



Department for Education



About this release

This Statistical First Release (SFR) provides information about looked after children in England for the year ending 31 March 2015, including where they are placed, their legal status, numbers starting and ceasing to be looked after.

It also provides figures on looked after children who were placed for adoption, the number of looked after children adopted and the average time between different stages of the adoption process.

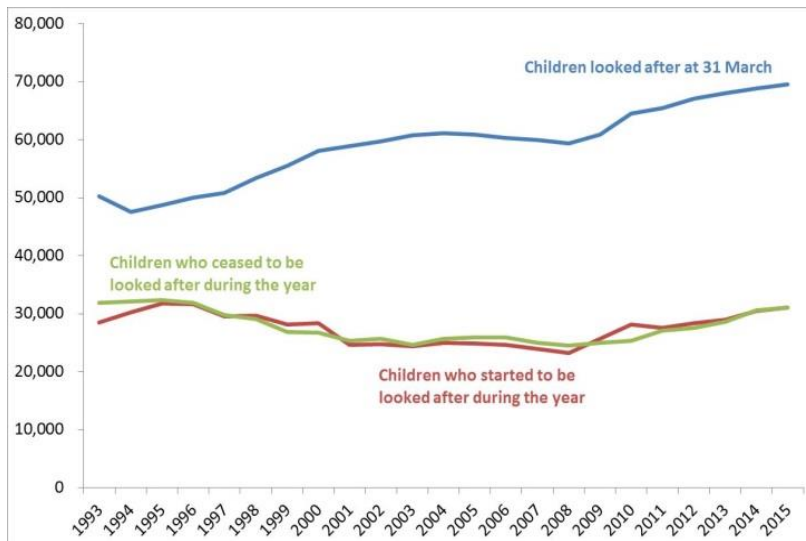
The accommodation and activity of former care leavers (now aged 19 to 21) is also included.

For the first time, newly collected information is included about children looked after who were missing or away from placement without authorisation.

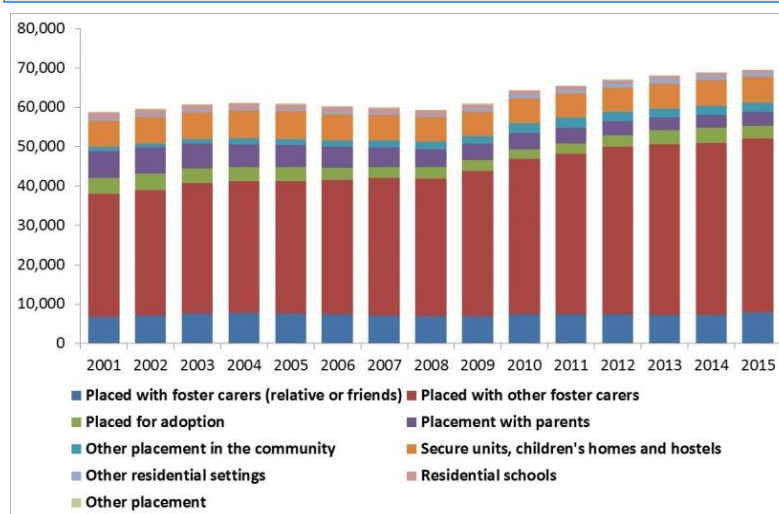
# Children looked after in England (including adoption and care leavers) year ending 31 March 2015

## Numbers of looked after children have continued to steadily rise

The number of looked after children has increased steadily over the past seven years. There were 69,540 looked after children at 31 March 2015, an increase of 1% compared to 31 March 2014 and an increase of 6% compared to 31 March 2011.



## More children with foster carers



The majority of children looked after are placed with foster carers. In 2015 the number of children in foster care continued to rise; of the 69,540 children looked after at 31 March, 52,050 (75%) were cared for in a foster placement.

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### In this publication

The following tables are included in the SFR:

- Children looked after national tables (SFR34\_2015\_National\_tables.xls)
- Children looked after local authority tables (SFR34\_2015\_LA\_tables.xls)

The accompanying quality and methodology information document provides further information on the data sources, their coverage and quality and explains the methodology used in producing the data.

### Feedback

We are changing how our releases look and welcome feedback on any aspect of this document at [cla.stats@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:cla.stats@education.gsi.gov.uk).

# 1. Numbers and characteristics of children looked after at 31 March 2015

(Tables A1, A3 and LAA1)

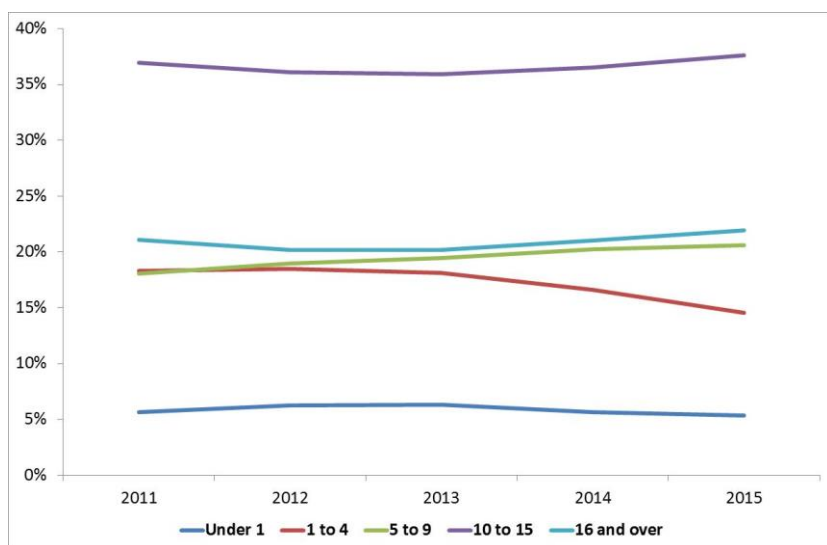
There were 69,540 looked after children as of 31 March 2015, an increase of 1% compared to 31 March 2014 and an increase of 6% compared to 31 March 2011. This rise is not just a reflection of a rise in the child population: in 2015, 60 children per 10,000 of the population were looked after, an increase from 2011 when 58 children per 10,000 of the population were looked after.

