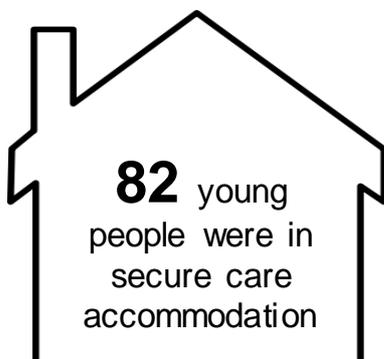
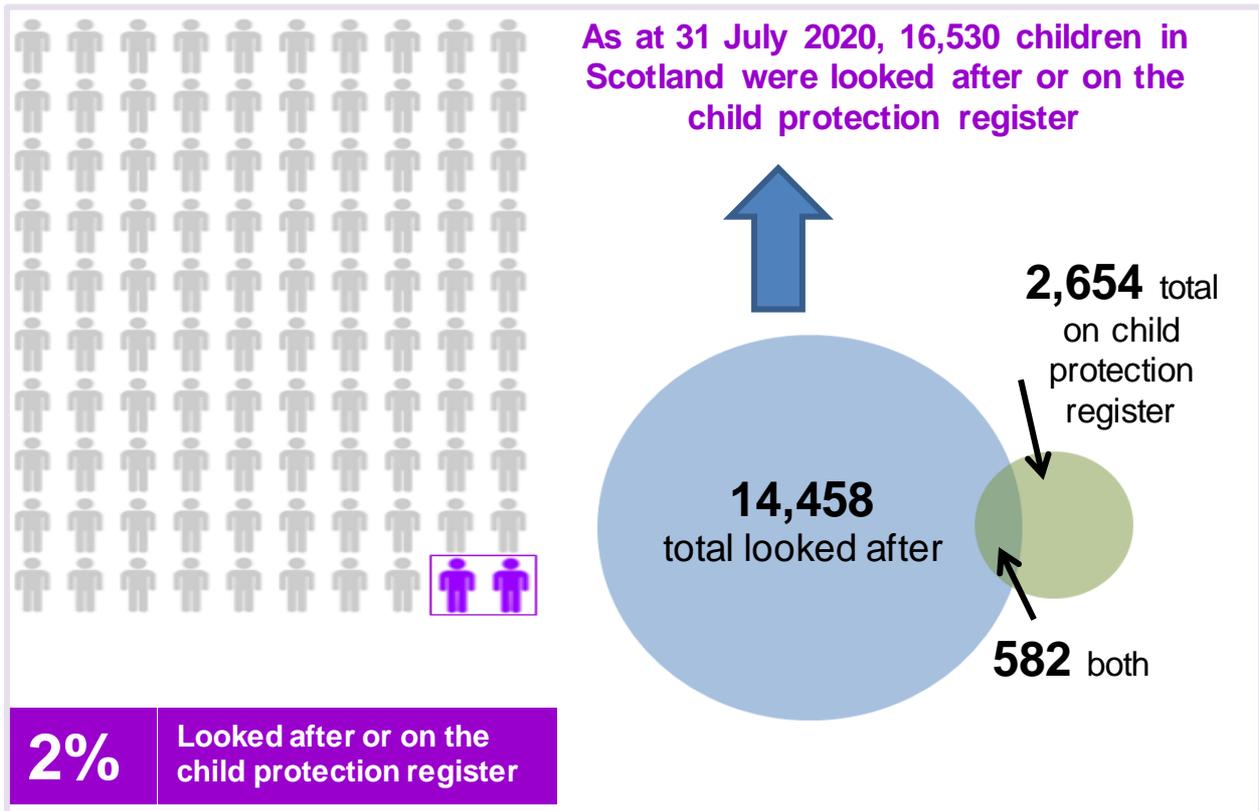


# CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SKILLS

## Children's Social Work Statistics Scotland, 2019-20



### Comparisons with 2018-19:

- 1%** increase in number of children looked after
- 3%** increase in number of children on child protection register
- 3** more young people, on average, during the year in secure care accommodation

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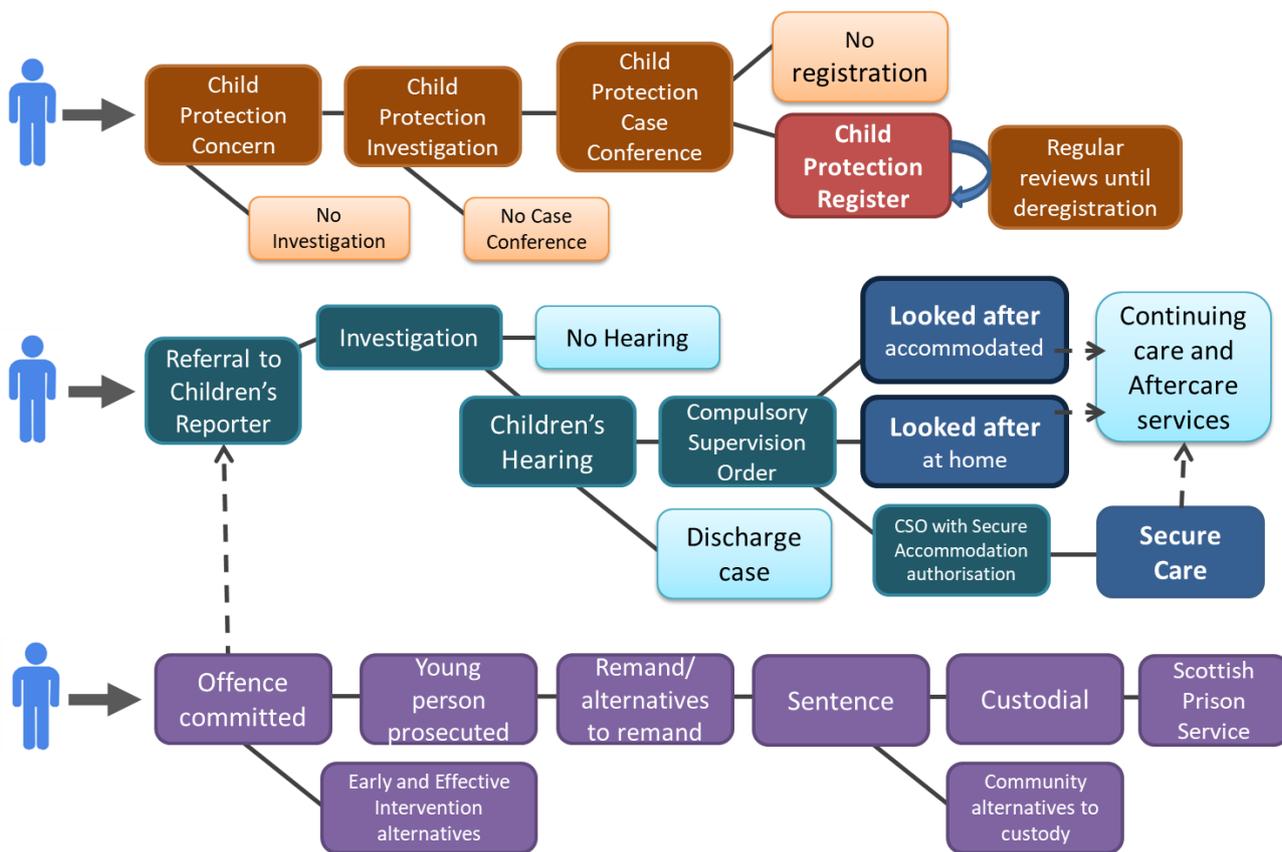
# Introduction

## What do these statistics include?

We present information collected from local authorities and secure units on children and young people, who were formally looked after; under child protection measures; or in secure care at some point between 1 August 2019 and 31 July 2020.

## How do children come to be counted in these figures?

There are a number of ways that a child may become looked after, on the child protection register or in secure care. Children may be referred to the Children’s Reporter<sup>1</sup>, become voluntarily looked after or come via the criminal justice system. The diagram below gives a high-level illustration of the main routes by which children would be included.



<sup>1</sup> Most [referrals to the Children's Reporter](#) come from partner agencies, such as the police, social work and education. However, anyone can make a referral, including parents, family members, carers or members of the public.

## Revisions of 2018-19 data

Each year, data for Children Looked After, Child Protection and Eligibility for Aftercare are collected for the period 1 August to 31 July from all local authorities in Scotland.

It is normal practice that, during the child protection data collection process, local authorities revise their data for the previous year. This report reflects those updates provided by all local authorities for 2018-19.

Also, in this year's report, figures on the number of young people eligible for aftercare services does not include those in continuing care. This revised method has also been applied to 2018-19 figures included in the supporting tables.

### Child protection

The total number of children on the child protection register was previously reported to be 2,599 at the 31<sup>st</sup> July 2019. The revised figure in this report is 2,580.

### Eligible for aftercare

The total number of young people eligible for aftercare services on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2019 was previously reported as 6,650. This figure has been revised to 6,492.

## Effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on these statistics

Statistics for the year 2019-20 in this report refer to the period from 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020. Therefore, annual figures for 2019-20 are affected by any impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on social work practices, from March 2020.

Weekly data monitoring the impacts of the pandemic on vulnerable children and families, and how services were responding, have been collected and published<sup>2</sup> by Scottish Government since April 2020.

To illustrate the impact of the pandemic on these figures, this report includes time series charts showing patterns by month within each of the last two years, in:

- children becoming looked after
- children ceasing to be looked after
- children registered on the child protection register
- children deregistered from the child protection register

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<sup>2</sup> [Vulnerable Children and Adult Protection - SG Education Analytical Services: Learning Analysis | Tableau Public](#)

## Children Looked After



**The total number of children looked after** has increased for the first year after seven years of consecutive decline.



The number of children starting to become looked after **decreased by 9%**, compared with 2019.



The number of children ceasing to be looked after **decreased by 18%**, compared with 2019.

This section presents data on looked after children from 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020. This is referred to as 2020 for ease of reporting, with 2018-19 referred to as 2019, and so on.

Local authorities have a responsibility to provide support to certain children and young people, known as 'looked after children'. A child may become looked after for a number of reasons, including neglect, abuse, complex disabilities requiring specialist care, or involvement in the youth justice system.

At 31 July 2020, there were 14,458 looked after children – an increase of 196 (1%) from 2019. This is the first year of increase after seven consecutive years of decline, falling from a peak of 16,248 in 2012 to 14,262 in 2019. The number of children ceasing to be looked after each year was consistently greater than the number becoming looked after between 2012 and 2019. However, the number of children ceasing to be looked after fell by 18% from 4,068 in 2019 to 3,325 in 2020. The number of children becoming looked after also fell – by 9% from 3,824 in 2019 to 3,490 in 2020. This figure was higher than the number of children ceasing to be looked after, as shown in the supporting publication tables 1.3, 1.4 and Charts 2a-2b.

### Placement type

There are several types of care setting in which looked after children or young people could be looked after, including:

- at home (where a child is subject to a Compulsory Supervision Order and continues to live in their usual place of residence)
- in kinship care (where they are placed with friends or relatives)
- with prospective adopters
- foster care
- residential unit or school
- a secure unit

Table 1.1 and Chart 1 show the proportion of children being looked after at home has decreased over the last decade, with 25% of the total in this group in 2020 compared to 39% in 2010. Increasing proportions of children are being looked after away from home in community settings. In particular, 4,456 children were placed formally with kinship carers in 2020 (31% of the total in 2020 compared with 20% in 2010). There has also been an increase in the proportion of children placed with foster carers – up from 30% in 2010 to 33% in 2020 – and this remains the most common accommodation type for looked after children. The proportion of children looked after in residential care settings remained static at around 10% of the overall total.

