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Accredited official statistics

Main findings: children's social care in England 2024

Updated 15 July 2024

Applies to England

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This is the main findings report for the [children's social care in England 2024 release](#). The following are also available:

- [underlying data](#)
- [methodology](#)
- [pre-release access list](#)

Summary

This release contains:

- the number of providers of children's social care, and the number of places they are registered for, as at 31 March 2024
- the most recent inspections and outcomes for all regulated and inspected children's social care provision, as at 31 March 2024, and published by 30 April 2024
- outcomes for all regulated and inspected children's social care provision inspections carried out between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024 and published by 30 April 2024
- the number of providers of supported accommodation registrations, and the number of places they are registered for, as at 31 March 2024

Main findings

The number of new children's homes of all types in England continues to rise across all regions: there are now just under 3,500.

As at 31 March 2024, the number of children's homes of all types had increased by 12% and the number of places had increased by 7% compared with 31 March 2023. This continues the long-standing trend of the number of new homes rising faster than the number of new places. Although the number of children's homes increased in all regions this year, homes are still not evenly distributed across England. Similar to last year, the North West accounts for a quarter of all children's homes and almost a quarter of all places.

This year, a higher proportion of children's homes that received a full inspection judgement were rated as outstanding or good compared to last year.

As at March 2024, over 80% of all children's homes had an inspection judgement of outstanding or good compared with just under 80% as at March 2023. Between April 2023 and March 2024, 80% of children's homes received an outstanding or good judgement in their inspection compared with just over 70% last year.

Residential family centres have seen a large proportional increase again this year, with a 26% increase in the number of settings and a 20% increase in potential capacity for the number of families.

Residential family centres represent a small proportion of social care providers and places overall, but the number has continued to increase from last year. There were just under 100 residential family centres as at 31 March 2024, compared with just under 80 last year.

Data on supported accommodation as at 31 March 2024 has been included in the official statistics for the first time.

Supported accommodation is for 16- and 17-year-old looked after children and care leavers, to enable them to live semi-independently. From 28 April 2023, supported accommodation providers in England were required to register with Ofsted. We have included data on these providers in this release.

Introduction

Ofsted reports each year on social care inspections and outcomes for regulated providers and other providers of placements for children in England.

Out of the [nearly 12 million children](#) living in England, just over [400,000 \(3%\)](#) are in the social care system at any one time. Nearly [84,000 of these children are in care](#).

We regulate and inspect providers that offer placements for children in care and children in other types of placements. As at 31 March 2024, there were 4,453 active or suspended providers of these social care services in England. More information about the different types of provider can be found in [Figure 1](#) and in the [glossary](#).

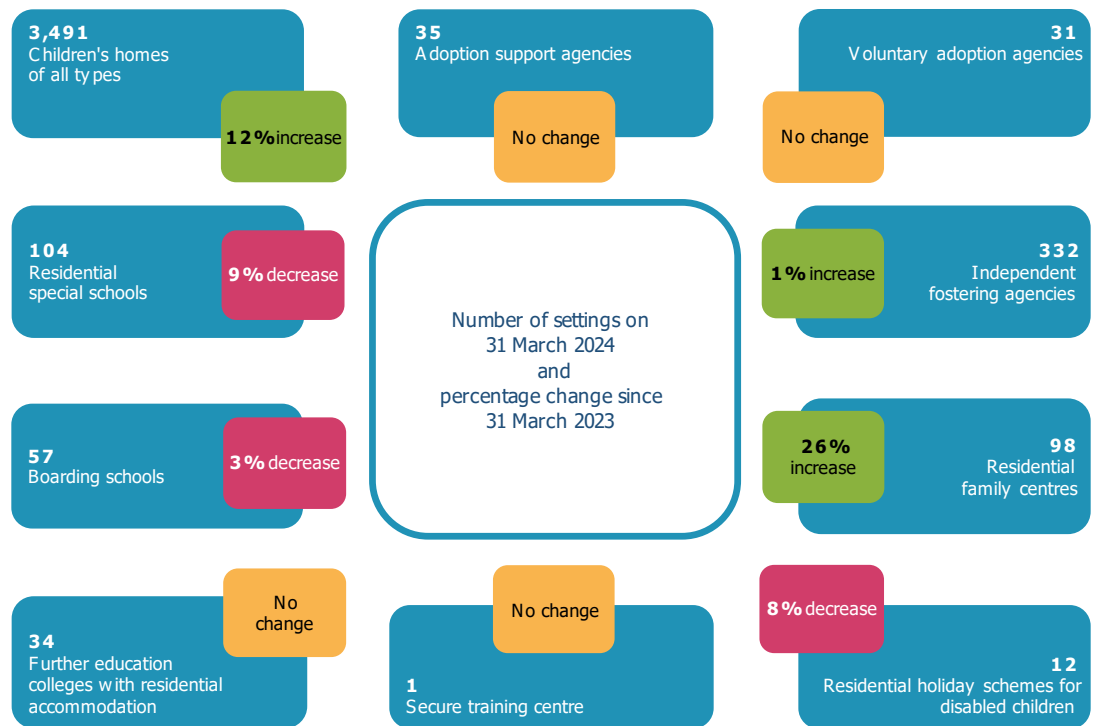
Data on regulatory activity in children's homes and supported accommodation will not appear in the main publication this year. Instead, it will be published as annual management information and commentary located on the [Ofsted children's social care statistics page](#).

Social care providers and places as at 31 March 2024

On 31 March 2024, there were 4,453 active or suspended children's social care providers. This is a 17% increase compared with 31 March 2023, when there were 3,812 providers. The large increase this year can be attributed in part to the registration of supported accommodation providers, which were not previously regulated. Another factor is the increase in children's homes (not including secure children's homes and residential special schools registered as children's homes), which saw a 12% increase in the number of settings and a 9% increase in the number of registered places this year.

