

SDR 144/2008

11 September 2008

Adoptions, Outcomes and Placements for Children Looked After by Local Authorities: Year Ending 31 March 2008

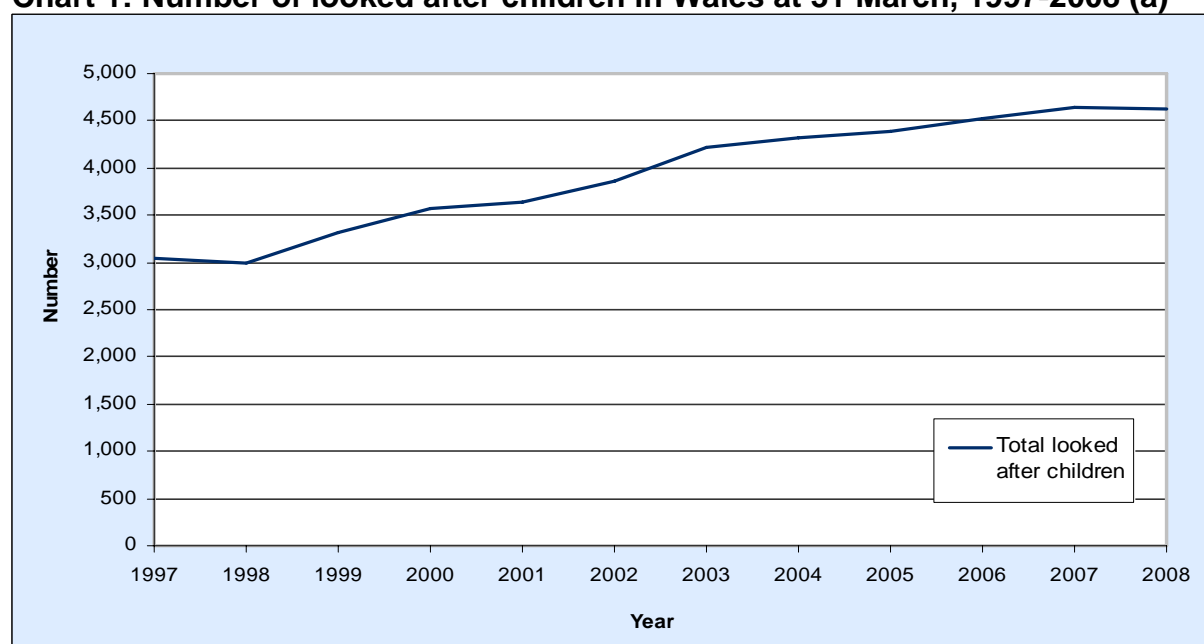
This National Statistics First Release presents figures about children looked after by local authorities in Wales. The Release summarises the results for Wales. Data cover the year 1 April to 31 March or the position at 31 March.

Full details, with information for individual local authorities, are published today on the internet by the Local Government Data Unit ~ Wales (Data Unit) in partnership with the Welsh Assembly Government. The data was supplied to the Data Unit by each of the 22 local authorities in Wales. The data and definitions are published on the Data Unit's website: <http://dissemination.dataunitwales.gov.uk>

Summary of main findings for the year ending 31 March 2008:

- 4,807 children were looked after at 31 March 2008, 77 less than on 31 March 2007, a decrease of 2%. 174 children were looked after under an agreed series of short-term placements. Excluding these children, the total fell by 0.2% from 4,642 in 2007 to 4,633 in 2008. Chart 1 illustrates the number of looked after children over the last decade (excluding children in short-term placements). The remainder of the figures in this release refer to the looked after children who were not in short-term placements.