**Table 1.1: Number of children looked after at 31 July, in each type of accommodation<sup>(1)</sup>**

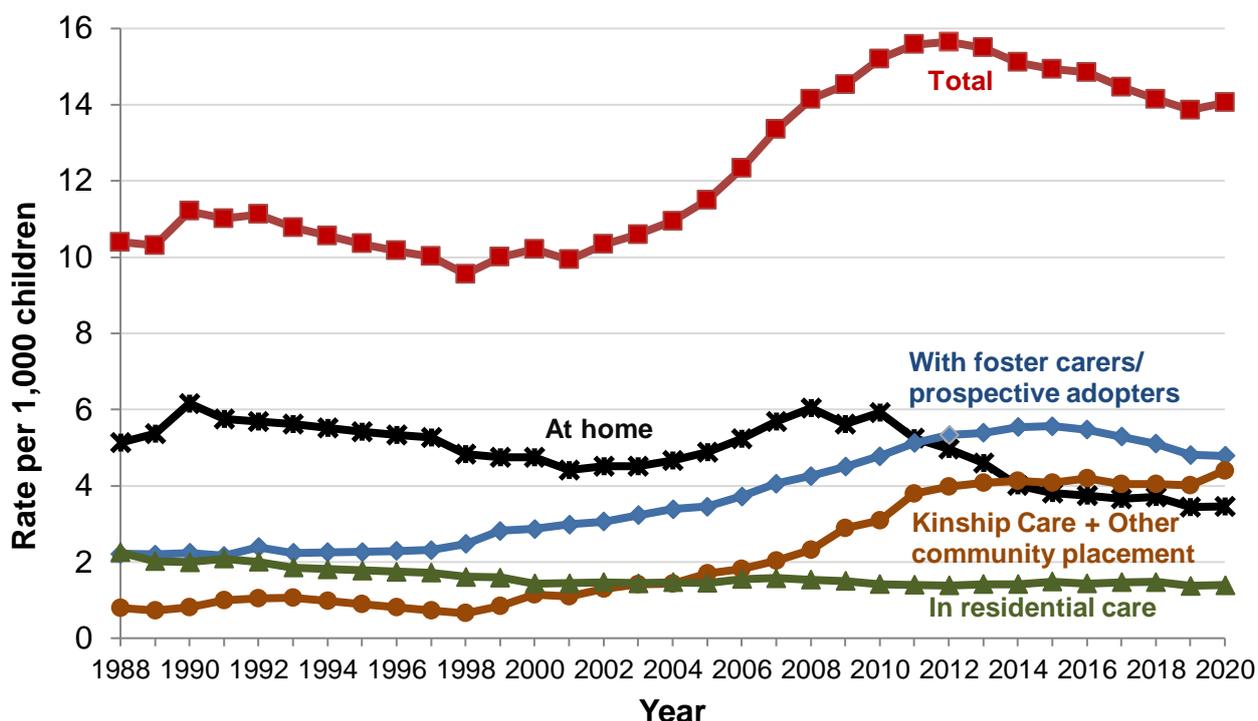
	2010	2019	2020
<b>In the community</b>	<b>14,412</b>	<b>12,814</b>	<b>13,022</b>
At home with parents	6,193	3,569	3,563
With Kinship Carers: friends/relatives	3,172	4,175	4,456
With Foster Carers provided by LA	3,651	3,335	3,315
With Foster Carers purchased by LA	1,046	1,463	1,429
With prospective adopters	299	212	185
In other community	51	60	74
<b>Residential Accommodation</b>	<b>1,480</b>	<b>1,448</b>	<b>1,436</b>
In local authority home	620	581	556
In voluntary home	82	127	130
In residential school	471	344	329
In secure accommodation	82	63	59
Crisis care	17	0	0
In other residential <sup>(1)</sup>	208	333	362
<b>Total looked after children</b>	<b>15,892</b>	<b>14,262</b>	<b>14,458</b>

(1) Information on the number of children looked after by accommodation type is available back to 1988 in chart 1 data of the spreadsheet version of the associated downloadable publication tables

(2) 'In other community' is a category that captures those people in community placements outside those listed, such as supported accommodation

(3) The bulk of the 'other residential' placements are private/independent residential placements for young people with complex needs

**Chart 1: Children Looked after per 1,000 children under 18, by Accommodation 1987-2020**



## Care Plan

When children become looked after, a care plan should be produced by the local authority. The care plan should include detailed information about the child’s care, education and health needs, as well as the responsibilities of the local authority, the parents, and the child. A care plan is considered ‘current’ if it has been produced or reviewed in the past 12 months.

Table 1.2 shows that 96% of the 14,458 children who were looked after at the end of July 2020 had a current care plan, up from 94% in 2019. The proportion with a current care plan was 96% among those looked after at home and those looked after away from home. Of those looked after away from home, the proportion with a current care plan was slightly higher among those placed with foster carers (97%) or in residential care (97%), compared to those with kinship carers (95%) or with prospective adopters/ other community placement (93%).

**Table 1.2: Children looked after with and without a current care plan, at 31 July 2020<sup>(1)</sup>**

	At home	Away from home	Away from home - breakdown by category				Total
			With Kinship Carers: friends/relatives	With Foster Carers	With prospective adopters/ other community	In Residential Care	
With current care plan	3,406	10,479	4,230	4,619	242	1,388	13,885
Without current care plan	157	416	226	125	17	48	573
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,563</b>	<b>10,895</b>	<b>4,456</b>	<b>4,744</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>1,436</b>	<b>14,458</b>
With current care plan	96%	96%	95%	97%	93%	97%	96%
Without current care plan	4%	4%	5%	3%	7%	3%	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

(1) Some children without a current care plan may have one in progress on this date; local recording may differ with regard to when a care plan is recorded as being in place.

## Children starting and ceasing to be looked after

The increase in total numbers being looked after is because fewer children or young people left care than started it.

As shown in table 1.3, 3,490 episodes of care began between 1 August 2019 and 31 July 2020. This represents a 9% decrease from the 3,824 episodes of care beginning in 2019.

**Table 1.3: Number of children starting to be looked after, by age<sup>(1,2)</sup>**

Age	Number			Percentage		
	2010	2019	2020	2010	2019	2020
Under 1	650	565	531	13%	15%	15%
1-4	1,146	891	815	24%	23%	23%
5-11	1,463	1,137	1,060	30%	30%	30%
12-15	1,555	1,128	922	32%	29%	26%
16-17	45	102	158	1%	3%	5%
18-21	0	*	*	0%	*	*
Not known	0	*	*	0%	*	*
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,859</b>	<b>3,824</b>	<b>3,490</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

(1) A child may start to be looked after more than once in a year and so may be counted more than once.

(2) Table cells containing \* have been suppressed to maintain confidentiality

Table 1.3 also shows a reduction in the proportion of children becoming looked after aged 12-15, from 32% in 2010 to 26% in 2020. The longer term pattern of children starting to be looked after at younger ages than this is offset by a slightly increased

proportion of children becoming looked after aged 16-17 - up to 5% in 2020 from 1% in 2010. Fifteen percent of children starting episodes of care were less than one year old, increasing from thirteen percent in 2010.

There were more boys than girls starting episodes of care in 2020 – 55% of those starting episodes of care were boys compared with 45% girls (the Scotland-wide population of under eighteens was 51% male in 2019<sup>3</sup>). This is the most pronounced gender split of those starting episodes of care since 2007, during which period the proportion of those starting episodes of care who were boys has ranged from 51% to 55%.

[Table 1.4](#) shows the number of episodes of care which ceased, by length of time looked after. There were 3,325 episodes of care which ceased between 1 August 2019 and 31 July 2020, a decrease of 18% from the previous year.

The length of time for which children ceasing to be looked after had been looked after remained similar between 2019 and 2020. However, when compared with 2010, there are a higher proportion of children who had been looked after for more than five years, and a lower proportion who had been looked after for under one year.

**Table 1.4: Number of children ceasing to be looked after, by length of time looked after<sup>(1)</sup>**

Length of time looked after	Number			Percentage		
	2010	2019	2020	2010	2019	2020
Under 6 weeks	342	259	264	8%	6%	8%
6 weeks to under 6 months	349	321	301	8%	8%	9%
6 months to under 1 year	764	543	400	17%	13%	12%
1 year to under 3 years	1,811	1,474	1,184	40%	36%	36%
3 years to under 5 years	672	643	496	15%	16%	15%
5 years and over	566	828	680	13%	20%	20%
Not known	0	0	0	0%	0%	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,504</b>	<b>4,068</b>	<b>3,325</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

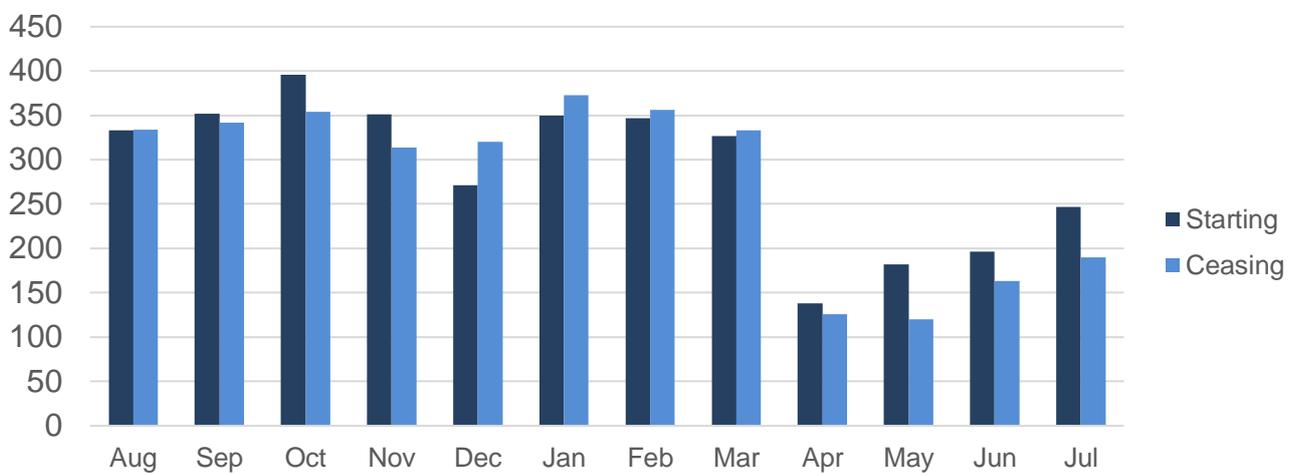
(1) A child may cease to be looked after more than once during the year and will be counted once for each episode of care ending.

[Charts 2a](#) and [2b](#) show the pattern of children becoming and ceasing to be looked after by month within each of the last two years. In 2018-19, the number of children ceasing to be looked after was lower than the number of children becoming looked after in only two out of twelve months, with no clear pattern emerging over the year

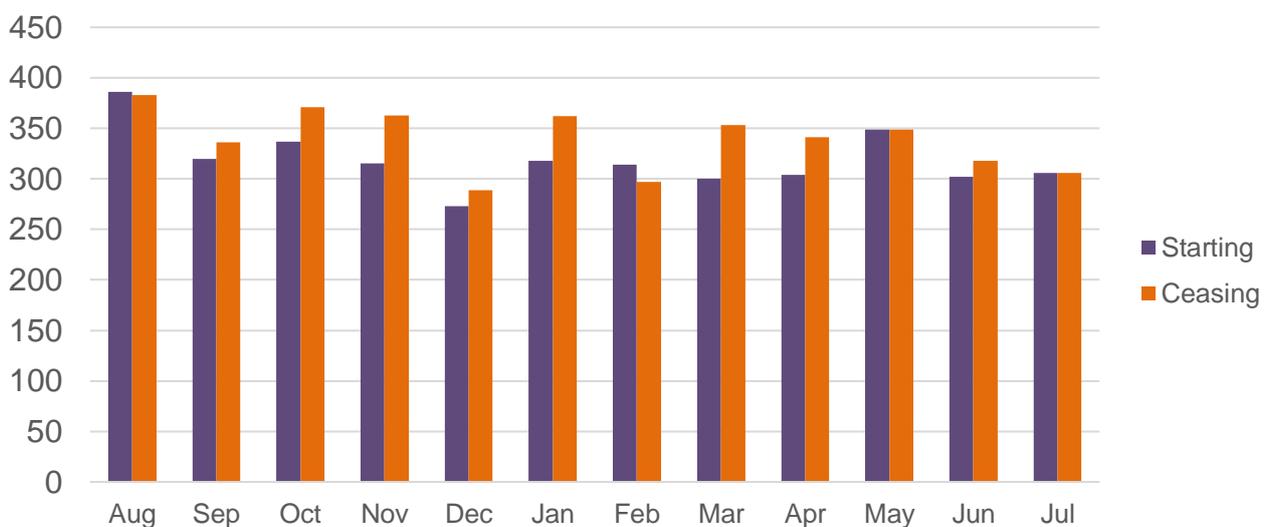
<sup>3</sup> [Mid-2019 Population Estimates Scotland | National Records of Scotland \(nrscotland.gov.uk\)](https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk)

except lower numbers of cases in December. In 2019-20, the pattern of more children ceasing to be looked after reversed at the beginning of the year, but again with no clear pattern until a step change from April 2020 – the first full month of the COVID-19 pandemic. From April to July 2020, the numbers of children becoming and ceasing to be looked after were considerably lower than earlier in the year, although the figures rose steadily throughout those months. While from 1 August 2019 to 31 March 2020, the number of children starting (2,727) and ceasing (2,726) to be looked after was almost identical, there was a clear difference from April 2020 onwards (763 becoming looked after; 599 ceasing to be looked after).

**Chart 2a: Number of Children Starting and Ceasing to be Looked After by month, 2019-20**



**Chart 2b: Number of Children Starting and Ceasing to be Looked After by month, 2018-19**



When a child ceases being looked after, a destination is recorded ([Table 1.5](#)). This is the third year that Kinship Care Order and Continuing Care were included as destination categories in the Looked After Children data collection. A Kinship Care Order is a court order that confers all or part of parental responsibilities and rights to a friend or relative of the child and can be a trigger for receipt of kinship care assistance. More information on Continuing Care is available in the [Continuing Care](#) section.

Although most children go home to their biological parents when they cease to be looked after, the proportion has declined from 62% in 2010 to 54% in 2020. A further 16% went to live in kinship care with friends or relatives or left care through a Kinship Care Order in 2020. The proportion of children leaving care due to being adopted was 6% in 2020, down 1 percentage point from 2019. The majority of adoptions (73%) are of children aged under five years old, as shown in Additional Table 1.9. There is a much more even spread of ages of young people leaving care to go home or to live with friends and relatives.

