



Department
for Education

Adoption Leadership Board headline measures and business intelligence

Quarter 1 2015 to 2016 update

November 2015

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Summary

Adoption Leadership Board (ALB) Headline Measures

2,460 children waiting at 30 June 2015 This is a 17% decrease from 31 March 2015 when there were 2,970 children waiting with a placement order not yet placed with an adoptive family.

Child timeliness has improved The time taken between a child entering care and being placed with a family has decreased by 4 months, from 22 months in 2012-13 to 18 months in 2014-15. Latest quarterly data suggests there has been a further improvement to 17 months during quarter 1 2015-16. These improvements have been driven by an increase in the proportion of children placed within a year, from 27% in 2013-14 to 37% in 2014-15.

At 7 months, the average number of days between placement order and match in 2013-14 was a slight improvement on 2012-13. However, the latest quarterly data suggests that this has increased to 8 months during quarter 1 2015-16.

Adopter timeliness is declining The latest quarterly data suggests timeliness is beginning to decline. In quarter 2 2013-14, 50% of approvals made by local authorities were made within 6 months of registration, while in quarter 1 2015-16 this had decreased to 29% of registrations.

The timeliness of matches has also declined. In quarter 4 2013-14, 80% of matches were made within 6 months of approval, compared to 58% in quarter 1 2015-16.

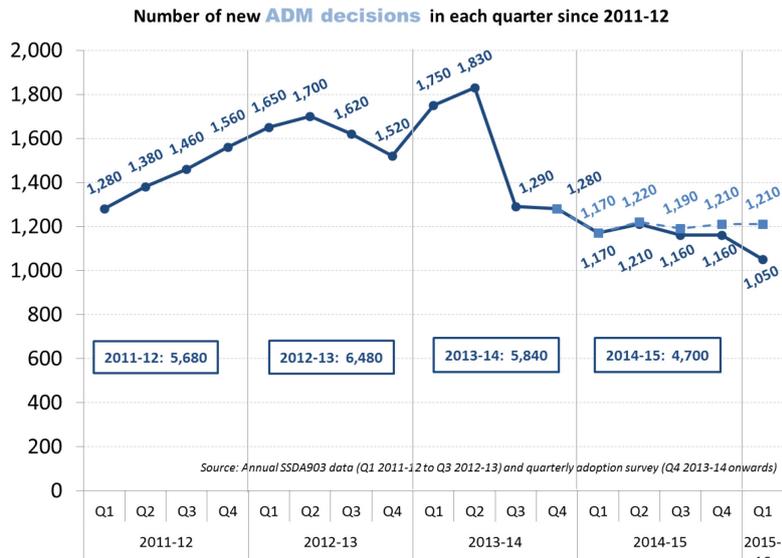
Other Key Headlines

New ADM decisions and placement orders granted have fallen

Quarterly data suggests that the number of new decisions has continued to fall from 1,830 in quarter 2 2013-14 to 1,050 in quarter 1 2015-16, a decrease of 42%.

The number of new placement orders have also continued to fall from 1,550 in quarter 2 2013-14 to 750 in quarter 1 2015-16, a decrease of 51%.

The charts below show the number of ADM decisions and placement orders over time. The estimated figures on the charts are based on the uplift seen in previous quarters when local authorities revise their figures the following quarter. When we apply this uplift our estimates suggest that the number of new placement orders granted may have decreased between quarter 4 2014-15 and quarter 1 2015-16 and new decisions plateaued.



Children adopted from care has increased

2014-15 saw the highest number of adoptions from care since the current data collection began in 1992, with 5,330 children adopted from care. Quarterly data suggests that the number of children adopted fell slightly between quarter 4 2014-15 and quarter 1 2015-16 (from 1,240 to 1,140).

Adopter approvals and registrations have decreased

Registrations to become an adopter have decreased by 24% from 1,250 in quarter 4 2014-15 to 960 in quarter 1 2015-16. The number of adopter families approved for adoption has decreased by 8% from 1,170 in quarter 4 2014-15 to 1,080 in in quarter 1 2015-16.

Our most recent estimate for the “adopter gap” suggests that the gap has closed, and we now have more adopters than children waiting. However, there are still 2,030 children with a placement order not yet matched and the relevance of this measure assumes that matching is working effectively.

Reversal of decision

Of the children reported to have had their decision reversed during quarter 1 2015-16, 22% were due to the court not making a placement order, a decrease from 25% in 2014-15.

Data Sources

New data This document has been updated with new data from the ALB quarterly survey providing information on children and adopters in the first quarter of 2015-16 (April to June 2015).

SSDA903 data Local authorities provide data on their looked after children using the SSDA903 collection. Data are collected from all local authorities. The information is collected at child level and includes information about the child's characteristics and their dates for each stage of the care process, including adoption. The data goes through thorough quality assurance and local authorities are able to update their historic data annually. We therefore view this as the most robust source of information on adoption. It is used to produce the Looked After Children statistical first release (SFR) and the Adoption Scorecards. The most recent data used in this document covers the year ending 31 March 2014. A new SFR was published covering the year ending 31 March 2015 on 1 October 2015. The SFR can be found [here](#). Figures relating to the year ending 31 March 2015 in this document will be derived from the SSDA903 data in the next update following the SFR being updated with additional tables in December 2015.

ALB quarterly survey In quarter 1 2015-16 the response rate for the child section of the return was 95%, and the response rate for the adopter level section of the return was 93%. Therefore national and regional figures on adoptions and adopters include estimates made for non-responses. Estimates are made by scaling to the regional level based on the number of adoptions in each LA during 2013-14 (from the SSDA903 data). Four Voluntary Adoption Agencies did not provide a return in quarter 1 2015-16.

Ofsted data Ofsted have previously published annual data on the recruitment of adopters and the children placed with them. From quarter 4 2014-15 the Ofsted data collection became part of the quarterly survey.



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