



Department  
for Education

# **Children accommodated in secure children's homes 31 March 2015**

**Methodology document**

# Contents

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Background   | 3 |
| Methodology  | 5 |
| Data cleaning                                      | 5 |
| Data processing                                    | 6 |
| Production of Statistical First Release            | 6 |
| Process Map  | 8 |
| Annex A: Secure Accommodation Data Collection Form | 9 |

## Background

---

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 2015 along with historical data from previous years' collections. Data on young offender institutions and secure training centres are published separately; see related information section of the accompanying quality and uses document which is available on the publication webpage.

---

Secure children's homes

Secure children's homes provide care in a secure setting for the most vulnerable looked after children and young offenders with challenging and complex needs, including sometimes severe behavioural and emotional difficulties. Children are placed into the homes either by their local authority (a "welfare placement") or via the youth justice system (a "justice" placement). There are 14 secure children's homes in England; 13 are managed by local authorities and one by a charity (Nugent Care). Although only 13 local authorities 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 14 English homes, 6 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 on a spot-purchase basis by individual local authorities. The [secure children's homes website](#) has further information on the 15 homes included in this SFR.

---

---

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.

---

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.

---

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.

---

## Methodology

The secure homes return their data as at 31 March to DfE via a data collection form, a copy of which can be found at Annex A. This form collects information on eight areas:

1. Number of approved places (Item 1)
2. Number of places in use or available for use (Item 2)
3. Number of approved places contracted to the Youth Justice Board (YJB) (Item 3)
4. Number of children accommodated (Item 4)
5. Sex of children (Items 5a and 5b)
6. Age of children (Items 6a-h)
7. Length of stay (Items 7a-f)
8. Type of placement (Items 8a-c)

## Data cleaning

A number of validation checks are carried out on the data once it is returned to DfE:

- The number of places in use or available for use (Item 2) should be less than or equal to the number of approved places (Item 1)
- The number of approved places contracted to the YJB (Item 3) should be less than or equal to the number of approved places (Item 1)
- The number of children accommodated (Item 3) should be less than or equal to the number of approved places (Item 1) and the number of places in use or available for use (Item 2)
- The total number of males (Item 5a) and females (Item 5b) should be equal to the number of children accommodated (Item 4)
- The total number of children in each age group (Items 6a-h) should be equal to the number of children accommodated (Item 4)
- The total number of children by length of stay (Items 7a-f) should be equal to the number of children accommodated (Item 4)
- The total number of children in each type of placement (Items 8a-c) should be equal to the number of children accommodated (Item 4)

We also check where the number of places available is less than the number of places approved what the reason for this is. This can be for a number of reasons, for example, refurbishment, staff sickness, implementing new processes and procedures.

Data is also compared to previous years to ensure there are no unusual changes.

In addition to the above we also make checks against other related publications:

- [Ofsted's Official Statistics 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 (Item 1) in our collection against the maximum number of places for each of the secure children's homes in England reported by Ofsted. Ofsted's data is published annually in July (previously in November and May). We check against their data which will be published in July which covers data at 31 March at the link above.
- [Ministry of Justice Youth Custody Data](#): The Ministry of Justice publishes monthly statistics on children and young people within secure children's homes (SCHs), secure training centres (STCs) and young offender institutions (YOIs). We compare the total number of children detained or sentenced and placed by the Youth Justice Board (Item 8a) and those remanded (Item 8b) in our collection against the March monthly total for secure children's homes at the above link.

For more information on related publications please refer to the accompanying quality and uses document which is available on the publication webpage.

## Data processing

Once all secure children's homes have submitted their data and the validation checks listed above have been carried out, the data is collated into one spread sheet ready for analysis.

## Production of Statistical First Release

The SFR contains 3 tables:

**Table 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 2015.

**Table 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 2015.

**Table 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 2015.

Data in tables 1 and 2 cover secure children's homes in England and Wales. Table 3 covers secure children's homes in England only. Table 2 is the only table to contain home-level information. Data is taken directly from the data collection form. Additional calculations are made to form the percentages shown in the tables.

