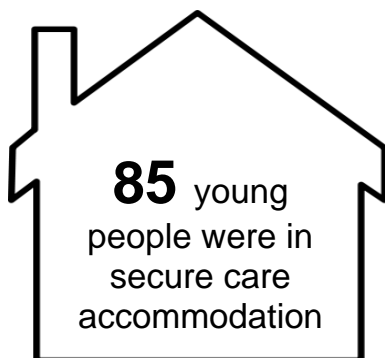
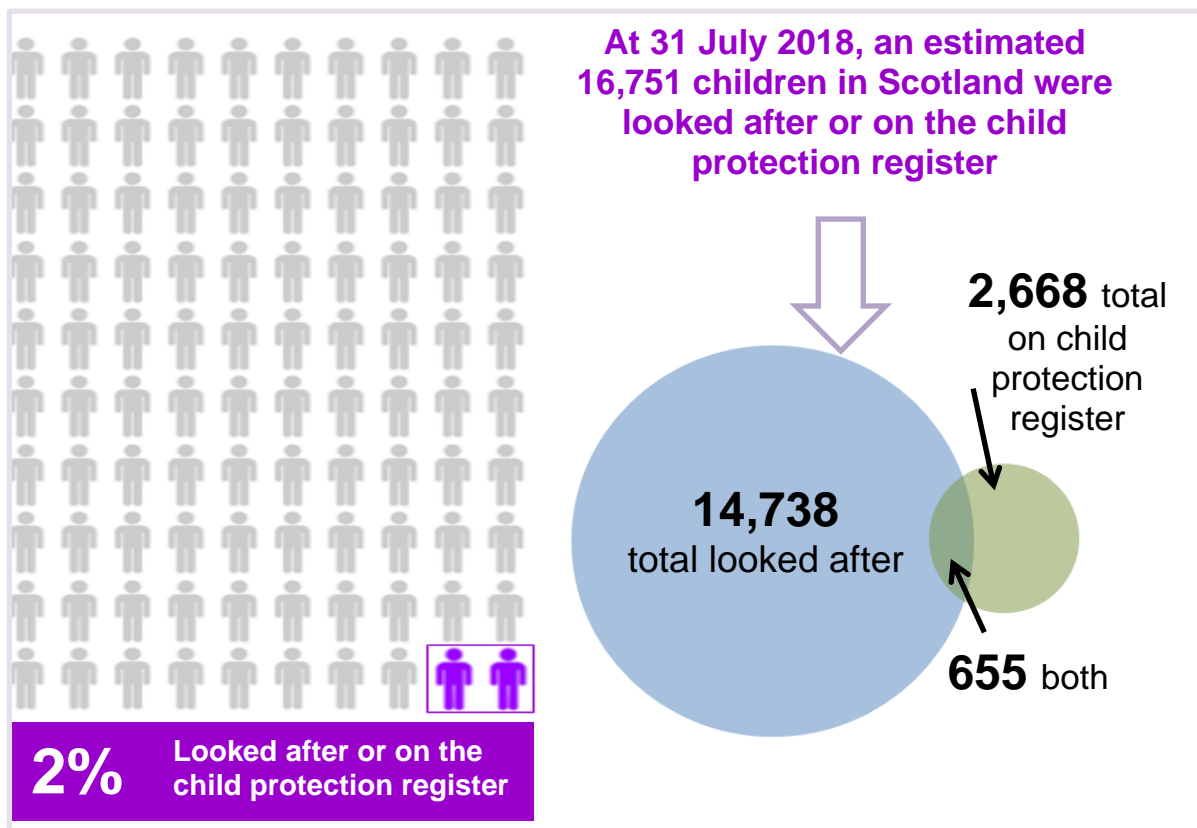


CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Children's Social Work Statistics Scotland, 2017-18



Comparisons with 2016-17:



1% decrease in number of children looked after



3% increase in number of children on child protection register



5 more young people, on average, during the year in secure care accommodation

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Introduction

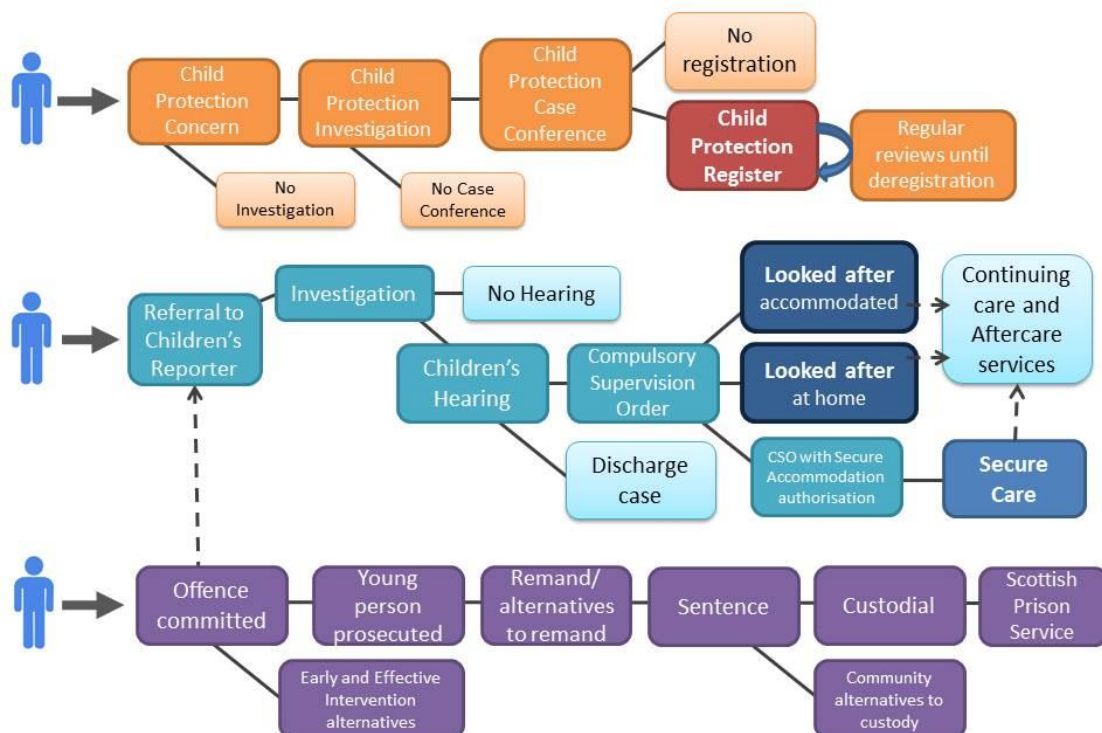
What do these statistics include?

We present information collected from local authorities and secure units on children and young people, generally younger than their mid-twenties, who were formally looked after, under child protection measures, or in secure care at some point between 1 August 2017 and 31 July 2018.

Some data tables are summarised within this publication, but full tables including extended time series are available in the spreadsheets published alongside this bulletin.

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, 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. See background note 1.1 for more information.



Coverage

Data for Children Looked After, Child Protection and Eligibility for Aftercare was collected for the period 1 August 2017 to 31 July 2018 from all local authorities in Scotland, except from Glasgow City. To estimate national figures for 2017-18, the 2016-17 figures for Glasgow City have been used along with the 2017-18 figures for all other local authorities.

As a result of this, some additional tables that are usually published alongside this publication have not been produced. The decisions on which tables to exclude were made on the basis that if Glasgow City's data made up a significant proportion of the count in any of the individual breakdowns reported in a table, then it was decided not to publish these tables at national level. This is because a high proportion of the national estimate in these breakdowns is comprised solely of Glasgow City's data and any changes for Glasgow City's figures that have occurred over the year for these breakdowns will have a significant impact on the national figure.

This issue also affects reporting of the scale of changes that have occurred since last year. If the impact of the absence of data for Glasgow City for 2018 has had a major impact on the percentage change over the year, then this is clearly highlighted in the commentary accompanying the affected table. Further information on the impact of using 2017 data for Glasgow City is available in the [Background Notes](#).

The figures for Secure Care are collected directly from secure units and, therefore, are unaffected by this issue.