Residential family centres represent a much smaller proportion of social care providers and places overall but saw a large proportional increase compared with last year, with a 26% increase in settings (20) and a 20% increase in potential capacity (87).

Figure 1: The number of settings as at 31 March 2024 by provider type, and the change from 31 March 2023



View [data in an accessible format](#).

Supported accommodation

From April 2023, providers of supported accommodation were able to register with Ofsted. Those that submitted a complete application and paid the application fee by 28 October 2023 can operate legally while we decide on their registration. Those that have applied since, or paid the fee after 28 October 2023, must be fully registered to operate.

As at 31 March, there were 258 active supported accommodation providers. Many of these were private (90%), with voluntary and LA providers making up 7% and 3% respectively. The North West had the largest proportion of providers at 21% (54).

In addition to the active and suspended supported accommodation providers, a number of supported accommodation providers had completed their application by

the deadline and were operating legally, even though their registration was not yet completed as at 31 March 2024. For more details, please see the transparency data on [supported accommodation applications](#).

As of 31 March 2024, there have been no inspections judgements of this type of social care provider.

Children's homes of all types

In this section, we report separately on the 3 types of children's homes:

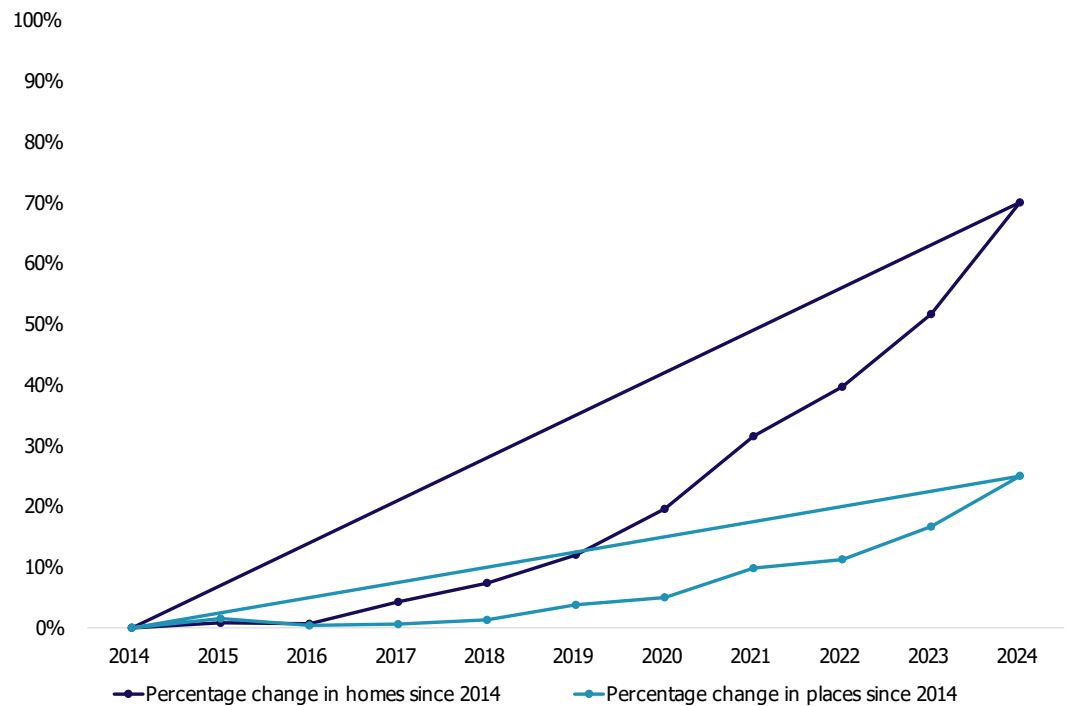
- secure children's homes
- residential special schools registered as children's homes
- children's homes (including short-break-only children's homes)

There were 3,491 children's homes of all types as at 31 March 2024, a 12% increase (372 homes) from the previous year (3,119).

In total, the 3,491 children's homes of all types were registered for 14,486 places. This represents a 7% increase in potential capacity since 31 March 2023, when there were 13,528 registered places in total, compared with a 5% increase last year.

Since 2014, the number of children's homes of all types has increased by 70%, from 2,057 to 3,491. Over the same period, the number of places has increased by a smaller proportion (25%), from 11,594 to 14,486.

Figure 2: Percentage change in the number of children's homes of all types and their potential capacity since 2014



View [data in an accessible format](#).

Secure children's homes

There were 13 secure children's homes as at 31 March 2024, offering a total of 214 places. Of these, 12 are run by local authorities and 1 by a charitable organisation.

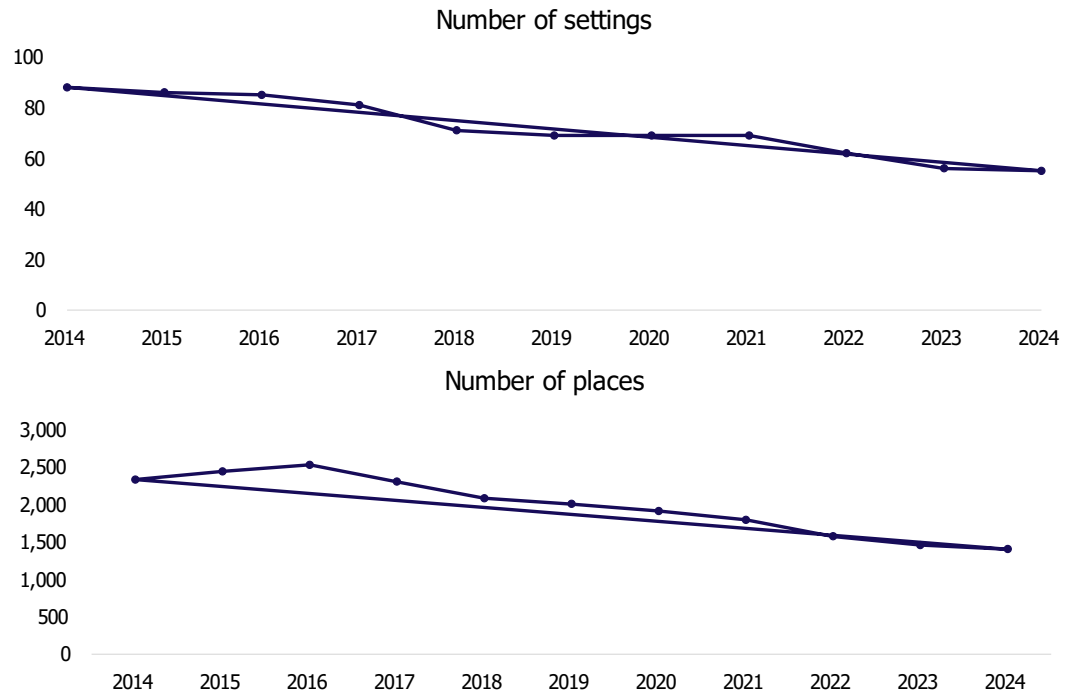
Residential special schools registered as children's homes