**Table 1.5: Number of children ceasing to be looked after by destination<sup>(1)</sup>**

Destination after leaving care	Number			Percentage		
	2010	2019	2020	2010	2019	2020
Home with (biological) parents	2,794	2,365	1,807	62%	58%	54%
Kinship carers: Friends/relatives <sup>(1)</sup>	532	563	481	12%	14%	14%
Kinship Care Order <sup>(2)</sup>	-	70	53	-	2%	2%
Former foster carers <sup>(1)</sup>	84	110	85	2%	3%	3%
Continuing Care <sup>(2)</sup>	-	167	229	-	4%	7%
Adoption	218	265	192	5%	7%	6%
Supported accommodation / own tenancy	257	223	245	6%	5%	7%
Other <sup>(3)</sup>	303	281	202	7%	7%	6%
Not known	316	24	31	7%	1%	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,504</b>	<b>4,068</b>	<b>3,325</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

(1) A child may cease to be looked after more than once during the year and will be counted once for each episode of care ending.

(2) New destination categories of 'continuing care' and 'kinship care order' were added in 2018. Children who left care for these destinations in previous years were mostly recorded in the friends/relatives category for 'kinship care order' and the former foster carers category for 'continuing care', which partly explains the decrease in these 2 categories in 2018.

(3) "Other" includes residential care, homeless, in custody and other destination.

## Pathway Plans

Local authorities have a duty to provide advice, guidance and assistance for young people who at the point of leaving care have reached 16 years of age. This is referred to as 'aftercare services'. Local authorities are required to carry out a

pathway assessment for aftercare services for all currently looked after young people who are over the age of sixteen and every 'compulsorily supported person' (a care leaver who has not yet reached their nineteenth birthday). These young people should be provided with a pathway co-ordinator who assesses their needs and a pathway plan which outlines how the local authority plans to meet the needs of the young person. The pathway assessment should be done within three months of a young person becoming a compulsorily supported person but it is expected that all young people over age 16 will have had their pathway assessment, and will have a completed pathway plan in place as to their future, before they cease to be looked after.

Of those young people who had reached 16 years of age at the time they ceased to be looked after during 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020, 79% (up from 71% in 2019) had a pathway plan and 70% had a pathway co-ordinator ([Table 1.6](#)), an increase from 60% in 2019. Where a young person's final placement type was 'at home' they were less likely to have a pathway plan or a pathway co-ordinator than if the final placement type was 'away from home'. Of young people whose last placement was at home, 68% had a pathway plan and 57% a pathway coordinator, compared with 83% and 74% respectively of those whose final placement type was 'away from home'.

**Table 1.6: Pathway plans and nominated pathway co-ordinators of young people who were at least 16 years of age on the date they ceased to be looked after during 2019-20<sup>(1,2)</sup>**

	Number looked after			Percentage looked after			Away from home - breakdown by category			
	at home	away from home	Total	at home	away from home	Total	With Kinship Carers: friends/relatives	With Foster Carers	With prospective adopters/ other community	In Residential Care
With a pathway plan	200	759	959	68%	83%	79%	182	271	40	266
Without a pathway plan	92	156	248	32%	17%	21%	65	26	5	60
With a pathway co-ordinator	165	675	840	57%	74%	70%	161	228	28	258
Without a pathway co-ordinator	127	240	367	43%	26%	30%	86	69	17	68
<b>Total</b>	<b>292</b>	<b>915</b>	<b>1,207</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>326</b>

(1) Figures include all episodes of ceasing to be looked after beyond 16 years of age (i.e. a child may be counted more than once).

(2) It may be the case that some young people who don't have a relevant pathway plan/coordinator may be receiving similar support from adult services instead.

## Aftercare services

[Table 1.7](#) shows the number of young people eligible for aftercare services by age and the percentage of these young people in receipt of aftercare on 31 July 2020.

From April 2015, aftercare eligibility has been extended to cover all care leavers up to and including people aged 25 where it previously only covered up to their 21st birthday. This extension of the original policy has now reached maturity so age groups entering eligibility for aftercare should broadly equal those sufficiently mature to leave aftercare. Figures for those eligible for aftercare have risen from 4,602 in 2016 to 6,492 in 2019 and increasing further to 7,198 in 2020.

For young people eligible for aftercare, Table 1.7 shows that 57% have taken up these services, in line with the proportion in receipt of aftercare services in 2019. As in 2019, the proportion of eligible young people in receipt of aftercare was highest among those aged 19-21, with 65% of those eligible and aged 19-21 being in receipt of aftercare services (67% in 2019).

**Table 1.7a: Young people eligible for and in receipt of aftercare services by age<sup>(1)</sup>, 2020**

Status	16	17	18	19-21	22+	Total
In receipt of aftercare	177	348	639	1,688	1,278	4,129
Not in receipt of aftercare	199	281	479	926	1,184	3,069
<b>Total eligible for aftercare</b>	<b>377</b>	<b>629</b>	<b>1,118</b>	<b>2,614</b>	<b>2,461</b>	<b>7,198</b>
In receipt of aftercare	47%	55%	57%	65%	52%	57%
Not in receipt of aftercare	53%	45%	43%	35%	48%	43%
<b>Total eligible for aftercare</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

(1) Age on 31 July 2020

**Table 1.7b: Young people eligible for and in receipt of aftercare services by age<sup>(1)</sup>, 2019**

Status	16	17	18	19-21	22+	Total
In receipt of aftercare	200	396	576	1,616	922	3,710
Not in receipt of aftercare	159	222	404	791	1,206	2,782
<b>Total eligible for aftercare</b>	<b>359</b>	<b>618</b>	<b>980</b>	<b>2,407</b>	<b>2,128</b>	<b>6,492</b>
In receipt of aftercare	56%	64%	59%	67%	43%	57%
Not in receipt of aftercare	44%	36%	41%	33%	57%	43%
<b>Total eligible for aftercare</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

(1) Age on 31 July 2019

## Continuing Care

Continuing Care is the continued provision of the accommodation and other assistance that was being provided by the local authority immediately before the young person ceased to be looked after. Only children who cease to be looked after

aged 16 years or over and were looked after away from home are eligible for Continuing Care. Continuing Care has been available to eligible care leavers from April 2015, enabling eligible young people aged 16 or older to stay in the same kinship, foster or residential care placements when they ceased to be looked after. The ‘higher age’ for continuing care eligibility rose annually as part of a roll out strategy. Continuing Care became fully operational in April 2020, allowing all eligible care-leavers to remain in their care setting from age 16 until their 21st birthday.

The data in [Table 1.5](#) shows that 229 children who ceased to be looked after between 1 August 2019 and 31 July 2020 received Continuing Care. Additional data on the population in Continuing Care is collected as part of the above statistics on eligibility for aftercare. [Table 1.8](#) uses that data to show that, in addition to the 229 young people recorded as ceasing to be looked after and staying in Continuing Care, there were an additional 77 young people in a Continuing Care placement, identified in the eligible for aftercare data. Therefore, in total there were 306 young people recorded as being in Continuing Care in 2019-20, up from 286 in 2018-19.

**Table 1.8: Number of children in Continuing Care<sup>(1)</sup>, 2019-20**

	<b>Recorded as ceasing to be looked after with a destination of Continuing Care</b>	<b>Recorded as being in Continuing Care</b>	<b>Total</b>
Number of children	229	77	<b>306</b>

(1) There were 11 additional children recorded as being in Continuing Care in the eligible for aftercare data, but they were also included in the ceasing to be looked after with a destination of Continuing Care figures. They have been omitted from the ‘Recorded as being in continuing care’ figures to avoid double counting.

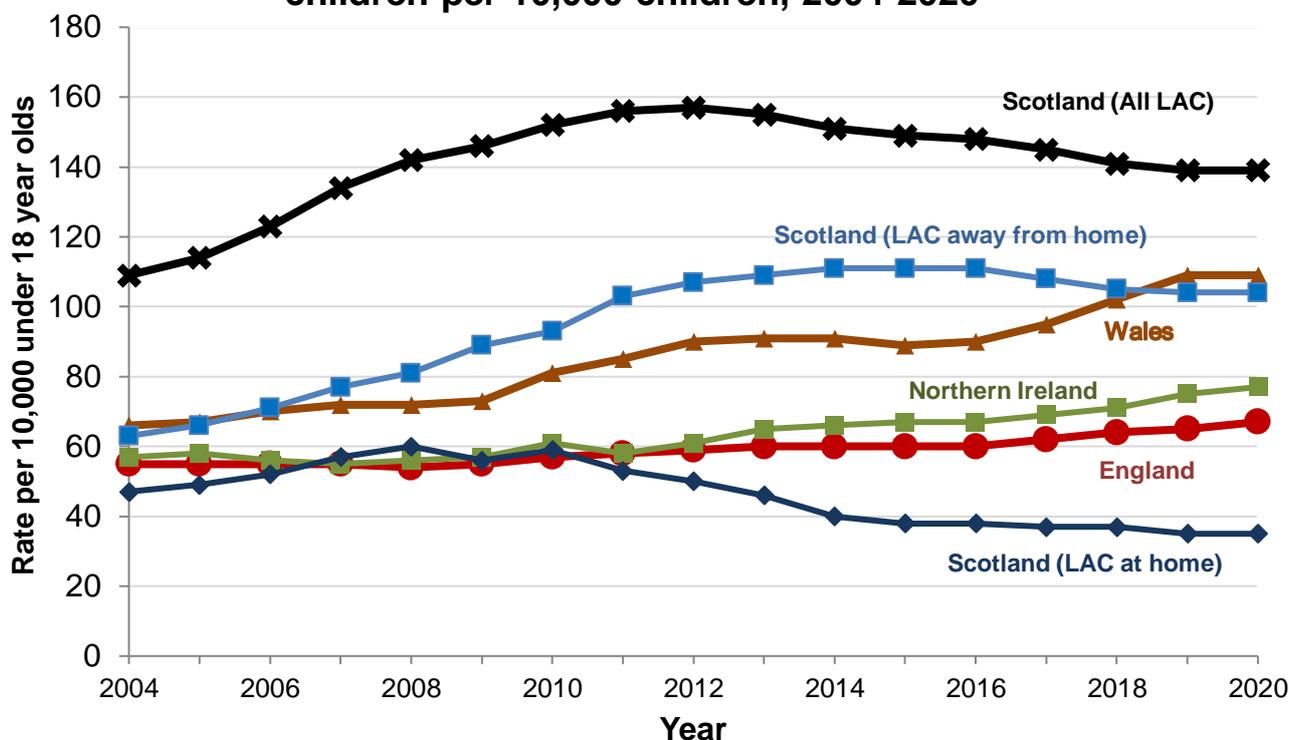
## **Cross-UK looked after comparisons**

The definition of “looked after children” varies across the countries within the UK, which makes cross-UK comparisons difficult. To improve comparability, the Scotland figure at 31 March has been used, rather than the published 31 July figure, as the other nations publish figures as at this date.

Chart 3 gives Scottish figures including a breakdown for children looked after at home and away from home for comparability with the other nations. Scotland has a much higher proportion of children looked after at home than the rest of the UK, a placement which in Scotland requires a supervision order from the Children’s Panel. Overall, Scotland had the highest rate of looked after children in 2020 at 139 children per 10,000 under 18 population. The rate of looked after children in Wales is

lower, at 109 per 10,000, while the rates in Northern Ireland (77 per 10,000) and England (67 per 10,000) are much lower still.

**Chart 3: Cross-UK comparison of rate of looked after children per 10,000 children, 2004-2020**



Links to the cross-UK data underlying the chart can be found in Background Note 1.7. There is more information on the comparability of looked after children data across the UK on the [Scottish Government website](#).

The data used to produce the charts and tables on looked after children in the publication are available in the supporting files accompanying the publication. There are also **additional tables** available in the supporting files.

[Children's social work statistics - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

## Child Protection



**Number of children** on the child protection register increased by 3%, but is lower than the peak in 2014



There was a decrease in the number of child protection registrations and deregistrations in the last year, by 8% and 9% respectively



Most common causes for concern were **emotional and domestic abuse, parental substance misuse, and neglect**

This section presents data on children on the child protection register from 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020. This will be referred to as 2020 for ease of reporting (with 2018-19 referred to as 2019 and so on). Child protection means protecting a child from abuse or neglect. This can either be in cases where abuse or neglect has taken place, or in cases where a likelihood of significant harm or neglect has been identified. The risk of harm or neglect is considered at a Child Protection Case Conference. Where a child is believed to be at risk of significant harm, their name will be added to the child protection register (a child protection registration).