Scottish Government are currently working with Glasgow City to secure the provision of the Children Looked After, Child Protection and Eligibility for Aftercare returns for 2017-18. If the returns are provided to Scottish Government, then this publication will be updated to include the data from Glasgow City.

Children Looked After



The total number of children looked after has fallen for the sixth consecutive year



The number of children starting to become looked after **decreased**.



The number of children ceasing to be looked after **increased**, compared with 2017.

This section presents data on children looked after during the period from 1 August 2017 to 31 July 2018. This will be referred to as 2018 for ease of reporting (with 2016-17 referred to as 2017 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 which require specialist care, or involvement in the youth justice system.

At 31 July 2018, there were an estimated 14,738 looked after children – a decrease of 159 (1%) from 2017. This is the sixth consecutive year the numbers have decreased following a peak of 16,248 in 2012. The number of children ceasing to be looked after each year has been consistently more than the numbers becoming looked after over this period– see main tables 1.3 and 1.4.

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 normal place of residence), foster care, residential unit or school, a secure unit, with prospective adopters, or in kinship care (where they are placed with friends or relatives).

Table 1.1 and Chart 1 show the proportion of children being looked after at home has decreased over the last decade, with an estimated 26% of the total in this group in 2018 compared to 43% in 2008. Increasing numbers of children are being looked after away from home in

community settings, in particular with foster carers (34% of the total). Foster care and kinship care are the most common settings for looked after children in 2018. Numbers of children looked after in residential care settings have been fairly static over recent years at around 10% of the overall total.

Table 1.1: Number and percentage of children looked after at 31 July, in each type of accommodation^(1,4)

Placement type	Number			Percentage		
	2008	2017	2018	2008	2017	2018
In the community	13,275	13,388	13,219	89%	90%	90%
At home with parents	6,360	3,766	3,818	43%	25%	26%
With Kinship Carers: friends/relatives	2,399	4,138	4,103	16%	28%	28%
With Foster Carers provided by LA	3,579	3,509	3,529	24%	24%	24%
With Foster Carers purchased by LA	664	1,743	1,529	4%	12%	10%
With prospective adopters	237	197	190	2%	1%	1%
In other community ⁽²⁾	36	35	50	0%	0%	0%
Residential Accommodation	1,613	1,509	1,519	11%	10%	10%
In local authority home	695	619	585	5%	4%	4%
In voluntary home	58	127	122	0%	1%	1%
In residential school	649	375	395	4%	3%	3%
In secure accommodation	93	56	52	1%	0%	0%
Crisis care	35	0	0	0%	0%	0%
In other residential ⁽³⁾	83	332	365	1%	2%	2%
Total looked after children	14,888	14,897	14,738	100%	100%	100%

(1) Information on the number of children looked after by accommodation type is available back to 1971 in chart 1 data of the spreadsheet version of the associated downloadable publication tables:

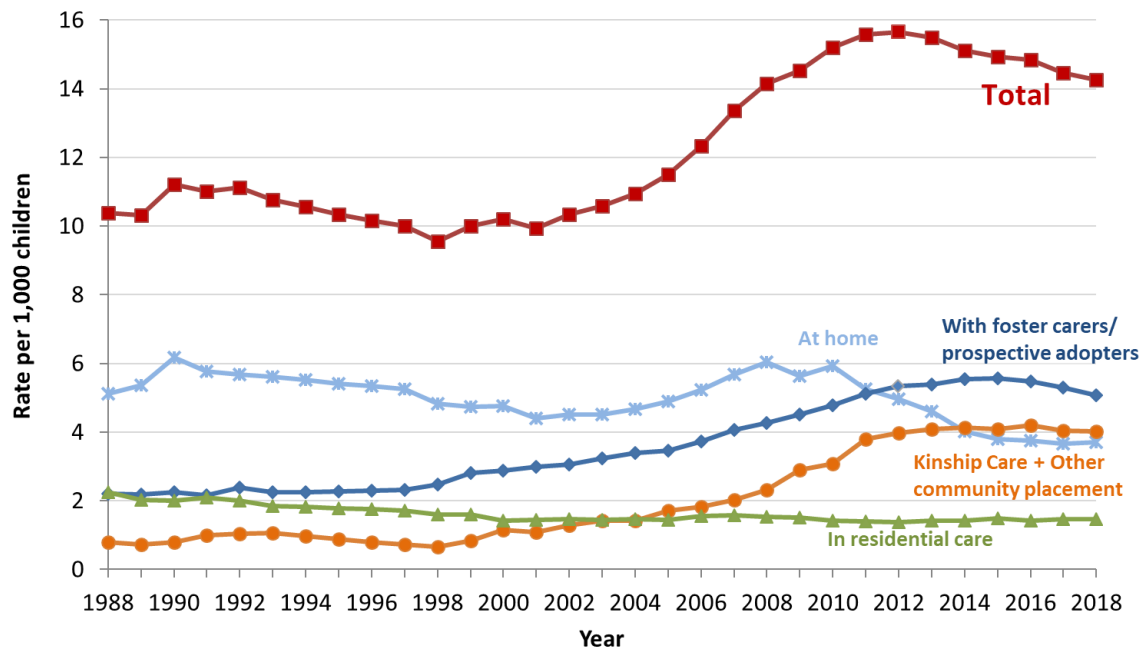
<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Children/PubChildrenSocialWork>

(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.

(4) Data for 2018 is estimated by using 2017 figures for Glasgow City and 2018 figures for all other local authorities.

Chart 1: Children looked after per 1,000 children under 18 by type of accommodation, 1988-2018⁽¹⁾



(1) Data for 2018 is estimated by using 2017 figures for Glasgow City and 2018 figures for all other local authorities.

Care Plan

When children become looked after, a care plan should be produced. 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 95% of the estimated 14,738 children who were looked after at the end of July 2018 had a current care plan, remaining around the same level as 2017. Of those looked after away from home with kinship carers, only 90% had a current care plan. This compares with 98-99% for other placement types for those looked after away from home.

Table 1.2: Children looked after with and without a current care plan, at 31 July 2018^(1,2)

	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 a current care plan	3,636	10,423	3,710	4,971	236	1,506	14,059
Without a current care plan	182	497	393	87	4	13	679
Total	3,818	10,920	4,103	5,058	240	1,519	14,738
With a current care plan	95%	95%	90%	98%	98%	99%	95%
Without a current care plan	5%	5%	10%	2%	2%	1%	5%
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

(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.

(2) Data is estimated using 2017 figures for Glasgow City and 2018 figures for all other local authorities.

Children starting and ceasing to be looked after

The reduction in total numbers being looked after is simply because more people are leaving care than starting.

As shown in table 1.3, an estimated 4,063 episodes of care began between 1 August 2017 and 31 July 2018. This represents a 3% decrease from the 4,186 episodes of care beginning in 2017.

Table 1.3: Number of children starting to be looked after by age^(1,3)

Age	Number			Percentage		
	2008	2017	2018	2008	2017	2018
Under 1	502	647	632	10	15	16
1-4	1,132	972	884	22	23	22
5-11	1,537	1,287	1,302	30	31	32
12-15	1,758	1,191	1,173	34	28	29
16-17	225	*	*	4	*	*
18-21 ⁽²⁾	5	*	*	0	*	*
Not known	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	5,159	4,186	4,063	100	100	100

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

(2) The 18-21 category in this table may include a small number of looked after young people who were over 21 years.

(3) Data for 2018 is estimated by using 2017 figures for Glasgow City and 2018 figures for all other local authorities.

Table 1.3 also shows that over the last 10 years children have started episodes of care at younger ages. In 2008, 32% of children starting episodes of care were under five years of age. By 2018 this had risen to 37%, although this is a decline from a peak of 41% in 2014. A large proportion of the under-five group are the under-one year olds, and the

proportion in this youngest group has increased from 10% in 2008 to 16% in 2018.

There were slightly more boys than girls starting episodes of care in 2018 – 54% boys compared to 46% girls, compared with 51% of the total under 18 population in Scotland being male in 2018¹. The gender split of those starting episodes of care has remained consistent at 54% male and 46% female over the last 3 years.