As at 31 March 2024, there were 55 residential special schools registered as children's homes, offering 1,402 places. This is a 2% decrease in the number of providers and a 4% decrease in the number of places since March 2023.

This continues the longer-term trend of the steadily decreasing number and potential capacity of residential special schools

registered as children's homes.

Figure 3: The year-on-year decrease in the number of residential special schools registered as children's homes and places since 2014



View [data in an accessible format](#).

Private companies ran most residential special schools registered as children's homes, operating 71% (39) of schools and 62% (870) of places.

Children's homes

Children's home providers (including short-break-only children's homes) and places as at 31 March 2024

There were 3,423 children's homes (excluding secure children's homes and residential special schools registered as children's homes) as at 31 March 2024, a 12% increase (373 homes) from the previous year (3,050). These 3,423 homes were registered

for 12,870 places, a 9% increase from 11,857 at 31 March 2023.

Both the number of homes and places had a higher rate of growth this year than the rate in 2023, when the number of homes grew by 9% and places by 7%.

Children's homes registered within the year were registered for 3 places on average, compared with an average of 4 places among all active or suspended children's homes as at 31 March 2024.

Change in the number of homes by region

As in previous years, children's homes are not distributed evenly across the country. All regions saw an increase in the number of homes and places. As at 31 March 2024, the North West had the most children's homes (866) and places (2,823). London had the fewest settings (220), and the South West had the fewest places (731).

Table 1: The number of children's homes (including short-break-only children's homes) and the number of places as at 31 March 2024 by region

Region	Number of children's homes	Percentage of children's homes	Number of children's home places	Percentage of children's home places
North West	866	25%	2,823	22%
West Midlands	556	16%	1,940	15%
North East,	515	15%	1,983	15%

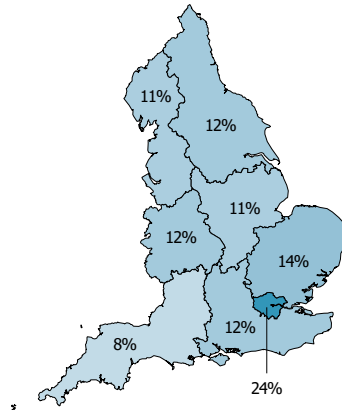
Yorkshire
and the
Humber

East Midlands	379	11%	1,404	11%
South East	368	11%	1,762	14%
East of England	282	8%	1,220	9%
South West	237	7%	731	6%
London	220	6%	1,007	8%
England	3,423	100%	12,870	100%

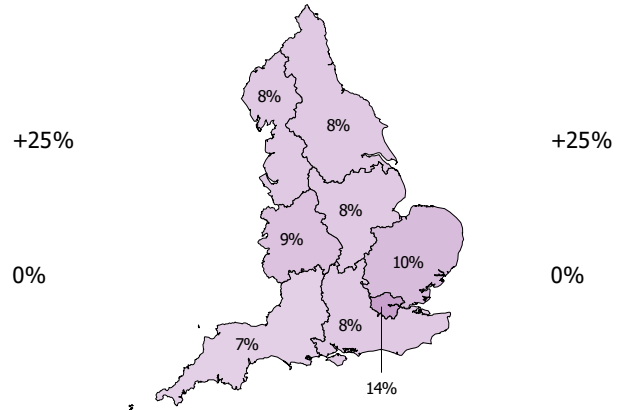
The region with the most substantial proportional growth in the number of settings over the last year was London (43 settings, 24%), while the North West had the highest increase in the number of settings (89 settings, 11%). London and the East of England saw the largest proportional increase in places (14% and 10% respectively).

Figure 4: Percentage change in children’s homes (including short-break-only children’s homes) and places from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, by region

Children's homes



Children's homes places



Note: In both maps, a lighter hue indicates a lower percentage change.

View [data in an accessible format](#).

Number of children's homes (including short-break-only children's homes) by sector

As at 31 March 2024, private companies ran 83% of children's homes (2,824) and provided 77% of places (9,917). Local authorities ran 13% (429) of children's homes and provided 16% of places (2,051).

In the past 5 years, there has been a 70% increase in private-sector homes, a 10% increase in voluntary-run homes and a 7% increase in homes run by local authorities. As at 31 March 2024, private-sector homes accounted for 89% of children's home registrations, voluntary homes for 5% and homes run by local authorities for 6%.

