

INFORMATION  
ANALYSIS  
DIRECTORATE



# Children in Care in Northern Ireland 2018 - 19



*Statistical Bulletin*

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## Reader Information

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Target Audience	Directors of Children's Services, Chief Executives of Boards and HSC Trusts in Northern Ireland, health care professionals, academics and social care stakeholders.
Main uses of document	The main use of this data is to monitor the delivery of social care services to children, to help assess Trust performance, for corporate monitoring, to inform and monitor related policy, and to respond to parliamentary/assembly questions. The bulletin is also used by academics/ researchers, the voluntary sector and those with an interest in children in care.
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Price	FREE

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### **Our Vision and Values**

- *Provide up-to-date, quality information on children and adult social services and community health;*
- *to disseminate findings widely with a view to stimulating debate, promoting effective decision-making and improvement in service provision; and*
- *be an expert voice on social care information.*

[www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/dhssps-statistics-and-research-social-services/social-care-statistics](http://www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/dhssps-statistics-and-research-social-services/social-care-statistics)

Statistics and research for the **Department of Health** is provided by the Information and Analysis Directorate (IAD). IAD is responsible for compiling, processing, analysing, interpreting and disseminating a wide range of statistics covering health and social care.

The statisticians within IAD are out posted from the Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency (NISRA) and the statistics are produced in accordance with the principles and protocols set out in the [Code of Practice for Official Statistics](#).

IAD comprises four statistical sections: Hospital Information, Community Information, Public Health Information & Research and Project Support Analysis.

This publication is produced by Community Information Branch.

### **About Community Information Branch**

The purpose of Community Information Branch (CIB) is to promote effective decision making in children and adult social services by providing quality information and analysis.

We collect, analyse, and publish a wide range of community information that is used to help monitor the delivery of personal social services policy. Information collected by CIB is used to assess HSC Trust performance, for corporate monitoring, policy evaluation, and to respond to parliamentary/assembly questions.

Information is widely disseminated through a number of regular key statistical publications and ad hoc reports, details of which are available online.

## Introduction

[The Children \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1995](#) (the Children Order) is the principal statute governing the care, upbringing and protection of children in Northern Ireland. It affects all those who work and care for children, whether parents, paid carers or volunteers. The Children Order emphasises the unique advantages to a child being brought up within his or her own family. In practice, this means that the Order sees families as a major way of supporting and helping children. Health and Social Care Trusts have the power and in some circumstances the duty, under the Children Order, to help children by providing services to their families.

A child can be referred to social services for a variety of reasons. When a child is referred, social services undertake an initial assessment to determine if that child is a 'child in need' as defined by the Children Order. If a child is considered to be a child in need, services should be offered to assist the child's parents/carers to meet that identified need. Should there be concerns that a child may be suffering or at risk of suffering 'significant harm' Social Services will conduct an investigation under Article 66 of the Children Order and respond appropriately. A Child Protection Case Conference may be convened and the child's name included on the Child Protection Register and a Child Protection Plan drawn up to safeguard the child. If there are significant concerns that indicate authoritative intervention is required Social Services may make application to the Court for a Legal Order to enable them to afford an appropriate level of safeguarding to the child. This may include removing a child from its family and into the care of the HSC Trust.

Children are taken into care for a variety of reasons, the most common being to protect the child from abuse or neglect. In other cases their parents could be absent or may be unable to cope due to disability or illness.

### **The OC2 Community Information Return**

This publication presents the latest figures on children and young people in care in Northern Ireland. The OC2 community information return is specifically designed to collect information on children while they are in care, expressly for those who have been in care continuously for 12 months or longer. Together with two additional returns, OC1, which collects information on educational attainment of care leavers aged 16 to 18, and OC3, which covers the circumstances of care leavers at the time of their 19th birthday<sup>1</sup>, they provide a comprehensive series of data on children and young people in care in Northern Ireland.

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<sup>1</sup> Please see Appendix A: Technical Notes for further details on the OC publications

## The 2018-19 Data Collection – REDUCED OUTPUT

The 2018-19 “Children in care” data collection could not be completed in full. Although all children in the cohort have been included, limited information was available for two-fifths of the children. The analysis in this publication is therefore significantly reduced compared with previous years.

The 2018-19 OC2 data collection, that this publication is based on, was hampered by a number of events.

1. A Civil Service wide IT issue delayed the collection for several weeks at its outset.
2. Industrial action by registered social workers, specifically targeted the non-completion of specific statistical returns, including the OC2.
3. Covid-19 impeded remedial actions taken to resolve the issues caused by points 1 and 2.

The returns were fully completed for around 60% of the relevant cohort of children while data for the remaining 40% was subsequently obtained through electronic downloads from administrative systems. These downloads could only capture a fraction of the information on the OC2 form, and none of the granular information that allows for in-depth analysis.