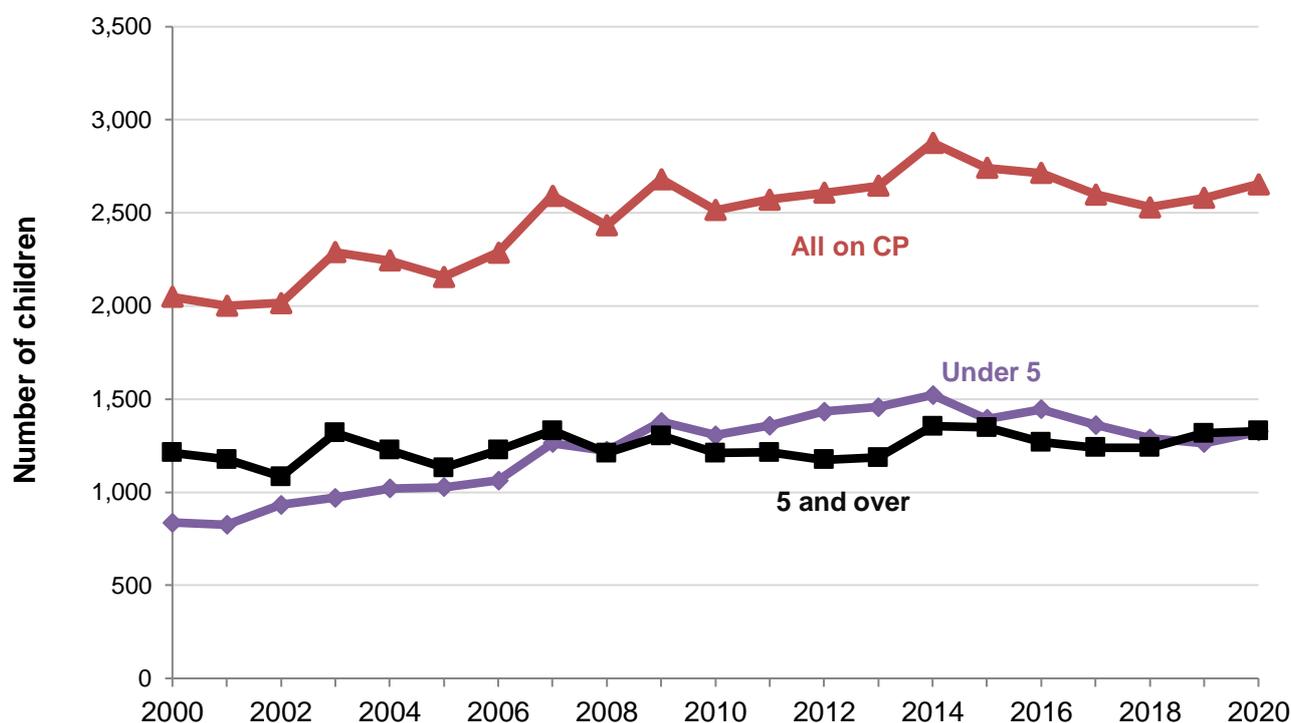
This was the eighth year that child protection data has been collected entirely at individual level.

### Children on the child protection register

The number of children on the child protection register increased from 2,580 in 2019 to 2,654 in 2020 (a 3% increase). There was a general upward trend in the number of children on the child protection register, until 2014 when the number peaked at 2,877. However, the number on the register then reduced in each of the next four years, before rising again slightly in 2019 and 2020.

As is usual, the number of children on the register in 2020 will be revised in next year's publication, as updated information is received from local authorities. This report includes revised figures in 2019 for all local authorities.

**Chart 4 : Number of children on the child protection register by age, 2000-2020<sup>(1)</sup>**



Between 2008 and 2018, there were more children aged under five than five or over on the child protection register. This changed in 2019, with just over half of children being aged five or over. In 2020, again around half of children on the child protection register were aged under five (1,325) and half were 5 or over (1,329).

There is no strong gender pattern among children on the child protection register – 47% were boys, 48% were girls, and 5% were unborn (Table 2.1). Because of a change in how unborn children were recorded by local authorities in 2010, figures for unborn children are only comparable from 2011 onwards.

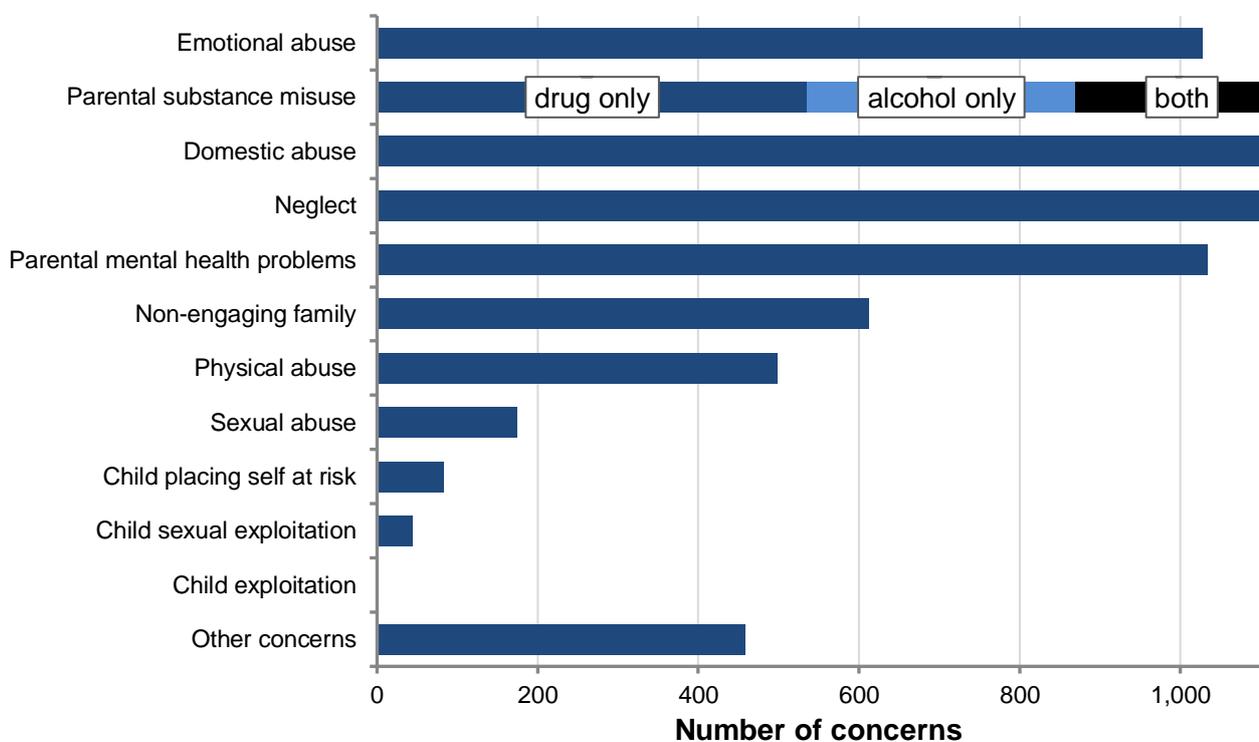
**Table 2.1: Number of children on the child protection register, by gender<sup>(1)</sup>**

	Number			Percentage		
	2011	2019	2020	2011	2019	2020
Male	1,282	1,358	1,260	50%	53%	47%
Female	1,209	1,224	1,271	47%	47%	48%
Unborns	80	97	123	3%	4%	5%
<b>All Children</b>	<b>2,571</b>	<b>2,580</b>	<b>2,654</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

(1) Unborn children include both unborn children with a known gender and those with an unknown gender. Those with a known gender are not included in the boys or girls categories in this table.

At child protection case conferences, multiple concerns can be recorded (rather than just the main category of concern). This means that the total number of concerns is larger than the total number of registrations. For the 2,654 children on the child protection register at 31 July 2020, there were 7,315 concerns at the case conferences at which they were registered – an average of 2.8 concerns per conference. Chart 6 below shows the most common concerns identified were domestic (1,132) and emotional (1,028) abuse, neglect (1,112), and parental substance misuse (1,135). The parental substance misuse category is further broken down by the type of substance misused. Alcohol misuse only was identified as a concern in 333 conferences, drug misuse only in 536 conferences and both in 266 conferences. Figures are shown in full in Additional Table 4.3.

**Chart 5: Concerns identified at the case conferences of children who were on the child protection register, 2020**



## Child protection registrations and deregistrations

The number of registrations to the child protection register decreased by 8% between 2019 and 2020. The proportion of children registered who had never been registered before stayed at 80% in 2020 (Table 2.2). The remaining 20% of registrations on the child protection register were for children who had been registered previously. The largest group of these children was those who had been previously registered 2 years ago or more, with this group making up 11% of all registrations in 2020.

**Table 2.2: Number of registrations following an initial, pre-birth or transfer-in case conference by length of time since previous deregistration**

Time since last deregistration	Number			Percentage		
	2010	2019	2020	2010	2019	2020
Never been registered before	2,971	3,427	3,163	84%	80%	80%
Registered before but time unknown	0	0	0	0%	0%	0%
Less than 6 months	81	99	104	2%	2%	3%
6 months - < 1 year	98	104	81	3%	2%	2%
1 year - < 18 months	67	107	89	2%	2%	2%
18 months - < 2 years	60	96	59	2%	2%	1%
2 years or more	269	456	446	8%	11%	11%
Not known if been registered before	5	6	15	0%	0%	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,551</b>	<b>4,295</b>	<b>3,957</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

(1) This is calculated as a proportion of registrations excluding cases where it is not known if a child had been registered before.

Table 2.3 shows the numbers of deregistrations from the child protection register, by length of time registered and reason for deregistration. There were 3,879 deregistrations from the child protection register in the year to 31 July 2020, a 9% decrease from the 4,245 recorded in 2019. The most common reason for deregistration in 2020 was an improved home situation, recorded in 53% of cases. In almost half (48%) of deregistrations, the child had been on the child protection register for less than 6 months, and in 86% of cases for less than one year.

**Table 2.3: Length of time registered and reason for deregistration from the child protection register<sup>(1)</sup>**

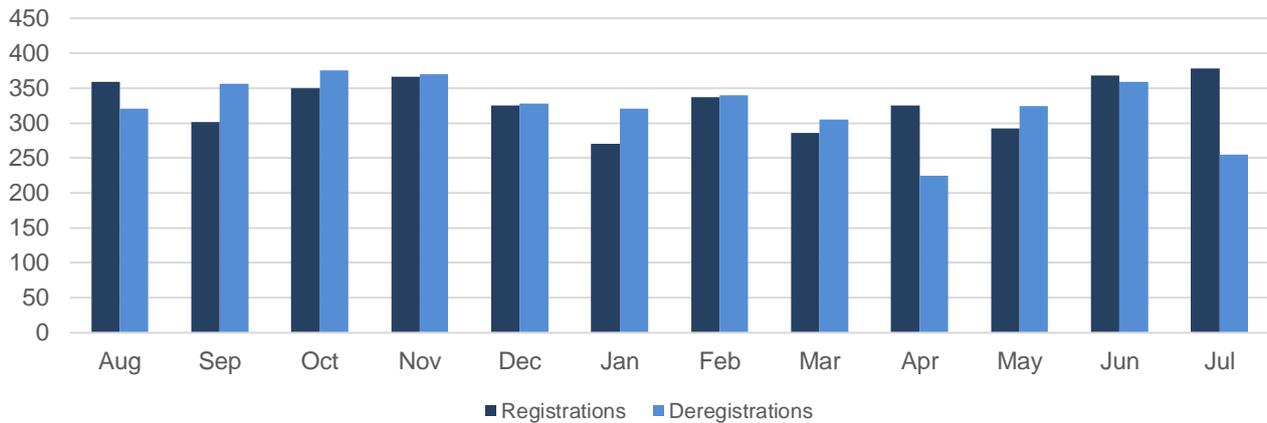
Time since last deregistration	Number			Percentage		
	2010	2019	2020	2010	2019	2020
<b>Length of time registered</b>						
Less than 6 months	1,592	2,149	1,856	42%	51%	48%
6 months to under 1 year	1,483	1,551	1,464	39%	37%	38%
1 year to under 18 months	460	356	362	12%	8%	9%
18 months to under 2 years	168	103	101	4%	2%	3%
2 years or more	123	43	55	3%	1%	1%
No date of registration information	0	43	41	0%	1%	1%
<b>Reason for deregistration</b>		0	0			
Child taken into care & risk reduced	538	500	465	14%	12%	12%
Child with other carers	275	307	312	7%	7%	8%
Child died	*	11	9	*	0%	0%
Removal of perpetrator	81	144	123	2%	3%	3%
Improved home situation	1,220	2,227	2,074	32%	52%	53%
Child automatically deregistered because of age	8	12	6	0%	0%	0%
Child moved away - no continued risk	26	37	30	1%	1%	1%
Other reason	1,674	1,007	860	44%	24%	22%
Reason not known	0	0	0	0%	100%	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,822</b>	<b>4,245</b>	<b>3,879</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

(1) Includes where a child transferred to another local authority and where reason has not been recorded.

Charts [6a](#) and [6b](#) show the number of children being registered on and deregistered from the child protection register in each of the last two years by month. While the number of deregistrations relative to the number of registrations has fluctuated across each of the last two years, and the patterns are broadly similar in each year, the number of deregistrations reached its lowest level over the two years in April 2020 at 225. The second lowest level of deregistrations over the two year period was recorded in July 2020.

