

[Home](#) ▾ [Parenting, childcare and children's services](#) ▾ [Safeguarding and social care for children](#)
▾ [Children's social care providers](#) ▾ [Local authority inspection outcomes as at 31 March 2025](#)



Official Statistics

Main findings: local authority inspection outcomes as at 31 March 2025

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Applies to England

Contents

[Introduction](#)

[Key messages](#)

[Quality of local authority children's services as at 31 March 2025](#)

[ILACS inspection activity between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025](#)

[Further information](#)

[Glossary](#)

[Annex: data tables for figures](#)

 [Print this page](#)

This is the main findings report for the [local authority inspection outcomes as at 31 March 2025 release](#). This publication includes:

- main findings
- underlying data
- methodology report
- pre-release access list

Introduction

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

Across England, 153 local authorities are responsible for ensuring and overseeing the effective delivery of social care services for children who need help and protection, children in care, and care leavers. We inspect these local authorities under the [inspecting local authority children's services \(ILACS\) framework](#).

This official statistics release reports on the quality of local authority children's services as at 31 March 2025, as well as on our inspection activity between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025. Only inspections with a report published as at 30 June 2025 are included.

Key messages

The overall quality of local authority children's services in England has improved over the past few years. As at 31 March 2025, 67% of local authorities were judged to be good or outstanding at their most recent inspection, compared with 53% as at 31 March 2022.

Of the 114 local authorities that received more than 1 inspection under the ILACS framework, 45 (39%) improved their overall effectiveness judgement compared with their previous ILACS inspection, and 35 (31%) retained a good or outstanding judgement. There were 19 local authorities (17%) that had a decline in their overall effectiveness.

The quality of local authority children's services showed substantial variations at a regional level. However, compared to the previous release as at 31 March 2024, the difference between regions has narrowed. The proportion of local authorities judged as good or outstanding was highest in the London region (88%, previously 85%) and lowest in the North West (46%, previously 36%).

There was some variation in quality across the different judgement areas. For the experiences and progress of children who need help and protection, 61% of local authorities were judged as good or outstanding, while for the experiences and progress of children in care, 73% were judged as good or outstanding.

Quality of local authority children's services as at 31 March 2025

Overall effectiveness

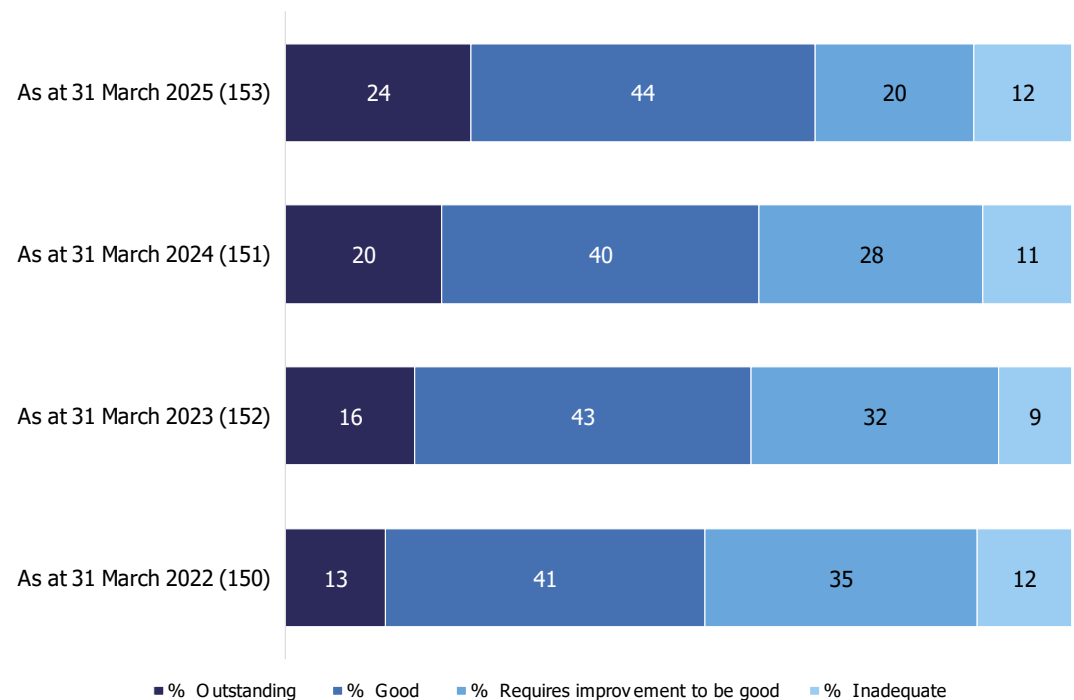
As at 31 March 2025, all 153 local authorities in England had received a graded judgement inspection (standard or short inspection).