<b>Analysis included in the 2018-19 publication</b>	<b>Analysis not included in the 2018-19 publication</b>
HSC Trust	Multiple Deprivation Measure & Rurality
Age	Disability
Gender	Dependants
Religion	Health assessments/checks
Ethnicity	Placement changes
Placements	Statutory reviews
Placements by Age	Pre-school provision
Placements by Trust	Personal Education Plan
Type of school information	EOTAS
Special Educational Needs	Attendance, absenteeism and suspensions <sup>2</sup>
	School changes
	Educational attainment
	Cautions / convictions /substance abuse
	School leavers

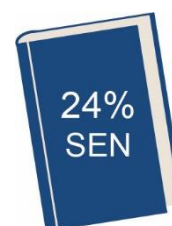
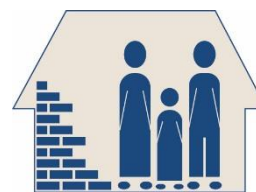
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<sup>2</sup> Attendance, absenteeism and suspension data has since 2016 been collected through the Department of Education's annual attendance survey. This survey was not carried out in 2018/19. Provision is in place for it to be carried out for 2019/20 and this data will be included in next year's "Children in Care" publication.

## Key Findings

**This bulletin presents findings from annual information returns of children who have been in care continuously for twelve months or longer.**

- At 30 September 2019, 2,638 children and young people had been in care continuously for 12 months or longer in Northern Ireland;
- Foster care was the most common placement for children in care, with 81% placed with foster carers;
- Of the school aged children and young people included in this report, 49% attended Primary School the previous school year, 38% were at Non-Grammar School, 4% attended a Grammar School and 8% attended Special School;
- Having a statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) continues to be more prevalent among the children in care of school age (24%) compared with the general school population (5.5%).



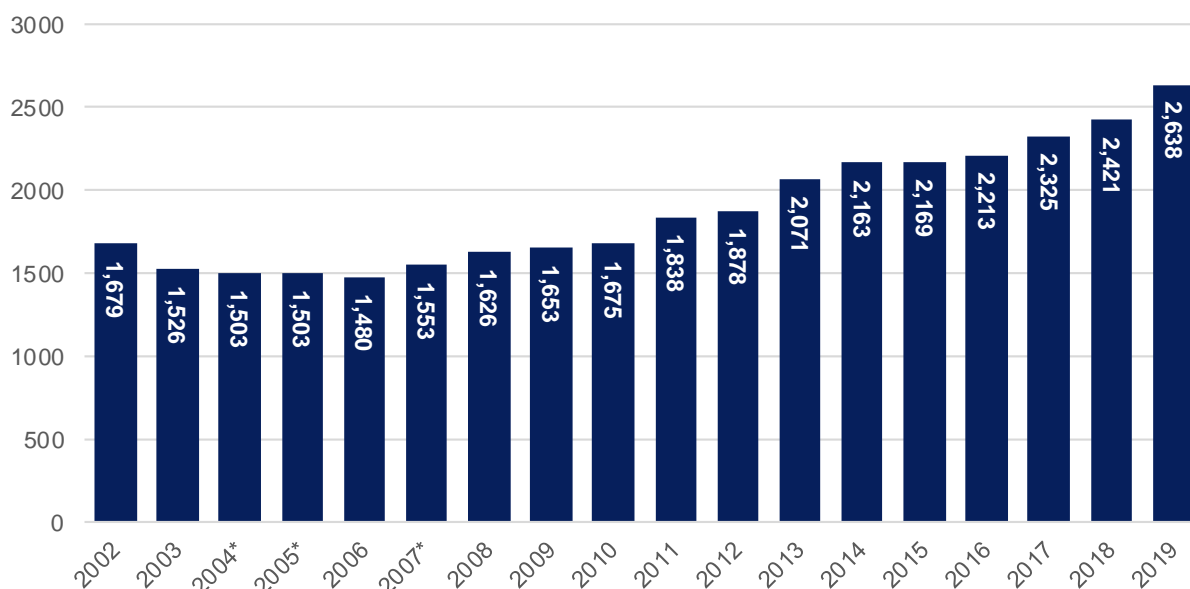
# 1. Children in Care in Northern Ireland 2018-19

## 1.1. Number of children in care for 12 months or longer

At 30 September 2019, 2,638 children and young people who were in care in Northern Ireland had been continuously in care for more than a year<sup>3</sup>. Figure 1.1 outlines how the number of children in care for at least 12 months has risen year on year since 2006. The number of children in care in 2019 was 9% higher than in the previous year, and represented a 78% increase from 2006 (1,480).

The 2,638 children and young people that had been in care continuously for 12 months or longer represented 78% of all children in care at 30 September 2019<sup>4</sup>, and a rate of 60 children per 10,000 population aged under 18<sup>5</sup>. The rate was higher than that in 2018 when 55 children per 10,000 population were in care. Of recent years, the lowest rate occurred in 2006 when 34 children per 10,000 population had been in care for 12 months or longer.

Figure 1.1 Number of children in care continuously for 12 months or longer at 30 September (2002 to 2019)



\*Number estimated for these years

<sup>3</sup> This figure may differ slightly from other sources due to categorisation and exclusions.

