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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

**CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER IN ENGLAND (INCLUDING
ADOPTIONS AND CARE LEAVERS), 2004-05**

This Statistical First Release provides the earliest information about children looked after in England for the year ending 31 March 2005. The data are collected from all 150 local authorities. The tables show national totals for children looked after on 31 March 2005, children looked after adopted in 2004-05, children who left care in 2004-05 aged 16 or over, and 19 year old former care leavers looked after on 1 April 2002. New information is collected on distance between the home and placement of the children looked after at 31 March 2005, on mothers looked after at 31 March 2005, and on method of participation at last review of children looked after aged 4 and over at 31 March 2005.

KEY POINTS**Children looked after**

- 60,900 children were looked after at 31 March 2005, a decrease of less than 1% from a year earlier but an increase of 3% from 2001.
- The largest category of placement for children looked after on 31 March 2005 was foster care, accounting for 68% of all placements. The number of children in foster placements has increased by 9% since 2001.
- 2,900 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children were looked after at 31 March 2005. 69% of the Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children were located in London, with a further 16% located elsewhere in the South East.
- 65% of the 23,100 children under 16 who have been looked after for 2.5 or more years had been living in the same placement for at least 2 years or were placed for adoption. This is the same as the updated figure for last year (see paragraph 4 in "Notes for Editors"). The Government's target is that by 2008, 80% of these children will have been living in the same placement for at least 2 years, or are placed for adoption.

Adoptions

- 3,800 children were adopted in the year ending 31 March 2005. This is the same as the updated figure for the previous year (see paragraph 4 in "Notes for Editors").
- In 2004-05, 1,000 more children were adopted than in 1999-00. This represents an increase of 38%. The Government's target for adoptions, included in the Priorities and Planning Framework 2003-06, is to increase by 40% the number of looked after children who are adopted by 2004-05 and to exceed this by

achieving, if possible, a 50% increase by 2006, from 1999-00.

- 81% of children looked after adopted in 2004-05 were placed for adoption within 12 months of the decision that adoption is in the child's best interests. From 2000-01 this figure has remained stable at around 80%. The Government's target, contained in the Priorities and Planning Framework 2003-06 was to increase the proportion to 95% by 2004-05.
- 62% of children adopted were aged between 1 and 4 while 28% were aged between 5 and 9. The average age at adoption in 2004-05 was 4 years 2 months and has changed little in the last five years.

Care leavers

- 43% of the 7,500 children leaving care aged 16 or over in 2004-05 had at least one GCSE or GNVQ on leaving care, the same as last year. When Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children looked after for less than 2 years at the time of leaving care are excluded, along with children who would not have usually sat their exams at the time of leaving care, the equivalent figure is 50%.
- 6% left care with at least 5 GCSEs at grades A* - C, the same as in 2003-04.

Activity of care leavers on their 19th birthday

- 5,200 former looked after children were 19 in 2004-05 and had been looked after on 1 April 2002 (in their 17th year). Councils were in touch with 89% of these children. This compared to an in touch rate of 85% in 2003-04.
- The largest category of accommodation for 19 year old former care leavers is independent living, which accounts for 42% of the cohort. The increase in the proportion of former care leavers in independent living over the last few years is largely the result of the improved in touch rate.
- 59% of former care leavers were in education, employment or training on their 19th birthday. This compares to 55% in 2003-04.

New information collected in this year's collection

Distance between home and placement

- Nearly three quarters (74%) of looked after children were living in placements within 20 miles from their home at the time they were taken into care.

Mothers

- There were 320 mothers aged 12 and over who were looked after at 31 March 2005. The vast majority of these were aged 15 to 17 (97%). The percentage of females in care who were mothers increased with age from 2% among 15 year olds to 8% among 17 year olds. Overall, 4% of looked after females aged 15-17 were mothers.

Reviews

- More than half of all children (51%) who had a statutory review spoke for themselves. 17% did

not attend and did not have their views conveyed to a review.

