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Department for Education

Reporting year 2025

Children in need: A focus on disability

Analysis of the characteristics and journeys of children in need with a disability, including children looked after and care leavers

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Headline facts and figures

Unless stated otherwise, Children in Need (CIN) statistics relate to CIN at 31 March 2025, and Children Looked after (CLA) and care leavers statistics relate to CLA and care leavers at 31 March 2024. This is due to disability information for CLA and care leavers being extracted from the longitudinal CIN dataset, an internal dataset that has been updated to 31 March 2024.

- 14% of CIN at 31 March 2025 had a recorded disability and this has remained stable over time (rising from 13% to 14% in the last ten years).
- CIN are slightly more likely to have a recorded disability compared to CLA (11%) and care leavers (13% aged 17 to 21 and 14% aged 22 to 25).
- A large proportion of CIN with a recorded disability had an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan (88%), though CIN without a recorded disability had a higher proportion of children receiving special educational needs (SEN) support (28% compared to 9% of CIN with a recorded disability).
- Autism was the most commonly recorded disability (46% of CIN with a recorded disability), followed by learning disabilities (33%) and behaviour disabilities (20%). Autism has become more commonly recorded among CIN with a recorded disability over time, rising from 31% in 2015.
- A higher proportion of CIN with a recorded disability were male, older and white (compared to CIN without a recorded disability).
- CIN with a recorded disability most commonly had disability or illness identified as their primary need (45%) but there was still a large proportion with a primary need of abuse or neglect (31%).
- A lower proportion of CIN with a recorded disability were eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) compared to CIN without a recorded disability (51% vs 66%), suspended (7% vs 16%), permanently excluded (0.3% vs 1%) or persistently absent (40% vs 43%). However, CIN with a recorded disability still had higher rates of FSM eligibility, suspensions, permanent exclusions and persistent absence when compared to the overall pupil population.
- 52% of children who had a learning disability identified by a social worker at the end of assessment, and 47% of children who had a physical disability identified, were not recorded as a disabled child in the CIN census.

- A lower proportion of children with a recorded disability had S47 enquiries - 20% compared to 26% of children without a recorded disability.
- Only 17% of CLA with a recorded disability had disability or illness identified as their primary need. The majority of CLA with a recorded disability had abuse or neglect listed as their primary need (57%).
- A lower proportion of CLA with a recorded disability were in foster placements, compared to CLA without a recorded disability (54% vs 69%). A higher proportion of CLA with a recorded disability were placed in secure homes and children's homes (29% vs 8%).
- A higher proportion of care leavers with a recorded disability were not in education, employment or training (NEET) compared to those without a recorded disability – 43% of 17-21 year old care leavers with a recorded disability were NEET, compared with 36% of care leavers without a recorded disability. This compares to 13% of all 17 to 21 year olds shown in the [labour force survey data \(opens in new tab\)](#)

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About these statistics

This ad hoc release contains statistics on children in need (CIN), children looked after (CLA) and care leavers with a recorded disability in England. This includes time series, demographics, journeys through social care, types of disability and additional breakdowns including primary need at assessment, factors identified at the end of assessment, educational outcomes such as absence, suspensions and permanent exclusions, and subnational analysis. Additional breakdowns are explored for CLA and care leavers including placement type and locality, care leaver activity and care leaver accommodation.

The majority of data in this release is drawn from the data collections used in the following statistical releases: [Children in need census](#), [Children looked after in England including adoptions \(SSDA903\)](#) and [Outcomes for children in need, including children looked after by local authorities in England](#). It presents breakdowns and

analysis not included in these releases. Additional data cleaning focusing on disability-related variables may have resulted in slightly different numbers between publications.

Children in need are a legally defined group of children (under the [Children Act 1989 \(opens in new tab\)](#)), assessed as needing help and protection as a result of risks to their development or health.

Disability information for children in need, children looked after and care leavers is taken from the Children in need census. The [Disability Discrimination Act \(opens in new tab\)](#) defines a disabled person as a person with a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities. The condition must have lasted, or be likely to last, for at least 12 months to be classed as a disability. The [Children in need 2025 to 2026 census guide \(opens in new tab\)](#) outlines how a child is recorded as being disabled and the codes for the possible disability types. All children in need are classified as either having a disability or not having a disability. Where a child is disabled, or becomes disabled at any point during the collection year, all relevant disabilities affecting the child are recorded.

The latest statistics and charts relate to the year ending 31 March 2025. The standard period for data in this release is for the year ending 31 March 2015 to the year ending 31 March 2025, however CLA and Care Leavers statistics are up to year ending 31 March 2024. This is because extracting disability information for these cohorts required linking the CIN and CLA datasets to the Longitudinal CIN Dataset (LCD), an internal dataset that contains data up to 31 March 2024.

Data from March 2020 to March 2022 may have been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. This potential impact should be taken into consideration when interpreting trends over time.

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Children in need

Time series and disability type

Only disabled children who have been assessed as requiring children’s social care services are included in the [Children in need collection](#). All children in need are classified as either having a disability or not having a disability. Where a child is disabled, or becomes disabled at any point during the collection year, all relevant disabilities affecting the child are recorded.

14% (58,100) of children in need (CIN) at 31 March 2025 had a recorded disability. This has remained largely stable since 2015, rising from 13% to 14% in the last two years.

Chart

Table

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Number and percentage of CIN at 31 March with and without a recorded disability, 2015 to 2025

		Child count	Child percent
CIN at 31 March with a disability recorded	2015	50,650	13%
	2016	49,950	13%
	2017	50,310	13%
	2018	49,770	12%
	2019	49,630	12%
	2020	49,170	13%

		2021	49,310	13%
		2022	49,680	12%
		2023	51,790	13%
		2024	54,510	14%
		2025	58,100	14%
CIN at 31 March with no disability recorded		2015	339,480	87%
		2016	343,960	87%
		2017	338,720	87%
		2018	354,940	88%
		2019	349,880	88%
		2020	340,090	87%
		2021	339,190	87%
		2022	354,630	88%
		2023	351,300	87%
		2024	344,950	86%
		2025	344,300	86%

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Footnotes

1. Numbers have been rounded to the nearest 10. Percentages rounded to the nearest whole number. Figures in some tables may be suppressed, denoted by a 'c', percentages <0.5% are denoted by a 'k'.
2. Data for the years ending 31 March 2021 and 2022 is not available for Hackney local authority, therefore 2020 data for Hackney has been included in the 2021 and 2022 national totals and regional totals. Data for the year ending 31 March 2024 is not available for Hampshire local authority, therefore 2023 data for Hampshire has been included in the 2024 national and regional totals. Refer to the methodology page for more information.

Source: Children in Need census

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Among CIN with a recorded disability in 2025, autism was the most commonly recorded disability type (46%), followed by learning (33%), behaviour (20%), other disability (19%) and communication (16%).

Autism has become increasingly prevalent among CIN with a recorded disability, rising from 31% in 2015 to 46% in 2025. Over the same period, the percentage of most disability types generally decreased, with learning showing the largest decline from 46% to 33%, although it remained the second most common disability type in

2025. Behaviour and other disability remained comparatively stable throughout this period, with each accounting for around one-fifth of CIN with a recorded disability.

[Chart](#)

[Table](#)

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Disability types for CIN with a recorded disability, England, 2025

	2025	
	Child count	Child percent
Autism/Asperger Syndrome	26,700	46%
Behaviour	11,730	20%
Communication	9,480	16%
Consciousness	1,950	3%
Hand Function	940	2%
Hearing	2,030	3%
Incontinence	2,280	4%
Learning	19,410	33%
Mobility	6,760	12%
Other Disability	10,860	19%
Personal Care	2,870	5%
Unknown	0	0%
Vision	2,990	5%

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Source: Children in Need census

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Disability types for CIN with a recorded disability, England, 2015 to 2025

		Child count	Child percent
2015	Autism/Asperger Syndrome	15,460	31%
	Behaviour	11,680	23%
	Communication	12,040	24%
	Consciousness	2,710	5%
	Hand Function	2,610	5%
	Hearing	2,830	6%
	Incontinence	4,510	9%
	Learning	23,200	46%
	Mobility	10,910	22%
	Other Disability	10,230	20%
	Personal Care	6,980	14%
	Vision	4,470	9%
2016	Autism/Asperger Syndrome	15,860	32%
	Behaviour	11,040	22%
	Communication	11,090	22%
	Consciousness	2,670	5%

	Hand Function	2,170	4%
	Hearing	2,690	5%
	Incontinence	4,160	8%
	Learning	22,390	45%
	Mobility	10,110	20%
	Other Disability	10,030	20%
	Personal Care	6,050	12%
	Vision	4,260	9%
2017	Autism/Asperger Syndrome	16,450	33%
	Behaviour	10,930	22%
	Communication	10,940	22%
	Consciousness	2,590	5%
	Hand Function	1,980	4%
	Hearing	2,580	5%
	Incontinence	3,980	8%
	Learning	22,320	44%
	Mobility	9,620	19%

2018	Other Disability	11,080	22%
	Personal Care	5,510	11%
	Vision	4,130	8%
	Autism/Asperger Syndrome	16,750	34%
	Behaviour	10,320	21%
	Communication	10,190	20%
	Consciousness	2,520	5%
	Hand Function	1,690	3%
	Hearing	2,460	5%
	Incontinence	3,580	7%
2019	Learning	22,090	44%
	Mobility	9,050	18%
	Other Disability	10,740	22%
	Personal Care	4,710	9%
	Vision	3,940	8%
	Autism/Asperger Syndrome	17,120	34%
	Behaviour	10,340	21%

	Communication	9,420	19%
	Consciousness	2,330	5%
	Hand Function	1,500	3%
	Hearing	2,380	5%
	Incontinence	3,260	7%
	Learning	21,440	43%
	Mobility	8,630	17%
	Other Disability	10,030	20%
	Personal Care	4,250	9%
	Vision	3,740	8%
2020	Autism/Asperger Syndrome	16,860	34%
	Behaviour	9,890	20%
	Communication	9,080	18%
	Consciousness	2,210	4%
	Hand Function	1,330	3%
	Hearing	2,280	5%
	Incontinence	2,930	6%
	Learning	20,520	42%

	Learning	20,330	42%
	Mobility	8,230	17%
	Other Disability	10,220	21%
	Personal Care	3,820	8%
	Vision	3,590	7%
2021	Autism/Asperger Syndrome	18,020	37%
	Behaviour	9,910	20%
	Communication	8,950	18%
	Consciousness	2,170	4%
	Hand Function	1,250	3%
	Hearing	2,210	4%
	Incontinence	2,740	6%
	Learning	20,460	41%
	Mobility	7,860	16%
	Other Disability	10,020	20%
	Personal Care	3,560	7%
	Vision	3,470	7%
2022	Autism/Asperger Syndrome	19,370	39%

	Behaviour	9,950	20%
	Communication	8,940	18%
	Consciousness	1,920	4%
	Hand Function	1,100	2%
	Hearing	2,210	4%
	Incontinence	2,450	5%
	Learning	19,410	39%
	Mobility	7,360	15%
	Other Disability	9,800	20%
	Personal Care	3,260	7%
	Vision	3,330	7%
2023	Autism/Asperger Syndrome	21,470	41%
	Behaviour	10,050	19%
	Communication	8,770	17%
	Consciousness	1,850	4%
	Hand Function	1,040	2%
	Hearing	2,070	4%

	Incontinence	2,310	4%
	Learning	19,140	37%
	Mobility	7,120	14%
	Other Disability	9,580	18%
	Personal Care	2,870	6%
	Vision	3,210	6%
2024	Autism/Asperger Syndrome	24,110	44%
	Behaviour	10,600	19%
	Communication	8,750	16%
	Consciousness	1,910	3%
	Hand Function	950	2%
	Hearing	2,010	4%
	Incontinence	2,190	4%
	Learning	18,750	34%
	Mobility	6,950	13%
	Other Disability	10,520	19%
	Personal Care	2,770	5%

	Vision	3,090	6%
2025	Autism/Asperger Syndrome	26,700	46%
	Behaviour	11,730	20%
	Communication	9,480	16%
	Consciousness	1,950	3%
	Hand Function	940	2%
	Hearing	2,030	3%
	Incontinence	2,280	4%
	Learning	19,410	33%
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Source: Children in Need census

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Child characteristics

Sex

Over two thirds (67%) of CIN at 31 March 2025 with a recorded disability were male. This is an over-representation when compared to CIN without a recorded disability (53%) and the overall child population (51%, [as shown in the latest ONS mid-year population estimates \(opens in new tab\)](#)).