<sup>4</sup> Delegated Statutory Functions Returns, 30 September 2019

<sup>5</sup> 2019 Mid-Year Population Estimates, NISRA 2020



## 1.2. Trust Profile

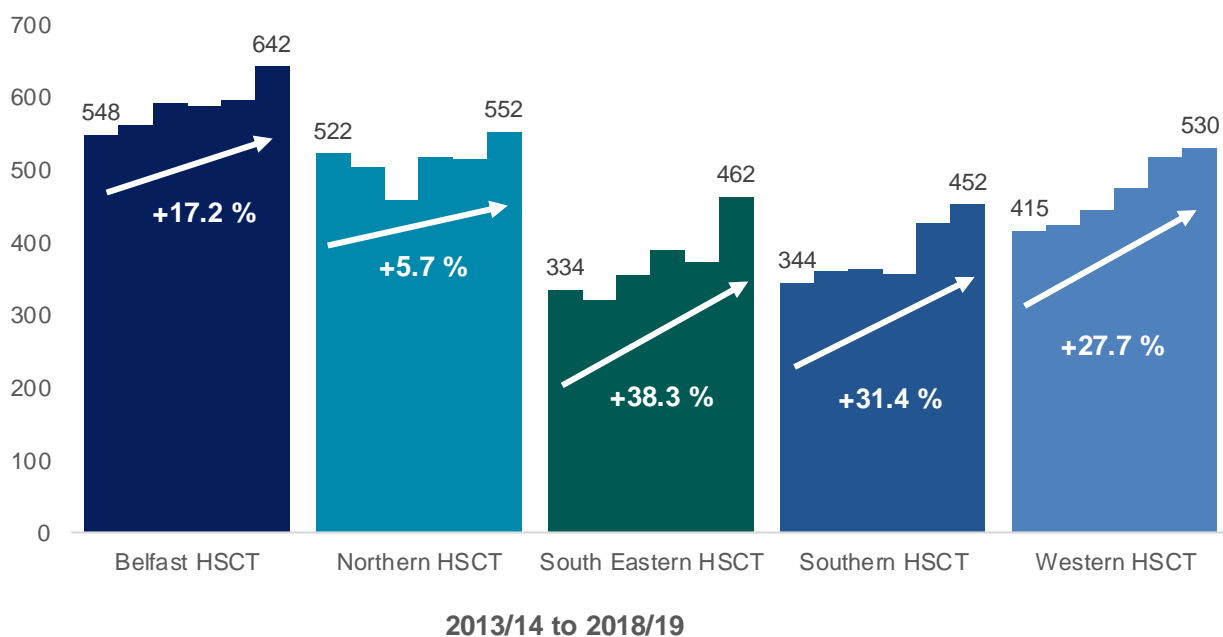
Table 1.1 sets out the number of children in care for 12 months or longer at 30 September 2019 by Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts. Overall the Belfast HSC Trust had the largest proportion of these children and young people (24%).

Table 1.1 Number of children and young people in care continuously for 12 months or longer at 30 September 2019

HSC Trust	Number of children in care for 12 months or longer (n)	Percentage of children in care for 12 months or longer (%)
Belfast HSC Trust	642	24%
Northern HSC Trust	552	21%
South Eastern HSC Trust	462	18%
Southern HSC Trust	452	17%
Western HSC Trust	530	20%
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>2,638</b>	<b>100%</b>

Figure 1.2 sets out the trend figures of looked after children for 12 months or longer over the last six years. It shows that between 2013/14 and 2018/19 all Trusts had an increase in this cohort of children. The South Eastern HSC Trust saw the largest increase amounting to 38%, which was mainly caused by a large increase in the last year. The variance in these figures between the Trusts will to some extent relate to their different population structures and geographies.

Figure 1.2 Change in the number of children in care for 12 months or longer between 2013/14 and 2018/19 by HSC Trust