Tables

Table 1: Children looked after at 31 March by age, sex, legal status, and placement, 2001-2005

Table 2: Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking children looked after at 31 March by sex and region, 2002-2005

Table 3: Children looked after adopted in the year ending 31 March by age at adoption, sex, and time between best interest decision and placement for adoption, 2001-2005

Table 4: Children who ceased to be looked after during the year ending 31 March aged 16 or over, by age, sex, and level of qualification achieved, 2001-2005

Table 5: Care leavers at age 19 who were looked after on 1 April 1999, 1 April 2000, 1 April 2001, and 1 April 2002 aged 16 (in their 17th year) by sex, activity, and accommodation

Table 6: Children looked after at 31 March 2005 by distance between home and placement

Table 7: Mothers looked after at 31 March 2005 by placement and age

Table 8: Children looked after aged 4 and over at 31 March 2005 by method of participation at the last review

Table 9: Summary of 2004-05 Performance Assessment Framework (PAF) indicators

Notes to editors

1. The 2005 figures for children looked after are the latest in a regular series. Data are collected on the SSDA903 return, which provides the Department for Education and Skills with data on children looked after in England. It also covers adoptions and looked after children, educational qualifications of care leavers and the activity of former care leavers aged 19.
2. The figures presented for the year ending 31 March 2005 are based on data reported by all 150 local authorities.
3. This was the second year the SSDA903 data collection was carried out using a web based system.
4. The database used to collect this information is longitudinal with one record for every child. As local authorities are continually updating the database every year, previous years figures have also been amended where there have been changes.
5. Between 1998 and 2003 local authorities were required to submit a CLA100 return along with the SSDA903 return. The CLA100 was an aggregate return completed for all children looked after at 31 March while the SSDA903 was a one-in-three sample survey. In 2004 and 2005 the SSDA903 covered all children looked after and so the CLA100 was not required.

Between 1998 and 2003, the AD1 return was completed for all children adopted during the year; the OC1 return collected data on the qualifications achieved at the point of leaving care for young people leaving care in the year aged 16 and over; and the OC3 return collected data on the activity and accommodation of former care leavers at age 19 who were looked after on 1 April aged 16 (in their 17th year). In 2004 and 2005 these returns were collected as part of the SSDA903 data collection.

6. Figures have been rounded to the nearest 100 if they exceed 1,000 and to the nearest 10 otherwise, with the exception numbers from 1 to 5 inclusive which for confidentiality purposes have been replaced in the published tables by a hyphen (-). Where any number is shown as zero (0), the original figure submitted was zero (0).
7. This publication is one of five children's social services publications being released at the same time. The others cover children on the Child Protection Register, Private Fostering, Children in Need and the Children's User Experience survey. Further details of these publications may be found in the annex.
8. Detailed local authority data on Looked After Children are expected to be released in March 2006. A selection of these data as they become ready for publication will be made available in the new year on the Department's website at:
<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000615/index.shtml>.

TABLE 1 Children looked after at 31 March by age, sex, legal status, and placement, 2001-2005¹

England		numbers, percentages, and rates per 10,000 children under 18									
		2001 ²	2002 ²	2003 ²	2004 ³	2005 ³	2001 ²	2002 ²	2003 ²	2004 ³	2005 ³
All children¹		58,900	59,700	60,800	61,100	60,900	100	100	100	100	100
Rates per 10,000 children under 18		53	54	55	55	55					
Sex	Male	32,600	33,200	33,600	33,900	33,700	55	56	55	55	55
	Female	26,300	26,500	27,200	27,200	27,200	45	44	45	45	45
Age	Under 1	2,300	2,300	2,600	2,600	2,800	4	4	4	4	5
	1-4	9,300	9,200	9,200	8,900	8,700	16	15	15	15	14
	5-9	13,400	13,300	13,300	12,700	12,100	23	22	22	21	20
	10-15	24,600	25,300	26,100	26,500	26,500	42	42	43	43	44
	16 and over	9,300	9,500	9,600	10,300	10,800	16	16	16	17	18
Legal status	Care orders	37,600	38,400	39,600	39,600	39,400	64	64	65	65	65
	Interim	7,900	8,800	10,200	9,000	9,500	13	15	17	15	16
	Full	29,800	29,600	29,300	30,600	29,900	51	50	48	50	49
	S20 CA 1989	19,100	19,000	18,900	18,800	18,800	32	32	31	31	31
	Freed for adoption	1,600	1,800	1,900	2,400	2,300	3	3	3	4	4
	Other ⁴	570	540	460	270	270	1	1	1	0	0
Placement	Foster	38,300	39,200	41,100	41,200	41,700	65	66	68	67	68
	Children's homes ⁵	6,800	6,800	6,600	7,000	7,000	11	11	11	11	11
	With parents	6,900	6,700	6,400	5,900	5,700	12	11	10	10	9
	Placed for adoption	3,400	3,600	3,400	3,600	3,100	6	6	6	6	5
	Other ⁶	3,400	3,400	3,300	3,500	3,300	6	6	5	6	5