Of the 153 local authorities inspected, 36 (24%) were judged as outstanding at their most recent inspection, 67 (44%) good, 31 (20%) requires improvement to be good, and 19 (12%) inadequate.

Compared with the picture as at 31 March 2024, there have been some changes for each graded judgement, as seen in [Figure 1](#). The proportion of local authorities judged:

- outstanding increased by almost 4 percentage points
- good increased by just over 3 percentage points
- requires improvement to be good decreased by just over 8 percentage points
- inadequate increased by just over 1 percentage point

Figure 1: Local authorities' overall effectiveness at their most recent inspection



1. Numbers in brackets represent the number of local authorities with an overall effectiveness outcome as at 31 March 2025, 2024, 2023, and 2022, respectively.

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

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

Of the 153 local authorities in England, 114 had received more than 1 inspection under the ILACS framework as at 31 March 2025. Compared to their previous ILACS inspection, as shown in [Table 1](#), the current overall effectiveness indicates:

- 45 local authorities (39%) improved – 8 of these improved by 2 judgements
- 35 local authorities (31%) retained a good or outstanding judgement
- 19 local authorities (17%) declined – 6 of these declined by 2 judgements

Table 1: Change in overall effectiveness for local authorities that received more than 1 inspection under the ILACS framework as at 31 March 2025

Previous overall effectiveness judgement	Number of local authorities that improved	Number of local authorities that retained their judgement	Number of local authorities that declined
Outstanding	–	16	3
Good	13	19	8
Requires improvement to be good	19	13	8
Inadequate	13	2	–

Regional and local authority level

The overall effectiveness of local authority children’s services as at 31 March 2025 showed substantial variations at a regional level, as seen in [Figure 2](#). However, proportions in this section should be treated with caution as they refer to low numbers.

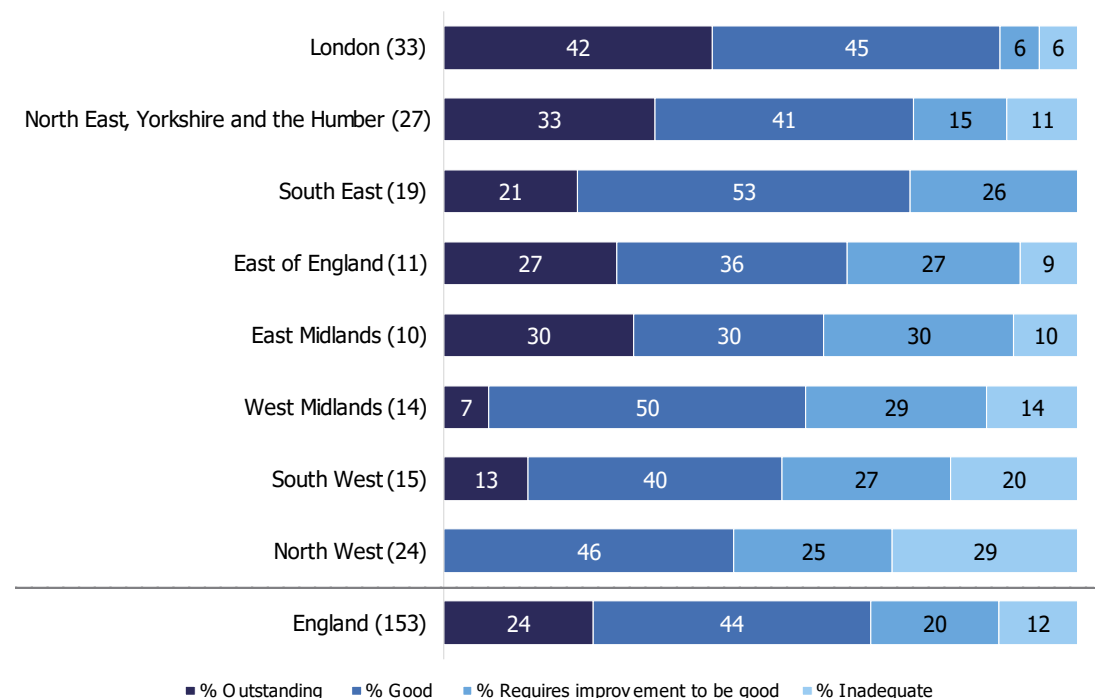
In the London region, 29 local authorities (88%) were judged as good or outstanding – considerably higher than the national figure of 67% and an increase of 3 percentage points since 31 March 2024. Conversely, in some regions, these proportions were much lower than the national figure:

- in the West Midlands, only 1 local authority (7%) was judged as outstanding
- in the South West, only 2 local authorities (13%) were judged as outstanding
- in the North West, 11 local authorities (46%) were judged as good (an increase of 10 percentage points since 31 March 2024) and none were outstanding

In the South East region, no local authorities were judged as inadequate. In contrast, 3 local authorities (20%) in the South West and 7 local authorities (29%) in the North West were judged as inadequate.

At a local authority level, as seen in [Figure 3](#), those with an overall effectiveness judgement of good or outstanding tend to be geographically clustered together, whereas inadequate local authorities are more dispersed. An exception to this is the North West region where some inadequate local authorities border each other.

Figure 2: Local authorities' overall effectiveness at their most recent inspection, by region

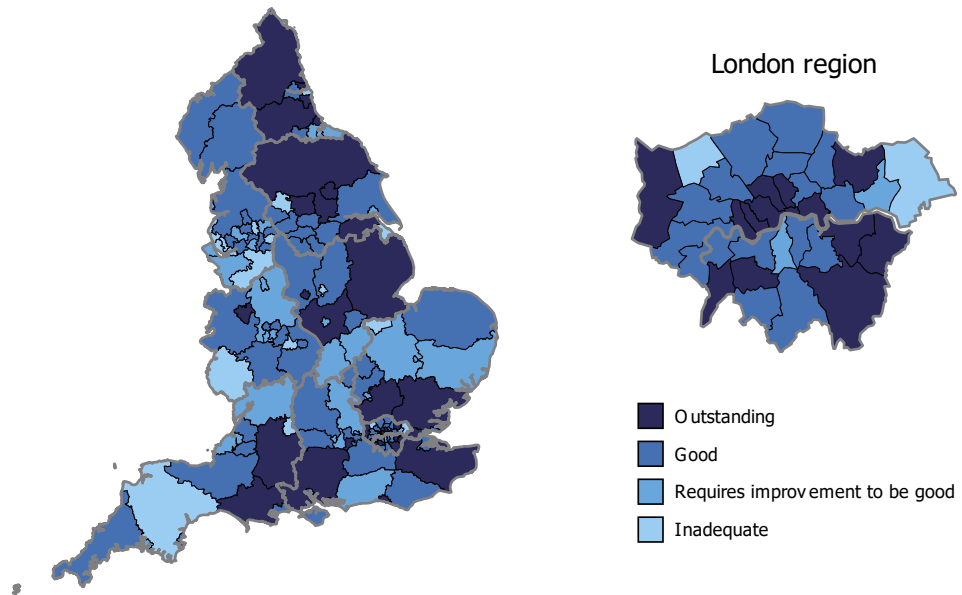


1. Numbers in brackets represent the number of local authorities with a graded judgement.

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

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

Figure 3: Map showing the overall effectiveness of local authorities as at 31 March 2025



1. This map of England and close-up of the London region uses a grey outline to visualise regional boundaries. To magnify the image, use the zoom function on your browser. A close-up of the London region is included due to the small size and density of the local authorities.