Chart 1: Number of looked after children in Wales at 31 March, 1997-2008 (a)



Source: SSDA903

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

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Table 1: Placements of looked after children (a)

	2006	2007	2008
Children looked after at 31 March	4,529	4,642	4,633
Number by placement:			
in foster care placements	3,353	3,467	3,487
in foster placements inside local authority boundary	2,374	2,392	2,456
in foster placements outside local authority boundary	979	1,075	1,031
in residential placements	228	222	213
placed with own parents or other person with parental responsibility	556	527	532
other placements	392	426	401
Number with three or more placements during the year to 31 March	633	589	510
Percentage with three or more placements during the year to 31 March	14%	13%	11%

Source: SSSDA903

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

3,487 (75%) of the 4,633 children looked after on 31 March 2008 were in foster care placements.

510 (11%) of the 4,633 children had three or more placements during the year.

Table 2: Children starting to be looked after, by need for care (a)

	2006	2007	2008
Children starting to be looked after in the year ending 31 March	1,673	1,537	1,446
Number by category of need:			
abuse or neglect	811	777	753
family in acute stress	269	272	187
other	593	488	506
Percentage by category of need:			
abuse or neglect	48%	51%	52%
family in acute stress	16%	18%	13%
other	35%	32%	35%

Source: SSSDA903

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

The largest category of need for children starting to be looked after in the year to 31 March 2008 was "abuse or neglect" at 52% of the total.

Table 3: Children leaving care, by reason for leaving (a)

	2006	2007	2008
Children leaving care in the year ending 31 March	1,565	1,398	1,426
Number by destination:			
returned home to live with parents, relative or other person with parental responsibility (b)	886	788	684
adopted from care	249	225	212
other	430	385	530
Percentage by destination:			
returned home to live with parents, relative or other person with parental responsibility (b)	57%	56%	48%
adopted from care	16%	16%	15%
other	27%	28%	37%

Source: SSDA903

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

(b) 2007 and 2008 figures include special guardianship orders made to carers or former foster carers

48% of the 1,426 children leaving care in the year to 31 March 2008 returned home to live with parents or other people with parental responsibility while 212 (15%) were adopted from care.

Table 4: Adoptions of looked after children

	2006	2007	2008
Children adopted from care in the year ending 31 March	249	225	212
Number:			
adopted by their former foster carer	37	33	27
adopted by others	212	192	185
Percentage:			
adopted by their former foster carer	15%	15%	13%
adopted by others	85%	85%	87%

Source: AD1

27 (13%) of children adopted from care in the year to 31 March 2008 were adopted by their former foster carers.

Table 5: Educational attainments of looked after children

	2008 (a)
The percentage of looked after children eligible for assessment at the end of Key Stage 2 achieving the Core Subject Indicator, as determined by Teacher Assessment (SCC/035)	38%
The percentage of looked after children eligible for assessment at the end of Key Stage 3 achieving the Core Subject Indicator, as determined by Teacher Assessment (SCC/036)	18%
The average external qualifications point score for 16 year old looked after children, in any local authority maintained learning setting (SCC/037)	123

Source: PM1

(a) The data refers to the 2006-07 school year

In the year ending 31 March 2008, 38% of looked after children who were eligible for assessment at Key Stage 2 achieved the Core Subject Indicator. This is a measure used for schools and refers to achieving a specified level in the core National Curriculum subjects of English or Welsh (first language), Mathematics and Science in combination. The equivalent figure for Key Stage 3 was 18%. The average external qualifications points score for looked after children aged 16 was 123.

Information on Key Stage assessments for all school pupils for 2007 was published by the Statistical Directorate in SDR 145/2007 "National Curriculum Assessments of 7, 11 and 14 Year Olds: Wales, 2007". Information on point scores for all pupils was published in "Schools in Wales: Examination Performance, 2007".

This table for looked after children is based on information collected as part of the local authority performance measurement framework. As these were new indicators for 2007-08, there is no comparable data for previous years.

