



Department
for Education

Looked after children in independent or semi-independent placements

February 2020

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Summary

National figures on children looked after (CLA) in England living independently or in semi-independent living accommodation are published in the [children looked after statistics release](#). There has been growing attention to the use of these placements and the need for more data to provide additional insights into these settings. This document, and accompanying time series, provides further information on children in these placements from 31 March 2010 to 2019.

Headline messages

- There were 6,180 CLA living independently or in semi-independent living accommodation at 31 March 2019. This is an increase of 80% from 3,430 at the same time in 2010.
- There is a higher proportion of children in these placements who were unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) (43% living independently and 36% in semi-independent accommodation) compared to the national average.
- The majority CLA living independently or in semi-independent accommodation are aged 16 and over (99% and 97% at 31 March 2019 respectively) and male (72% and 70% at 31 March 2019 respectively).
- Compared to the national average, a higher proportion of these children are on voluntary agreements under S20 (72% living independently and 70% in semi-independent accommodation compared to 18% of all CLA at 31 March 2019) and in private provision (76% and 77% for children living independently or in semi-independent accommodation respectively, compared to 35% of all CLA at 31 March 2019).
- A high proportion of these children move into these placements soon after entering care (37% living independently and 39% in semi-independent accommodation at 31 March 2019 moved into their placements within 1 week of starting to be looked after).

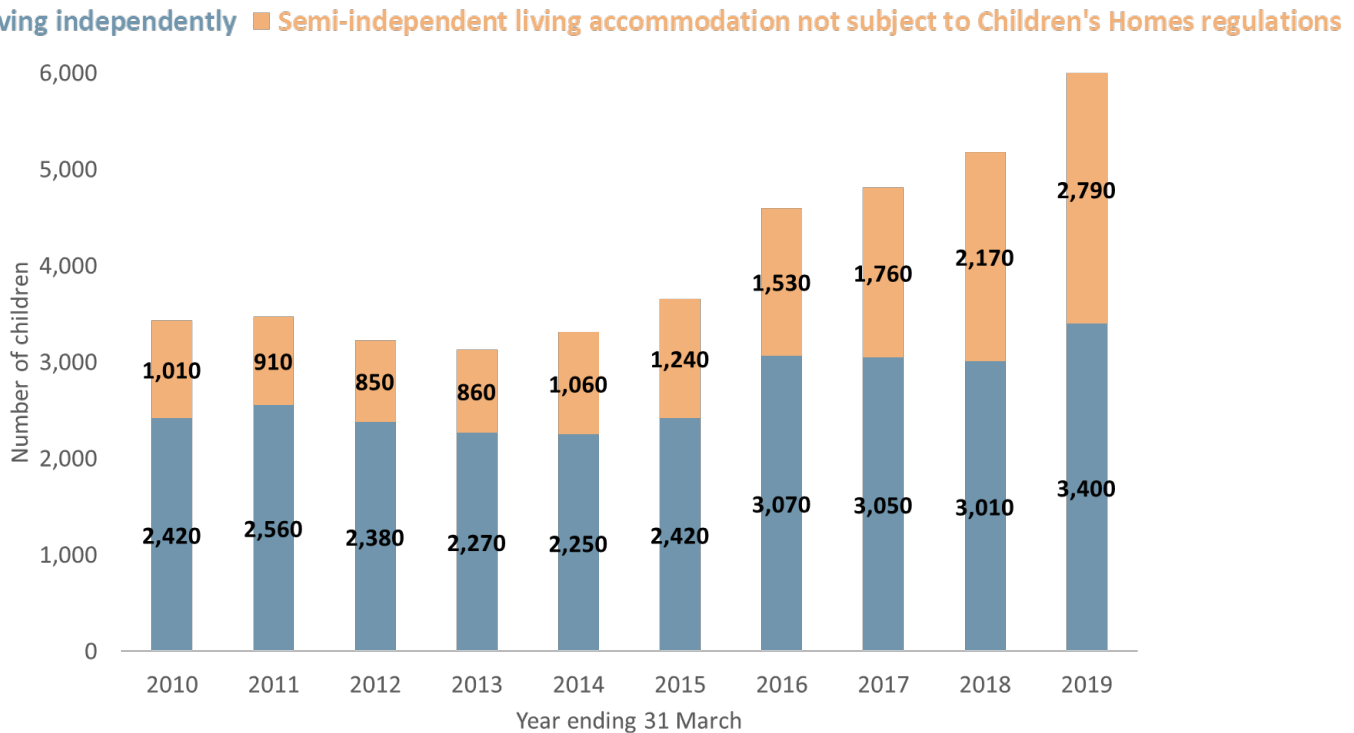
This is an ad-hoc release and will not be produced annually.