Table 1.4 shows the number of episodes of care which ceased during 2017-18 by length of time looked after. There were an estimated 4,412 episodes of care which ceased between 1 August 2017 and 31 July 2018, an increase of 3% from the previous year. For the local authorities for which we have 2018 data, the number of children who ceased episodes of care increased by 4% in 2018. This is because zero change in the figures is assumed for Glasgow City over the year due to lack of data for 2018, so all the change in 2018 is due to more people who ceased episodes of care in the 31 other local authorities.

The length of time that children ceasing to be looked after were in care for remained similar between 2017 and 2018. However, when compared with 2008, there are a higher proportion of children being looked after for more than five years, and a lower proportion looked after for only a period of weeks. This is in line with the policy that children should remain looked after until a permanent placement is found.

Table 1.4: Number of children ceasing to be looked after, by length of time looked after ^(1,2)

Length of time looked after	Number			Percentage		
	2008	2017	2018	2008	2017	2018
Under 6 weeks	460	235	213	10	5	5
6 weeks to under 6 months	504	337	325	11	8	7
6 months to under 1 year	803	594	597	18	14	14
1 year to under 3 years	1,591	1,521	1,530	35	36	35
3 years to under 5 years	653	658	697	14	15	16
5 years and over	414	929	1,050	9	22	24
Not known	88	0	0	2	0	0
Total	4,513	4,274	4,412	100	100	100

(1) Excludes children who are on a planned series of short term placements. If a child ceases to be looked after more than once during the year they will be counted more than once.

(2) Data for 2018 is estimated by using 2017 figures for Glasgow City and 2018 figures for all other local authorities.

¹ [National Records of Scotland, Projected Population of Scotland \(2016-based\)](#)

When a child ceases being looked after, a destination category is recorded (Table 1.5). In 2018, for the first time, the destinations of Kinship Care Order and Continuing Care were recorded. 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.

Most children (57% in 2018) go home to their biological parents and 18% go to live in kinship care with friends or relatives or leave care through a Kinship Care Order. The proportion of children leaving care due to being adopted fell from 9% in 2017 to 7% in 2018, although this remains much higher than the 3% recorded in 2008. The majority of adoptions (67%) are of children aged under five years old, as shown in additional table AT1.9. There is a much more even spread of ages of young people leaving care to go home or to live with friends and relatives. There has been an improvement in data quality over the past five years, as shown by the large decrease of the 'Not known' category in Table 1.5.

Table 1.5: Number of children ceasing to be looked after by destination
(1,2,5)

Destination after leaving care	Number			Percentage		
	2008	2017	2018	2008	2017	2018
Home with (biological) parents	2,336	2,326	2,502	52%	54%	57%
Kinship carers: Friends/relatives ⁽³⁾	377	877	662	8%	21%	15%
Kinship Care Order ⁽³⁾	-	-	113	-	-	3%
Former foster carers ⁽³⁾	47	123	84	1%	3%	2%
Continuing Care ⁽³⁾	-	-	116	-	-	3%
Adoption	137	367	321	3%	9%	7%
Supported accommodation / own tenancy	282	283	278	6%	7%	6%
Other ⁽⁴⁾	317	285	317	7%	7%	7%
Not known	1,017	13	19	23%	0%	0%
Total	4,513	4,274	4,412	100%	100%	100%

(1) Table excludes planned series of short term placements. 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. Some totals do not exactly equal the sum of their component parts due to the effects of rounding.

(2) Figures for 2017-18 are provisional and may be revised in 2018-19.

(3) 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.

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

(5) Data for 2018 is estimated by using 2017 figures for Glasgow City and 2018 figures for all other local authorities.

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 2017 to 31 July 2018, an estimated 72% had a pathway plan and 70% had a pathway co-ordinator (table 1.6), a decrease from 73% and 75% respectively in 2017. 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 children whose last placement was at home, 52% were estimated to have a pathway plan and 53% a pathway coordinator, compared with 79% and 77% 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 2017-18^(1,2,3)

	Number			Percentage		
	Looked after at home	Looked after away from home	Total	Looked after at home	Looked after away from home	Total
With a pathway plan at discharge	190	813	1,003	52	79	72
Without a pathway plan at discharge	176	210	386	48	21	28
With a nominated pathway co-ord at discharge	195	784	979	53	77	70
Without a nominated pathway co-ord at discharge	171	239	410	47	23	30
Total	366	1,023	1,389	100	100	100

(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.

(3) Data is estimated using 2017 figures for Glasgow City and 2018 figures for all other local authorities.

Aftercare services

Table 1.7a shows the number of young people eligible for aftercare services on 31 July 2018 by age and Table 1.7b shows the percentage of these young people in receipt of aftercare.

Since 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. As this is an extension of the original policy, the data in this publication are unlikely to be a full report on the additional eligible age group. These figures will continue to improve in quality in future publications as extension of support services to this group becomes more completely embedded. Figures have already risen from 4,602 in 2016 to 6,109 in 2018 as a result of better reporting of the over-21 age group.

There were an estimated 6,109 young people reported to be eligible for aftercare services on 31 July 2018, of whom 62% were known to be receiving aftercare.

For young people eligible for aftercare, more than half have taken up these services in some way across all age groups up to age 21. For the over-21 age group, the majority are not receiving aftercare, which may be expected given that this is a relatively recent implementation, and many of this group may have moved onto adult services where required.

Table 1.7a: Number of young people eligible for aftercare services by age^(1,2), 2018

Status	16	17	18	19-21	22+	Total
In receipt of aftercare	215	438	753	1,720	691	3,817
Not in receipt of aftercare	84	187	359	732	930	2,292
Total eligible for aftercare	299	625	1,112	2,452	1,621	6,109

(1) Age on 31 July 2018

(2) Data is estimated using 2017 figures for Glasgow City and 2018 figures for all other local authorities.

Table 1.7b: Percentage of eligible young people in receipt of aftercare services by age^(1,2), 2018

Status	16	17	18	19-21	22+	Total
In receipt of aftercare	72%	70%	68%	70%	43%	62%
Not in receipt of aftercare	28%	30%	32%	30%	57%	38%
Total eligible for aftercare	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

(1) Age on 31 July 2018

(2) Data estimated using 2017 figures for Glasgow City and 2018 figures for all other local authorities.

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.

The data in [Table 1.5](#) shows that 116 children who ceased to be looked after between 1 August 2017 and 31 July 2018 stayed in 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. This group who stayed in a Continuing Care placement form a small part of the population of care leavers. The data in [Table 1.5](#) only includes those who entered Continuing Care when they left care in 2017-18. Because the 'higher age' for eligibility has been rising annually as part of an agreed roll out strategy, this data, therefore, only includes those aged between 16 and 19. The Continuing Care policy will be fully commenced by April 2020, allowing all eligible care leavers to remain in their care setting from age 16 until their 21st birthday.

In the eligible for aftercare collection there is additional information on the population in Continuing Care that can be used to supplement the data in [Table 1.5](#). [Table 1.8](#) shows that in addition to the 116 young people recorded as ceasing to be looked after and staying in Continuing Care, there were an additional 92 eligible for aftercare in Continuing Care. Therefore, in total there were 208 young people recorded as being in Continuing Care in 2017-18.

It should be noted that this is likely to be an underestimate of the total number in Continuing Care as some local authorities have been unable to return the new category of data on Continuing Care as a destination

for those ceasing to be looked after in this first year of collection. Also, no Continuing Care figures for Glasgow City are available as data was not provided in 2017-18. We will be working with local authorities to gather feedback on the process of data collection, and make changes to improve the completeness of the return next year, and ongoing.

Table 1.8: Children in Continuing Care⁽¹⁾

	Recorded as ceasing to be looked after with a destination of Continuing Care	Recorded as being in Continuing Care and eligible for aftercare ⁽²⁾	Total
Number of children	116	92	208

(1) These figures are likely to be underestimates of the number in Continuing Care as some local authorities have been unable to return the new category of data in this first year of collection.

(2) There were 30 additional children recorded as being in Continuing Care and eligible for aftercare, but they were also included in the ceasing to be looked after with a destination of Continuing Care figures. They have been omitted from this column to avoid double counting.

