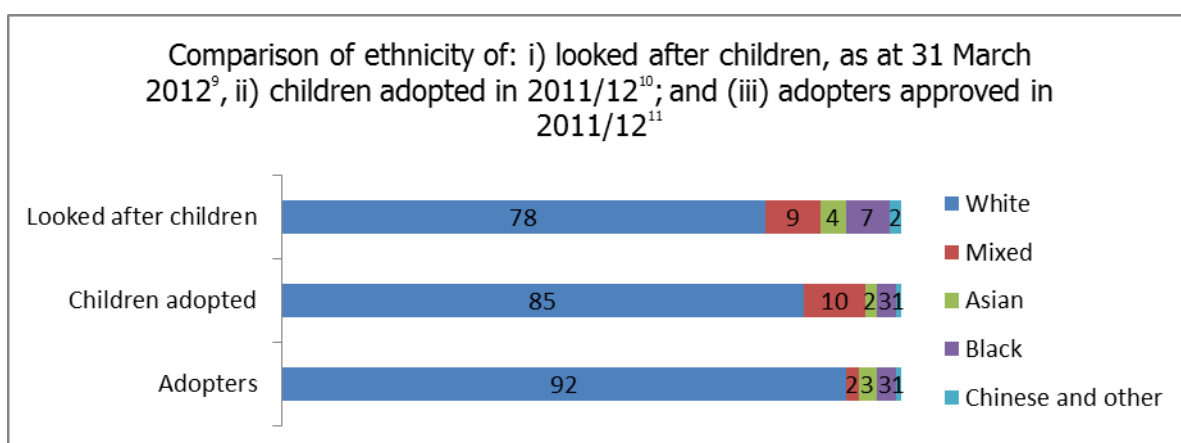


⁶ Suppression has been used on the data. Where a figure is less than five it has been suppressed and excluded from the percentages.

- The largest ethnic origin, of all adopters approved by VAAs during the year, was White at 86% (631), with Asian the next largest with 5% (38), then Black and Mixed with 2% each (24 and 22 respectively).⁷ (C1)



- The most recent published data on the ethnicity of children adopted in the same period, while not strictly comparable, is still usefully illustrative: 85% were White, with the next largest being Mixed, at 10%.⁸
- There are 15 adopters with no information available regarding their ethnic origin, 14 of these were approved by one local authority in the North East. (C1.16)



⁷ Suppression has been used on the data. Where a figure is less than five it has been suppressed and excluded from the percentages.

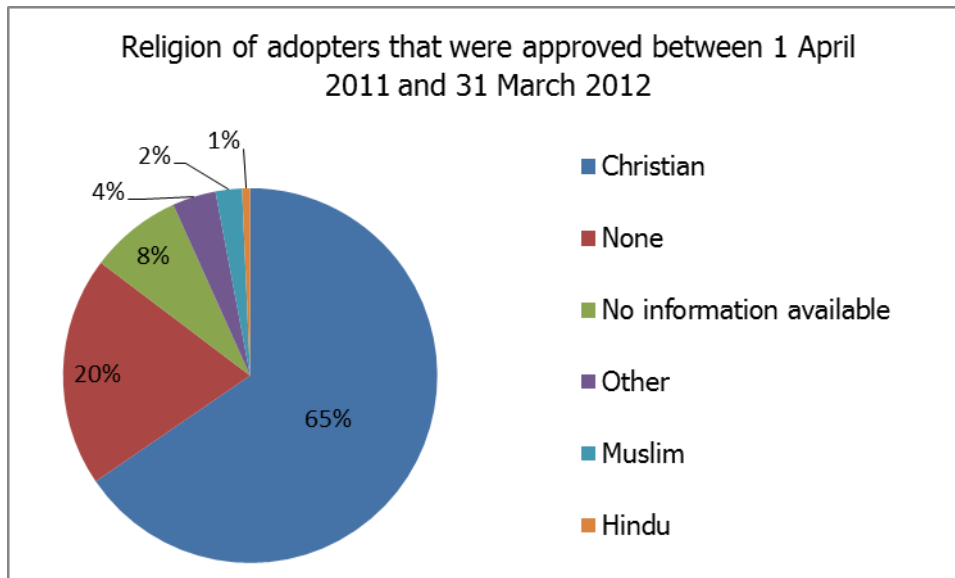
⁸ DfE: Children Looked After by Local Authorities in England (including adoption and care leavers) - year ending 31 March 2012, table E1 (<http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s001084/sfr20-2012.xls>)

⁹ DfE: Children Looked After by Local Authorities in England (including adoption and care leavers) - year ending 31 March 2012, table A1 (<http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s001084/sfr20-2012.xls>)