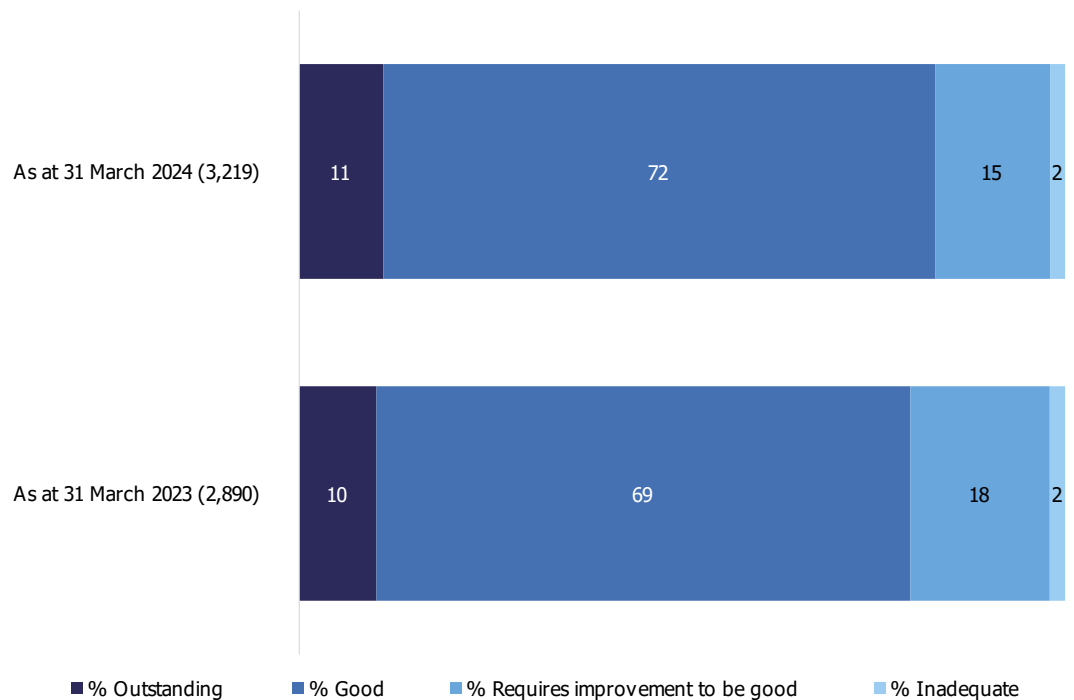
Inspection profile of all types of children's homes as at 31 March 2024

In this section, we report on the 3 types of children’s homes together.

As at 31 March 2024, 92% of all active or suspended children’s homes of all types had an inspection judgement (3,219 out of 3,491).

The proportion of children’s homes of all types judged outstanding or good was 83% as at 31 March 2024. This is a slight increase from 2023, when the proportion was 79%.

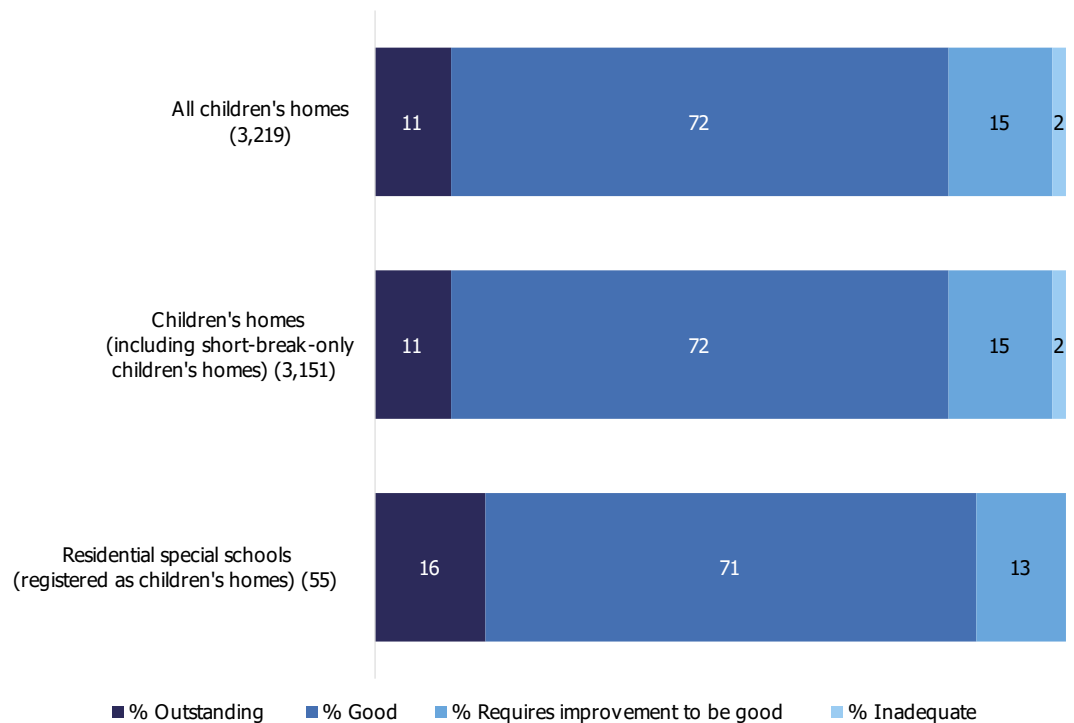
Figure 5: Judgement profile of all children’s homes of all types with inspection outcomes as at 31 March 2024 and 2023



Note: Numbers in brackets represent the number of providers with an overall effectiveness judgement as at 31 March 2023 and 2024.

View [data in an accessible format](#).

