

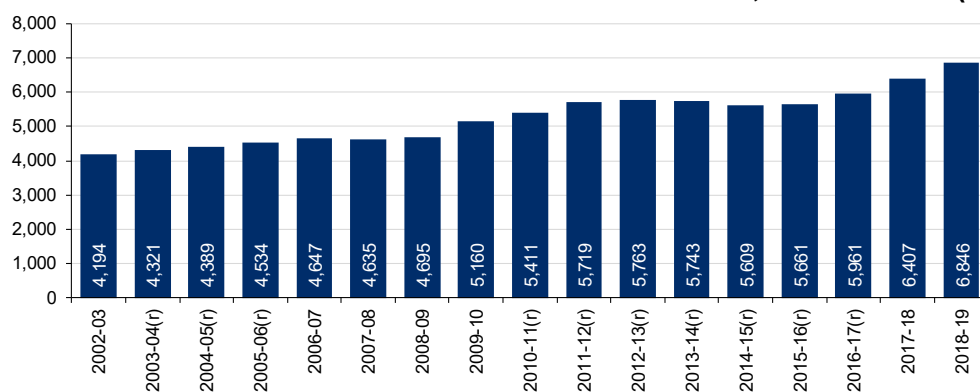
## Experimental Statistics: Children looked after by local authorities, 2018-19

30 October 2019  
SFR 106/2019

This annual release presents figures about children looked after by Welsh local authorities. Children looked after include those on care orders and others provided with accommodation by their local authority.

This release is based on the third year of data collected from the [Looked after children census](#) following the introduction of the [Social Services and Well-being \(Wales\) Act](#). See the [Key quality information](#) section for more information about the data.

**Chart 1: Number of children looked after in Wales, at 31 March (a)**



Source: 2016-17 to 2018-19, Looked after children census  
Prior to 2016-17, SSDA903

(a) Excluding children looked after in short-term placements.  
(r) The data has been revised since previously published.

### Main points for the period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019

- 6,846 children were looked after on 31 March 2019, an increase of 439 (7 per cent) on the previous year and a rate of 109 per 10,000 population aged under 18, 7 percentage points higher than in 2017-18. ([Chart 1](#) and [Table 1](#))
- 2,125 children started to be looked after in 2018-19, a decrease of 43 (2 per cent) compared with the previous year. ([Table 4](#))
- 1,678 children left care during 2018-19, a decrease of 49 (3 per cent) compared with the previous year. ([Table 5](#))
- 309 children were adopted from care in 2018-19, an increase of 3 (1 per cent) on the previous year. ([Table 8](#))

### About this release

This release presents key results at the Wales level from the Looked after children census data collected for the third time in 2018-19 following implementation of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act on 6 April 2016. Data is based on the year 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019, or the position at 31 March 2019, unless otherwise stated.

Further information for individual local authorities can be found in the [Annex](#) and published on [StatsWales](#).

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## Children looked after by local authorities

Throughout this statistical release, 'looked after children' refers to children looked after by local authorities in Wales.

A child is a person who is aged under 18. Section 74 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act states that a child who is looked after by a local authority is a child who is in its care; or provided with accommodation, for a continuous period of more than 24 hours, by the authority in the exercise of any functions which are social services functions, apart from functions under section 15, Part 4, or section 109, 114 or 115.

6,846 children were looked after\* on 31 March 2019, a rate of 108.7 per 10,000 children aged under 18. This was an increase of 439 (7 per cent) when compared to the previous year. This reflects that more children started to be looked after during 2018-19 than left care. This was also the case for the previous year.

\*Children looked after exclusively under short breaks, who normally live at home but are accommodated by a local authority in a series of short periods of care, have been excluded.

