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Reporting year 2023

Children accommodated in secure children's homes

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

- numbers of approved and available places
- availability and occupancy rates

Releases in this series

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Methodologies

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

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

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.

Figures relate to a snapshot of the position on 31 March each year, 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.

Headline facts and figures - 2023

Number of children
accommodated

139

Down from 165 last year

► What is this?

Percentage of approved
places occupied
(occupancy rate)

60%

Down from 66% last year

► What is this?

Number of children placed
by YCS

56

Down from 62 last year

► What is this?

Figures relate to 31 March 2023, for England and Wales, comparisons are to 31 March 2022 unless otherwise stated.

- Between 2015 and 2022, the number of places in secure children's homes that were approved for use remained fairly stable around 250, however this has fallen by 19 places this year to 230.
- Children accommodated in secure children's homes decreased by 16% (26 fewer children) to 139. Since 2010, there has been an overall gradual decline in children accommodated in secure children's homes.
- The occupancy rate on 31 March has decreased to 60% - down from 66%.
- 56 children were placed by the Youth Custody Service (YCS), down from 62. Since 2010, there has been a longer-term trend of fewer children being placed in secure children's homes by the YCS.

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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. Local authorities 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](#). Data on children placed in these are not included in this release, but are published by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ).

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

[Hide](#)

There are currently 14 secure children's homes in England and Wales, carrying 230 approved places which is a decrease of 19 places on last year; the five years before this the number of places remained consistently around 250. This decrease is largely due to temporary closures in some homes, resulting in fewer approved

places for local authorities to use to place children on a criminal justice basis or for welfare reasons.

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 availability of approved places is the same as last year, at 88%. The availability rate remained consistently above 90% between 2010 and 2016 but has been below in each year since then.

Chart	Table
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► Export options

Places approved for use and available for use have fallen in 2023 in England and Wales

	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

[Data symbols](#) ?

Source: SA1

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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 the MoJ have remained at a similar level - there were 105 this year -

the same as in 2022.

Similarly the number of children placed by the YCS in secure homes decreased from 146 in 2011 and 2012 down to 62 in 2022. This year YCS placements have fallen again to 56.

Figures published by the [His Majesty's Prison Service \(opens in a new tab\)](#) show 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.

<u>Chart</u>	Table
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► Export options

Places in England and Wales contracted to the MoJ remain the same and children placed by the YCS have fallen slightly in 2023.

	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

[Data symbols ?](#)

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Children accommodated and occupancy rate

 Hide

Within the 14 secure children’s homes, there were 139 children accommodated, down 16%. The occupancy rate was 60% - down from 66% last year - the only time since 2010 that the occupancy was lower was during the covid-19 pandemic.

However, a lower occupancy rate does not necessarily mean that there are available spaces within secure children's homes - availability of a suitable place may depend upon whether or not it 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

<u>Chart</u>	Table
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► Export options

Children accommodated in secure homes in England and Wales have decreased in 2023

	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

[Data symbols](#) ?

Source: SA1

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Chart

Table

► Export options

Occupancy rate has decreased in secure children's homes in England and Wales in 2023, whilst availability rate has stayed the same.

	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%

[Data symbols](#) ?

Footnotes

1. 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.

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Since 2016, the proportion of children accommodated for welfare or justice placements have been broadly even - prior to that a higher proportion of the children accommodated were there for justice reasons. In 2023, 53% of children within secure children's homes were placed by the LA for welfare reasons, up from 50% in 2022 but down from 56% in 2021.

In 2023, children detained or sentenced and placed by the YCS accounted for 40% of children (down from 38%).

Chart

Table

► Export options

Children placed in secure children's homes by placement type

	Number of children accommodated				Percentage of children accommodated			
	Placement type				Placement type			
	Total	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	Total	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
2010	258	131	31	96	100%	51%	12%	37%
2011	221	146	13	62	100%	66%	6%	28%
2012	239	146	17	76	100%	61%	7%	32%
2013	206	102	15	89	100%	50%	7%	43%
2014	229	111	14	104	100%	48%	6%	45%
2015	205	97	20	88	100%	47%	10%	43%
2016	210	89	16	105	100%	42%	8%	50%
2017	203	93	7	103	100%	46%	3%	51%
2018	204	98	10	96	100%	48%	5%	47%
2019	172	66	9	97	100%	38%	5%	56%
2020	184	80	15	89	100%	43%	8%	48%
2021	142	55	7	80	100%	39%	5%	56%
2022	165	62	21	82	100%	38%	13%	50%
2023	139	56	9	74	100%	40%	6%	53%

[Data symbols ?](#)

Footnotes

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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.

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Sex, age, and ethnicity

 Hide

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 decrease in overall numbers of children placed in secure children's homes means that whilst the number of males accommodated has fallen by 14 children (to 100), as a proportion of all children accommodated males have increased from 69% to 72%. The number of female children accommodated also fell by 12 children to 39.

Age

Children aged 15 years or over make up around 70% of the children accommodated. The numbers in each age group are small and do fluctuate over time - children accommodated by age in 2023:

- 10 were aged 13 years (7%)
- 22 were aged 14 years old (16%)

- 44 were aged 15 years old (32%)
- 39 were aged 16 years old (28%)
- 14 were aged 17 years old (10%)
- the remaining 7% were either aged under 13, or 18 years and over.

Ethnicity

Information on the ethnicity of children accommodated in secure homes was reported for the first time in 2021. The numbers and proportions of children accommodated by ethnicity are in the table.

► Export options

Children accommodated in secure children's homes, by ethnicity, in England and Wales, 2021 to 2023

		Number of children accommodated				Percentage of children accommodated			
		2020	2021	2022	2023	2020	2021	2022	2023
Ethnicity of child	Total	x	142	165	139	x	100%	100%	100%
	White	x	103	107	99	x	73%	65%	71%
	Mixed	x	c	30	18	x	c	18%	13%
	Black or Black British	x	13	9	13	x	9%	5%	9%
	Asian or Asian British	x	11	10	7	x	8%	6%	5%
	Other Ethnic groups	x	c	c	c	x	c	c	c
	Unknown	x	0	c	c	x	0%	c	c

[Data symbols](#) ?

Footnotes

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

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Length of stay

[Hide](#)

The length of stay of children accommodated is given in the table.

► Export options

Children accommodated in secure children's homes, by length of stay, in England and Wales, 2019 to 2023

		Number of children accommodated					Percentage of children accommodated				
		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Length of stay	Total	172	184	142	165	139	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	Under 1 month	36	40	25	36	22	21%	22%	18%	22%	16%
	1 to < 3 months	43	65	35	42	41	25%	35%	25%	25%	29%
	3 to < 6 months	47	47	42	42	25	27%	26%	30%	25%	18%
	6 to < 12 months	31	21	21	24	27	18%	11%	15%	15%	19%
	12 to < 24 months	c	c	19	c	c	c	c	13%	c	c
	24 months or more	c	c	0	c	c	c	c	0%	c	c

[Data symbols](#) ?

Footnotes

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

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

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- meet identified user needs
- produced according to sound methods
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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

Press office

If you have a media enquiry:

Telephone: 020 7783 8300

Public enquiries

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