The number of looked after children has increased steadily over the past seven years and it is now higher than at any point since 1985.

Whilst the reasons why children start to be looked after have remained relatively stable since 2011, the percentage starting to be looked after due to family dysfunction has increased slightly (16% of children in 2015 compared with 14% in 2011). The majority of looked after children – 61% in 2015 - are looked after by the state due to abuse or neglect.

## Chart 1: Over a third of looked after children are aged between 10 and 15 years old

Percentage of children looked after at 31 March 2015 by age group



The ethnic breakdown for children looked after has varied little since 2011. The majority of children looked after at 31 March 2015 (73%) are from a White British background: similar to the general population of all children. Children of mixed ethnicity continue to be slightly over-represented, and children of Asian ethnicity slightly underrepresented in the looked after children population.

**Table 1: Number of children looked after at 31 March 2011 to 2015**

Year ending 31 March	Number of looked after children
2011	65,510
2012	67,070
2013	68,060
2014	68,800
2015	69,540

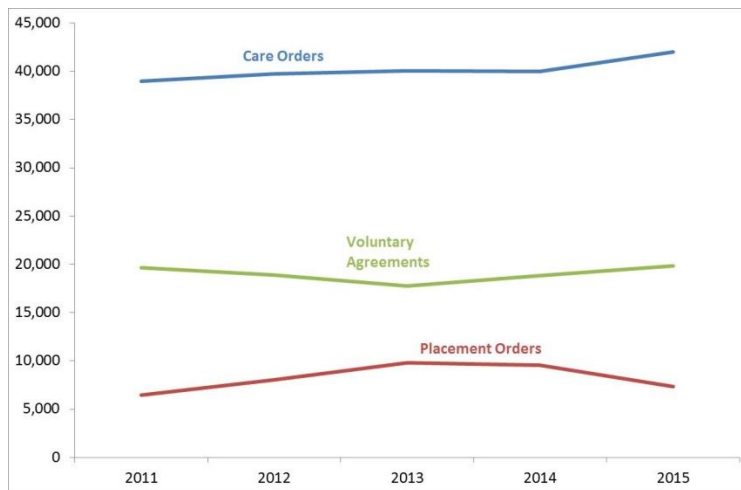
Source: SSDA 903

The age profile of children looked after has been changing slightly over recent years. There has been a fall in the last two years in the numbers of 1- to 4-year-olds looked after at 31 March reflecting higher numbers ceasing to be looked after (around 8,500 each year) than starting to be looked after (just under 6,000 each year).

For older children aged 10 years and older we have seen a rise in the numbers starting to be looked after, with 12,120 starting in 2013, increasing to 13,870 in 2015. There has been a smaller increase in those ceasing to be looked after, resulting in just over 3,000 more children aged 10 and over being looked after at 31 March compared to 2013. Therefore, we are seeing a greater number of older children looked after this year.

## Chart 2: A decrease in the number with a placement order and an increase in the number looked after under a voluntary agreement

Number of children looked after at 31 March by legal status



There has been an increase in the number and percentage of children looked after under a care order or voluntary agreement in 2015, but a reduction in the number and percentage of those looked after with a placement order.

At 31 March 2015, 42,030 (60%) children were looked after under a care order (either an interim or full care order), a 5% increase compared to 2014 and an 8% increase since 2011. A further 19,850 (29%) children were looked after under a voluntary agreement under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989 - this number and percentage has increased steadily since 2013. However, there has been a drop in the number of children looked after with a placement order at 31 March 2015, from 9,580 (14% of looked after children) in 2014 to 7,320 (11%) in 2015. This is in line with quarterly adoptions data collected by the Adoption Leadership Board, which has indicated that since Quarter 2 2013-14, numbers of Adoption Decision Maker decisions for adoption and numbers of adoption placement orders granted have decreased. The National Adoption Leadership Board has linked this trend to the impact of two relevant court judgments, known as Re B and Re B-S. The National Adoption Leadership Board has published [guidance](#) on this issue.

Under the Children Act 1989, a **care order** is defined as an order made by the court on the application of any local authority or authorised person to: (a) place a child with respect to whom the application is made in the care of a designated local authority; or (b) put him under the supervision of a designated local authority.