**Table 1: Looked after children at 31 March, 2014-15 to 2018-19**

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
<b>Gender</b>					
Male	3,019	3,022	3,206	3,475	3,697
Female	2,590	2,639	2,755	2,932	3,149
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,609</b>	<b>5,661</b>	<b>5,961</b>	<b>6,407</b>	<b>6,846</b>
<b>Disability</b>					
Number of disabled children	394	340	321	454	434
Number of non-disabled children	5,115	5,196	5,353	5,814	6,258
Information not obtained	100	125	287	139	154
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,609</b>	<b>5,661</b>	<b>5,961</b>	<b>6,407</b>	<b>6,846</b>
<b>Ethnicity</b>					
White	5,104	5,139	5,507	5,902	6,257
Mixed ethnic groups	174	191	210	195	236
Asian or Asian British	76	73	93	137	127
Black, African, Caribbean or Black British	57	63	83	91	103
Other ethnic group	41	50	64	82	123
Information not obtained	157	145	4	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,609</b>	<b>5,661</b>	<b>5,961</b>	<b>6,407</b>	<b>6,846</b>
<b>Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Child (UASC)</b>					
Number of UASC children	30	41	54	72	76
Number of non-UASC children	5,579	5,620	5,907	6,335	6,770
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,609</b>	<b>5,661</b>	<b>5,961</b>	<b>6,407</b>	<b>6,846</b>

Source: SSDA903; Looked after children census

Table 1 shows there are more males than females children looked after. At 31 March 2019, 54 per cent of looked after children were male and 46 per cent were female. These proportions have been stable in recent years.

6 per cent of children looked after at 31 March 2019 were disabled; where the child has 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. This proportion has been fairly stable in recent years.

91 per cent of looked after children at 31 March 2019 were white, 3 per cent were of mixed ethnicity, 2 per cent were Asian or Asian British, 2 per cent were Black, African, Caribbean or Black British and 2 per cent were other ethnic groups. The proportion of looked after children who were non-white has increased from 6 per cent in 2014-15 to 9 per cent in 2018-19.

1 per cent of children looked after at 31 March 2019 were an unaccompanied asylum seeking child<sup>1</sup> (UASC). An unaccompanied asylum seeking child (UASC) is an individual, who is under 18, who has applied for asylum in his/her own right, is separated from both parents and is not being cared for by an adult who by law or custom has responsibility to do so. This proportion has been slowly increasing in recent years.

Whilst the number of looked after children has increased, the age profile of looked after children has been consistent. 37 per cent of looked after children were aged 10-15, 23 per cent were aged 5-9, 19 per cent were aged 1-4, 15 per cent were 16 and over and 6 per cent were under 1 at 31 March 2019.

## Legal status of children looked after

The legal status indicates the underlying legal reason describing why a child is being looked after.

**Table 2: Looked after children at 31 March by legal status, 2014-15 to 2018-19(a)**

	2014-15 (r)	2015-16 (r)	2016-17 (r)	2017-18	2018-19
Care orders (b)	3,884	4,147	4,637	5,151	5,669
Other legal status (c)	688	612	614	630	599
Single period of accommodation	1,033	891	706	622	557
Remand, detained or other compulsory order (d)	4	11	4	4	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,609</b>	<b>5,661</b>	<b>5,961</b>	<b>6,407</b>	<b>6,846</b>

Source: SSDA903; Looked after children census

(a) Excluding children looked after in short-term placements.

(b) Includes Interim care orders and Full care orders.

(c) Includes those on remand, or committed for trial or sentence, and accommodated by LA; Detained in LA accommodation under PACE; Sentenced to CYPA 1969 supervision order with residence requirement; Under police protection and in local authority accommodation; Emergency protection order; Under child assessment order and local authority accommodation.

(d) Includes freeing order granted; placement order granted; Wardship granted in High Court and child in LA accommodation.

(r) The data has been revised since previously published.

Table 2 shows most children are looked after under a care order, with the proportion having increased steadily from a 69 per cent in 2014-15 to 83 per cent in 2018-19. Over the same period of time, the proportion of children looked after under single instances of voluntary accommodation (under section 76 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 or section 20 of the Children Act 1989 prior to April 2016) has decreased from 18 per cent to 8 per cent. The proportion of children looked after under other legal status has also decreased; from 12 per cent in 2014-15 to 9 per cent in 2018-19.

## Placements of children looked after

A looked after child's placement indicates where they are living.

**Table 3: Looked after children at 31 March, by placement, 2014-15 to 2018-19(a)**

	2014-15 (r)	2015-16 (r)	2016-17 (r)	2017-18 (r)	2018-19
In foster care placements	4,217	4,250	4,427	4,701	4,868
<i>With relative or friends</i>	842	897	1,011	1,189	1,348
<i>With other foster carers</i>	3,375	3,353	3,416	3,512	3,520
With parents or other parental responsibility	581	636	724	860	1,063
Secure units, children's homes, hostels	271	304	355	399	470
Placed for adoption	294	264	247	249	226
Living independently	110	100	130	132	125
Residential schools	49	37	29	31	26
Other (b)	87	70	49	35	68
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,609</b>	<b>5,661</b>	<b>5,961</b>	<b>6,407</b>	<b>6,846</b>

Source: SSDA903; Looked after children census

(a) Excluding children looked after in short-term placements.

