



CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Education Outcomes for Looked After Children 2019/20

Main Findings 2019/20

Education outcomes for looked after children have improved over the last ten years.

However, there are still large gaps compared with all pupils

Leaver Attainment

38%

Looked after school leavers with 1 or more qualification at SCQF level 5

up from

13%
in 2009/10

compared with

86%
all pupils 2019/20

Leaver Destinations

75%

Looked after school leavers in positive follow-up destinations

up from

42%
in 2009/10

compared with

92%
all pupils 2019/20

Full results are available from the accompanying tables that can be found alongside this report.

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Introduction

Local authorities have a responsibility to provide support to a group of vulnerable young people, known as 'looked after children'. A young person may become looked after for a number of reasons, including neglect, abuse, complex disabilities which require specialist care, or involvement in the youth justice system.

This publication links school and social work data to present information on school leaver attainment and the post-school destinations of children who were looked after within the last year and left school in 2019/20.

Who are counted in these figures?

This publication reports on the education outcomes of school-age children who were looked after by local authorities in Scotland at any point between August 2019 and July 2020 and had a recorded Scottish Candidate Number available.

The first two chapters of this publication give information on the education outcomes and post-school destinations of the estimated 943 young people who were looked after at any point between August 2019 and July 2020, and who were in the 2019/20 school leaver cohort. These looked after young people represent two per cent of the 47,454 school leavers in 2019/20.

The figures presented here are a subset of the population of care-experienced children in Scotland. This is because only those school-leavers who were looked after within the last year are included. Care-experienced children who left care prior to the last year are not included in these statistics.

Data on looked after children also needs to be linked to schools data from publicly-funded schools. Not all looked after children can be successfully linked to schools data, for a variety of reasons. For successful linking to occur, the Scottish Candidate Number of the child is needed to obtain data on their education outcomes. A Scottish Candidate Number is usually assigned to a child when they begin school. Some school-age looked after children have missing Scottish Candidate Numbers in the data provided to Scottish Government by local authorities. Therefore, these children are also excluded from the figures. More information on this is available in the background notes.

Figures are provided in the accompanying tables for attainment and post-school destinations. Attendance and exclusion data are only reported every second year

and are not included in this year's report. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic led to significant disruption to the delivery of Education and Social Work Services, impacting on the scope of this publication. Collection of data for the achievement of the Curriculum for Excellence was suspended in 2019-20 and so that data does not feature in this year's report.

Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on these statistics

Impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on School Leaver Destinations and Educational Attainment figures

The availability of particular opportunities to 2019/20 school leavers may have been directly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The pandemic meant that the start dates for some opportunities such as apprenticeship programmes and college courses were delayed in 2020. Had these started as originally planned, any school leavers participating in them would have been recorded as being in a positive destination (see page 12 for the definition of 'positive destination'). Where they instead started later than planned, it is possible that some school leavers may be recorded as being in an 'other' destination, depending on the activity they were undertaking prior to these opportunities starting. The coronavirus pandemic may have also affected local partnerships' ability to track some school leavers through home visits meaning that their initial destination may be 'Unknown'.

The pandemic led to the cancellation of National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher exams in 2020. Grades awarded in these qualifications were instead based on teacher estimates. The 2020 results will therefore have an impact on the overall attainment of many 2019/20 school leavers. It is not possible to fully determine the extent to which the certification methods used in 2020 affected attainment levels of the 2019/20 school leaver cohort.

Interpretation of trends should take the above factors into account. Tables and charts in this report and supporting documents include a dashed line break in the series between 2018/19 and 2019/20 to indicate that care must be taken when comparing data for 2019/20 with earlier years.

Educational attainment

↑ Attainment for school leavers who were looked after within the last year has increased over the last ten years.

● Looked after leavers who were in foster care or with friends or relatives had higher attainment than other placement types

Age of school leavers

This section presents data on the educational attainment of the estimated 943 young people who were looked after during the period 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020 who left school during 2019/20.