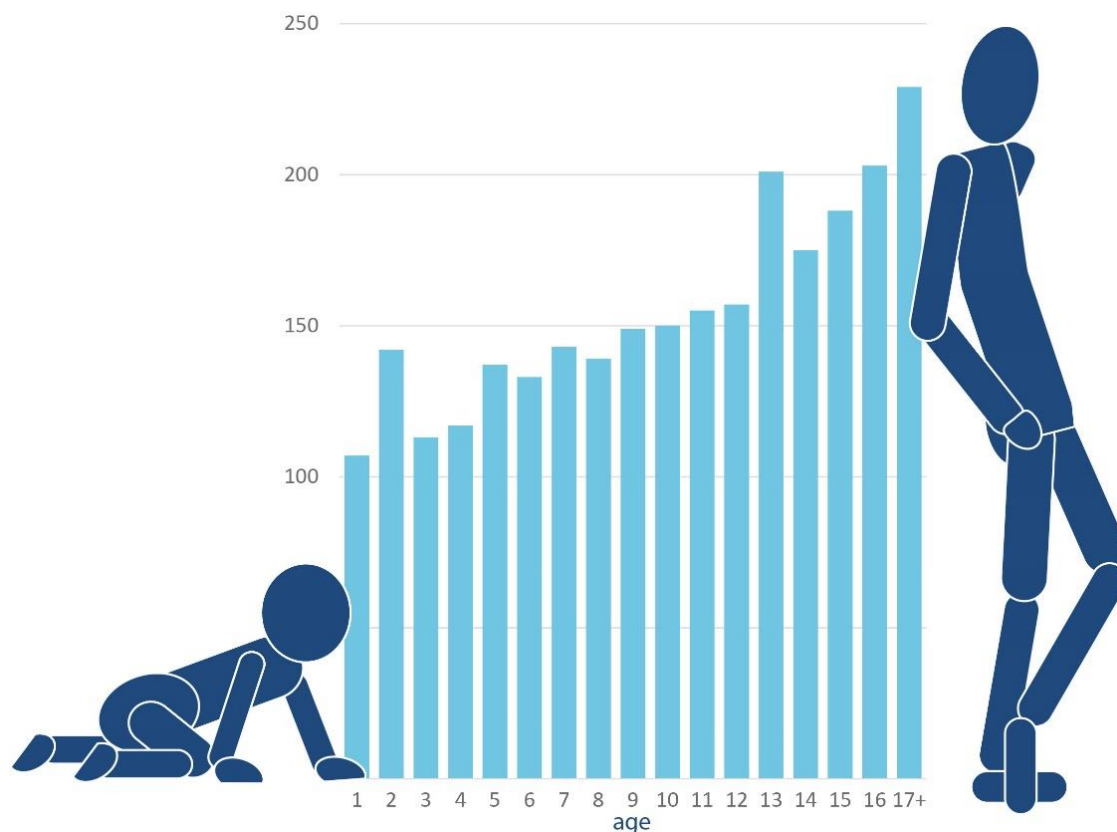


### 1.3. Age and Gender

At 30 September 2019, 54% of the children and young people who had been in care for 12 months or longer were male (1,416) and 46% were female (1,222).

Similar to 2017/18, some 18% of the children were of pre-school age (1-4 years), 38% were of primary school age (5-11 years), 27% of post-primary school age (12-15) and 16% were 16 years or older. There were only minor differences in the age breakdown between boys and girls.

Figure 1.3 Number of children in care for 12 months or longer by age at 30 September 2019



### 1.4. Religion and Ethnicity

There was a higher proportion of looked after children from Catholic community background (53%) than Protestant (37%), with 277 (11%) reported as having either 'No', 'Unknown' or 'Other' religious denomination<sup>6</sup>. This difference would be expected as the 2011 Census results showed that the Catholic population has a younger age distribution than Protestants<sup>7</sup>. These figures are similar to the previous year.

HSC Trust differences were observed in relation to religion, with around four fifths of the children in the Western HSC Trusts having Catholic background (79%), compared to 30% in the Northern HSC Trust. The South Eastern Trust had the highest proportion with protestant

<sup>6</sup> See tables for details

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.nisra.gov.uk/Census/detailedcharacteristics\\_stats\\_bulletin\\_2011.pdf](http://www.nisra.gov.uk/Census/detailedcharacteristics_stats_bulletin_2011.pdf)

background (48%) and the Northern HSC Trust had the highest proportion of No, Unknown or Other religion (24%).

The ethnic grouping of the children in 2018/19 indicated that 94% (2,468) were White, and of the remaining 6% (170), 45 were Irish or Roma Travellers, 30 were Black, 7 were Chinese, and 88 were of mixed, 'other' or not known ethnic backgrounds. Belfast HSC Trust had the lowest population of white ethnic background (89%) whereas the South Eastern and Western HSC Trusts had 96%.

## 2. Placements

### 2.1. Placement at 30 September 2019

Children in care can be cared for in a variety of placement types depending on the individual child's situation and needs<sup>8</sup>. For the purpose of this report, five main placement categories will be used; **non-kinship foster care** (including children placed for adoption<sup>9</sup>), **kinship foster care**<sup>10</sup> (including emergency foster care), **residential care, placed with parent** and **'other' placement types**.

At 30 September 2019, 44% (1,161) of the children in care for 12 months or longer were placed in non-kinship foster care, 37% (973) were placed in kinship foster care, 11% (293) were placed with a parent, 6% (149) were in residential care, and 2% (62) were in 'other' placement types. These are similar proportions to those in 2018.

Of the 1,161 children in non-kinship foster care, 75 were placed for adoption. A similar number of children were placed for adoption with 'others' (37 children) compared to those placed with their former foster carers (38 children).

Of the 62 children in 'Other' placement types, 19 (31%) were living independently, with the remaining 43 placed in assessment centres, community placements, supported accommodation, hospitals, juvenile justice centres and other placements not elsewhere described.

### 2.2. Placements by HSC Trust

Table 4.1 below shows the main placement categories, broken down by HSC Trusts. For all Trusts, apart from the Western HSC Trust, the most prevalent placement was non-kinship foster care followed by kinship foster care. In the Western HSC Trust, Kinship care was the most prevalent placement category. The South Eastern HSC Trust had lower proportions of children placed with parents and slightly higher proportions of children in residential care compared with the other Trusts.

Table 2.1 Placement type by HSC Trust year ending 30 September 2019

Placement Type	Northern Ireland	Belfast Trust	Northern Trust	South Eastern Trust	Southern Trust	Western Trust
Non-kinship foster care*	44%	42%	44%	52%	48%	36%
Kinship foster care	37%	38%	36%	32%	30%	45%
Placed with parent	11%	13%	11%	6%	15%	10%
Residential care	6%	6%	5%	8%	5%	5%
Other	2%	1%	3%	2%	2%	4%
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