Main Findings

1. Number of children at 31 March

There were 6,180 CLA living independently or in semi-independent living accommodation at 31 March 2019. This is an increase of 80% from 3,430 at the same time in 2010.

Figure 1: CLA in independent or semi-independent accommodation, as at 31 March



Source: SSDA903

Looking at the number of children across the year in these settings, there were 12,880 CLA in independent or semi-independent accommodation during 2018-19.

2. Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC)

A higher proportion of children living independently or in semi-independent accommodation at 31 March 2019 were UASC (43% and 36% respectively) compared to all CLA (6%). At a national level the majority of UASC are male (90%), and aged 16 and over (85%).

The proportion of children who were UASC has increased since 2018 for those living independently (from 36%) and in semi-independent accommodation (from 32%). This follows the national increase of UASC by 11% since 31 March 2018. Between 31 March 2018 and 2019, 65% of the increase in children living independently and in semi-independent living accommodation was due to the increase in UASC in these settings.

Table 1: CLA in independent or semi-independent accommodation by UASC status, as at 31 March 2019

31 March 2019		
UASC	Number of children	Percentage
Living independently	3,400	100
UASC	1,460	43
Not UASC	1,940	57
Semi-independent living accommodation not subject to Children's Homes regulations	2,790	100
UASC	990	36
Not UASC	1,800	64

Source: SSDA903

3. Age at 31 March

The majority of children living independently or in semi-independent accommodation were aged 16 and over (99% and 97% at 31 March 2019 respectively), with a small number of children in the 10 to 15 age group. Across both placement types, 6,090 (98%) of the CLA in independent or semi-independent accommodation were aged 16 and over, and 100 (2%) were under 16.

Looking across the year, there were 660 CLA in independent or semi-independent accommodation during 2018-19 who were aged under 16 when their placement started¹. This is 5% of CLA in these settings during 2018-19.

There has been an increase in the proportion of children aged 16 and over in semi-independent accommodation since 2010 (from 94%), in line with the increasing number of older children entering care.

Table 2: CLA in independent or semi-independent accommodation by age, as at 31 March 2019

31 March 2019		
Age at 31 March (years)	Number of children	Percentage
Living independently	3,400	100
Under 1	0	0
1 to 4	0	0
5 to 9	0	0
10 to 15	20	1
16 and over	3,370	99
Semi-independent living accommodation not subject to Children's Homes regulations	2,790	100
Under 1	0	0
1 to 4	c	c
5 to 9	0	0
10 to 15	70	3
16 and over	2,710	97

Source: SSDA903

Note: Where a very small number of 1 to 4 year old children are shown as being in semi-independent accommodation, this is likely to be when they're with their mother who is also looked after and in this placement setting.

¹ The placement could have started prior to 1 April 2018.

4. Gender

There was a higher proportion of boys living independently (72%) or in semi-independent accommodation (70%) at 31 March 2019 compared to all CLA (56%).

This is being driven by the higher proportion of UASC in these settings. When looking at the proportion of boys in these settings who were not reported as being UASC, it is in line with the national average (56%).

Table 3: CLA in independent or semi-independent accommodation by gender, as at 31 March 2019

31 March 2019		
Gender	Number of children	Percentage
Living independently		
Total	3,400	100
Male	2,440	72
Female	960	28
UASC	1,460	100
Male	1,350	93
Female	110	7
Not UASC	1,940	100
Male	1,090	56
Female	850	44
Semi-independent living accommodation not subject to Children's Homes regulations		
Total	2,790	100
Male	1,960	70
Female	830	30
UASC	990	100
Male	940	94
Female	60	6
Not UASC	1,800	100
Male	1,020	57
Female	770	43

Source: SSDA903

5. Ethnic origin

There was a higher proportion of Asian or Asian British, black or black British, and other ethnic groups living independently or in semi-independent accommodation than the national average (4%, 8% and 4% respectively) at 31 March 2019. This is also being driven by the higher proportion of UASC in these settings.

Table 4: CLA in independent or semi-independent accommodation by ethnicity, as at 31 March 2019

31 March 2019		
Ethnic origin	Number of children	Percentage
Living independently	3,400	100
White	1,540	45
Mixed	250	7
Asian or Asian British	320	9
Black or Black British	690	20
Other ethnic groups	570	17
Refused or information not yet available	40	1
Semi-independent living accommodation not subject to Children's Homes regulations	2,790	100
White	1,330	48
Mixed	220	8
Asian or Asian British	230	8
Black or Black British	610	22
Other ethnic groups	380	13
Refused or information not yet available	20	1

Source: SSDA903

6. Legal status

The majority of children living independently or in semi-independent accommodation were on a voluntary agreement under S20 (72% living independently and 70% in semi-independent accommodation compared to 18% of all CLA at 31 March 2019), as opposed to the majority of CLA at 31 March 2019 being on a care order (75%).

