

### Private fostering in Wales, 2013-14

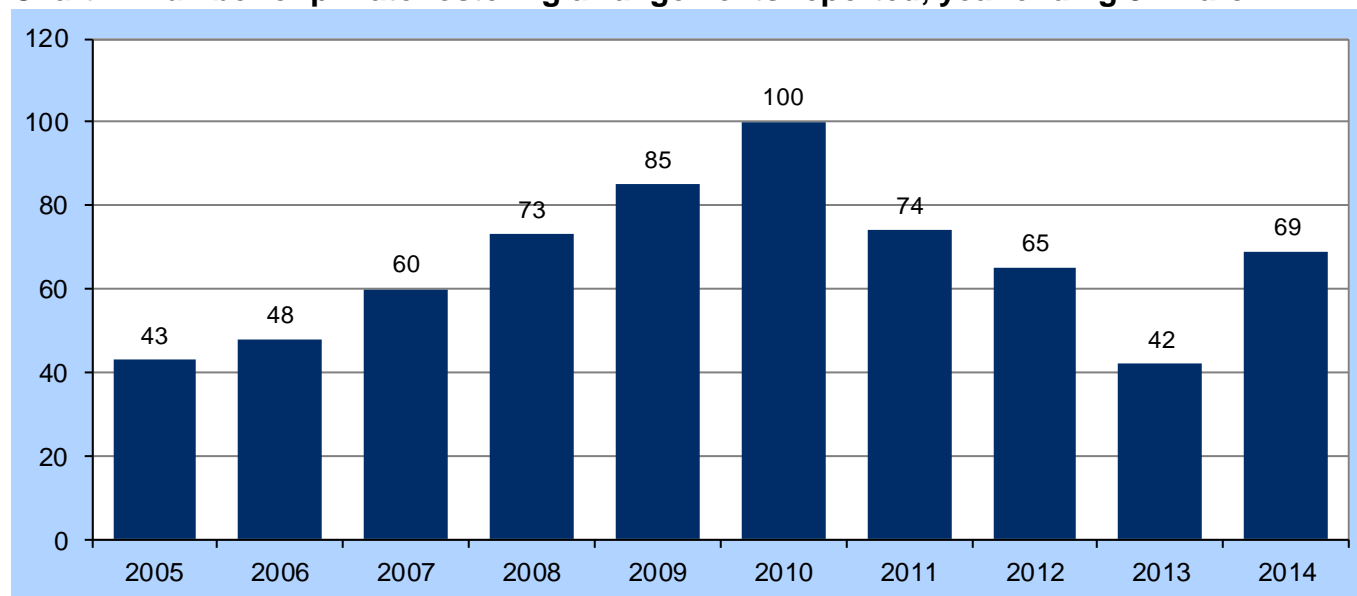
This annual Statistics First Release summarises information on private fostering arrangements in Wales. The release presents key results in Wales for the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014. A private fostering arrangement occurs when a child under 16 (under 18 if disabled) is cared for by an adult, who is not a relative, under a private arrangement between parent and carer that lasts for 28 days or more. This release does not include information on fostering of children looked after by local authorities.

Further information and full details for individual local authorities are published today online on [StatsWales](http://StatsWales).

Key results for the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014:

- 69 new private fostering arrangements were reported during the year, compared to 42 in the previous year ([Chart 1](#), [Table 1](#)).
- 68 children received an initial visit from the local authority during the year, 66 per cent of which were within 7 days of the beginning of the fostering arrangement ([Table 1](#)).
- 83 per cent of the children whose private fostering arrangement began in the year were born in the UK and 17 per cent in other countries. 68 per cent were aged 10 or over on 31 March 2014 ([Table 2](#)).

**Chart 1: Number of private fostering arrangements reported, year ending 31 March**



Source: SSDA904

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## Private fostering arrangements

Private fostering occurs when a child under 16 (under 18 if disabled) is cared for by an adult, who is not a relative, under a private arrangement between parent and carer that lasts for 28 days or more. Private foster carers may be from the child's extended family, eg a cousin or great aunt. However, a person who is a relative as defined under the Children Act 1989, i.e. a grandparent, brother, sister, aunt or uncle (whether by full of half blood or by marriage) or a step-parent will not be a private foster carer. A private foster carer may be a friend of the family, the parent of a friend of the child, or someone previously unknown to the child's family who is willing to privately foster a child. The number of arrangements commencing in 2013-14 rose.

Local authorities have a duty to promote and encourage notification of private fostering arrangements and also to satisfy themselves that the welfare of children privately fostered is satisfactorily safeguarded and promoted. These responsibilities include making visits to the children.

**Table 1: Private fostering arrangements reported, year ending 31 March 2014**

	2012	2013	2014
Number of arrangements commencing during the year	65	42	69
Number of children with an initial visit during the year	74	48	68
Number of visits within 7 working days	54	39	45

Source: SSDA904

(a) In 2013, one child had two arrangements.

There were 68 children who received an initial visit from a local authority worker during the year ending 31 March 2014. 66 per cent of visits were within 7 days of the beginning of the fostering arrangement, a decrease of 15 percentage points compared to 31 March 2013. Arrangements and initial visits may occur in different years, leading to differing totals.

