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Reporting year 2021

# Children accommodated in secure children's homes

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**Published** 27 May 2021

**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

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## Methodologies

[Children accommodated in](#)

- children accommodated by gender, age, ethnicity, and length of stay.

[secure children's homes](#)

Data is reported for England and Wales. Information is taken from the DfE SA1 data return collected from secure children's homes.

Figures relate to the position at 31 March except for 2020 when the reference date was changed to 29 February to reflect the position in secure children's homes before the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and the national lockdown. Therefore, this year's figures are the first in this series to reflect the impacts of the pandemic and users should bear this in mind when making comparisons over time.

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# Headline facts and figures - 2021

Number of children  
accommodated

142

Down from 184 last year

► What is this?

Percentage of approved  
places occupied  
(occupancy rate)

56%

Down from 72% last year

► What is this?

Number of children placed  
by YCS

55

Down from 80 last year

► What is this?

Figures relate to 31 March 2021, for England and Wales.

- Children **accommodated** in secure children's homes decreased by 23% (42 fewer children) to **142**.
- **Approved** places that were **occupied** - **56%** - down from 72%.
- Places contracted to the **Ministry of Justice (MoJ)** were the same as last year at **107** places - **55** children were placed by the **Youth Custody Service (YCS)**, down from 80.

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## Background

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### Secure children's homes

These are children's homes which provide a locked environment and restrict a child or young person's liberty. They provide care and accommodation to children and young people who have been detained, or sentenced by the criminal courts and those who have been remanded to secure local authority accommodation. They also accommodate and care for children and young people who have been placed there on welfare grounds by local authorities and the courts.

#### Other types of secure accommodation

Note that data on children placed in young offender institutions and secure training centres are not included in this release, but are published by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ).

- **Secure Training Centres (STCs)** are available to place those young people who are a little older and perhaps more independent and more motivated to attend school, or have risk factors which would make a placement in a Young Offender Institution (YOI) inappropriate. There are three purpose built STCs in England offering secure provision to sentenced or remanded young people aged 12 to 17 years.
- **Young Offender Institutions (YOIs)** can accommodate young people from aged 15 to 21 years. However, the YCS is only responsibly for commissioning YOIs which hold young males aged from 15 to 18 years. YOIs tend to be larger than SCH and STCs with lower ratios of staff to young people. Consequently, young people who are more resilient and older may be placed in a YOI. Also, young people who predominantly externalise their risk may be placed within a YOI.

#### 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 Youth Custody Service (YCS) took over responsibility for individual placements of children and young people into youth custody and day-to-day management of youth custody. So 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, carrying 253 **approved places**. This has remained broadly stable for the last seven years.

The **availability of approved places** has dropped slightly to 88%, down 4 places to 223. The availability rate remained consistently above 90% between 2010 and 2016 but has been slightly lower in the last five years.

### Availability rates

These are based on the number of places that were in use or available for use at 31 March (29 February in 2020), excluding any approved places that are out of service, for example undergoing development work.

[Chart](#)

[Table](#)

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### Number of places approved and available for use in secure children's homes, England and Wales, 2010 to 2021

	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

[Data symbols](#) ?

Source: DfE SA1

### Explore and edit this data online

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The number of **approved places contracted to the MoJ** has remained stable at 107 places, the same as 2020. More longer-term, figures published by the [Her Majesty's Prison Service \(opens in a new tab\)](#) show that the overall population of the youth secure estate has declined in the last decade, influenced by a move by courts towards sentencing children being a last resort. This is reflected in the secure children's homes data for MoJ contracted places and YCS placements.

## ► Export options

**Number of places contracted to the MoJ and number of children placed by the YCS, at secure children's homes in England and Wales, 2010 to 2021**

	Number of places contracted to the MoJ	Number of children placed by YCS
<b>2010</b>	191	131
<b>2011</b>	190	146
<b>2012</b>	183	146
<b>2013</b>	166	102
<b>2014</b>	166	111
<b>2015</b>	138	97
<b>2016</b>	138	89
<b>2017</b>	117	93
<b>2018</b>	120	98
<b>2019</b>	106	66
<b>2020</b>	107	80
<b>2021</b>	107	55

[Data symbols](#) ?**Footnotes**

1. 'c' denotes figures suppressed to preserve confidentiality.

Source: DfE SA1

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## Children accommodated and occupancy rate

[Hide](#)

Within the 14 secure children’s homes, there were 142 **children accommodated**, down 23% on last year, representing 42 fewer children. This is an **occupancy rate** of 56%, the lowest recorded in the time-period from 2010. This follows a rise of 7% in the number of children accommodated in the previous year – it was 172 in 2019 and rose to 184 in 2020.

### Occupancy rates

These are based on the number of children accommodated in relation to the number of places approved by the Secretary of State.

[Chart](#)

[Table](#)

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► Export options

## Number of children accommodated in secure children's homes, England and Wales, 2010 to 2021

	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

[Data symbols](#) ?