Table 5: CLA in independent or semi-independent accommodation by legal status, as at 31 March 2019

31 March 2019		
Legal status	Number of children	Percentage
Living independently	3,400	100
Care Order	960	28
Placement Order or Freed for adoption	c	c
Voluntary agreements under S20	2,430	72
Detained for child protection	0	0
Youth Justice legal statuses	10	-
Semi-independent living accommodation not subject to Children's Homes regulations	2,790	100
Care Order	810	29
Placement Order or Freed for adoption	0	0
Voluntary agreements under S20	1,960	70
Detained for child protection	0	0
Youth Justice legal statuses	10	1

Source: SSSA903

7. Placement provider

The majority of children living independently or in semi-independent accommodation were in private provision (76% and 77% respectively) at 31 March 2019, a much higher proportion than the national average for all CLA (35%).

The use of private provision for those living independently has increased since 2010 (from 67%) and the proportion of children in LA own provision has decreased (from 23%).

Table 6: CLA in independent or semi-independent accommodation by placement provider, as at 31 March 2019

31 March 2019		
Placement provider	Number of children	Percentage
Living independently	3,400	100
Own provision (by the Local Authority)	520	15
Other Local Authority provision	60	2
Other public provision (e.g. by a PCT etc)	40	1
Private provision	2,600	76
Voluntary/third sector provision	180	5
Semi-independent living accommodation not subject to Children's Homes regulations	2,790	100
Own provision (by the Local Authority)	280	10
Other Local Authority provision	30	1
Other public provision (e.g. by a PCT etc)	70	3
Private provision	2,150	77
Voluntary/third sector provision	250	9

Source: SSDA903

8. Locality of placement

The proportion of children placed inside the local authority boundary is slightly higher for children living independently (62%) and slightly lower for those in semi-independent accommodation (55%) compared to the national average (58%) at 31 March 2019.

For children living independently, the proportion of children placed inside the local authority boundary has decreased gradually since 2010 (from 68%).

Table 7: CLA in independent or semi-independent accommodation by locality of placement², as at 31 March 2019

31 March 2019		
Locality of placement	Number of children	Percentage
Living independently	3,400	100
Inside boundary	2,100	62
Outside boundary	1,300	38
Semi-independent living accommodation not subject to Children's Homes regulations	2,790	100
Inside boundary	1,550	55
Outside boundary	1,240	45

Source: SSDA903

Note that distance from home has not been reported here due to the large number in the 'not known or not recorded' group. Where a child is UASC a home postcode is not submitted and the distance from home is therefore 'unknown'.

² Placement locality denotes whether or not the placement at 31 March is within the geographical boundary of the responsible local authority.

9. Time to start of placement

For both placement types a high proportion of CLA at 31 March 2019 moved into these placements within 1 week of starting to be looked after (37% living independently and 39% in semi-independent accommodation).

This indicates that these could be temporary placements and may have been the child's first placement.

Table 8: CLA in independent or semi-independent accommodation by time to start of placement, as at 31 March 2019

