



## Statistical First Release

# Children Accommodated in Secure Children's Homes at 31 March 2014: England and Wales

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- 17** Secure Children's Homes (SCHs) open at 31 March 2014 in England and Wales. The number of SCHs has remained the same since 31 March 2010.
- 298** Approved places in England and Wales at 31 March 2014, an extra 2 places since 31 March 2013. The extra two places are at Lansdowne which followed a rebuild of the home. This is a decrease of 13 places from 31 March 2010.
- 229** Children were accommodated in SCHs in England and Wales at 31 March 2014; 211 in England and 18 in Wales. The total for England and Wales represents an increase of 11% from 31 March 2013 and a decrease of 11% from 31 March 2010. The overall trend in the number of children accommodated is a decrease.
- 77%** Occupancy at 31 March 2014. Since 2010 the occupancy rate at 31 March has fluctuated between a minimum of 70% and a maximum of 83%.
- 41%** Of children accommodated at 31 March 2014 were female compared with 35% at 31 March 2013 and 36% at 31 March 2010.
- 45%** Of children accommodated at 31 March 2014 were placed by the local authority on welfare grounds compared with 43% at 31 March 2013 and 37% at 31 March 2010.

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#### A National Statistics publication

National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the National Statistics Code of Practice. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political interference.

## 1. Background and context

This Statistical First Release (SFR) provides data on Secure Children's Homes (SCHs) in England and Wales. It includes the number of places approved and number of children accommodated as well as characteristics of those children accommodated; gender, age, length of stay and type of placement.

Secure children's homes are children's homes which provide a locked environment and restrict a young person's liberty. They provide care and accommodation to children and young people who have been detained or sentenced by the Youth Justice Board (YJB) and those who have been remanded to secure local authority (LA) accommodation. They also accommodate and care for children and young people who have been placed there on welfare grounds by LAs and the courts. Secure children's homes provide children and young people with support tailored to their individual needs; to achieve this they have a high ratio of staff to young people and are generally small facilities.

This publication gives an annual snapshot of the status of SCHs in England and Wales at 31 March. Please see the Methodology document for further details on the collection process and the Quality and Uses document for further details on quality and how the data is used.

## 2. Places approved and children accommodated (Table 1)

Chart A: Overall trend in number of children accommodated is decreasing over time

Number of places approved, children accommodated and places contracted to the Youth Justice Board (YJB) at 31 March from 2010 to 2014 in secure children's homes in England and Wales.



<b>4% decrease in the number of approved places since 2010</b>	There were 298 approved places in England and Wales at 31 March 2014, an extra 2 places since 31 March 2013. The extra 2 places are at Lansdowne which followed a rebuild of the home. This is a decrease of 13 places (4%) from 31 March 2010.
<b>11% decrease in the number of children accommodated since 2010</b>	There were 229 children accommodated in SCHs in England and Wales at 31 March 2014; 211 in England and 18 in Wales. The total for England and Wales represents an increase of 11% from 31 March 2013 and a decrease of 11% from 31 March 2010. Over the five year period from 2010 to 2014, the number of children accommodated at 31 March is decreasing.
<b>13% decrease in the number of Youth Justice Board places since 2010</b>	At 31 March 2014, 166 approved places were contracted to the Youth Justice Board (YJB) which is no change from 31 March 2013. This represents a decrease of 25 places (13%) from 31 March 2010. Over the five year period from 2010 to 2014, the number of approved places contracted to the YJB at 31 March is decreasing.

### 3. Occupancy rates (Table 1)

At 31 March 2014, 77% of approved places in England and Wales were occupied, an increase of 7 percentage points from 2013. The occupancy rate at the 31 March has fluctuated between a minimum of 70% and a maximum of 83% in the period 2010 to 2014. The occupancy rate for 31 March 2014 is approximately in the centre of this range of data; 77% is the median value and 76% is the mean value for the period 2010 to 2014 at 31 March.

Table A: Occupancy rates fluctuate over time  
Occupancy rates in secure children's homes in England and Wales at 31 March, 2010 to 2014.

