

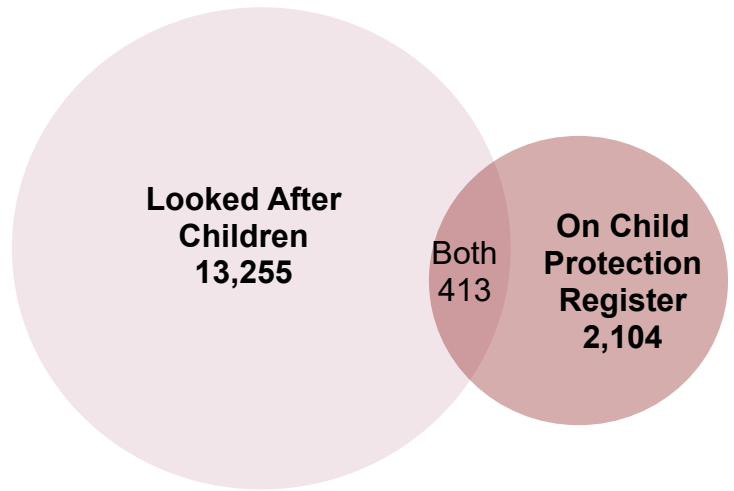
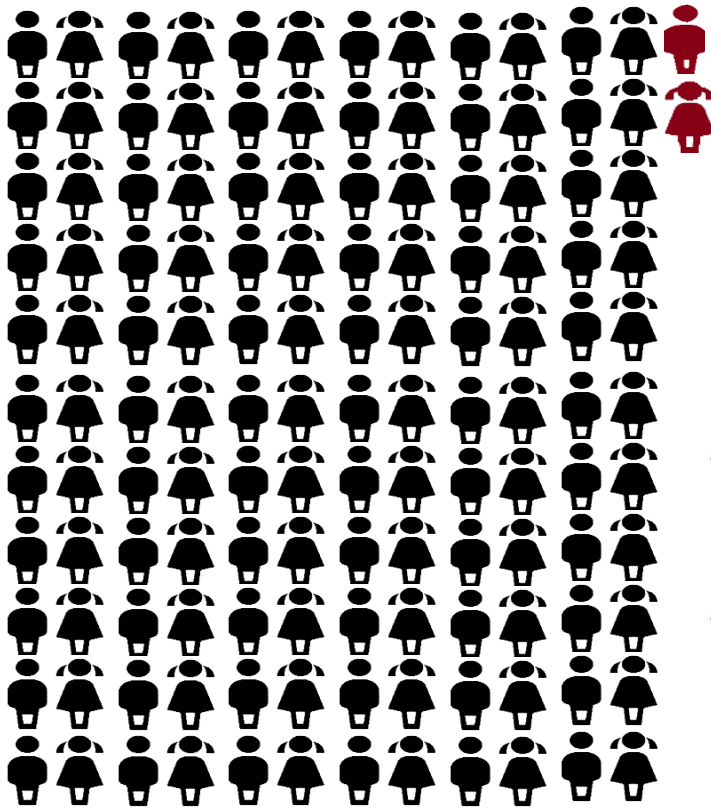


CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Children's Social Work Statistics 2020/21

As at 31 July 2021

14,946 children in Scotland were
Looked After or on the Child Protection
Register – 1.5% of Scotland's under 18
population



Compared with 2020:

- ↓ 8% decrease in the number of Looked After Children
- ↓ 20% decrease in the number of children on the Child Protection Register



Compared with 2020:

- ↓ 6 fewer young people, on average, resided in Secure Care Accommodation

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Introduction

What do these statistics include?

These statistics include data collected from 32 local authorities on children and young people who were formally Looked After and/or under Child Protection measures. Additionally, these statistics include data from 5 Secure Care units on children and young people who were in Secure Care Accommodation.

The figures relate to the year 1 August 2020 to 31 July 2021. This will be referred to as 2021 throughout for ease of reporting, with 2019-20 referred to as 2020, and so on. The 'previous year' refers to 2020 (i.e. 2019-20).

All data used to produce the charts is available in the [supporting files](#) accompanying the publication as well as additional tables.

Looked After Children

Children may become looked after for various reasons including: abuse or neglect at home, having complex disabilities requiring specialist care, or involvement in the youth justice system. The [Each and Every Child Initiative](#) aims to change how we speak about care experience. We know that children and young people with care experience do not like the phrase 'Looked After Children'. We are committed to improving our language around those with care experience. In this report, we use the current legal definition of 'Looked After Children' under the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 – broadly defined as those in the care of their local authority.

Child Protection

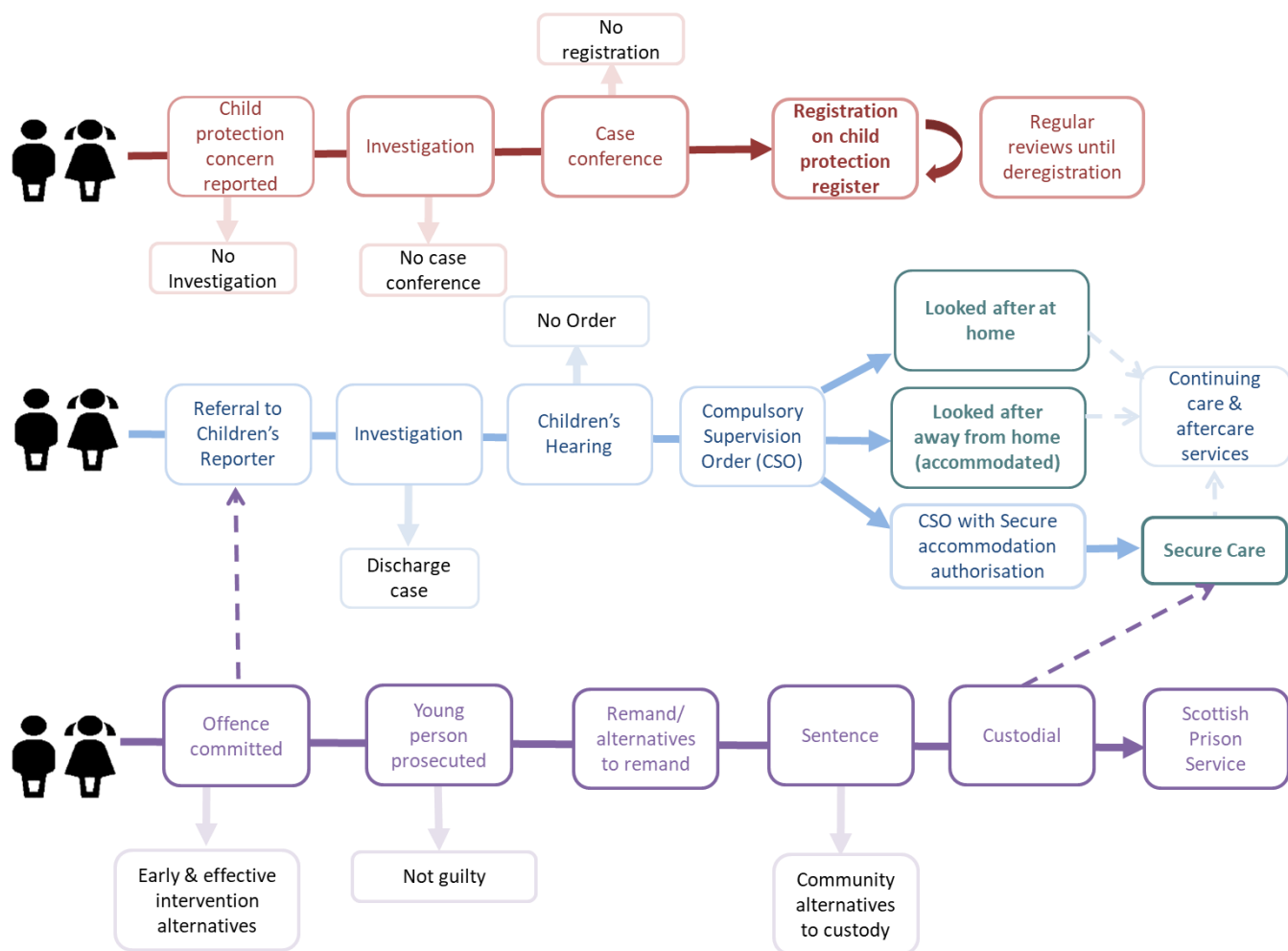
Child Protection refers to protecting a child from abuse or neglect. This process is usually initiated when police, social work, or health professionals determine that a child may have been abused or may be at risk of significant harm. If a child is believed to be at risk of significant harm, their name will be added to the Child Protection Register.