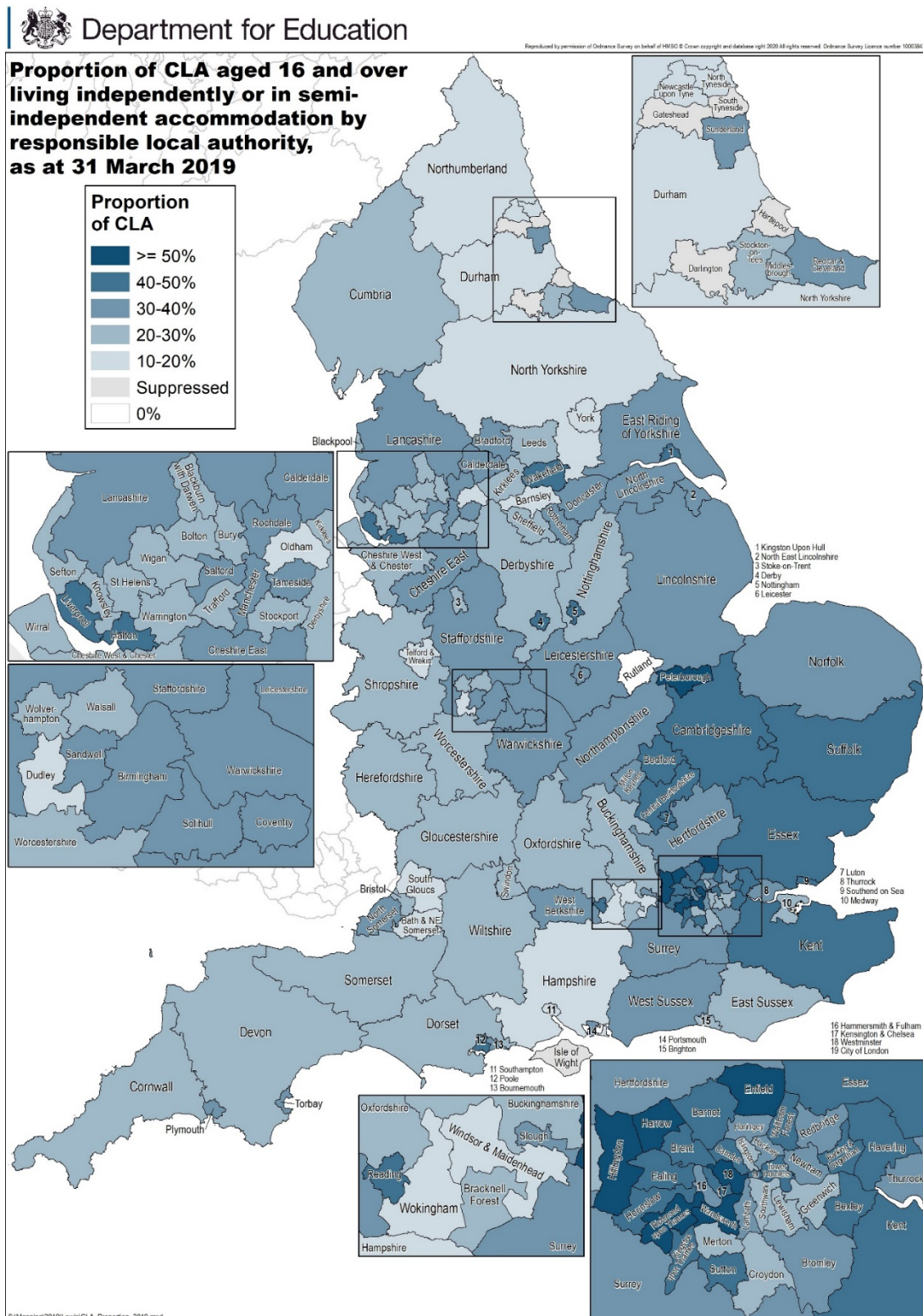
31 March 2019		
Number of days between period of care and placement start date	Number of children	Percentage
Living independently	3,400	100
Less than 1 week	1,240	37
1 week to 6 months	570	17
6 months to 1 year	270	8
1 to 2 years	370	11
2 to 3 years	240	7
3 to 5 years	270	8
5 to 10 years	300	9
More than 10 years	130	4
Semi-independent living accommodation not subject to Children's Homes regulations	2,790	100
Less than 1 week	1,080	39
1 week to 6 months	390	14
6 months to 1 year	220	8
1 to 2 years	310	11
2 to 3 years	220	8
3 to 5 years	240	8
5 to 10 years	210	8
More than 10 years	120	4