Figure 6: Judgement profile of all types of children’s homes with inspection outcomes as at 31 March 2024



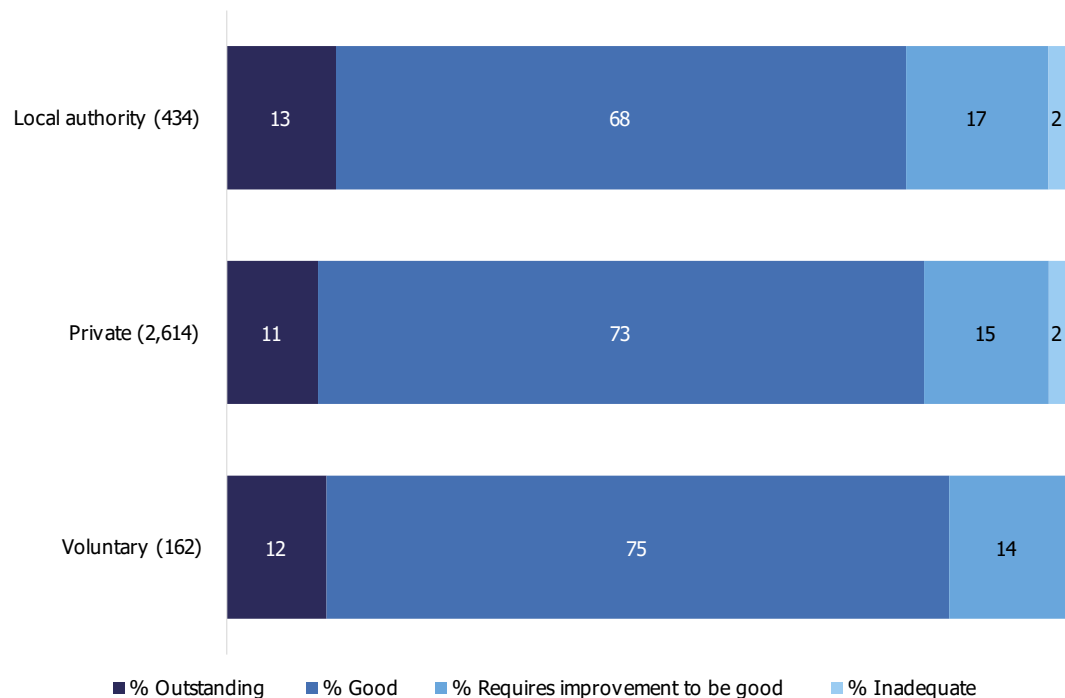
Note: Numbers in brackets represent the number of providers with an overall effectiveness judgement as at 31 March 2024.

There is a small number of secure children's homes, making percentage-based comparisons with other setting types difficult in this instance; therefore, they are excluded from this chart. Percentages are rounded and may not sum to 100.

View [data in an accessible format](#).

The judgement profiles are broadly in line across the sectors. Local authorities have the highest proportion of outstanding children's homes (13%).

Figure 7: Judgement profile of all types of children's homes with inspection outcomes as at 31 March 2024, split by sector



Note: Totals in brackets are the number of children’s homes of all types in each sector as at 31 March 2024.

Nine children’s homes are run by a health authority and are excluded from the chart. As at 31 March 2024, all 9 were judged to be good.

Percentages are rounded and may not sum to 100.

View [data in an accessible format](#).

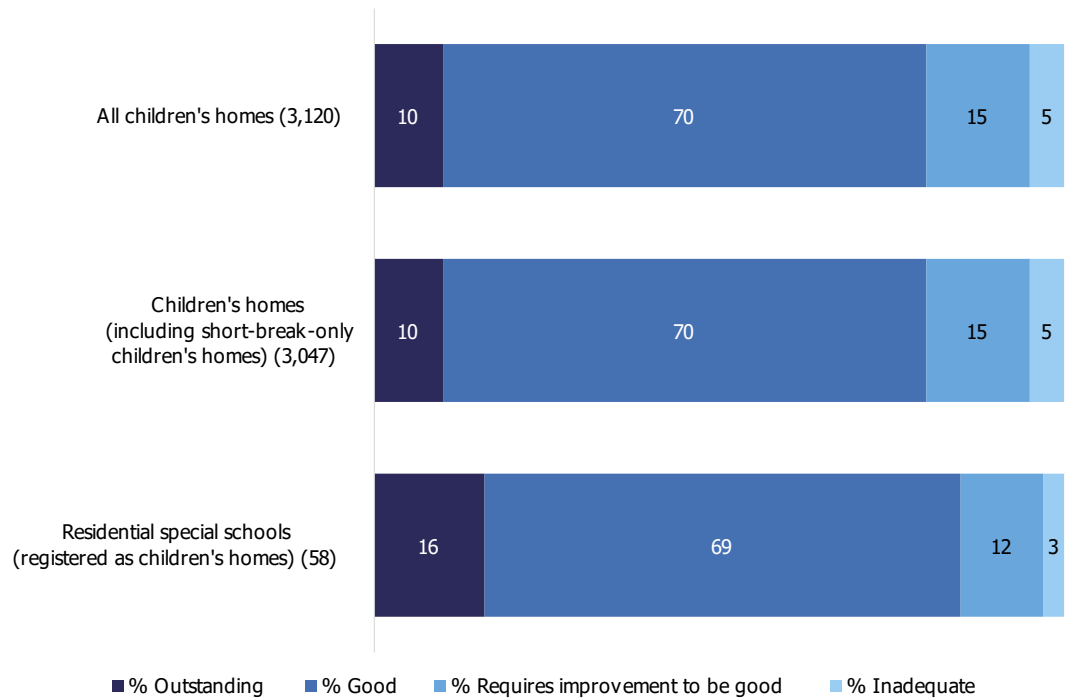
Inspections of all types of children’s homes during 2023 to 2024

Between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024, we carried out a total of 3,856 full, assurance or monitoring inspections of 3,056 children’s homes of all types.

Full inspections

Between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024, we carried out 3,120 full inspections of children’s homes of all types, including some homes that had multiple inspections. Of these, 80% were judged outstanding or good.