Cross-UK looked after comparisons

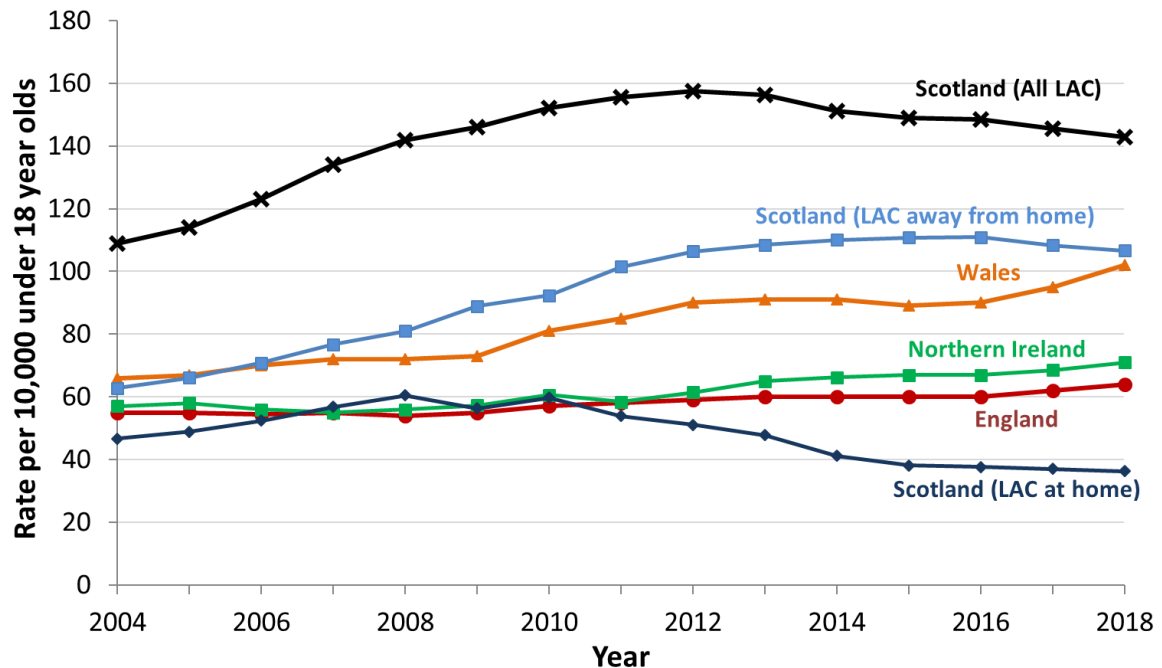
The definition of “looked after children” varies across the countries within the UK which makes cross UK comparisons difficult. In Scotland, children placed at home require a supervision order from the children’s panel, whereas in England and Wales, being looked after at home is an informal situation put in place by a social worker, often as an interim measure until a foster or kinship care placement can be found.

To improve comparability, the Scotland figure at 31 March has been used, rather than the published 31 July figure, as the other nations publish on this date.

[Chart 2](#) gives Scottish figures including a breakdown for children looked after at home and away from home for comparability with the other nations. Overall, Scotland had the highest rate of looked after children in 2018 at an estimated 143 children per 10,000 under 18 population, the highest rate in the UK. The rate for only children looked after away from home in Scotland is still the highest in the UK at 107 per 10,000 under 18 population. However, this is only slightly higher than the rate of

looked after children in Wales (102 per 10,000). The rates in Northern Ireland (71 per 10,000) and England (64 per 10,000) are much lower.

Chart 2: Cross-UK comparison of rate of looked after children per 10,000 children, 2004-2018⁽¹⁾



(1) Data for Scotland for 2018 is estimated by using 2017 figures for Glasgow City and 2018 figures for all other local authorities.

Links to the cross-UK data underlying Chart 3 can be found in Background Note 1.7. There is more information on the comparability of looked after children data across the UK:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Children/socialservicestats>

There are **additional tables** on looked after children available at:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Children/PubChildrenSocialWork>

Child Protection



Number of children on the child protection register increased slightly in 2018, but remains lower than the recent peak recorded in 2014



Around half of children were **on the child protection register for less than 6 months**



Causes for concern relating to **emotional abuse and neglect** were the most prevalent

This section presents data on children on the child protection register from 1 August 2017 to 31 July 2018. This will be referred to as 2018 for ease of reporting (with 2016-17 referred to as 2017 etc.). 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).

2017-18 was the sixth year that child protection data has been collected entirely at individual level. As the series has lengthened, more in-depth validation of the data has been possible, which gives a high level of confidence in its accuracy. Some of the 2017 figures in this publication have been revised as part of the 2018 validation process.

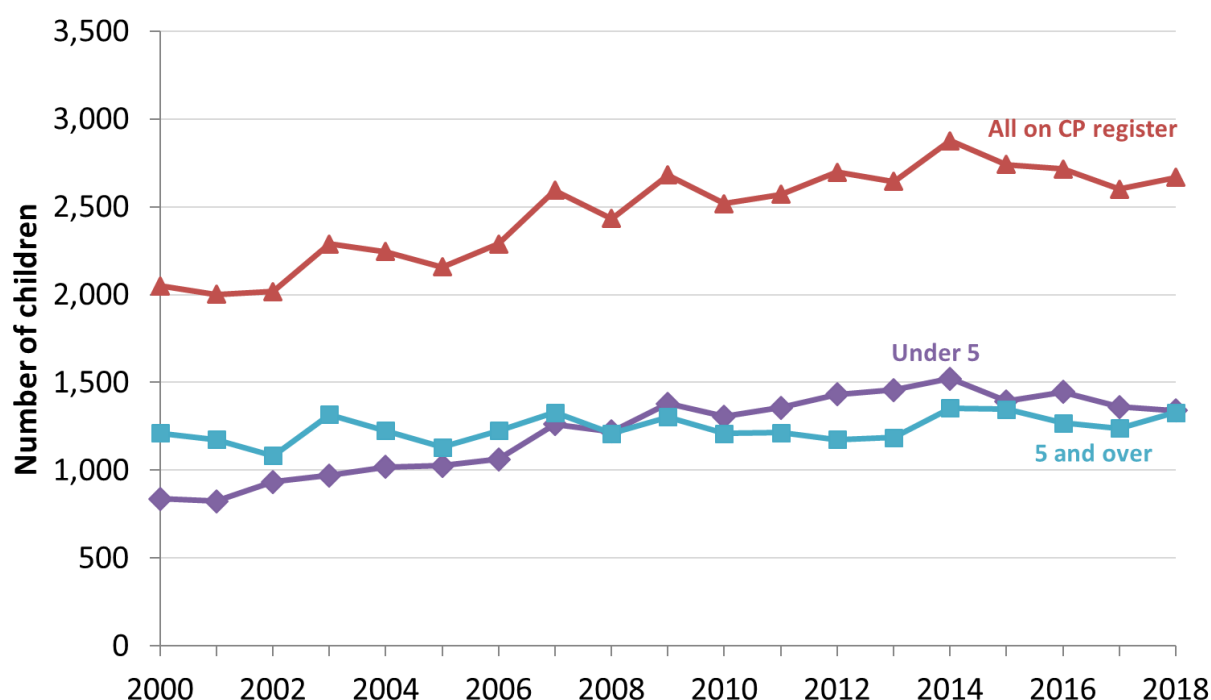
Children on the child protection register

The number of children on the child protection register increased from 2,600 in 2017 to an estimated 2,668 in 2018 (a 3% increase). [Chart 3](#) shows that the number of children on the child protection register fluctuated regularly, and there was a general upwards trend until 2014. However, in the last four years there has been an overall decrease, although there was a slight increase over the latest year.

Following updated information from local authorities, the number of children on the register at 31 July 2017 has been amended from 2,631 to 2,600. It should be noted that relatively large year-on-year changes

are experienced in a number of local authorities (see Table 2.4 for local authority level breakdowns). The number of children on the register in 2018 will also be revised in next year's publication. It should be noted that this revision is usually in a downwards direction, therefore the increase in the number on the register may be smaller than the 3% reported once the 2018 figure is revised.