In 2019-20, the numbers of registrations and deregistrations were lower than in 2018-19 in the period August to March (prior to the COVID-19 pandemic) by 9% and 7% respectively. For the remainder of the year, the numbers were lower than in the equivalent period the previous year by 5% and 13%.

**Chart 6a: Child Protection registrations and deregistrations by month, 2019-20**



**Chart 6b: Child Protection registrations and deregistrations by month, 2018-19**

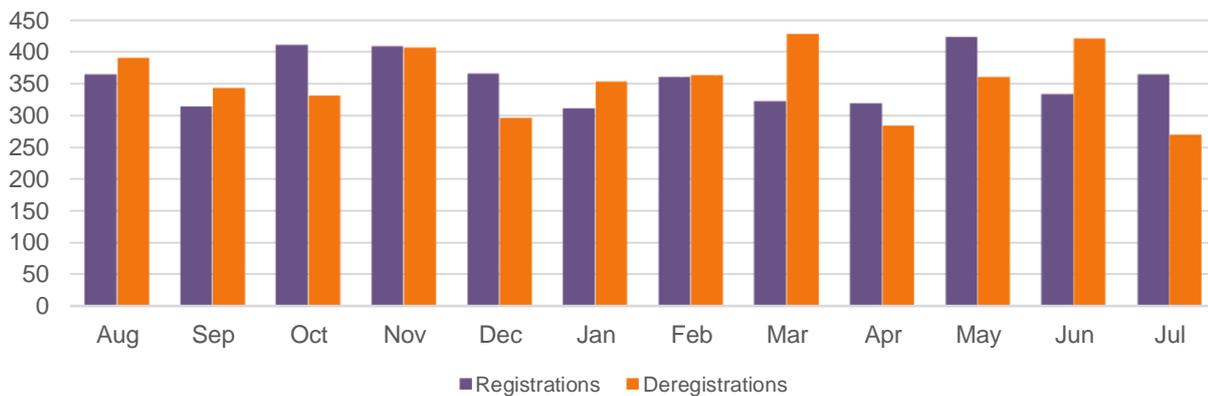
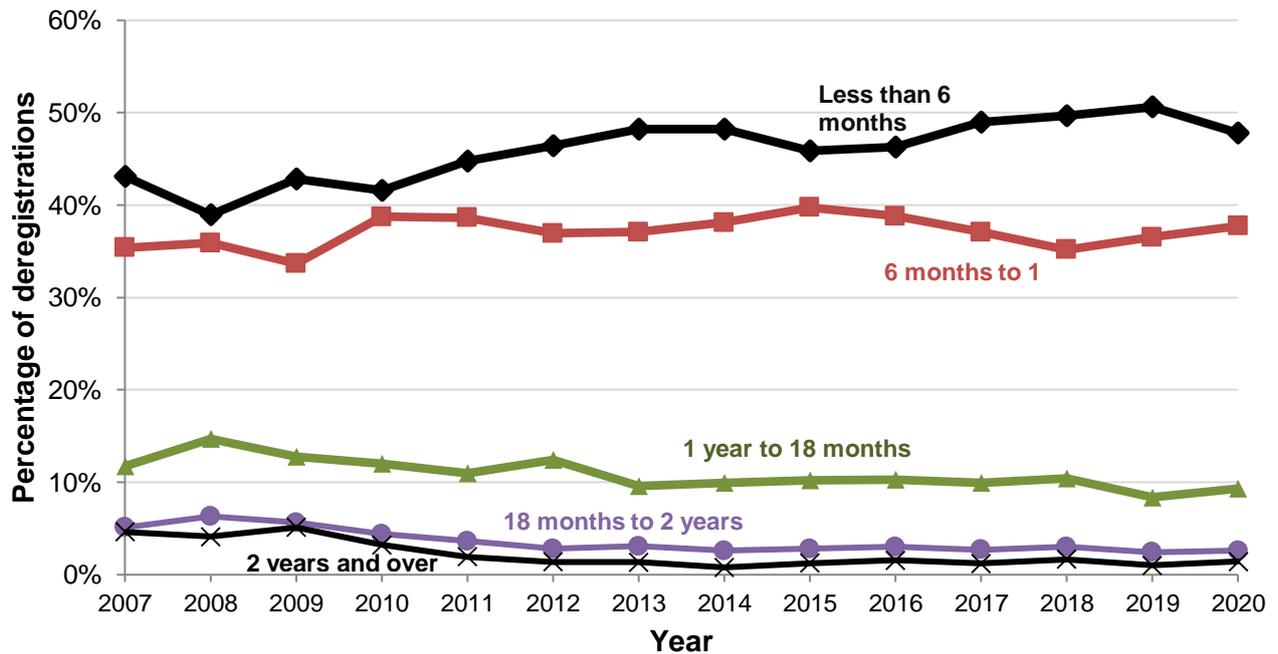


Chart 7 shows that, since 2015, the percentage of deregistrations of children who spent less than six months on the child protection register increased each year till 2019, peaking at 51%. The current figure has fallen back to 48% of deregistrations in 2019-20. There has been a corresponding increase in the last year in the proportion of deregistrations for children who spent 6 months or more on the child protection register, with 38% of deregistrations in 2019-20 being of children who spent between 6 months and a year on the child protection register.

**Chart 7: Percentage of deregistrations by length of time on Child Protection Register, 2007-2020**



## Child Protection Register Geographical Comparisons

### Number on the register within Scotland

Table 2.4 shows the number and rate of children under 16 who were on the child protection register in Scotland in July 2020 by local authority. The rate varied from 0.5 per 1,000 children in the East Renfrewshire to 6.1 per 1,000 children in North Ayrshire.

There is a lot of variability from year to year in the numbers of children on the child protection register at a local authority level due to the small numbers of children involved in each local authority.

**Table 2.4: Number of children on the child protection register and rate per 1,000 population aged 0-15 by local authority**

Local authority	2010		2019		2020	
	Number on Register	Rate <sup>(1,2)</sup>	Number on Register	Rate <sup>(1,2)</sup>	Number on Register	Rate <sup>(1,2)</sup>
Aberdeen City	119	3.7	119	3.4	142	4.0
Aberdeenshire	51	1.1	103	2.1	111	2.3
Angus	92	4.5	45	2.4	36	1.9
Argyll and Bute	43	2.9	28	2.2	49	3.8
City of Edinburgh	256	3.6	122	1.5	95	1.2
Clackmannanshire	56	5.9	24	2.7	41	4.6
Dumfries and Galloway	100	3.9	18	0.8	26	1.1
Dundee City	70	2.9	90	3.7	102	4.2
East Ayrshire	42	1.9	100	4.7	78	3.7
East Dunbartonshire	28	1.5	55	2.8	37	1.9
East Lothian	70	3.8	48	2.4	52	2.6
East Renfrewshire	31	1.7	15	0.8	9	0.5
Falkirk	73	2.6	124	4.4	142	5.1
Fife	220	3.4	205	3.2	147	2.3
Glasgow City	286	3.0	415	4.1	420	4.2
Highland	99	2.4	91	2.3	129	3.3
Inverclyde	35	2.5	47	3.7	61	4.8
Midlothian	96	6.2	49	2.7	49	2.7
Moray	44	2.6	47	2.9	31	1.9
Na h-Eileanan Siar	*	*	*	*	*	*
North Ayrshire	60	2.4	104	4.6	137	6.1
North Lanarkshire	63	1.0	162	2.6	118	1.9
Orkney Islands	*	*	*	*	10	2.8
Perth and Kinross	49	1.9	78	3.2	95	3.9
Renfrewshire	119	3.9	83	2.7	98	3.2
Scottish Borders	32	1.6	46	2.4	34	1.8
Shetland Islands	10	2.2	12	2.9	*	*
South Ayrshire	43	2.3	37	2.1	29	1.6
South Lanarkshire	135	2.4	116	2.1	160	2.9
Stirling	43	2.7	42	2.7	46	3.0
West Dunbartonshire	27	1.6	44	2.8	66	4.2
West Lothian	119	3.4	104	2.9	92	2.6
<b>Scotland</b>	<b>2,518</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>2,580</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>2,654</b>	<b>2.9</b>

(1) Per 1,000 population aged 0-15. Source: National Records of Scotland, 2007-2019 mid-year population estimates

(2) The rate shown in this table includes unborn children who are on the register

## Number of child protection investigations within Scotland

A child protection investigation is a joint<sup>4</sup> investigation launched following an Inter-agency Referral Discussion in order to determine if any child protection action is needed and whether a child protection case conference should be held.

Data on child protection investigations has been published for the first time in [Table 2.5](#). The rate of child protection investigations varied from 1.2 in East Renfrewshire to 39.7 per 1,000 children in Clackmannanshire.

The number of initial and pre-birth child protection case conferences and registrations from these is also shown; for those with an investigation recorded within 90 days prior to case conference, the child's progression through the child protection process from investigation to case conference and potentially registration can be followed.

However, there were 733 out of 4,978 total initial and pre-birth case conferences where no investigation was recorded within 90 days prior to case conference; this suggests that the investigations for these conferences may be missing from the figures shown. There may be other legitimate reasons for the investigation not being within 90 days prior to case conference.

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<sup>4</sup> Between Social work, police and health services, and any other agencies as required

**Table 2.5: Number of child protection investigations, initial and pre-birth case conferences, registrations from these conferences and rates per 1,000 population aged 0-15 by local authority, 2019-20<sup>(1),(2)</sup>**

Local authority	Child protection investigations		Child protection initial and pre-birth case conferences				Child protection registrations from initial and pre-birth case conferences			
	Number <sup>(3)</sup>	Rate <sup>(2)</sup>	Number with an investigation recorded within 90 days of case conference	Number with no investigation recorded within 90 days of case conference <sup>(4)</sup>	Total	Rate <sup>(2)</sup>	Number with an investigation recorded within 90 days of case conference	Number with no investigation recorded within 90 days of case conference <sup>(3)</sup>	Total	Rate <sup>(2)</sup>
Aberdeen City	269	7.6	183	3	186	5.3	156	3	159	4.5
Aberdeenshire	408	8.3	144	14	158	3.2	134	13	147	3.0
Angus	266	13.9	50	70	120	6.3	38	62	100	5.2
Argyll and Bute	114	8.8	39	36	75	5.8	38	29	67	5.2
City of Edinburgh	1,026	13.0	159	30	189	2.4	143	26	169	2.1
Clackmannanshire	355	39.7	70	37	107	12.0	47	22	69	7.7
Dumfries and Galloway	383	16.5	57	11	68	2.9	32	9	41	1.8
Dundee City	698	29.0	128	29	157	6.5	127	29	156	6.5
East Ayrshire	384	18.2	211	15	226	10.7	139	8	147	7.0
East Dunbartonshire	170	8.8	79	8	87	4.5	40	7	47	2.4
East Lothian	360	18.3	55	14	69	3.5	50	9	59	3.0
East Renfrewshire	23	1.2	20	0	20	1.0	19	0	19	1.0
Falkirk	459	16.3	181	8	189	6.7	150	5	155	5.5
Fife	892	13.8	317	1	318	4.9	282	1	283	4.4
Glasgow City	1,740	17.3	654	3	657	6.5	449	2	451	4.5
Highland	412	10.6	22	145	167	4.3	20	136	156	4.0
Inverclyde	125	9.9	94	28	122	9.7	76	19	95	7.5
Midlothian	567	31.6	92	20	112	6.2	76	18	94	5.2
Moray	240	14.9	27	23	50	3.1	23	17	40	2.5
Na h-Eileanan Siar	15	3.5	3	23	26	6.1	1	8	9	2.1
North Ayrshire	430	19.1	295	1	296	13.2	243	1	244	10.9
North Lanarkshire	720	11.5	271	15	286	4.6	208	10	218	3.5
Orkney Islands	67	18.7	13	1	14	3.9	10	1	11	3.1
Perth and Kinross	303	12.4	112	16	128	5.2	102	15	117	4.8
Renfrewshire	405	13.4	224	1	225	7.4	136	0	136	4.5
Scottish Borders	118	6.2	39	5	44	2.3	32	5	37	1.9
Shetland Islands	96	22.9	10	5	15	3.6	8	3	11	2.6
South Ayrshire	157	8.9	63	0	63	3.6	46	0	46	2.6
South Lanarkshire	699	12.6	366	35	401	7.2	252	23	275	4.9
Stirling	100	6.5	0	52	52	3.4	0	50	50	3.2
West Dunbartonshire	241	15.4	114	29	143	9.1	72	6	78	5.0
West Lothian	692	19.5	153	55	208	5.9	114	49	163	4.6
<b>Scotland</b>	<b>12,934</b>	<b>14.0</b>	<b>4,245</b>	<b>733</b>	<b>4,978</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>3,263</b>	<b>586</b>	<b>3,849</b>	<b>4.2</b>

(1) Per 1,000 population aged 0-15. Source: National Records of Scotland, mid-year 2019 population estimates.

(2) The rate shown in this table includes unborn children who are on the register

(3) Includes 135 child protection investigations that took place prior to 1 August 2019 (in 2018-19) where the resulting case conference took place on or after 1 August 2019 (in 2019-20).