(b) Residential care home, NHS/Health Trust or other establishment providing medical or nursing care, family centre or mother and baby unit, Youth Offender Institution or prison, residential employment and whereabouts unknown.

(r) The data has been revised since previously published.

Table 3 shows 71 per cent of looked after children at 31 March 2019 were accommodated in foster care placements, a gradual decline in proportion since 31 March 2015.

The remainder of children looked after were mostly placed with parents. This proportion has gradually increased in recent years from 10 per cent in 2014-15 to 16 per cent in 2018-19. Over the last four years, the proportions of children in the remaining other placement types have stayed broadly similar accounting for around 13 per cent of placements in total.

Over two-thirds (68 per cent) of children who were looked after at 31 March 2019 were in placements inside the local authority where they were living when they first became looked after. 27 per cent of children were in placements outside their home local authority but within Wales and a further 6 per cent were placed outside Wales. Those children for which no postcode was provided have been excluded.

There were 638 looked after children at 31 March 2019 who had three or more placements during the year, a decrease of 8 children (1 per cent) compared with the previous year. This equates to 9 per cent of children which has been a consistent proportion in recent years.

## Children looked after by need for care and support

A child's need for care and support is defined as the main reason why a child is receiving care and support.

**Table 4: Children starting to be looked after, by need for care and support, 2014-15 to 2018-19(a)**

	2014-15 (r)	2015-16 (r)	2016-17 (r)	2017-18	2018-19
<b>Children starting to be looked after</b>	<b>2,039</b>	<b>2,064</b>	<b>2,229</b>	<b>2,168</b>	<b>2,125</b>
Number by category of need:					
Abuse or neglect	1,240	1,311	1,388	1,391	1,397
Family in acute stress or dysfunction	499	499	596	521	492
Parental illness, disability or absence	140	133	143	143	115
Socially unacceptable behaviour	123	86	69	78	78
Other (b)	37	35	33	35	43
<b>Percentage (%) by category of need:</b>					
<i>Abuse or neglect</i>	61	64	62	64	66
<i>Family in acute stress or dysfunction</i>	24	24	27	24	23
<i>Parental illness, disability or absence</i>	7	6	6	7	5
<i>Socially unacceptable behaviour</i>	6	4	3	4	4
<i>Other (b)</i>	2	2	1	2	2

Source: SSDA903; Looked after children census

(a) Excluding children looked after in short-term placements. Where a child had multiple periods of care only the first period is counted and shows the initial reason for a child coming into care.

(b) Up until 2015-16, the Other category included adoption disruption, disability and low income. From 2016-17 onwards, information is no longer collected on low income.

(r) The data has been revised since previously published.

Table 4 shows there were 2,125 children who started to be looked after between 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2019, a decrease of 43 children (2 per cent) from the previous year.

For children who started to be looked after during the year, the most common reason why the child received care and support initially was because of abuse or neglect (66 per cent or 1,397 children).

The pattern of reasons for why children who started to be looked after during the year were receiving care and support has been broadly similar in recent years. The abuse and neglect category proportion has increased the most.

## Children looked after leaving care

**Table 5: Children leaving care, by reason for leaving, 2014-15 to 2018-19(a)(b)**

	2014-15 (r)	2015-16	2016-17 (r)	2017-18 (r)	2018-19
<b>Children leaving care (b)</b>	<b>2,171</b>	<b>2,009</b>	<b>1,909</b>	<b>1,727</b>	<b>1,678</b>
Returned home to live with parents, relatives or other person with parental responsibility	1,110	1,030	978	815	782
Adopted from care	385	341	314	306	309
Independent Living	275	236	190	167	189
Turned 18 years old and continued to live with former foster parent(s) (d)	..	..	81	132	117
Other	401	402	346	307	281
<b>Percentage (%) by reason for leaving care:</b>					
<i>Returned home to live with parents, relatives or other person with parental responsibility (c)</i>	51	51	51	47	47
<i>Adopted from care</i>	18	17	16	18	18
<i>Independent Living</i>	13	12	10	10	11
<i>Turned 18 years old and continued to live with former foster parent(s) (d)</i>	..	..	4	8	7
<i>Other</i>	18	20	18	18	17

Source: SSDA903; Looked after children census

(a) Excludes children looked after in short-term placements. Where a child had multiple periods of care only the latest period is counted.

