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Important update

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Reporting year 2025

Children accommodated in secure children's homes

This is the latest data



Published 15 May 2025

Next update May 2026

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Releases in this series

This release contains statistics on children accommodated in secure children's homes, including:

- numbers of approved and available places
- availability and occupancy rates
- children accommodated by sex, age, ethnicity, and length of stay.

The data in this release is used to support monitoring and assessment of capacity within the system. The data is reported for England and Wales and is collected directly from secure children's homes.

Given the cohort of children accommodated in secure children's homes is small, and these figures represent a snapshot of the position on 31 March each year, users should be cautious when interpreting year on year variations.

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Background

Secure children's homes

Secure children's homes provide a safe place where very vulnerable children and young people can receive the care, support and education they need. Beds within secure children's homes are either contracted to the Youth Custody Service (YCS) or are available to local authorities (LAs) for welfare or criminal justice placements, so children can be placed within these children's homes either by LAs or the YCS. The YCS place vulnerable children when they are remanded to custody by the courts or are serving a custodial sentence. LAs place children when no other type of placement can keep them safe as they are a significant risk to themselves or others.

There are currently two other types of secure accommodation - [young offender](#)

[institutions](#) and [secure training centres](#). There is also one secure school. Data on children placed in these are not included in this release [but are published by the Ministry of Justice \(MoJ\)](#). ([opens in a new tab](#))

Places contracted to the Ministry of Justice (MoJ)

From September 2017, the overall responsibility for commissioning of youth custody transferred to the MoJ from the Youth Justice Board. At the same time the YCS took over responsibility for individual placements of children and young people into youth custody and day-to-day management of youth custody. Some places within secure children's homes are contracted out for use to the MoJ and children are placed in them by the YCS.

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Places approved and available

There are currently 14 secure children's homes in England and Wales, with 235 approved places which is a decrease of 2 places on last year.

The availability of approved places has decreased slightly since last year, at 90% down from 93%. Last year the availability rate was above 90% for the first time since 2016.

Not all approved places are always available for use, for example homes may temporarily close to make improvements, a bed may be out of use due to damage or refurbishment or if staffing ratios mean a reduced number of places can be filled.

The number of approved places contracted to the MoJ steadily declined from 191 places in 2010 to 106 in 2019. Since then places contracted to the MoJ have remained at a similar level - there were 102 places this year - three less than in 2024.

The number of children placed by the YCS in secure homes decreased from 146 in 2011 and 2012 down to 56 in 2023. Last year YCS placements increased slightly to 59 and they have increased further this year to 83.

Figures published by the [His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service](#) ([opens in a new tab](#)) show the overall population of the youth secure estate had been declining to a series low in 2022. The population has fluctuated just above this value

since. This is reflected in the secure children's homes data for MoJ contracted places and YCS placements.

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Children accommodated and occupancy rate

Within the 14 secure children's homes, there were 170 children accommodated, up 9% since last year. Between 2010 and 2021 there was an overall gradual decline in children accommodated in secure children's homes, but since 2021 the number of children accommodated has fluctuated more - generally around 150 children each year, and increasing to 170 this year.

The occupancy rate was 72% - up from 66% last year. Note that a lower than 100% occupancy rate does not necessarily mean that there are available spaces within secure children's homes - availability of a suitable place may depend on if the place is contracted to the YCS. In addition, placements are complex, and each home will assess the resources required to support the individual needs of the children they accommodate.

Occupancy rates

These are based on the number of children accommodated in relation to the number of places for which the home has approval to operate with.

Children and young people placed within secure children's homes may be placed as:

- **Children detained or sentenced and placed by the YCS** include children detained for, or convicted of, a serious offence under the Powers of Criminal Courts (Sentencing) Act 2000 or the Criminal Justice Act 2003; or subject to a Supervision Order with a residence requirement or a Detention and Training Order under the Powers of Criminal Courts (Sentencing) Act 2000.
- **Children placed by the local authority in a criminal justice context** include children remanded by a court under section 102 (Remand to youth detention accommodation) of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012; or accommodated pursuant to section 38 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984.
- **Children placed by the local authority on welfare grounds** include children who are placed into the homes by their local authority under section 25 of the

Children Act 1989 for the protection of themselves and/or others.

On 31 March 2025, 47% of the children accommodated in secure children's homes were placed on welfare grounds, 49% were detained or sentenced and placed by the YCS and 4% were placed by the LA in a criminal justice context.

Children placed in secure homes on a welfare basis increased to 80 (up by 8 children).

Children detained or sentenced and placed by the YCS increased to 83 (up by 24 children). Placements by the YCS have previously varied between 50 and 60 children for the last 4 years but is still down from a series peak of 146 in 2012.

Children placed by the LA in a criminal justice context decreased to 7 (down by 18 children),

However, it is common for these figures to fluctuate from year to year.

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Sex, age, and ethnicity

Note that due to the relatively small size of the cohort, users should be cautious interpreting year on year changes.

Sex

There are more males than females accommodated in secure children's homes. The proportion of children accommodated who were male was 69% - a slight decrease from 72% last year. Males are over-represented in the secure children's homes population (69% compared to 51% in the overall child population - as shown in the [ONS mid-year population estimates \(opens in a new tab\)](#)).

Age

Children aged 15, 16 or 17 years make up 72% of the children accommodated. The numbers in each age group are small and do fluctuate over time - children accommodated by age in 2025:

- 14 were aged 13 years (8%)

- 26 were aged 14 years old (15%)
- 49 were aged 15 years old (29%)
- 47 were aged 16 years old (28%)
- 27 were aged 17 years old (16%)
- the remaining 4% were either aged under 13, or 18 years and over.

Ethnicity

Information on the ethnicity of children accommodated in secure homes has been reported since 2021.

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Length of stay

60% of young people had been at the secure children's home for 3 months or more, compared to 55% last year.

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Methodology

Find out how and why we collect, process and publish these statistics.

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Accreditation signifies their compliance with the authority's [Code of Practice for Statistics](#) which broadly means these statistics are:

- managed impartially and objectively in the public interest

- meet identified user needs
- produced according to sound methods
- well explained and readily accessible

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You are welcome to contact us directly with any comments about how we meet these standards. Alternatively, you can contact OSR by emailing regulation@statistics.gov.uk or via the [OSR website](#).

Contact us

If you have a specific enquiry about Children accommodated in secure children's homes statistics and data:

Children looked after statistics team

Email: cla.stats@education.gov.uk

Contact name: Justin Ushie

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If you have a media enquiry:

Telephone: 020 7783 8300

Public enquiries

If you have a general enquiry about the Department for Education (DfE) or education:

Telephone: 037 0000 2288

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