Chart 1a: Stage of all school leavers and those who were looked after, 2019/20

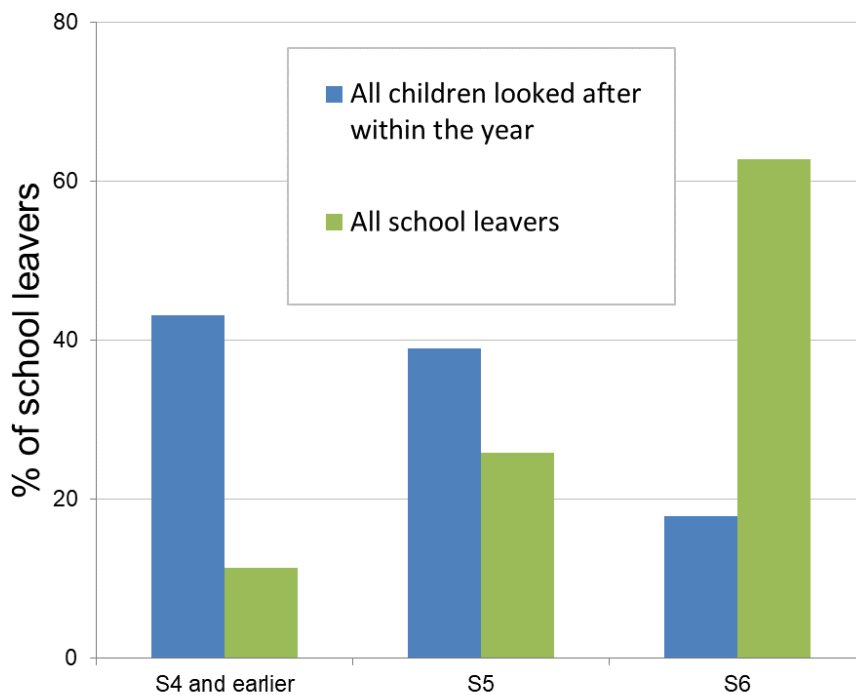
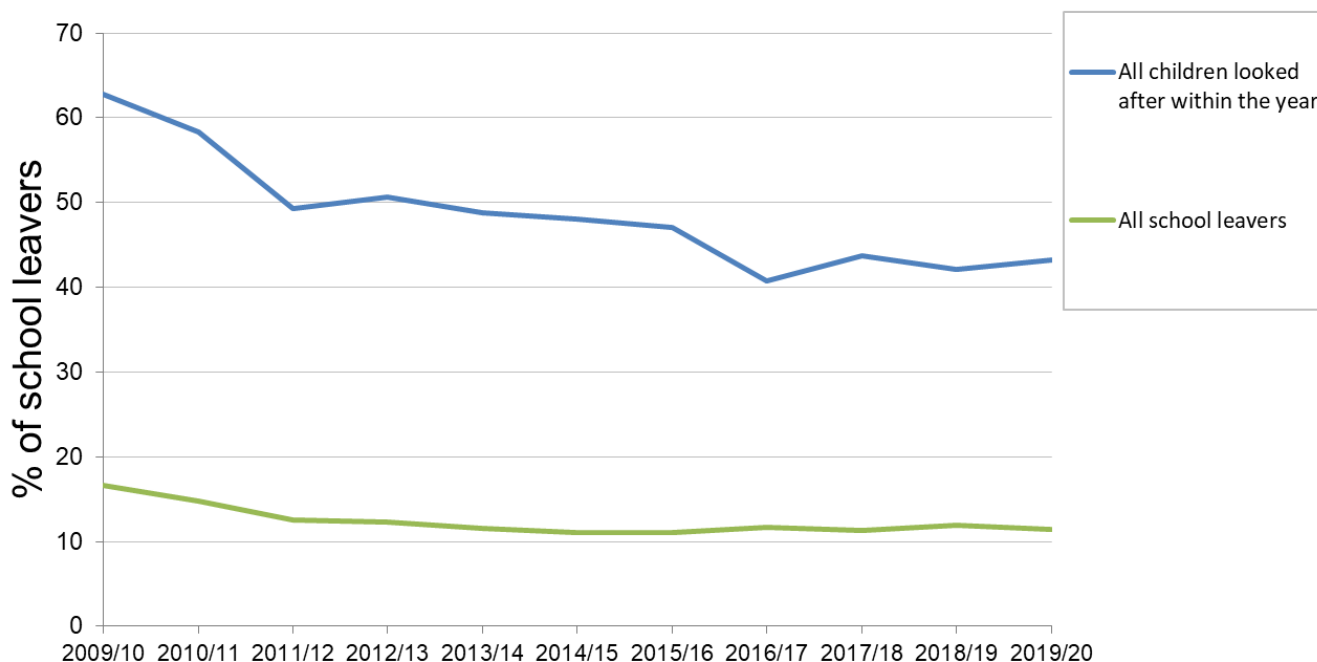


Chart 1b: Percentage of pupils leaving school in S4 or earlier for all school leavers and those who were looked after, 2009/10 to 2019/20

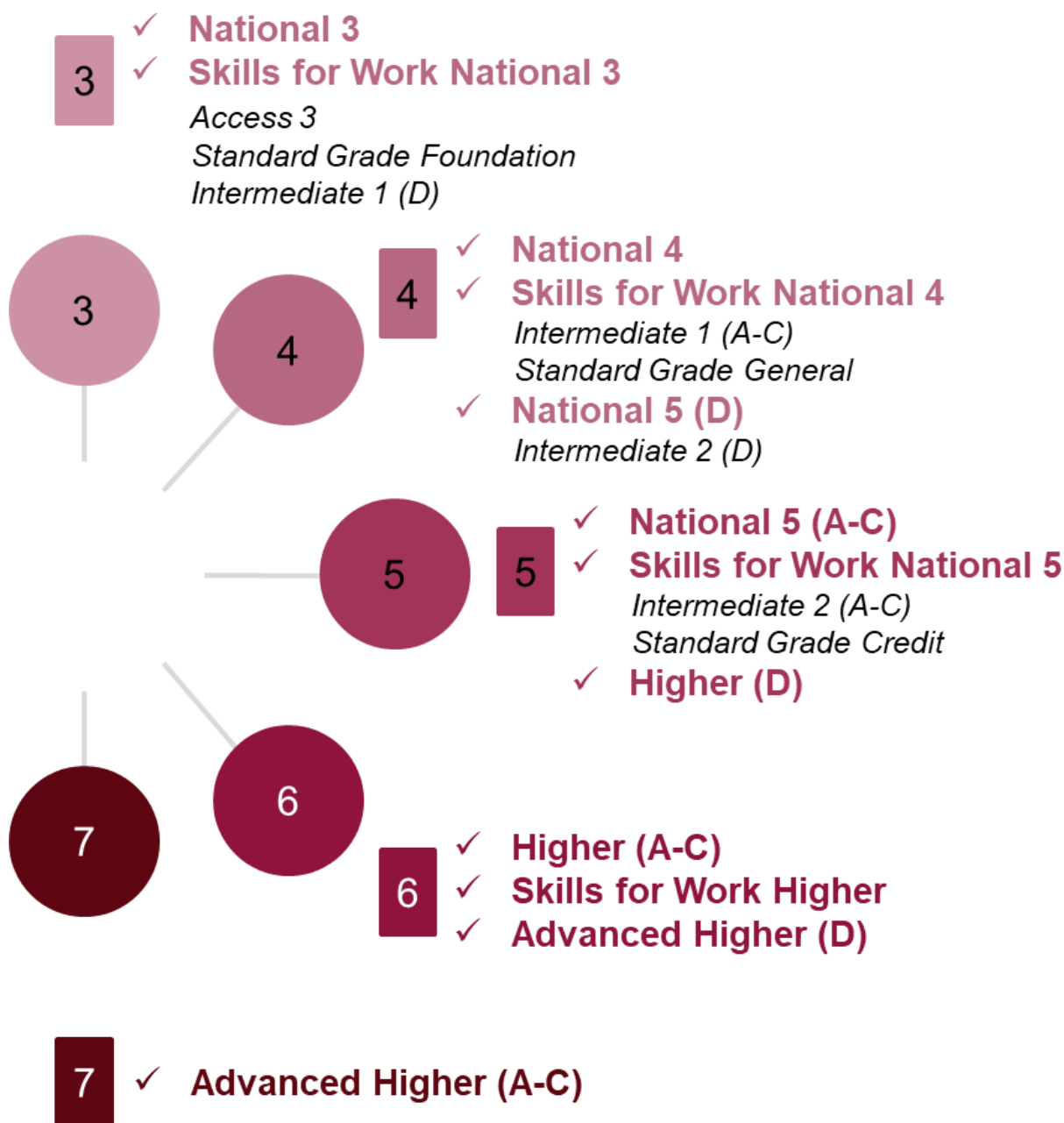


Looked after children tend to leave school at earlier stages, as shown in Chart 1a. In 2019/20, 43% of school leavers who were looked after within the year left school in S4 or earlier. As can be seen in Chart 1b above, this proportion has been fairly stable over the last four years, following a decline from 63% in 2009/10 to 41% in 2016/17. The proportion of looked after leavers who left school in S4 or earlier has remained considerably higher than for all school leavers (Chart 1b).