1. Figures exclude children looked after under an agreed series of short term placements

2. Figures are taken from the CLA100 return

3. Figures are taken from the SSDA903 return

4. Includes children who are on remand, committed for trial or detained, and children subject to emergency orders or police protection

5. Includes secure units, homes and hostels but excludes residential schools

6. Includes residential schools, lodgings and other residential settings

TABLE 2 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children looked after at 31 March by sex and region, 2002-2005¹

England					numbers and percentages			
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2002	2003	2004	2005
All children¹	2,200	2,400	2,900	2,900	100	100	100	100
Male	1,700	1,900	2,100	2,000	78	76	70	70
Female	490	580	870	880	22	24	30	30
Region								
North ²	50	100	140	170	2	4	5	6
Midlands ³	160	230	270	280	7	9	9	10
London	1,600	1,700	2,000	2,000	72	71	70	69
South East (excl. London)	410	390	470	460	19	16	16	16

1. Figures exclude children looked after under an agreed series of short term agreements

2. Includes North East, North West, Merseyside and Yorks & Humber

3. Includes East Midlands, West Midlands, South West and Eastern

TABLE 3 Children looked after adopted in the year ending 31 March by age at adoption, sex, and time between best interest decision and placement for adoption, 2001-2005

England		numbers and percentages									
		2001 ¹	2002 ¹	2003 ¹	2004 ²	2005 ²	2001 ¹	2002 ¹	2003 ¹	2004 ²	2005 ²
All children		3,100	3,400	3,500	3,800	3,800	100	100	100	100	100
<i>Percentage of looked after children adopted</i>		5	6	6	6	6					
Sex	Male	1,600	1,700	1,900	1,900	1,900	52	50	53	51	51
	Female	1,500	1,700	1,700	1,900	1,800	48	50	47	49	49
Age	Under 1	200	180	230	220	210	7	5	6	6	5
	1-4	1,900	2,000	2,100	2,200	2,300	60	60	59	58	62
	5-9	850	1,000	1,000	1,100	1,100	28	29	29	30	28
	10-15	140	190	180	210	170	5	5	5	6	4
	16 and over	20	10	10	20	20	1	0	0	0	0
Average age (yrs: mths)		4:3	4:5	4:4	4:5	4:2					
Timing of adoption placement	Placed within 12 months of best interest decision	2,500	2,700	2,900	3,000	3,000	81	80	81	79	81
	Placed over 12 months of best interest decision	600	700	690	790	720	19	20	19	21	19

1. The all children figure is taken from the AD1 return. All other figures are derived from the SSDA903 return
2. From 2004, the AD1 returns were collected as part of the SSDA903 data collection

TABLE 4 Children who ceased to be looked after during the year ending 31 March aged 16 or over, by age, sex, and level of qualification achieved, 2001-2005¹

England		numbers and percentages									
		2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
All children¹		6,700	6,600	6,700	6,800	7,500	100	100	100	100	100
Sex	Male	3,800	3,700	3,700	3,900	4,200	56	56	55	57	56
	Female	2,900	2,900	3,000	3,000	3,200	44	44	45	43	44
Age on leaving care	16	2,300	2,100	2,000	2,000	2,100	35	32	29	29	28
	17	1,100	1,100	1,000	950	1,100	17	16	16	14	15
	18th birthday	3,000	3,100	3,400	3,500	4,000	45	47	50	51	53
	Older than 18th birthday	260	290	320	370	340	4	4	5	5	4
Qualifications	At least 1 GCSE or GNVQ	2,500	2,700	2,900	2,900	3,200	37	41	43	43	43
	At least 5 GCSEs at grade A*- C	300	350	390	400	460	5	5	6	6	6