Compared to all CIN with a recorded disability, males were particularly over-represented among CIN with autism (74%) and behaviour disabilities (73%); females were over-represented in hand function and mobility disabilities (both 41% compared to 33%), as well as 'other' disability types (38%).

Age

CIN at 31 March 2025 with a recorded disability tended to be older than those without a recorded disability. 76% were aged 10 and over compared to 57% of CIN without a recorded disability and 47% of the overall child population.

Both CIN with and without a recorded disability are getting older over time. In the year ending 31 March 2015, 26% of CIN with a recorded disability were aged 16 and over, compared to 17% of CIN without a recorded disability. In 2025, the equivalent percentages were 32% and 27% respectively.

Ethnicity

A higher proportion of CIN at 31 March 2025 with a recorded disability were White (70%) or Asian/Asian British (10%) compared to CIN without a recorded disability (65% White, 8% Asian/Asian British). A lower proportion were from mixed or multiple ethnic groups. Both groups had a similar proportion of Black/African/Caribbean/Black British children (10% of CIN with a recorded disability, 9% of CIN without a recorded disability).

Compared to all CIN at 31 March 2025 with a recorded disability, children from a White ethnic background were particularly over-represented among those with a behaviour disability (76%); children from an Asian/Asian British ethnic background were over-represented among those with consciousness, personal care, and mobility disabilities (all 13%), and children from a Black/African/Caribbean/Black British ethnic background were over-represented among those with a hand function disability (15%) or autism (12%).

► Export options

CIN at 31 March by disability, ethnicity, age group and sex, England, 2025

All CIN at 31 March	CIN at 31 March with a disability recorded	CIN at 31 March with no disability recorded
---------------------	--	---

Age	Unborn	2%	k	2%
	Under 1	4%	k	5%
	1 to 4	13%	3%	15%
	5 to 9	21%	21%	21%
	10 to 15	32%	44%	30%
	16 and over	27%	32%	27%
	Unknown	k	0%	k
Sex	Female	43%	33%	45%
	Male	55%	67%	53%
	Unknown	2%	k	2%
Ethnicity Major	Asian / Asian British	8%	10%	8%
	Black / African / Caribbean / Black British	9%	10%	9%
	Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups	9%	8%	10%
	Other ethnic group	4%	2%	5%
	Unknown	3%	1%	3%

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Source: Children in Need census

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Primary need at assessment

A social worker determines the child’s primary need at their first assessment. Only one primary need can be reported at this point and is selected from a hierarchical list. In cases where multiple needs are identified, the need highest in the list is reported.

Among CIN at 31 March 2025 with a recorded disability, 'Child's disability or illness' was the most commonly recorded primary need (45%), followed by 'Abuse or neglect' (31%). The most common primary need for CIN without a recorded disability was ‘Abuse or neglect’ (63%).

In both groups, the proportion of children with ‘Abuse or neglect’ as their primary need has increased over time. Among CIN at 31 March with a recorded disability, this rose from 18% in 2015 to 31% in 2025. Over the same period, the proportion with ‘Child’s disability or illness’ as their primary need fell from 63% to 45%. This suggests that, compared with previous years, fewer children with a recorded disability are in social care due to disability alone.

In the latest year, 'Child's disability or illness' was the [most common primary need](#) among children with all disability types except for behaviour, for which ‘Abuse or neglect’ was the most common.

Chart

Table

► Export options

CIN at 31 March by disability and primary need, England, 2015 to 2025

Child count		Child percent	
CIN at 31 March with a disability recorded	CIN at 31 March with no disability recorded	CIN at 31 March with a disability recorded	CIN at 31 March with no disability recorded

Primary Need	N0 - Not stated	2015	1,380	16,200	3%	5%
		2016	1,260	16,600	3%	5%
		2017	1,090	13,110	2%	4%
		2018	1,840	19,150	4%	5%
		2019	1,920	16,700	4%	5%
		2020	1,640	11,370	3%	3%
		2021	1,440	9,720	3%	3%
		2022	1,340	11,080	3%	3%
		2023	1,350	8,480	3%	2%
		2024	1,650	8,790	3%	3%
	2025	2,210	13,590	4%	4%	
	N1 - Abuse or neglect	2015	9,170	183,420	18%	54%
		2016	10,160	189,420	20%	55%
		2017	10,800	192,810	21%	57%
		2018	11,480	203,800	23%	57%
		2019	12,260	204,030	25%	58%
		2020	12,980	204,460	26%	60%

	2021	13,340	205,850	27%	61%
	2022	14,040	216,790	28%	61%
	2023	15,170	216,320	29%	62%
	2024	16,530	215,400	30%	62%
	2025	18,140	216,450	31%	63%
N2 - Child's disability or illness	2015	31,750	7,960	63%	2%
	2016	29,820	7,910	60%	2%
	2017	29,130	7,630	58%	2%
	2018	27,460	7,780	55%	2%
	2019	26,300	7,290	53%	2%
	2020	24,870	7,070	51%	2%
	2021	24,480	7,660	50%	2%
	2022	23,900	8,270	48%	2%
	2023	24,490	8,310	47%	2%
	2024	25,030	7,120	46%	2%
	2025	25,960	7,070	45%	2%
N3 - Parent's disability or illness	2015	760	10,320	1%	3%

disability or illness	2016	760	10,680	2%	3%
	2017	760	10,100	2%	3%
	2018	750	9,750	1%	3%
	2019	690	9,190	1%	3%
	2020	720	8,700	1%	3%
	2021	700	8,760	1%	3%
	2022	760	8,180	2%	2%
	2023	740	7,810	1%	2%
	2024	780	7,490	1%	2%
	2025	860	6,880	1%	2%
N4 - Family in acute stress	2015	3,000	32,990	6%	10%
	2016	3,070	31,270	6%	9%
	2017	3,570	32,420	7%	10%
	2018	3,340	30,940	7%	9%
	2019	3,470	30,280	7%	9%
	2020	3,390	29,470	7%	9%
	2021	3,490	29,620	7%	9%

	2022	3,660	31,090	7%	9%
	2023	3,870	31,670	7%	9%
	2024	4,130	30,280	8%	9%
	2025	4,400	29,410	8%	9%
N5 - Family dysfunction	2015	3,450	66,490	7%	20%
	2016	3,750	64,660	8%	19%
	2017	3,770	58,540	7%	17%
	2018	3,690	58,490	7%	16%
	2019	3,700	55,120	7%	16%
	2020	4,050	50,760	8%	15%
	2021	4,290	49,210	9%	15%
	2022	4,510	49,090	9%	14%
	2023	4,680	46,480	9%	13%
	2024	4,900	43,000	9%	12%
	2025	4,720	37,570	8%	11%
N6 - Socially unacceptable behaviour	2015	500	7,240	1%	2%
	2016	510	7,080	1%	2%

	2017	550	7,340	1%	2%
	2018	550	7,670	1%	2%
	2019	600	7,640	1%	2%
	2020	610	7,570	1%	2%
	2021	600	7,130	1%	2%
	2022	620	7,580	1%	2%
	2023	640	7,400	1%	2%
	2024	660	7,210	1%	2%
	2025	700	6,700	1%	2%
N7 - Low income	2015	120	1,870	k	1%
	2016	120	1,780	k	1%
	2017	120	1,550	k	k
	2018	80	1,340	k	k
	2019	90	1,400	k	k
	2020	100	1,430	k	k
	2021	100	1,500	k	k
	2022	90	1,250	k	k
	2023	80	1,110	k	k

	2023	80	1,110	k	k
	2024	70	990	k	k
	2025	80	950	k	k
N8 - Absent parenting	2015	250	9,830	k	3%
	2016	240	11,410	k	3%
	2017	240	11,940	k	4%
	2018	240	12,480	k	4%
	2019	330	14,780	1%	4%
	2020	300	15,650	1%	5%
	2021	270	16,140	1%	5%
	2022	250	18,160	1%	5%
	2023	280	20,700	1%	6%
	2024	260	21,670	k	6%
	2025	290	22,270	1%	6%
N9 - Cases other than children in need	2015	270	3,160	1%	1%
	2016	260	3,150	1%	1%
	2017	280	3,300	1%	1%
	2018	350	3,540	1%	1%

2019	280	3,450	1%	1%
2020	510	3,590	1%	1%
2021	600	3,590	1%	1%
2022	520	3,160	1%	1%
2023	510	3,020	1%	1%
2024	510	3,000	1%	1%
2025	720	3,420	1%	1%

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Footnotes

1. Numbers have been rounded to the nearest 10. Percentages rounded to the nearest whole number. Figures in some tables may be suppressed, denoted by a 'c', percentages <0.5% are denoted by a 'k'.
2. Data for the years ending 31 March 2021 and 2022 is not available for Hackney local authority, therefore 2020 data for Hackney has been included in the 2021 and 2022 national totals and regional totals. Data for the year ending 31 March 2024 is not available for Hampshire local authority, therefore 2023 data for Hampshire has been included in the 2024 national and regional totals. Refer to the methodology page for more information.

Source: Children in Need census

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

Explore data

Factors identified at the end of assessment

Factors identified at the end of assessment are additional factors that social workers record as being relevant in a case.

These figures are based on assessment factors recorded against individual children who were referred to children's social care services and assessed as being in need of children's social care services during the year ending 31 March 2025.

The majority of children have more than one factor recorded. It should be noted that not all episodes have factors recorded, but this has improved over time. Nonetheless, there can be differences in the recording and practice between local authorities therefore this data should be treated with caution and shouldn't be taken to represent the national, regional or local authority level prevalence of particular issues.

For children with a recorded disability, the most common assessment factors in 2025 were:

- Learning disability concerns about child (27% compared to 5% of children without a recorded disability)
- Mental health concerns about parent (14% compared to 21% of children without a recorded disability)
- Physical disability concerns about child (12% compared to 2% of children without a recorded disability)

- Mental health concerns about child (10% for both children with and without a recorded disability).

For children without a recorded disability, the most common assessment factors in 2025 were:

- Mental health concerns about parent (21% compared to 14% of children with a recorded disability)
- Domestic abuse (concerns parent is victim) (21% compared to 7% of children with a recorded disability)
- Emotional abuse (14% compared to 5% of children with a recorded disability)
- Neglect (13% compared to 6% of children with a recorded disability)

Among children with a recorded disability, learning disabilities, physical disabilities and mental health concerns were the most common assessment factors for each disability type.

Chart

Table

► Export options

Percentage of children with and without a recorded disability with factors recorded in England at the end of assessment in the year ending 31 March 2025

	2025			
	Number of children assessed with a recorded disability	Number of children assessed without a recorded disability	Percentage of children assessed with a recorded disability	Percentage of children assessed without a recorded disability
Abuse linked to faith or belief	60	880	k	k

Alcohol misuse: concerns about child	510	4,860	1%	1%
Alcohol misuse: concerns about other person	360	5,510	1%	2%
Alcohol misuse: concerns about parent	1,950	33,210	3%	10%
Domestic abuse: concerns child is victim	1,530	24,100	3%	7%
Domestic abuse: concerns other person is victim	810	10,570	1%	3%
Domestic abuse: concerns parent is victim	3,900	64,340	7%	19%
Drug misuse: concerns about child	1,120	11,030	2%	3%
Drug misuse: concerns about other person	520	8,110	1%	2%

Drug misuse: concerns about parent	1,890	36,990	3%	11%
Emotional abuse	3,020	48,260	5%	14%
Female Genital Mutilation	10	200	k	k
Gangs	400	4,030	1%	1%
Going/being missing	1,130	8,270	2%	2%
Learning disability: concerns about child	15,600	17,150	27%	5%
Learning disability: concerns about other person	1,430	2,560	2%	1%
Learning disability: concerns about parent	1,460	8,110	3%	2%
Mental health: concerns about child	5,890	34,710	10%	10%

Mental health: concerns about other person	1,670	10,040	3%	3%
Mental health: concerns about parent	8,380	73,000	14%	21%
Neglect	3,590	46,420	6%	13%
Other	2,280	22,930	4%	7%
Physical abuse: adult on child	1,500	23,870	3%	7%
Physical abuse: child on child	710	6,750	1%	2%
Physical disability or illness: concerns about child	6,920	6,120	12%	2%
Physical disability or illness: concerns about other person	810	1,950	1%	1%
Physical disability or illness:	2,940	10,770	5%	3%

concerns about parent

Privately fostered	90	910	k	k
Self-harm	2,180	10,640	4%	3%
Sexual abuse: adult on child	480	6,950	1%	2%
Sexual abuse: child on child	430	3,840	1%	1%
Socially unacceptable behaviour	2,550	14,270	4%	4%
Trafficking	90	1,240	k	k
Young carer	1,680	8,850	3%	3%

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Footnotes

1. Numbers have been rounded to the nearest 10. Percentages rounded to the nearest whole number.
Figures in some tables may be suppressed, denoted by a 'c', percentages <0.5% are denoted by a 'k'.