Highest level of qualification

The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) is used as the basis for reporting attainment. The SCQF is Scotland’s national qualifications framework. The SCQF has 12 levels, which, in ascending order (SCQF Level 1-12), indicate the level of difficulty of a particular qualification. With reference to a set of ‘level descriptors’, the SCQF allows for broad comparisons to be made between qualifications (Illustration 1). It also allows learners, employers and the public in general, to understand the range of skills and learning that should be achieved at each level.

Illustration 1: Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) levels



(Current qualifications are marked with a tick ✓)

Highers (SCQF Level 6) are generally taken in S5/S6 and Advanced Highers (SCQF 7) are generally taken in S6. Highers, sometimes along with Advanced Highers, are the Scottish qualifications required for entry into Higher Education.

In this publication, grade A to C (or ungraded pass) in National Qualifications is considered a pass. If a pupil attains a D at a certain level, this is counted as equivalent to attainment at the level below.

School leavers from 2019/20 are the fifth cohort to have experienced the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) throughout the senior phase of their school education. School leavers from 2013/14 and 2014/15 will have taken a range of qualifications from the current set and older qualifications that have now been phased out.

Table 1.1: Percentage of all school leavers and those who were looked after, by highest level of attainment achieved, 2019/20

	School leavers looked after within the last year	All School Leavers
1 or more qualification at SCQF level 3 or better	87	98
1 or more qualification at SCQF level 4 or better	72	96
1 or more qualification at SCQF level 5 or better	38	86
1 or more qualification at SCQF level 6 or better	14	64
1 or more qualification at SCQF level 7	2	23
No passes at SCQF 3 or better	13	2

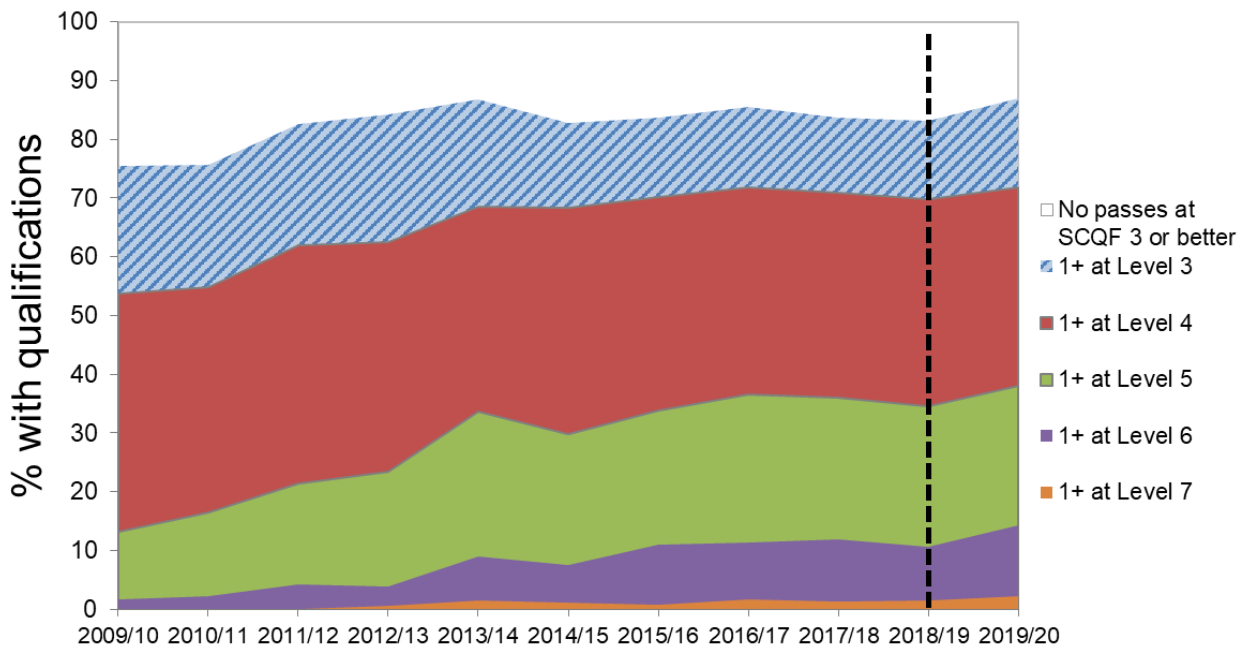
Almost all school leavers (98%) have at least one qualification at level 4 or better. This compares with 87% of young people looked after within the last year leaving school with the same level of qualifications. At the higher levels of qualification, 64% of all leavers have at least one qualification at level 6 or better, compared with 14% of looked after school leavers.

Chart 2a shows the percentage of school leavers who were looked after within the last year who left school with one or more qualifications at each SCQF level and Chart 2b shows the same for all school leavers. The percentage of looked after school leavers achieving all SCQF qualification levels is consistently lower than all school leavers; however, educational attainment among looked after leavers has increased notably over the last ten years, narrowing the gap to all school leavers. Most of the increase in attainment for looked after school leavers occurred from around 2011/12 to 2013/14. Since 2013/14, there have been further increases in attainment at SCQF levels 4 or higher.