(b) Excludes children who died or where care was taken over by another local authority in the UK.

(c) Includes special guardianship orders made to carers or former foster carers.

(d) This data is only available from 2016-17 onwards. When the young person reaches their 18th birthday, they are no longer in care. At this point, the young person, the carer and the appropriate local authority support staff members sign the 'When I am Ready' Living Together Agreement. The young person and the carer also sign an excluded licensee agreement. This signifies the start of the 'When I am Ready' arrangement.

(r) The data has been revised since previously published.

.. Data is not available.

Table 5 shows 1,678 children left care between 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2019, a decrease of 49 children (3 per cent) compared with the previous year. The number of children leaving care has decreased each year since 2014-15.

During 2018-19, 782 children left care to return home to live with parents, relatives or other persons with parental responsibility with special guardianship orders made for 200 of these children. The number of special guardianship orders made decreased by 7 per cent compared with the previous year. Children returning home accounted for 47 per cent of all children leaving care in 2018-19. A similar proportion has been seen in the last two years but this is a smaller proportion than seen prior to 2017-18. 18 per cent of children leaving care during 2018-19 were adopted, which has been a fairly consistent proportion in recent years.

## Young persons (aged 16 and over) leaving care

Typically, children cease to be looked after the day before their 18th birthday. Some young people may need to be accommodated by the local authority up to their 21st birthday if they are being looked after in a community home which is suitable for children aged 16 and over. In practice these are few in number, and tend to be young persons with severe physical or mental disabilities.

**Table 6: Young persons aged 16 and over leaving care, by age when leaving care and reason for leaving, 2016-17 to 2018-19 (a)(b)**

	2016-17 (r)				2017-18 (r)				2018-19			
	16	17	18 (d)	Total	16	17	18	Total	16	17	18 (d)	Total
Moved into independent living arrangement and no longer looked after	29	126	38	<b>193</b>	13	113	41	<b>167</b>	13	119	58	<b>190</b>
Returned home to live with parents, relatives or other person with parental responsibility (c)	71	64	6	<b>141</b>	45	57	9	<b>111</b>	52	72	12	<b>136</b>
Turned 18 years old and continuing to live with former foster parent(s)	..	42	38	<b>80</b>	..	65	66	<b>131</b>	..	70	47	<b>117</b>
Transferred to care of adult social services (d)	0	19	13	<b>32</b>	0	32	9	<b>41</b>	0	22	17	<b>39</b>
Sentenced to custody	9	16	3	<b>28</b>	8	9	2	<b>19</b>	3	6	0	<b>9</b>
Period of being looked after ceased for any other reason	14	56	133	<b>203</b>	10	57	111	<b>178</b>	17	90	99	<b>206</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>677</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>333</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>647</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>697</b>

Source: Looked after children census

(a) Excludes children looked after in short-term placements. Where a child had separate periods of care only the latest period is counted.

(b) Excludes children who died or where care was taken over by another local authority in the UK.

(c) Includes special guardianship orders made to carers or former foster carers.

(d) One 19 year old has been included in this category for 2016-17 and 2018-19.

.. Data is not applicable.

Table 6 shows 697 young persons aged 16 and over left care between 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2019; 233 (33 per cent) of those leaving were aged 18 or over when they left care. There was a decrease of 50 children (8 per cent) leaving care aged 16 and over, at the time they left care, compared with the previous year.

27 per cent of young persons leaving care moved into independent living arrangements and were no longer looked after; 20 per cent returned home to live with parents, relatives or other person with parental responsibility; and 17 per cent turned 18 years old and continued to live with former foster parent(s) in a When I Am Ready arrangement.