1. Figures exclude children who ceased to be looked after during the year aged 16 or over who had been looked after under an agreed series of short term placements

TABLE 5 Care leavers at age 19 who were looked after on 1 April 1999, 1 April 2000, 1 April 2001, and 1 April 2002 aged 16 (in their 17th year) by sex, activity, and accommodation¹

England		numbers and percentages							
		2002 ²	2003 ³	2004 ⁴	2005 ⁵	2002 ²	2003 ³	2004 ⁴	2005 ⁵
All young people¹		4,700	4,900	5,100	5,200	100	100	100	100
Sex	Male	2,600	2,700	2,800	2,900	55	55	55	56
	Female	2,100	2,200	2,300	2,300	45	45	45	44
Activity	In education, training or employment	2,200	2,400	2,800	3,100	46	49	55	59
	Not in education, training or employment	1,400	1,600	1,500	1,600	29	32	30	30
	Not in touch	1,200	970	750	560	25	20	15	11
Accommodation	With parents or relatives	470	540	560	690	10	11	11	13
	Community home	200	200	230	230	4	4	4	4
	Supported accommodation ⁶	580	710	800	860	12	15	16	17
	Lodgings	310	270	250	190	6	6	5	4
	Independent living	1,600	1,800	2,100	2,200	35	37	41	42
	In custody	110	120	120	150	2	2	2	3
	Other ⁷	270	300	320	310	6	6	6	6
Not in touch	1,200	970	750	560	25	20	15	11	

1. Figures exclude children who were looked after on 1 April aged 16 (in their 17th year) under an agreed series of short term placements

2. Looked after on 1 April 1999

3. Looked after on 1 April 2000

4. Looked after on 1 April 2001

5. Looked after on 1 April 2002

6. Includes supported hostels, trainer flats, supported lodgings, foyers

7. Includes bed & breakfast and emergency accommodation

TABLE 6 Children looked after at 31 March 2005 by distance between home and placement ^{1,2,3}

England		numbers and percentages					
		numbers					
	All Children ²	Foster Placements	Children's homes and hostels ⁴	Living independently	Placed with Parents ⁵	Other	Placed for Adoption
All children ²	60,900	41,700	7,000	1,400	5,700	1,900	3,100
Distance							
Under 21 miles	44,800	33,300	4,500	1,100	5,300	710	
21 miles and over	10,900	7,000	2,300	140	370	1,100	
Not Known ^{3,6}	2,000	1,400	260	180	90	110	
Not Recorded ⁷	3,100						3,100
		percentages					
	All Children ²	Foster Placements	Children's homes and hostels ⁴	Living independently	Placed with Parents ⁵	Other	Placed for Adoption
All children ²	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Distance							
Under 21 miles	74	80	64	76	92	37	
21 miles and over	18	17	32	10	6	58	
Not Known ^{3,6}	3	3	4	13	2	5	
Not Recorded ⁷	5						100

1. Figures exclude children looked after under an agreed series of short term placements

2. Figures are taken from the SSSA 903 return

3. This is the first year of data collection and some authorities have reported difficulties in recording this information.

4. Includes homes and hostels, but excludes residential schools

5. Placed with parents or other person with parental responsibility

6. Due to "Home" address being unknown or unavailable. This could occur with UASC or child missing from main placement

7. Due to confidentiality any children who were placed for adoption were exempt from recording the distance

TABLE 7 Mothers aged 12 and over looked after at 31 March 2005 by placement and age ^{1,2}

England		numbers and percentages				
		Age				
		12-14	15	16	17	18
All females ³	13,400	5,900	2,800	2,500	2,200	10
Teenage mothers ⁴	320	10	50	90	170	0
Percentage of mothers ⁵	2	0	2	4	8	0
Placements						
Foster placements	130	10	30	40	40	0
Children's homes and hostels ⁶	70	-	10	20	50	0
Living Independently	80	0	0	20	60	0
Placed with parents	30	0	-	10	10	0
Other	20	0	-	-	10	0

1. Figures exclude children looked after under an agreed series of short term placements

2. This is the first year of data collection and some authorities have reported difficulties in recording this information