2. Children may have been assessed with more than one of these factors; each child is counted once for each year they were assessed in.

[Show 3 more footnotes](#)

Source: Children in Need census

Explore and edit this data online

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Explore data

52% of children assessed by a social worker as having a learning disability, and 47% of those assessed as having a physical disability, were not flagged as a disabled child in the 2025 CIN census. This highlights potential data quality issues.

[Chart](#)

[Table](#)

► Export options

Percentage of children with a recorded disability that were assessed with a learning disability or physical disability, England, 2025

**Learning Disability:
concerns about child**

**Physical Disability: concerns
about child**

CIN at 31 March with a disability recorded	48%	53%
CIN at 31 March with no disability recorded	52%	47%

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Footnotes

1. Numbers have been rounded to the nearest 10. Percentages rounded to the nearest whole number.
Figures in some tables may be suppressed, denoted by a 'c', percentages <0.5% are denoted by a 'k'.
2. Children may have been assessed with more than one of these factors; each child is counted once for each year they were assessed in.

[Show 1 more footnote](#)

Source: Children in Need census

Explore and edit this data online

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Source of referrals

A referral is defined as a request for services to be provided by children’s social care and is regarding a child who is not currently in need.

Referrals to children’s social care services can be made from various sources. Referrals from LA services were the most common source for CIN at 31 March 2025 with a recorded disability, accounting for 1 in 5 referrals (20%). Referrals from individuals were more common for CIN with a recorded disability (17%) compared to CIN without a recorded disability (8%), while referrals from the police were less common (10%, compared to 24% of referrals for CIN without a recorded disability). A higher proportion of referrals for CIN with a recorded disability had an unknown source (10% compared to 6% of referrals for CIN without a recorded disability).

[Chart](#)

[Table](#)

► Export options

Sources of referral for CIN at 31 March with and without a recorded disability, England, 2025

			Child count			Child percent		
			All CIN at 31 March	CIN at 31 March with a disability recorded	CIN at 31 March with no disability recorded	All CIN at 31 March	CIN at 31 March with a disability recorded	CIN at 31 March with no disability recorded
2025	Referral Source	Anonymous	6,610	520	6,090	2%	1%	2%

Education services	7,610	1,410	6,200	2%	2%	2%
Health services	55,720	8,720	47,000	14%	15%	14%
Housing	4,550	310	4,240	1%	1%	1%
Individual	36,470	9,760	26,710	9%	17%	8%
LA services	70,400	11,760	58,640	17%	20%	17%
Other	20,530	2,840	17,700	5%	5%	5%
Other legal agency	17,150	690	16,460	4%	1%	5%
Police	88,130	5,750	82,380	22%	10%	24%
Schools	69,240	10,400	58,830	17%	18%	17%
Unknown source	25,990	5,930	20,060	6%	10%	6%

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Footnotes

1. Numbers have been rounded to the nearest 10. Percentages rounded to the nearest whole number.

Figures in some tables may be suppressed, denoted by a 'c', percentages <0.5% are denoted by a 'k'.

2. Data for the years ending 31 March 2021 and 2022 is not available for Hackney local authority, therefore 2020 data for Hackney has been included in the 2021 and 2022 national totals and regional totals. Data for the year ending 31 March 2024 is not available for Hampshire local authority, therefore 2023 data for Hampshire has been included in the 2024 national and regional totals. Refer to the methodology page for more information.

[Show 4 more footnotes](#)

Source: Children in Need census

Explore and edit this data online

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Explore data

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Pupil characteristics and educational outcomes

The statistics and charts in this section are produced using the same data as used to produce the annual [Outcomes for children in need, including children looked after publication](#), which is derived from information collected in the children in need (CIN) census, the children looked after (CLA) SSDA903

return and a range of outcome measures from the National Pupil Database (NPD). As a result, the statistics in this section refer to children matched to the NPD, rather than all CIN. This therefore excludes most children that are not of school age (some children who aren't of school age may be included depending on the type of setting they attend), children that have never attended certain schools (for example, some unaccompanied asylum-seeking children or children that have only ever attended an independent school), children that are educated outside of England, or children that are newly CIN or CLA (from one week before the end of the collection period).

Special educational needs

A child has a special educational need (SEN) if they have a learning difficulty or disability that requires special educational provision to be made for them. This differs from a disability, which is defined as a person with a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. The condition must have lasted, or be likely to last, for at least 12 months to be classed as a disability. The [Children in need 2025 to 2026 census guide \(opens in new tab\)](#) outlines how a child is recorded as being disabled and the codes for the different disability types. Although there is overlap between the two, a child may be disabled but not have SEN, and vice versa.

The majority of CIN at 31 March 2025 with a recorded disability had a special educational need in 2024/25, compared to CIN without a recorded disability and all pupils. A higher proportion of CIN with a recorded disability had EHC plans (88.0%) compared to CIN without a recorded disability (14.5%). However, a lower proportion were receiving SEN support without an EHC plan (8.9% vs 28.2%).

Among CIN with a recorded disability, the disability type with the highest proportion of children with an EHC plan was 'personal care' (94.9%). The disability type with the highest proportion receiving SEN support without an EHC plan was 'behaviour' (12.9%).

[Chart](#)

[Table](#)

► Export options

**Percentage of CIN at 31 March by SEN provision and disability,
England, 2024/25**

		2025			
		All CIN at 31 March	All pupils comparison	CIN at 31 March with a disability recorded	CIN at 31 March with no disability recorded
Child percent	Education, health and care plan	28.8%	5.3%	88.0%	14.5%
	No SEN provision	46.7%	80.8%	3.1%	57.3%
	SEN support / SEN without an EHC plan	24.4%	14.0%	8.9%	28.2%

[Show full screen table](#)

[Data symbols](#)

Footnotes

1. Special educational needs (SEN) status and primary type of SEN data is taken from both the school census and the alternative provision census. More detailed information on the SEN data published within this release is available in the [Outcomes for children in need, including children looked after by local authorities in England methodology](#).

2. Numbers have been rounded to the nearest 10. Percentages rounded to 1 decimal place. Figures in some tables may be suppressed, denoted by a 'c', percentages <0.05% are denoted by a 'k'.

Source: Children in Need census

Explore and edit this data online

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Explore data

Primary type of special educational need

For CIN at 31 March 2025 with a recorded disability, the most common type of need for those with an EHC plan in 2024/25 was autism (36.0%), followed by severe learning difficulty (17.6%). For CIN with an EHC plan but no recorded disability, the most common type of SEN was social, emotional and mental health (45.8%).

A higher proportion of CIN with a disability recorded had autism, severe learning difficulty, or profound and multiple learning difficulty identified as their primary type of SEN compared to CIN without a recorded disability. A lower proportion had social, emotional and mental health needs or moderate learning difficulty recorded.

The percentage of CIN with a recorded disability and an EHC plan who have autism identified as their primary type of SEN has been increasing since 2018/19 (from 29.8% to 36.0%), while the percentage of those with physical disability as their primary SEN type has been decreasing (from 7.9% to 5.5%).

ChartTable

 Some rows and columns are not shown in this table as the data does not exist in the

underlying file.

► Export options

Primary SEN type of CIN at 31 March with an EHC plan, by recorded disability status, England, 2024/25

	Education, health and care plan	
	2025	
	CIN at 31 March with a disability recorded	CIN at 31 March with no disability recorded
Autistic Spectrum Disorder	36.0%	16.9%
Down Syndrome	0.3%	0.1%
Hearing Impairment	0.8%	0.5%
Moderate Learning Difficulty	4.9%	8.2%
Multi-Sensory Impairment	0.3%	0.2%
Other Difficulty/Disability	1.7%	1.8%
Physical Disability	5.5%	1.9%
Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulty	8.9%	1.5%
SEN support but no specialist assessment type of need	0.0%	0.0%

Severe Learning Difficulty	17.6%	5.1%
Social, Emotional and Mental Health	11.9%	45.8%
Specific Learning Difficulty	2.0%	3.4%
Speech, Language and Communication needs	9.0%	14.3%
Unknown	0.0%	c
Visual Impairment	1.0%	0.3%

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[Data symbols](#)

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Footnotes

1. Special educational needs (SEN) status and primary type of SEN data is taken from both the school census and the alternative provision census. More detailed information on the SEN data published within this release is available in the [Outcomes for children in need, including children looked after by local authorities in England methodology](#).
2. Numbers have been rounded to the nearest 10. Percentages rounded to 1 decimal place. Figures in some tables may be suppressed, denoted by a 'c', percentages <0.05% are denoted by a 'k'.

Source: Children in Need census

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

Explore data

School type

For CIN at 31 March 2025 with an EHC plan, a much higher proportion of those with a recorded disability attended special schools (75.9%) compared to those without a recorded disability (38.6%).

For CIN at 31 March receiving SEN support in 2024/25, school type did not differ much by disability status. For CIN with no identified SEN, a higher proportion of those with a recorded disability attended state-funded alternative provision (2.8%) than those without a disability (0.5%).

Among CIN with a recorded disability, those with a consciousness disability had the highest proportion of children attending special schools (87.0%), while those with a behaviour disability had the lowest (56.3%).

Chart

Table

► Export options

Percentage of CIN at 31 March by SEN provision, school type and recorded disability, England, 2024/25

	CIN at 31 March with a disability recorded	CIN at 31 March with no disability recorded
Special schools	75.9%	38.6%
State-funded alternative provision	2.8%	0.5%
Other	21.3%	60.9%

Education, health and care plan	Nursery	0.1%	0.1%
	Special	75.9%	38.6%
	State-funded alternative provision	1.0%	3.6%
	State-funded primary	14.0%	30.3%
	State-funded secondary	9.0%	27.4%
No SEN provision	Nursery	0.8%	0.4%
	Special	c	c
	State-funded alternative provision	2.8%	0.5%
	State-funded primary	38.4%	54.0%
	State-funded secondary	57.9%	45.1%
SEN support / SEN without an EHC plan	Nursery	0.6%	0.3%
	Special	1.2%	0.2%
	State-funded alternative	3.8%	4.4%

provision

**State-funded
primary**

47.8%

55.1%

**State-funded
secondary**

46.6%

40.0%

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[Data symbols](#)

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Footnotes

1. Special educational needs (SEN) status and primary type of SEN data is taken from both the school census and the alternative provision census. More detailed information on the SEN data published within this release is available in the [Outcomes for children in need, including children looked after by local authorities in England methodology](#).
2. Numbers have been rounded to the nearest 10. Percentages rounded to 1 decimal place. Figures in some tables may be suppressed, denoted by a 'c', percentages <0.05% are denoted by a 'k'.

[Show 1 more footnote](#)

Source: Children in Need census

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

Free school meals

Pupils in state-funded schools in England are entitled to receive free school meals if a parent or carer was in receipt of certain benefits. More information on free school meal eligibility is provided in the department's [Schools, pupils and their characteristics](#) statistical release.

Since 1 April 2018, transitional protections have been in place which will continue during the roll out of Universal Credit. This has meant that pupils eligible for free school meals on or after 1 April 2018 retain their free school meal eligibility even if their circumstances change. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, this had been the main driver in the increase in the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals as pupils continue to become eligible but fewer pupils stop being eligible.

Any pupils gaining eligibility for free school meals after 1 April 2018 were protected against losing free school meals until March 2025. After March 2025, any existing claimants that no longer meet the eligibility criteria at that point (because they are earning above the threshold or are no longer a recipient of Universal Credit) has continued to receive free school meals until the end of their current phase of education (i.e. primary or secondary).