Secure Care Accommodation

Secure Care Accommodation refers to a type of residential care that restricts the freedom of vulnerable children under the age of 18 who may be a significant risk to themselves or others in the community. A Secure Care placement can only be authorised following a decision through the Children's Hearing System or Court, or as an emergency placement for up to 72 hours before attending a hearing or court.

Children and young people in these figures include those referred to the Children’s Reporter, those for whom a concern was raised about a child (related to abuse or neglect) which led to a child protection investigation, those who become voluntarily looked after, and those who commit an offence. Most [referrals to the Children’s Reporter](#) come from partner agencies, such as the police, social work, and education. Additionally, parents, family members, carers, or members of the public can also make a referral. [Figure 1](#) provides a broad illustration of these main routes.

Figure 1. Children included in these figures



Effects of COVID-19

This is the first release of these statistics for which the reporting period began after the initial COVID-19 outbreak, and subsequent periods of lockdown and restrictions. Any impacts of the pandemic affecting children’s services may therefore affect comparability with figures for previous years. Since April 2020, the [Vulnerable Children Monitoring Return](#) has provided regular data to help understand how COVID-19 was affecting vulnerable children and families, and how services were responding.

Looked After Children

13,255 children were looked after – an 8% decrease from the previous year (14,458).



The number of Looked After Children has decreased from 16,231 in 2011, and the lowest this figure has been since 2006.

Placement type

There are several [types of placements](#) in which children and young people can be looked after. In 2021, the majority of Looked After Children (90%) were placed in the community. This included 33% of children and young people who were placed with Kinship Carers, 24% placed with Foster Carers provided by local authorities, and 22% were looked after at home. In addition to this, 10% of Looked After Children were placed with Foster Carers purchased by local authorities.

A smaller proportion of Looked After Children (10%) were placed in residential accommodation, including 4% placed in a local authority home.

Table 1.1: Number of Looked After Children at 31 July, in each type of placement

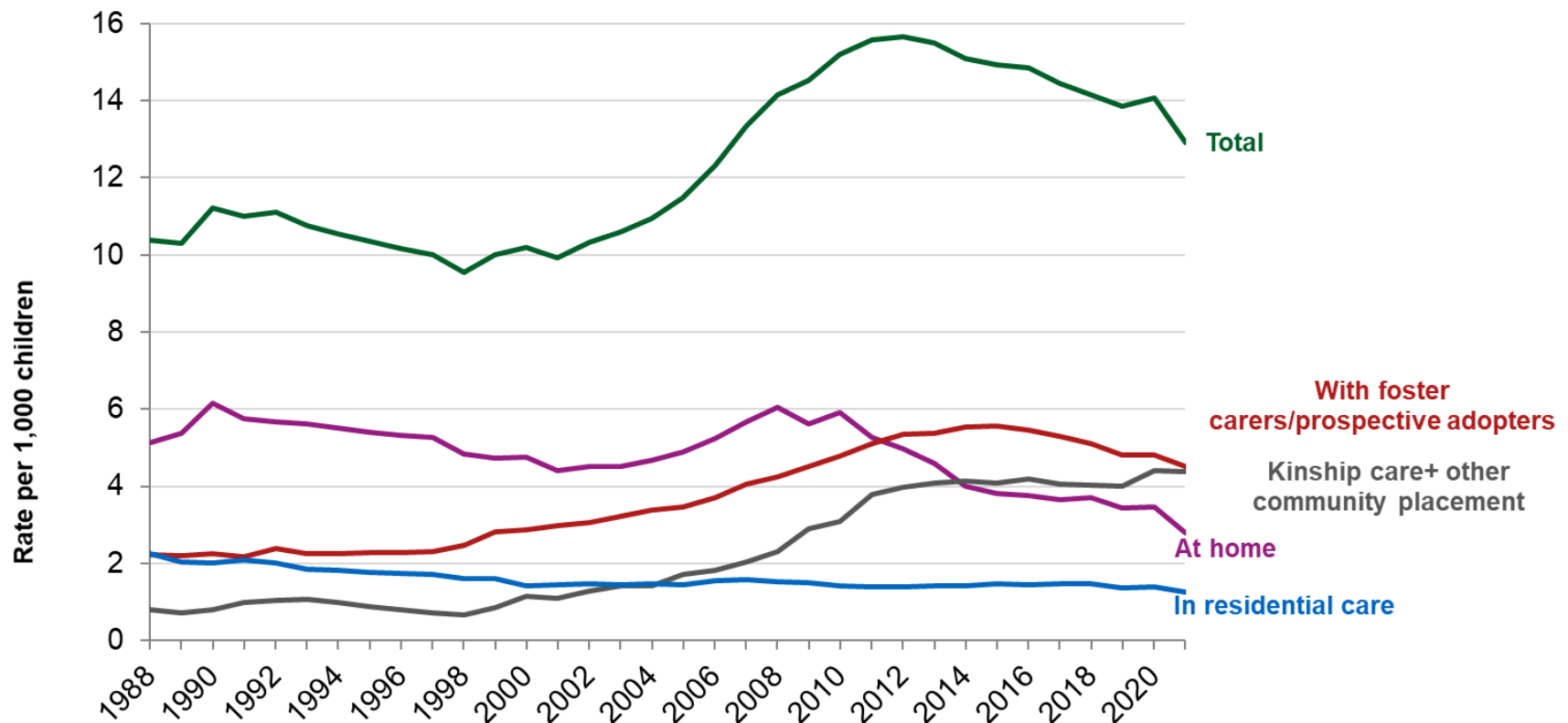
	2011	2020	2021
In the community	14,770	13,022	11,969
At home with parents	5,476	3,563	2,859
With Kinship Carers: friends/relatives	3,910	4,456	4,399
With Foster Carers provided by LA	3,871	3,315	3,160
With Foster Carers purchased by LA	1,197	1,429	1,307
With prospective adopters	267	185	156
In other community	49	74	88
Residential accommodation	1,461	1,436	1,286
In local authority home	615	556	525
In voluntary home	88	130	96
In residential school	460	329	323
In secure accommodation	86	59	38
Crisis care	13	0	0
In other residential ^[1]	199	362	304
Total looked after children	16,231	14,458	13,255

^[1] The bulk of the 'other residential' placements are private/independent residential placements for young people with complex needs.

Changes over time

Broadly, the number of Looked After Children has declined over the past decade ([Chart 1a](#)). In 2021, the number of children placed at home with parents (2,859) was around half that of 2011 (5,476; [Table 1.1](#)). The number of looked after children placed in the community, away from home, has decreased slightly between 2011 (9,294) and 2021 (9,110).