See the fourth worksheet in the [underlying data spreadsheet](#) to view this data in an accessible format.

Inspection sub-judgements

During standard and short inspections, local authorities receive the following graded judgements in addition to their overall effectiveness judgement:

- the impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families
- the experiences and progress of children who need help and protection
- the experiences and progress of children in care
- the experiences and progress of care leavers

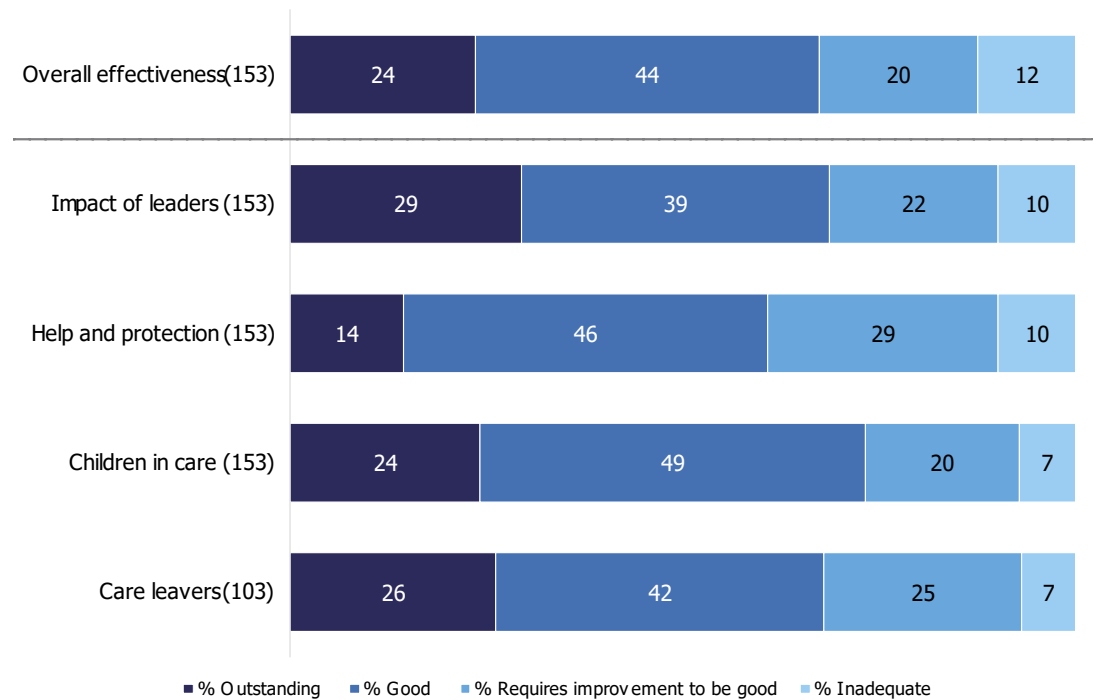
The care leavers judgement was introduced in January 2023. The experiences of care leavers were previously evaluated as part of the judgement 'the experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers'. This became a separate judgement following a [consultation in summer 2022](#).

As at 31 March 2025, 103 of the 153 local authorities inspected had a graded judgement for care leavers. Of these 103, 71 local authorities (69%) have a care leaver judgement the same as or better than their children in care judgement.