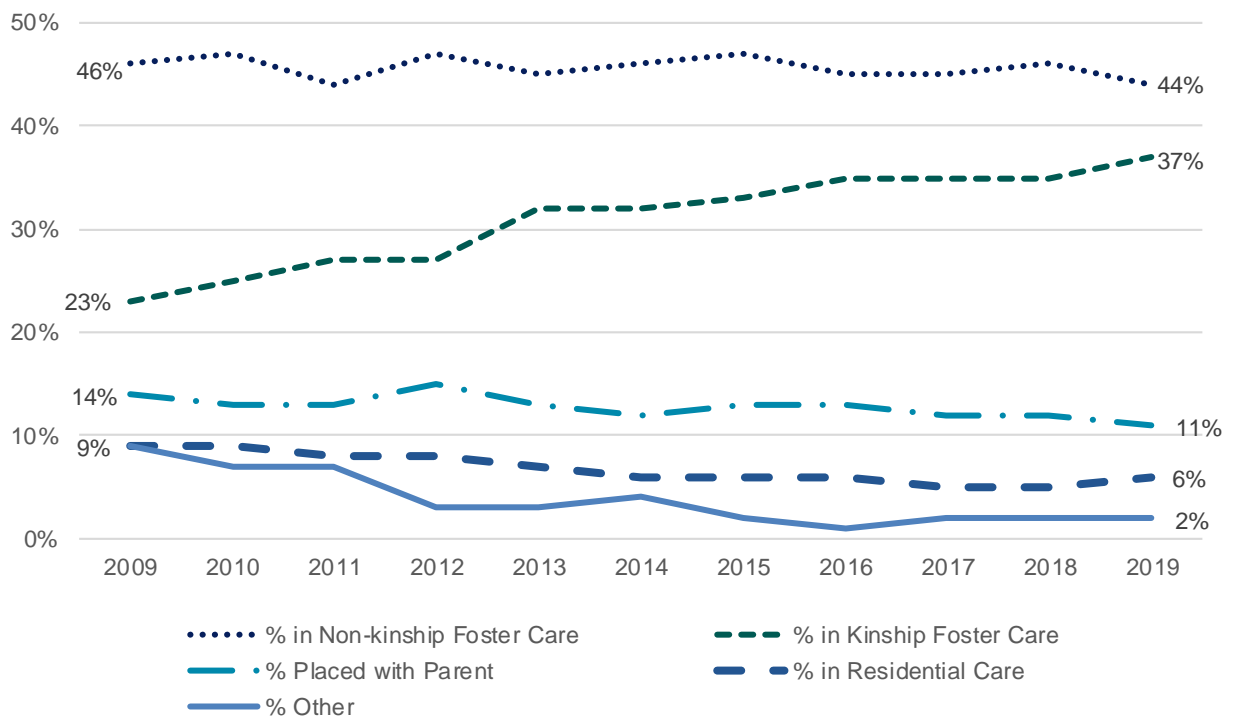
\* Non-kinship foster care includes children placed for adoption.

<sup>8</sup> Appendix C sets out descriptions of different placement types

<sup>9</sup> Being placed for adoption is a stage in the adoption process and a child will still be considered as looked after until the granting of an Adoption Order

<sup>10</sup> In this publication "kinship foster care" covers formal kinship care arrangements as opposed to informal kinship care which are private arrangements. Please see appendix C for further details

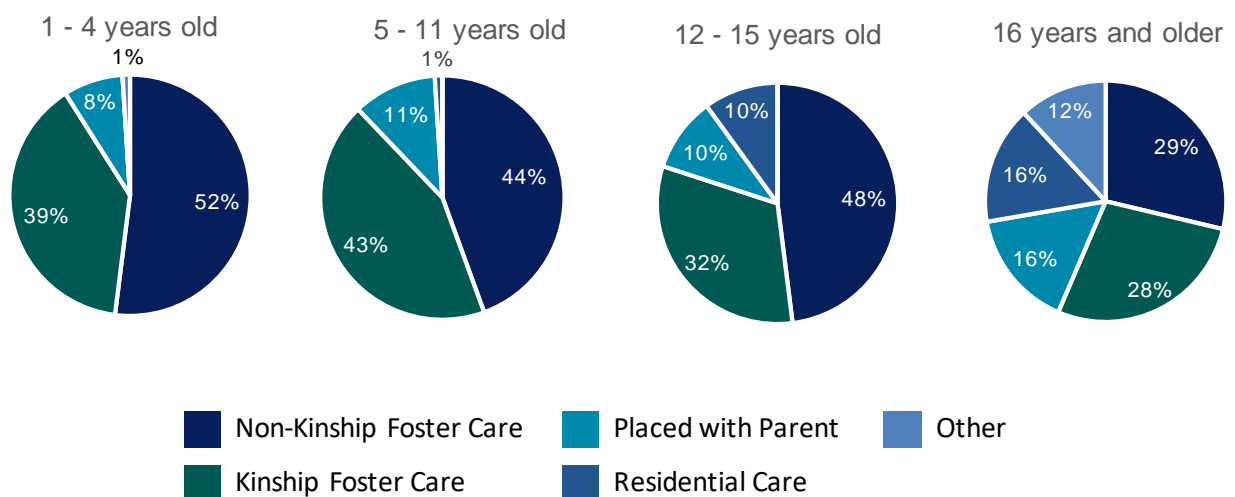
**Figure 2.1 Placement of children in care continuously for 12 months or longer at 30 September 2010 - 2019**



### 2.3. Placement by age

The age of the child in care may influence the suitability of placement types. For all age groups, non-kinship foster care and kinship foster care were the main placement types. The circumstances of every child is unique, however it is generally understood that where possible children under eleven years old will not be placed in residential care. This is reflected in the charts below (Figure 4.2). Those aged 16 & over, as may be expected, showed the greatest variation in placement type.