	Occupancy Rate
	%
2010	83
2011	70
2012	80
2013	70
2014	77

### 4. Gender (Table 1)

Of the total number of children accommodated in England and Wales, 41% were female and 59% were male. At 31 March 2013, 35% were female and 65% were male. This year's data has the highest proportion of females accommodated at 31 March for the period 2010 to 2014. Please note that numbers are small so percentages are volatile.

## Table B: Increase in the proportion of females accommodated

Gender proportions for children accommodated in secure children's homes in England and Wales at 31 March, 2010 to 2014.

	Male	Female	Total
	%	%	%
2010	64	36	100
2011	69	31	100
2012	66	34	100
2013	65	35	100
2014	59	41	100

## 5. Type of placement (Table 1)

Of the children accommodated at 31 March 2014 in England and Wales, 45% were placed by the local authority on welfare grounds<sup>1</sup> compared with 43% at 31 March 2013 and 37% at 31 March 2010. This year's data has the highest proportion placed on welfare grounds at 31 March for the period 2010 to 2014. Please note that numbers are small so percentages are volatile.

### Table C: Proportion placed on welfare grounds at its highest since 2010

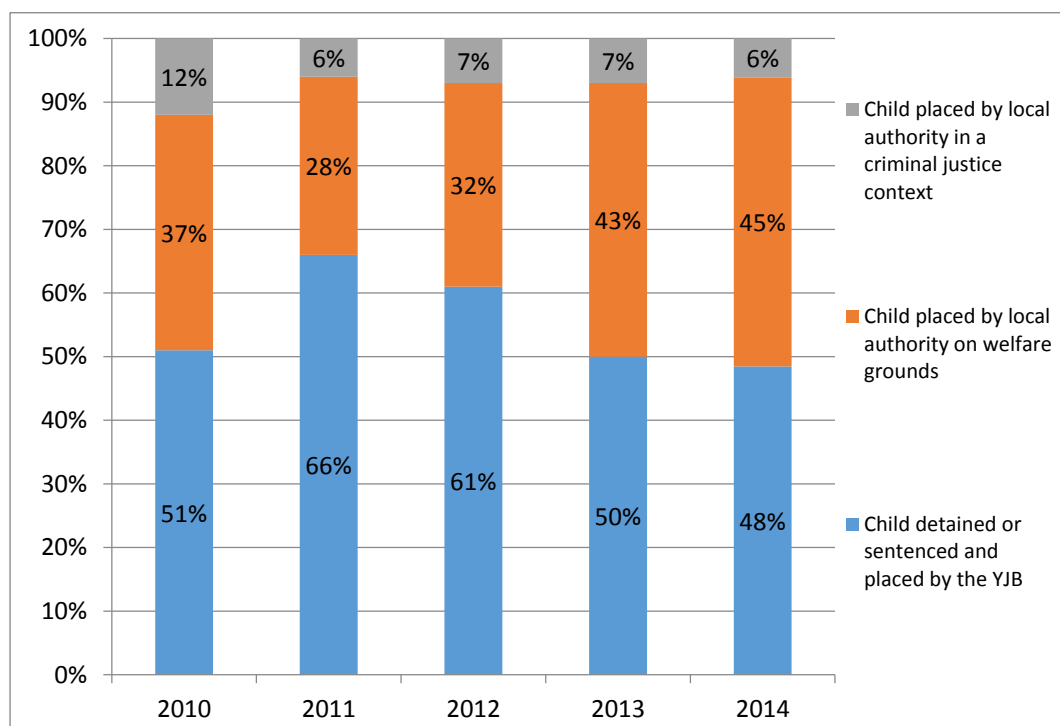
Type of placement percentages for children accommodated in secure children's homes in England and Wales at 31 March, 2010 to 2014

	Child detained or sentenced and placed by the Youth Justice Board	Child placed by local authority on welfare grounds	Child placed by local authority in a criminal justice context	Total
	%	%	%	%
2010	51	37	12	100
2011	66	28	6	100
2012	61	32	7	100
2013	50	43	7	100
2014	48	45	6	100

<sup>1</sup> [Child placed under section 25 of the Children Act 1989](#) for the protection of himself and/or others.