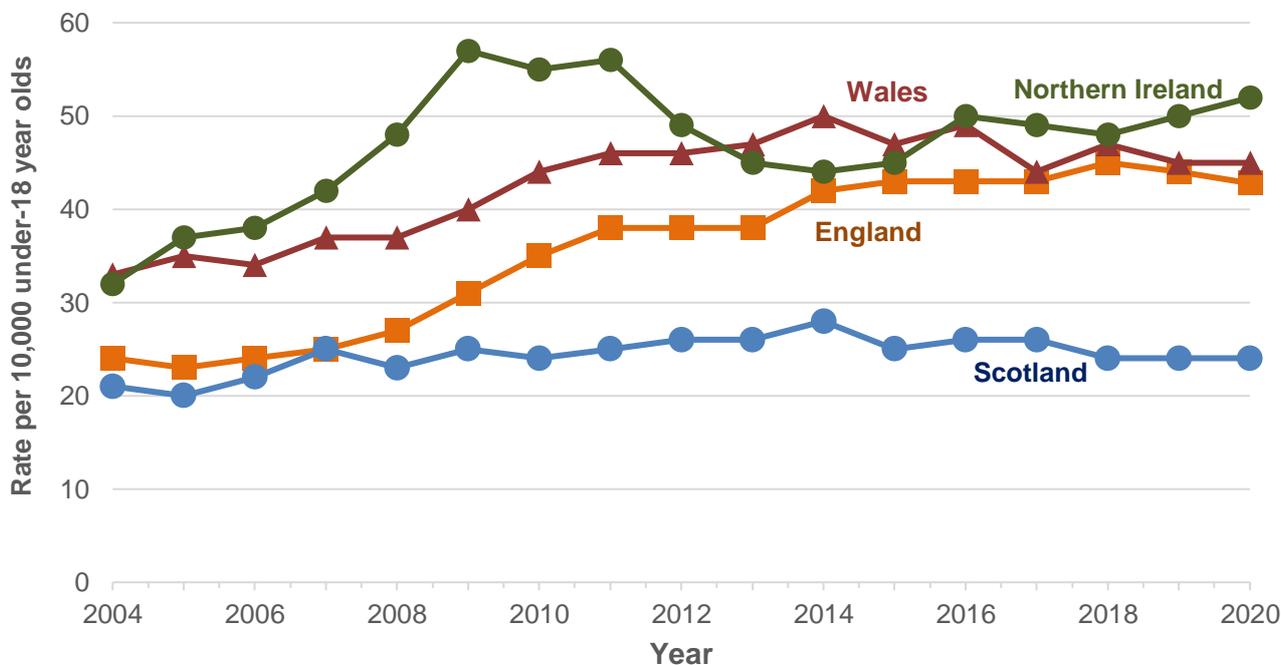
(4) Case conferences with no investigation recorded within 90 days are cases where no investigation was recorded in the data provided to Scottish Government in the 90 days preceding the case conference.

### Cross-UK child protection comparisons

Child protection systems across the United Kingdom vary but are generally comparable. Scotland's data collection year runs from 1 August to 31 July, so end-year figures are typically reported at 31 July in this publication, while the collection year in England, Wales and Northern Ireland runs from 1 April to 31 March

(so end-year figures are at 31 March). In Chart 8, we report the Scotland figures at the 31st March to allow better comparison with the other countries.

**Chart 8: Cross-UK comparison of rate of children on the child protection register per 10,000 under 18s, 2004-2020**



The proportion of children on the child protection register has been broadly stable in Scotland over the last decade and this proportion is notably lower compared with the rest of the UK. Scotland did not experience the large increases in children on the register in 2007-2011 as seen in the rest of the UK. There is more information on the comparability of child protection data across the UK on the [Scottish Government website](#).

The data used to produce the charts and tables on child protection in the publication are available in the supporting files accompanying the publication. There are also **additional tables** available in the supporting files.

[Children's social work statistics - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

# Secure Care Accommodation



**Average number of residents** increased by 3 to 82 since 2019.



**The number of young people admitted** to secure care decreased by 11% from 217 to 194 since 2019.

This section presents 2019-20 data on secure care accommodation. Following the conventions in the rest of this publication, 2019-20 is referred to as 2020. Secure care is used for a small number of young people who present high risk to themselves or others. A placement to secure care can only be authorised following a decision through the Children’s Hearing System or a Court, or as an emergency placement for up to 72 hours before attending a hearing or court.

## Bed complement

There were 84 secure places available in five secure units in Scotland excluding emergency beds on 31 July 2020 (Table 3.1). Furthermore, there were an additional 7 beds available across these units for emergency and short-term use – these would normally only be used if required and on a short-term basis.

**Table 3.1: Secure care unit bed complement at 31 July 2020<sup>(1)</sup>**

Unit	Number of secure care beds
Edinburgh Secure Services	6
Good Shepherd	18
Kibble	18
Rossie School	18
St. Mary's Kenmure <sup>(1)</sup>	24
<b>ALL UNITS</b>	<b>84</b>

(1) Excluding emergency or short-term respite beds

## Capacity and usage

Table 3.2 shows there were an average of 82 residents in secure care accommodation between 1 August 2019 and 31 July 2020, an increase from an average of 79 in the previous year. The average number of residents from within Scotland remained at 53, while the average from outside Scotland increased slightly from 26 to 28, all of whom were from England.

The number of nights emergency beds were used was 209 in 2020. This is a considerable decrease of 47% from 398 in the previous year. The number of residents using emergency beds decreased by 49%, from 55 in 2019 to 28 in 2020.

**Table 3.2: Secure care accommodation capacity<sup>(1)</sup> and usage, 2014-2020**

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	% change 2019-20
Places at year end	90	90	90	84	84	84	84	0%
Admissions during the year	232	249	256	248	210	217	194	-11%
Discharges during the year	226	245	253	257	213	210	194	-8%
Average number of residents during the year	74	82	85	76	80	79	82	4%
Residents from within Scotland	67	76	72	56	45	53	53	0%
Residents from outside Scotland	7	6	13	19	35	26	28	8%
Minimum number of residents during the year	60	71	77	67	73	71	75	6%
Maximum number of residents during the year <sup>(1)</sup>	84	89	90	87	86	88	88	0%
Number of nights emergency bed used during the year <sup>(2,3)</sup>	5	146	50	90	284	398	209	-47%
Number of residents emergency bed used for during the year <sup>(2,3)</sup>	*	13	11	25	41	55	28	-49%

(1) Capacity: Young people can be admitted and discharged more than once during the year.

(2) Four units reported having an emergency bed: Rossie Secure Accommodation Services; Good Shepherd Centre; Kibble Education and Care Centre; and St. Mary's Kenmure. St Mary's Kenmure also have 3 short-term beds (see background notes for definition of an emergency or short-term bed).

(3) Figures for emergency/short term bed usage have been estimated for St. Mary's Kenmure. More information is available in the background notes section.

On 31 July 2020, 54% of young people in secure care accommodation were male and 46% were female (Table 3.3); 46% were aged 16 or over; and 78% were aged 15 or older.

On 31 July 2020, 9% of young people in secure care accommodation had at least one disability, defined as “a mental or physical impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities”.

**Table 3.3: Young people in secure care at 31st July 2020 by gender, age at admission, disability and length of stay<sup>(1,2)</sup>**

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018 <sup>(3)</sup>	2019	2020	% of 2020 total
<b>Gender of residents<sup>(3)</sup></b>								
Males	52	59	65	46	39	60	44	54%
Females	29	26	23	34	43	24	37	46%
<b>Age of Residents</b>								
13 years old or under	5	7	9	14	12	*	5	6%
14 years	12	18	18	18	18	*	13	16%
15 years	31	28	27	26	25	21	26	32%
16 years or over	33	32	34	22	27	55	37	46%
<b>Residents with disability</b>								
Yes	-	-	34	27	39	27	7	9%
No/unknown	-	-	54	53	43	57	74	91%
<b>Length of stay of residents at year end</b>								
Less than 1 month	13	17	20	26	10	21	17	21%
1 month to under 2 months	14	16	14	13	14	16	14	17%
2 months to under 3 months	14	13	14	12	13	9	6	7%
3 months to under 6 months	23	26	24	25	27	22	18	22%
6 months to under 1 year	9	*	10	*	14	11	16	20%
1 year or more	8	*	6	*	0	5	2	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>100%</b>

(1) As at 31 July of each year.

(2) Cells containing \* represent numbers that are suppressed to maintain confidentiality.

(3) Trans, intersex and non-binary individuals are grouped with males for the purposes of maintaining confidentiality.

## Cross-UK secure care accommodation comparisons

Table 3.4 shows secure children's homes/secure care accommodation units, places approved, and children and young people accommodated across the United Kingdom. This shows that there is no clear trend in the number of children accommodated in England and Wales, as the numbers have fluctuated.

As noted earlier, the Scotland total includes a number of young people who are from elsewhere in the UK. The England and Wales totals may also include some children from other parts of the UK, but these numbers aren't published separately.

**Table 3.4: Number of secure children's homes/secure care accommodation units, places approved and children accommodated at year end across the United Kingdom<sup>(1,2,3)</sup>, 2014-2020**

		2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
England	Number of secure children's homes	16	14	14	14	14	14	13
	Places approved	276	232	232	232	233	237	230
	Children accommodated	211	194	192	184	189	162	171
Wales	Number of secure children's homes	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Places approved	22	22	22	22	22	22	22
	Children accommodated	18	11	18	19	15	10	13
Scotland <sup>(4)</sup>	Number of secure care units	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
	Places approved	90	90	90	84	84	84	84
	Children accommodated	80	85	84	81	82	84	82

(1) Sources: England and Wales - Statistics on secure children's homes: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-secure-children-s-homes>; Scotland - Secure care accommodation census; Northern Ireland, official/national statistics are not produced on secure care accommodation. The legal routes into secure care can vary between the four UK countries.

(2) The Scotland total includes a number of children from the rest of the UK, so trends in each country based on the children's origin may be different.

(3) The figures from outside Scotland include children placed on welfare grounds only.

(4) To allow for comparison with England and Wales, Scotland's data for all years is 'at 31 March' within this table only.

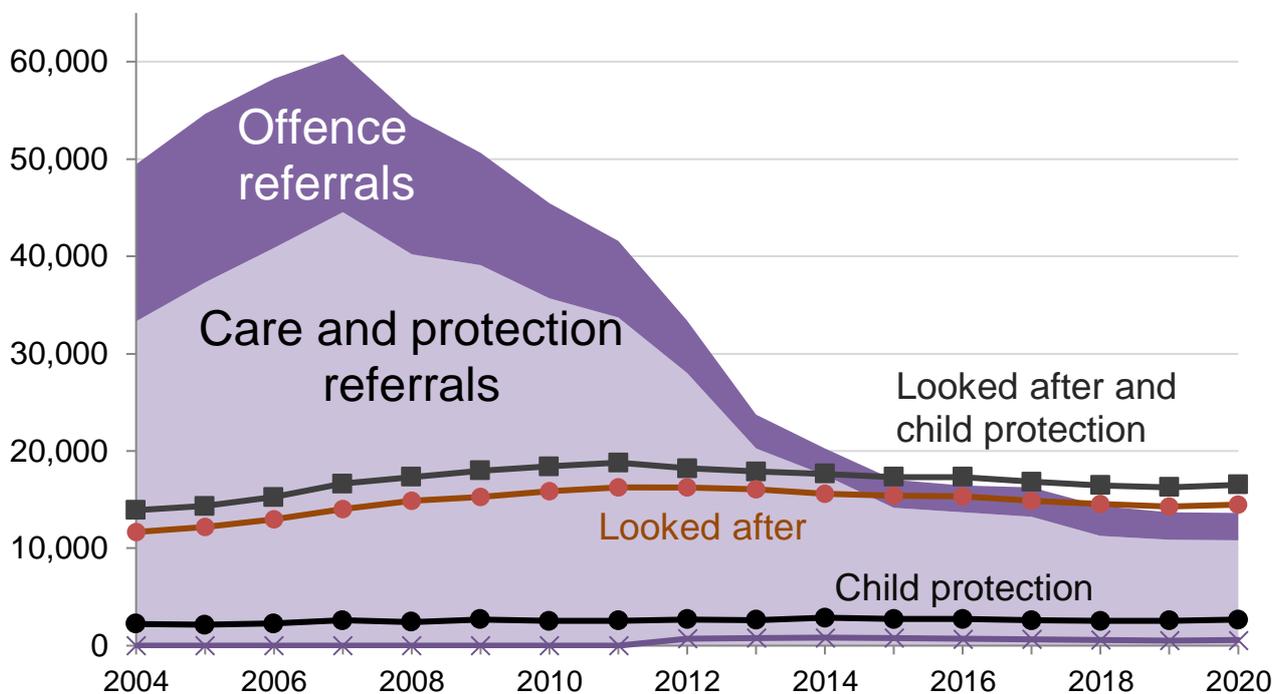
The data used to produce the charts and tables on secure care in the publication are available in the supporting files accompanying the publication. There are also **additional tables** available in the supporting files.

