



Department
for Education

Adoption Scorecards: year ending March 2015

Methodology and guidance document

March 2016

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Guidance for Adoption Scorecards 2015

Notes for all tables

1. All calculations have been derived from unrounded figures.
2. The average number of days are presented rounded to the nearest day.
3. The distance from the 2012-15 performance threshold has been derived from unrounded figures and presented rounded to the nearest day. Therefore the difference between the 3 year averages and the thresholds may differ from any calculations made using the rounded indicators presented elsewhere in the scorecard.
4. Percentages have been rounded to whole numbers but where the numerator was 5 or fewer or the denominator was 10 or fewer, they have been suppressed and replaced by a cross (x).
5. Numbers in the related information section of the scorecard are rounded to the nearest 5 children. For confidentiality purposes, numbers from one to five inclusive have been replaced by a cross (x). Where any number is shown as zero (0), the original figure submitted was zero (0).
6. Symbols used:
 - x Figures not shown in order to protect confidentiality.
 - N/A Not applicable, i.e. no children in the cohort.
 - .. Data not provided.
 - Percentages less than 0.5% but greater than 0%.
7. All figures exclude children looked after under an agreed series of short term placements.
8. Throughout this guidance, reference is made to codes used in the SSDA903 data collection (the data source for the majority of the indicators). Further information on the SSDA903 data collection and the codes can be found in its guidance at the following link:
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/children-looked-after-return>
9. Indicators sourced from the SSDA903 data collection use a snapshot of the data taken in summer 2015.

The numbering of the indicators is the same as in the previous years. However, the order they are presented in this guidance notes reflects their display order in the scorecard.

Adoption Scorecard Indicators

A1. Average time (in days) between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family, for children who have been adopted

Definition

For all the children that have been adopted during the three-year period ending 31 March, the average length of time (in days) between a child entering care and moving in with their adoptive family, i.e. being placed for adoption (placement codes A3 to A6).

Period covered

The most recent indicator refers to the years ending 31 March 2013, 31 March 2014 and 31 March 2015.

Figures relating to the first two quarters of the year ending 31 March 2016 (i.e. the period 1 April 2015 to 30 September 2015) have also been provided, derived from the Adoption Leadership Board (ALB) quarterly survey. Reports from this collection are published at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/adoption-system-performance>

Calculation

A mean average is calculated of the time (in days) between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family (i.e. being placed for adoption, placement codes A3 to A6), for all children that were adopted between 1 April 2012 and 31 March 2015.

Children who were not placed for adoption prior to the adoption order are excluded.

The indicator is presented rounded to the nearest number of days.

Good performance

A **low** number of days represents good performance.

A2. Average time (in days) between a local authority receiving court authority to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family

Definition

For all the children that have been adopted during the three-year period ending 31 March, the average length of time (in days) between a local authority receiving court authority to place a child (i.e. a placement order being granted) and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family.

Period covered

The most recent indicator refers to the years ending 31 March 2013, 31 March 2014 and 31 March 2015.

Figures relating to the first two quarters of the year ending 31 March 2016 (i.e. the period 1 April 2015 to 30 September 2015) have also been provided, derived from the Adoption Leadership Board (ALB) quarterly survey.

Calculation

A mean average is calculated of the time (in days) between a local authority receiving court authority to place a child, i.e. granting a placement order or a freeing order (legal status codes E1 and D1, respectively) and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family, for all children that were adopted between 1 April 2012 and 31 March 2015.

Children who were not placed for adoption prior to the adoption order are excluded. Children with no placement order or freeing order are also excluded (legal status codes E1 and D1, respectively).

The indicator is presented rounded to the nearest number of days.

Notes

A time of zero is assigned to children who were matched before court authority was received.

Good performance

A **low** number of days represents good performance.

A3. Percentage of children who wait less than 16 months¹ between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family

Definition

The proportion of all the children that have either been adopted during the year ending 31 March or those still going through the adoption process (i.e. with an agency decision maker's decision that they should be adopted) who have waited less than 16 months (487 days)¹ between entering care and a) moving in with their adoptive family (if adopted or placed for adoption) or b) up to 31 March 2015 (if still waiting to be placed).