**Table 7: Young persons aged 16 and over leaving care, by age and accommodation at date of ceasing to be looked after, 2016-17 to 2018-19(a)(b)**

	2016-17 (r)				2017-18 (r)				2018-19			
	16	17	18 (c)	Total	16	17	18	Total	16	17	18 (d)	Total
<b>Suitable accommodation</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>613</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>599</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>645</b>
With parents or relatives in suitable accommodation	73	94	44	211	40	73	45	158	53	99	41	193
Ordinary lodgings without formal support	0	54	71	125	7	76	75	158	4	74	52	130
Semi-independent, transitional accommodation	9	48	9	66	5	49	16	70	8	62	39	109
Independent living (d)	7	37	42	86	4	48	41	93	5	37	41	83
Suitable supported lodgings	13	37	29	79	1	43	31	75	4	43	33	80
Other suitable accommodation	1	4	1	6	2	7	9	18	3	10	7	20
Community home or other form of residential or nursing care such as an NHS establishment (c)	0	11	12	23	1	8	7	16	1	9	8	18
Foyers and similar supported accommodation which combines the accommodation with opportunities for education, training or employment	2	10	4	16	2	8	1	11	0	12	0	12
Custody	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Unsuitable accommodation</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>52</b>
Other unsuitable accommodation	7	4	10	21	2	7	3	12	2	16	6	24
In custody	7	15	6	28	9	12	6	27	2	8	0	10
With parents or relatives in unsuitable accommodation	0	2	0	2	0	0	2	2	2	5	0	7
Independent living	0	0	1	1	0	2	0	2	1	3	2	6
Bed and breakfast	4	4	0	8	3	0	1	4	0	0	2	2
Emergency accommodation	0	2	2	4	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1
Residential or nursing care	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Ordinary lodgings without formal support	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>677</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>333</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>647</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>697</b>

Source: Looked after children census

(a) Excludes children looked after in short-term placements. Where a child had separate periods of care only the latest period is counted.

(b) Excludes children who died or where care was taken over by another local authority in the UK.

(c) One 19 year old has been included in this category for 2016-17.

(c) One 19 year old has been included in this category for 2018-19.

(r) The data has been revised since previously published.

Table 7 shows of the 697 young persons aged 16 and over who left care between 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2019, 645 (93 per cent) were in suitable accommodation at the date they ceased to be looked after; the same proportion as in 2017-18.

Just under a third (30 per cent) of those in suitable accommodation were with parents or relatives and 130 (20 per cent) were in ordinary lodgings without formal support. The proportion of those leaving care to live with parents or relatives in suitable accommodation increased by 4 percentage points compared with the previous year from 26 per cent to 30 per cent; whilst the proportion in ordinary lodgings without formal support decreased by 6 percentage points from 26 per cent to 20 per cent.

The number of care leavers in unsuitable accommodation increased by 4 (8 per cent) from 48 to 52 compared with the previous year. 19 per cent of care leavers in unsuitable accommodation were in custody.

## Adoptions of children looked after

An adoption refers to when a child ceases to be looked after on the granting of an adoption order.

**Table 8: Adoptions of children looked after, between 1 April and 31 March, 2013-14 to 2018-19(a)**

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18 (r)	2018-19
<b>Children adopted from care</b>	<b>385</b>	<b>341</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>309</b>
Adopted by former foster carer	41	31	24	23	25
Adopted by others	344	310	291	283	284

Source: SSDA903; Looked after children census

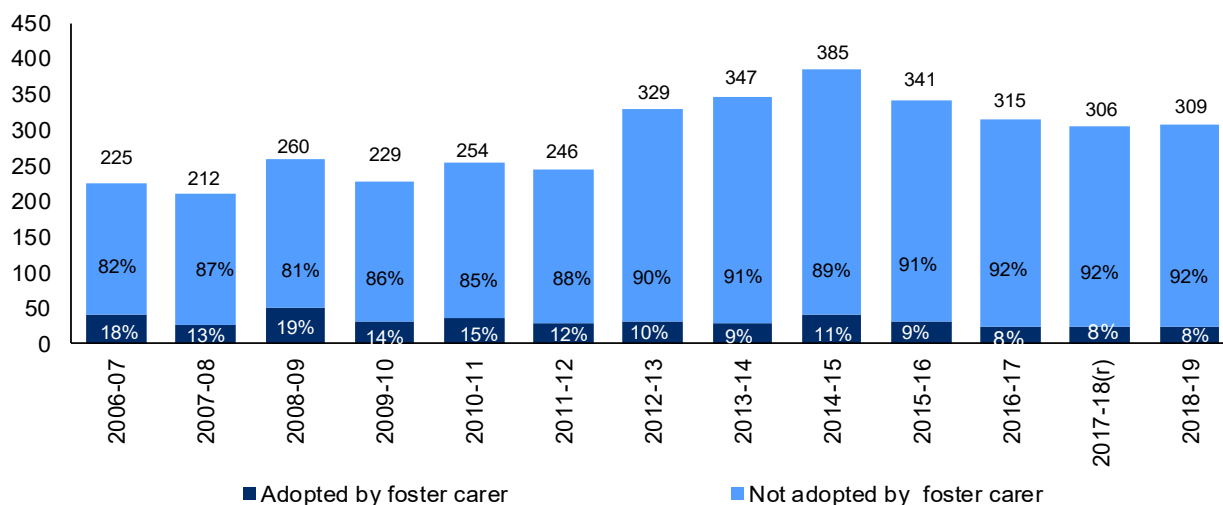
(a) Excluding children looked after in short-term placements. Where a child had separate periods of care only the latest period is counted.