**A voluntary agreement under section 20 of the Children Act 1989** enables a local authority to provide accommodation for any child in need if they consider that to do so would safeguard or promote the child's welfare. Such an arrangement requires the consent of (i) those with parental responsibility where a child is under 16; or (ii) the child themselves where the child is over 16. A local authority is required to provide accommodation for a child within their area under section 20 as a result of—

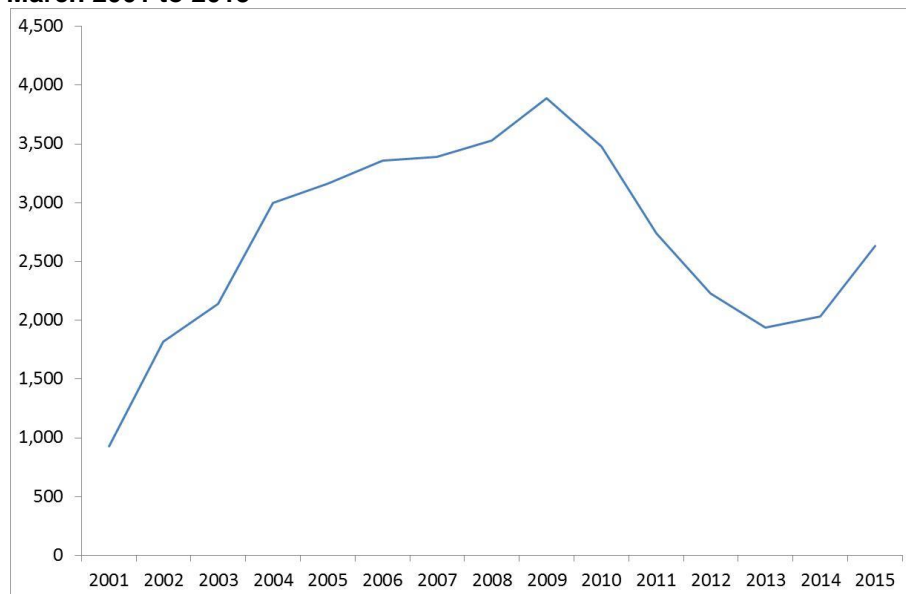
(a) there being no person who has parental responsibility for him; (b) his being lost or having been abandoned; or (c) the person who has been caring for him being prevented (whether or not permanently, and for whatever reason) from providing him with suitable accommodation or care.

**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.

## Number of looked after unaccompanied asylum seeking children has increased in 2015 (Table A3)

Of the 69,540 children looked after at 31 March 2015, 2,630 (4%) were unaccompanied asylum seeking children. The number of looked after unaccompanied asylum seeking children has been falling since 2009, but increased by 5% between 2013 and 2014 and has increased by 29% between 2014 and 2015.

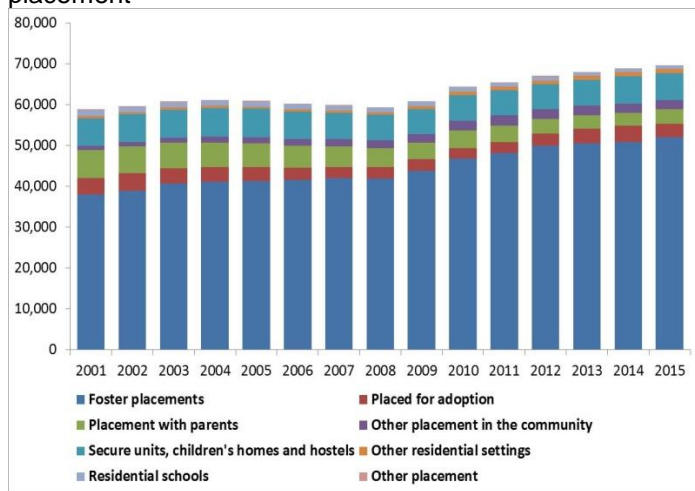
**Chart 3: Unaccompanied asylum seeking children looked after at 31 March 2001 to 2015**



## 2. Placement of looked after children (Table A2)

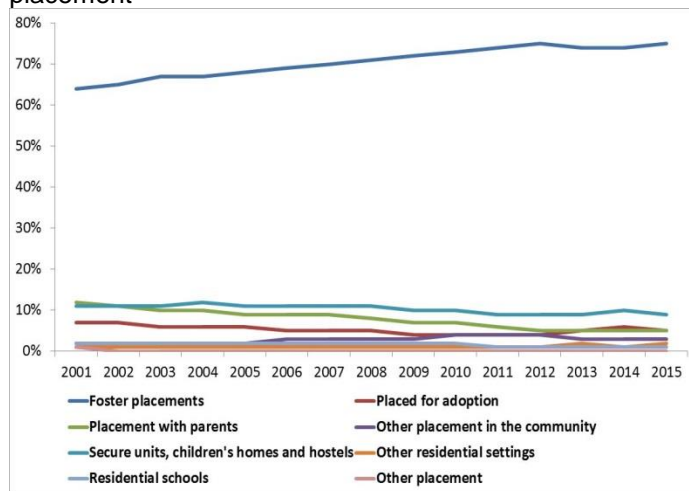
**Chart 4a: More children with foster carers**

Number of children looked after at 31 March by placement



**Chart 4b:**

Percentage of children looked after at 31 March by placement



Most looked after children are placed with foster carers and the number of children in foster care has continued to rise in 2015. The number of children placed with their parents, and the number placed in the community has also risen in 2015; this is a reversal of previous downward trends. However, the year-on-year changes are relatively small and the percentage of looked after children in these placement types has stayed relatively stable over the last 5 years. The number of children placed for adoption at 31 March has fallen for the first time since 2011, and number placed in children homes has also fallen slightly in 2015.

In 2015, 52,050 of the 69,540 children looked after at 31 March, were cared for in a foster placement. This represents an increase of 8% since 2011 - a larger increase than the rise in overall numbers of looked after children (6%). The percentage of looked after children cared for in foster placements was 74% in 2011; in 2015 it increased to 75%.

There were 6,570 looked after children cared for in secure units, children's homes and hostels. Numbers have been increasing in recent years in line with the overall increase in looked after children, but there has been a slight decrease this year. The proportion of looked after children in secure units, children's homes and hostels has remained stable over the same time period.