Table 6: Educational qualifications of care leavers

	2006	2007	2008
Children aged 16 or over who ceased being looked after in the year ending 31 March	382	370	477
Number:			
with at least one GCSE or GNVQ A* to G	181	158	221
with 5 or more GCSEs at grade A* to G	117	95	142
due to sit examinations later after leaving care or unable to sit examinations due to a illness or disability	47	36	45
Percentage:			
with at least one GCSE or GNVQ A* to G	47%	43%	46%
with 5 or more GCSEs at grade A* to G	31%	26%	30%

Source: OC1

In the year to 31 March 2008, 477 children aged 16 or over ceased being looked after and 46% of these children had at least one GCSE or GNVQ grade A* to G; excluding those who were due to sit examinations later or were prevented by illness or disability the figure was 51%.

Table 7: Care leavers on their 19th birthday

	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>
Care leavers who had their 19 th birthday in the year ending 31 March and were in care on 1 April 3 years before	305	292	324
Number:			
in touch with the local authority	270	264	302
of those in touch, number in education training or employment	107	129	148
in part time education training or employment (a)	-	12	27
in full time education training or employment (a)	-	117	121
Percentage:			
in touch with the local authority	89%	90%	93%
of those in touch, percentage in education training or employment	40%	49%	49%
in part time education training or employment (a)	-	9%	18%
in full time education training or employment (a)	-	91%	82%

Source: OC3

(a) Data not available for 2006

Local authorities were in touch with 93% of care leavers who had been in care on 1 April 2005 and had their 19th birthday in the year ending 31 March 2008, and 49% of these young people were in full or part time education, training or employment.

Glossary

"Looked after" is the term used in the Children Act 1989 Act to describe all children who are the subject of a care order, or who are provided with accommodation on a voluntary basis for more than 24 hours.

"Special guardianship orders" (SGO) were introduced by the Adoption and Children Act 2002 section 144(4) which amended the Children Act 1989. A special guardianship order gives the special guardian parental responsibility for the child. Unlike adoption, under a SGO the parents remain the child's parents and retain parental responsibility, though their ability to exercise their parental responsibility is extremely limited.

"Need for care" or "Category of need" is the main reason why a child is being provided with services.

"Short term placement" is the term used to describe children who are subject to short-term break agreements. These children normally live at home, but are accommodated by a local authority in a pattern of short periods of care in order to give their parents (or guardians) some "respite" from the normal duties of looking after a child.

External Points Score - Approved external qualifications are listed under section 99 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000, for the purposes of section 96 of that Act. A complete list of the approved external qualifications can be found on the [Learning Wales website](#). Points are allocated according to the equivalencies detailed on the [Open Qualifications database](#).

Core Subject Indicator - Achieving a specified level in the core National Curriculum subjects of English or Welsh (first language), Mathematics and Science in combination.

Achieving the Key Stage 2 Core Subject Indicator means achieving level 4 or above in the core National Curriculum subjects of English or Welsh (first language), Mathematics and Science in combination.

Achieving the Key Stage 3 Core Subject Indicator means achieving level 5 or above the core National Curriculum subjects of English or Welsh (first language), Mathematics and Science in combination.

General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE)

General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ)

SCC - Social Care - Children's

SSDA 903 - Statistical return on children looked after

AD1 - Statistical return on adoptions of looked after children

OC1 - Statistical return on educational qualifications of care leavers

OC3 - Statistical return on care leavers on their 19th birthday

PM1 - Performance Management - Children's services

Data collection and Quality

Information on the number of looked after children was collected using two sources for the financial year 1 April to 31 March. As well as collecting individual child level data on looked after children through the SSDA 903 return, the Performance Management (PM1) return collected aggregated figures for local authorities in order to calculate local authority performance indicators. The data in this release is derived from the SSDA 903, AD1, OC1 and OC3 returns collected by the Data Unit using an online secure data transfer system called 'Emyr'. This methodology of data collection has improved the quality and timeliness of the data.

Data regarding educational qualifications of care leavers: there were 9 unknown qualifications records (OC1's) for the period 1 April 2006 to 31 March 2007.

Further information

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

<http://www.wales.gov.uk/statistics>

The full subject dataset for this year is published on the Local Government Data Unit ~ Wales website at:

<http://dissemination.dataunitwales.gov.uk>

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