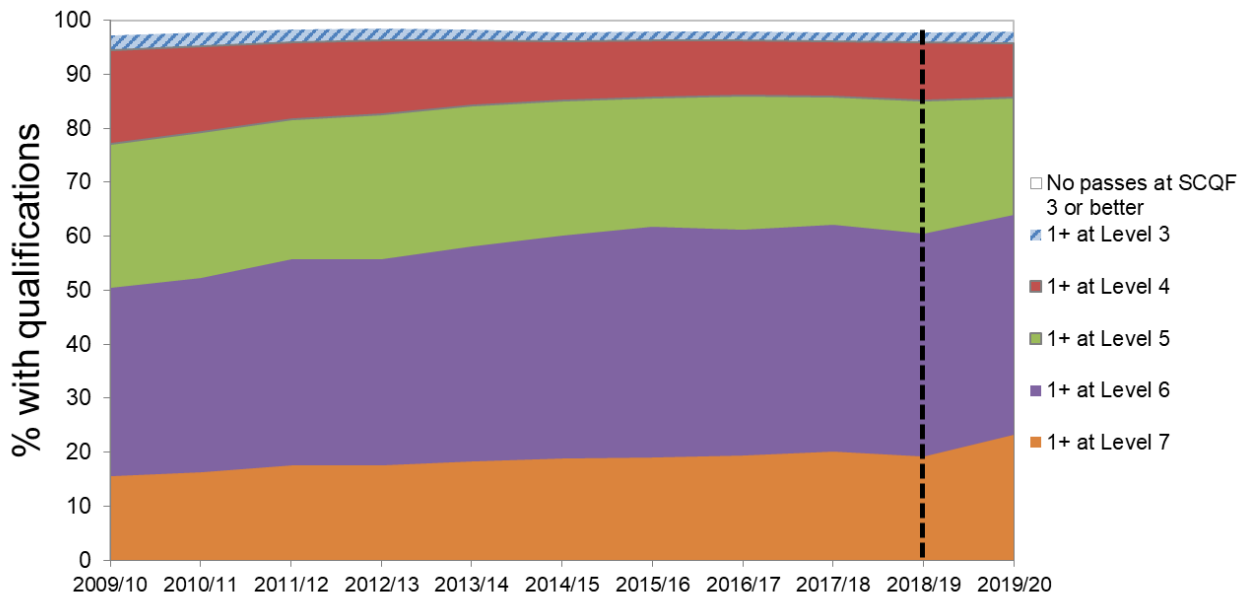
The proportion of leavers looked after within the year with no qualifications at SCQF 3 or higher decreased from 25% in 2009/10 to 17% in 2011/12, and fluctuated around that level until 2018/19 before decreasing to 13% in 2019/20. Attainment at higher levels has increased between 2012/13 and 2019/20: from 62% to 72% (70% in 2018/19) at SCQF level 4 or better, from 23% to 38% (35% in 2018/19) at SCQF level 5 or better, and from 4% to 14% (11% in 2018/19) at SCQF level 6 or better.

Chart 2: Percentage of all school leavers and those who were looked after, by highest level of attainment achieved, 2009/10 to 2019/20

(a) School leavers looked after within the year



(b) All school leavers



A dashed line break has been placed between 2018/19 and 2019/20, reflecting the change to the assessment approach on 2019/20 school leaver attainment.

Type of placement

When a young person is looked after, there are various types of care setting where they can be placed. Placements can be at home (where a child is subject to a

Supervision Requirement and continues to live in their usual place of residence), foster care, kinship care (where they are living with friends or relatives) or residential care. Table 1.2 presents the attainment level of leavers looked after within the last year by the type of placement.

Educational attainment varies across the types of accommodation in which looked after children are placed. School leavers staying with friends or relatives or in foster care provided by the local authority performed better than those in other care settings, with 69% and 65% achieving at least one qualification at SCQF level 5 or better respectively, compared with 38% of all looked after school leavers.

School leavers who were looked after within the last year in 'other residential settings', which includes residential schools, secure care accommodation and crisis care, had the lowest overall levels of attainment. Despite increasing in the last year from 59% to 71% achieving at least one qualification at SCQF level 3 or better, this was lower than 87% for all looked after school leavers. School leavers who were looked after at home with parents also had lower levels of attainment compared with most other placement types.

Table 1.2: Percentage of school leavers looked after within the year, by highest level of attainment achieved and placement type, 2019/20⁽¹⁾

	Looked after leavers					
	% No passes at SCQF 3 or better	% with 1 or more qualification at SCQF Level 3 or better	Level 4 or better	Level 5 or better	Level 6 or better	Level 7 or better
In the community (children with one placement)						
At home with parents	22%	78%	51%	9%	1%	0%
With friends or relatives	6%	94%	86%	53%	21%	4%
With foster carers provided by LA	4%	96%	92%	69%	34%	5%
With foster carers purchased by LA	3%	97%	92%	65%	28%	4%
In other community ⁽²⁾	*	*	*	*	*	*
Residential Accommodation (children with one placement)						
In local authority home	12%	88%	65%	23%	7%	0%
In voluntary home	25%	75%	44%	25%	0%	0%
In other residential ⁽³⁾	29%	71%	65%	38%	15%	3%
More than one placement	16%	84%	66%	34%	4%	1%
All looked after within the last year	13%	87%	72%	38%	14%	2%

(1) Cells containing * represent small numbers that have been suppressed to maintain confidentiality.

(2) Includes supported accommodation and with prospective adopters.

(3) Includes in residential school, secure care accommodation and crisis care.

Number of placements in the last year

Young people who are looked after may be looked after in different residences over time. Moving to a new residence or a new carer is recorded as a change in

placement. Table 1.3 shows that a slightly higher percentage of leavers looked after within the year with one or two placements achieved at least one qualification at SCQF level 3 or better (87%). This compared with 75% of those with three or more placements (75%). A higher proportion of those with one placement achieved qualifications at higher attainment levels (SCQF level 4 or better) compared to those with two or more placements.

Table 1.3: Percentage of school leavers looked after within the year, by highest level of attainment achieved and number of placements they had in the year, 2019/20⁽¹⁾

Number of placements	No passes at SCQF level 3 or better	1 or more qualification at SCQF level 3 or better	1 or more qualification at SCQF level 4 or better	1 or more qualification at SCQF level 5 or better	1 or more qualification at SCQF level 6 or better	1 or more qualification at SCQF level 7 or better
1	13%	87%	73%	39%	16%	2%
2	13%	87%	69%	34%	6%	1%
3 or more	25%	75%	57%	32%	0%	0%
All looked after within the last year	13%	87%	72%	38%	14%	2%

Post-school destinations

- 75% of looked after leavers had a positive follow-up destination in 2019/20, up from 71% the previous year
- Looked after school leavers are less likely to go to positive destinations than school leavers in general, especially higher education

This section presents data on the destinations of the estimated 943 young people who were looked after during the period 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020 and who left school during 2019/20. Information is collected on the destination of school leavers in the September after they leave school (initial destination) and again the following March (follow-up destination). School leavers who are engaged in higher education, further education, training, voluntary work, employment or are undertaking personal skills development are classified as having a 'positive destination'. Other destinations include school leavers who are unemployed and individuals where their destination is not known. For more information on school leaver destination categories, see background note 3.7.