3. All females in care aged 12 and over

4. All mothers in care aged 12 and over

5. Mothers in care aged 12 and over as a percentage of all females in care aged 12 and over

6. Includes homes and hostels, but excludes residential schools

TABLE 8 Children looked after aged 4 and over at 31 March 2005 by method of participation at the last review ^{1,2,3,4}

England		numbers and percentages							
Method of Participation	Age at 31 March								
	numbers				percentages				
	All Children	4-9	10-15	16 and over	All Children	4-9	10-15	16 and over	
All Children aged 4 and over ^{1,5}	50,000	13,400	25,800	10,700	100	100	100	100	
Child Physically attends and speaks for him or herself	25,700	3,000	15,300	7,400	51	22	59	69	
Child Physically attends and an advocate speaks on his or her behalf	1,100	410	530	190	2	3	2	2	
Child attends and conveys his or her view symbolically (non-verbally)	470	150	260	70	1	1	1	1	
Child physically attends but does not speak for him or herself, does not convey his or her view symbolically (nonverbally) and does not ask an advocate to speak for him or her.	790	340	350	100	2	3	1	1	
Child does not attend physically but briefs an advocate to speak for him or her	6,800	2,900	3,000	840	14	22	12	8	
Child does not attend but conveys his or her feelings to the review by a facilitative medium	5,600	2,500	2,600	520	11	19	10	5	
Child does not attend nor are his or her views conveyed to the review	8,500	3,800	3,400	1,300	17	28	13	12	
Not Known ⁶	980	290	420	270	2	2	2	3	

1 Figures exclude children looked after under an agreed series of short term placements

2 The last review during the year ending 31 March 2005 of children who have been looked after for 4 weeks or over

3 Figures only include children who have been reported as having a review

4 This is the first year of data collection and some authorities have reported difficulties in recording this information

5 Figures exclude children aged under 4 at the time of the latest review and those children that did not have a review

6 A review took place but participation at the review was not recorded

TABLE 9 Summary of 2004-05 Performance Assessment Framework (PAF) indicators

England		percentages
		2004-05
A1	Stability of placements of children looked after¹ % of children looked after at 31 March with three or more placements during the year	13
A2	Educational qualifications of children looked after^{1,2} % of young people leaving care aged 16 or over with at least 1 GCSE at grade A*-G or a GNVQ	50
A4	Employment, education and training for care leavers¹ % of 19 year old former care leavers who were engaged in education, training or employment	59
B7	Children looked after in foster placements or placed for adoption^{1,3} % of children looked after at 31 March in a foster placement or placed for adoption	81
C22	Young children looked after in foster placements or placed for adoption^{1,3} % of children looked after under the age of 10 at 31 March in a foster placement or placed for adoption	98
C23	Adoptions of children looked after^{1,4} The number of children adopted in the year as a percentage of the number of children looked after continuously for 6 months or more at 31 March	8
C63	Participation of looked after children in statutory reviews¹ % of children and young people who communicated their views specifically for their latest statutory review as a percentage of the number of children and young people who had been looked after at March 31st for more than four	81
D35	Long term stability of children looked after¹ % of children looked after continuously for 4 years or more who were currently in a foster placement which had lasted for 2 or more years	50

1. Figures exclude children looked after under an agreed series of short term agreements

2. Figures exclude unaccompanied asylum seeking children looked after continuously for less than two years and children who left before they would have sat their exams

3. Figures exclude children looked after placed with parents

4. Figures exclude unaccompanied asylum seeking children

Annex

Other DfES Publications on Children's Social Services Statistics published in November 2005

Private Fostering Arrangements in England, year ending 31 March 2005. This can be downloaded from the Department's website at:

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000621/index.shtml>

Referrals, Assessments, and Children and Young People on Child Protection Registers, England - Year ending 31 March 2005. This can be downloaded from the Department's website at:

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000614/index.shtml>

Children in Need in England: Preliminary results of a survey of activity and expenditure as reported by Local Authority Social Services' Children and Families Teams for a survey week in February 2005. This can be downloaded from the Department's website at:

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000620/index.shtml>

Survey of Children and Young People receiving personal Social Services in England Aged 10-17: 2004-05. This new publication is not within the scope of National Statistics but can be downloaded from the department's website at:

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000622/index.shtml>