Figure 8: Judgement profile of all full inspections of all types of children’s homes carried out between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024



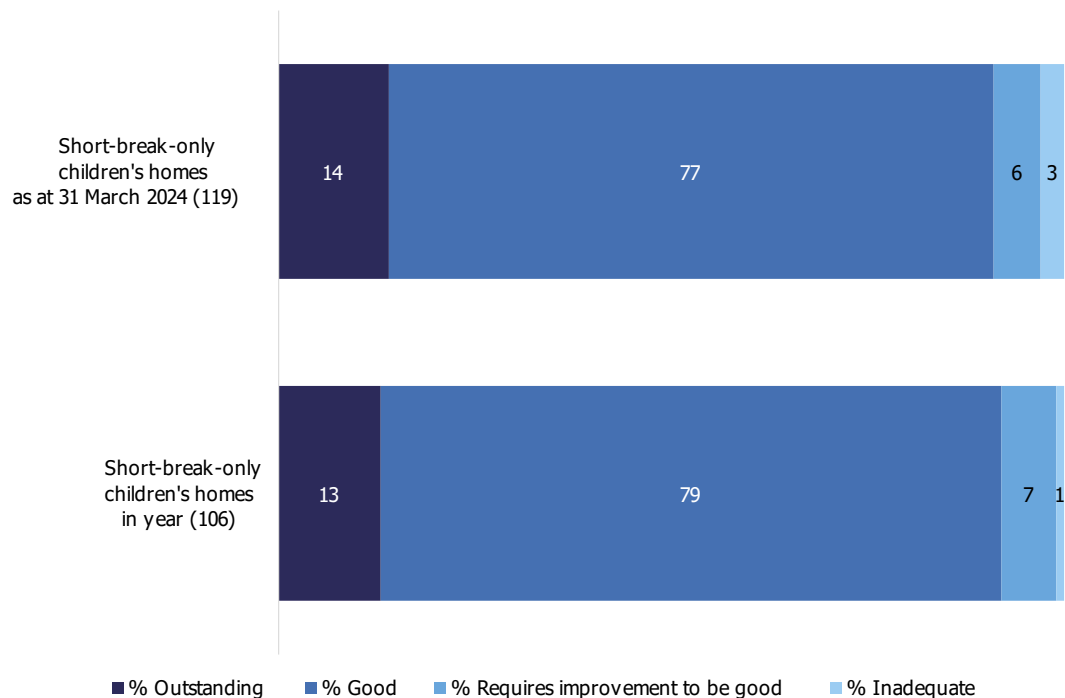
There is a small number of secure children’s homes, making percentage-based comparisons with other setting types difficult in this instance; therefore, they are excluded from this chart. Percentages are rounded and may not sum to 100.

View [data in an accessible format](#).

Short-break-only children’s homes

As at 31 March 2024, there were 103 children’s homes on record as providing care exclusively for short breaks, offering a potential of 412 places. This group of children’s homes represent 3% of all children’s homes and 3% of places.

Figure 9: Full inspection outcomes of short-break-only children’s homes of all types as at 31 March 2024 and between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024

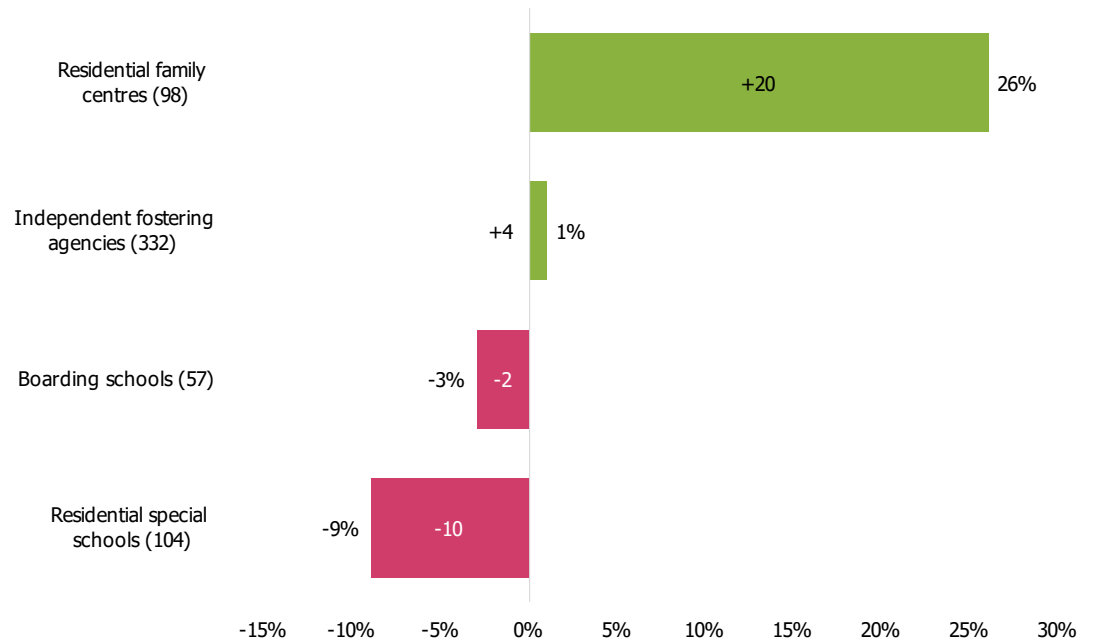


View [data in an accessible format](#).

Other social care providers

As at 31 March 2024, there were 704 settings from other social care provider types (excluding supported accommodation). Independent fostering agencies and residential special schools accounted for the majority of the 704 settings, with 332 (47%) and 104 (15%) settings respectively.

Figure 10: Percentage change in other social care providers from 31 March 2023 to 31 March 2024



Note: Adoption support agencies, further education colleges with residential accommodation and voluntary adoption agencies all saw a change of less than 1% and are not included in this chart.

Residential holiday schemes for disabled children decreased by 1 provider (from 13 to 12) and are not included in this chart.

Totals in brackets are the number of settings of each type as at 31 March 2024.

View [data in an accessible format](#).