Initial destinations

A lower proportion of looked after children enter positive destinations than all school leavers, but this gap has narrowed considerably over the last ten years. The lower proportion of looked after children going into positive destinations is likely to be related to lower attainment and a higher proportion of looked after children leaving school at an earlier stage. 80% of young people looked after within the last year went on to a positive destination after leaving school, compared with 93% of all school leavers in 2019/20 (Table 2.1). The gap of 13 percentage points between all school leavers and those who were looked after in 2019/20 has narrowed from 30 percentage points in 2009/10, when 58% of looked after school leavers were in a positive initial destination, compared with 88% of all school leavers.

56% of school leavers who were looked after within the last year were in either Higher or Further Education three months after leaving school. In comparison, 72% of all school leavers were in Further or Higher Education (Table 2.1). The lower proportion of looked after young people entering Higher Education is associated with leaving school at an earlier stage and consequent lower levels of qualifications.

Table 2.1: Percentage of all school leavers and those who were looked after by initial destination (approximately 3 months after leaving school), 2019/20

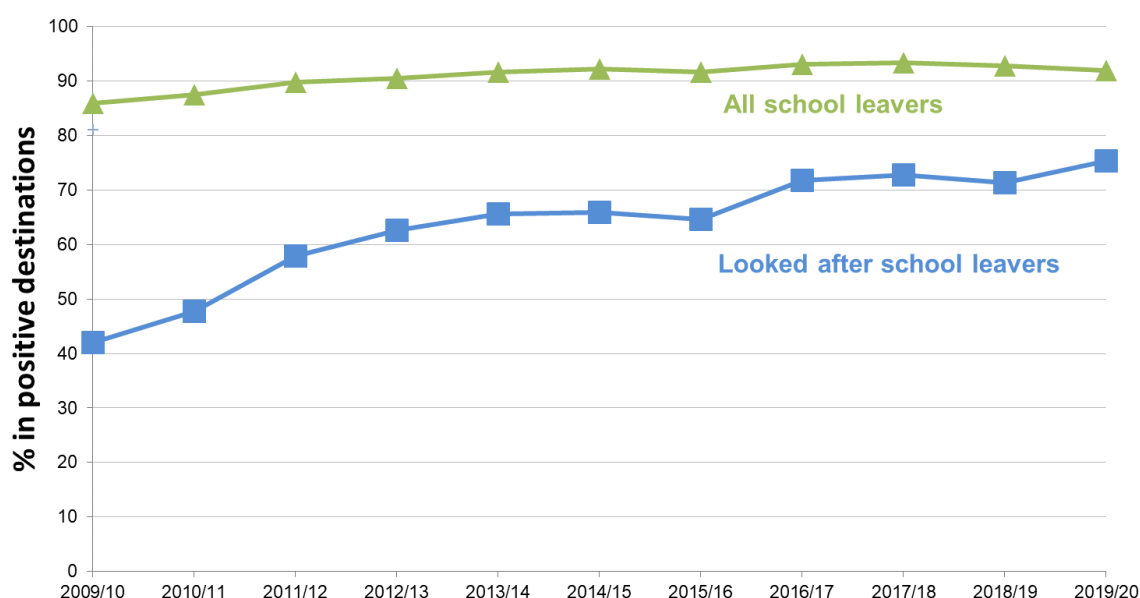
	School leavers looked after within the last year	All school leavers
Higher Education	7	44
Further Education	49	28
Training	14	4
Employment	9	16
Voluntary Work	0	1
Personal Skills Development	2	1
Unemployed Seeking	10	4
Unemployed Not Seeking	8	2
Unknown	1	1
% in a positive destination⁽¹⁾	80	93

(1) Positive destinations includes higher education, further education, training, voluntary work, employment and personal skills development.

Follow-up destinations

From 2009/10 to 2013/14, the percentage of looked after school leavers in positive follow-up destinations increased rapidly from 42% to 66%, then stabilised for three years, before increasing to 72% in 2016/17 and remaining around this level for another two years. In 2019/20, the percentage of looked after leavers in positive follow-up destinations increased to 75%. Over the same time period, the proportion of all school leavers in positive follow-up destinations has remained higher, increasing from 86% in 2009/10 to 92% in 2013/14 and remaining at 92-93% each year since (92% in 2019/20).

Chart 3: Percentage of all school leavers and those who were looked after in positive follow-up destinations, 2009/10 to 2019/20⁽¹⁾



In 2019/20, 75% of school leavers looked after within the last year were in a positive follow-up destination, down from 80% in a positive initial destination. The reduction is also present for all school leavers, but to a lesser extent (92% in a positive follow-up destination, down from 93% in positive initial destinations).

Table 2.2: Percentage of school leavers by follow-up destination (9 months after leaving school), for all school leavers and those who were looked after children, 2019/20⁽¹⁾

	School leavers looked after within the last year	All school leavers
Higher Education	7	43
Further Education	43	24
Training	12	3
Employment	10	21
Voluntary Work	0	0
Personal Skills Development	4	1
Unemployed Seeking	10	4
Unemployed Not Seeking	12	3
Unknown	3	1
% in a positive destination	75	92

(1) Positive destinations includes higher education, further education, training, voluntary work, employment and personal skills development.

Initial and follow-up destinations by type of placement

Table 2.3 shows the percentage of school leavers looked after within the last year in positive initial and follow-up destinations by placement type. Those in foster care placements had the highest proportion in both positive initial and follow-up destinations, while young people who were looked after in a voluntary home, at home with parents, or in other residential accommodation, such as secure care, had the lowest proportion in positive destinations.

The largest decreases between the proportion in positive initial and follow-up destinations were seen in those young people in other residential accommodation, decreasing from 82% in a positive initial destination to 65% at follow-up, and young people in a local authority home, decreasing from 84% in a positive initial destination to 74% at follow-up.