Chart 3: Number of children on the child protection register at 31 July, by age, 2000-2018⁽¹⁾



(1) Data for 2018 is estimated by using 2017 figures for Glasgow City and 2018 figures for all other local authorities.

In 2018, half of children on the child protection register were aged under five and half were over 5. Since 2008 there have been more children aged under five than over five on the child protection register, with the gap narrowing in 2018 when there were an estimated 1,340 children aged under 5 and 1,328 aged 5 and over on the child protection register.

There is no strong gender pattern among children on the child protection register – 49% were boys, 47% were girls and the remaining 4% were unborn children ([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^(1,4)

Gender	Number			Percentage		
	2008	2017	2018	2008	2017	2018
Boys	1,193	1,262	1,307	49%	49%	49%
Girls	1,218	1,216	1,254	50%	47%	47%
Unborns ⁽²⁾	22	122	107	1%	5%	4%
Unknown	1	0	0	0%	0%	0%
All children	2,433	2,600	2,668	100%	100%	100%

(1) Figures for 2017-18 are provisional and may be revised in 2018-19. Figures for 2016-17 have been revised for this publication.

(2) The rate shown in this table excludes unborn children as their gender is unknown. 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.

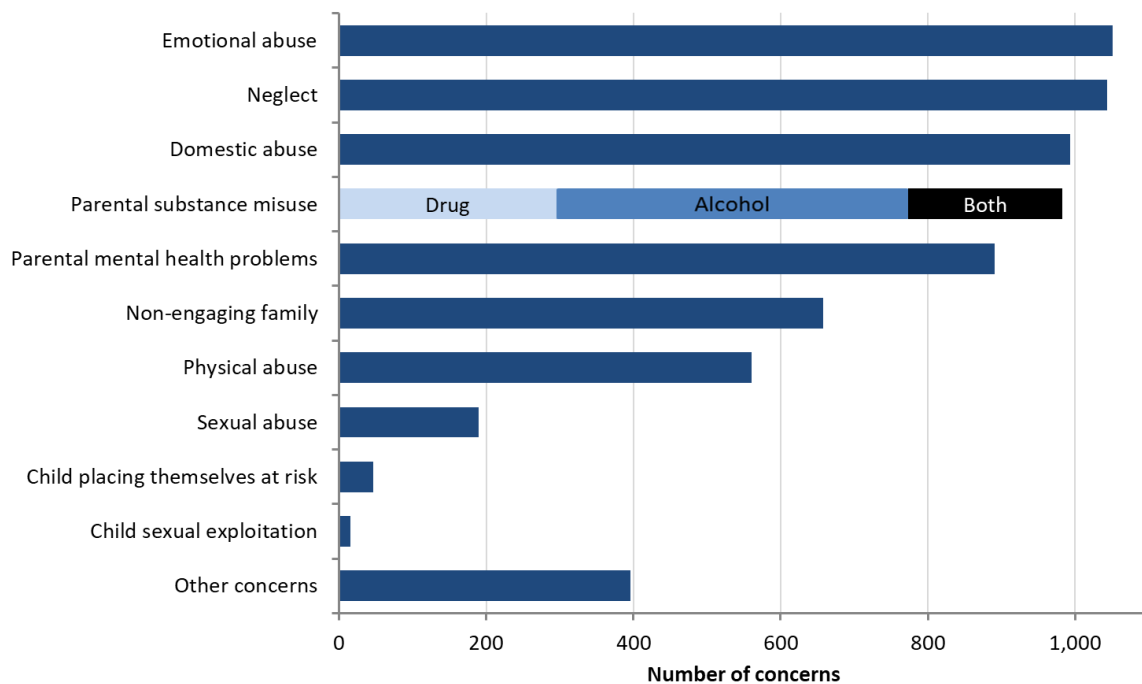
(3) Source: National Records of Scotland, Projected Population of Scotland, 2016-based, 2018 projection for 0-15 year olds.

(4) Data for 2018 is estimated by using 2017 figures for Glasgow City and 2018 figures for all other local authorities.

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 estimated 2,668 children on the child protection register at 31 July 2018, there were 6,830 concerns at the case conferences at which they were registered – an average of 2.6 concerns per conference.

[Chart 4](#) shows the most common concerns identified were emotional abuse and neglect, with 1,051 and 1,044 concerns identified respectively. The next most common concerns were domestic abuse (993 concerns identified) and parental substance misuse (983 concerns identified). The parental substance misuse category is further broken down by the type of substance misused. Alcohol misuse only was identified as a concern in 477 conferences, drug misuse only in 296 conferences and both in 210 conferences. Data is shown in full in additional table AT4.3.

Chart 4: Concerns identified at the case conferences of children who were on the child protection register, 2018⁽¹⁾



(1) Data is estimated using 2017 figures for Glasgow City and 2018 figures for all other local authorities.

Child protection registrations and deregistrations

The number of registrations to the child protection register increased by 1% between 2017 and 2018. The proportion of children registered who had never been registered before fell to an estimated 82% in 2018, down from 83% in 2017 ([Table 2.2](#)). The remaining 18% of registrations on the child protection register were for children who had been registered previously. The largest group of these children are those that had been previously registered at least 2 years ago, with this group making up 10% of all registrations in 2018.

Table 2.2: Number of registrations following an initial, pre-birth or transfer-in case conference by length of time since previous deregistration⁽¹⁾

Time since last deregistration	Number			Percentage		
	2008	2017	2018	2008	2017	2018
Never been registered before	2,355	3,552	3,564	84%	83%	82%
Registered before but time unknown	5	0	0	0%	0%	0%
Less than 6 months	95	123	86	3%	3%	2%
6 months - < 1 year	68	97	108	2%	2%	2%
1 year - < 18 months	48	58	71	2%	1%	2%
18 months - < 2 years	53	70	58	2%	2%	1%
2 years or more	181	363	433	6%	8%	10%
Not known if been registered before	9	30	7	0%	1%	0%
Total	2,814	4,293	4,327	100%	100%	100%

(1) Data for 2018 is estimated by using 2017 figures for Glasgow City and 2018 figures for all other local authorities.

Table 2.3 shows the numbers of deregistrations from the child protection register. There were an estimated 4,365 deregistrations from the child protection register in the year to 31 July 2018, a small decrease from the 4,402 recorded in 2017. The most common reason for deregistration in 2018 was an improved home situation, recorded in 55% of cases.

Table 2.3: Length of time registered and reason for deregistration from the child protection register⁽¹⁾