There were 3,320 looked after children placed for adoption at 31 March 2015 representing 5% of all looked after children. The number and percentage of looked after children placed for adoption at 31 March rose each year between 2011 and 2014, but there has been a 15% reduction in the number in 2015. This corresponds with a reduction in the number of children with placement orders. As noted above, the National Adoption Leadership Board has linked this to the impact of two relevant court judgments, known as Re B and Re B-S. The National Adoption Leadership Board has published [guidance](#) on this issue.

The number of children placed with their parents has increased for the first time since 2010. In 2015, there were 3,510 children looked after placed with their parents; this represents an increase of 8% from 2014. However, the year-on-year changes have been relatively small and the percentage of children looked after placed with their parents has remained stable at 5% since 2012.

Information has been collected for the first time in 2015 on whether a foster placement is 'fostering for adoption' or 'concurrent planning'. Of the 52,050 children in foster placements, 530 were fostering for adoption or concurrent planning.

A **Fostering for Adoption (FfA)** placement relates to when a looked after child is placed in a foster placement with carers who are foster carers who are also approved prospective adopters and adoption is likely to be the outcome. The local authority are considering adoption for the child or are satisfied that the child ought to be placed for adoption but do not have a placement order or parental consent to place the child for adoption, but are seeking to obtain the order or consent.

**Concurrent planning** is where the local authority is trying to rehabilitate the child with the birth parents, but at the same time, the local authority is planning for adoption, in the event that rehabilitation fails.

Of all children looked after at 31 March 2015, 67% (46,690) had one placement during the year, 23% had two placements and 10% had three or more placements. There has been a slight change in methodology this year, whereby a child going missing from his/her agreed placement is no longer counted as a separate placement in 2015. Whilst this means the figures for 2015 are not strictly comparable with earlier years, the percentages with 1, 2, 3 or more placements have changed relatively little compared with previous years, suggesting the impact of the methodology change is minimal.

### 3. Children who started to be looked after (Tables C1 and LAC1)

The number of children who started to be looked after has been increasing since 2011. In 2015, the increase was due to a rise in the number of children aged 5 and over who started to be looked after; the number of children starting to be looked after aged 4 and under fell slightly.

There were 31,070 children who started to be looked after during the year ending 31 March 2015: an increase of 2% from the previous year's figure of 30,540 and an increase of 13% from 2011.

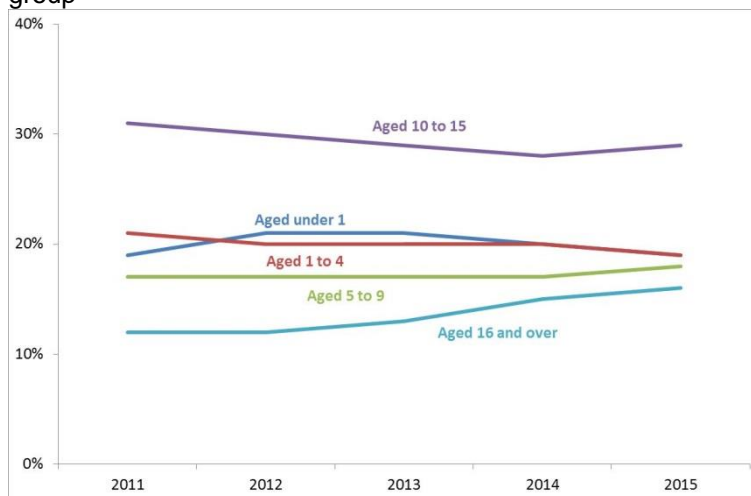


The percentage of children starting to be looked after aged 10 to 15 has decreased from 31% in 2011 to 29% in 2015 but the number and percentage of children starting to be looked after aged 16 and over has increased steadily each year since 2011. In 2015, 16% of children starting to be looked after were aged 16 and over, compared with 12% in 2011.

19% of those starting to be looked after in 2015 were babies aged under 1: the same proportion as in 2011.

**Chart 5: Increase in 16 year olds and over and decrease in 10 to 15 year olds starting to be looked after**

Percentage of children who started to be looked after by age group



**Chart 6: Percentage of children starting to be looked after under voluntary agreements and care orders has remained broadly consistent over time**

Percentage of children who started to be looked after at 31 March by legal status

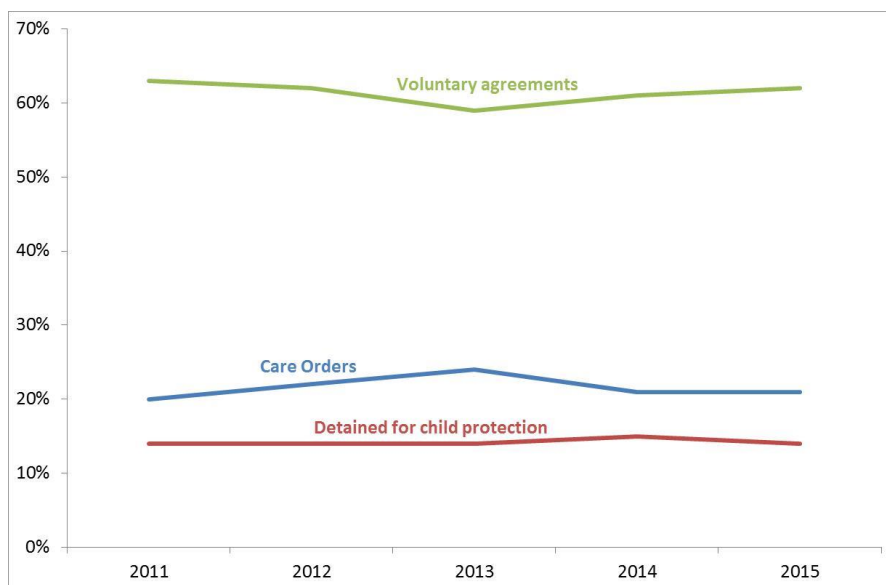


Chart 6 shows the percentage of children who started to be looked after at 31 March by legal status.