## Chart B: Proportion placed on welfare grounds at its highest since 2010

Type of placement percentages for children accommodated in secure children's homes in England and Wales at 31 March, 2010 to 2014



## 6. List of tables

The following tables are available in excel format on the publication website.

- 1 Places approved and children accommodated in secure children's homes at 31 March by gender, age, length of stay and type of placement (numbers and percentages), England and Wales, 2010 to 2014
- 2 Places approved and available, and children accommodated at 31 March by individual secure children's homes (numbers and percentages), England and Wales, 2010 to 2014
- 3 Places approved and children accommodated in secure children's homes at 31 March by gender, age, length of stay and type of placement (numbers and percentages), England, 2010 to 2014

When reviewing the tables, please note the following:

### **We preserve confidentiality**

The Code of Practice for Official Statistics requires we take reasonable steps to ensure that our published or disseminated statistics protect confidentiality.

### **Suppressed numbers**

Numbers between 1 and 5 inclusive, or a percentage based on a numerator between 1 and 5 inclusive have been replaced by an 'x'. To protect the suppressed number, secondary suppression may be required in some cases. Whenever it would be possible to calculate the value of a suppressed number by means of simple arithmetic, the

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rule applied in these circumstances would be to suppress the next smallest data item. This suppression is consistent with the [Departmental statistical policy](#).

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**Percentages**

Percentages are displayed to the nearest whole number but where the numerator is between 1 and 5 inclusive, they have been suppressed as described above. Due to rounding it is possible that the sum of the category percentages may not always total 100%.

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**Zeros**

Where any number is shown as zero (0), the original figure submitted was zero.

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**Symbols**

A dot has been used to signify where data is not applicable.

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**Small numbers**

Note that in this collection we are dealing with relatively small numbers and so percentages are volatile. Also, this is a snapshot at the 31 March each year and there will naturally be a certain level of fluctuations in the data over time.

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## 7. Background on the data

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**Three types of secure accommodation**

In England and Wales there are three types of secure accommodation in which children and young people can be placed. These are young offender institutions, secure training centres and secure children's homes. This Statistical First Release provides figures on children accommodated in secure children's homes. Information has been derived from statistical data reported to the Department by all secure children's homes in England and Wales that were open at 31 March 2014. Data on young offender institutions and secure training centres are published separately; see Related Publications below.

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**Scarce national resource**

Secure children's homes are a scarce national resource providing care in a secure setting for the most vulnerable looked after children and young offenders with challenging and complex needs – e.g. with behavioural and emotional difficulties; learning difficulties etc. There are 16 secure children's homes in England; 15 are managed by local authorities and one by a charity (Nugent Care). Although only 15 LAs run secure children's homes, almost all authorities have an occasional but compelling need to commission secure welfare placements. There is one secure children's home in Wales which is managed by the local authority. Of the 16 English homes, 7 provide welfare places only and the remainder provide both welfare and youth justice places. Placements for sentenced children are commissioned by the Youth Justice Board (YJB), whereas placements for children requiring detention on welfare grounds under Section 25 of the Children Act 1989 are commissioned by individual local

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authorities.

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**Steady decline in the number of secure children's homes**

New approaches to managing very troubled children have influenced demand for these very complex high maintenance services and local authorities have gradually withdrawn from direct provision of secure accommodation. This has resulted in a steady decline in the numbers of secure children's homes over the last 10 years such that those remaining are not evenly distributed throughout English regions. At present, any decision to establish a new secure children's home would be for local authorities or other potential providers (private or voluntary) based on their assessment of the future market for these highly specialised services.

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**Placement of children in secure children's homes**

Many factors are taken into account when determining whether a child is sent to a secure children's home or another type of secure accommodation. Children under 12 who commit serious offences will always be sent to a secure children's home; but for older children the Youth Justice Board will take account of their vulnerability, based on what is known about their mental health, emotional and cognitive development etc. Whilst there is a preference for placing children within travelling distance of their families – the geographical distribution of secure children's home will often mean that this is not possible. Further, some secure children's homes have developed expertise in managing certain kinds of behaviour and these specialisms will also need to be taken into account in determining the most appropriate placement for an individual child.