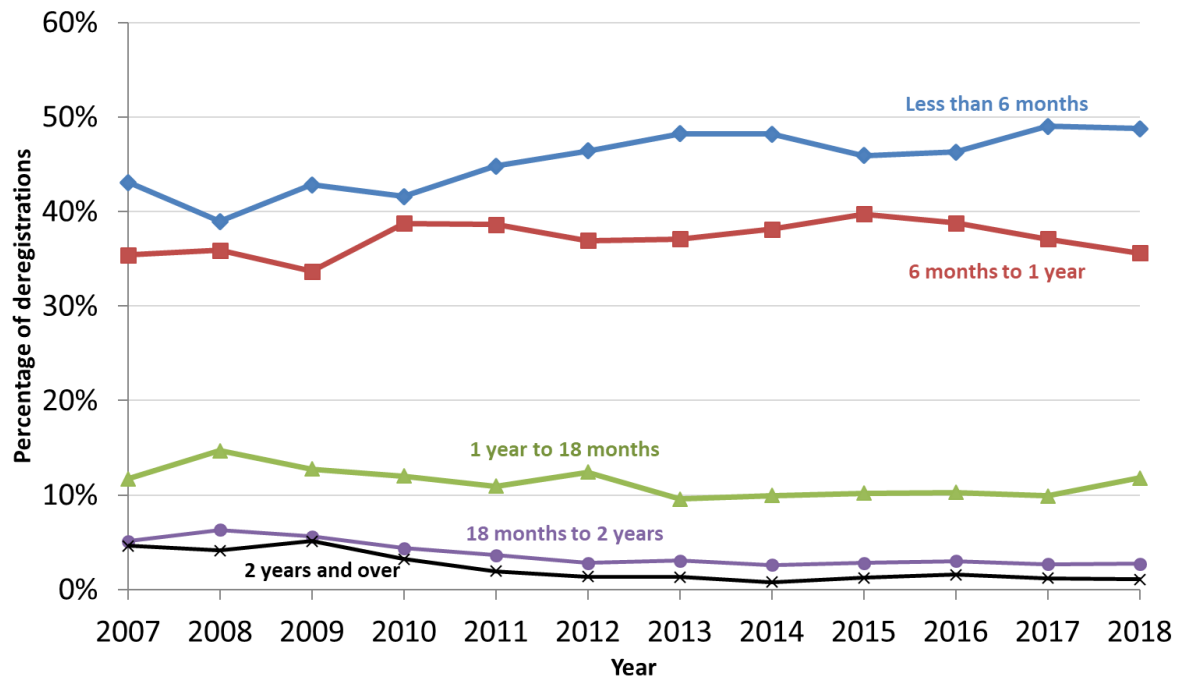
	2008	2017	2018	2008	2017	2018
Length of time registered						
Less than 6 months	1,245	2,157	2,128	39%	49%	49%
6 months to under 1 year	1,148	1,633	1,555	36%	37%	36%
1 year to under 18 months	470	437	515	15%	10%	12%
18 months to under 2 years	202	119	119	6%	3%	3%
2 years or more	132	53	47	4%	1%	1%
No date of registration information	0	3	1	0%	0%	0%
Reason for de-registration						
Child taken into care & risk reduced	411	600	531	13%	14%	12%
Child with other carers	218	281	327	7%	6%	7%
Child died	4	10	10	0%	0%	0%
Removal of perpetrator	112	153	153	4%	3%	4%
Improved home situation	830	2,367	2,419	26%	54%	55%
Child automatically de-registered because of age	12	7	8	0%	0%	0%
Child moved away - no continued risk	24	31	25	1%	1%	1%
Other reason	1,586	953	892	50%	22%	20%
Reason not known	0	0	0	0%	0%	0%
Total	3,197	4,402	4,365	100%	100%	100%

(1) Data for 2018 is estimated by using 2017 figures for Glasgow City and 2018 figures for all other local authorities.

Chart 5 shows that since 2015, the percentage of deregistrations of children who spent 6 months to under 1 year on the child protection

register has decreased each year to the current figure of 36% of deregistrations. There has been a corresponding increase over this period in the proportion of deregistrations for children who spent less than 6 months on the child protection register.

Chart 5: Percentage of deregistrations by length of time on the child protection register, 2007-2018⁽¹⁾



(1) Data for 2018 is estimated by using 2017 figures for Glasgow City and 2018 figures for all other local authorities.

Child Protection Register Geographical Comparisons

Within Scotland

Table 2.4 shows the number and rate of children under 16 who were on the child protection register in Scotland in 2018 by local authority. The rate varied from 0.5 per 1,000 children in East Renfrewshire to 6.7 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. In many cases, there are no obvious reasons for changes, although in some areas, sibling groups entering and leaving the system has led to fluctuating numbers.

Table 2.4: Number of children on the child protection register and rate per 1,000 population aged 0-15 by local authority^(1,2)

Local authority	2017		2018	
	Number on Register	Rate ^(3,4)	Number on Register	Rate ^(3,4)
Aberdeen City	80	2.3	68	1.9
Aberdeenshire	77	1.6	77	1.5
Angus	51	2.6	64	3.3
Argyll & Bute	31	2.4	31	2.4
City of Edinburgh	235	3.0	190	2.4
Clackmannanshire	26	2.9	36	4.0
Dumfries & Galloway	78	3.3	94	4.0
Dundee City	69	2.9	73	3.0
East Ayrshire	96	4.5	127	5.9
East Dunbartonshire	42	2.2	57	3.0
East Lothian	45	2.4	36	1.9
East Renfrewshire	20	1.1	9	0.5
Falkirk	80	2.8	88	3.1
Fife	172	2.7	176	2.7
Glasgow City ⁽⁵⁾	405	4.1	-	-
Highland	102	2.6	83	2.1
Inverclyde	33	2.6	31	2.4
Midlothian	64	3.7	45	2.6
Moray	79	4.8	62	3.7
Na h-Eileanan Siar	*	*	*	*
North Ayrshire	60	2.6	155	6.7
North Lanarkshire	131	2.1	95	1.5
Orkney Islands	*	*	*	*
Perth & Kinross	81	3.3	76	3.1
Renfrewshire	107	3.6	103	3.4
Scottish Borders	39	2.0	50	2.6
Shetland Islands	*	*	8	1.9
South Ayrshire	60	3.4	44	2.5
South Lanarkshire	140	2.5	184	3.3
Stirling	47	3.0	56	3.6
West Dunbartonshire	71	4.5	54	3.4
West Lothian	70	2.0	82	2.3

(1) Figures for 2017-18 are provisional and may be revised in 2018-19.

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

(3) Per 1,000 population aged 0-15. Source: National Records of Scotland, 2017 mid-year population estimates and population projections for 2018

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

(5) Data for Glasgow City was not provided in 2018.

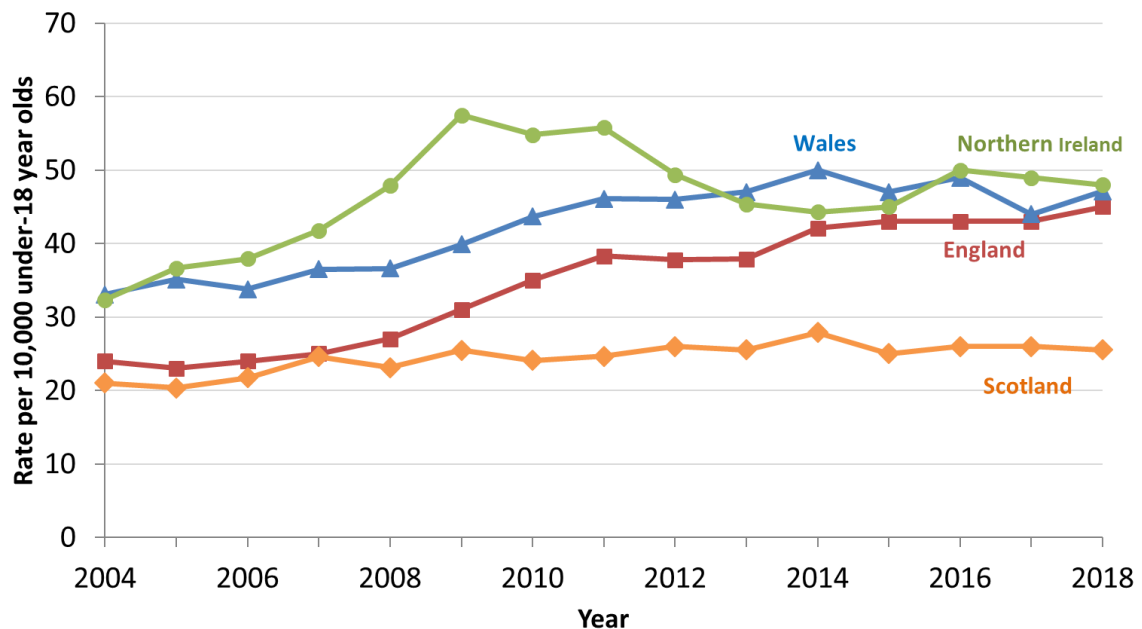
Cross-UK child protection comparisons

Child protection systems across the United Kingdom vary but are generally comparable. Scotland's 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). However, in Chart 6 we report the Scotland figures at the 31st March to allow comparison with the other countries.

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 to 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.

Chart 6: Cross-UK comparison of rate of children on the child protection register per 10,000 under 18s, 2004-2018⁽¹⁾



(1) Data for Scotland for 2018 is estimated by using 2017 figures for Glasgow City and 2018 figures for all other local authorities.