A lower proportion of CIN at 31 March 2025 with a recorded disability were eligible for free school meals in 2024/25 (51.0%) than CIN without a recorded disability (65.8%). Both groups had higher proportions eligible for free school meals than the overall pupil population (25.7%).

Among CIN with a recorded disability recorded, the most common disability type to have children eligible for free school meals was 'behaviour' (54.5%).

► Export options

CIN at 31 March eligible for free school meals by disability, England, 2018/19 to 2024/25

	Child count				Child percentage			
	All pupils comparison	All CIN at 31 March	CIN at 31 March with a disability recorded	CIN at 31 March with no disability recorded	All pupils comparison	All CIN at 31 March	CIN at 31 March with a disability recorded	CIN at 31 March with no disability recorded
2019	1,270,940	108,870	14,910	93,960	15.4%	46.0%	37.9%	47.6%
2020	1,440,790	113,420	15,440	97,980	17.3%	49.6%	40.2%	51.5%
2021	1,737,600	123,880	16,890	107,000	20.8%	54.8%	43.9%	57.0%
2022	1,897,450	135,730	17,830	117,900	22.5%	57.0%	46.1%	59.2%
2023	2,019,510	139,200	18,950	120,260	23.8%	59.0%	47.5%	61.4%
2024	2,094,170	139,870	20,260	119,610	24.6%	60.9%	48.7%	63.6%
2025	2,171,920	140,170	22,100	118,070	25.7%	62.9%	51.0%	65.8%

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Footnotes

1. Free school meal (FSM) eligibility is taken from both the school census and the alternative provision census. More detailed information on the FSM data published within this release is available in the [Outcomes for children in need, including children looked after by local authorities in England methodology](#).
2. Numbers have been rounded to the nearest 10. Percentages rounded to 1 decimal place. Figures in some tables may be suppressed, denoted by a 'c', percentages <0.05% are denoted by a 'k'.

Source: CIN-CLA-NPD

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

Explore data

Suspensions and exclusions

Suspensions and permanent exclusions data is collected two terms in arrears, which means the latest available data for the full academic year is 2023/24.

The figures presented in this publication include the 2019/20 and 2020/21 academic years that were affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Data for all pupils are produced using a different methodology to that used for the social care groups, so it is not appropriate to make precise comparisons with suspensions and exclusions figures for all pupils.

Suspensions

Pupils with one or more suspensions refers to pupils that had at least one suspension across the full academic year.

A lower proportion of CIN at 31 March 2024 with a recorded disability had one or more suspension (7.45%) in 2023/24 than CIN without a recorded disability (16.36%). In both groups, the rate of suspensions has been increasing over time.

Among CIN with a recorded disability, the disability type with the highest proportion of children with one or more suspension was ‘behaviour’ (16.34%).

Permanent exclusions

A permanent exclusion refers to a pupil who is excluded and will not come back to that school (unless the exclusion is overturned). This data only includes permanent exclusions which have been upheld by the governing body or Independent Review Panel (IRP), and not those which are still ongoing.

The percentage of CIN at 31 March 2024 with a permanent exclusion in 2023/24 was similar for those with or without a recorded disability, though a lower proportion of those with a recorded disability had been permanently excluded (0.34%) compared to those without a recorded disability (0.97%). Rates have been slightly rising for all groups since 2022.

Among CIN with a recorded disability, the disability type with the highest exclusion rate was ‘behaviour’ (0.91%).

[Chart](#)

[Table](#)

► Export options

**Percentage of pupils with a permanent exclusion or suspension,
by disability, England, 2018/19 to 2023/24**

		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
All CIN at 31 March	Percentage of pupils with one or more permanent exclusion	0.67%	0.42%	0.33%	0.59%	0.80%	0.86%
	Percentage of pupils with one or more suspension	10.90%	9.30%	9.30%	12.29%	14.06%	14.85%
All pupils comparison	Percentage of pupils with one or more permanent exclusion	0.10%	0.06%	0.05%	0.08%	0.11%	0.13%
	Percentage of pupils with one or more suspension	2.56%	1.97%	2.28%	3.13%	3.74%	4.18%
CIN at 31 March with a disability recorded	Percentage of pupils with one or more permanent exclusion	0.20%	0.13%	0.13%	0.19%	0.31%	0.34%
	Percentage of pupils with one or more suspension	5.28%	4.67%	4.70%	6.17%	7.25%	7.45%

	pupils with one or more suspension						
CIN at 31 March with no disability recorded	Percentage of pupils with one or more permanent exclusion	0.76%	0.48%	0.37%	0.66%	0.89%	0.97%
	Percentage of pupils with one or more suspension	11.96%	10.18%	10.18%	13.40%	15.35%	16.36%

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[Data symbols](#)

Footnotes

1. While suspensions and permanent exclusions were possible throughout the 2019/20 and 2020/21 academic years, national restrictions will have had an impact on the numbers presented and caution should be taken when comparing across years.
2. Numbers have been rounded to the nearest 10. Percentages rounded to 2 decimal places. Figures in some tables may be suppressed, denoted by a 'c', percentages <0.005% are denoted by a 'k'.

Source: CIN-CLA-NPD

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

Explore data

Absence

Persistent absentees

A pupil is identified as persistently absent if they miss 10% or more of possible sessions.

A lower proportion of CIN at 31 March 2025 with a recorded disability were persistently absent in 2024/25 (39.9%) than CIN without a recorded disability (43.2%). Both groups had higher rates of persistent absence than the overall pupil population (18.5%).

Rates of persistent absence have risen substantially for all pupils since the COVID-19 pandemic (from 11.2% in 2018/19 to 18.5% in 2024/25), and this increase is particularly high for both groups of CIN (from 29.9% to 39.9% for CIN with a recorded disability and from 30.5% to 43.2% for CIN without a recorded disability).

Severe absentees

A pupil is identified as severely absent if they miss 50% or more of possible sessions.

A lower proportion of CIN at 31 March 2025 with a recorded disability were severely absent in 2024/25 (9.8%) than CIN without a recorded disability (11.4%). Both groups had higher rates of severe absence than the overall pupil population (2.6%).

Among CIN with a recorded disability, the disability type with the highest rates of severe absence was ‘behaviour’ (14.5%).

► Export options

**Percentage of CIN at 31 March persistently or severely absent,
by disability, England, 2018/19 to 2024/25**

		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
All CIN at 31 March	Persistently absent child percentage	30.4%	x	41.0%	43.9%	44.4%	44.0%	42.6%
	Severely absent child percentage	5.0%	x	5.6%	8.0%	10.0%	10.9%	11.1%
All pupils comparison	Persistently absent child percentage	11.2%	x	12.3%	22.8%	21.5%	20.3%	18.5%
	Severely absent child percentage	1.0%	x	1.2%	1.8%	2.2%	2.5%	2.6%
CIN at 31 March with a disability recorded	Persistently absent child percentage	29.9%	x	43.8%	41.8%	41.2%	40.4%	39.9%
	Severely absent child percentage	4.6%	x	5.9%	7.4%	8.5%	9.3%	9.8%
CIN at 31 March with no disability recorded	Persistently absent child percentage	30.5%	x	40.4%	44.2%	45.0%	44.8%	43.2%
	Severely absent child percentage	5.1%	x	5.5%	8.1%	10.2%	11.2%	11.4%

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Footnotes

1. Due to the disruption caused by the impact of Covid-19 during the 2020/21 and 2021/22 academic years, caution should be taken when comparing data to previous years. No absence data relating to the full 2019/20 academic year is available.
2. Numbers have been rounded to the nearest 10. Percentages rounded to 1 decimal place. Figures in some tables may be suppressed, denoted by a 'c', percentages <0.05% are denoted by a 'k'.

Source: CIN-CLA-NPD

Explore and edit this data online

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Explore data

Key Stage 2 attainment

Pupils take national curriculum assessments in year 6, at the end of Key Stage 2, when most pupils will reach age 11 by the end of the academic year. Pupils take tests in reading, mathematics, and grammar, punctuation, and spelling, and receive a teacher assessment in writing and science. The combined, reading, writing and mathematics measure uses the results of the reading and mathematics tests and the outcome of the writing teacher assessment.

A lower proportion of CIN at 31 March 2025 with a recorded disability achieved the expected standard in reading,

writing and mathematics (7%) in 2024/25 compared to CIN without a recorded disability (37%) and all pupils (62%).

[Chart](#)

[Table](#)

 **Some rows and columns are not shown in this table as the data does not exist in the underlying file.**

► Export options

Percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics (combined), by disability, England, 2024/25

	2019	2022	2023	2024	2025
All CIN at 31 March	35%	29%	30%	31%	31%
All pupils comparison	65%	59%	60%	61%	62%
CIN at 31 March with a disability recorded	7%	5%	6%	7%	7%
CIN at 31 March with no disability recorded	40%	33%	35%	36%	37%

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[Data symbols](#)

Footnotes

1. Numbers have been rounded to the nearest 10. Percentages rounded to the nearest whole number. Figures in some tables may be suppressed, denoted by a 'c', percentages <0.5% are denoted by a 'k'.
2. Data is not available for 2019/20 and 2020/21 as assessments were cancelled in these years due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

[Show 2 more footnotes](#)

Source: CIN-CLA-NPD

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

Explore data

Key Stage 4 attainment and progress

Attainment 8

Attainment 8 measures the average achievement of pupils in up to 8 qualifications. This includes: English language; English literature (if only one GCSE in English is taken then it is double weighted); mathematics (double weighted); three further qualifications that count in the English Baccalaureate (EBacc); and three further qualifications that can be GCSE qualifications (including EBacc subjects) or any other non-GCSE qualification on the [DFE approved list \(opens in new tab\)](#).

From 2018, Attainment 8 had a maximum point score of 90, compared to a maximum of 87 in 2017 and 80 in 2016. This is a consequence of the phased introduction of reformed GCSEs graded on the 9-1 scale. These differences should be considered when comparing Attainment 8 scores before

CIN at 31 March 2025 with a recorded disability had a lower mean attainment 8 score in 2024/25 (5.6) compared to CIN without a recorded disability (20.0) and all pupils (46.0).

[Chart](#)[Table](#)

► Export options

Mean attainment 8 score for CIN at 31 March with and without a disability recorded, England, 2024/25

	2025
All CIN at 31 March	16.9
All pupils comparison	46.0
CIN at 31 March with a disability recorded	5.6
CIN at 31 March with no disability recorded	20.0

[Show full screen table](#)[Data symbols](#)

Footnotes

1. Due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the summer examination series was cancelled in both 2020 and 2021, and alternative processes set up to award grades. The method to award grades was different

in 2021 to that in 2020. The changes to the way GCSE grades were awarded in these two years means 2019/20 and 2020/21 pupil attainment data should not be directly compared to pupil attainment data from previous or later years for the purposes of measuring year on year changes in pupil performance.

Source: CIN-CLA-NPD

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

Explore data

Progress 8

Progress 8 aims to capture the progress a pupil makes from the end of Key Stage 2 to the end of Key Stage 4. It compares pupils' achievement – their Attainment 8 score – with the national average Attainment 8 score of all pupils who had a similar starting point (or 'prior attainment'), calculated using assessment results from the end of primary school. Progress 8 is a relative measure, therefore the national average Progress 8 score for all pupils is very close to zero. It can be used to compare the progress of different pupil characteristics.

A Progress 8 score of 1 means pupils in the group make on average approximately a grade more progress than the national average; a score of -0.5 means they make on average approximately half a grade less progress than average.

The Key Stage 4 progress measures were not published for the 2024/25 academic year as Key Stage 4 pupils in these years did not have Key Stage 2 assessments due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



CIN at 31 March 2025 with a recorded disability had very similar Progress 8 scores in 2023/24 compared to CIN without a recorded disability. In 2023/24, the mean Progress 8 score for CIN with a recorded disability was -1.29; for CIN without a recorded disability, it was -1.30. Progress 8 scores were similar across all disability types.

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Children looked after

The statistics and charts in this section refer to the year ending 31 March 2024 unless stated otherwise. This is due to disability information being extracted from the longitudinal CIN dataset, an internal dataset that has been updated to cover up to 31 March 2024.

