



Department  
for Education

# **Adoption Leadership Board headline measures and business intelligence**

**Quarter 3 2014 to 2015 update**

**June 2015**

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# Summary

## Adoption Leadership Board (ALB) Headline Measures

### **2,960 children waiting at 31 December 2014**

This is a 37% decrease from 31 March 2014 when there were 4,680 children waiting with a placement order not yet placed with an adoptive family.

### **Child timeliness has improved**

In 2013-14, the average number of days between entering care and placement was 594 days, an improvement from 656 days in 2012-13. Latest quarterly data suggests there has been a further improvement to 533 days. At 216 days, 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 241 during quarter 3 2014-15.

### **Adopter timeliness is declining**

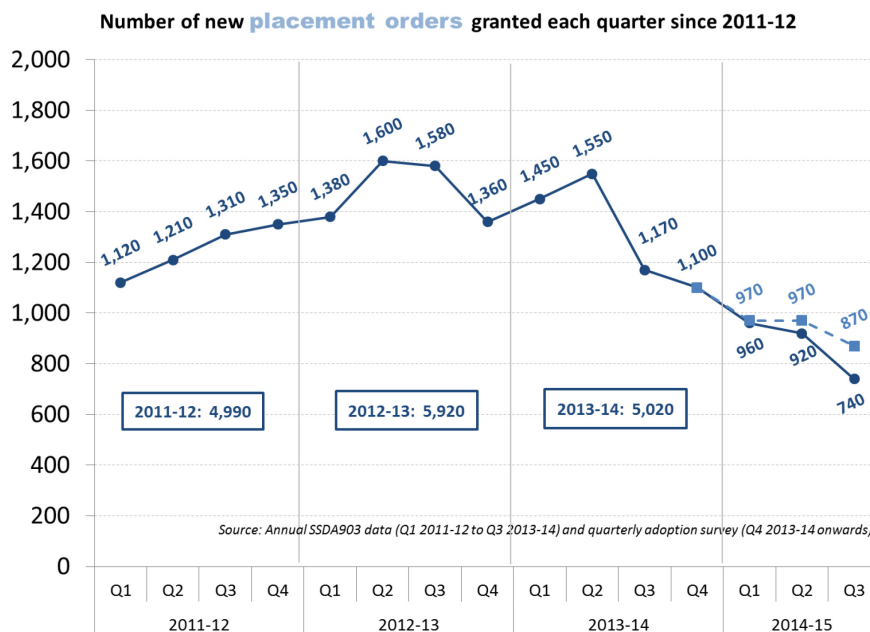
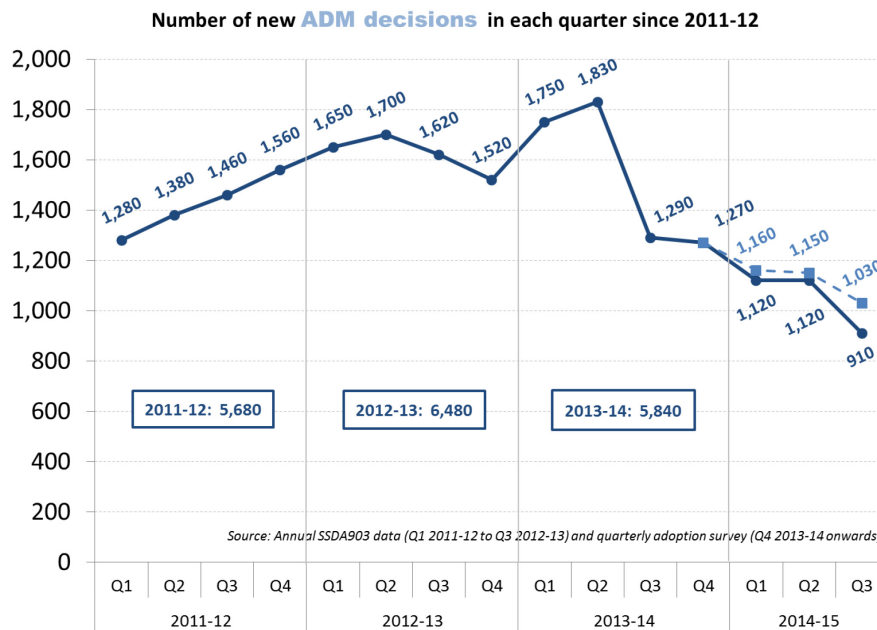
The latest quarterly data suggests timeliness is beginning to decline. In quarter 2 2013-14, 50% of approvals made by local authorities were made within 6 months of registration, while in quarter 3 2014-15 this has more than halved to 23% of registrations. The timeliness of matches has also declined. In quarter 4 2013-14, 80% of matches were made within 6 months of approval, compared to 68% in quarter 3 2014-15.

## 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 910 in quarter 3 2014-15, a decrease of 50%. The number of new placement orders have also continued to fall from 1,550 in quarter 2 2013-14 to 740 in quarter 3 2014-15, a decrease of 52%.

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.



**3,740 children adopted in quarters 1 to 3 2014-15**

2013-14 saw the highest number of adoptions from care since the current data collection began in 1992, with 5,050 children adopted from care. Quarterly data suggests that the number of children adopted fell slightly between quarters 2 and 3 (from 1,270 to 1,200).

**Adopter approvals and registrations have decreased**

Registrations to become an adopter have decreased by 24% from 1,340 in quarter 2 2014-15 to 1,020 in quarter 3 2014-15. The number of adopter families approved for adoption has decreased by 3% from 1,240 in quarter 2 2014-15 to 1,200 in quarter 3 2014-15. 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 2,600 children with a placement order not yet matched and the relevance of this measure assumes that matching is working effectively.

**New 2 stage process**

Approvals made via the new process were 5 weeks quicker than those approved via the old process in the first three quarters of 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 third quarter of 2014-15 (October to December 2014).

**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 covers the year ending 31 March 2014. The SFR can be found [here](#).

**ALB quarterly survey** From quarter 4 2013-14, responsibility for quarterly surveys transferred (from the DfE for local authorities and the CVAA for voluntary adoption agencies) to the ALB. The ALB collection form includes new variables, the biggest change being that adopter data is requested at adopter level (previous collections asked for this aggregated to agency level). This was also the first time voluntary adoption agencies were asked for the same adopter information as local authorities.

In quarter 1 2014-15, all agencies provided a return; in quarter 2 2014-15, six local authorities and one voluntary adoption agency did not; in quarter 3 2014-15, six local authorities and two voluntary adoption agencies did not. In quarter 1 2014-15, the response rate for the child level section of the return was 100% and so national and regional figures on adoptions are based on full returns. Estimates have not been made for the two missing local authorities in quarters 2 and 3 2014-15. The response rate for the adopter level section of the return was 95%, 97% and 96% respectively in quarters 1, 2 and 3. Therefore national and regional figures on 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).

**Ofsted data** Ofsted publish annual data on the recruitment of adopters and the children placed with them. Data is collected on both local authority recruitment and voluntary adoption agency recruitment. We include information on adopter timeliness taken from this collection in this document. Data relating to 2013-14 was published in November.



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