There are links to the cross-UK data underlying Chart 6 in Background Note 1.8 and more information on the comparability of child protection data across the UK here:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Children/socialservicestats>

Additional tables on child protection are available at:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Children/PubChildrenSocialWork>

Secure Care Accommodation



Average number of residents increased by 5 to 81



The number of young people admitted to secure care decreased by 15% to 211

This section presents 2017-18 data on secure care accommodation. Secure care is used for a small number of young people who present high risk to themselves or others and can only be authorised following a decision through the Children's Hearing System or a Court.

Bed complement

There were 84 secure places available in five secure units in Scotland excluding emergency beds on 31 July 2018 (Table 3.1). Furthermore, there were an additional 7 beds available across these units for emergency and respite 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 2018

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

(1) St. Mary's Kenmure provide a care service to 24 children and young people in secure care accommodation. In addition the service has 3 short term / respite beds which can be used when the service is at capacity. These are referred to as short term beds in this report.

Capacity and usage

Table 3.2 shows there were an average of 81 residents in secure care accommodation between 1 August 2017 and 31 July 2018, an increase from an average of 76 in the previous year. There was an 18% decline in the average number of residents from within Scotland and an increase of 89% in the average number of residents from outside Scotland, most of whom were from England.

The number of nights emergency and short term beds were used is estimated at 287 in 2017/18. This is an increase of 219% from 90 in the previous year. The number of residents using emergency and short term beds has also increased from 25 in 2016/17 to 49 in 2017/18.

Table 3.2: Secure care accommodation capacity⁽¹⁾ and usage, 2014-2018

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	% change 2017-18
Places at year end	90	90	90	84	84	0%
Admissions during the year	232	249	256	248	211	-15%
Discharges during the year	226	245	253	257	209	-19%
Average number of residents during the year	74	82	85	76	81	7%
Residents from within Scotland	67	76	72	56	46	-18%
Residents from outside Scotland	7	6	13	19	36	89%
Minimum number of residents during the year	60	71	77	67	75	12%
Maximum number of residents during the year ⁽¹⁾	84	89	90	87	86	-2%
Number of nights emergency and short term beds used during the year ^(2,3)	5	146	50	90	287	219%
Number of residents emergency and short term beds used for during the year ^(2,3)	3	13	11	25	49	96%

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

(2) Four units reported having an emergency bed: Rossie School; Good Shepherd; Kibble; and St. Mary's Kenmure (see background notes for definition of an emergency bed).

St Mary's Kenmure also has 3 short term beds which are not subject to the same regulations as emergency beds and are integrated with the main unit.

(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 2018, 53% of young people in secure care accommodation were female (Table 3.3). 34% were aged 16 or over and more than half (64%) were aged 15 or older. Young people in secure care accommodation tend to be older than those looked after and on the child protection registers.

On 31 July 2018, 51% 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 accommodation at 31st July by gender, age at admission, disability and length of stay⁽¹⁾

	2014	2015	2016	2017	% of 2017 total	2018	% of 2018 total
Gender of residents⁽³⁾							
Males	52	59	65	46	58%	40	47%
Females	29	26	23	34	43%	45	53%
Age of Residents							
13 years old or under	5	7	9	14	18%	13	15%
14 years	12	18	18	18	23%	18	21%
15 years	31	28	27	26	33%	25	29%
16 years or over	33	32	34	22	28%	29	34%
Residents with disability⁽²⁾							
Yes	-	-	34	27	34%	43	51%
No/unknown	-	-	54	53	66%	42	49%
Length of stay of residents at year end							
Less than 1 month	13	17	20	26	33%	*	*
1 month to under 2 months	14	16	14	13	16%	15	18%
2 months to under 3 months	14	13	14	12	15%	15	18%
3 months to under 6 months	23	26	24	25	31%	28	33%
6 months to under 1 year	9	*	10	*	*	13	15%
1 year or more	8	*	6	*	*	*	*
Total	81	85	88	80	100%	85	100%

(1) As at 31 July of each year.

(2) The question was new in 2016, and asked: “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 replaced ‘additional support needs’, which did not match the definition of disability from the Equalities Act. See background note 3.22 for more information.

(4) Trans, intersex and nonbinary young people are included in the category ‘male’ for data protection purposes.

Cross-UK secure care accommodation comparisons

Table 3.4 shows secure children’s homes/secure care accommodation units, places approved, and children 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 in this Secure Care Accommodation section, the Scotland total includes a number of children that are from the rest of 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^{(1),(2),(3),(4)}

		2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
England	Number of secure children's homes	16	14	14	14	14
	Places approved	276	232	232	232	233
	Children accommodated	211	194	192	184	189
Wales	Number of secure children's homes	1	1	1	1	1
	Places approved	22	22	22	22	22
	Children accommodated	18	11	18	19	15
Scotland ⁽⁴⁾	Number of secure care units	5	5	5	5	5
	Places approved	90	90	90	84	84
	Children accommodated	80	85	84	81	81

(1) Sources: England and Wales - Children accommodated in secure children's homes statistics; 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 figures from outside Scotland include children placed on welfare grounds only.

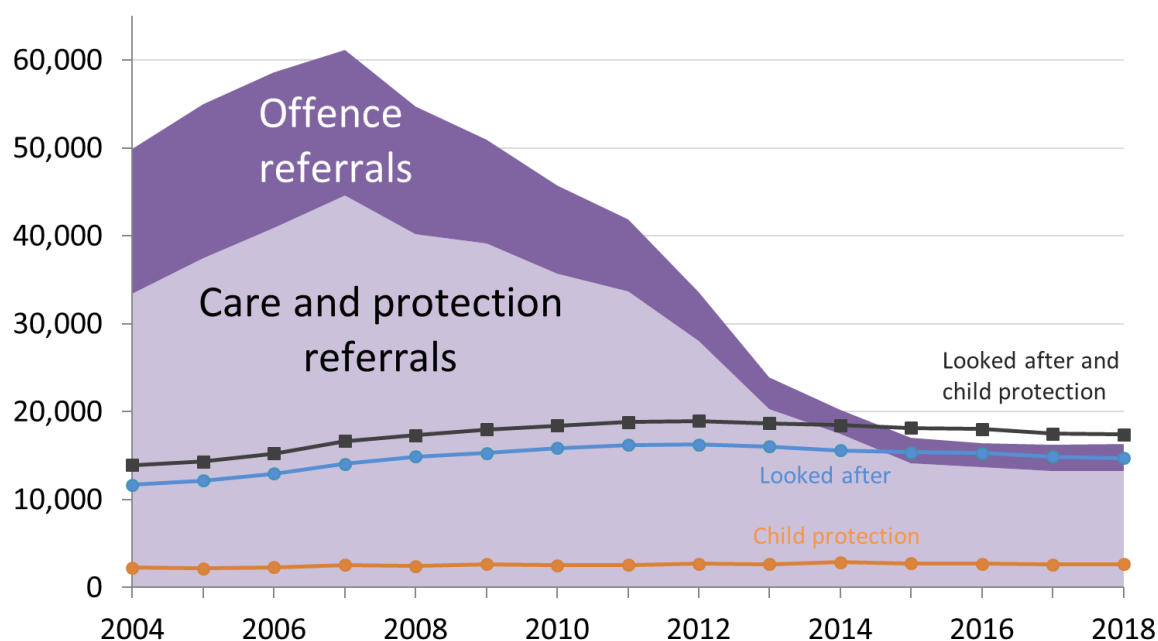
(3) As noted elsewhere, the Scotland total includes a number of children from the rest of the UK, so trends in each country based on the children's origin may be different.

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

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

Between 2008 and 2018 the number of children and young people referred to the Children's Reporter decreased by 70%² (Chart 7), 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 19% of all referrals, down from 27% in 2007/08.

Chart 7: Children Referred to the Children's Reporter and numbers looked after/on child protection register, 2004-2018



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 they are deemed necessary.

The historic increase in the number of children who are looked after or on the child protection register at a time when referrals are falling, means that the smaller number of referrals being received by the

² SCRA Official Statistics http://www.scra.gov.uk/resources_articles_category/official-statistics/

Reporters are potentially of a more complex nature and are more likely to result in being looked after or on the child protection register than in previous years. The continuing decline in numbers of children who are both looked after and on the child protection register seen since 2012 could be linked to the fall in referrals feeding through to the later stages of the social work system – however, the rate of decline has slowed, so this effect may not be particularly pronounced.