(r) The data has been revised since previously published.

Table 8 shows there were 309 children adopted from care between 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2019. The number of children adopted has been decreasing in recent years but has increased slightly by 3 (1 per cent) compared with the previous year.

Most (81 per cent) of the children adopted during the year were in the 1-4 years age group. The average age of looked after children adopted during the year was 37 months at adoption. Slightly more females than males were adopted (53 per cent compared with 47 per cent).

**Chart 2: Number and percentage of adoptions of children looked after between 1 April and 31 March, 2006-07 to 2018-19**



Source: AD1; Looked after children census

Chart 2 shows 8 per cent of children were adopted by their former foster carer, a proportion that has fallen over the past 10 years but remained consistent over the last three years.

Further information on adoptions of looked after children can be found on [StatsWales](https://www.statswales.gov.wales/).

## Annex

### Placements of looked after children by local authority, 31 March 2018-19 (a)

	Children looked after at		Rate per 10,000 population at		With parents or other parental responsibility		Other placements (b)
	31 March 2019	Change from March 2018	31 March 2019	In foster care placements	responsibility		
Isle of Anglesey	147	+3	109	90	37	20	
Gwynedd	253	+26	108	165	57	31	
Conwy	208	-4	97	144	29	35	
Denbighshire	165	0	85	118	27	20	
Flintshire	239	+22	74	153	49	37	
Wrexham	280	+24	96	187	67	26	
Powys	238	+28	99	169	19	50	
Ceredigion	63	+1	51	50	8	5	
Pembrokeshire	154	+18	64	104	28	22	
Carmarthenshire	183	-10	49	146	17	20	
Swansea	554	+34	117	432	56	66	
Neath Port Talbot	309	-19	110	255	32	22	
Bridgend	381	-3	130	278	57	46	
Vale of Glamorgan	283	+38	103	188	60	35	
Cardiff	899	+69	120	590	142	167	
Rhondda Cynon Taf	674	-2	135	533	60	81	
Merthyr Tydfil	198	+42	155	145	27	26	
Caerphilly	436	+51	114	300	80	56	
Blaenau Gwent	222	-11	163	135	43	44	
Torfaen	416	+52	216	300	92	24	
Monmouthshire	173	+34	98	114	40	19	
Newport	371	+46	106	272	36	63	
<b>Wales</b>	<b>6,846</b>	<b>+439</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>4,868</b>	<b>1,063</b>	<b>915</b>	

Source: Looked after children census

(a) Excluding children looked after in short-term placements.

(b) Residential care home, NHS/Health Trust or other establishment providing medical or nursing care, family centre or mother and baby unit, Youth Offender Institution or prison, whereabouts unknown.

Further local authority level data can be found on [StatsWales](https://www.statswales.gov.wales/).

## Notes

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act came into effect on 6 April 2016. It is the new legal framework that brings together and modernises social services law in Wales. From 6 April 2016 Part 3 of and Schedule 2 to the Children Act 1989 no longer applies to local authorities in Wales. The rights and duties under those provisions have been incorporated into the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act, in the main, into Part 6 of and Schedule 1 to the 2014 Act.

From 2016-17 individual level data in relation to looked after children is collected through the Looked after children census. This replaced the datasets Looked After Children (SSDA903), Adoptions of looked after children (AD1), Educational qualifications of care leavers (OC1) and Care leavers on their 19th birthday (OC3). Outcomes for care leavers on their 19th birthday are no longer captured.

These statistics are published as experimental statistics. More information on the designation of these statistics can be found in the [correspondence between the Welsh Government and the Office for Statistical Regulation](#).

## Future developments

Data requirements in relation to measuring the impact that the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act is having on people who need care and support and carers who need support are currently being reviewed. It is intended that new data requirements will be launched in April 2020.