[Figure 4](#) shows a breakdown of the outcomes for all local authorities at their most recent inspection as at 31 March 2025 for each sub-judgement area. There was some variation in the quality of local authority children's services across the different areas. The lowest quality of practice was seen across help and protection, with only 93 local authorities (61%) judged as good or outstanding. The strongest practice was seen across experiences and progress of children in care, where 112 local authorities (73%) were judged as good or outstanding. The sub-judgement with the highest proportion of outstanding judgements was the impact of leaders on social work practice, with just over a quarter of local authorities (29%) judged outstanding at their latest inspection.

There are currently 4 local authorities judged as inadequate for one sub-judgment which resulted in an overall effectiveness judgement of inadequate. Their other sub-judgements were judged as good or requires improvement to be good.

Figure 4: Inspection sub-judgement outcomes at local authorities' most recent inspection



1. Numbers in brackets represent the number of local authorities with a graded judgement in that area.

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

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

ILACS inspection activity between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025

Between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025, we visited 99 of the 153 local authorities, on 112 different occasions. These included:

- 22 standard inspections
- 30 short inspections
- 36 focused visits
- 24 monitoring visits

ILACS standard and short inspections

While local authorities that were previously judged as good or outstanding usually receive a short inspection, local authorities that were previously judged as inadequate or as requires improvement to be good receive a standard inspection. Both standard and short inspections result in graded judgements.

Between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025, we carried out 22 standard inspections and 30 short inspections. Due to potential risks that had been identified, one of these standard inspections was for a local authority previously judged as good. However, the inspection found that the local authority was still good overall.

The overall effectiveness judgements for the 52 standard or short inspections carried out between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025 were:

- 19 local authorities (37%) outstanding
- 24 local authorities (46%) good
- 5 local authorities (10%) requires improvement to be good
- 4 local authorities (8%) inadequate

Of these 52 local authorities, 50 had previously been inspected under the ILACS framework. The overall effectiveness judgement improved for 20 local authorities (40%) and declined for 7 (14%). There were 20 local authorities (40%) that retained a judgement of good or outstanding.

Following a cycle of monitoring visits, we reinspected 2 local authorities that had been judged as inadequate at their previous inspection. One improved their overall effectiveness judgement to good, and the other remained inadequate.

ILACS monitoring visits

We carry out monitoring visits after a local authority is judged as inadequate. These visits do not result in a graded judgement. The first monitoring visit usually occurs around 6 months after we publish the short/standard inspection report. These first monitoring visits are not included in our annual figures, as we do not publish reports for these visits unless they are the second set of monitoring visits for a local authority. We will usually carry out between 4 and 6 monitoring visits before the reinspection occurs.

Between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025, we carried out a total of 24 monitoring visits across 14 local authorities that had been judged as inadequate at their latest inspection.