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**England and Wales**

The Statistical First Release contains information for both England and Wales due to a long-standing agreement with the Welsh Government that DfE will report on the single secure children's home in Wales. The combined figures for England and Wales are presented as the main figures, as cross-border placements mean that Welsh children may be accommodated in English secure children's homes and vice versa. Figures for England are available separately in the Statistical First Release.

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## 8. Data Quality and Uses of Data

Information on data quality issues and the uses made of the data on children accommodated in secure children's homes is available in a separate document available on the publication webpage.

## 9. Methodology

A detailed account of the methods used to collect and calculate the data used in this publication is available in a separate document on the publication webpage.

## 10. National Statistics

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.

## 11. Related Publications

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### **Ofsted**

Ofsted publishes official statistics biannually in November and May on [children's social care providers and places](#). This includes data on the maximum number of places a provider may offer at any one time. Secure children's homes are one of a number of types of provider that they cover.

We check the number of approved places in our collection against the maximum number of places for each of the 16 secure children's homes in England reported by Ofsted. We check against the data published in May which covers data at 31 March.

### **Ministry of Justice**

The Ministry of Justice publishes [youth custody data](#) monthly on children and young people within secure children's homes, secure training centres (STCs) and young offender institutions (YOIs).

While this publication from the Department for Education is concerned with children accommodated in secure children's homes, the Ministry of Justice publishes statistics on the population in custody of children and young people within secure children's homes, young offender institutions and secure training centres. Also, the Ministry of Justice data does not include children placed in a secure children's home on a welfare basis.

From the Ministry of Justice publication, only the figures on children in secure children's homes are comparable with figures in this publication. We can compare the under 18 secure population accommodated in SCHs as at March 2014 from table 2.4 Accommodated in SCHs of the Ministry of Justice publication with those children accommodated in a criminal context in this Department for Education publication. The former shows 118 children accommodated (provisional data) and the latter 125. There are



some small differences in definitions and methodology which can explain the difference between the two publications:

- i) The Ministry of Justice figures are for those accommodated in SCHs under 18 years old, whereas this Department for Education publication includes those accommodated in SCHs that are 18 years old and over.
- ii) The Ministry of Justice figures are a monthly snapshot of the custodial population in the secure estate for children and young people. They are taken on the last Friday of the month or first Friday of the following month, depending on which is nearer to the actual month end and not necessarily the position at 31 March on which this publication is based.
- iii) The Ministry of Justice figures have been drawn from administrative IT systems, which, as with any large scale recording system, are subject to possible errors with data entry and processing and can be subject to change over time. The specific system used is the internal YJB placements system (eAsset, formerly known as SACHs) which is populated by the YJB upon placements of children. Whereas the Department for Education's figures are taken from local records held by secure children's homes which are based on their own administrative IT systems which, as with any administrative recording system, maybe subject to possible errors with data entry and processing and can be subject to change over time.

Both the Department for Education and Ministry of Justice figures are useful in their own right. The Department for Education's figures provides a comparable annual time series of data on secure children's homes sourced directly from them, and includes some figures on children detained or sentenced and placed by the Youth Justice Board in a secure children's home. The Ministry of Justice figures focus on the population in custody overall, including children placed in a secure children's home.

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**Research report**

A research report, titled '[Understanding the Market for Secure Children's Homes](#)' was undertaken by the Childhood Wellbeing Research Centre in September and October 2011, as part of the centre's programme of rapid-response work for the Department for Education on issues of immediate policy relevance.

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**Rest of the UK**                      Figures on the number of children accommodated in secure children's homes in Scotland are published in the [Children's and Social Work Statistics Scotland](#) publication.

Northern Ireland does not produce statistics relating specifically to secure accommodation.

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**Children's homes data pack**                      The Department for Education produce a [data pack on children's homes](#).

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**Previous publications**                      [Links to previous publications](#).

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## 12. Got a query? Like to give feedback?

We would like to know more about our users and would encourage and welcome any feedback on how the data is used. Comments on any issues relating to this publication are also welcomed and encouraged. If you would like to be involved in future user engagement consultations then please do get in touch. Any enquiries should be addressed to the following:

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