Of the children who started to be looked after during the year ending 31 March 2015, 19,300 (62%) were looked after under a voluntary agreement under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989; this is similar to 2014 (61%).

The percentage of children starting to be looked after under care orders has not changed since it decreased from 24% in 2013. It is now 21%, the same as in 2014.

The percentage of children starting to be looked after and who were detained for child protection order has remained fairly stable since 2011.

Of all children who started to be looked after in the year ending 31 March 2015, 2% had returned to care having previously been adopted, granted a residence or child arrangements order or a special guardianship order. This is a slight increase of 1 percentage point from 2014 when the data was collected for the first time.

## 4. Children who ceased to be looked after (Tables D1 and LAD1)

The number of children who ceased to be looked after has increased steadily over the past five years. Over the period, there have been rises in the number of children who have ceased to be looked after due to adoption or the granting of a special guardianship order, residence order or child arrangements order.

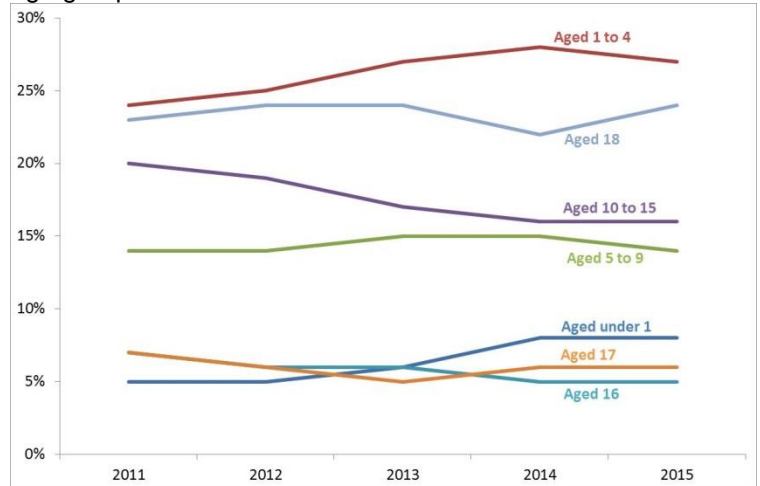
There were 31,100 children who ceased to be looked after during the year ending 31 March 2015, an increase of 2% from the previous year's figure of 30,600 and an increase of 15% from 2011.

In 2015, 8,410 children aged 1- to 4- years-old ceased to be looked after. The percentage of 1- to 4-year-olds ceasing to be looked after has increased from 24% in 2011 to 27% in 2015, reflecting the increase in numbers of young children adopted during this period. In contrast, the percentage of 10- to 15- year-olds has decreased over the same time period, from 20% to 16%.

The percentage of children who ceased to be looked after when they were 18-years-old has remained fairly stable since 2011. In 2015, there were 7,390 children who ceased to be looked after when they were 18-years-old, this represents 24% of all children ceasing to be looked after.

**Chart 7: Increase in 16 and overs and decrease in 10 to 15 year olds ceasing to be looked after**

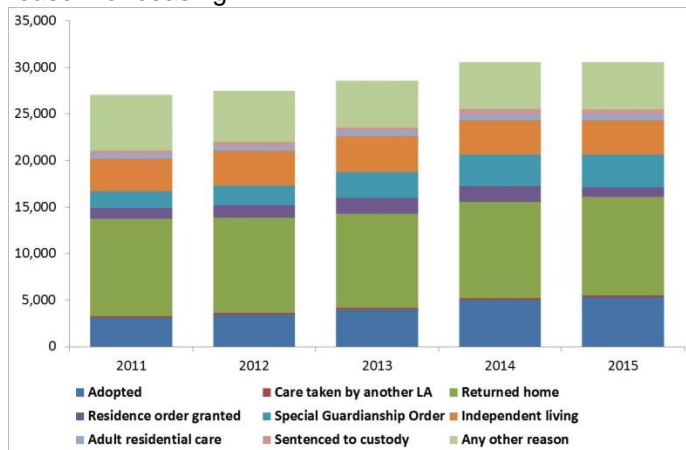
Percentage of children who ceased to be looked after by age group



### Reasons for ceasing care

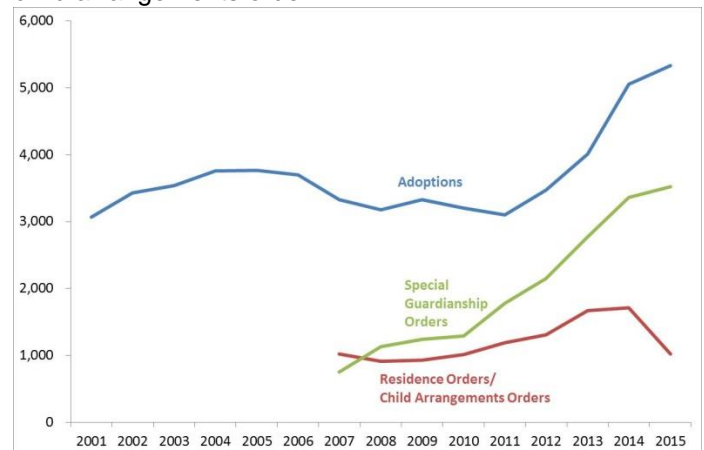
**Chart 8a: Increase in special guardianship orders and adoptions**

