

SDR 166/2011

15 September 2011

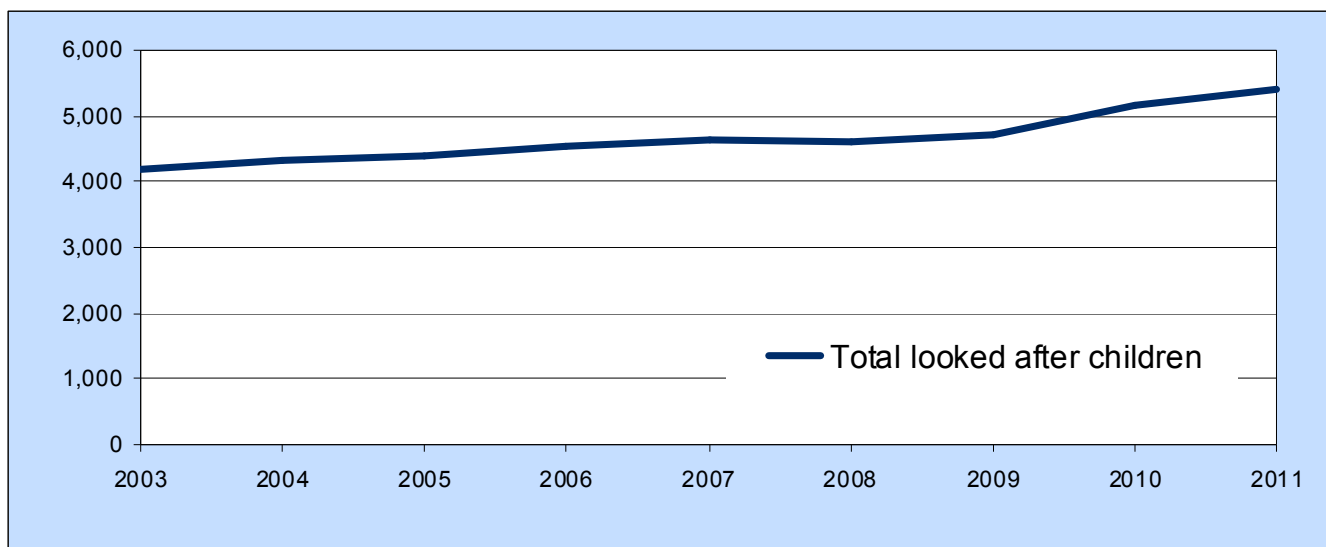
Adoptions, Outcomes and Placements for Children Looked After by Local Authorities: year ending 31 March 2011

This National Statistics First Release presents figures about children looked after by local authorities in Wales. Children looked after include those on care orders and other children provided with accommodation by their local authority. Some children are also looked after because the local authority provides accommodation for respite purposes, and during the year to 31 March 2011, 674 children received this support. The remaining figures in this Release exclude this group of children. See the Notes pages for more information about the data and method of collection. Further data is provided online in StatsWales tables at <http://www.statswales.wales.gov.uk/ReportFolders/ReportFolders.aspx>.

Key points for the year ending 31 March 2011:

- 5,419 children were looked after on 31 March 2011, an increase of 5 per cent over the previous year and a rate of 87 per 10,000 population aged under 18. The number of looked after children has increased by 20 per cent over the last five years
- 9 per cent of children looked after at 31st March 2011 had three or more placements during the year
- Educational attainments improved over the previous year, with the exception of Key Stage 3 assessments
- Local authorities were in touch with 93 per cent of 19 year old care leavers; 48 per cent of 19 year old care leavers were known to be in education, training or employment

Chart 1: Number of looked after children in Wales at 31 March, 2003-2011



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Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
 Welsh Assembly Government

Table 1: Placements of looked after children (a)

	2009	2010	2011
Children looked after at 31 March	4,704	5,161	5,419
Number by placement:			
in foster care placements	3,632	4,051	4,311
placed for adoption	189	204	183
placed with own parents or other person with parental responsibility	487	483	498
living independently	76	73	68
residential schools	65	64	67
secure units, children's homes and hostels	199	227	214
other placements (b)	56	59	78
Number with three or more placements during the year to 31 March	455	530	499
Percentage with three or more placements during the year to 31 March	10%	10%	9%

Source: SSDA903

(a) Excluding children looked after in short-term placements

(b) Residential care home, NHS/Health Trust or other establishment providing medical or nursing care, family centre or mother and baby unit, Youth Offender Institution or prison, whereabouts unknown.

There were 5,419 looked after children at 31 March 2011, an increase of 258 or 5 per cent on the previous year's figure of 5,161. The number of children in foster care placements increased by 260 and there was a net decrease of 2 in the number of children in all other types of placement.