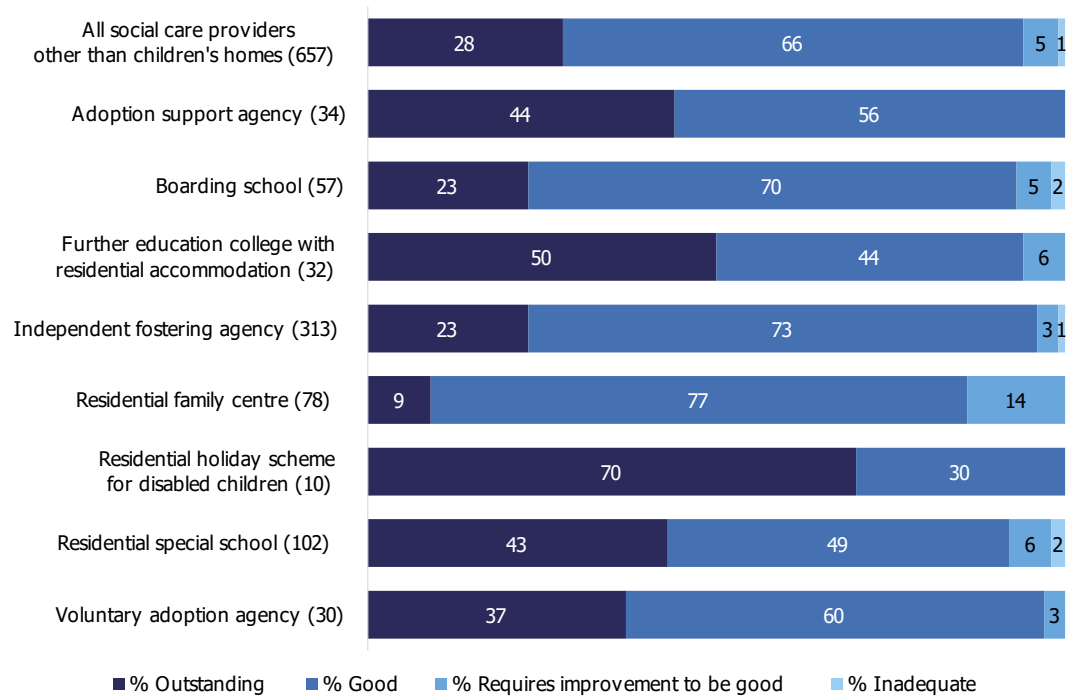
Inspections of other social care providers

Between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024, we carried out a total of 260 full inspections of 254 other social care providers.

Inspection profile of other social care providers as at 31 March 2024

Of the 704 other social care provider settings, the majority (657, 93%) had a full inspection outcome as at 31 March 2024.

Figure 11: Inspection judgement profile of other social care providers at 31 March 2024



Note: Numbers in brackets represent the number of other social care providers with an overall effectiveness judgement as at 31 March 2024.

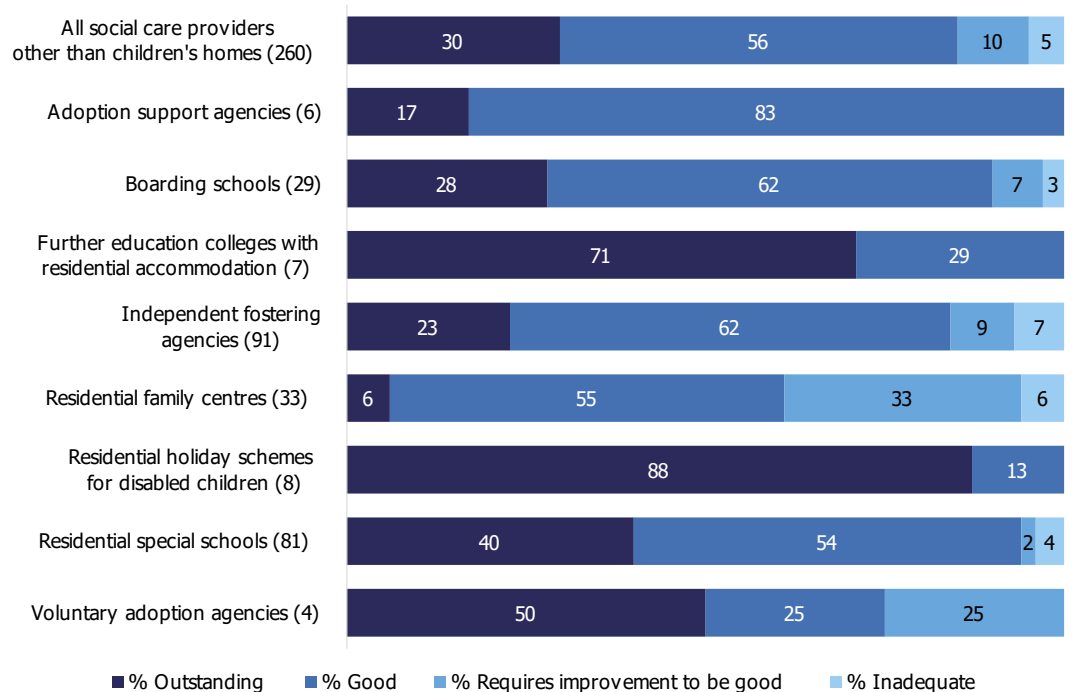
There is one secure training centre, which we inspected and judged requires improvement to be good. This has been excluded from the chart.

View [data in an accessible format](#).

Inspections of other social care providers during 2023 to 2024

Of the 260 full inspections of other social care providers, the majority (86%) were judged outstanding or good.

Figure 12: Full inspection outcomes of other social care providers between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024, by provider type



Note: There is one secure training centre, which has been excluded from the chart. This was inspected and it was judged requires improvement to be good.

Due to rounding, percentages might not add up to 100.

View [data in an accessible format](#).