Table 2.3: Positive initial and follow-up destinations among school leavers looked after within the year, by placement type, 2019/20⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾

	Initial destination		Follow-up destination	
	Number	% in a positive destination	Number	% in a positive destination
In the community (children with one placement)				
At home with parents	282	70	280	68
With friends or relatives	189	85	189	81
With foster carers provided by LA	161	95	160	88
With foster carers purchased by LA	74	92	74	85
In other community ⁽³⁾	*	*	*	*
Residential Accommodation (children with one placement)				
In local authority home	69	84	69	74
In voluntary home	16	63	15	53
In other residential ⁽⁴⁾	34	82	34	65
More than one placement	115	70	112	67
All looked after within the last year	943	80	936	75

(1) Some children who were included in the initial destination survey could not be contacted at the time of the follow up destination survey. This is why the total number of children in each survey differs.

(2) Cells containing * represent small numbers that have been suppressed to maintain confidentiality.

(3) Includes supported accommodation and with prospective adopters.

(4) Includes in residential school, secure care accommodation and crisis care.

Background notes

1. Sources and coverage

1.1 This document summarises the education outcomes of Scotland's looked after children. It links information from:

- Looked After Children statistics, 2019/20
- Pupil Census records, 2020
- School Leaver Initial and Follow-up Destination data, October 2020 and March 2021
- Attainment data throughout school education

Follow-up destinations figures for all school leavers are available here:

<https://www.gov.scot/ISBN/978-1-80201-004-6>

1.2 The looked after children data held by the Children and Families statistics team is linked to the educational outcomes data using a child's Scottish Candidate Number (SCN). Children might not have a SCN if they have been educated at home, in an independent school, outside Scotland or have already left school.

We estimate that the Scottish Candidate Numbers (SCNs) provided by local authorities represented 89% of the possible matched records for school-age children. By imputing data from previous years from some local authorities we estimate that 90% of looked after school-age children had matchable SCNs. There was variation between local authorities in the percentage of SCNs provided, ranging from 66% to 100%.

Table 3.1: Percentage of children aged 5 to 15 with Scottish Candidate Number (SCN) present, by local authority, 2019/20⁽¹⁾

Local Authority	SCN provided in 2019/20	Total SCNs after processing
Aberdeen City	98.0	98.0
Aberdeenshire	96.9	96.9
Angus	83.1	83.1
Argyll and Bute	96.9	96.9
City of Edinburgh	96.7	96.7
Clackmannanshire	97.3	97.3
Dumfries and Galloway	97.8	97.8
Dundee City	75.9	84.3
East Ayrshire	72.7	75.4
East Dunbartonshire	97.5	97.5
East Lothian	94.4	94.9
East Renfrewshire	97.1	97.1
Falkirk	91.6	93.6
Fife	97.4	97.6
Glasgow City	65.9	65.9
Highland	93.2	93.2
Inverclyde	95.5	95.5
Midlothian	99.5	99.5
Moray	91.4	91.4
Na h-Eileanan Siar	92.3	92.3
North Ayrshire	91.1	91.1
North Lanarkshire	98.5	98.5
Orkney Islands	100.0	100.0
Perth and Kinross	99.2	99.2
Renfrewshire	99.8	99.8
Scottish Borders	98.7	98.7
Shetland Islands	95.5	95.5
South Ayrshire	97.5	97.5
South Lanarkshire	85.1	85.1
Stirling	92.7	92.7
West Dunbartonshire	98.3	98.3
West Lothian	98.5	98.5
Scotland	89.4	89.8

1.3 The **looked after children** statistics were collected by the Children and Families statistics team in the Scottish Government from local authorities. Demographic information on all children looked after (including the most recent data covering children who were looked after between 1 August 2019 and 31 July 2020) is available at:

[Children's social work statistics: 2019 to 2020 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot/Childrens-social-work-statistics-2019-to-2020)

The survey forms, data specifications and guidance notes for the data presented in this publication (and previous years' publications) can be seen at:

[Scottish Exchange of Data: looked after children - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot/Scottish-Exchange-of-Data-looked-after-children)

1.4 The **qualifications** data were provided by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA). The grade boundaries and publication schedules of this information is available on the [SQA website](http://www.sqa.gov.scot).

1.5 The **leaver destinations** data were collected by Skills Development Scotland (SDS) on each young person identified as being a school leaver in September 2020 (initial destination, approximately three months after leaving school) and March 2021 (follow-up destination, approximately nine months after leaving school). The time of year that a young person leaves school can affect their destinations in these surveys, as a young person leaving school in May who starts a course in the following January could be counted as being in an "other destination" in the initial survey, but a positive destination in the follow-up survey.