Four-fifths (80 per cent) of looked after children were in foster placements at 31 March 2011. The proportion of looked after children in foster placements increased slightly compared to previous years.

There were 499 children in care at 31 March who had three or more placements during the year, a decrease of 31 children compared to the previous year. The percentage of children with 3 or more placements fell slightly from 10 per cent to 9 per cent.

Numbers of children by local authority and type of placement are shown in Table A2 on page 13.

Table 2: Children starting to be looked after, by need for care (a)

	2009	2010	2011
Children starting to be looked after in the year ending 31 March	1,640	2,025	1,885
Number by category of need:			
abuse or neglect	885	1,198	1,116
parental illness/disability or absence	211	206	149
family in acute stress or dysfunction	427	493	486
socially unacceptable behaviour	78	93	87
other	39	35	47
Percentage by category of need:			
abuse or neglect	54%	59%	59%
parental illness/disability or absence	13%	10%	8%
family in acute stress or dysfunction	26%	24%	26%
socially unacceptable behaviour	5%	5%	5%
other	2%	2%	2%

Source: SSSA903

(a) Excluding children looked after in short-term placements. Where a child had separate periods of care only the first period is counted and shows the initial reason for a child coming into care

There were 1,885 children who started to be looked after in the year to 31 March 2011, a decrease of 7 per cent from the previous year, but still some 15 per cent higher than in 2009.

The main reason why social services first engaged with looked after children was because of abuse or neglect (59 per cent). In the year ending 31 March 2011, a total of 1,116 children started to be looked after because of abuse and neglect.

Table 3: Children leaving care, by reason for leaving (a)

	2009	2010	2011
Children leaving care in the year ending 31 March (b)	1,565	1,579	1,627
Number by destination:			
returned home to live with parent, relative or other person with parental responsibility (c)	724	796	801
adopted from care	255	229	252
other	586	554	574
Percentage by destination:			
returned home to live with parent, relative or other person with parental responsibility (c)	46%	50%	49%
adopted from care	16%	15%	15%
other	37%	35%	35%

Source: SSDA903

(a) Excluding children looked after in short-term placements. Where a child had separate periods of care only the latest period is counted

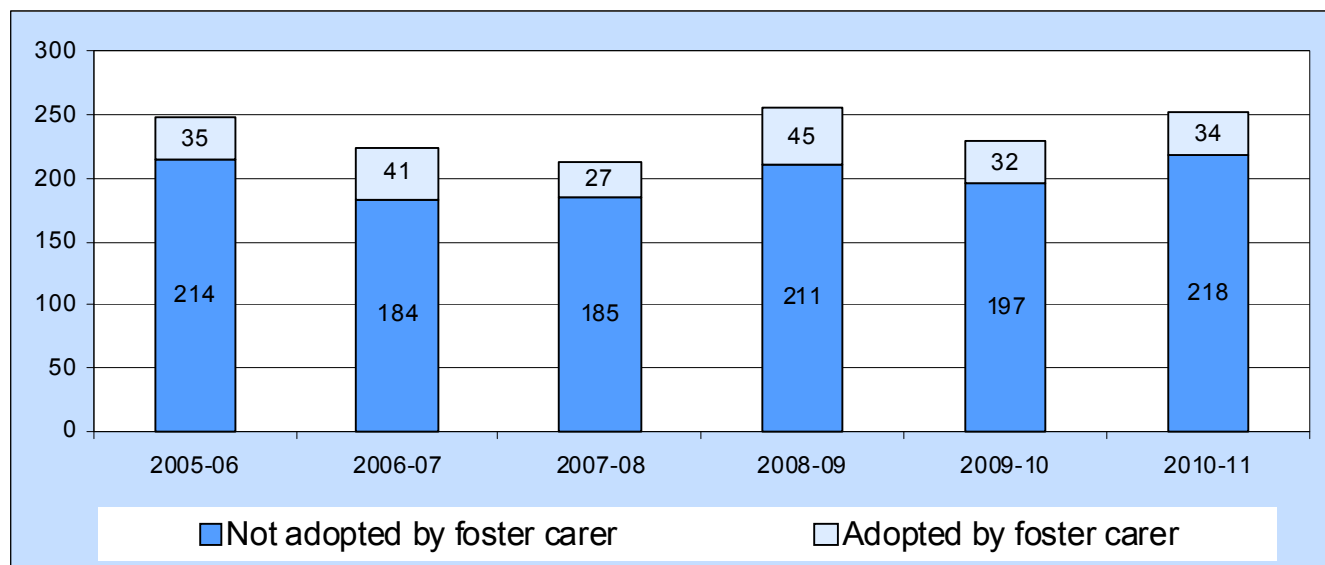
(b) Excludes children who died or where care was taken over by another local authority in the UK

(c) Includes special guardianship orders made to carers or former foster carers

There were 1,627 children leaving care in the year ending 31 March 2011, an increase of 3 per cent from the previous year.