Chart 1a: Looked After Children per 1,000 children under 18, by type of accommodation, 1987-2021



Care plans for Looked After Children

95% of children who were looked after had a current [care plan](#), a 1 percentage point reduction from the previous year.

Of those looked after **at home**, 94% had a current care plan, and of those looked after **away from home**, 95% had a current care plan ([Table 1.2](#)). These figures were comparable for children placed with Kinship Carers (95%), Foster Carers (95%), in Residential Care (94%), and for those placed with prospective adopters/other community placements (93%).

Table 1.2: Looked After Children with and without a current care plan, at 31 July 2021^[1]

	Away from home - breakdown by category						
	At home	Away from home	With Kinship Carers: friends/relatives	With Foster Carers	With prospective adopters/ other community	In Residential Care	Total
With a current care plan	2,686	9,873	4,193	4,240	227	1,213	12,559
Without a current care plan	173	523	206	227	17	73	696
Total	2,859	10,396	4,399	4,467	244	1,286	13,255
<i>With a current care plan</i>	94%	95%	95%	95%	93%	94%	95%
<i>Without a current care plan</i>	6%	5%	5%	5%	7%	6%	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.

Children starting and ceasing to be looked after



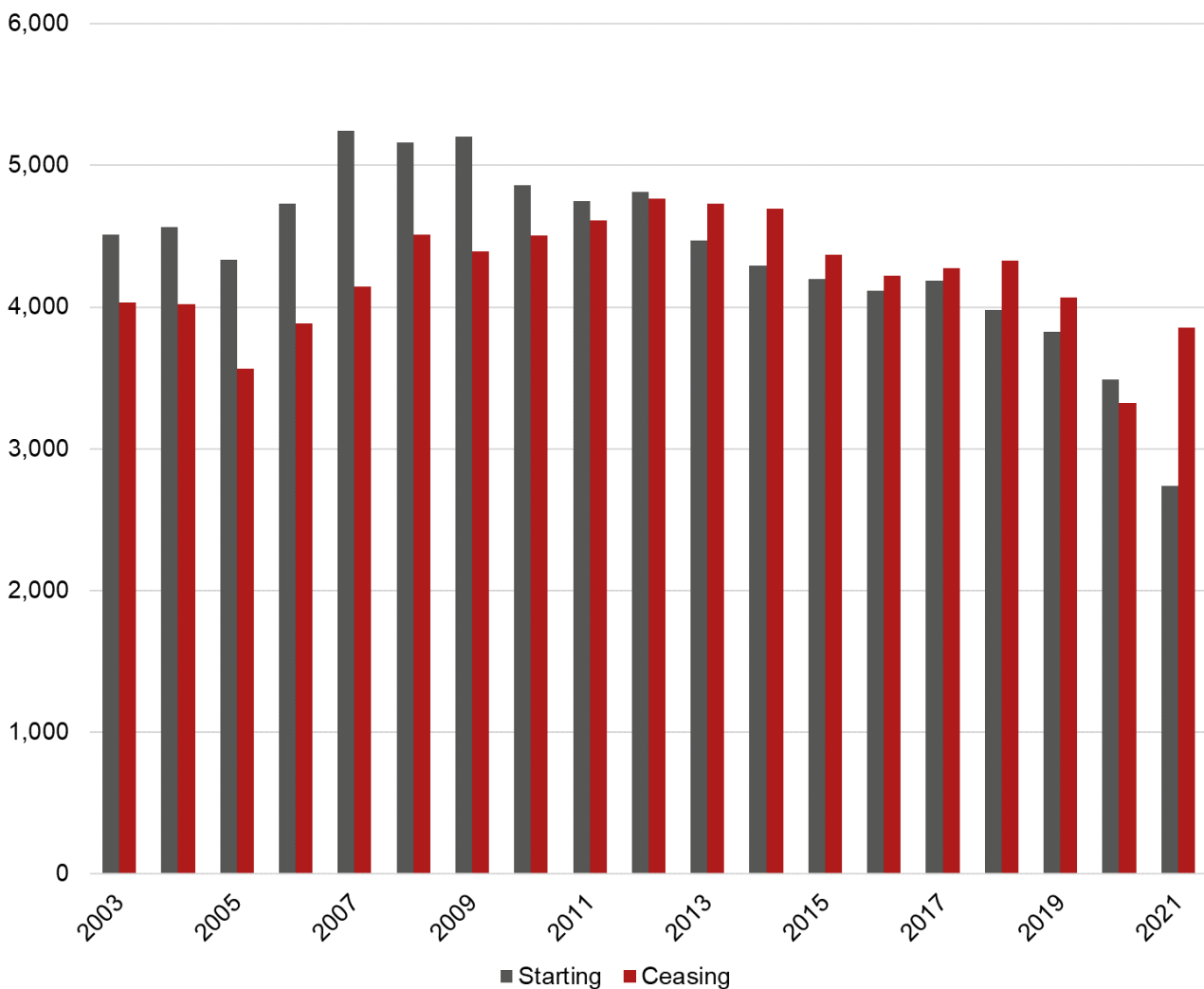
The number of children **starting** to be looked after was down by 22% since the previous year.



The number of children **ceasing** to be looked after was up by 16% since the previous year.

Between 2013 and 2019, the number of children ceasing to be looked after was consistently greater than those starting to be looked after ([Chart 1b](#)). This pattern changed in 2020, when slightly more children started to become looked after than ceasing to be looked after. In 2021 this pattern changed again, with substantially fewer children starting to be looked after than ceasing to be looked after.

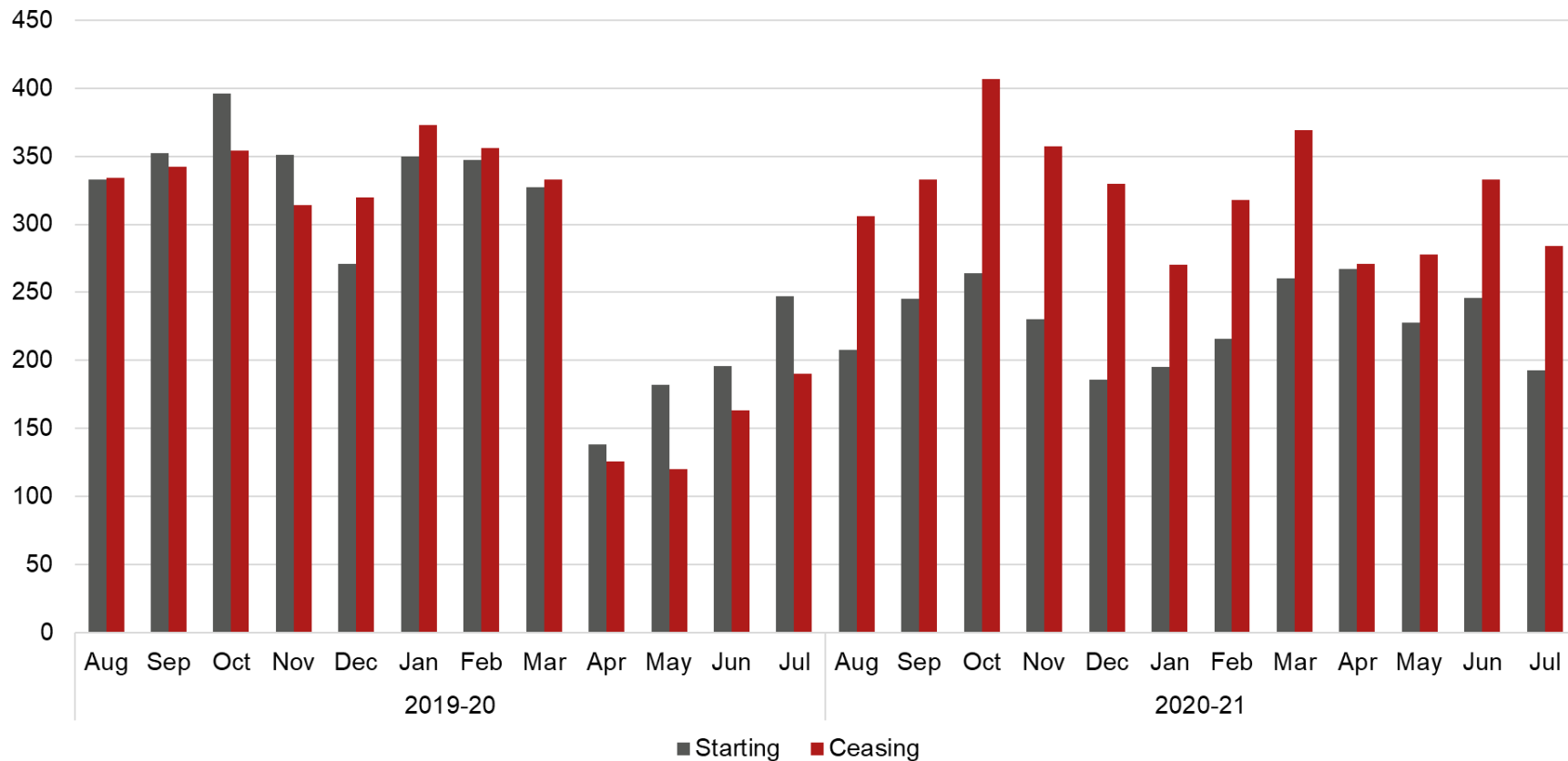
Chart 1b - Number of children starting and ceasing to become looked after at 31 July, 2003-2021