Number of children who ceased to be looked after by reason for ceasing



**Chart 8b:**

Number of children who ceased to be looked after due to adoption, special guardianship order, residence order or child arrangements order



The percentage of children ceasing care with a special guardianship order (SGO) has increased by 5% to 3,520 in 2015. This continues the upward trend from previous years, although it is a lower rate of increase than in more recent years. Of children ceasing care with a SGO, 1,630 (5%) ceased with a SGO made to former foster carers, down from 1,750 (6%) in 2014. This is the first time it has decreased since inception in 2007. However, the percentage of children ceasing with a SGO made to carers other than former foster carers has continued to increase and it is now 1,890 (6%).



1,020 (3%) children ceased care with a residence order or child arrangements order granted in 2015, a decrease from 6% in 2014, and a reversal of the previous upward trend.

There was also an increase in the percentage of children ceasing to be looked after because they were adopted from 11% in 2011 to 17% in 2015; however, this percentage has not changed from 2014.

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). 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 Children and Families Act 2014 replaces residence orders (and contact orders) with ‘**child arrangements orders**’ from 22 April 2014. References to residence orders have therefore been expanded to reflect this change.

New information on the reasons why children cease to be looked after shows that of the 10,620 who returned home to live with parents or relatives in 2015, 8,100 (76%) returned home to parents or others with parental responsibility as part of the care planning process, 1,710 (16%) not as part of the care planning process, and the remaining 8% returned home to live with parents, relatives or other person without parental responsibility.

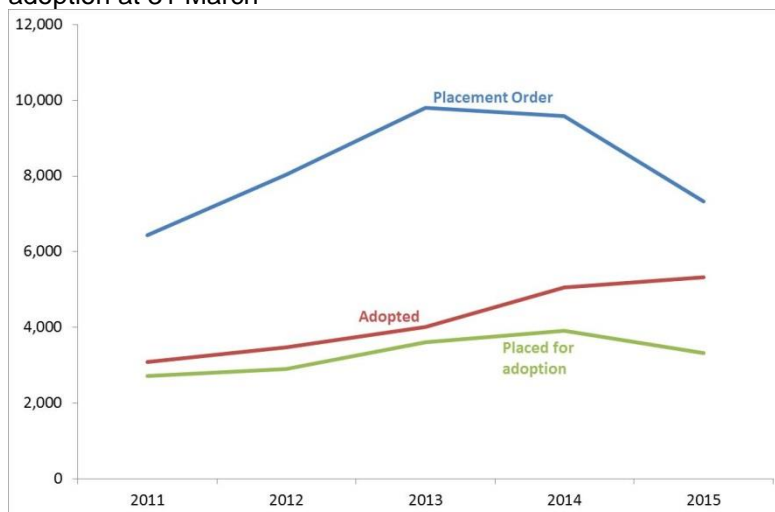
The majority of the children ceasing to be looked after in 2015 were looked after under a voluntary agreement under section 20 of the Children Act 1989. There were 15,410 children ceasing to be looked after under a voluntary agreement, representing 50% of all children ceasing to be looked after.

## 5. Looked after children who were adopted (Tables A2, E1 and E2)

There were 5,330 looked after children adopted during the year ending 31 March 2015. Whilst numbers continue to increase, the rate of increase in 2015 is lower than in previous years: there was an increase of 5% between 2014 and 2015, compared with an increase of 26% between 2013 and 2014. The number of looked after children placed for adoption at 31 March, which rose from 2011 to 2014, has decreased by 15% in 2015 to 3,320 (table A2). This is consistent with the decrease in the number of looked after children with a placement order in place at 31 March which has dropped by 24% from 2014 (table A1). The National Adoption Leadership Board has linked decreases in placement orders to the impact of two relevant court judgments, known as Re B and Re B-S. The National Adoption Leadership Board has published [guidance](#) on this issue.

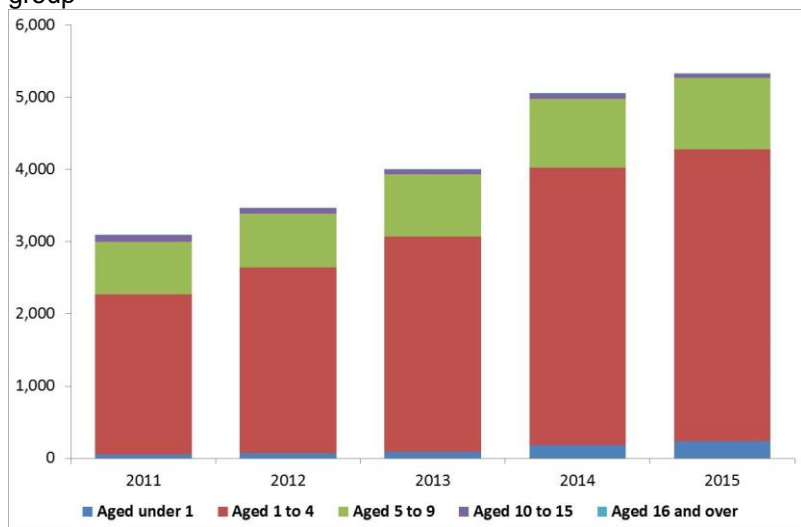
**Chart 9: Increase in adoptions**

Number of looked after children with a placement order in place at 31 March, number adopted in the year and number placed for adoption at 31 March



The average time between entry into care and adoption order has consistently reduced since 2012. In 2015 it was 2 years 3 months, a reduction of 1 month since 2014 and 4 months since 2011. This comes after the [Action Plan on Adoption](#) that was published in March 2012 by the Department for Education which set out aims for reducing the time taken for a child to be adopted.