[Children's social work statistics - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

## What are the trends in other children’s social work data?

Between 2009 and 2020 the number of children referred to the Children’s Reporter decreased by 73%<sup>5</sup> (Chart 9), while the number of children looked after or on the child protection register has remained broadly stable over this period. The decrease is the result of falls in both the number of offence and non-offence referrals. Offence referrals now account for 21% of all referrals.

**Chart 9: Number of children referred to the Children's Reporter and numbers looked after/on child protection register, 2004-2020**



The fall in referrals to the Reporter is likely to be due to pre-referral screening across many areas of the country. This has led to a reduction in referrals received by the Reporter where compulsory measures are not deemed necessary; and a proportionate increase in referrals, where deemed necessary.

<sup>5</sup> [Official Statistics - SCRA](#)

# Background notes

## 1. Context and related publications

1.1. This publication includes data on children and young people who were looked after, on the child protection register or in secure care accommodation between 1 August 2019 and 31 July 2020. Children most commonly become looked after or placed on the child protection register following a referral to the Children's Reporter. The majority of referrals to the Children's Reporter are on care and protection grounds, although a small proportion are on offence grounds. Young people are placed in secure care either as an outcome of the criminal justice system or through a referral to the Children's Reporter. Figures on referrals to the Children's Reporter are published by the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA): [Official Statistics - SCRA](#)

Figures on referrals of young people from the criminal justice system to the social work system are published the bottom of the following link:

[Criminal justice social work statistics: 2019 to 2020 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

1.2. This publication collates data on children who were looked after during 2019-20. Education Outcomes for Looked After Children statistics are produced on a subset of these children – those whose Scottish Candidate Numbers have been supplied to Scottish Government. The latest education outcomes publication is available here:

[Education Outcomes for Looked After Children, 2018-19 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

1.3. The annual Civil Law Statistics published by the Scottish Government includes a table which gives the number of petitions for adoption made through the courts. These figures include looked after children who are adopted from care as well as children who are out with the care system. The Civil Law Statistics in Scotland are available on page 48 of following link:

[Civil Justice Statistics in Scotland 2018-19 \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

### Cross-UK comparability

1.4. It is possible to draw comparisons between the looked after children, child protection and secure care accommodation statistics of the four UK countries. However, it should be borne in mind that there are differences in legislation, the children's social work systems and the definitions of categories that will affect these figures.

1.5. Work has been undertaken between the Scottish Government and administrations from England, Wales and Northern Ireland to document clearly the differences between each administration's **looked after children** statistics and to scope out the feasibility and need for a comparable dataset. Further developments from this work have been published on the Scottish Government children's statistics web site: [UK Comparability of Children's Social Services Statistics](#).

1.6. Work was commissioned by the Department for Education to document clearly the differences between each administration's **child protection** statistics. Further developments from this work have been published on the Scottish Government Children's Statistics web site: [UK Comparability of Children's Social Services Statistics](#).

### Equivalent data across the UK

1.7. Looked after children statistics:

England	<a href="#">Children looked after in England including adoption: 2019 to 2020 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a>
Wales	<a href="#">Children looked after (gov.wales)</a>
Northern Ireland	<a href="#">Children's Social Care Statistics for Northern Ireland 2019/20 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a>

1.8. Child protection statistics:

England	<a href="#">Statistics: children in need and child protection - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a>
Wales	<a href="#">Statistics: children in need and child protection - GOV.UK</a>
Northern Ireland	<a href="#">Children's Social Care Statistics for Northern Ireland 2019/20 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a>

1.9. Official/ National Statistics are not produced on secure accommodation in Northern Ireland. However, there is one secure unit which when at full capacity can house sixteen 11 to 18 year olds. The latest national statistics on children accommodated in secure children's homes in England and Wales were released on 17 September 2020 and can be found at:- [Statistics: secure children's homes - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

## 2. Data sources and coverage

2.1. The **looked after children** data in this publication were collected at an individual level from local authorities. Data were collected on all children/young people who were looked after between 1 August 2019 and 31 July 2020, on every episode of being looked after which occurred at some point in the reporting period, every placement that took place during these episodes, and every legal reason for which a child was looked after. Statistics were also collected at an individual-level for those eligible for aftercare.

2.2. All **child protection** information in this publication were collected at an individual level from local authorities. Information is submitted for each investigation and case conference held as well as demographic information for each child. Detailed individual data has been collected since 2012-13. Prior to this, data was collected as aggregate summarised data.

2.3. The child protection statistics survey covered the period 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020. If a member of the public or professional report concern about a child, a referral will be made to an agency such as the local authority social work team. If they decide that the child is at risk of significant harm, an investigation will be undertaken. In 2010-11 and previous years, aggregate information was collected on the referrals that were initiated during the period (so numbers starting). From 2011-12 information has been collected on child protection investigations which ended during the collection period. Information on child protection referrals has not been collected since 2010-11.

2.4. The **secure care** statistics in this publication were collected from five secure care units which were open from 1 August 2019 till 31 July 2020.

2.5. The secure care accommodation census covered 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020. The data collected at the unit level covers the number of places. Individual-level information was collected on the characteristics of the young person, medical care, admissions and discharges in secure care accommodation.

2.6. The Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) can provide information on staffing and vacancies of secure accommodation services, where a secure unit has provided that information to the Care Inspectorate, although this is not necessarily published. The data is an annual snapshot of the workforce on 31 December each year. If you require further information on staffing and vacancies on the other data held for secure accommodation services, you can visit the SSSC's workforce data

site at: [Scottish Social Services Council Data | SSSC](#) or contact [dataenquiries@sssc.uk.com](mailto:dataenquiries@sssc.uk.com).

### 3. Definitions and notation

3.1. The survey forms, data specifications and guidance notes for the statistics presented in this publication are available on the Scottish Government website. The data specifications include the standard validation checks undertaken to quality assure these data.

	Online documentation can be found at the bottom of the following links.
Looked after	<a href="http://www.gov.scot">Scottish Exchange of Data: looked after children - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)</a>
Child protection	<a href="http://www.gov.scot">Scottish Exchange of Data: child protection - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)</a>
Secure care accommodation	<a href="http://www.gov.scot">Scottish Exchange of Data: secure accommodation - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)</a>

#### Children Looked After

3.2. Under the Children (Scotland ) Act 1995 , 'looked after children' are defined as those in the care of their local authority – sometimes referred to as a 'corporate parent'. [Looked after children - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

3.3. *Supervision Requirement/Compulsory Supervision Order* – A children's hearing is a lay tribunal which considers and makes decisions on the welfare of the child or young person before them, taking into account the circumstances including any offending behaviour. The hearing decides on the measures of supervision which are in the best interests of the child or young person. If the hearing concludes compulsory measures of supervision are needed, it will make a Supervision Requirement or a Compulsory Supervision Order which will determine the type of placement for the child. In most cases the child will continue to live at home but will be under the supervision of a social worker. In some cases the hearing will decide that the child should live away from home with relatives or other carers.

3.4. *Permanence order* – This is an order that the sheriff court can make for the protection of children. By default, parents have a right for their child to live with them and control where the child lives. A Permanence order, which can only be applied for by the local authority, transfers this right of residence to the local authority. In making a permanence order the court can, as it considers appropriate, to promote and safeguard the child's health, development and welfare, also make ancillary orders which:

- give other parental rights and responsibilities to the local authority or other person(s),
- and /or remove those parental rights and responsibilities from the child(s) parents.

A permanence order may also specify arrangements for contact between the child and any other person the court considers appropriate and in the best interests of the child.

### 3.5. *Types of placement*

- At home with parent(s): at home with parent(s) or 'relevant person(s)' as defined in Section 200 of the Children's Hearings Act 2011
- With friends/relatives: placed with friends or relatives who are not approved foster carers. Also referred to as 'kinship care'.
- With foster carers provided by the local authority
- With foster carers purchased by the local authority
- With prospective adopters
- Other community: such as supported accommodation, hospital (e.g. at birth)
- Local authority home: in local authority children's home/hostel, local authority home/hostel for children with learning disabilities, local authority home/hostel for physically disabled children
- Voluntary home: in voluntary children's home/hostel which may be specifically for children with learning disabilities or for physically disabled children
- Residential school: in local authority or voluntary residential school (home/hostel), private school or independent school
- Secure accommodation
- Crisis care: in women's refuge, local authority/voluntary hostel for offenders or for drug/alcohol abusers
- Other residential: a known residential setting but does not fit with one of the above

3.6. There is information on the process by which children come to be looked after and legislation governing this on the Scottish Government website: [Looked after children - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

## Child Protection

3.7. *Child Protection Case Conference (CPCC)* – a meeting where the risk of harm or neglect of a child is addressed. There are four types of CPCC:

Type	Who is it for	Potential outcome
Initial	a child not currently on the child protection register	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Child is <b>registered</b> or</li> <li>- Child is not registered</li> </ul>
Pre-birth	an unborn child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Child is <b>registered</b> or</li> <li>- Child is not registered</li> </ul>
Review	a child already on the child protection register either receiving a regular case review, or where there are significant recent changes in the child or family situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Child remains on register or</li> <li>- Child is <b>deregistered</b></li> </ul>
Transfer	a child already on the child protection register moving between local authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Child is <b>deregistered</b> or</li> <li>- Child remains on register</li> </ul>

3.8. *Registrations* - The children who were the subject of a child protection case conference and were subsequently added to the child protection register between 1 August 2019 and 31 July 2020.

3.9. *Deregistrations* - Children who were subject to a transfer or review conference and subsequently removed from the child protection register between 1 August 2019 and 31 July 2020.

3.10. The National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland, published in 2010 and refreshed in 2014, is available here: [National guidance for child protection in Scotland - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot/publications/national-guidance-for-child-protection-in-scotland/pages/2/index.aspx). This guidance is currently under review.

## Secure care accommodation

3.11. *Secure accommodation legal framework* – The children’s hearings system has responsibility for dealing with most children and young people under 16 who commit offences or who are in need of care and protection. In some cases, children’s hearings have responsibility for young people under 18 where the young person is under the supervision of the hearing when he or she reaches 16 and the supervision requirement is extended.

3.12. For children who commit very grave crimes (the circumstances are set out in the relevant Lord Advocate’s guidelines), the option remains for them to be jointly reported to the children’s reporter and the procurator fiscal and together, they will decide whether prosecution through the court is appropriate. The court may then sentence, or return the young person to the hearing to be dealt with.

3.13. A young person who appears in court accused of an offence, where bail is not considered appropriate, can be remanded to the care of the local authority responsible for them under section 51 of the Criminal Procedures (Scotland) Act 1995. Local authorities are then responsible for placing that young person in secure care.

3.14. A young person convicted of an offence in court can be sentenced to detention in secure accommodation under section 205 or 208 of the Criminal Procedures (Scotland) Act 1995. In these cases, it is the responsibility of Scottish Ministers to place the sentenced young person in suitable accommodation.

3.15. Before a child or young person can be placed in secure accommodation through the children’s hearings system, the children’s panel must consider that the young person meets the legal criteria set out in The Children’s Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011. The conditions are -

- (a) that the child has previously absconded and is likely to abscond again and, if the child were to abscond, it is likely that the child’s physical, mental, or moral welfare would be at risk;
- (b) the child is likely to engage in self harming conduct;
- (c) the child is likely to cause injury to another person.

3.16. *Average number* – The average number of young people in secure care accommodation over the year is calculated using the dates of admission and discharge for every child. Ages on admission, discharge during 2019-20 and age at 31 July 2020 are the actual ages for all young people.

3.17. *Ethnicity and Religion* – Data was collected on ethnicity and religion of young people in secure care and close support accommodation, but we are unable to publish this due to small numbers and data confidentiality issues.

3.18. *Emergency/short-term beds* – these can be used at short notice, for example, when a young person is admitted during the night as it is less disruptive for the other young people. The young person is usually admitted to the main facility the following day. Four units reported having an emergency bed: Rossie Secure Accommodation Services; Good Shepherd Centre; Kibble Education and Care Centre; and St. Mary's Kenmure. St Mary's Kenmure also has 3 short-term beds which, for ease, these beds are referred to as emergency in the report.

### **Disability and additional support needs**

3.19. Prior to 2011, data was presented as 'Disability', and, because the categories in use did not match with definitions in the Equalities Act, from 2011-12 until 2014-15, data was presented as 'additional support needs'. The statistics themselves did not change in any way – the content of the data and categories remained the same, so were still comparable over time. From 2016-17 onwards, a new disability question has been introduced for the child protection, children looked after and secure care accommodation data collections, and this reduced the question to a simple yes/no, but with a more stringent qualification: "does the young person have a mental or physical impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities?". This is not comparable to data prior to 2016. Work is underway to find a unified set of disability criteria to provide more detail and to meet user needs.

Further information is available in the online documentation listed in [section 3.1](#).

### **Notation and rounding**

3.20. The following notation is used in this publication

- Data not available
- \* In cases where information is presented on a small number of children, indicates that data have been suppressed to prevent disclosure of personal information.