Time series and disability type

More than 1 in 10 (11%) of children looked after (CLA) at 31 March 2024 had a recorded disability (9,410). This has remained stable since 2015. When unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) are excluded, the proportion rises to 12%.

[Chart](#)

[Table](#)

► Export options

CLA at 31 March with and without a disability, England, 2015 to 2024

		Child count		Child percent	
		Include UASC	Exclude UASC	Include UASC	Exclude UASC
All CLA at 31 March	2015	68,550	65,860	100%	100%
	2016	69,860	65,600	100%	100%
	2017	72,350	67,670	100%	100%
	2018	75,230	70,690	100%	100%
	2019	78,020	72,880	100%	100%
	2020	79,910	74,830	100%	100%
	2021	80,690	76,540	100%	100%
	2022	81,940	76,300	100%	100%
	2023	83,610	76,260	100%	100%
	2024	83,210	76,050	100%	100%
CLA at 31 March with a disability recorded	2015	7,620	7,600	11%	12%
	2016	7,710	7,690	11%	12%
	2017	8,260	8,220	11%	12%

	2018	8,300	8,260	11%	12%
	2019	8,580	8,550	11%	12%
	2020	8,840	8,810	11%	12%
	2021	8,860	8,840	11%	12%
	2022	8,860	8,850	11%	12%
	2023	9,030	9,010	11%	12%
	2024	9,410	9,400	11%	12%
CLA at 31 March with no disability recorded	2015	60,930	58,260	89%	88%
	2016	62,150	57,910	89%	88%
	2017	64,090	59,450	89%	88%
	2018	66,930	62,430	89%	88%
	2019	69,430	64,330	89%	88%
	2020	71,070	66,020	89%	88%
	2021	71,830	67,700	89%	88%
	2022	73,080	67,450	89%	88%
	2023	74,580	67,250	89%	88%
	2024	73,800	66,660	89%	88%

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[Data symbols](#)

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Footnotes

1. Numbers have been rounded to the nearest 10. Percentages rounded to the nearest whole number. Figures in some tables may be suppressed, denoted by a 'c', percentages <0.5% are denoted by a 'k'.
2. Unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) are children who have applied for asylum in their own right and are separated from both parents and/or any other responsible adult. Local authorities have a legal duty to provide accommodation for these children. Details of the National Transfer Scheme (NTS) can be found in the [methodology section of the Children looked after publication](#).

[Show 1 more footnote](#)

Source: Longitudinal CIN dataset and SSDA903

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

Explore data

The most common disability types amongst CLA at 31 March 2024 with a recorded disability were learning and autism (both 35%).

Child characteristics

Sex

Males were over-represented among CLA at 31 March 2024 with a recorded disability: 68% were male compared to 56% of CLA without a recorded disability and 51% of the overall child population (as shown in the [latest ONS mid-year population estimates \(opens in new tab\)](#)).

Age

CLA at 31 March 2024 with a recorded disability tend to be older than those without a recorded disability. 82% were aged 10 and over, compared to 62% of CLA without a recorded disability and 47% of the overall child population.

Ethnicity

A higher proportion of CLA at 31 March 2024 with a recorded disability were White (80%) compared to CLA without a recorded disability (70%), and a lower proportion were from any other ethnic group. When UASC are excluded, the gap reduces to 81% and 77%.

► Export options

Percentage of CLA at 31 March with and without a disability, by characteristic, England, 2024

	All CLA at 31 March		CLA at 31 March with a disability recorded		CLA at 31 March with no disability recorded	
	Include UASC	Exclude UASC	Include UASC	Exclude UASC	Include UASC	Exclude UASC
Total	100%	100%	11%	12%	89%	88%

Age	Under 1 year	4%	5%	k	k	5%	5%
	1 to 4 years	13%	14%	3%	3%	14%	16%
	5 to 9 years	18%	20%	14%	14%	19%	20%
	10 to 15 years	38%	40%	50%	50%	36%	39%
	16 years and over	27%	21%	32%	32%	26%	20%
Ethnicity major	Asian / Asian British	5%	3%	3%	3%	6%	3%
	Black / African / Caribbean / Black British	7%	6%	5%	5%	8%	6%
	Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups	11%	12%	10%	10%	11%	12%
	Other ethnic group	5%	1%	1%	1%	5%	1%
	Unknown	1%	1%	k	k	1%	1%
	White	71%	77%	80%	81%	70%	77%
Sex	Female	43%	47%	32%	32%	44%	49%
	Male	57%	53%	68%	68%	56%	51%

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[Data symbols](#)

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[Show 1 more footnote](#)

Source: Longitudinal CIN dataset and SSDA903

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

Explore data

Age at entry to care

CLA at 31 March 2024 with a recorded disability had a slightly higher median age at first entry into care (8 years) compared to CLA without a recorded disability (6 years). Among CLA with a recorded disability, those with autism had the highest median age at entry (10 years).

► Export options

Median age of entry to care for CLA at 31 March by disability type, England, 2024

				Median age of entry
2015	CLA at 31 March with a disability recorded	Include UASC	Total	8
			Autism/Asperger Syndrome	10
			Behaviour	9
			Communication	8
			Consciousness	8
			Hand Function	8
			Hearing	6
			Incontinence	8
			Learning	8
			Mobility	6
			Other Disability	6

Personal Care	8
Vision	5

2016	CLA at 31 March with a disability recorded	Include UASC	Total	8
			Autism/Asperger Syndrome	11
			Behaviour	9
			Communication	7
			Consciousness	8
			Hand Function	8
			Hearing	6
			Incontinence	8
			Learning	8
			Mobility	6
			Other Disability	6
			Personal Care	8
			Vision	5

2017	CLA at 31 March with a disability recorded	Include UASC	Total	8
			Autism/Asperger	10

Autism/Asperger Syndrome	10
Behaviour	9
Communication	8
Consciousness	8
Hand Function	7
Hearing	7
Incontinence	8
Learning	8
Mobility	6
Other Disability	7
Personal Care	8
Vision	5

2018 CLA at 31 March with a disability recorded Include UASC

Total	8
Autism/Asperger Syndrome	10
Behaviour	9
Communication	8
Consciousness	8

Consciousness	5
Hand Function	6
Hearing	6
Incontinence	8
Learning	8
Mobility	6
Other Disability	7
Personal Care	8
Vision	5

2019	CLA at 31 March with a disability recorded	Include UASC	Total	8
			Autism/Asperger Syndrome	10
			Behaviour	9
			Communication	8
			Consciousness	8
			Hand Function	6
			Hearing	7
			Incontinence	8

Learning	8
Mobility	6
Other Disability	6
Personal Care	8
Vision	5

2020	CLA at 31 March with a disability recorded	Include UASC	Total	8
			Autism/Asperger Syndrome	10
			Behaviour	9
			Communication	7
			Consciousness	8
			Hand Function	6
			Hearing	6
			Incontinence	8
			Learning	8
			Mobility	6
			Other Disability	6
			Personal Care	8

			Vision	5
2021	CLA at 31 March with a disability recorded	Include UASC	Total	8
			Autism/Asperger Syndrome	10
			Behaviour	9
			Communication	7
			Consciousness	8
			Hand Function	6
			Hearing	6
			Incontinence	8
			Learning	8
			Mobility	6
			Other Disability	6
			Personal Care	8
			Vision	5
2022	CLA at 31 March with a disability recorded	Include UASC	Total	8
			Autism/Asperger Syndrome	10

Behaviour	9
Communication	7
Consciousness	8
Hand Function	7
Hearing	6
Incontinence	8
Learning	8
Mobility	6
Other Disability	6
Personal Care	8
Vision	6

2023	CLA at 31 March with a disability recorded	Include UASC	Total	8
			Autism/Asperger Syndrome	10
			Behaviour	9
			Communication	7
			Consciousness	8
			Hand Function	6

Hand Function	8
Hearing	7
Incontinence	8
Learning	8
Mobility	6
Other Disability	6
Personal Care	8
Vision	6

2024	CLA at 31 March with a disability recorded	Include UASC	Total	8
			Autism/Asperger Syndrome	10
			Behaviour	9
			Communication	7
			Consciousness	8
			Hand Function	6
			Hearing	6
			Incontinence	7
			Learning	7

Mobility	6
Other Disability	6
Personal Care	8
Vision	6

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[Data symbols](#)

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Footnotes

1. Numbers have been rounded to the nearest 10. Percentages rounded to the nearest whole number. Figures in some tables may be suppressed, denoted by a 'c', percentages <0.5% are denoted by a 'k'.
2. Unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) are children who have applied for asylum in their own right and are separated from both parents and/or any other responsible adult. Local authorities have a legal duty to provide accommodation for these children. Details of the National Transfer Scheme (NTS) can be found in the [methodology section of the Children looked after publication](#).

[Show 1 more footnote](#)

Source: Longitudinal CIN dataset and SSDA903

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

Reasons for being looked after

When a child is assessed by children’s services their primary need is recorded. For CLA this corresponds to the most relevant need at the time the current period of being looked after began. This list is hierarchical and where more than one need is identified then the need ‘highest’ up the list is reported.

‘Abuse or neglect’ was the most common reason for being looked after for both CLA at 31 March 2024 with a recorded disability (57%) and without a recorded disability (67%). 17% of CLA with a recorded disability had 'Child's disability or illness' as their primary reason for being looked after.

[Chart](#)

[Table](#)

► Export options

Children looked after at 31 March by category of need and disability, England, 2024

2024		
All CLA at 31 March	CLA at 31 March with a disability recorded	CLA at 31 March with no disability recorded

Category of need		Child count	Child percent	Child count	Child percent	Child count	Child percent
Category of need	N1 - Abuse or neglect	55,070	66%	5,380	57%	49,690	67%
	N2 - Child's disability or illness	1,930	2%	1,560	17%	370	1%
	N3 - Parent's disability or illness	2,000	2%	200	2%	1,800	2%
	N4 - Family in acute stress	6,110	7%	820	9%	5,290	7%
	N5 - Family dysfunction	10,120	12%	1,240	13%	8,880	12%
	N6 - Socially unacceptable behaviour	840	1%	110	1%	730	1%
	N7 - Low income	80	k	10	k	60	k
	N8 - Absent parenting	7,060	8%	80	1%	6,970	9%

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[Data symbols](#)

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[Show 1 more footnote](#)

Source: Longitudinal CIN dataset and SSDA903

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

Explore data

Reasons for ceasing to be looked after

This section looks at children who ceased to be looked after in the year ending 31 March 2024. The most common reasons for CLA with a recorded disability leaving care was being aged 18 or over and staying with current carers (26%, compared to 15% of CLA without a recorded disability), followed by returning home to live with parents or another person with parental responsibility (24%, compared to 26% of CLA without a recorded disability).

Compared to CLA without a recorded disability, CLA with a recorded disability had:

- A lower rate of adoption (2% compared to 9%)
- A lower rate of placement under a special guardianship order (5% compared to 12%)
- A higher proportion transferred to residential care funded by adult social services (10% compared to 1%)

[Chart](#)

[Table](#)

► Export options

Number and percentage of CLA and their reasons for ceasing care, England, 2024

		2024		
		All CLA at 31 March	CLA at 31 March with a disability recorded	CLA at 31 March with no disability recorded
Total	Child count	33,510	2,620	30,890
	Child percent	100%	8%	92%
Accommodation on remand ended	Child count	150	20	120
	Child percent	k	1%	k
Adopted	Child	2,970	60	2,910

	count			
	Child percent	9%	2%	9%
Age assessment determined child aged 18 or over	Child count	370	c	360
	Child percent	1%	c	1%
Aged 18 or over and stayed with current carers	Child count	5,370	690	4,680
	Child percent	16%	26%	15%
Care ceased for any other reason	Child count	2,650	250	2,400
	Child percent	8%	9%	8%
Care taken by another local authority	Child count	2,140	10	2,130
	Child percent	6%	k	7%
Child moved abroad	Child count	70	0	70
	Child percent	k	0%	k

	percent			
Died	Child count	60	20	40
	Child percent	k	1%	k
Moved into independent living	Child count	5,310	450	4,860
	Child percent	16%	17%	16%
Residence order or child arrangement order granted	Child count	1,150	60	1,090
	Child percent	3%	2%	4%
Returned home to live with parents or other person with parental responsibility	Child count	8,760	640	8,120
	Child percent	26%	24%	26%
Sentenced to custody	Child count	220	20	200
	Child percent	1%	1%	1%
Special guardianship orders	Child count	3,850	140	3,710

	Child percent	11%	5%	12%
Transferred to residential care funded by adult social services	Child count	460	250	210
	Child percent	1%	10%	1%

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[Data symbols](#)

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Footnotes

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2. Unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) are children who have applied for asylum in their own right and are separated from both parents and/or any other responsible adult. Local authorities have a legal duty to provide accommodation for these children. Details of the National Transfer Scheme (NTS) can be found in the [methodology section of the Children looked after publication](#).