**Figure 2.2 Placement type at 30 September 2019 by Age**



# 3. School Age Children

*Education is a vital component of all children's lives and can impact on their chances for future employment and their general wellbeing. This applies particularly to looked after children who continue to have lower educational achievements than their peers in the general school population. There are a number of initiatives in place to maximise the benefit of education and make real improvements in outcomes for these children and young people.*

*Family & Children's Policy Directorate  
Department of Health*

## 3.1. Compulsory School Age

Compulsory school age in this publication refers to all children whose date of birth fell on or between 2 July 2002 and 1 July 2014, whether or not the child was in a position to attend school, i.e. any child who received or should have received full-time schooling during the school year.

The number of children and young people of compulsory school age, who had been in care for 12 months or longer at 30 September 2019 was 1,944. Of these, 414<sup>11</sup> children in care identified in the OC2 returns could not be linked with school data provided by the Department of Education. The total number of school aged children included in the following analyses is therefore 1,530, some 79% of the cohort<sup>12</sup>.

Of those children of compulsory school age in care continuously for at least 12 months at 30 September 2019, 49% attended Primary School the previous school year, 38% were at Non-Grammar School, 8% were at Special School and 4% attended a Grammar School<sup>13</sup>.

*Historically, school related information reported in this publication has been obtained from the child's school by social workers. Since 2015/16, a data sharing agreement has been in place between Department of Education and Department of Health in regards to looked after children's school information. This relates to specific, but not all, school information covered in this publication.*

*Further details on the variables covered by this agreement, the linking rates and changes to methodology can be found in the Technical Notes.*

<sup>11</sup> The non-linking were mainly due to the issues completing the data collection, set out in the beginning of this report. In addition, some of the non-linking was also due to that children were either not attending school or attending school outside of Northern Ireland.

<sup>12</sup> Please see Technical Notes for further details.

<sup>13</sup> Information on type of school was missing for 4 children.

### 3.2. Children with statements of Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Children have special educational needs if they require special educational provision. Learning difficulty means the child has significantly greater difficulty in learning than children of similar age, and/or has a disability which hinders using everyday educational facilities. Special educational provision is different from, or additional to, that made for children of comparable age. Further information is provided in the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs (SEN)<sup>14</sup>.

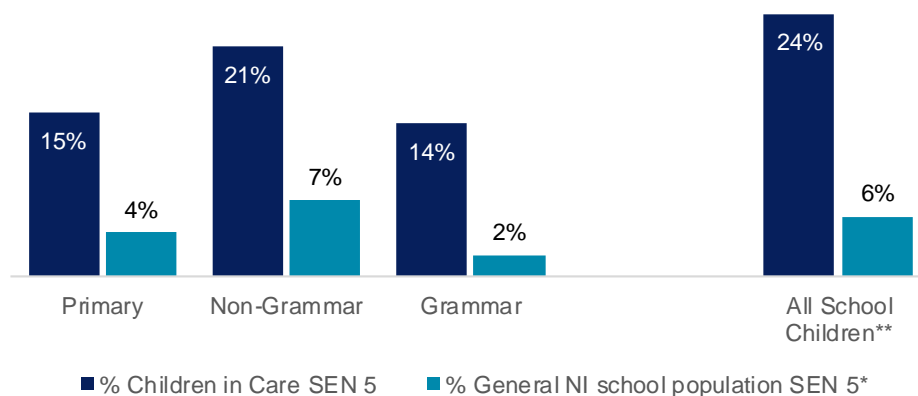
Of the children and young people who had been in care for twelve months or longer and were of compulsory school age in 2018/19, 61% received some form of special educational needs support in school (SEN stages 1-5)<sup>15, 16</sup>. This was substantially higher than the general school population in Northern Ireland<sup>17</sup> (19.3%), however similar to children in care in England, where 56% were identified with a special educational need<sup>18</sup>.

In 2018/19, almost a quarter of children and young people in care were covered by a statement of SEN (SEN stage 5, 24%), which again was substantially higher than the general school population in Northern Ireland (5.5%).

With the exception of Special Schools, where 97% of the children had statement of SEN, the proportion of children in care with a statement of SEN was most prevalent in non-grammar schools (21%). Figure 3.1 sets out a comparison with the general school population by school type.

As in previous years, higher proportion of boys (29%) than girls (17%) were covered by a statement of SEN.

**Figure 3.1 Proportion of children in care for 12 months or longer and the general school population with a statements of Special Educational Needs, by school type (2018/19)**



\* Source: "Annual enrolments at schools and in funded preschool education in Northern Ireland, 2019/20", DE

\*\* Includes children in Special Schools

Please note that the children in care figures are based on 79% of the school aged children in this cohort – see Technical Note for more information.

<sup>14</sup> Code of Practice, Department of Education NI <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/review-special-educational-needs-and-inclusion>

<sup>15</sup> Please note that the children in care figures are based on 79% of the school aged children in this cohort – see Technical Note for more information.

<sup>16</sup> Excludes 4 children for whom Special Educational Needs status was not recorded.

<sup>17</sup> Department of Education NI, Enrolments at Schools and in Funded Pre-School Education in Northern Ireland 2019/20

<sup>18</sup> Outcomes for Children Looked After by Local Authorities in England, as at 31 March 2019 – DfE

## Appendix A – Technical Notes

### Data Collection – Reduced output

Please see section at the beginning of this report for details in regards to reduced output.