Source: SSDA903

10. CLA in independent or semi-independent accommodation by local authority

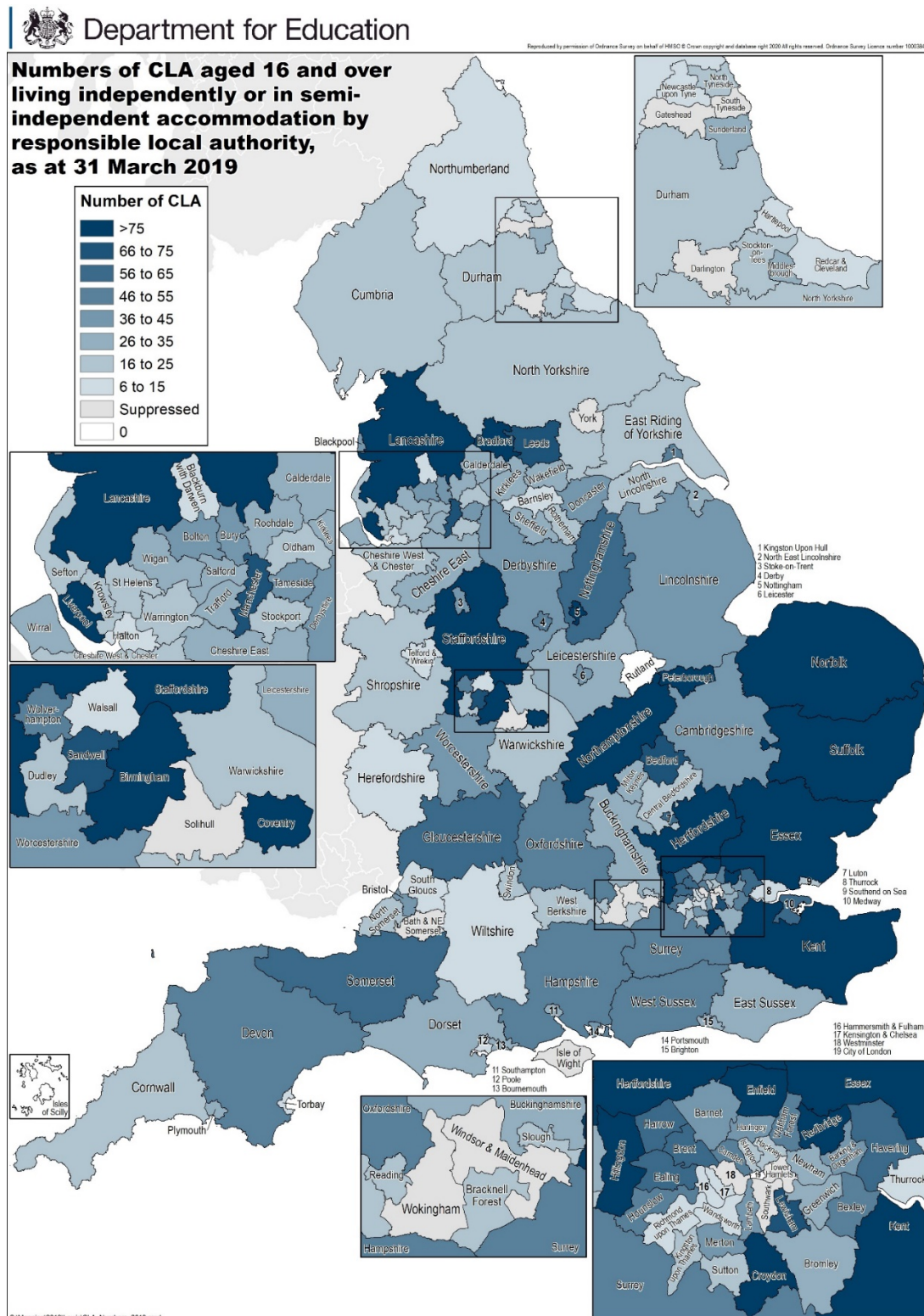
The East of England and London were responsible for the highest proportion of CLA aged 16 and over living independently or in semi-independent accommodation at 31 March 2019.

Figure 2: Proportion of CLA aged 16 and over in independent or semi-independent accommodation by responsible local authority, as at 31 March 2019



Local authority of placement includes both children placed within the local authority boundary and those from another local authority. London had the highest proportion of the these placements at 31 March 2019. The North East had the fewest proportion of these placements.

Figure 3: Number of CLA in independent or semi-independent accommodation by local authority of placement, as at 31 March 2019



Technical information

Methodology

This analysis focuses on children living independently or in semi-independent living accommodation. For further information on these placement types can be found in the [children looked after in England guidance](#).

The figures are based on data from the SSDA903 return which is collected each spring from all local authorities in England. This publication is the main source of information on the numbers of CLA in England.

Quality and methodology information can be found on the CLA statistics collection page. These provide further information on the data sources, their coverage and quality and explains the methodology used in producing the data, including how it is validated and processed. The tables produced here provide further breakdowns from the SSDA903 dataset of the national figures published in the CLA statistical release, covering the years 2010 to 2019.

Further information can be found on the [children looked after in England including adoption collection](#) page.

Rounding conventions

1. Rounding and suppression is applied to the data.
2. Figures have been rounded to the nearest 10. Note that figures may not sum to the total due to rounding.
3. For confidentiality purposes, numbers from one to five inclusive have been replaced by a 'c'. To ensure the suppressed number cannot be identified by simple arithmetic secondary suppression may be required. Where any number is shown as zero (0), the original figure submitted was zero (0). The following convention has been used:

”.” means not applicable

“-” means negligible – used to represent a percentage below 0.5%

Percentages have been rounded to whole numbers but where the numerator was five or less or the denominator was 10 or less, they have been suppressed and replaced by a 'c'. Note that percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.



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