[Show 1 more footnote](#)

Source: Longitudinal CIN dataset and SSDA903

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

Legal status

Information is collected on the legal status underlying being looked after, which helps to describe why the child is being looked after. These include:

- A care order – a court order placing a child in the care or supervision of a local authority
- A voluntary agreement – this allows the local authority to provide accommodation for a child where there's parental consent, or when no-one with parental responsibility is in place.
- A placement order – a court order allowing a local authority to place a child for adoption
- Detained for child protection reasons
- Detained under youth justice legal statuses

Legal status did not differ much by disability. In both groups, the most common legal status in the year ending 31 March 2024 was being looked after on a care order (78% of CLA on 31 March with a recorded disability and 75% of CLA on 31 March without a recorded disability). A higher proportion of CLA without a recorded disability were looked after on a placement order (6%) than CLA with a recorded disability (2%).

Placements

Compared to those without a recorded disability, CLA at 31 March with a recorded disability had:

- A lower proportion in foster placements (54% compared to 69% of CLA without a recorded disability)
- A lower proportion in independent/semi-independent living arrangements or supported accommodation (4%

compared to 8%)

- A higher proportion in secure homes and children's homes (29% compared to 8%)

In both groups, the percentage of children in foster placements has been decreasing over time (from 63% in 2015 to 54% in 2024 for CLA with a recorded disability, and from 76% to 69% for CLA without a recorded disability).

		Chart Table					
		► Export options					
		Number and percentage of CLA with and without a disability by placement type, England, 2024					
		2024					
		Include UASC					
		All CLA at 31 March		CLA at 31 March with a disability recorded		CLA at 31 March with no disability recorded	
		Child count	Child percent	Child count	Child percent	Child count	Child percent
Placement	Adoption	1,890	2%	40	k	1,850	3%
	Foster placements	56,160	67%	5,110	54%	51,060	69%
	Independent and semi-independent living	6,190	7%	400	4%	5,780	8%

**independent living
arrangements/supported
accommodation**

Other placements	3,700	4%	460	5%	3,250	4%
Other residential settings	1,250	2%	240	3%	1,020	1%
Placed with parents or others with parental responsibility	5,290	6%	410	4%	4,880	7%
Residential schools	90	k	60	1%	30	k
Secure homes and children's homes	8,640	10%	2,700	29%	5,930	8%

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[Data symbols](#)

Footnotes

1. Numbers have been rounded to the nearest 10. Percentages rounded to the nearest whole number. Figures in some tables may be suppressed, denoted by a 'c', percentages <0.5% are denoted by a 'k'.
2. The category 'Independent and semi-independent living arrangements/supported accommodation' reports data for young people in placements in former semi-independent living arrangements and living independently up to and including 2023. From 2024 all placements are supported accommodation (registered with Ofsted). From 28 October 2023 it became illegal for young people to be placed in former semi-independent and independent living placements. Supported accommodation providers were required to submit a completed application to Ofsted by 28 October 2023. From 2024, young people who were placed in former semi-independent and independent living placements with providers who had

not submitted a completed application by the deadline are reported within the 'Other' category.

[Show 2 more footnotes](#)

Source: Longitudinal CIN dataset and SSDA903

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

Explore data

Locality of placements

Local authorities have a general duty to provide accommodation that is within the local authority area, that meets the needs of the child and allows the child to live near their home.

A lower proportion of CLA at 31 March 2024 with a recorded disability were placed within their LA boundary (51%) compared to CLA without a recorded disability (56%). The percentage of children placed inside the LA boundary has decreased over time in both groups since 2015 (from 54% to 51% for CLA with a recorded disability and from 61% to 56% for CLA without a recorded disability).

CLA with a recorded disability also had a higher median distance of placement from their home (9 miles) compared to CLA without a recorded disability (7 miles).

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Care leavers

Data collected on care leavers

Local authorities provide information about young people who were previously looked after, who turned 17 to 21 in the year. These people were CLA for at least 13 weeks after their 14th birthday, including some time after their 16th birthday. The information provided relates to contact around their birthday in the year. In comparison, for 22 to 25 year old care leavers, LAs only report data for young people who have been in touch with the LA and who have requested and received support. The information collected relates to their last contact within the reporting year.

Data was collected for the first time in 2023 on care leavers aged 22 to 25 years old who had been in touch with their local authority and who had requested and received support. We believe the data collected may be an undercount of the full cohort, particularly for the older care leavers, so users should take this into account when using this data.

Time series and disability type

13% of 17 to 21 year old care leavers in the year ending 31 March 2024 had a recorded disability, decreasing from 15% in 2016. Among care leavers aged 22 to 25 years old, the proportion with a recorded disability was 14% in 2024.

If unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) are excluded, the proportion of those with a recorded disability rises to 18% for both groups.

[Chart](#)

[Table](#)

► Export options

Care leavers aged 17 to 21 by disability, England, 2016 to 2024

			Care leaver percentage								
			2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
17 to 21	Exclude care leavers formerly UASC	Care leavers with a disability recorded	17%	17%	17%	17%	18%	18%	18%	18%	18%
		Care leavers with no disability recorded	83%	83%	83%	83%	82%	82%	82%	82%	82%
	Include care leavers formerly UASC	Care leavers with a disability recorded	15%	15%	14%	14%	14%	14%	14%	14%	13%
		Care leavers with no disability recorded	85%	85%	86%	86%	86%	86%	86%	86%	87%

[Show full screen table](#)

[Data symbols](#)

Footnotes

1. Numbers have been rounded to the nearest 10. Percentages rounded to the nearest whole number.
Figures in some tables may be suppressed, denoted by a 'c', percentages <0.5% are denoted by a 'k'.
2. Figures exclude young people who were looked after under an agreed series of short term placements, those who have died since leaving care, those who have returned home to parents or someone with parental responsibility for a continuous period of at least 6 months and those whose care was transferred to another local authority.

[Show 2 more footnotes](#)

Source: Longitudinal CIN dataset and SSDA903

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

Explore data

Among 17 to 21 year old care leavers in the year ending 31 March 2024 with a recorded disability, learning was the most commonly recorded type (40%), followed by autism (36%) and behaviour (32%).

Learning disabilities were also the most commonly recorded among 22 to 25 year old care leavers with a recorded disability (46%).

Child characteristics

Sex

In the year ending 31 March 2024, over two thirds (67%) of 17 to 21 year old care leavers with a recorded disability were male. This is an over-representation when compared to care leavers without a recorded disability (64%) and the overall child population (51%). This difference was largely driven by 17 year olds, where 82% of care leavers with a recorded disability were male compared to 60% of those without a recorded disability. This gap was much smaller in the older age groups. Males were particularly over-represented among care leavers with behaviour disabilities (75%) and autism (74%).

Ethnicity

A higher proportion of 17 to 21 year old care leavers with a recorded disability were White and a lower proportion were from other ethnic backgrounds compared to those without a recorded disability. However, these differences are substantially narrowed if unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) are excluded. When those who have ever been UASC are excluded, 81% of 17 to 21 year old care leavers with a recorded disability were White compared to 73% of those without a recorded disability. A lower proportion of those with a recorded disability were Black, African, Caribbean or Black British (6%, compared to 10% of those without a recorded disability).

► Export options

Care leavers aged 17 to 21 by disability, ethnicity and sex, England, 2024

2024			
17 to 21			
Care leavers with a disability recorded		Care leavers with no disability recorded	
Exclude care	Include care	Exclude care	Include care

			leavers formerly UASC	leavers formerly UASC	leavers formerly UASC	leavers formerly UASC
Care leaver percentage	Ethnicity major	Asian / Asian British	4%	4%	5%	11%
		Black / African / Caribbean / Black British	6%	6%	10%	16%
		Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups	8%	8%	10%	7%
		Other ethnic group	1%	1%	2%	14%
		Unknown	c	c	k	k
		White	81%	80%	73%	51%
	Sex	Female	34%	33%	49%	36%
		Male	66%	67%	51%	64%
	Total		18%	13%	82%	87%

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[Data symbols](#)

Footnotes

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2. Figures exclude young people who were looked after under an agreed series of short term placements, those who have died since leaving care, those who have returned home to parents or someone with parental responsibility for a continuous period of at least 6 months and those whose care was transferred to another local authority.

[Show 2 more footnotes](#)

Source: Longitudinal CIN dataset and SSDA903

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

Explore data

‘In touch’

Local authorities are expected to initiate contact and stay in touch with care leavers aged 21 years and younger and provide statutory support to help the care leaver transition to living independently.

Similar proportions of 17 to 21 year old care leavers in the year ending 31 March 2024 were in touch with their

local authority regardless of whether they had a recorded disability (92%).

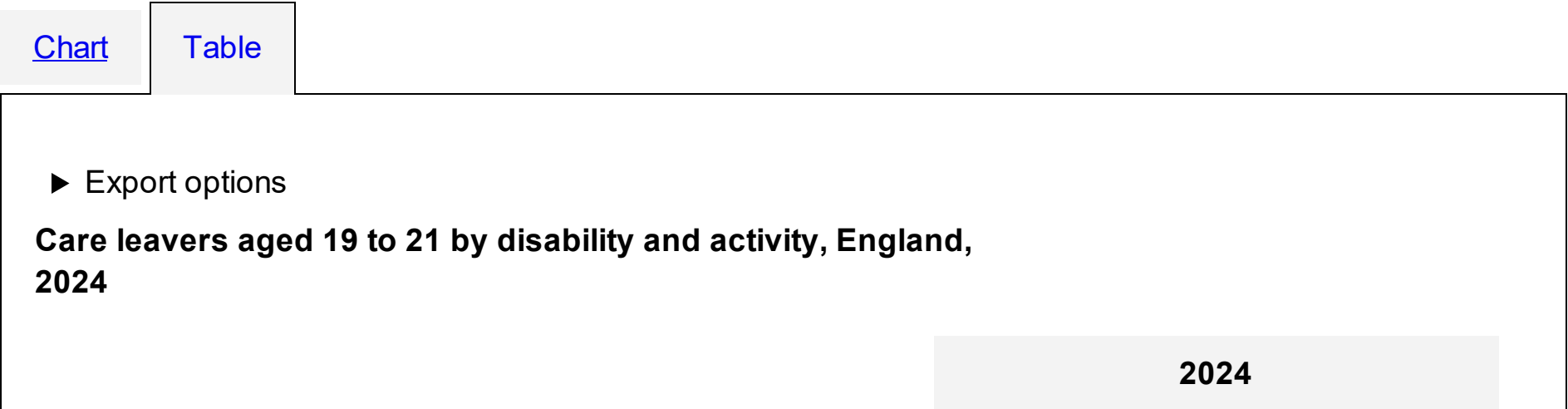
A lower proportion of 22 to 25 year old care leavers with a recorded disability were in touch with their local authority (34%) compared to those without a recorded disability (38%).

Activity

Information is collected on the activity that most accurately reflects the young person's main activity status on or around their birthday.

In the year ending 31 March 2024, the most common activity for 19 to 21 year old care leavers with a recorded disability was to be not in education, employment or training (NEET) (46%). A similar proportion were NEET due to other circumstances (22%) as were NEET due to disability or illness (21%). Compared to those without a recorded disability, a higher proportion were NEET (46% vs 38%) or in education other than higher education (28% vs 19%) and a lower proportion were in training or employment (15% vs 27%) or in higher education (3% vs 7%). When UASC are excluded, the proportion of 19 to 21 year old care leavers without a recorded disability who were NEET rises to 44%, narrowing the difference compared to those with a recorded disability.

The most common activity for 19 to 21 year old care leavers with a behaviour disability was NEET (54%) and this was mostly due to circumstances other than their disability.