Source: DfE SA1

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Chart

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### Availability rate and occupancy rate at secure children's homes in England and Wales, 2010 to 2021

	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%

[Data symbols](#) ?

Source: DfE SA1

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The fall in the occupancy rate from 72% in 2020 was caused by drops across all placement types but was mostly evident in the number of YCS placements decreasing by 31% to 55, from 80 last year.

This is likely to be a result of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. [MoJ \(opens in a new tab\)](#) have reported

fewer young people in custody following the initial impact of the pandemic on [court proceedings \(opens in a new tab\)](#). [Local authorities \(opens in a new tab\)](#) have reported that on occasion throughout the year, staff availability has impacted on the number of available places in some of their residential settings

[Chart](#)

[Table](#)

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### Number and percentage of children accommodated in secure children's homes, by placement type, England and Wales, 2010 to 2021

	Number of children accommodated			Percentage of children accommodated		
	Placement type			Placement type		
	Child detained or sentenced and placed by the Youth Custody Service	Child placed by local authority in a criminal justice context	Child placed by local authority on welfare grounds	Child detained or sentenced and placed by the Youth Custody Service	Child placed by local authority in a criminal justice context	Child placed by local authority on welfare grounds
<b>2010</b>	131	31	96	51%	12%	37%
<b>2011</b>	146	13	62	66%	6%	28%
<b>2012</b>	146	17	76	61%	7%	32%
<b>2013</b>	102	15	89	50%	7%	43%
<b>2014</b>	111	14	104	48%	6%	45%
<b>2015</b>	97	20	88	47%	10%	43%
<b>2016</b>	89	16	105	42%	8%	50%
<b>2017</b>	93	7	103	46%	3%	51%
<b>2018</b>	98	10	96	48%	5%	47%
<b>2019</b>	66	9	97	38%	5%	56%
<b>2020</b>	80	15	89	43%	8%	48%
<b>2021</b>	55	7	80	39%	5%	56%

[Data symbols ?](#)

## Footnotes

1. Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number and categories may not sum to 100% due to rounding.
2. 'c' denotes figures suppressed to preserve confidentiality.

Source: DfE SA1

## Explore and edit this data online

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**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.

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## Gender, age, and ethnicity

 Hide

There are more males than females accommodated in secure children's homes. The proportion of children accommodated who are **male** has dropped to 62% (88 children), from 70%, this represents a decrease of 40 children compared with the number of **female** children accommodated which fell by just 2 children to 54.

Information on the gender split by type of placement is not collected but it is most likely this decrease in number of males relates to the decrease in children placed by the YCS, as males account for over 95% of the youth custody population.

► Export options

## Number and proportion of children accommodated in secure children's homes, by gender, England and Wales, 2010 to 2021

			2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Number of children accommodated	Gender	Male	165	152	157	133	136	133	121	120	118
		Female	93	69	82	73	93	72	89	83	81
Percentage of children accommodated	Gender	Male	64%	69%	66%	65%	59%	65%	58%	59%	67%
		Female	36%	31%	34%	35%	41%	35%	42%	41%	33%



[Data symbols ?](#)

### Footnotes

1. Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number and categories may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Source: DfE SA1

### Explore and edit this data online

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Children accommodated by **age** in 2021:

- 33 were aged 14 years old (23%)
- 40 were aged 15 years old (28%)
- 43 were aged 16 years old (30%)
- 20 were aged 17 years old (14%)
- the remaining 6 children (4%) were either aged 13 years or under, or 18 years and over.

There are substantial decreases in the number of 15- and 17-years olds (down by 37% combined) and an increase in the number of 14 years olds (up 14%) compared to last year. This is in part due to the decrease in YCS placements, however, the numbers in each age group are small and do fluctuate over time.

This is the first year information on the ethnicity of children accommodated in secure homes has been

collected. Children accommodated by **ethnicity** in 2021:

- 103 were White (73%)
- 13 were Black or Black British (9%)
- 11 were Asian or Asian British (8%)
- the remaining 15 children (11%) were either Mixed Ethnicity or identify as Other Ethnic groups.

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## Length of stay

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**Length of stay** of children accommodated at 31 March 2021:

- 25 children had been accommodated for less than 1 month (18%)
- 35 had been accommodated for 1 month but less than 3 months (25%)
- 42 had been accommodated for 3 months but less than 6 months (30%)
- 21 had been accommodated for 6 months but less than 1 year (15%)
- 19 had been accommodated for a year or more (13%).

Children are staying longer in secure homes. Historically children were more likely to remain in the secure home for less than 3 months (2010-2017) but in 3 of the last 4 years more than half of children are accommodated for 3 months or more. In 2021, children **accommodated for three months or more** increased to 58%, up from 43% in 2020.

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## Methodology

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

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

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- 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](mailto: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](mailto:cla.stats@education.gov.uk)

Contact name: Justin Ushie

### Press office

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:

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