Period covered

The most recent indicator refers to the years ending 31 March 2013, 31 March 2014 and 31 March 2015.

Figures relating to the first two quarters of the year ending 31 March 2016 (i.e. the period 1 April 2015 to 30 September 2015) have also been provided, derived from the Adoption Leadership Board (ALB) quarterly survey.

Calculation

The indicator is calculated by determining the number of children, who either:

- were adopted between 1 April 2012 and 31 March 2015 and waited less than 16 months¹ between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family; or
- were going through the adoption process at 31 March 2015 and had waited less than 16 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family (if placed for adoption); or
- were going through the adoption process at 31 March 2015 and had been looked after for less than 16 months (if still waiting to be placed).

This is divided by the sum of children adopted between 1 April 2012 and 31 March 2015 and all children going through the adoption process at 31 March 2015.

Children adopted who were not placed for adoption first are excluded.

Good performance

A **high** percentage represents good performance.

¹ This threshold was 18 months (547 days) during the period between 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2014, 20 months (608 days) for the period between 1 April 2010 and 31 March 2013, and before that it was 21 months (639 days).

Adopter Indicators

Data for the adopter indicators (A11, A12 and A13) is now collected via the Adoption Leadership Board (ALB) quarterly survey following its alignment with the Ofsted adoption collection. Reports from this collection are published at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/adoption-system-performance>

A11. Number of approved adoptive families

Definition

The number of approved adoptive families as at 31 March.

Calculation

The indicator counts the number of adoptive families returned as having a Stage 2 complete date (if through the 2-stage process) or approval date (if through the old process) that have not yet been matched with children.

Period covered

The most recent indicator refers to 31 March 2015.

Note

The adopter recruitment practice of some local authorities (for example, a local authority outsourcing their recruitment) will impact this indicator. Where an authority is part of a consortium, this has been highlighted above these indicators in the scorecard.

A12. Percentage of adoptive families matched to a child who waited at least 3 months from approval to being matched

Definition

All the adoptive families matched to a child during the year ending 31 March 2015 are considered.

Of these children, we are interested in the subset of adoptive families that waited more than 3 months (91 days) between approval and being matched to a child.

Calculation

The indicator is calculated by determining the number of adoptive families matched to a child during the year ending 31 March 2015 that waited more than 3 months between approval and being matched and then dividing by the number of adoptive families that were matched to a child during the year ending 31 March 2015.

The adopter must have a registration date (if recruited via the old process) or a Stage 1 start date (if recruited via the new two-stage process) to be included. Those fast-tracked to Stage 2 without a Stage 1 start date are excluded.

Note

The adopter recruitment practice of some local authorities (for example, a local authority outsourcing their recruitment) will impact this indicator. Where an authority is part of a consortium, this has been highlighted above these indicators in the scorecard.

Good performance

A **low** percentage represents good performance.

A13. Number of applications to become an adoptive family still to be assessed (not yet approved or rejected)

Definition

The number of applications to become an adoptive family still to be assessed (not yet approved or rejected) as at 31 March.

Calculation

The indicator counts the number of adoptive families returned as having a Stage 1 start date (if through the 2-stage process) or application submitted date (if through the old process) but no further dates are provided.

Period covered

The most recent indicator refers to 31 March 2015.

Note

The adopter recruitment practice of some local authorities (for example, a local authority outsourcing their recruitment) will impact this indicator. Where an authority is part of a consortium, this has been highlighted above these indicators in the scorecard.

Related Information

A15. Number of new ADM decisions

Definition

The number of new agency decision maker decisions made during the year ending 31 March that a child should be adopted.

Period covered

The most recent figures refer to the years ending 31 March 2014 and 31 March 2015.

Calculation

If a child receives more than one ADM decision during the year (following a reversal of the previous decision), they are counted only once. If a child receives a decision in more than one year are counted once in each year.