Comparisons with previous year

Monthly breakdowns of the number of children starting and ceasing to be looked after in 2020 and in 2021 are provided in [Chart 2](#). There was a steep decrease in the first full month of the COVID-19 pandemic (April 2020) in the number of children starting and ceasing to be looked after. Between April 2020 and July 2020, more children started to become looked after than ceased to be looked after. This pattern changed between August 2020 and July 2021, however, during which there were consistently more children ceasing to be looked after than starting to become looked after.

Chart 2: Number of children starting and ceasing to be looked after by month, 2019-20 and 2020-21



Episodes of care starting

2,738 episodes of care began in 2021 – a large decrease from 3,490 episodes in the previous year.

The age distribution of children becoming looked after has remained broadly stable since 2011 ([Table 1.3a](#)).

Table 1.3a: Number of children starting to be looked after by age^{[1],[2]}

Age	Number			Percentage		
	2011	2020	2021	2011	2020	2021
Under 1	701	531	442	15%	15%	16%
1-4	1,127	815	599	24%	23%	22%
5-11	1,485	1,060	907	31%	30%	33%
12-15	1,389	922	695	29%	26%	25%
16-17	44	158	94	1%	5%	3%
18-21 ^[3]	0	*	*	0%	*	*
Not known	0	*	*	0%	*	*
Total	4,746	3,490	2,738	100%	100%	100%

^[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.

In 2021, **53%** of children starting to become looked after were male, and **47%** were female. Compared to the previous year, this reflects a decrease in the disparity between males (55%) and females (45%) starting to become looked after ([Table 1.3b](#)).

Table 1.3b: Number of children starting to be looked after by sex^{[1],[2]}

Sex	Number			Percentage		
	2011	2020	2021	2011	2020	2021
Male	2,436	1,904	1,454	51%	55%	53%
Female	2,310	1,586	1,283	49%	45%	47%
Total	4,746	3,490	2,738	100%	100%	100%

^[1] A child may start to be looked after more than once in a year and so may be counted more than once.

^[2] For a very small number of children Male or Female sex was not specified. To maintain their confidentiality they have been counted in the Male category.

Episodes of care ceasing

3,856 episodes of care ceased in 2021 – an increase from 3,325 episodes in the previous year.

4% of children ceasing to be looked after had been looked after for under 6 weeks – the lowest this figure has been (since 2003).

Compared with 2011, a higher proportion of children ceasing to be looked after had been looked after for five years or longer – up from 13% in 2011 to 21% in 2021 ([Table 1.4](#)). Meanwhile the proportion of children looked after for a shorter period of time, especially for between 6 months and under 1 year, decreased (from 16% in 2011 to 10% 2021).

Table 1.4: Number of children ceasing be looked after by length of time looked after^[1]

Length of time looked after	Number			Percentage		
	2011	2020	2021	2011	2020	2021
Under 6 weeks	299	264	172	6%	8%	4%
6 weeks to under 6 months	348	301	270	8%	9%	7%
6 months to under 1 year	717	400	372	16%	12%	10%
1 year to under 3 years	1,880	1,184	1,497	41%	36%	39%
3 years to under 5 years	748	496	729	16%	15%	19%
5 years and over	619	680	816	13%	20%	21%
Not known	0	0	0	0%	0%	0%
Total	4,611	3,325	3,856	100%	100%	100%

^[1] A child may cease to be looked after more than once in a year and so may be counted more than once.

Destination of children ceasing to be looked after

The recorded destinations of children ceasing to be looked after are shown in [Table 1.5](#).

56% of children ceasing to be looked after in 2021 had a recorded destination of at home with their biological parents – a 4% point decrease since 2011 (60%).

14% of children ceasing to be looked after in 2021 went to stay with their friends/relatives.

2% of children ceased to be looked after with a [Kinship Care Order](#) – a figure which has remained relatively stable since 2018 (3%), when this information was first included in these statistics.

6% of children ceased to be looked after due to being adopted – a figure which has remained stable since 2011 (6%). The majority of children who were adopted (66%) were below the age of 5 years.

↑ Overall, there was an increase in children who were in Kinship Care when they ceased to be looked after, from 13% in 2011 to 16% in 2021.

Table 1.5: Children ceasing to be looked after, by destination^[1]

Destination	Number			Percentage		
	2011	2020	2021	2011	2020	2021
Home with (biological) parents	2,766	1,807	2,166	60%	54%	56%
Kinship Carers (friends/relatives)	603	481	532	13%	14%	14%
Kinship Care Order ^[2]	-	53	84	-	2%	2%
Former Foster Carers	55	85	47	1%	3%	1%
Continuing Care ^[2]	-	229	267	-	7%	7%
Adoption	264	192	224	6%	6%	6%
Supported accommodation / own tenancy	285	245	244	6%	7%	6%
Other ^[3]	225	202	276	5%	6%	7%
Not known	413	31	16	9%	1%	0%
Total	4,611	3,325	3,856	100%	100%	100%

^[1] This 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.

^[2] New destination categories of 'Continuing Care' and 'Kinship Care Order' were added in 2018.

Previously, children who left care for 'Continuing Care' were mostly recorded in the 'Foster Carers' destination category, while those who left care under a 'Kinship Care Order' were mostly recorded in the 'Kinship Carers (friends/relatives)' category.

^[3] 'Other' includes residential care, homeless, in custody and other destination.

Aftercare services

Aftercare services refer to local authorities' duty to provide advice, guidance, and assistance for young people who, at the point of leaving care, have reached 16 years of age. As such, the current section refers to 'young people/person' rather than 'children/child'.

↓ The proportion of young people with a **pathway plan** at the time they ceased to be looked after was 71% – down from 79% in the previous year.

↓ The proportion of young people with a **pathway co-ordinator** at the time they ceased to be looked after was 56% – down from 70% in the previous year.