			Care leaver percentage	
			19 to 21	
			Exclude care leavers formerly UASC	Include care leavers formerly UASC
All care leavers	Activity of care leaver	Total in apprenticeship	2%	2%
		Total in education other than higher education	14%	21%
		Total in higher education	7%	6%
		Total in training or employment (excl. apprenticeship)	25%	25%
		Total not in education, employment or training	45%	39%
Care leavers with a disability recorded	Activity of care leaver	Total in apprenticeship	1%	1%
		Total in education other than higher education	28%	28%
		Total in higher education	3%	3%
		Total in training or employment (excl.	15%	15%

		apprenticeship)		
		Total not in education, employment or training	46%	46%
Care leavers with no disability recorded	Activity of care leaver	Total in apprenticeship	3%	2%
		Total in education other than higher education	10%	19%
		Total in higher education	8%	7%
		Total in training or employment (excl. apprenticeship)	28%	27%
		Total not in education, employment or training	44%	38%

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parental responsibility for a continuous period of at least 6 months and those whose care was transferred to another local authority.

[Show 2 more footnotes](#)

Source: Longitudinal CIN dataset and SSDA903

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Accommodation of former care leavers

In the year ending 31 March 2024, the most common accommodation for care leavers ages 19 to 21 was independent living arrangements (20%). This was also the most common accommodation for those without a recorded disability.

Compared to 19 to 21 year old care leavers without a recorded disability, for those with a recorded disability:

- A higher proportion were living in community homes or other form of residential care (17% vs 1%)
- A higher proportion were living in supported lodgings (7% vs 4%)
- A lower proportion were in independent living arrangements (20% vs 37%)
- A lower proportion were in semi-independent, transitional accommodation (14% vs 20%, though when UASC are excluded, this gap is narrowed to 14% vs 13%)

Accommodation suitability

Information on whether care leaver accommodation is suitable can be used to monitor whether they are receiving the support they need to make a successful transition to adulthood. However, there are no hard and fast rules on whether accommodation is deemed 'suitable'; the decision made by local authorities when reporting accommodation information will depend on the circumstances of the individual case.

In the year ending 31 March 2024, 88% of 17 to 21 year old care leavers with a recorded disability were living in accommodation deemed suitable. This proportion was similar for those without a recorded disability (89%).

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Journeys through social care

Post-referral activity

This analysis looks at children referred in the year ending 31 March 2019 and their journeys through social care over the following 5 years. It focuses on their highest level of involvement with social care during the 5 years following their assessment, as well as whether they had ever received each type of intervention during those 5 years.

61% of children referred to children's social care in the year ending 31 March 2019 with a recorded disability had CINO (children in need, excluding children on protection plans and children looked after) as their highest intervention, compared to 51% of children without a recorded disability. Children with and without a recorded

disability had similar rates of CPP as their highest level of intervention, and children with a recorded disability has slightly higher rates of CLA (6% vs 5%).

A lower proportion of children with a recorded disability had NFA (no further action) as their highest level of intervention (26%) compared to children without a recorded disability (37%).

Similar patterns can be seen when looking at children referred between 1 April 2023 and 29 February 2024 and their events occurring after referral up to 31 March 2024.

[Chart](#)

[Table](#)

► Export options

Percentage of children by disability and highest level of intervention in the 5 years following their referral in 2019, England

	All children referred	Children referred with a disability recorded	Children referred with no disability recorded
CLA	5%	6%	5%
CPP	8%	8%	8%
CINO	51%	61%	51%
NFA	36%	26%	37%

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[Data symbols](#)

Footnotes

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[Show 1 more footnote](#)

Source: Longitudinal children in need dataset

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

Explore data

Similar patterns can be seen when looking at whether children have ever received certain interventions.

A higher proportion of children referred in the year ending 31 March 2019 with a recorded disability had ever been CINO than those with no recorded disability (69% vs 59%), and a lower proportion had been NFA, CLA and CPP.

[Chart](#)

[Table](#)

► Export options

Percentage of children who had ever had this intervention type in the 5 years following their referral in 2019, England

	All children referred	Children referred with a disability recorded	Children referred with no disability recorded
CINO	63%	73%	62%
CLA	5%	6%	5%
CPP	11%	11%	11%
NFA	37%	26%	37%

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[Data symbols](#)

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Section 47 enquiries, ICPC, and CPP conversions

If a local authority identifies there is reasonable cause to suspect the child is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm, it will carry out an assessment under section 47 (S47) of the Children Act 1989 to determine if it needs to take steps to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child. If concerns are substantiated and the child is judged to be at continuing risk of harm, then an initial child protection conference (ICPC) should be convened within 15 working days. A child becomes the subject of a child protection plan (CPP) if they are assessed as being at risk of harm at an ICPC.

The analysis looked at the percentage of referrals that converted to S47 enquiries, ICPCs and CPPs within 5 years of referral (for children referred in the year ending 31 March 2019) and 1 year of referral (for children referred between 1 April 2023 and 29 February 2024).

Conversion rates for children referred in the year ending 31 March 2019 were similar for children with and without a recorded disability, however a lower proportion of children referred between 1 April 2023 and 29 February 2024 with a recorded disability converted to further interventions during the year. For example, 9% of referrals in the year ending 31 March 2019 for children with a recorded disability resulted in a CPP, compared to 5% between 1 April 2023 and 29 February 2024.

A lower proportion of children with a recorded disability had S47 enquiries (20% compared to 26% of children without a recorded disability).

► Export options

Percentage of referrals in 2024 in England that led to a S47 enquiry, ICPC or CPP within a year, by disability

	CPP	ICPC	S47
All children referred	8%	9%	26%
Children referred with a disability recorded	5%	6%	20%
Children referred with no disability recorded	8%	9%	26%

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[Show 1 more footnote](#)

Source: Longitudinal children in need dataset

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Explore data

Activity prior to referral

Children referred in the year ending 31 March 2024 had similar previous social care activities regardless of disability, however there were small differences.

A slightly higher proportion of children with a recorded disability had been previously CINO than those with no recorded disability (35% vs 34%). Similarly, a slightly higher proportion had been previously CLA (2% vs 1%). A slightly lower proportion of children with a recorded disability had previously been CPP (7% vs 8%) and NFA (22% vs 24%).

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Regional and local authority variation

Children in need

Since the year ending 31 March 2015, the number of CIN with a recorded disability in London has increased by 56%. London, along with the South East, now report the highest proportion of CIN with a recorded disability, at 17.8%. This is despite overall CIN numbers in London decreasing over this time frame.

The East of England has maintained a consistently high and stable rate over this period (16.6% in both 2015 and 2025). In contrast, the Yorkshire and Humber region continues to report the lowest proportion (11.6%), which has remained broadly unchanged.

The North-East has experienced a notable recent rise, with the proportion of CIN with a recorded disability increasing by 24% over the past three years, bringing the region to the fourth highest position at 15%.

Chart		Table
► Export options		
Percentage of CIN with disability recorded by region in England, 2015 to 2025		
Percentage of CIN with disability recorded		
North East	2015	12.6%
	2016	12.7%
	2017	13.0%
	2018	12.0%
	2019	12.8%
	2020	13.1%

	2021	12.9%
	2022	11.8%
	2023	12.1%
	2024	13.1%
	2025	15.0%
North West	2015	9.9%
	2016	9.7%
	2017	11.0%
	2018	10.5%
	2019	10.4%
	2020	10.5%
	2021	10.6%
	2022	10.9%
	2023	11.0%
	2024	11.3%
	2025	11.9%
Yorkshire and The Humber	2015	11.4%
	2016	10.0%

	2016	12.0%
	2017	11.0%
	2018	9.8%
	2019	10.1%
	2020	10.0%
	2021	10.0%
	2022	9.6%
	2023	10.5%
	2024	10.9%
	2025	11.6%
East Midlands	2015	11.7%
	2016	11.8%
	2017	11.7%
	2018	11.4%
	2019	10.3%
	2020	9.9%
	2021	9.9%
	2022	9.8%

	2023	9.6%
	2024	11.9%
	2025	11.9%
West Midlands	2015	12.3%
	2016	12.2%
	2017	12.9%
	2018	12.0%
	2019	12.7%
	2020	13.1%
	2021	13.0%
	2022	11.2%
	2023	11.5%
	2024	11.9%
	2025	12.1%
East of England	2015	16.6%
	2016	14.8%
	2017	16.5%

	2018	16.2%
	2019	15.9%
	2020	15.7%
	2021	15.8%
	2022	15.7%
	2023	15.1%
	2024	15.9%
	2025	16.6%
London	2015	11.4%
	2016	11.9%
	2017	12.9%
	2018	13.0%
	2019	12.8%
	2020	14.0%
	2021	13.9%
	2022	13.8%
	2023	14.6%

	2024	16.0%
	2025	17.8%
South East	2015	15.1%
	2016	14.5%
	2017	13.8%
	2018	12.9%
	2019	12.8%
	2020	14.0%
	2021	14.9%
	2022	14.2%
	2023	15.5%
	2024	16.9%
	2025	17.8%
South West	2015	17.7%
	2016	15.9%
	2017	14.6%
	2018	13.3%

2019	15.2%
2020	13.0%
2021	12.2%
2022	12.1%
2023	13.3%
2024	12.2%
2025	12.4%

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[Data symbols](#)

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Source: Children in Need census

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

Explore data

Analysis of additional LA characteristics suggests that the recording of CIN disability is generally lower in areas of high deprivation than in areas with low or medium levels of deprivation. The recent increase observed in low-deprivation areas appears to be largely driven by LAs in London and the South.

There is no evidence to suggest that a local authority's Ofsted rating has a significant influence on disability recording.

Across all regions, there has been a transition from learning disabilities being the most frequently recorded disability type to autism taking precedence. However, this shift occurred earlier in London (2021) than in other regions, such as the North East (2024).

Behaviour disabilities have remained broadly stable in both regions, consistently accounting for around 15%. In contrast, in regions such as the South West and North West, behaviour disabilities have consistently ranked as the third most commonly reported disability since 2019 and 2016 respectively.

There could be various reasons why disability recording is different across regions, such as:

- Difference in how children access and receive disability support via local specialist services, health services (e.g. unequal waiting times for NHS Autism services) or education pathways.
- Social care activities in areas with high deprivation may be more heavily focused on safeguarding, and disability recording could be less consistent or viewed as secondary to more immediate risks.

More detailed research and analysis would be required to unpick these.

► Export options

Percentage of CIN with a recorded disability by disability type in London, 2015 to 2025

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Percentage of CIN with a recorded disability with Autism/Asperger syndrome recorded	35.7%	37.2%	39.1%	41.0%	41.2%	39.4%	41.1%	45.8%	48.2%	53.0%
Percentage of CIN with a recorded disability with behaviour disability recorded	18.9%	17.2%	18.0%	16.4%	16.7%	16.6%	16.7%	15.4%	14.8%	13.8%
Percentage of CIN with a recorded disability with communication disability	22.6%	21.0%	21.6%	21.4%	18.9%	19.6%	19.0%	18.7%	17.6%	15.5%

recorded

Percentage of CIN with a recorded disability with consciousness disability recorded	5.1%	4.0%	4.3%	4.7%	4.9%	4.4%	5.0%	4.4%	4.0%	3.4%
---	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------

Percentage of CIN with a recorded disability with hand function disability recorded	4.9%	3.7%	4.1%	3.6%	3.5%	3.3%	3.2%	3.0%	3.0%	2.4%
---	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------

Percentage of CIN with a recorded disability with hearing disability recorded	5.3%	4.8%	4.7%	4.4%	4.5%	4.4%	4.2%	4.1%	4.0%	3.7%
---	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------

Percentage of CIN with a recorded disability with incontinence disability	5.1%	5.2%	5.9%	5.4%	4.4%	4.0%	3.7%	3.0%	2.5%	2.0%
---	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------

recorded

Percentage of CIN with a recorded disability with learning disability recorded	42.2%	40.9%	41.0%	42.2%	40.2%	40.3%	40.7%	34.6%	32.2%	29.8%
---	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------

Percentage of CIN with a recorded disability with mobility disability recorded	19.6%	17.5%	17.9%	15.7%	15.5%	15.1%	14.4%	12.8%	11.9%	10.9%
---	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------