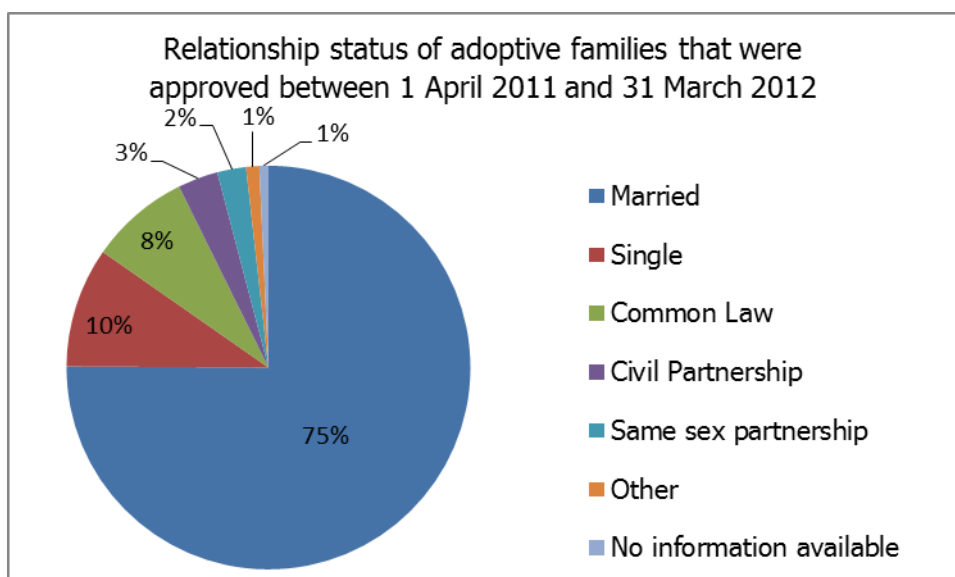
¹⁰ See footnote 8 above

¹¹ Quality assurance and data form question C1

- Almost two thirds (3,671) of adopters approved during the year were Christian, a fifth (1,113) had no religious affiliation and 2% (128) were Muslim. In VAAs, 58% (425) were Christian, 31% (225) had no religious affiliation and 5% (36) were Muslim. (C2)



- In England, 88% (4,902) of adopters approved during the year were heterosexual, 6% (319) were lesbian or gay and information was not available for 6% (339). Information on sexuality was not available for 12% (87) of VAA adopters. (C3)
- Very few, (1%, 78) of the adopters approved in England during the year had a disability. (C4.1)
- Of the adopters approved in the year: 75% (2,282) were married; 10% (292) were single; 8% (243) had a common law marriage (unmarried cohabiting couples); 3% (98) had a civil partnership; and 2% (70) were in a same sex partnership. (C5)



Adoption support

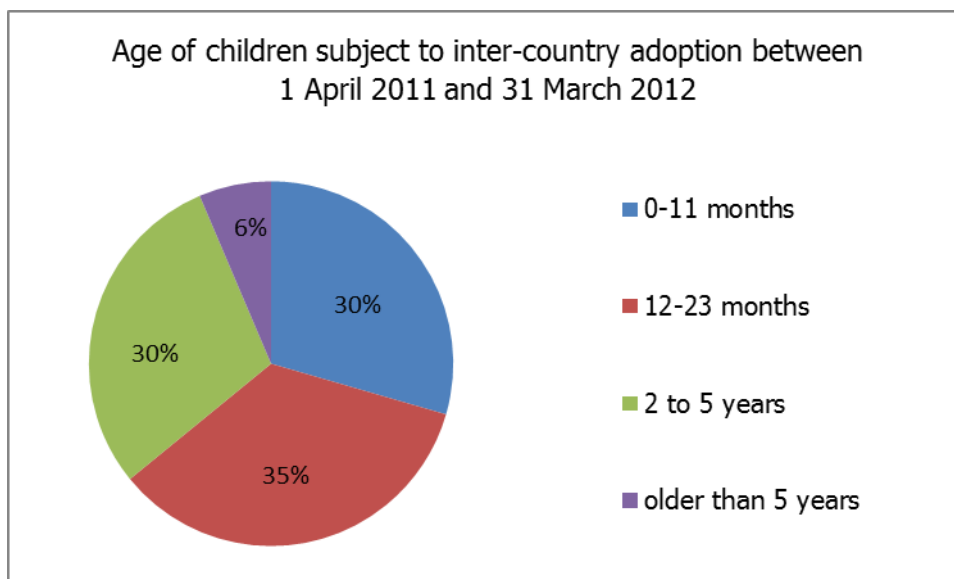
- There were 5,278 requests for adoption support made to LAs during the year, of which LAs reported 87% (4,576) resulted in the provision of support. (D1)
- VAAs provided adoption support packages to 1,885 families during the year, of which 39% (729) were funded by LAs. (D1)