Pathway plans and co-ordinators

Young people whose final placement was 'at home' were less likely to have a pathway plan or a pathway coordinator, than those who had been placed 'away from home' ([Table 1.6](#)).

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 2020-21^{[1],[2]}

	Number looked after			Percentage looked after		
	at home	away from home	Total	at home	away from home	Total
With pathway plan	235	759	994	55%	78%	71%
Without pathway plan	193	218	411	45%	22%	29%
With pathway co-ordinator	214	574	788	50%	59%	56%
Without pathway co-ordinator	214	403	617	50%	41%	44%
Total	428	977	1,405	100%	100%	100%

^[1] Figures include all episodes of ceasing to be looked after beyond 16 years of age (i.e. a young person 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.

Table 1.6: Continued

	Number looked after away from home (breakdown by category)			
	Kinship Carers: friends/relatives	Foster Carers	Prospective adopters/other community	Residential Care
With pathway plan	185	238	64	272
Without pathway plan	97	51	11	59
With pathway co-ordinator	137	165	56	216
Without pathway co-ordinator	145	124	19	115
Total	282	289	75	331

Eligibility for aftercare

Since April 2015, aftercare eligibility was extended to cover all care leavers up to, and including, people aged 25 years (where it previously only covered up to their 21st birthday).

The highest proportion of eligible young people in receipt of aftercare services were those aged 19-21 years (58%). The lowest proportion of children in receipt of aftercare services were those aged 16 years (46%).

7,323 young people were eligible for aftercare services – a 2% increase since the previous year (7,198). Figures for those eligible for aftercare have risen substantially since 2016 (4,602).

54% of young people eligible were in receipt of aftercare services – a decrease from the previous year (57%).

Table 1.7: Number of young people eligible for aftercare services on 31 July 2021 by age^[1]

Status	16	17	18	19-21	22+	Total
In receipt of aftercare	118	311	619	1,584	1,299	3,931
Not in receipt of aftercare	136	264	544	1,150	1,298	3,392
Total eligible for aftercare	254	575	1,163	2,734	2,597	7,323
In receipt of aftercare	46%	54%	53%	58%	50%	54%
Not in receipt of aftercare	54%	46%	47%	42%	50%	46%
Total eligible for aftercare	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

^[1] Age on 31 July 2021

Continuing Care

Continuing Care is the continued provision of the accommodation and other assistance being provided by local authorities 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.

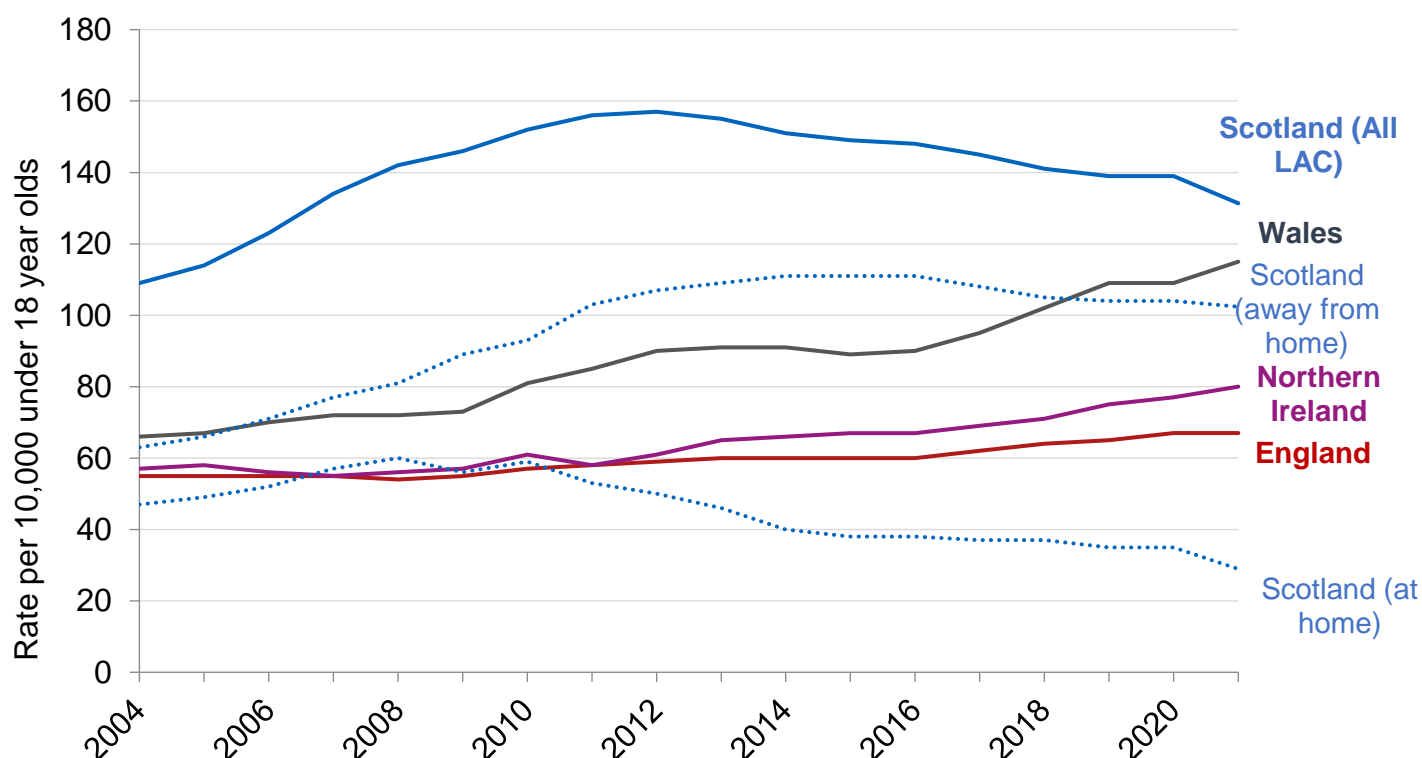
534 young people were in Continuing Care at 31 July 2021 – a sharp rise from 88 recorded as being in Continuing Care at 31 July 2020. This increase may be partly explained by improvement in recording by local authorities.

During 2021, the number of young people recorded as ceasing to be looked after with a destination of Continuing Care was 267 – an increase from 218 in the previous year.

Cross-UK comparisons

Scotland has the highest rate of Looked After Children (131 per 10,000 children) when compared to the other nations within the UK ([Chart 3](#)). It is followed by Wales (115 per 10,000), Northern Ireland (80 per 10,000), and England (67 per 10,000). Since 2016, all other UK countries, and in particular Wales, have seen a gradual increase in the rate of Looked After Children.

Chart 3: Cross-UK comparison of rate of Looked After Children per 10,000 children, 2004-2021 ^{[1],[2],[4],[5]}



[1] Scotland data used here is as at 31st March 2021 for comparability purposes with other UK countries. Please refer to [Cross-UK comparability](#) background notes for further information.

[2] England data source: [Children looked after in England including adoptions 2021](#)

[3] Wales data source: [Children Looked After 2021](#)

[4] Northern Ireland Source: [Children's Social Care Statistics for Northern Ireland 2020/21](#)

[5] Rate per 10,000 calculates using NRS mid 2020 population estimates for those aged under 18 years.