In the year ending 31 March 2011, almost half of all children leaving care returned home to live with parents, relatives or other persons with parental responsibility. The number of children returning home was similar to the previous year.

Chart 4: Adoptions of looked after children



Source: AD1

There were 252 children adopted from care in the year ending 31 March 2011. Almost nine in ten children (87 per cent) were adopted by others and not by their former foster carer in 2010-11. The number of children adopted increased by 23 (10 per cent) over the previous year.

Numbers and percentages of children adopted are shown in Table A1 on page 12.

Table 5: Educational attainments of looked after children at 31 March (a)

	2009	2010	2011
The percentage of looked after children eligible for assessment at the end of Key Stage 2 achieving the Core Subject Indicator, as determined by Teacher Assessment	40%	44%	44%
The percentage of looked after children eligible for assessment at the end of Key Stage 3 achieving the Core Subject Indicator, as determined by Teacher Assessment	20%	25%	22%
The average external qualifications point score for 16 year old looked after children, in any local authority maintained learning setting	146	152	183

Source: PM1 and SSDA903

(a) For the previous school year, e.g. for children looked after at 31 March 2011 results are for the 2009-10 school year

In the year ending 31 March 2011, the educational attainments of looked after children improved on some measures but not all. 44 per cent of looked after children who were eligible for assessment at Key Stage 2 achieved the Core Subject Indicator, the same as the previous year. At Key Stage 3, 22 per cent of looked after children achieved the Core Subject Indicator, a slight fall compared to 25 per cent in the previous year. This is a measure used for schools and refers to achieving a specified level in the core National Curriculum subjects of English or Welsh (first language), Mathematics and Science in combination. The average external qualifications points score for looked after children aged 16 continued to improve at 183 compared to 152 in the previous year.

Table 6: Educational qualifications of care leavers

	2009	2010	2011
Children aged 16 or over who ceased being looked after in the year ending 31 March	491	499	562
Number:			
with at least one qualification (a)	313	325	398
with at least one GCSE A* to G or GNVQ	241	244	316
with 5 or more GCSEs at grade A* to G	145	152	195
with 5 or more GCSEs at grade A* to C	43	47	59
due to sit examinations later after leaving care or unable to sit examinations due to a illness or disability	56	60	76
Percentage:			
with at least one qualification (a)	64%	65%	71%
with at least one GCSE A* to G or GNVQ	49%	49%	56%
with 5 or more GCSEs at grade A* to G	30%	30%	35%
with 5 or more GCSEs at grade A* to C	9%	9%	10%

Source: OC1

(a) Includes GCSEs, GNVQs, NVQs, advanced level GNVQs, A levels, and any other qualifications approved for use in schools under Section 400 of the Education Act 1996

In the year ending 31 March 2011, 562 children aged 16 or over ceased being looked after and 71 per cent of these children had at least one qualification. Excluding those children due to sit exams later after leaving care, and those prevented from sitting exams due to illness or disability, the proportion with at least one qualification was 82 per cent.

The proportion of care leavers aged 16 or over with 5 or more GCSEs at grade A* to G increased from 30 per cent in 2008-09 and 2009-10 to 35 per cent in 2010-11. Excluding those children due to sit exams later after leaving care, and those prevented from sitting exams due to illness or disability, the proportion increased from 33 per cent in 2008-09 to 40 per cent in 2010-11. In 2010-11, slightly under a third (30 per cent) of these children achieved 5 or more GCSEs at grade A* to C.

Educational attainments are an important measure of the achievement of looked after children and attainment is generally low compared to the school population as a whole. However, some looked after children have difficulties that should be taken into account when making these comparisons. A new experimental data collection has been introduced for all children receiving social services that enables

comparisons to be made between looked after children and other children who may have similar difficulties. Results from this new collection, known as the Children in Need Census, were published on 24 February 2011. Although the results cannot be compared directly with the OC1 figures, because the Children in Need Census includes a different sample of children, the Census showed that looked after children did slightly better than other children receiving social services.