#### Data Collection

The information presented in this bulletin derives from the tenth collection of 'OC2' annual returns of children and young people in care in Northern Ireland. The returns were provided by each of the five Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland to Community Information Branch (CIB) in the Department of Health (DoH).

Information is entered online by nominated HSC Trust staff using a secure web-based application. Records are anonymised to ensure confidentiality and to protect the identities of individual children. Guidance notes and other documents associated with the OC2 survey are available to view or download from the DoH website:

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/children-care-return-and-quality-report>

#### Looked after children included in this collection

For inclusion in the OC2 returns, children had to be looked after continuously for at least 12 months at 30 September 2019. Children looked after under an agreed series of respite placements were excluded from the survey. As such, the reference period for the present survey was 1 October 2018 to 30 September 2019. This is distinctly different from other statistical collections by the DoH, which are based on the year ending 31 March. The period chosen for OC2 is designed to align with the academic school year.

The main aim of the OC2 returns is to inform on educational attainment for children in care, however it also collects information on a range of other areas such as religion, ethnicity, disability, placement, health assessments, economic activity and criminal convictions (the return is available upon request). Together with its companion returns OC1 (care leavers aged 16-18) and OC3 (care leavers at their 19th birthday), it provides a comprehensive series of data on children and young people in care in Northern Ireland.

#### Change of data source

Historically, school related information reported in this publication has been obtained from the child's school by social workers. To both ease the data collection burden on the social workers as well as streamlining information with that published by Department of Education (DE), and through this ensure improved quality and consistency of data, a data sharing agreement was put in place in 2016 between DE and DoH in regards to children in care. The data supplied from the DE relates to three sources; the School Census; Attendance and School leaver survey.

The information shared covers:

- Attendance (including suspensions)
- Special Educational Needs (SEN)
- School type
- School year

The attendance, suspension and SEN information will be reported on the same way as in previous publications. However, where the new source of information allows for more scrutiny of the figures, additional analysis will be supplied. For example, reason for non-attendance can now be analysed. It also allows for comparison with the general school population on a like for like basis. Furthermore, there is a slight change to the methodology of reporting Key Stage and GCSE attainment information. This is set out in detail below.

#### Linking rate between OC2 returns and DE data 2018-19

Unique linking variables were used to match the OC2 returns with the DE school data without compromising children's identity. However, due to the data collection issues (set out at the beginning of this report), the data linking variables were missing for many of the children and



young people. The linking rate was therefore substantially reduced from previous years. Of the 1,944 children of compulsory school age (5-16) in 2018-19, 79% could be matched between the OC2 and DE datasets;

### Data Quality

The data quality of the results presented in this bulletin is considered to be high. The online data collection system has built in validation checks, where Trust staff correct or amend data as required, and provide appropriate explanations if information is missing. CIB perform further checks, using historical data to monitor annual variations and emerging trends.

Furthermore, the new data source (DE data) removes elements of manual recording and ensures inter-departmental consistency of information.

A detailed quality report for children's community statistics is available on our website at: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/children-care-return-and-quality-report>

### Rounding/Disclosure Conventions

Percentages have been rounded to whole numbers and as a consequence some percentages may not sum to 100.

It has been necessary to suppress other figures whenever it would be possible to calculate the value of a suppressed number by means of simple arithmetic. The rule applied in these circumstances has been to suppress the next smallest data item.

### A National Statistics Publication

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Services Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- are trustworthy;
- have high quality; and
- are of value to the public.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed. The most recent assessment of these statistics, Report 265, can be found at the following link:

<https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/publications-list/?type=assessment-report>

If you have any comments on this publication, please contact:

Community Information Branch  
Department of Health  
Annexe 2, Castle Buildings  
Stormont, BT4 3SQ

Email: [cib@health-ni.gov.uk](mailto:cib@health-ni.gov.uk)  
Tel: 028 90522580

### Related Publications

Statistics on children and young people in care published by other countries in the UK (United Kingdom) can be found as detailed below.

#### **Scotland**

*Children's Social Work Statistics* are produced annually by the Scottish Government. The most recent publication was published on 26 March 2019, and is available at:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/childrens-social-work-statistics-2017-2018/>

*Educational Outcomes for Scotland's Looked After Children* is an annual summary of the educational outcomes of Scotland's looked after children. The most recent publication was published on 1 September 2020, and is available at:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/republication-childrens-social-work-statistics-scotland-2018-19/>

### **Wales**

*Children Looked After by Local Authorities, Year Ending 31 March* by Local Authorities in Wales are produced annually by the Local Government Data Unit and the Welsh Assembly Government. The most recent publication was published on 30 October 2019 and is available at:

<https://gov.wales/children-looked-after-local-authorities-april-2018-march-2019>

### **England**

*Outcomes for Children looked after by local authorities in England, 31 March* is produced annually by the Department for Education. Figures for the year were published on 26 March 2020, and are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/outcomes-for-children-looked-after-by-local-authorities-31-march-2019>

*Children looked after in England (including adoption and care leavers) year ending 31 March* is published annually by the Department for Education. The latest publication was published on 5 December 2019, and is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption-2018-to-2019>

Other statistics produced by the DoH relating to looked after children and other areas of children's social care as detailed below can be found on:

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/dhssps-statistics-and-research/childrens-services-statistics>

## Appendix B – Coverage of OC2 2018-19

The table below specifies the subset of children and young people covered by each category of the OC2 collection.