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 2017 and 31 July 2018. 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):

http://www.scra.gov.uk/resources_articles_category/official-statistics/

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

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/PubSocialWork>

1.2. This publication collates demographic data on children who were looked after during 2017-18. In June 2019, Education Outcomes for Looked After Children statistics 2017-18 will be published on a subset of these children – those whose Scottish Candidate Numbers have been supplied to Scottish Government. The education outcomes publication will be available here:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Children/EducOutcomesLAC>

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 outwith the care system. The Civil Law Statistics in Scotland are available here:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/civil-judicial-statistics/>

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 at: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Children/socialservicestats>

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 at: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Children/socialservicestats>

Equivalent data across the UK

1.7. **Looked after** statistics:

England	https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption-2017-to-2018
Wales	https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Health-and-Social-Care/Social-Services/Childrens-Services/children-receiving-care-and-support
Northern Ireland	https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/childrens-social-care-statistics-for-northern-ireland-201718

1.8. **Child protection** statistics:

England	https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-children-in-need
Wales	http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/children-receiving-care-support/?lang=en
Northern Ireland	https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/childrens-social-care-statistics-for-northern-ireland-201718

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 1 June 2018 and can be found at:-

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-secure-children-s-homes>

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 2017 and 31 July 2018, 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.

2.3. The child protection statistics survey covered the period 1 August 2017 to 31 July 2018. 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.

2.4. Data for **looked after children** and **child protection** was collected for the period 1 August 2017 to 31 July 2018 from all local authorities in Scotland, except from Glasgow City. To estimate national figures for 2017-18, the 2016-17 figures for Glasgow City have been used along with the 2017-18 figures for all other local authorities.

2.5. The **secure care** statistics in this publication were collected from five secure care units which were open at 1 August 2017.

2.6. The secure care accommodation census covered 1 August 2017 to 31 July 2018. 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.

2.7. 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: <http://data.sssc.uk.com> or contact 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
Looked after	http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Children/SurveyChildrenLookedAfter
Child protection	http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Children/SurveyChildProtection
Secure care accommodation	http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Children/SurveySecureAccommodation

Children Looked After

3.2 *Looked after child* – The definition of a looked after child is in section 17(6) of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, as amended by Schedule 2, para 9(4) of the Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007. Information on this definition is available here:

<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2011/03/10110037/2>

3.2. *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.

3.3. *Permanence order* – This is an order that the sheriff court can make for the protection and supervision 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 to the local authority. Other parental rights

and responsibilities can be shared between the local authority, birth parents and carers of the child (e.g. foster or kinship carers).

3.4. *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

3.5. There is information on the process by which children come to be looked after and legislation governing this on the Scottish Government website: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/People/Young-People/protecting/lac>

Child Protection

3.6. *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"> – Child is registered or – Child is not registered
Pre-birth	an unborn child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Child is registered or – Child is not registered
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"> – Child remains on register or – Child is de-registered
Transfer	a child already on the child protection register moving between local authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Child is de-registered or – Child remains on register

3.7. *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 2016 and 31 July 2018.

3.8. *Deregistrations* - Children who were subject to a transfer or review conference and subsequently removed from the child protection register between 1 August 2016 and 31 July 2018.

3.9. The National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland, published in 2010 and refreshed in 2014, is available here:

<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2014/05/3052>

Secure care accommodation

3.10. *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.

3.11. 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.

3.12. 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.

3.13. 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.

3.14. 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.

3.15. 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 2017-18 and age at 31 July 2018 are the actual ages for all young people.

3.16. *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.

3.17. *Emergency 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 operated such a place (including the 3 respite beds at St. Mary's Kenmure).

3.18. *Mothballed* – The term mothballed was used when recommendation 6 from the Securing our Future Initiative report recommended the targeted closure of 12 beds to bring the capacity of each of the independent secure units down to 18 beds. Beds were mothballed for the first year with on-going review meaning provision was reduced although a group of key core staff were retained to provide emergency cover if there was ever a short term need to increase capacity.

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 which 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 (e.g. legal reason data from the looked after children collection).

4.4. There is more information on the data quality of the administrative sources underlying this publication here:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Children/sourcesandsuitability/StatementAdminSources>

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 of the new individualised collection methodology. This should be borne in mind when performing cross-year comparisons.

4.6. Data collected on children in a current planned series of short-term placements were not collected from 2013/14 onwards – in consultation with local authorities and data users, it was seen to be little-used, and could therefore be dropped from the collection. Historical figures are still available from previous years' publications.

Looked after – data quality of specific variables

4.7. The data on looked after children is collected from local authority social work management information systems. There can be a delay between the data being updated on local authority management information systems and the event affecting the child occurring (e.g. a change of placement may not be updated on the system until sometime after). Therefore, the figures published here for looked after children may not present the exact correct numbers if the data received is later revised or updated at a later date. Scottish Government are currently investigating the feasibility of using new data to update the figures for previous years in order to resolve this issue.

4.8. 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). While the quality of this information is improving, it is still not being consistently recorded across local authorities. Only information on the legal reasons in place at the 31st July has been published (Table 2.5 in the additional tables).

4.9. 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

4.10. In 2012-13 the child protection data were collected entirely at individual level. The added detail and complexity to the data have increased scope for small errors. During the 2017-18 collection process, it was possible for local authorities to revise their 2016-17 data. Data revisions This, coupled with the possibility of comparing data across two different years, has helped improve on the quality of individual data and the confidence in the accuracy of this.

4.11. 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

4.12. 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.

Impact of the use of 2017 data for Glasgow City

4.13. In order to estimate national level figures for 2018, 2017 data has been used for Glasgow City along with 2018 data for the other 31 local authorities. This affects reporting of the scale of changes that have occurred since last year, since no change from last year has been assumed for Glasgow City. The potential impact of changes to the 2018 figures for Glasgow City on the headline national estimates for looked after children and child protection are evaluated below.

4.14. The estimate of the number of children looked after in Scotland on 31 July 2018 is 14,738, a 1% decrease on the 2017 figure of 14,897. The 2018 figure includes the estimated number of 2,827 children from Glasgow City who were on the child protection register at 31 July 2017. If Glasgow City's 2018 number has increased by 6% or more, then the national level figure for 2018 will no longer be an decrease on 2017.

4.15. The estimate of the number of children on the child protection register in Scotland on 31 July 2018 is 2,668, a 3% increase on the 2017 figure of 2,600. The 2018 figure includes the estimated number of 405 children from Glasgow City who were on the child protection register at 31 July 2017. If Glasgow City's 2018 number has decreased by 17% or more, then the national level figure for 2018 will no longer be an increase on 2017.

Secure Care - estimated number of nights emergency and short term beds used

4.16. Due to issues with the provision of data on emergency/short term bed usage, figures on the number of nights used at St. Mary's Kenmure have been estimated. The number of residents admitted to emergency/short term beds was provided, however the number of nights spent in those beds was not available.

4.17. In order to produce national figures for emergency/short term bed usage, the average number of nights that residents admitted to an emergency/short term bed spent in the other secure units was applied to the number of residents who used an emergency/short term bed at St. Mary's Kenmure.

4.18. The total number of nights that emergency/short term beds were used in secure units other than St. Mary's Kenmure was 185 nights. After applying this method, the final national estimated figure was 287 nights.

5. Enquiries

These data in this publication and **additional tables** on looked after children, child protection and secure care and close support accommodation are available at:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Children/PubChildrenSocialWork>

Email any requests for **further analysis** to:
childrens.statistics@gov.scot

Children and Families Statistics
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Annex A

Children's Social Work Statistics 2017-18

Publication tables

Full Excel versions of these tables with additional detail are available here:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Children/PubChildrenSocialWork>

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Children's Social Work Statistics 2017-18

Additional tables

Excel versions of these tables will be made available here:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Children/PubChildrenSocialWork>

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A National Statistics publication for Scotland

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How to access background or source data

The data collected for this statistical bulletin may be made available on request, subject to consideration of legal and ethical factors. Please contact childrens.statistics@gov.scot for further information.

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