Note

THIS IS NOT A PERFORMANCE INDICATOR.

Since September 2013, the number of new decisions and placement orders granted has fallen considerably. The latest ALB quarterly data suggests that:

- The number of new decisions has decreased each quarter since quarter 2 2013-14, falling by 43% (from 1,850 to 1,060) to quarter 2 2015-16.
- The number of new placement orders granted has decreased each quarter since quarter 2 2013-14, falling by 52% (from 1,630 to 780) to quarter 2 2015-16.

This indicator has, therefore, been included to provide contextual information to help agencies understanding how decision making has changed within their own area and across others.

A16. Number of new placement orders granted

Definition

The number of new placement orders granted by the courts during the year ending 31 March.

Period covered

The most recent figures refer to the years ending 31 March 2014 and 31 March 2015.

Calculation

A child is counted when their legal status changes to placement order granted (legal status code F1).

Note

THIS IS NOT A PERFORMANCE INDICATOR. See note under A15.

A4. Adoptions from care (with proportion leaving care who are adopted)

Definition

The number of children adopted from care and the proportion of all children who ceased to be looked after during the year ending 31 March who were adopted.

Period covered

The most recent indicator refers to the years ending 31 March 2013, 31 March 2014 and 31 March 2015.

Calculation

The indicator is calculated by summing all children who ceased to be looked after who were adopted (children with a reason episode ceased code E11 or E12) in the years ending 31 March 2013, 31 March 2014 and 31 March 2015. This total is then divided by the total children who ceased to be looked after in the years ending 31 March 2013, 31 March 2014 and 31 March 2015.

Figures exclude children looked after under an agreed series of short term placements.

Only the last occasion on which a child ceased to be looked after in the year has been included. Children who ceased to be looked after in more than one year will be counted more than once.

Good performance

A **higher** percentage represents good performance, but percentages should not reach 100%.

A5. Children for whom permanence decisions has changed away from adoption

Definition

The number of children who have had their agency decision maker decision that they should be adopted reversed. A proportion of all children who had been on an adoption plan during the period is also provided.

Period covered

The most recent indicator refers to the years ending 31 March 2013, 31 March 2014 and 31 March 2015.

Calculation

To calculate the percentage, the number of children who had their decision reversed during that same period is divided by the number of children with an adoption decision at any point between 1 April 2012 and 31 March 2015 (including those whose decision occurred before this period).

The reversal is determined by whether a “Date of decision that the child should no longer be placed for adoption” or “Reason why the child should no longer be placed for adoption” has been provided.

If a child receives more than one reversal during the year, they are counted only once. If a child receives a reversal in more than one year, they are counted once in each year.

A9. Number of children waiting to be placed for adoption

Definition

The number of children looked after with an adoption plan at 31 March who had not yet been placed for adoption.

When adoption is the preferred option for permanence this is referred to as the adoption plan. An adoption plan is made by an agency decision maker.

Period covered

The most recent indicator refers to the year ending 31 March 2015.

A14. Number of children waiting to be placed for adoption with a placement order

Definition

The number of children with an adoption plan and a placement order in the year ending 31 March who had not been placed for adoption at 31 March.

When adoption is the preferred option for permanence this is referred to as the adoption plan. An adoption plan is made by an agency decision maker.

Period covered

The most recent indicator refers to the year ending 31 March 2015.

Notes

This is a subset of indicator A9.

A10. Average time (in days) between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family adjusted for foster carer adoptions

Definition

For all the children that have been adopted during the three-year period ending 31 March, the average length of time (in days) between a child entering care and moving in with their adoptive family, i.e. being placed for adoption (placement codes A3 to A6).

The indicator is adjusted for foster carer adoptions, in that if a child was adopted by their foster carer, the time considered is stopped at the date the child moved in with the foster family.

Period covered

The most recent indicator refers to the years ending 31 March 2013, 31 March 2014 and 31 March 2015.