Table 7: Care leavers on their 19th birthday

	2009	2010	2011
Care leavers who had their 19th birthday in the year ending 31 March and were in care on 1 April 3 years before	353	391	364
Number:			
in touch with the local authority	324	372	339
in education training or employment	158	183	175
in part time education training or employment	27	34	23
in full time education training or employment	131	149	152
Percentage:			
in touch with the local authority	92%	95%	93%
in education training or employment	45%	47%	48%
in part time education training or employment	8%	9%	6%
in full time education training or employment	37%	38%	42%

Source: OC3

There were 364 young people who had their 19th birthday in the year ending 31 March 2011 and were in care on 1 April 2008, a decrease of 7 per cent from the previous year.

The percentage of young people who were in touch with local authorities was 93 per cent, slightly lower than the figure of 95 per cent in 2009-10. The percentage of young people who were in full time education, training or employment continued to increase, rising from 38 per cent in 2009-10 to 42 per cent in 2010-11.

Glossary

"Looked after" is the term used in the Children Act 1989 to describe all children who are the subject of a care order, or who are provided with accommodation on a voluntary basis for more than 24 hours.

"Placements" of looked after children include all placement types, except where a child is in respite care or has been recorded as missing from a placement. For a full list of these placements, please refer to the SSDA903 guidance. A new placement is recorded for a child when they start to be looked after or are already looked after and move to a new location. These changes are indicated by the use of 'Reason for new episode' codes S, P and B. A change in legal status alone ('Reason for new episode' code L) is not regarded as a placement change.

"Special guardianship orders" (SGO) were introduced by the Adoption and Children Act 2002 section 144(4) which amended the Children Act 1989. A special guardianship order gives the special guardian parental responsibility for the child. Unlike adoption, under a SGO the parents remain the child's parents and retain parental responsibility, though their ability to exercise their parental responsibility is extremely limited.

"Need for care" or "Category of need" is the main reason why a child is being provided with services.

"Short term placement" is the term used to describe children who are subject to short-term break agreements. These children normally live at home, but are accommodated by a local authority in a pattern of short periods of care in order to give their parents (or guardians) some "respite" from the normal duties of looking after a child.

External Points Score - A complete list of the approved external qualifications and their points values can be found on the Database of Approved Qualifications in Wales (DAQW) at www.daqw.org.uk.

Core Subject Indicator - Achieving a specified level in the core National Curriculum subjects of English or Welsh (first language), Mathematics and Science in combination.

Achieving the Key Stage 2 Core Subject Indicator means achieving level 4 or above in the core National Curriculum subjects of English or Welsh (first language), Mathematics and Science in combination.

Achieving the Key Stage 3 Core Subject Indicator means achieving level 5 or above the core National Curriculum subjects of English or Welsh (first language), Mathematics and Science in combination.

General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE)

General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ)

SCC - Social Care - Children's

SSDA 903 - Statistical return on children looked after

AD1 - Statistical return on adoptions of looked after children

OC1 - Statistical return on educational qualifications of care leavers

OC3 - Statistical return on care leavers on their 19th birthday

PM1 - Performance Management - Children's services

NOTES

Data Collection

All references made to 'year' relate to the standard financial year which runs from 1 April to 31 March (for example 2011 should be understood as 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011).

Information on the number of looked after children was collected using two sources for the year 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011. As well as collecting individual child level data on looked after children through the SSDA903 (Children Looked After), AD1 (Adoptions), OC1 (Educational attainments) and OC3 (Care leavers 19th birthday) data collections, the PM1 (Performance Management - Children) form collected aggregated figures for local authorities in order to calculate local authority performance indicators. PM1 data was used in compiling Table 5. All other tables are based on the individual records.

Data for the individual child level collections is extracted from local authority administrative systems and returned electronically to the Data Collection team within the Welsh Assembly Government Statistical Directorate using an online secure data transfer system called 'AFON'. The AFON system applies an extensive series of validation checks to ensure that the information provided uses the correct codes and is internally consistent.

Guidance notes and other documents useful for the completion of the SSDA903 and other returns can be found on the Welsh Assembly Government website at:

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/about/data-collection/social/child/?lang=en>

Data Quality

The tables are based on complete returns from all local authorities in Wales. In order to provide a more representative figure for the number of children receiving respite services, a count of all children receiving such services at any time during the year has been included, instead of the count at 31 March included in the previous edition of this Release. For 2011, the count during the year was 674 compared to 210 at 31 March.

Symbols and rounding conventions

- . = not applicable
- .. = not available
- = nil or less than half the final digit shown
- * = data suppressed to prevent disclosure

All local authority level tables, and others where disclosure risks exist, have been rounded to the nearest 5 and numbers between 1 and 4 have been suppressed.

In tables where figures have been rounded there may be an apparent discrepancy between the sum of the constituent items and the total.