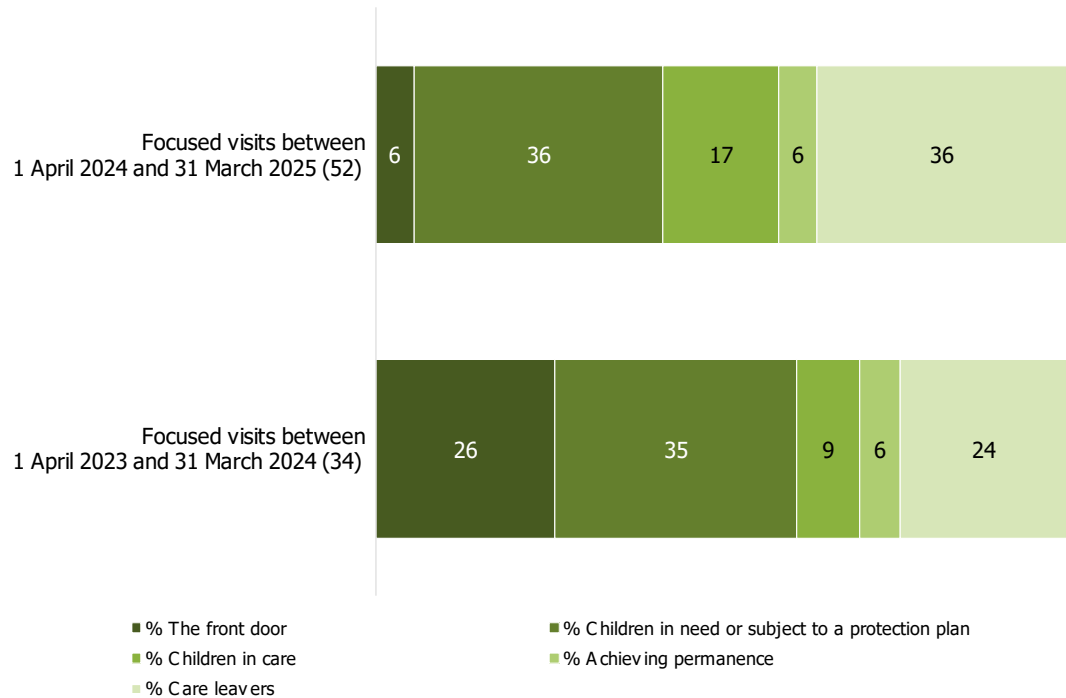
ILACS focused visits

We carry out focused visits between standard or short inspections. These do not result in a graded judgement. A focused visit looks at one or more aspects of the service, themes, or cohorts of children.

Of the 36 focused visits carried out, 21 (58%) were to local authorities judged as requires improvement to be good at their last graded inspection.

Details of visit themes from this year compared to last year are given in [Figure 5](#). The two most common focused visit themes from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 were children in need or subject to a protection plan and care leavers (both 36%). Conversely, from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, the two most common themes were children in need or subject to a plan and the front door (35% and 26%, respectively).

Figure 5: ILACS focused visits by theme between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025 and between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024



- 1. Numbers in brackets represent the number of focused visits carried out in the given time period.
 - 2. Due to rounding, percentages might not add up to 100.
- View [data in an accessible format](#).

Further information

Contacts

If you are a member of the public and have any comments or feedback on this publication, contact Clare Atkinson (clare.atkinson@ofsted.gov.uk) or the social care inspection insight team (socialcareSAO@ofsted.gov.uk).

Acknowledgements

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Glossary

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

Annex: data tables for figures

This section contains the underlying data in an accessible table format for Figures 1, 2, 4, and 5.

Data for Figure 1: Local authorities’ overall effectiveness at their most recent inspection

Period	% Outstanding	% Good	% Requires improvement to be good	% Inadequate
As at 31 March 2025 (153)	24	44	20	12
As at 31 March 2024	20	40	28	11

(151)

As at 31 March 2023 (152)	16	43	32	9
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As at 31 March 2022 (150)	13	41	35	12
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See [Figure 1](#).

Data for Figure 2: Local authorities' overall effectiveness at their most recent inspection, by region

Region	% Outstanding	% Good	% Requires improvement to be good	% Inadequate
London (33)	42	45	6	6
North East, Yorkshire and the Humber (27)	33	41	15	11
South East (19)	21	53	26	0
East of England (11)	27	36	27	9

East Midlands (10)	30	30	30	10
West Midlands (14)	7	50	29	14
South West (15)	13	40	27	20
North West (24)	0	46	25	29
England (153)	24	44	20	12

See [Figure 2](#).

Data for Figure 4: Inspection sub-judgement outcomes at local authorities' most recent inspection

Sub-judgements	% Outstanding	% Good	% Requires improvement to be good	% Inadequate
Overall effectiveness (153)	24	44	20	12
Impact of leaders (153)	29	39	22	10
Help and protection (153)	14	46	29	10

Children in care (153)	24	49	20	7
Care leavers (103)	26	42	25	7

See [Figure 4](#).

Data for Figure 5: ILACS focused visits by theme between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025 and between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024

Theme	% Focused visits between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024 (34)	% Focused visits between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025 (52)
Front door	26	6
Children in need or subject to a protection plan	35	36
Children in care	9	17
Achieving permanence	6	6
Care leavers	24	36

See [Figure 5](#).

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