Complaints and allegations

- There were 357 complaints received between 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2012; 95% (338) were made to LAs and 5% (19) were made to VAAs. (E1.1)
- There were 11 allegations of misconduct made against staff or volunteers of LAs during the year; none were made against VAA staff or volunteers. (E1.2)
- There were 79 allegations relating to child protection made against adopters, or prospective adopters, received between 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2012; 82% (65) for LAs and 18% (14) for VAAs. (E1.3)

Inter-country adoptions of children from outside the UK by VAAs

- Of the 33 VAAs that responded, six carry out assessments for inter-country adoptions, including the matching process during the year, four provided welfare supervision, five reported back to the state the child originated from, four facilitated probation orders and four provided other functions. (H1)
- There were 21 children and young people matched, but not placed, with adopters and there were 37 children and young people placed with adopters, which included five sibling groups. (H2.1, 2.2, 3.1)
- There were 32 children made subject of a final adoption order during the year. (H2.3)
- There were no unplanned endings of inter-country adoptions during the year. (H2.4)
- Almost one third (23) of the children adopted were aged under one year, 35% (27) were aged between one and two years, 30% (23) were aged between two and five years and 6% (5) were more than five years of age. (H4)



- VAAs reported that there were 78 inter-country adoptions during the year; 41% (32) of the children came from Europe, the Middle East and Russia, 38% (30) from Asia and 15% (12) from Africa. The large majority (73%, 57) of children adopted were female and overall more than a third (37%, 29) of the children came from Russia. (H5)
- There were 186 adoptive families approved for inter-country adoption as at 31 March 2012, of which 27% (50) were matched to children and 23% (42) had children placed with them, where the final UK/overseas adoption order had not yet been granted. (H6.1-6.3)
- Of the inter-country adoptive families, 9% (22) withdrew prior to a placement being made. (H6.5)

- VAAs reported that there were 39 adoptive families granted a final inter-country adoption order between 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2012. (H6.4) There is a possible discrepancy in this data in relation to (H5).
- There were 815 initial enquires by prospective inter-country adoptive families during the year. Of these enquiries 10% (81) went on to become applications for adoption. (H7.1-7.2)
- The number of applications received prior to 1 April 2011, and not decided by that date, was 30. The number of applications still being assessed, by 31 March 2012, stood at 52. (H7.3-7.4)
- Between 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2012, 58 applications were approved, no applications were refused and less than five applications were withdrawn. (H7.5-7.7)
- For those applications to adopt that were approved or refused, the decision was made within 8 months for 74% (43) of them. (H7.8)
- There were no applications referred to the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM) between 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2012. (H7.9)

Methodology

1. The data in this publication are taken from returns made to Ofsted by local authority and voluntary adoption agencies. Most of the data relate to the period between 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2012.
2. The data are being published as experimental statistics as they are still subject to testing in terms of their volatility.
3. 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.

Additional information

All the tables shown in this release, along with data at England, total local authority adoption agencies and total voluntary adoption agencies levels, are available in Excel format on the Ofsted website in the same location as this document.

Please see data tables listed below:

Table 1: Percentage of returns of the adoption quality assurance and data form 2011-12

Introduction

The adoption quality assurance and data form (2011-12) - experimental statistics

Adoption agencies 2011-12: Quality assurance and data form returns analysis

	Local authority adoption agencies	Voluntary adoption agencies	Total
Returns in analysis	147	33	180
Number of registered providers (as at 31 March 2011)	150	49	199
Percentage of returns	98%	67%	90%

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 plan

This means when the decision is made by the agency decision maker that the child 'should be placed for adoption' (SBPFA) decision.

Adoptive family

For the purposes of these data, one 'adoptive family' includes: a couple (married, civil partnership or common law marriage) who are applying to be adoptive parents; or a single person (including divorced or widowed) applying to be an adoptive parent.

Approved

The definition of approved is 'people who have been approved as adopters by the adoption agency decision maker'.

Disability

Section 6 of the Equality Act 2010 defines a disabled person as someone who has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities. Examples include cancer, diabetes, multiple sclerosis and heart conditions; hearing or sight impairments, or a significant mobility difficulty; and mental health conditions or learning difficulties.

Final adoption order

This is when the courts grant the adoption order.

Final adoption order (inter-country adoptions)

This is the final adoption order issued by the state of origin (for a convention or designated country) or the final adoption order issued by a UK court (for a non-convention country).

Misconduct

Where a formal investigation into the conduct of a member of staff or a prospective adopter is undertaken which follows a voluntary adoption agency's procedures for investigating such allegations. The use of the term allegation is used for employment as well as safeguarding.

Placed for adoption

This is where a child is placed (i.e. living with) the adoptive family that they have been matched to.

Requests for assessment

Formal requests for assessment for adoption support services, rather than on-going informal assistance or initial enquiries.

Unplanned endings

These include disruptions (placements that end before a UK or recognised final adoption order is made by the courts).

Withdrawn

The definition of withdrawn is 'those applications that were stopped by the applicant'.

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