Related Publications

England

Children Looked After Statistics are produced annually by the Department for Education. The most recent data will be published on 28 September at the following link:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s001026/index.shtml>

Scotland

Children Looked After Statistics are produced annually by the Scottish Government. The most recent data published on 23 February 2011 can be found at the following link:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Children/PubChildrenLookedAfter>

Northern Ireland:

Children Looked After Statistics are produced annually by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety. The latest Children Order Statistics were published on 27 May 2011. These and other publications are available at the following link:

http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/stats-cib/statistics_and_research-cib-pub/children_statistics.htm

Comparability

Work has been undertaken between the Welsh Government and administrations from England, Scotland and Northern Ireland to document clearly the differences between each administration's Looked After Children Statistics. English and Welsh figures were originally collected together and are still comparable, but some categories of children looked after in Scotland would not be regarded as such in Wales, so those figures are not directly comparable.

In addition, the Childhood Wellbeing Research Centre (CWRC) has been commissioned by the Department for Education to undertake a study to draw together data on safeguarding children and to compare the current position of England with other countries. Publication is expected in September 2011.

Wales:

Information on the costs to local authorities of services provided for looked after children are produced by the Welsh Assembly Government from local authority financial returns. Detailed figures are available in the StatsWales online system by drilling down on "Total children's and families' services" at <http://www.statswales.wales.gov.uk/TableViewer/tableView.aspx?ReportId=1984>

Information on the characteristics and educational outcomes of all children receiving social services was published in the "Wales Children in Need Census, 2010"

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/health2011/110224/?lang=en>

Information on Key Stage assessments for all school pupils for 2010 was published by the Welsh Government in SDR 122/2010 "National Curriculum Assessments of 7, 11 and 14 Year Olds: Wales, 2010"

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/schools2010/100818/?lang=en>

Information on point scores for all pupils for 2010 was published by the Welsh Government in "Schools in Wales: Examination Performance, 2010"

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/schools2011/110525/?lang=en>

A National Statistics publication

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.

We want to engage with users of our statistics and we invite you to send your comments on the publication to stats.pss@wales.gsi.gov.uk

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Table A1: Adoptions of looked after children (a) (b)

	2009	2010	2011
Children adopted from care in the year ending 31 March	256	229	252
Number:			
adopted by their former foster carer	45	32	34
adopted by others	211	197	218
Percentage:			
adopted by their former foster carer	18%	14%	13%
adopted by others	82%	86%	87%

Source: SSSA903

(a) Excluding children looked after in short-term placements. Where a child had separate periods of care only the latest period is counted

(b) Includes special guardianship orders made to carers or former foster carers

Table A2: Placements of looked after children by local authority (a) (b)

	Number	Number by placement						
	Children looked after at 31 March 2010	in foster care placements	placed for adoption	placed with own parents or other person with parental responsibility	living independently	residential schools	secure units, children's homes and hostels	other placements (c)
Local Authority								
Isle of Anglesey	80	45	*	20	*	*	5	*
Gwynedd	175	135	5	5	*	*	15	5
Conwy	165	130	5	20	*	*	*	5
Derbighshire	175	110	10	40	*	*	5	*
Flintshire	160	115	*	25	*	5	10	5
Wrexham	160	115	*	25	*	*	10	*
Powys	170	145	5	10	*	*	5	*
Ceredigion	80	75	*	*	*	*	*	*
Pembrokeshire	155	125	*	15	*	5	*	*
Carmarthenshire	260	215	20	15	*	*	*	*
Swansea	580	455	25	45	*	10	15	25
Neath, Port Talbot	415	350	15	30	*	*	15	*
Bridgend	325	260	5	30	*	5	15	*
Vale of Glamorgan	205	170	*	10	*	*	*	10
Cardiff	520	405	15	40	15	15	25	5
Rhondda, Cynon, Taff	550	440	20	45	*	*	40	*
Merthyr Tydfil	165	140	*	10	10	*	*	*
Caerphilly	300	255	*	25	*	*	10	*
Blaenau Gwent	130	110	5	15	*	*	*	*
Torfaen	290	235	5	40	*	*	*	5
Monmouthshire	80	70	*	*	*	*	*	*
Newport	285	220	10	20	5	*	25	*
Wales	5,420	4,310	185	500	70	65	215	80

Source: SSDA903

(a) Excluding children looked after in short-term placements

(b) Data in this table has been rounded to the nearest 5 for disclosure reasons. * = suppressed to prevent disclosure.

(c) Residential care home, NHS/Health Trust or other establishment providing medical or nursing care, family centre or mother and baby unit, Youth Offender Institution or prison, whereabouts unknown.