Child Protection

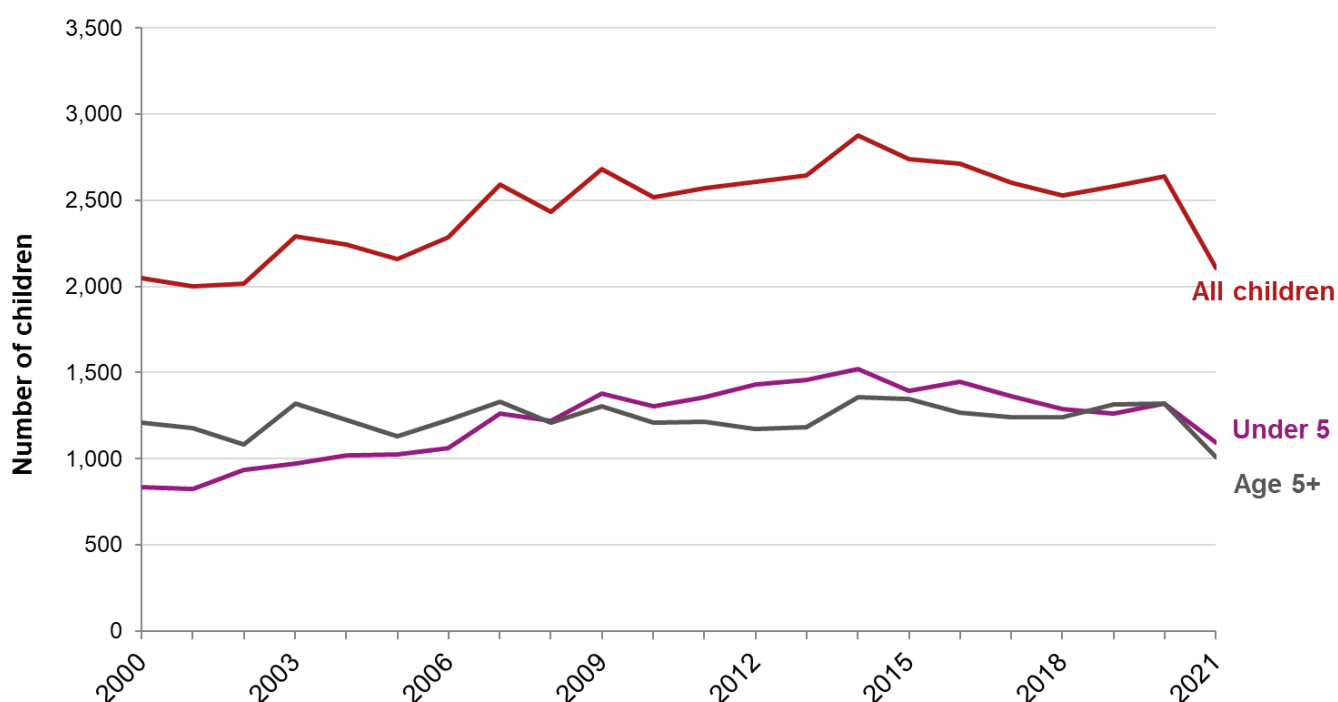
Children on the Child Protection Register



The number of children on the Child Protection Register decreased by 20% since the previous year.

2,104 children were on the Child Protection Register – the lowest figure since 2002 ([Chart 4](#)).

Chart 4: Number of children on the Child Protection Register by age, 2000-2021



Characteristics of children on the Child Protection Register

52% were below the age of 5 years

48% were male

48% were aged 5+ years

47% were female

Table 2.1: Children on the Child Protection Register by sex, 2011-2021

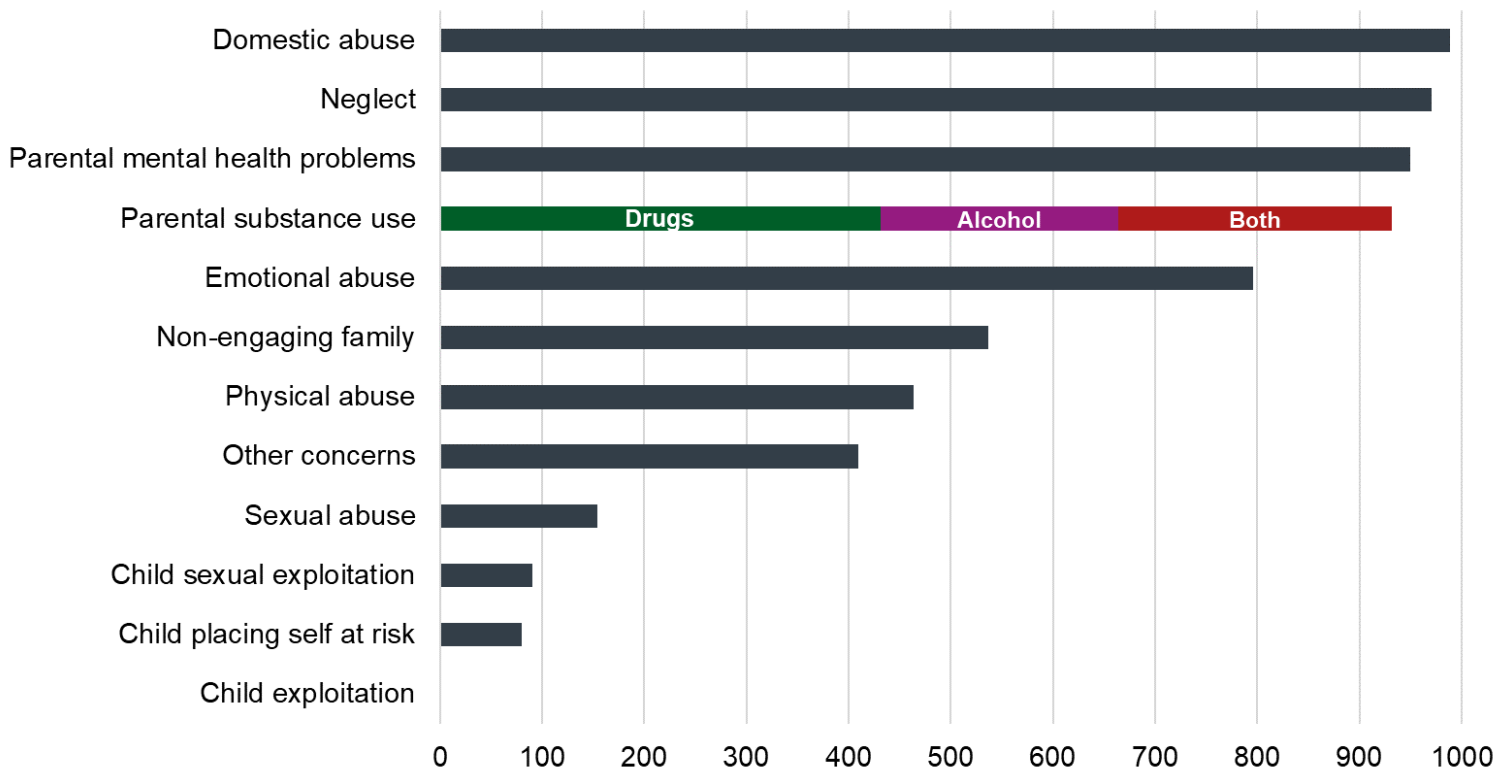
	Number			Percentage		
	2011	2020	2021	2011	2020	2021
Male	1,282	1,256	1,014	50%	48%	48%
Female	1,209	1,261	985	47%	48%	47%
Unborns ^[1]	80	124	105	3%	5%	5%
All Children	2,571	2,641	2,104	100%	100%	100%

^[1] Unborn children include some children with a known sex and those with an unknown sex. Please refer to Publication Table 2.1 for breakdowns of these.

Child Protection Case Conferences

In total, 6,374 concerns were identified at [Child Protection Case Conferences](#). Of all concerns identified, the most common concerns were: domestic abuse (16%), neglect (15%), parental mental health problems (15%), parental substance use (15%), and emotional abuse (12%; [Chart 5](#)).