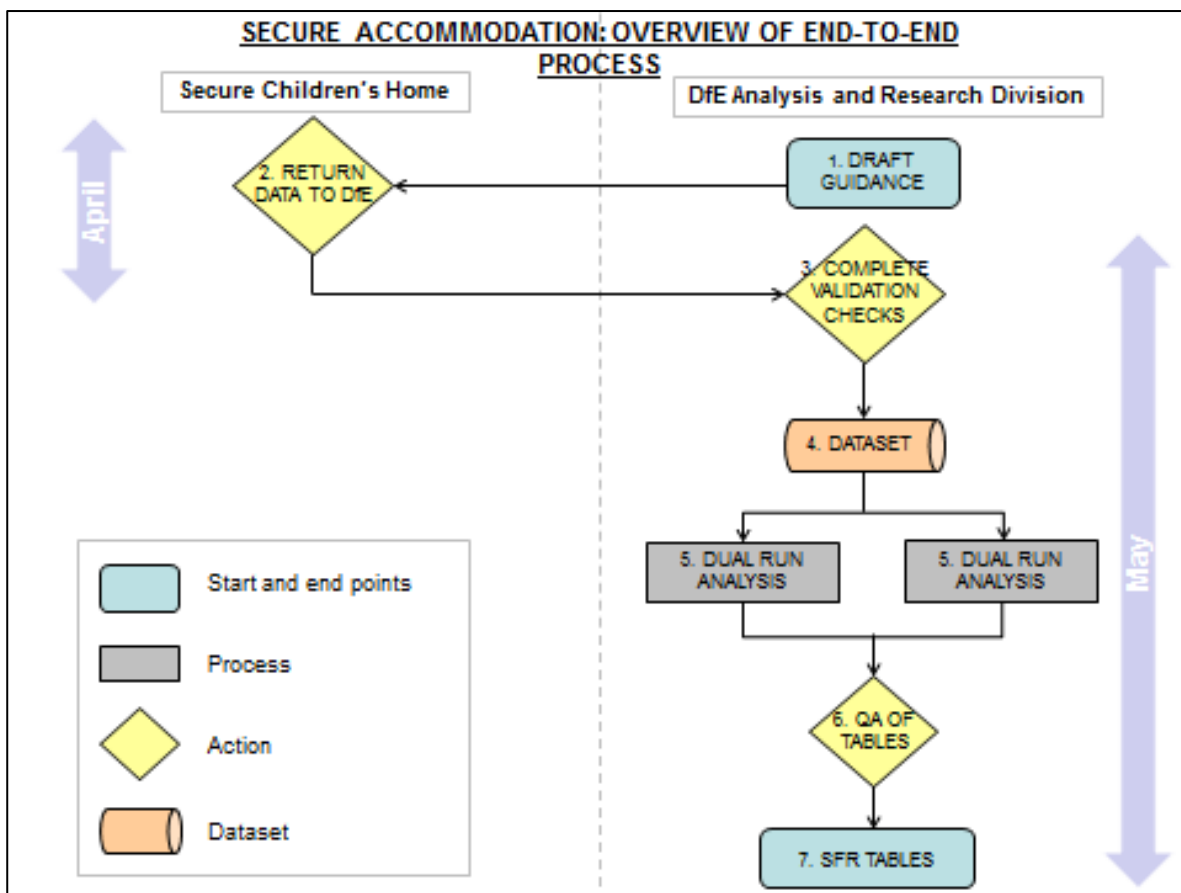
When reviewing the tables, please note the following:

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| 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 rule applied in these circumstances would be to suppress the next smallest data item. This suppression is consistent with the <a href="#">Departmental statistical policy</a> . |
| 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%.  |
| Zeros                       | Where any number is shown as zero (0), the original figure submitted was zero.  |
| Symbols                     | A dot has been used to signify where data is not applicable.  |
| 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.  |

# Process Map

The process map shown in Figure 1 covers the end to end process of the secure accommodation return, from data collection through to publication of the SFR.

**Figure 1: Overview of end to end process of Secure Accommodation collection and publication**





# Annex A: Secure Accommodation Data Collection Form

Department for Education  
 Children Accommodated in Secure Children's Homes 31 March 2015  
 Secure Accommodation Return (SA1)

Each item of this return refers to the position at 31 March 2015

|   |                      |    |
|---|----------------------|----|
| 1. Number of places approved for use                              | <input type="text"/> | 1  |
| 2. Number of places in use or available for use                   | <input type="text"/> | 2  |
| 3. Number of approved places contracted to YJB                    | <input type="text"/> | 3  |
| 4. Number of children accommodated                                | <input type="text"/> | 4  |
| 5. Sex of children accommodated                                   |                      |    |
| Number of males accommodated                                      | <input type="text"/> | 5a |
| Number of females accommodated                                    | <input type="text"/> | 5b |
| 6. Age of children accommodated                                   |                      |    |
| Number aged under 12  | <input type="text"/> | 6a |
| 12  | <input type="text"/> | 6b |
| 13  | <input type="text"/> | 6c |
| 14  | <input type="text"/> | 6d |
| 15  | <input type="text"/> | 6e |
| 16  | <input type="text"/> | 6f |
| 17  | <input type="text"/> | 6g |
| 18 and over   | <input type="text"/> | 6h |
| 7. Length of stay (as at 31 March) of children accommodated       |                      |    |
| Number accommodated for less than 1 month                         | <input type="text"/> | 7a |
| 1 month or more but less than 3 months                            | <input type="text"/> | 7b |
| 3 months or more but less than 6 months                           | <input type="text"/> | 7c |
| 6 months or more but less than 12 months                          | <input type="text"/> | 7d |
| 12 months or more but less than 24 months                         | <input type="text"/> | 7e |
| 24 months or more   | <input type="text"/> | 7f |
| 8. Type of placement*   |                      |    |
| Child detained or sentenced and placed by the Youth Justice Board | <input type="text"/> | 8a |
| Child placed by local authority in a criminal justice context     | <input type="text"/> | 8b |
| Child placed by local authority on welfare grounds                | <input type="text"/> | 8c |

\*Please record the basis that applies at 31 March 2015, not on entry.



Department  
for Education

© Crown copyright 2015

This publication (not including logos) is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

To view this licence:

visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3)

email [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk)

write to Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London, TW9 4DU

About this publication:

enquiries [www.education.gov.uk/contactus](http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus)

download [www.gov.uk/government/publications](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications)

Reference:



Follow us on Twitter:  
[@educationgovuk](https://twitter.com/educationgovuk)



Like us on Facebook:  
[facebook.com/educationgovuk](https://facebook.com/educationgovuk)