3.21. The sum of the breakdowns in the tables may not sum to the total displayed due to rounding.

## **4. Data Quality and revisions**

4.1. The data for all three parts of this publication – looked after children, child protection and secure care – come from administrative data held by local authorities and secure units. As this information is used to monitor and manage these sectors it should be robust and accurate.

4.2. Automated validation checks are undertaken at the point the data are submitted. These validations are outlined in the relevant data specifications (see Background note 3.1 for links).

4.3. The Children and Families statistics team undertake a range of validation checks on administrative data as part of the quality assurance process of preparing this national statistics publication. These procedures include: trend analysis, comparing against other available sources, and checking outliers with data providers. The data providers are then asked to confirm their data – for looked after children and child protection data this confirmation comes from local authorities; for secure care accommodation this confirmation comes from secure units. In cases where concerns about data quality outweigh the value of having an estimated figure publically available, we would not publish that particular information.

4.4. Where data need to be revised due to the resubmission of data for a particular year, or to correct errors, the timing will be announced on our website and by email to those who have registered an interest in our statistics. The impact of revisions will be clearly explained in our published reports.

### **Looked after – comparability over time**

4.5. Looked after children statistics for years prior to 2008-09 used data supplied by local authorities aggregated at a local authority level. Since 2008-09, there have been significant improvements in the quality of data reporting as a result the collection of data about individuals. This should be borne in mind when comparing years.

4.6. Data collected on children in a planned series of short-term placements ceased after 2012/13. This was done in consultation with local authorities and data users. Historical figures are still available from previous years' publications.

4.7. For this publication, local authorities were asked to review and revise their data for 2018-19 during the collection process, following quality assurance checks

comparing data on individual episodes of care open in 2018-19 and 2019-20. This report reflects those updates to Looked After Children data provided by local authorities for 2018-19.

### **Looked after – data quality of specific variables**

4.8. The data on looked after children is collected from local authority social work management information systems. There can be a delay between an event affecting the child and the data being updated on local authority management information systems. Therefore, the figures published may be the subject of future revision. However, Scottish Government and partner Local Authorities have been improving data flows and the need for revision is less likely.

4.9. From 2011-12, local authorities were requested to supply information on all legal reasons for a child being looked after (i.e. a child may have more than one legal reason at any time). The quality of this information has consequently improved.

4.10. The only looked after field for which data is collected but not published is religion. This is due to data quality concerns as each year around two-thirds of children are recorded with religion as 'unknown'.

### **Child protection**

4.11. Since 2012-13, the child protection data has been collected at an individual level. It has been normal practice that, during the collection process, local authorities revise their data for the previous year. This report reflects those updates provided by local authorities for 2018-19.

4.12. Prior to 2011-12, some local authorities did not place 'unborn' children on the child protection register until the child was actually born. The revised National Guidance now states that 'unborn' children should be placed on the child protection register if this is required and not wait until the child is born.

### **Secure care accommodation**

4.13. As the number of young people using secure care is very small, relative changes over time will show greater percentage changes than for data relating to children looked after or child protection.

# Annex A

## Children's Social Work Statistics 2019-20 Publication Tables

Full Excel versions of these tables with additional detail are available in the supporting files accompanying the publication.

### **Illustration 1 All children in Scotland and relative number being looked after and on the child protection register at 31 July 2020**

#### **Looked after children**

- Chart 1 Children looked after per 1,000 children under 18 by type of accommodation 1987-2020
- Table 1.1 Number and percentage of children looked after in each type of accommodation, 2009-2020
- Table 1.2 Children looked after with and without a current care plan, at 31 July 2020
- Table 1.3 and 1.3a Number and percentage of children starting to be looked after by age and gender, 2003-2020
- Table 1.4 and Table 1.4a Number and percentage of children ceasing to be looked after by length of time looked after and age, 2003-2020
- Table 1.5 Percentage of children ceasing to be looked after, by destination, 2002-2020
- Table 1.6 Pathway plans and nominated pathway co-ordinators of young people who were 16 or over on the date they ceased to be looked after, 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020
- Table 1.7 Number and percentage of young people eligible for aftercare services, at 31 July 2020, by age and economic activity
- Table 1.7 31 July 2019 Number and percentage of young people eligible for aftercare services, at 31 July 2019, by age and economic activity
- Table 1.8 Children in Continuing Care at 31 July 2020
- Table 1.8 31 July 2019 Children in Continuing Care at 31 July 2019
- Chart 2a Children Starting and Ceasing to be Looked After by Month during 2019-20
- Chart 2b Children Starting and Ceasing to be Looked After by Month during 2018-19

## **Child protection**

- Chart 3 Cross-UK comparison of rate of looked after children per 10,000 children, 2004-2020
- Table 2.1 Number of children on the child protection register by age and gender, 2000-2020
- Table 2.2 Number of registrations following an initial, pre-birth or transfer-in case conference by length of time since previous de-registration, 2007-2020
- Table 2.3 Number of deregistrations from the child protection register by length of time on register and reason for deregistration, 2007-2020
- Chart 4 Concerns identified at the case conferences of children who were on the child protection register, 2020
- Table 2.4 Number of children on the child protection register and rate per 1,000 population aged 0-15 by local authority, 2007-2020
- Table 2.5 Number of child protection investigations, initial and pre-birth case conferences, registrations from these conferences and rates per 1,000 population aged 0-15 by local authority, 2019-20
- Chart 5 Concerns identified at the case conferences of children who were on the child protection register, 2020
- Chart 6a Child protection registrations and deregistrations by month, 2019-20
- Chart 6b Child protection registrations and deregistrations by month, 2018-19
- Chart 7 Percentage of deregistrations by length of time on the child protection register, 2007-2020

## **Secure care**

- Table 3.1 Secure care unit bed complement at 31 July 2020
- Table 3.2 Secure care accommodation capacity and usage, 2013-2020
- Table 3.3 Young people in secure care accommodation by gender, age, disability and length of stay, 2014-2020
- Table 3.4 Number of secure children's homes/secure care accommodation units, places approved and children accommodated at year end across the United Kingdom, 2019-20

## Other

Chart 8 Children Referred to the Children's Reporter and numbers looked after/on child protection register, 2004-2020

Chart 9 Cross - UK Comparison of Rate of children on the Child Protection Register per 10,000 under 18s, 2004-2020

## Annex B

### Children's Social Work Statistics 2019-20 Additional tables

Full Excel versions of these tables are available in the supporting files accompanying the publication.

#### 1. Looked after children 2019-20

##### Characteristics of looked after children at 31 July

Table 1.1 By age group and gender

Table 1.2 By ethnic group

Table 1.3 By additional support needs status

Table 1.4 By type of accommodation

##### Children starting to be looked after

Table 1.5 By age group and gender

Table 1.6 By ethnic origin

Table 1.7 By additional support needs status

##### Children ceasing to be looked after

Table 1.8 By age group and gender

Table 1.9 By destination on discharge and age

Table 1.10 By ethnic origin

Table 1.11 By additional support needs status

Table 1.12 By age group and length of time looked after

## **Young people ceasing to be looked after who were 16 or over**

Table 1.13 By age group and destination on discharge

Table 1.14 By final accommodation type and destination on discharge

## **Placements ceasing**

Table 1.15 Placements ceasing, by placement type and duration

## **Children looked after by number of placements**

Table 1.16 Number of looked after children by age and number of placements

## **Young people eligible for aftercare services on 31 July**

Table 1.17 2019-20 By age and type of accommodation

Table 1.17 2018-19 By age and type of accommodation

Table 1.18 2019-20 By gender and economic activity

Table 1.18 2018-19 By gender and economic activity

Table 1.19 2019-20 By ethnic group and economic activity

Table 1.19 2018-19 By ethnic group and economic activity

Table 1.20 2019-20 By disability status and economic activity

Table 1.20 2018-19 By disability status and economic activity

Table 1.21 2019-20 Episodes of homelessness since becoming eligible for aftercare services

Table 1.21 2018-19 Episodes of homelessness since becoming eligible for aftercare services

Table 1.22 2019-20 With pathway plan and pathway coordinator

Table 1.22 2018-19 With pathway plan and pathway coordinator

## **2. Looked after children, trend data**

Table 2.1 Number of children looked after by age and gender, 2002-2020

Table 2.2 Number of children looked after by type of accommodation, 2002-2020

Table 2.3 Number of children looked after by ethnic origin, 2003-2020

<u>Table 2.4</u>	Number of children looked after by additional support needs status, 2002-2020
<u>Table 2.5 and Table 2.5a</u>	Number of children by legal reason for being looked after
<u>Table 2.6</u>	Number of children looked after by number of placements during the past year, 2012-2020
<u>Table 2.7</u>	Number of children ceasing to be looked after, by destination and age, 2002-2020
<u>Table 2.8</u>	Cross UK comparison of the number of looked after children and rate per 10,000 children under 18, 2005-2020

### 3. Looked after children, local authority data

Local authority breakdowns of

<u>Table 3.1 2019-20</u>	Children starting and ceasing to be looked after, 2019-20
<u>Table 3.1 2018-19</u>	Children starting and ceasing to be looked after, 2018-19
<u>Table 3.2 2019-20</u>	Characteristics of children looked after, 31 July 2020
<u>Table 3.2 2018-19</u>	Characteristics of children looked after, 31 July 2019
<u>Table 3.3 2019-20</u>	Children looked after by type of accommodation, 31 July 2020
<u>Table 3.3 2018-19</u>	Children looked after by type of accommodation, 31 July 2019
<u>Table 3.4 2019-20</u>	Percentage of care leavers beyond minimum school leaving age with a pathway plan and a pathway co-ordinator, 2019-20
<u>Table 3.4 2018-19</u>	Percentage of care leavers beyond minimum school leaving age with a pathway plan and a pathway co-ordinator, 2018-19
<u>Table 3.5 2019-20</u>	Young people eligible for aftercare services, percentage receiving aftercare and percentage in employment, education or training, 31 July 2020
<u>Table 3.5 2018-19</u>	Young people eligible for aftercare services, percentage receiving aftercare and percentage in employment, education or training, 31 July 2019
<u>Table 3.6 2019-20</u>	Number of children and young people ceasing to be looked after, by destination and local authority, 2019-20
<u>Table 3.6 2018-19</u>	Number of children and young people ceasing to be looked after, by destination and local authority, 2018-19

Table 3.7 2019-20 Comparison of reported and derived counts of looked after children on 31 July 2020, by local authority

#### **4. Child protection additional tables**

Table 4.1 Number of initial, pre-birth or transfer in child protection case conferences by child's primary known/suspected abuser, 2007-2020

Table 4.2 Number of children on the child protection register by ethnic group, additional support need status and religion, 2007-2020

Table 4.3 Concerns identified at the case conferences of children who were on the child protection register, 2012-2020

#### **Children on the child protection register at 31 July 2020 by local authority**

Table 4.4 2019-20 Concerns identified at the case conferences of children on the child protection register at 31 July 2020, by age, ethnicity, disability status and religion

Table 4.4 2018-19 Concerns identified at the case conferences of children on the child protection register at 31 July 2019, by age, ethnicity, disability status and religion

Table 4.5 Movement on and off the child protection register, 2019-2020

Table 4.6 2019-20 Main abuser recorded at case conferences held during 2019-20

Table 4.6 2018-19 Main abuser recorded at case conferences held during 2018-19

Table 4.7 2019-20 Main abuser recorded at pre-birth, initial and transfer in case conference 2019-20

Table 4.7 2018-19 Main abuser recorded at pre-birth, initial and transfer in case conference 2018-19

Table 4.8 Rate of children on the child protection register per 10,000 children across UK, 2007-2020

Table 4.9 Rate of children on the child protection register per 10,000 children across the UK, 2007-2020

## 5. Secure care accommodation additional tables

<u>Table 5.1</u>	Young people discharged from secure care accommodation by gender, age and destination on discharge, 2019-20
<u>Table 5.2</u>	Number and percentage of young people discharged from secure care accommodation who received medical care during their stay, 2019-20
<u>Table 5.3</u>	Number of human papillomavirus (HPV) immunisations received by females discharged from secure accommodation during 2019-20
<u>Table 5.4</u>	Number and rate of young people admitted to secure care accommodation by local authority, 2013-2020
<u>Table 5.5</u>	Young people admitted to secure care accommodation: placement prior to admission by gender, 2019-20
<u>Table 5.6</u>	Young people admitted to secure care accommodation: legal reason for admission by gender, 2019-20

## A National Statistics publication for Scotland

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be interpreted to mean that the statistics: meet identified user needs; are produced, managed and disseminated to high standards; and are explained well.

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For general enquiries about Scottish Government statistics please contact:

Office of the Chief Statistician, Telephone: 0131 244 0442,  
e-mail: [statistics.enquiries@gov.scot](mailto:statistics.enquiries@gov.scot).

## How to access background or source data

The data collected for this statistical bulletin:

- are available in more detail through [statistics.gov.scot](http://statistics.gov.scot)
- are available via an alternative route
- may be made available on request, subject to consideration of legal and ethical factors. Please contact [childrens.statistics@gov.scot](mailto:childrens.statistics@gov.scot) for further information.
- cannot be made available by Scottish Government for further analysis as Scottish Government is not the data controller.

## Complaints and suggestions

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