Chart 5: Concerns identified^[1] at Case Conferences of children on the Child Protection Register, 2021



^[1] Multiple concerns can be recorded (rather than just the main category of concern). This means that the total number of concerns will be greater than the total number of registrations.

^[2] We are aware of ongoing change in terminology – from ‘Child Protection Case Conferences’ to ‘Child Protection Planning Meetings’. We are committed to implementing this change in future reports, but will refer to ‘Case Conferences’ here to reflect the terminology used during the time spanning the 2021 collection period.

Child Protection registrations and de-registrations

Registrations



The number of child protection registrations decreased by 13% since 2020.

80% of registrations were for children who had never been registered before, the same as the proportion in 2020 ([Table 2.2](#)).

20% of registrations were for children who had been registered before. As in 2020, 11% of all registrations were for children previously registered two years ago or more.

Table 2.2: Number of registrations following an initial, pre-birth or transfer-in Case Conference by length of time since previous de-registration

Time since last deregistration	Number			Percentage		
	2010	2020	2021	2010	2020	2021
Never been registered before	2,971	3,166	2,753	84%	80%	80%
Registered before but time unknown	0	0	0	0%	0%	0%
Less than 6 months	81	104	75	2%	3%	2%
6 months to under 1 year	98	81	80	3%	2%	2%
1 year to under 18 months	67	89	92	2%	2%	3%
18 months to under 2 years	60	59	67	2%	1%	2%
2 years or more	269	446	363	8%	11%	11%
Unknown if child registered before	5	22	24	0%	1%	1%
Total	3,551	3,967	3,454	100%	100%	100%

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

De-registrations



The number of de-registrations increased by 2% since 2020.

56% of de-registrations were due to improved home situation ([Table 2.3](#)).

81% of de-registrations were for children who were on the Child Protection Register for less than one year.

Table 2.3: Number of de-registrations by length of time on register and reason for de-registration ^[1]

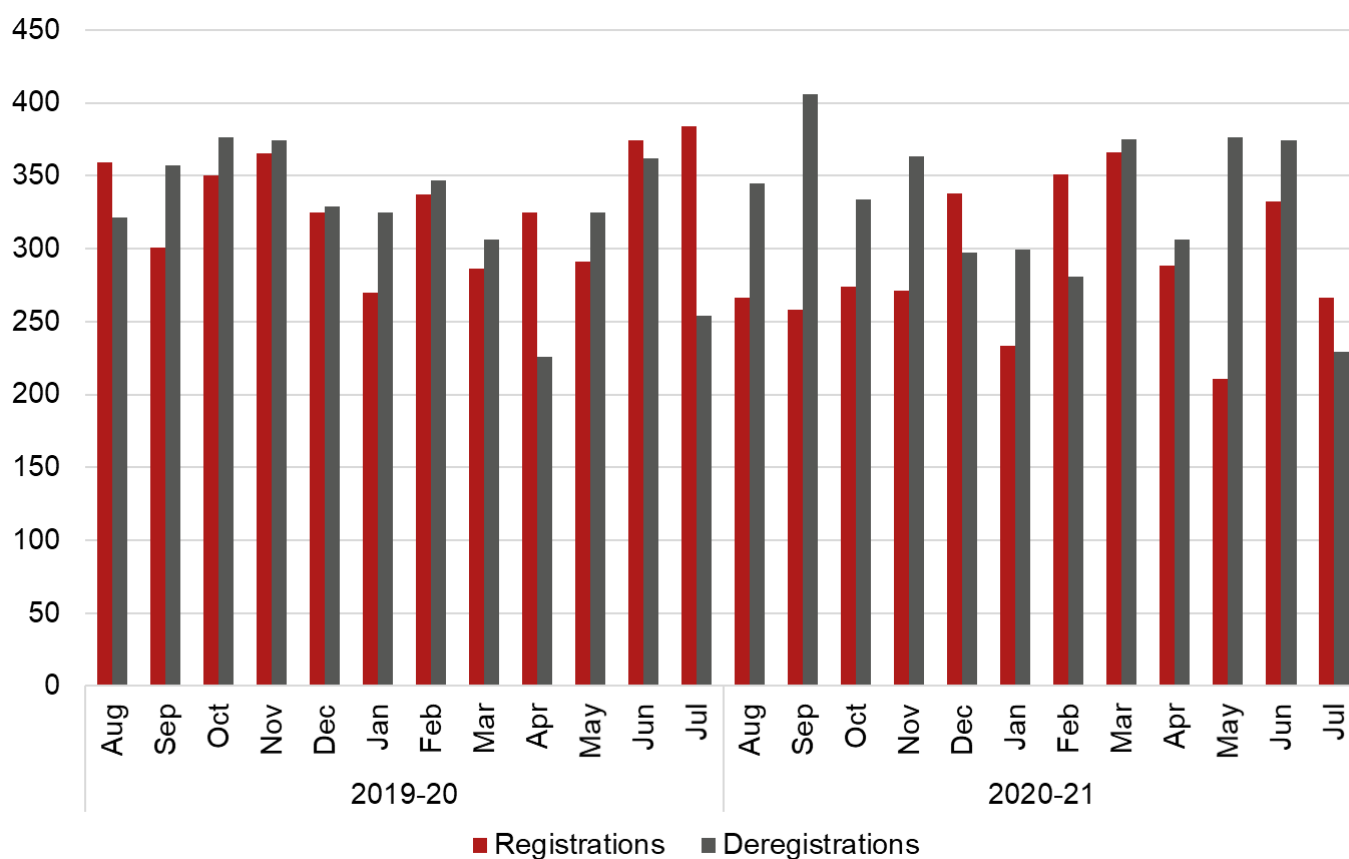
Time since last deregistration	Number			Percentage		
	2010	2020	2021	2010	2020	2021
Length of time registered						
Less than 6 months	1,592	1,866	1,826	42%	48%	46%
6 months to under 1 year	1,483	1,479	1,386	39%	38%	35%
1 year to under 18 months	460	363	443	12%	9%	11%
18 months to under 2 years	168	101	158	4%	3%	4%
2 years or more	123	55	74	3%	1%	2%
No date of registration information	0	38	98	0%	1%	2%
Reason for deregistration						
Child taken into care & risk reduced	538	477	404	14%	12%	10%
Child with other carers	275	312	288	7%	8%	7%
Child died	4	10	6	0%	0%	0%
Removal of perpetrator	81	123	139	2%	3%	3%
Improved home situation	1,220	2,083	2,229	32%	53%	56%
Child automatically de-registered because of age	8	6	7	0%	0%	0%
Child moved away - no continued risk	26	31	13	1%	1%	0%
Other reason	1,674	860	899	44%	22%	23%
Reason not known	0	0	0	0%	0%	0%
Total	3,826	3,902	3,985	100%	100%	100%

^[1] Includes where a child transferred to another local authority and where reason has not been recorded.