**Chart 10: More children aged 1 to 4 years old adopted**  
Number of children adopted in the year ending 31 March by age group



Of all looked after children adopted in 2015, the majority (76%) were aged 1 to 4. The rise in the number of adoptions is largely due to the increase in 1 to 4 year olds adopted, an increase of 83% from 2011 to 2015. The average age at adoption is 3 years 3 months – 2 months younger than in 2014, and 7 months younger than in 2011.

## 6. Former care leavers aged 19, 20 and 21 (Table F1)

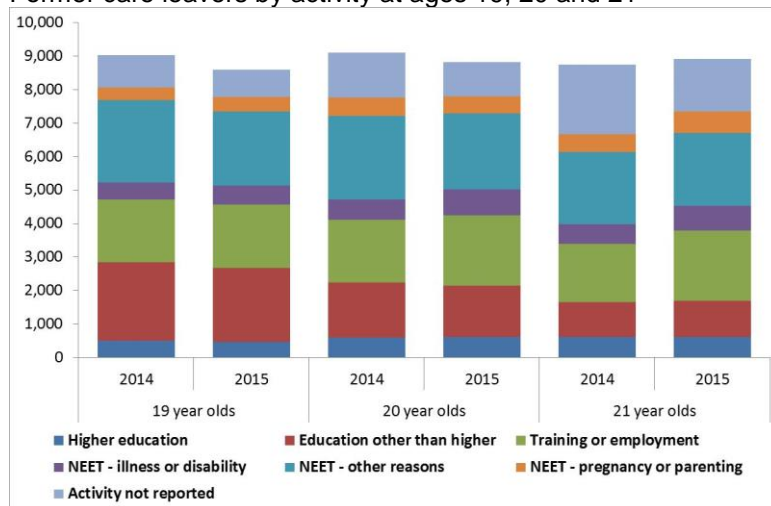
Local authorities provide the Department with information about the cohort of children who have turned 19, 20 or 21 in the year who were previously looked after. The cohort for former care leavers was extended in 2014 to 20- and 21-year-olds and also changed to cover those looked after for a total of at least 13 weeks after their 14th birthday including some time after their 16th birthday. Further information on the coverage and quality of this data can be found in the quality and methodology document.

Activity and accommodation information has been recorded for more care leavers in 2015 than was the case in 2014: in 2014, activity information was returned for 22,500 (84%) care leavers, and accommodation information was returned for 22,510 care leavers (84%); in 2015, the figures increased to 22,940 (87%) for activity and 23,170 (88%) for accommodation. Further information is provided in the methodology and quality document on what the improvements in recording mean for the headline statistics and year-on-year comparability.

Based on 2015 data, of the 26,330 former care leavers aged 19, 20 or 21, 39% were not in education, employment or training (NEET); this is a slight increase of 1 percentage point from 2014 but this increase may be due to improved recording. The increase is seen in those who were NEET owing to illness or disability (increased by 410 since 2014) and those who were NEET owing to pregnancy or parenting (increased by 140 since 2014); the number who were NEET owing to other reasons has reduced by 470 since 2014.

A slightly higher proportion of 20- and 21-year-olds were NEET (40%) than 19-year-olds (38%).

**Chart 11: Over a third of former care leavers are NEET**  
Former care leavers by activity at ages 19, 20 and 21



In 2015, 23% of former care leavers were in training or employment, an increase of 3 percentage points since 2014. 6% of former care leavers were in higher education, the same as in 2014. A further 18% were in education other than higher education, down slightly from 19% in 2014, although these headline year-on-year comparisons should be treated with some caution given the improved recording.

In 2015, 21,010 (81%) former care leavers aged 19, 20 and 21 were in accommodation classed as suitable; a further 1,840 (7%) were in accommodation judged to be unsuitable and for 3,160 (12%) young people, the accommodation was not reported.

The most common type of accommodation in 2015 was independent living (45%), although the number recorded as living independently has fallen slightly from 10,650 in 2014 to 10,310 in 2015, despite the overall increase in reporting. The number and percentage of care leavers living with their parents or relatives, or living with their former foster carers has increased slightly although, due to increased reporting, it is not easy to disentangle improved reporting effects from real changes.

Information was collected in 2015 on the number of 18 year old care leavers who were living with former foster carers 3 months after leaving care at 18 ('Staying Put'). Of the 3,230 children who ceased to be looked after in a foster placement on their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday during the year ending 31 March 2015, who were eligible for care leaver support, 1,560 (48%) remained with their former foster carers three months after their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. This information is not comparable with figures for 18 year olds published in last year's Statistical First Release due to changes to methodology: last year's figures looked at the number of young people remaining with their former foster carers immediately after their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday (rather than 3 months afterwards) and included all 18 year old care leavers rather than those leaving foster care in the denominator. For further information please see the quality and methodology document.

The Children and Families Act 2014 introduced a new duty on local authorities to support young people to continue to live with their former foster carers once they turn 18 (the '**Staying Put**' duty). This duty came into force on 13 May 2014.