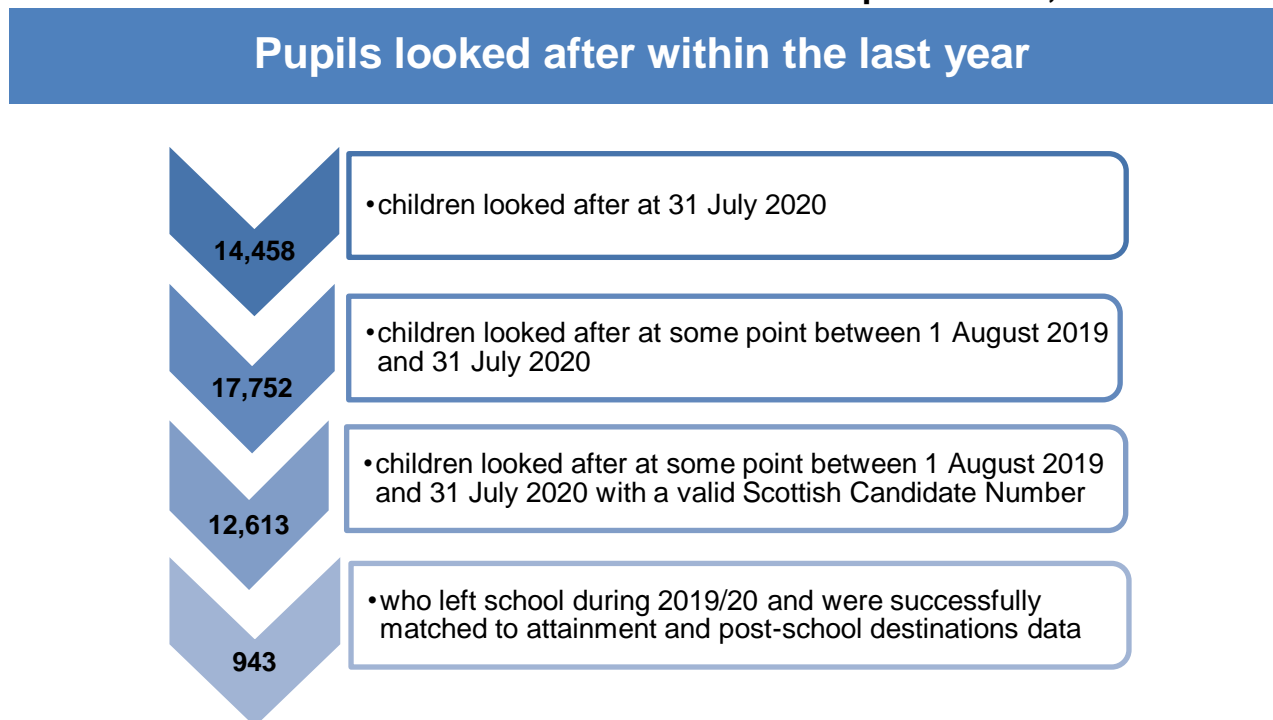
1.6 **Leaver destinations** Summary Statistics for Attainment and Initial Leaver Destinations, No. 3: 2021 Edition: [Summary Statistics for Attainment and Initial Leaver Destinations, No. 3: 2021 Edition - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot/Summary-Statistics-for-Attainment-and-Initial-Leaver-Destinations-No-3-2021-Edition) and Follow-up leaver destinations no. 2: summary statistics – 2021: <https://www.gov.scot/ISBN/978-1-80201-004-6>

2. Methodology

Matching looked after children data to school outcomes

2.1 As reported in Children's Social Work Statistics 2019-20¹, there were 14,458 children looked after on 31 July 2020. The population used in this publication was established through the following process:

Illustration 2: Looked after children included in this publication, 2019/20



2.3 The looked after children data provided to Scottish Government annually includes the Scottish Candidate Number (SCN) for each child, where available. This is used to link information on looked after children to various data from schools held by Scottish Government. This includes:

- data on attendance and absence, which is collected biennially and will next be reported in 2020/21;
- exclusion, which is also collected biennially and will next be reported in 2020-21;
- Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels which has not been collected in 2019/20 due to the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Academic attainment, included in this report;
- Initial and follow-up post-school destinations data, also included in this report.

¹ [Children's social work statistics: 2019 to 2020 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

Data are based only on pupils where there was a match on SCN and the age of the child in the looked after children dataset was appropriate for the stage associated with the SCN in the matched dataset. For example, if there was a record in the looked after children dataset for a ten year-old that matched a record in schools data for a pupil in S4, this record would be excluded from the analysis.

2.4 There are many more children looked after within the last year than those matched in this publication. Children are assigned a Scottish Candidate Number when they start primary school. If a child is under five they are unlikely to have a Scottish Candidate Number. Children also might not have a Scottish Candidate Number if they have been educated at home, in an independent school, outside Scotland, or have already left school. Of looked after children aged 5 to 15 years old, 90% had a valid Scottish Candidate Number present (Table 6.1).

3. Definitions and notation

Children Looked After

3.1 Local Authorities have a responsibility to provide support to certain vulnerable young people, known as looked after children. A young person may become looked after for a number of reasons, including neglect, mental, physical or emotional abuse, parental substance misuse or poor parenting skills, complex disabilities which require specialist care, or involvement in the youth justice system. The definition of a 'looked after child' is set out in section 17(6) of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 ("the 1995 Act"), as amended by the Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007 ("the 2007 Act") and Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 ("the 2011 Act").

3.2 Supervision Requirement – A children's hearing is a lay tribunal which considers and makes decisions on the welfare of the child or young person before them, taking into account all the circumstances including any offending behaviour. The hearing has to decide on the measures of supervision which are in the best interests of the child or young person. If the hearing concludes compulsory measures of supervision are necessary, it will make a Supervision Requirement which will determine the type of placement for the child. In most cases the child will continue to live at home but will be under the supervision of a social worker. In some cases the hearing will decide that the child should live away from home with relatives or other carers.

3.3 Types of placement

Community placements

- At home with parent(s): at home with parent(s) or 'relevant person(s)' as defined in Section 93(2)(b) of the Children's (Scotland) Act 1995
- With friends/relatives: placed with friends or relatives who are not approved foster carers. Also referred to as 'kinship care'.
- With foster carers provided by the local authority
- With foster carers purchased by the local authority
- With prospective adopters
- Other community: such as supported accommodation, hospital (e.g. at birth)

Residential placements

- Local authority home: in local authority children's home/hostel, local authority home/hostel for children with learning disabilities, local authority home/hostel for physically disabled children
- Voluntary home: in voluntary children's home/hostel, in voluntary home/hostel for children with learning disabilities, in voluntary home/hostel for physically disabled children
- Residential school: in local authority residential school (home/hostel), in voluntary residential school (home/hostel), in private school, in independent school
- Secure accommodation
- Crisis care: for example: in women's refuge, in local authority hostel for offenders, in voluntary hostel for offenders, in local authority hostel for drug/alcohol abusers, in voluntary hostel for drug/alcohol abusers
- Other residential: a known residential setting but does not fit with one of the above

3.4 There is information on the process by which children come to be looked after and legislation governing this on the [Scottish Government website](#).

School information

3.5 Scottish Candidate Number – A unique number created by the Scottish Qualifications Authority and assigned to each child by their school when they enter the Scottish School Education System (usually in Primary 1).

School leaver destinations

3.6 School leaver – A young person of school leaving age who left a publicly funded secondary school during or at the end of the school year. Age of school leavers was calculated as at 30 June 2020. Young people of school leaving age who left a publicly funded special school are not counted in this publication.

