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Reporting year 2025

Children accommodated in secure children's homes

This is the latest release



Published	15 May 2025
Next update	May 2026
Release type	Accredited official statistics 
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Produced by	Department for Education

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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Headline facts and figures - 2025

Number of children accommodated

170

Up 9%, from 156 last year

► Children accommodated

Percentage of approved places occupied (occupancy rate)

72%

Up from 66% last year

► Occupancy rate

Number of children placed by YCS

83

Up from 59 children last year

► Placed by Youth Custody Service

Number of children accommodated in secure children's home increases

Between 2010 and 2023 there was an overall gradual decline in children accommodated in secure children's homes to 139 children in 2023, but in the last two years the number has risen slightly. Children accommodated in secure children's homes increased to 170 in 2025, up by 9% (14 more children) compared to 2024.

Number of approved places decreases slightly

The number of places that were approved for use was 235, down 2 places on last year. However, this is still slightly below the approved places in recent years - between 2015 and 2022 the figure remained fairly stable around 250 places.

Occupancy rate increases

The occupancy rate increased to 72% - up from 66% last year - the same as in 2020.

Children placed by the Youth Custody Service (YCS) increases

83 children were placed by the Youth Custody Service (YCS), up by 24 children. Between 2010 and 2021 there was a longer-term trend of fewer children being placed in secure children's homes by the YCS.

Since 2021 the number has remained fairly stable at around 60 children however this has increased by 41% since last year.

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Background

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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.

Places approved and available

 Hide

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.

Chart

Table

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Places approved for use and places available for use have decreased slightly in 2025

	Number of places approved	Number of places available
2010	311	291
2011	312	291
2012	300	288
2013	296	286
2014	298	283
2015	254	245
2016	254	245
2017	254	227
2018	255	220
2019	259	228
2020	254	227
2021	253	223
2022	249	220
2023	230	203
2024	237	220
2025	235	211

[Data symbols](#) ?

Footnotes

1. Figures are at 31 March each year, except for 2020 where figures are at 29 February to reflect the position before the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and the national lockdown.

Source: SA1

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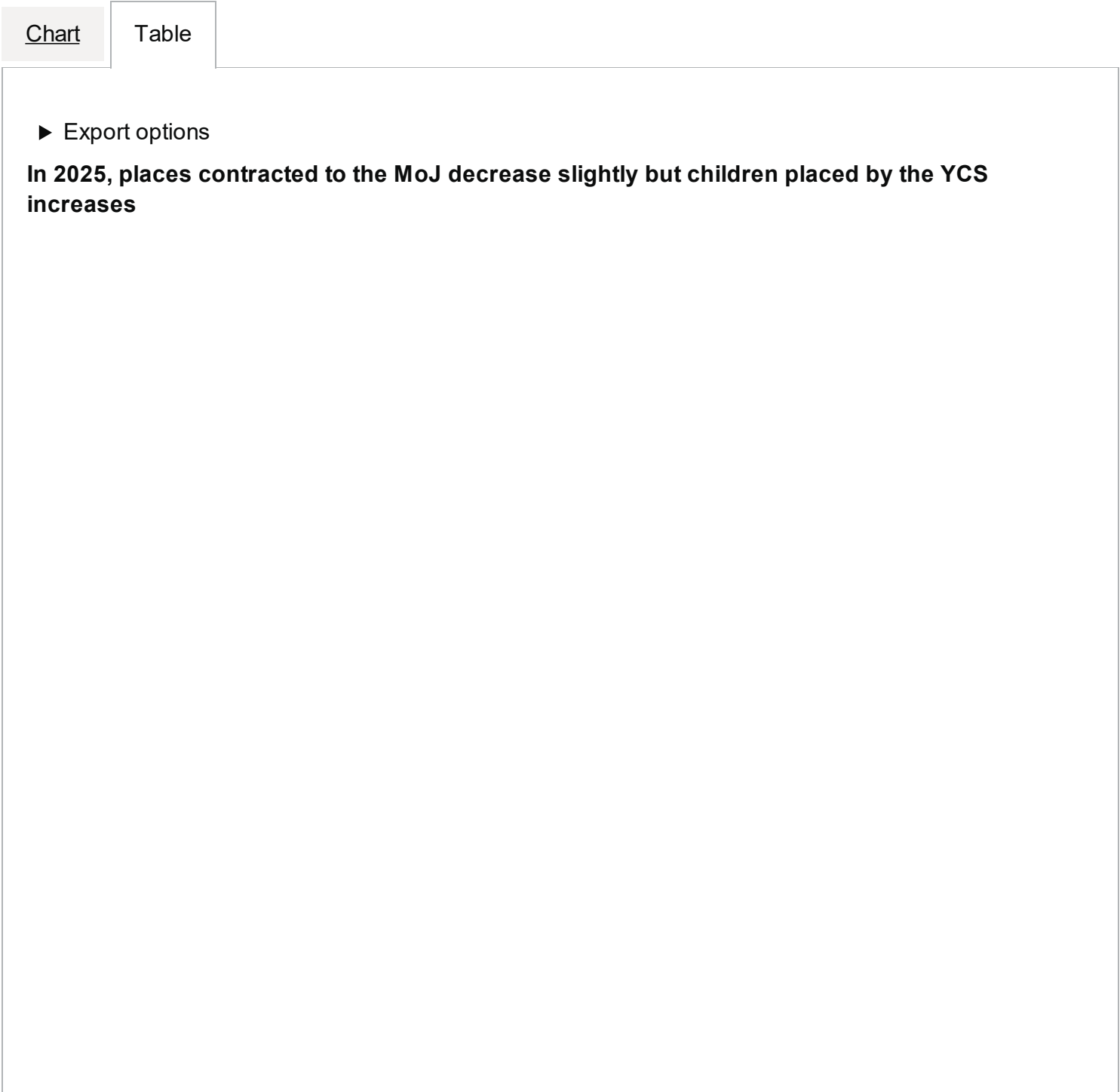
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The number of approved places contracted to the MoJ steadily declined from 191 places in 2010 to 106 in 2019. Since then places contracted to the MoJ have remained at a similar level - there were 102 places this year - three less than in 2024.