Percentage of CIN with a recorded disability with other disability recorded	18.9%	20.5%	20.5%	21.0%	20.5%	20.3%	19.6%	21.5%	20.8%	19.1%
--	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------

Percentage of CIN with a recorded disability with personal care disability recorded	11.4%	9.8%	9.4%	7.7%	6.7%	6.4%	6.4%	5.2%	4.8%	4.1%
--	-------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------

Percentage of CIN with a recorded disability with vision disability recorded	8.0%	7.3%	7.1%	6.8%	6.1%	6.5%	6.3%	5.7%	5.5%	5.0'
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Source: Children in Need census

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

[Explore data](#)[Chart](#)[Table](#)

► Export options

Percentage of CIN recorded with each disability type in the North East, 2015 to 2025

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Percentage of CIN with a recorded disability with Autism/Asperger syndrome recorded	31.3%	31.4%	31.1%	31.5%	33.9%	33.7%	35.3%	36.1%	38.7%	42.8%
Percentage of CIN with a recorded disability with behaviour disability recorded	17.7%	17.8%	17.9%	13.6%	13.0%	13.8%	13.8%	11.8%	13.2%	11.8%
Percentage of CIN with a recorded disability with physical disability recorded	21.3%	22.2%	21.0%	14.8%	14.6%	15.6%	15.0%	14.1%	13.0%	14.0%

Percentage of CIN with a recorded disability with communication disability recorded	21.0%	22.2%	21.0%	14.0%	14.0%	10.0%	10.0%	14.1%	10.0%	14.0%
Percentage of CIN with a recorded disability with consciousness disability recorded	5.7%	5.8%	5.7%	4.4%	4.2%	4.2%	4.0%	3.8%	3.3%	3.5%
Percentage of CIN with a recorded disability with hand function disability recorded	3.6%	3.4%	3.0%	1.9%	1.7%	1.8%	1.6%	1.4%	1.2%	1.1%
Percentage of CIN with a recorded disability with hearing disability recorded	5.4%	3.9%	4.2%	4.1%	4.6%	5.4%	5.0%	4.2%	4.1%	3.6%
Percentage of	9.0%	9.6%	9.3%	7.2%	6.5%	7.0%	6.6%	5.6%	5.6%	4.9%

**CIN with a
recorded
disability with
incontinence
disability
recorded**

Percentage of CIN with a recorded disability with learning disability recorded	46.8%	49.4%	48.1%	47.9%	48.3%	47.8%	46.9%	46.2%	45.0%	38.5%
---	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------

Percentage of CIN with a recorded disability with mobility disability recorded	19.1%	18.7%	18.0%	16.4%	16.3%	16.2%	15.8%	15.0%	14.9%	13.9%
---	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------

Percentage of CIN with a recorded disability with other disability recorded	19.7%	19.4%	21.4%	21.7%	20.4%	21.7%	19.7%	20.3%	15.5%	16.2%
--	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------

Percentage of CIN with a	11.6%	12.4%	12.1%	8.0%	7.5%	8.2%	7.5%	6.4%	5.8%	5.1%
-------------------------------------	-------	-------	-------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------

recorded
disability with
personal care
disability
recorded

Percentage of CIN with a recorded disability with vision disability recorded	9.4%	9.1%	9.2%	9.2%	8.4%	7.9%	8.1%	7.8%	7.1%	6.6'
---	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------

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Source: Children in Need census

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

Explore data

Children looked after

In the year ending 31 March 2024, the South East had the highest percentage of CLA with a recorded disability (15.5%). The lowest proportion was in the North East (8.9%).

As with CIN, the percentage of CLA with a recorded disability with autism has increased in each region in England, with the South West showing the most notable rise from 2015 to 2024 (from 20.6% to 40.7%).

When excluding UASC from the percentages, there is little change to the percentages of children recorded with each disability type however in each region the percentage of children with a recorded disability is lower when UASC are included.

[Chart](#)

[Table](#)

► Export options

Percentage of CLA with disability recorded by region in England, 2015 to 2024

Percentage of CLA with disability recorded	
Exclude UASC	Include UASC

North East**2015**

8.6%

8.6%

2016

8.9%

8.8%

2017

8.7%

8.6%

2018

8.5%

8.4%

2019

9.5%

9.4%

2020

9.7%

9.6%

2021

9.9%

9.8%

2022

8.9%

8.7%

2023

8.7%

8.4%

2024

9.3%

8.9%

North West**2015**

8.1%

8.0%

2016

8.7%

8.6%

2017

10.0%

9.8%

2018

9.9%

9.7%

2019

9.8%

9.6%

2020

9.5%

9.2%

2021

9.6%

9.3%

	2022	10.6%	10.2%
	2023	10.6%	10.2%
	2024	11.1%	10.5%
Yorkshire and The Humber	2015	9.4%	9.3%
	2016	10.0%	9.8%
	2017	10.1%	9.8%
	2018	9.2%	9.0%
	2019	9.8%	9.4%
	2020	9.8%	9.5%
	2021	9.7%	9.4%
	2022	9.6%	9.2%
	2023	10.2%	9.7%
	2024	10.6%	9.9%
East Midlands	2015	12.2%	11.8%
	2016	12.3%	11.7%
	2017	14.8%	14.1%
	2018	14.4%	13.7%

	2019	13.1%	12.5%
	2020	13.4%	12.8%
	2021	12.3%	12.0%
	2022	12.0%	11.4%
	2023	12.1%	11.2%
	2024	15.2%	13.8%
West Midlands	2015	12.0%	11.9%
	2016	11.9%	11.5%
	2017	11.9%	11.4%
	2018	10.7%	10.3%
	2019	10.8%	10.4%
	2020	10.5%	10.1%
	2021	10.4%	10.1%
	2022	9.4%	9.0%
	2023	10.1%	9.5%
	2024	9.8%	9.2%
East of England	2015	16.8%	16.0%

	2016	15.4%	14.3%
	2017	15.8%	14.5%
	2018	15.9%	14.7%
	2019	14.4%	13.2%
	2020	13.5%	12.4%
	2021	13.8%	12.7%
	2022	13.7%	12.4%
	2023	13.1%	11.3%
	2024	14.1%	12.2%
London	2015	10.8%	9.5%
	2016	12.4%	10.6%
	2017	12.7%	10.8%
	2018	11.2%	9.6%
	2019	12.0%	10.1%
	2020	12.6%	10.5%
	2021	11.4%	9.9%
	2022	12.1%	10.2%
	2023	12.10%	10.60%

	2023	12.4%	10.0%
	2024	13.0%	11.5%
South East	2015	13.4%	12.5%
	2016	13.5%	11.6%
	2017	13.5%	12.1%
	2018	13.7%	12.6%
	2019	13.7%	12.5%
	2020	15.7%	14.1%
	2021	15.8%	14.6%
	2022	16.1%	14.4%
	2023	16.9%	14.7%
	2024	17.8%	15.5%
South West	2015	16.1%	15.9%
	2016	14.6%	14.4%
	2017	14.1%	13.5%
	2018	14.2%	13.6%
	2019	14.9%	14.4%
	2020	13.8%	13.4%

2021	13.1%	12.7%
2022	13.0%	12.3%
2023	12.3%	11.2%
2024	11.5%	10.6%

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[Data symbols](#)

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Footnotes

1. Numbers have been rounded to the nearest 10. Percentages rounded to 1 decimal place. Figures in some tables may be suppressed, denoted by a 'c', percentages <0.05% are denoted by a 'k'.
2. Unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) are children who have applied for asylum in their own right and are separated from both parents and/or any other responsible adult. Local authorities have a legal duty to provide accommodation for these children. Details of the National Transfer Scheme (NTS) can be found in the [methodology section of the Children looked after publication](#).

[Show 1 more footnote](#)

Source: Longitudinal CIN dataset and SSDA903

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

Care leavers

In the year ending 31 March 2024, the percentage of 17 to 21 year old care leavers with a recorded disability was highest in the East Midlands (16.8%). Between 2015 and 2024, London consistently had the lowest percentage, ranging from 11.6% to 9.0%.

[Chart](#)[Table](#)

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Percentage of care leavers aged 17 to 21 with a recorded disability by region in England, including UASC, 2016 to 2024

		17 to 21	
		Percentage of care leavers with disability recorded	
		Exclude care leavers formerly UASC	Include care leavers formerly UASC
2016	North East	14.1%	13.8%
	North West	15.4%	14.9%
	Yorkshire and The Humber	13.7%	13.0%

	East Midlands	15.9%	14.3%
	West Midlands	16.0%	14.8%
	East of England	20.6%	18.4%
	London	15.5%	11.6%
	South East	17.1%	13.5%
	South West	21.4%	20.9%
	North East	13.2%	13.0%
	North West	17.0%	16.4%
	Yorkshire and The Humber	15.2%	14.3%
	East Midlands	16.0%	14.3%
2017	West Midlands	16.4%	15.0%
	East of England	22.2%	19.1%
	London	15.4%	11.3%
	South East	16.8%	12.4%
	South West	20.3%	19.8%
	North East	12.8%	12.5%
	North West	17.2%	16.5%
	Yorkshire and The Humber	15.2%	14.3%
2018	East Midlands	16.0%	14.3%
	West Midlands	16.4%	15.0%

	North West	17.5%	16.5%
	Yorkshire and The Humber	16.0%	14.8%
	East Midlands	17.2%	14.9%
	West Midlands	17.2%	15.3%
	East of England	22.9%	18.5%
	London	15.1%	10.7%
	South East	17.2%	12.0%
	South West	20.1%	19.1%
2019	North East	13.1%	12.6%
	North West	18.0%	16.9%
	Yorkshire and The Humber	16.4%	14.7%
	East Midlands	18.9%	15.9%
	West Midlands	17.9%	15.3%
	East of England	22.8%	17.3%
	London	14.7%	10.0%
	South East	17.4%	11.8%
	South West	18.9%	17.3%

	South West	18.9%	17.9%
2020	North East	13.6%	13.0%
	North West	17.8%	16.2%
	Yorkshire and The Humber	16.9%	14.4%
	East Midlands	19.9%	16.1%
	West Midlands	18.6%	15.1%
	East of England	22.6%	16.3%
	London	14.5%	9.5%
	South East	18.7%	12.5%
	South West	18.8%	16.5%
2021	North East	14.0%	13.2%
	North West	17.3%	15.2%
	Yorkshire and The Humber	17.3%	14.4%
	East Midlands	20.5%	16.4%
	West Midlands	18.6%	14.8%
	East of England	21.8%	15.3%
	London	14.1%	8.8%

	South East	20.1%	13.5%
	South West	19.2%	16.5%
2022	North East	14.8%	14.0%
	North West	17.2%	14.9%
	Yorkshire and The Humber	17.4%	14.3%
	East Midlands	20.6%	16.7%
	West Midlands	18.6%	14.9%
	East of England	20.5%	14.1%
	London	14.2%	8.7%
	South East	21.0%	14.5%
	South West	19.1%	16.4%
2023	North East	15.7%	14.4%
	North West	17.4%	14.5%
	Yorkshire and The Humber	17.7%	14.2%
	East Midlands	21.7%	17.2%
	West Midlands	17.7%	13.8%

	East of England	20.7%	13.7%
	London	14.4%	8.8%
	South East	21.8%	14.8%
	South West	19.4%	16.2%
2024	North East	15.8%	13.7%
	North West	17.7%	14.1%
	Yorkshire and The Humber	18.0%	14.2%
	East Midlands	21.9%	16.8%
	West Midlands	17.1%	12.9%
	East of England	20.9%	13.1%
	London	14.5%	9.0%
	South East	22.4%	14.7%
	South West	19.1%	15.2%

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Footnotes

1. Numbers have been rounded to the nearest 10. Percentages rounded to 1 decimal place. Figures in some tables may be suppressed, denoted by a 'c', percentages <0.05% are denoted by a 'k'.
2. Figures exclude young people who were looked after under an agreed series of short term placements, those who have died since leaving care, those who have returned home to parents or someone with parental responsibility for a continuous period of at least 6 months and those whose care was transferred to another local authority.

[Show 2 more footnotes](#)

Source: Longitudinal CIN dataset and SSDA903

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

Explore data

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Contact us

If you have a specific enquiry about Children in need: A focus on disability statistics and data:

Children's Social Care Analysis and Research

Email: keira.hunston@education.gov.uk

Contact name: Keira Hunston

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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