## 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 and coherence.

### Relevance

The statistics are used both within and outside the Welsh Government to monitor children's social services trends and as a baseline for further analysis of the underlying data. More specifically they provide a summary in relation to children looked after by local authorities under Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act. These statistics are used in a variety of ways. Some of the key users are:

- ministers and the Members Research Service in the National Assembly for Wales;
- the Health and Social Services Group in the Welsh Government;
- other areas of the Welsh Government;
- local authorities;
- the third sector (e.g. charities);
- 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;
- 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;
- to inform the national policy development;
- local authority analysis;
- to inform the Care Inspectorate Wales;
- to model the financial consequences of changes in the population or the care system;
- to assist in research on looked after children.

### **Accuracy**

This is the third year of collecting the data from the [Looked after children census](#) following the introduction of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act. The collection adheres closely to the definition of looked after children provided in law. In a small number of instances where there is scope for confusion, guidance on how to interpret the term 'looked after' for statistical purposes is given. This is to achieve consistency in data so that there is comparability between local authorities' figures.

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. Data adhere to the national standards and guidance, thus ensuring coherence within and across organisations. Local authorities are expected to comply with the guidance notes for completion that accompany the data collection form.

The figures in this release reflect the final position of the 2018-19 data year and are correct as at 31 March 2019. For the children looked after data, information which may be inconsistent with that already held in a previous year about the child is checked, in particular details submitted for the beginning of the current year which do not match those at the end of the previous year.

Occasionally, revisions can occur due to errors in our statistical processes or when a data supplier notifies the Welsh Government that they have submitted incorrect information. In these cases, a judgment is made as to whether the change is significant enough to publish a revised statistical release. Where changes are not deemed to be significant, figures will be corrected if they appear in future releases. However minor amendments to the figures may be reflected in the StatsWales tables prior to the next release.

### **Timeliness and punctuality**

The Data Collection team within the Welsh Government collected data, for the year 2018-19 i.e. from 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019, between May and June 2019. Data in this release refers

to final 2018-19 data. Once submitted data has been validated, this release is drafted and published as soon as possible. This release was published in October 2019, meeting the planned date of publication.

### **Accessibility and clarity**

This statistical release is pre-announced and then published on the Statistics and Research 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.

### **Comparability and coherence**

2018-19 is the third year of collecting and reporting on data derived from the [Looked after children census return](#). Data on looked after children was previously collected through the SSDA903 and associated returns.

This statistical release largely provides figures at the Wales level. Further information for local authorities is available on [StatsWales](#). To ensure that the national data are comparable and consistent, local authorities are expected to comply with the guidance notes for completion that accompany the data collection form. When comparing figures for different local authorities, relevant factors such as the size of the local authority population should be taken into account. [Local authority population estimates](#) by age can be found on StatsWales.

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.

[England's Children looked after publication](#) (Department for Education).

[Scotland's Children's social work statistics](#) (Scottish Government).

[Northern Ireland's Children in care publication](#) (Northern Ireland Executive)

### **Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG)**

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The Act puts in place seven well-being goals for Wales. These are for a more equal, prosperous, resilient, healthier and globally responsible Wales, with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. Under section (10)(1) of the Act, the Welsh Ministers must (a) publish indicators ("national indicators") that must be applied for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the Well-being goals, and (b) lay a copy of the national indicators before the National Assembly. The 46 national indicators were laid in March 2016.

Information on the indicators, along with narratives for each of the well-being goals and associated technical information is available in the [Well-being of Wales report](#).

Further information on the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#).

The statistics included in this release could also provide supporting narrative to the national indicators and be used by public services boards in relation to their local well-being assessments and local well-being plans.

## Further details

The document is available at: <https://gov.wales/children-looked-after-local-authorities>

Data at local authority level is available on [StatsWales](#).

Codes of practice and statutory guidance issued under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act are available at: [Codes of practice and statutory guidance](#)

Information on the costs to local authorities of services provided for children are produced by the Welsh Government from local authority financial returns. Detailed figures are available on [StatsWales](#).

Information on the characteristics and educational outcomes of all children receiving care and support is available at: [Children Receiving Care and Support Census](#)

## Next update

October 2020 (provisional)

## We want your feedback

We welcome any feedback on any aspect of these statistics which can be provided by email to [stats.pss@gov.wales](mailto:stats.pss@gov.wales)

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