Calculation

A mean average is calculated of the time (in days) between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family (i.e. being placed for adoption, placement codes A3 to A6) or if adopted by a foster carer (placement codes A3 and A5), until they had moved in with the foster carer, for all children that were adopted between 1 April 2012 and 31 March 2015.

Children who were not placed for adoption prior to the adoption order are excluded.

The indicator is presented rounded to the nearest number of days.

Note

This indicator includes the same children as indicator A1.

Good performance

A **low** number of days represents good performance.

A6. Adoptions of children from ethnic minority backgrounds (number adopted with proportion leaving care who are adopted)

Definition

The number of children adopted from care and the proportion of all children who ceased to be looked after during the year ending 31 March who were adopted, for those classified as being from a Black, Asian, Mixed or Other ethnic background.

Period covered

The most recent indicator refers to the years ending 31 March 2013, 31 March 2014 and 31 March 2015.

Calculation

The indicator is calculated by summing all the children from an ethnic minority group who ceased to be looked after who were adopted (children with a reason episode ceased E11 or E12) in the years ending 31 March 2013, 31 March 2014 and 31 March 2015. This total is then divided by the total of all children from an ethnic minority group who ceased to be looked after in the years ending 31 March 2013, 31 March 2014 and 31 March 2015.

Children from minority ethnic backgrounds are those classified as being from a Black (ethnic origin codes BCRB, BAFR or BOTH), Asian (AIND, APKN, ABAN or AOTH), Mixed (MWBC, MWBA, MWAS or MOTH), Chinese (CHNE) or Other ethnic background (OOTH).

Only the last occasion on which a child ceased to be looked after in the year has been included. Children who ceased to be looked after in more than one year will be counted more than once.

Figures exclude children looked after under an agreed series of short term placements.

Note

Percentages show the proportion of all ethnic minority children leaving care who are adopted. Therefore if a local authority has a low proportion of black and ethnic minority children in their care population then the denominator will reflect this low number.

Good performance

A **high** percentage represents good performance.

A7. Adoptions of children aged five or over (number adopted with proportion leaving care who are adopted)

Definition

The number of children adopted from care and the proportion of all children who ceased to be looked after during the year ending 31 March who were adopted, for those aged 5 or over when adopted.

Period covered

The most recent indicator refers to the years ending 31 March 2013, 31 March 2014 and 31 March 2015.

Calculation

The indicator is calculated by summing all the children who ceased to be looked after aged five or older who were adopted (children with a reason episode ceased E11 or E12) in the years ending 31 March 2013, 31 March 2014 and 31 March 2015. This total is then divided by the total of all children who ceased to be looked after aged five or older in the years ending 31 March 2013, 31 March 2014 and 31 March 2015.

Only the last occasion on which a child ceased to be looked after in the year has been included. Children who ceased to be looked after in more than one year will be counted more than once.

Figures exclude children looked after under an agreed series of short term placements.

Good performance

A **high** percentage represents good performance.

A8. Average length of care proceedings locally (weeks)

Figures are provided from the Cafcass National Case Management Systems (CMS and ECMS) and are published at the following link:

<https://www.cafcass.gov.uk/leaflets-resources/organisational-material/care-and-private-law-demand-statistics/how-long-do-care-applications-take.aspx>

Definition

The average length of care and supervision (s31) applications, in calendar weeks, calculated by applications closing within the period, for the three-year period ending 31 March.

Period covered

The most recent indicator refers to the years ending 31 March 2013, 31 March 2014 and 31 March 2015.

Notes

The unit of measurement is a care or supervision order application. An application can involve multiple children.

Average care duration is calculated from date of care application to the court to date application completed on CMS/ECMS in the selected time period. Averages are based on care applications completed in the period.

The average length of care proceedings locally includes all care proceedings which the local authority has initiated, including care proceedings which take place in courts outside of the local authority area.

All data updated on the 11 July (CMS snapshot on day it was shut down) and 15 November (ECMS). Please note ECMS is a live database and subject to change at the point of further update.



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