Further information

There is a [quality and methodology report](#) to accompany this release.

Contacts

If you are a member of the public and have any comments or feedback on this publication, contact [Emma Martin](#) or the [social](#)

[care team](#).

Acknowledgements

Thanks to the following for their contribution to this statistical release: Hannah Tempest and Kathryn Leech.

Glossary

Definitions of terms are in the [statistical glossary](#).

Annex: data tables for figures

Data for Figure 1: The number of settings as at 31 March 2024 by provider type, and the change from 31 March 2023

Type of provider	Number of settings as at 31 March 2024	Percentage change since 31 March 2023
Children's homes of all types	3,491	12% increase
Independent fostering agencies	332	1% increase
Residential family centres	98	26% increase
Residential holiday	12	8% decrease

schemes for disabled children

Adoption support agencies	35	No change
Voluntary adoption agencies	31	No change
Secure training centre	1	No change
Boarding schools	57	3% decrease
Residential special schools	104	9% decrease
Further education colleges with residential accommodation	34	No change

See [Figure 1](#).

Data for Figure 2: Percentage change in the number of children's homes and places since 2014

Year	Percentage change in the number of homes	Percentage change in the number of places
2014	0%	0%
2015	1%	2%
2016	1%	0%
2017	4%	1%
2018	7%	1%

2019	12%	4%
2020	20%	5%
2021	32%	10%
2022	40%	11%
2023	52%	17%
2024	70%	25%

See [Figure 2](#).

Data for Figure 3: The year-on-year decrease in the number of residential special schools registered as children’s homes and places since 2014

Year	Number of settings	Number of places
2014	88	2,331
2015	86	2,441
2016	85	2,527
2017	81	2,302
2018	71	2,082
2019	69	2,006
2020	69	1,911
2021	69	1,793
2022	62	1,573
2023	56	1,457

See [Figure 3](#).

Data for Figure 4: The percentage change of children's homes and places as at 31 March 2024 from 2023, by region

Region	Percentage change of children's homes	Percentage change of children's home places
East Midlands	11%	8%
East of England	14%	10%
London	24%	14%
North East, Yorkshire and the Humber	12%	8%
North West	11%	8%
South East	12%	8%
South West	8%	7%
West Midlands	12%	9%

See [Figure 4](#).

Data for Figure 5: Judgement profile of children's homes of all types with inspection outcomes as at 31 March 2024 and 2023

Period	% Outstanding	% Good	% Requires improvement	% Inadequate
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		to be good		
As at 31 March 2024 (3,219)	11	72	15	2
As at 31 March 2023 (2,890)	10	69	18	2

See [Figure 5](#).

Data for Figure 6: Judgement profile of all types of children’s homes with inspection outcomes as at 31 March 2024

Type of children’s home	% Outstanding	% Good	% Requires improvement to be good	% Inadequate
All children’s homes (3,219)	11	72	15	2
Children’s homes (including short-break-only) (3,151)	11	72	15	2
Residential special schools (registered	16	71	13	0

as
children's
homes)
(55)

See [Figure 6](#).

Data for Figure 7: Judgement profile of all types of children's homes with inspection outcomes as at 31 March 2024, split by sector

Type	% Outstanding	% Good	% Requires improvement to be good	% Inadequate
Local authority (434)	13	68	17	2
Private (2,614)	11	73	15	2
Voluntary (162)	12	75	14	0

See [Figure 7](#).

Data for Figure 8: Judgement profile of all types of children's homes with a full inspection between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024

Type of children's home	% Outstanding	% Good	% Requires improvement to be good	% Inadequate
All	10	70	15	5

children's homes (3,120)				
Children's homes (including short-break-only children's homes) (3,047)	10	70	15	5
Residential special schools (registered as children's homes) (58)	16	69	12	3

See [Figure 8](#).

Data for Figure 9: Full inspection outcomes of short-break-only children's homes of all types as at 31 March 2024 and between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024

Period	% Outstanding	% Good	% Requires improvement to be good	% Inadequate
Short-break-only children's homes	14%	77%	6%	3%

as at 31
March
2024
(119)

Short-break-only children's homes in year (106)	13%	79%	7%	1%
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See [Figure 9](#).

Data for Figure 10: Percentage change of other social care providers from 31 March 2023 to 31 March 2024

Provider type	Net change	Percentage change
Residential family centres (98)	+20	26%
Independent fostering agencies (332)	+4	1%
Boarding schools (57)	-2	-3%
Residential special schools (104)	-10	-9%

See [Figure 10](#).

Data for Figure 11: Inspection judgement profile of other social care providers as at 31 March 2024

Provider type	% Outstanding	% Good	% Requires improvement to be good	% Inad
All social care providers other than children's homes (657)	28	66	5	1
Adoption support agencies (34)	44	56	0	0
Boarding schools (57)	23	70	5	2
Further education colleges with residential accommodation (32)	50	44	6	0
Independent fostering agencies (313)	23	73	3	1
Residential family centres (78)	9	77	14	0
Residential holiday schemes for disabled children (10)	70	30	0	0
Residential special schools (102)	43	49	6	2

Voluntary adoption agencies (30)	37	60	3	0
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See [Figure 11](#).

Data for Figure 12: Full inspection outcomes of other social care providers between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024, by provider type

Provider type	% Outstanding	% Good	% Requires improvement to be good	% Inad
All social care providers other than children's homes (260)	30	56	10	5
Adoption support agencies (6)	17	83	0	0
Boarding schools (29)	28	62	7	3
Further education colleges with residential accommodation (7)	71	29	0	0
Independent fostering agencies (91)	23	62	9	7

Residential family centres (33)	6	55	33	6
Residential holiday schemes for disabled children (8)	88	13	0	0
Residential special schools (81)	40	54	2	4
Voluntary adoption agencies (4)	50	25	25	0

See [Figure 12](#).

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