3.7 Post-school destinations – Destinations data collected by Skills Development Scotland using a combination of administrative data sharing by partners, contact centre follow up and the traditional follow up by operational staff. More information is available from the latest publication: [Summary Statistics for Attainment and Initial Leaver Destinations, No. 3: 2021 Edition - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/summary-statistics-for-attainment-and-initial-leaver-destinations-no-3-2021-edition/pages/1-to-3.aspx)

The broad categories for leaver destinations are:

- Higher Education – includes leavers following HND (Higher National Diploma) or HNC (Higher National Certificate) courses, degree courses, courses for the education and training of teachers and higher level courses for professional qualifications. It includes programmes at a level higher than the standard of the National Qualifications, i.e. above SCQF Level 7. Leavers with a deferred, unconditional place in higher education have also been included in this category..
- Further Education – includes leavers undertaking full-time education which is not higher education and who are no longer on a school roll. This may include National Qualifications.
- Training – includes leavers who are on a training course and in receipt of an allowance or grant, such as the Employability Fund national training programme. It also includes leavers who are on local authority or third sector funded training programmes that are in receipt of a training allowance or those participating in Community Jobs Scotland. From 2018/19, this category includes school leavers receiving support that would previously have been recorded as ‘Activity Agreements’. This means that the proportion of school leavers with a destination category of Training from 2018/19 cannot be directly compared to the proportion recorded for previous years. Further information can be found in the Activity Agreements definition below.
- Employment – employed and in receipt of payment from their employers.
- Voluntary Work - includes those undertaking voluntary work/volunteering which will involve a young person giving of their time and energy through a third party with or without financial allowance.
- Activity Agreement – Activity Agreements were ‘agreements between a young person and an advisor that the young person will take part in a

programme of learning and activity which helps them to become ready for formal learning or employment'. From 2018/19, Activity Agreements are no longer recorded as a post-school destination. Instead, school leavers receiving this support who left during or at the end of the academic year are recorded in the Training category.

- Personal Skills Development - The way in which school leavers undertaking Personal Skills Development activity are counted in these statistics changed in the 2018/19 publication. In previous publications, young people participating in Personal Skills Development (PSD) were individually mapped to destination categories; this mapping was carried out by Skills Development Scotland (SDS) and Scottish Government analysts based on details of the PSD activity recorded on the SDS Customer Support System (CSS). Depending on the evidence, a leaver could be mapped to a positive destination or an unemployed seeking or unemployed not seeking destination. This meant that school leavers from special units within mainstream schools, specifically those with severe and complex needs, participating in PSD were not always being classified as in a “positive destination”. In light of user feedback, we undertook to consider the categorisation of school leavers in PSD. Historic data back to 2009/10 were revised in the 2018/19 report to allow comparison over time on a consistent basis, and are provided on that consistent basis in this publication.
- Unemployed seeking – includes those known by Skills Development Scotland or their partners to be seeking employment or training. This includes those receiving support from SDS, Department of Working and Pensions and other partners. It is based on regular contact between the supporting organisation and the individual. This does not refer to the definition of ‘unemployed’ used by the Department of Work and Pensions to calculate published unemployment rates.
- Unemployed not seeking – includes all those individuals who are not yet ready or are unavailable to enter the labour market for a range of reasons. The reasons may involve ill health/sickness, prison, pregnancy, caring for children or other dependents or taking time out.
- Unknown – destination is not known either to Skills Development Scotland or to the school attended.

3.8 Positive destinations – includes higher education, further education, training, employment, voluntary work, Personal Skills Development and (between 2010/11 and 2017/18) Activity Agreements.

3.9 The Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) is designed to achieve a transformation in education in Scotland by providing a coherent, more flexible and enriched curriculum for children and young people aged from 3 to 18. The curriculum includes the totality of experiences which are planned for children and young people through their education, wherever they are being educated.

CfE Level	Stage
Early	The final two years of early learning and childcare before a child goes to school and P1, or later for some.
First	To the end of P4, but earlier or later for some.
Second	To the end of P7, but earlier or later for some.
Third and Fourth	S1 to S3, but earlier or later for some. The Fourth Level broadly equates to Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework level 4. The Fourth Level experiences and outcomes are intended to provide possibilities for choice and young people's programmes will not include all of the Fourth Level outcomes.
Senior Phase	S4 to S6, and college or other means of study.

Further information on Curriculum for Excellence can be found on the [Education Scotland website](#).

Curriculum for Excellence defines five levels of learning. The first four levels are described in the Experiences and Outcomes, with progression to qualifications described under a fifth level, the [senior phase](#).

While children and young people should feel that the transition from one stage of learning to another is smooth, they should still be able to look forward to the excitement of starting nursery, primary school and secondary school, and finally to moving on to [positive and sustained destinations](#).

4. Data Quality

4.1 This is an Official Statistics Publication. Official Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. These statistics undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political interference. The results contained in this publication are deemed fit for purpose, but may be revised in future years where updates are made to the data. This publication has not yet been assessed by the UK Statistics Authority.

4.2 There is more information on the administrative sources underlying this publication on the [Scottish Government website](#).

Cross-UK comparisons

4.3 Differences in the education systems of Scotland and the rest of the UK make cross-UK comparisons invalid. Links to the most similar figures from across the UK are provided below:

England - [Statistics: looked-after children - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Wales - [Educational qualifications of care leavers \(gov.wales\)](#)

Northern Ireland - [Children's services statistics | Department of Health \(health-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

4.4 Information on the differences between each administration's looked after children statistics is available on the [Scottish Government children's statistics web site](#).

5. Enquiries

The information in this publication is available at:

[Children's social work statistics - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

Email any requests for **further analysis** to children.statistics@gov.scot.

If you would like to receive notification of forthcoming statistical publications, please register your interest on the Scottish Government ScotStat website at:

<http://register.scotstat.org/Subscribe/Step1>.

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How to access background or source data

The data collected for this statistical bulletin:

- are available in more detail through statistics.gov.scot
- are available via background tables
- may be made available on request, subject to consideration of legal and ethical factors.
- cannot be made available by Scottish Government for further analysis as Scottish Government is not the data controller.

Complaints and suggestions

If you are not satisfied with our service or have any comments or suggestions, please write to the Chief Statistician, 3WR, St Andrews House, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG, Telephone: (0131) 244 0302, e-mail statistics.enquiries@gov.scot.

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ISBN 978-1-80201-050-3

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Produced for The Scottish Government by APS Group Scotland, 21 Tennant Street, Edinburgh EH6 5NA
PPDAS878706 (06/21)