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.



	Number of children placed by YCS	Number of places contracted to the MoJ
2010	131	191
2011	146	190
2012	146	183
2013	102	166
2014	111	166
2015	97	138
2016	89	138
2017	93	117
2018	98	120
2019	66	106
2020	80	107
2021	55	107
2022	62	105
2023	56	105
2024	59	105
2025	83	102

[Data symbols](#) 

Footnotes

1. Figures are at 31 March each year, except for 2020 where figures are at 29 February to reflect the position before the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and the national lockdown.

Source: SA1

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Children accommodated and occupancy rate

 Hide

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.

Chart

Table

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Children accommodated in secure homes in England and Wales have increased in 2025

Number of children accommodated

2010	258
2011	221
2012	239
2013	206
2014	229
2015	205
2016	210
2017	203
2018	204
2019	172
2020	184
2021	142
2022	165
2023	139
2024	156
2025	170

[Data symbols](#) 

Footnotes

1. Figures are at 31 March each year, except for 2020 where figures are at 29 February to reflect the position before the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and the national lockdown.

Source: SA1

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In 2025, the availability rate has decreased slightly but the occupancy rate has increased in secure children's homes

	Percentage of approved places available (availability rate)	Percentage of approved places occupied (occupancy rate)
2010	94%	83%
2011	93%	71%
2012	96%	80%
2013	97%	70%
2014	95%	77%
2015	96%	81%
2016	96%	83%
2017	89%	80%
2018	86%	80%
2019	88%	66%
2020	89%	72%
2021	88%	56%
2022	88%	66%
2023	88%	60%
2024	93%	66%
2025	90%	72%

[Data symbols](#) 

Footnotes

1. Figures are at 31 March each year, except for 2020 where figures are at 29 February to reflect the position before the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and the national lockdown.

2. Percentages in charts and tables are rounded to the nearest whole number. Where percentages apply to a group of categories they may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Source: SA1

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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.

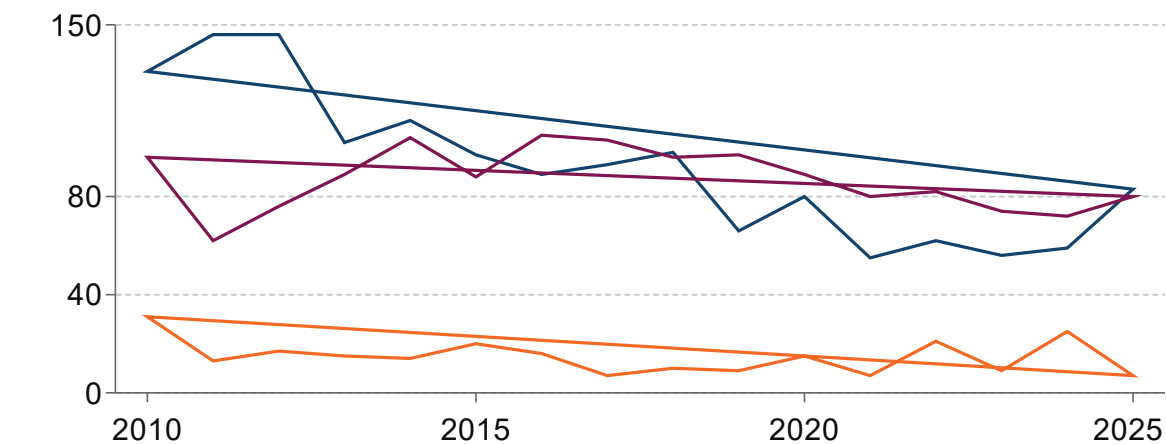
Chart

Table

► Export options

Children placed in secure children's homes by placement type

England and Wales



- Child detained or sentenced and placed by the YCS
- Child placed by the LA in a criminal justice context
- Child placed by the LA on welfare grounds

Footnotes

- Figures are at 31 March each year, except for 2020 where figures are at 29 February to reflect the position before the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and the national lockdown.
- Percentages in charts and tables are rounded to the nearest whole number. Where percentages apply to a group of categories they may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Source: SA1

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Sex, age, and ethnicity

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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.

► Export options

Children accommodated in secure children's homes, by ethnicity, in England and Wales, 2021 to 2025

		Number of children accommodated					Percentage of children accommodated				
		2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Ethnicity of child	Total	142	165	139	156	170	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	White	103	107	99	98	120	73%	65%	71%	63%	71%
	Mixed	c	30	18	13	16	c	18%	13%	8%	9%
	Asian or Asian British	11	10	7	9	9	8%	6%	5%	6%	5%
	Black or Black British	13	9	13	24	14	9%	5%	9%	15%	8%
	Other Ethnic groups	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c
	Unknown	0	c	c	c	c	0%	c	c	c	c

[Data symbols ?](#)

Footnotes

- Figures are at 31 March each year, except for 2020 where figures are at 29 February to reflect the position before the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and the national lockdown.
- Ethnicity was reported for the first time in 2021.

[Show 1 more footnote](#)

Source: SA1

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Length of stay

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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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[Children accommodated in secure children's homes](#)

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- produced according to sound methods
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Contact us

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Children looked after statistics team

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Contact name: Justin Ushie

Press office

If you have a media enquiry:

Telephone: 020 7783 8300

Public enquiries

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