The duty means that local authorities must advise, assist and support both the young person and their former foster carers when they wish to stay living together.

This supported arrangement can continue until the young person's 21st birthday. The Government is providing £44million to local authorities over three years (2014/15- 2016/ 2017) to help support these arrangements.

A Staying Put arrangement is one where the young person is a former relevant child who was looked after immediately prior to their 18th birthday (as an eligible child) and continues to reside with their former foster carer once they turn 18.

## 7. Children looked after who were missing or away from placement without authorisation (Table G1)

For the first time this year, local authorities provided the Department with more detailed information about children looked after who were missing or away from placement without authorisation. The collection was changed to gather information on all episodes of missing or away from placement without authorisation, rather than just those that lasted for over 24 hours, as was the case previously. As this is the first year of this new collection – and as noted in the accompanying tables - the figures should be treated with caution; further information on the quality of this data can be found in the quality and methodology document.

Of the 99,230 children looked after during the year ending 31 March 2015, 6,110 (6%) were recorded as missing at least once from their placement. The number of children who were away from their placement without authorisation was 3,230 (3%).

The number of times children were missing or away from placement was 28,570 and 13,080 respectively. The majority of the 6,110 children who were missing (just over half), or away from placement (half) were accommodated in secure units, children's homes or hostels. This is largely due to the high proportion of children aged 16 years and over who are mostly placed in these accommodation settings. Nearly half of the

missing incidents were for children aged 16 and over; the equivalent figure for children away from placement without authorisation was 58%.

## 8. Accompanying tables

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

### National tables

- A1 All children looked after at 31 March by gender, age at 31 March, category of need, ethnic origin, legal status and motherhood status
- A2 Children looked after at 31 March by placement
- A3 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children looked after at 31 March by gender, age at 31 March, category of need and ethnic origin
- C1 Children who started to be looked after during the years ending 31 March by gender, age on starting, category of need, ethnic origin, legal status and previous permanence arrangement
- D1 Children who ceased to be looked after during the years ending 31 March by gender, age on ceasing, reason episode ceased, ethnic origin, category of need and legal status
- E1 Looked after children who were adopted during the years ending 31 March by gender, age at adoption, ethnic origin, category of need, final legal status, duration of final period of care and age on starting final period of care
- E2 Children looked after who were adopted during the year ending 31 March by average time between the different stages of the adoption process and age at start of period of care
- F1 Care leavers aged 19, 20 and 21 years of age by gender, activity and accommodation
- G1 Children looked after who were missing or away from placement without authorisation

### Local authority and regional tables

- LAA1 Children looked after at 31 March
- LAC1 Children who started to be looked after during the years ending 31 March
- LAD1 Children who ceased to be looked after during the years ending 31 March
- LAE1 Children who ceased to be looked after and the number and percentage adopted during the years ending 31 March

When reviewing the tables, please note that:

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### Rounding Conventions

The National Statistics Code of Practice requires that reasonable steps should be taken to ensure that all published or disseminated statistics produced by the Department for Education protect confidentiality. National figures have been rounded to the nearest 10 and Local Authority figures have been rounded to the nearest 5. For confidentiality purposes, numbers from one to five inclusive have been replaced in the published tables by a cross (x). To ensure the suppressed number cannot be identified by simple arithmetic secondary suppression may be required. In this case the next smallest number less than 20 is also suppressed. Where any number is shown as zero (0), the original figure submitted was zero (0). The following convention has been used:

”.” means not applicable

“-“ means negligible – used to represent a percentage below 0.5%

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### UK Comparability of Looked-After Children's Statistics

Data is collected and published independently by each of the 4 countries in the UK. Although there are similarities between the data collected by the 4 nations, there are also differences which may be down to different policies and legislation, and differing historical data collections.

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Population Estimates	Population estimates are used to calculate rates per 10,000 children under the age of 18 published in Table A1 and LAA1. These are calculated using the appropriate mid-year population estimates supplied by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).
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## 9. Further information is available

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Outcomes for looked after children in England	Information on <a href="#">outcomes for looked after children</a> 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.
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Children in need and child protection statistics for England	Information on <a href="#">referrals, assessments and children who were the subject of a child protection plan</a> (taken from the Children in Need census) is available for 2014. Statistics for 2015 will be published in October 2014 on the <a href="#">children in need statistics website</a> .
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Information on care proceedings in England	The Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS) publish information on <a href="#">care proceedings applications</a> made by local authorities where CAFCASS has been appointed by the court to represent the interests of children.
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Local authority expenditure	Information on local authority <a href="#">planned expenditure</a> 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.
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Ofsted statistics	<a href="#">Ofsted</a> 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.
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Scotland	Statistics on children's social work in Scotland are available for 2013-14 on the Scottish Government <a href="#">website</a> .
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Wales	Statistics on children looked after in Wales are available for the period up to 31 March 2014 on the Welsh Government <a href="#">website</a> .
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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 <a href="#">website</a> .
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## 10. National Statistics

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.

The Department has a set of [statistical policies](#) in line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

## 11. Technical Information

A quality and methodology information document accompanies this SFR. This provides further information on the data sources, their coverage and quality and explains the methodology used in producing the data, including how it is validated and processed.

## 12. Got a query? Like to give feedback?

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If from the media	Press Office News Desk, Department for Education, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BT. 020 7783 8300
If non-media	Alison Butler, Department for Education, Bishopsgate House, Darlington, DL1 5QT. 01325 340465 <a href="mailto:cla.stats@education.gsi.gov.uk">cla.stats@education.gsi.gov.uk</a>

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Department  
for Education



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