**Table 2: Children whose private fostering arrangement started, year ending 31 March 2014**

	2012 <sup>(a)</sup>	2013	2014
Place of birth of children:			
United Kingdom	47	30	57
Elsewhere	13	11	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>69</b>
Age of children:			
Under 10 years old	8	6	22
10 years old and older	52	35	47
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>69</b>

Source: SSDA904

(a) 2011 and 2012 based on 21 authorities that supplied a breakdown of numbers by age and place of birth.

Of the 69 children whose private fostering arrangements began during the year to 31 March 2014, 83 per cent were born in the UK, with 17 per cent being born in other countries. 68 per cent were aged 10 or over on 31 March 2014. There were more children aged under 10 starting to be fostered than in previous years.

## 1. Notes

1. This is the second 'Private Fostering in Wales' statistical release to be published, with the first being published on 23 October 2013.
2. Information on the numbers of children publically fostered by local authorities can be obtained from the Statistical Release on looked after children, the latest edition of which was published on 26 September 2013.  
[SDR 155/2014, Adoptions, Outcomes and Placements for Children Looked After by Local Authorities, Wales, 2013-14.](#)
3. There are no planned revisions to the data in this release.

### 1.1 Data Collection

All references made to 'year' relate to the standard financial year which runs from 1 April to 31 March (for example 2013-14 should be understood as 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014).

The data on private fostering were supplied to the Data Collection team within the Welsh Government by the 22 local authorities in Wales on the SSDA904 form. The form applies an extensive series of validation checks to ensure that the information provided is accurate and consistent.

### 1.2 Symbols and rounding conventions

The following symbols are used in the tables:

- the data item is not exactly zero, but is less than half the final digit shown.
- . the data item is not applicable.
- .. the data item is not available.
- \* the data item is disclosive or not sufficiently robust for publication.

## 2. Key Quality Information

This section provides a summary of information on this output against five dimensions of quality: Relevance, Accuracy, Timeliness and Punctuality, Accessibility and Clarity, and Comparability.

### 2.1 Relevance

The statistics are used both within and outside the Welsh Government to monitor adult social services trends and as a baseline for further analysis of the underlying data. These statistics are used in a variety of ways. Some of the key users may be:

- Ministers and the Members Research Service in the National Assembly for Wales;
- Local authorities;
- The third sector (e.g. charities);
- The Department for Health and Social Services in the Welsh Government;
- Other areas of the Welsh Government;
- The research community;
- Students, academics and universities;
- Individual citizens and private companies.

The statistics may also be useful for other UK governments

- The Northern Ireland Executive's Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety
- The Scottish Government, Analytical Services Division
- The Department for Education in England.

These statistics are used in a variety of ways. Some examples of these are:

- advice to Ministers;
- local authority comparisons and benchmarks;
- to inform the social services policy decision-making process in Wales;
- to inform the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales;

## 2.2 Accuracy

The data on private fostering may be an underestimate of the total number of children in private fostering arrangements as there is doubt over whether all parents, carers and other relevant third parties currently report the existence of these arrangements to the local authority. However, the figures may still be used to monitor local authority performance in visiting children.

Every year the data are collected from the same source (the SSDA904 data collection return) and adhere to the national standards and guidance, thus ensuring coherence within and across organisations.

Statisticians within the Welsh Government review the data and query any anomalies with local authorities between submissions to ensure coherence of the data received, and before tables are published. The figures in this release reflect the final position of the 2013-14 financial year and are correct as at 31 March 2014.

## 2.3 Timeliness and Punctuality

The Data Collection team within the Welsh Government collected data, for the financial year 2013-14, between May and July 2014. Data in this release refers to final 2013-14 data. This release was published in October 2014, meeting the planned date of publication.

## 2.4 Accessibility and Clarity

This statistical release is pre-announced and then published on the Statistics section of the Welsh Government website. It is accompanied by more detailed tables on [StatsWales](#), a free to use service that allows visitors to view, manipulate, create and download data. Please select 'Fostering Services' at the navigation screen of the following site:

<https://statswales.wales.gov.uk/Catalogue/Health-and-Social-Care/Social-Services/Childrens-Services>

## 2.5 Comparability

Statistics collected in each United Kingdom country may differ and the detailed guidance available from each country's website should be consulted before using these statistics as comparative measures.

Related publications for the UK can be found at:

England:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/notifications-of-private-fostering-arrangements-in-england-2014>

Scotland:

The Scottish Government do not collect information on private fostering arrangements in Scotland.

Northern Ireland:

The Department of Health, Social Services and Public safety does not produce statistics relating to private fostering arrangements in Northern Ireland.

## 2.6 Further information

Further information is available for other Personal Social Services statistical releases on the Welsh Government website:

<http://wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/?topic=Health+and+social+care&lang=en#/statistics-and-research/?topics=Health+and+social+care&subtopics=Social+services&view=Search+results&lang=en>

## 2.7 Contact information

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## User Feedback

We want to engage with users of our statistics and we invite you to send your comments on the publication to [stats.pss@Wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:stats.pss@Wales.gsi.gov.uk).