<b>OC2 return 2018/19</b>		
<b>Definitions of the groups of children covered by each data item</b>		
<b>Data item on OC2</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Which children are included?</b>
	Scope of OC2	All children who were looked after on 30 September 2019 and on that date had been looked after continuously for at least a year
	Compulsory school age	Children whose birth dates are between 2/7/2002 and 1/7/2014 inclusive
<b>46</b>	Pre-school provision	Children whose dates of birth are in the range 2/7/2014 – 1/7/2015
<b>49 &amp; 50</b>	Development assessments and 6 monthly health assessments	Children aged 4 years or younger at 30 September 2019, i.e. whose dates of birth are 1/10/2014 or later
<b>51</b>	Annual health assessments	Children aged 5 years and over at 30 September 2019, i.e. children whose date of birth is 30/9/2014 or earlier
<b>57</b>	Offending	Children aged 10 and over at 30 September 2019, i.e. whose date of birth is 30/9/2009 or earlier

## Appendix C – Placement definitions

Below are explanations of different types of care placements.

*Foster care* is when a child is placed by a Trust, or by its parents (or those with parental responsibility), with other persons who will care for, and rear the child. Foster Carers are approved by a Health and Social Care Trust and receive an allowance for their caring responsibilities from the approving Trust. In this publication it will be differentiated between those foster care placements that are *kinship foster care* arrangements and those that are *non-kinship foster care* arrangements.

*Kinship care (formal)* is when a looked after child is placed by a Trust with a relative, friend or other person with a prior connection to the child, who will care for and rear the child. A person with a prior connection could be someone who knows the child in a professional capacity such as a child-minder, a teacher or a youth worker although these are not exclusive categories. Kinship carers are approved by a Health and Social Care Trust and receive an allowance for their caring responsibilities from the approving Trust. *Kinship care (informal)* is when a child who is not 'looked after' is placed with a relative or friend on a voluntary basis with no involvement of social services. This group of children is not covered in this publication.

*Placed for adoption* refers to a child that has been approved to be adopted and is placed with his/her prospective adoptive parents pending affirmation from the courts. It is distinguished between children who are placed for adoption with their former foster carers and those who are placed for adoption with 'others' (not former foster carers). Unless otherwise stated, children placed for adoption will be included in 'Non-kinship foster care' in the analysis in this report.

*Residential care* is when a looked after child is placed by a Trust in a children's home. Residential care for children / Children's Homes are there to ensure that the needs of children are met when they cannot live with their own family. They are a place for children to develop and grow, as well as providing food, shelter, and space for play and leisure in a caring environment. Children's Homes look after children with many different needs.

*Secure accommodation* is provided for children on a short term basis when it is likely that the child, in any other setting, will injure him/herself or abscond and is likely to suffer significant harm when absconding. Unless otherwise stated, children in secure accommodation will be included in 'Residential care' in the analysis of this report.

*Placed with parent* refers to children for whom a Care Order exists and who are placed with their parents, a person who is not a parent but who has parental responsibility for the child or where a child is in care and there was a residence order in force with respect to him/her immediately before the care order was made, and who are placed with a person in whose favour the residence order was made.

*Emergency foster care* is when a looked after child is placed by a social worker in an emergency (short term) arrangement. All emergency foster care placements covered in the 2014/15 OC2 survey collection related to kinship carers. Unless otherwise stated, children placed in emergency foster care will therefore be included under 'kinship foster care' in the analysis of this report.

*Independent living arrangements* refers to children placed in independent accommodation. This would refer to young people between 16-18 years old. Independent living arrangements can further be categorised into with or without formal support from Trust. Unless otherwise stated, children in independent living arrangements will be included in 'Other placements' in the analysis of this report due to the small number of children in these living arrangements within the cohort studied.

*Other placements* refers to any placement reported that are not covered by other categories given. This may include children in assessment centres, boarding schools etc. and also special arrangements relating to one Trust. The categories included may therefore change from year to year.

## Appendix D – Tables

All tables can be found in excel format at:

[www.health-ni.gov.uk/articles/looked-after-children](http://www.health-ni.gov.uk/articles/looked-after-children)

Table 1a	Children in care for at least 12 months at 30 September 2019
Table 1b	Demographic trends of children in care for at least 12 months (2011 – 2019)
Table 2	Educational information for children in care continuously for at least 12 months for the year ending 30 September 2019
Table 3	Special educational needs trend data for children of compulsory school age continuously in care for at least 12 months (2011 - 2019)
Table 4	Children in care for at least 12 months at 30 September 2019 by placement type

Statistical bulletins published by Community Information Branch are available to download from the DoH website at:

[www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/dhssps-statistics-and-research-social-services/social-care-statistics](http://www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/dhssps-statistics-and-research-social-services/social-care-statistics)

Community Information Branch  
Department of Health  
Annexe 2, Castle Buildings  
Stormont, BT4 3SQ Belfast, Northern Ireland

E-mail: [cib@health-ni.gov.uk](mailto:cib@health-ni.gov.uk)  
Phone: (028) 90522580