Comparisons with previous years

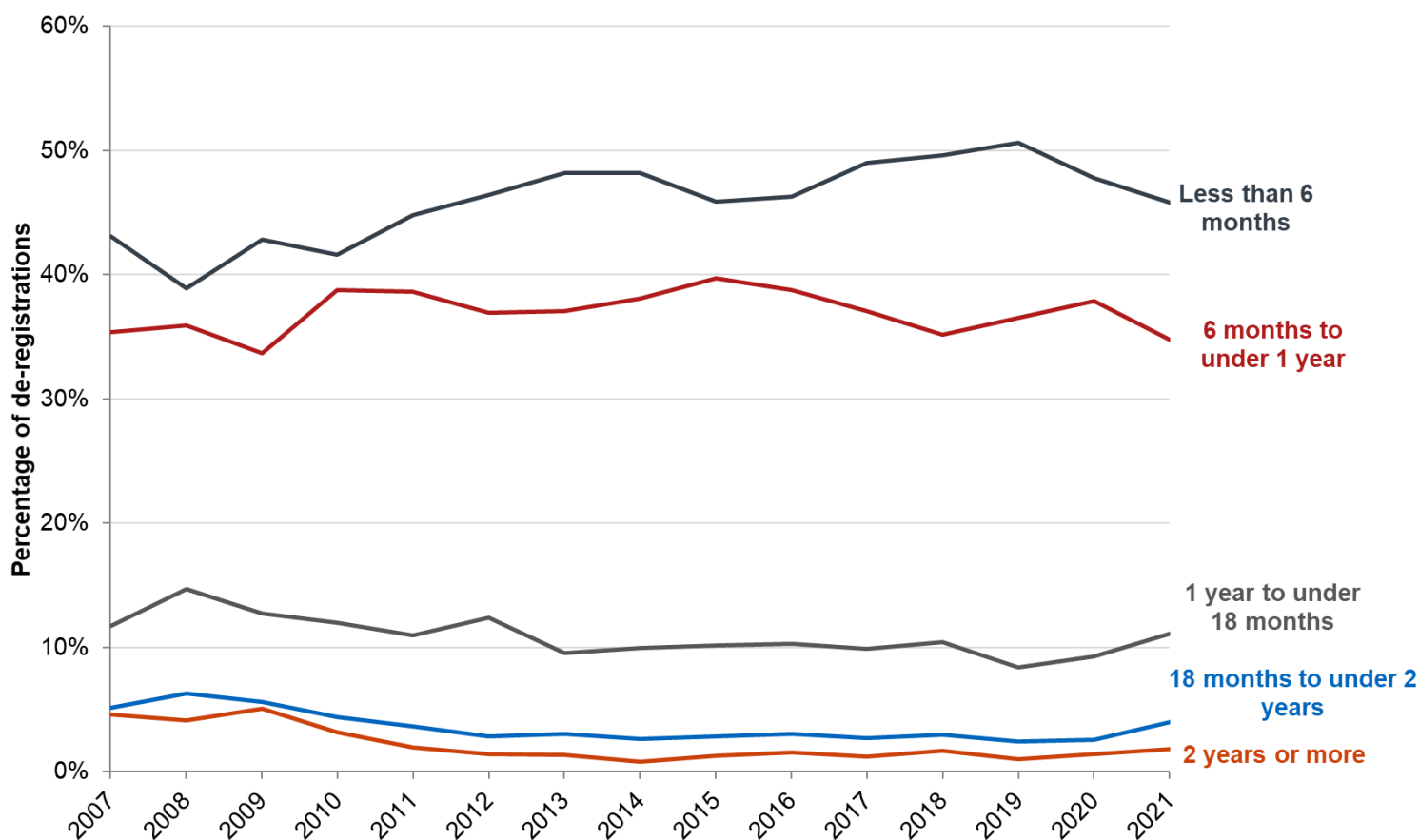
Monthly breakdowns of the number of children registered and de-registered from the Child Protection Register in 2020 and 2021 are provided in [Chart 6](#). May 2021 saw the lowest number of registrations (n=211), while April 2020 saw the lowest number of de-registrations (n=225) from the Child Protection Register. While the pattern over these last two years is unclear, there was greater disparity between the number of registrations and de-registrations observed in 2021 where, during most months, the number of de-registrations was greater than the number of registrations.

Chart 6: Child Protection registrations and de-registrations by month, 2019-20 and 2020-21



Since 2015, the percentage of de-registrations of children spending less than six months on the Register increased, peaking in 2019 (51%), followed by a decrease in 2020 (48%). This year saw a further decrease in the proportion of de-registrations of children spending less than six months on the Register ([Chart 7](#)).

Chart 7: Percentage of de-registrations by length of time on the Child Protection Register, 2007-2021



Geographical comparisons

Children on the Child Protection Register within Scotland

The Local Authority breakdowns of children on the Child Protection Register in Scotland are shown in [Table 2.4](#). The rate of children on the Child Protection Register ranged from 0.4 per 1,000 children aged 0-15 years in East Renfrewshire to 5.2 per 1,000 in North Ayrshire.

Please note that there is substantial 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 ^{[1],[2]}

Local authority	2010		2020		2021	
	Number	Rate ^{[1],[2]}	Number	Rate ^{[1],[2]}	Number	Rate ^{[1],[2]}
Aberdeen City	119	3.7	142	4.0	83	2.3
Aberdeenshire	51	1.1	111	2.3	73	1.5
Angus	92	4.5	35	1.9	25	1.3
Argyll and Bute	43	2.9	49	3.9	32	2.5
City of Edinburgh	256	3.6	95	1.2	97	1.2
Clackmannanshire	56	5.9	43	4.8	41	4.6
Dumfries and Galloway	100	3.9	26	1.1	34	1.5
Dundee City	70	2.9	102	4.3	84	3.5
East Ayrshire	42	1.9	75	3.6	71	3.4
East Dunbartonshire	28	1.5	37	1.9	23	1.2
East Lothian	70	3.8	45	2.3	29	1.5
East Renfrewshire	31	1.7	9	0.5	8	0.4
Falkirk	73	2.6	142	5.1	101	3.6
Fife	220	3.4	147	2.3	152	2.4
Glasgow City	286	3.0	413	4.1	282	2.8
Highland	99	2.4	129	3.4	96	2.5
Inverclyde	35	2.5	61	4.9	31	2.5
Midlothian	96	6.2	49	2.7	38	2.1
Moray	44	2.6	31	1.9	35	2.2
Na h-Eileanan Siar	*	*	3	0.7	5	1.2
North Ayrshire	60	2.4	136	6.1	115	5.2
North Lanarkshire	63	1.0	118	1.9	117	1.9
Orkney Islands	*	*	9	2.5	*	*
Perth and Kinross	49	1.9	95	3.9	66	2.7
Renfrewshire	119	3.9	98	3.2	71	2.4
Scottish Borders	32	1.6	34	1.8	34	1.8
Shetland Islands	10	2.2	9	2.2	8	1.9
South Ayrshire	43	2.3	29	1.7	19	1.1
South Lanarkshire	135	2.4	157	2.8	116	2.1
Stirling	43	2.7	53	3.5	56	3.7
West Dunbartonshire	27	1.6	67	4.3	57	3.7
West Lothian	119	3.4	92	2.6	103	2.9
Scotland	2,518	2.7	2,641	2.9	2,104	2.3

^[1] Per 1,000 population aged 0-15 years. Source: National Records of Scotland mid-year population estimates.

^[2] The rate shown in this table includes unborn children who are on the register.

Child Protection Investigations within Scotland

A Child Protection Investigation refers to a joint investigation between social work, police and health services (as well as any other relevant agencies). The purpose of the investigation is to determine whether any child protection action is needed and whether a Case Conference should be held.

Local Authority breakdowns relating to Child Protection Investigations in Scotland are shown in [Table 2.5](#). The rate of Child Protection Investigations ranged between 0.6 per 1,000 in East Renfrewshire and 33.2 per 1,000 in Clackmannanshire.

[Table 2.5](#) also provides Local Authority breakdowns relating to initial and pre-birth Case Conferences, as well as the number of registrations arising as a result of these. The rate of initial and pre-birth Case Conferences ranged between 0.9 per 1,000 in East Renfrewshire to 12.6 per 1,000 in North Ayrshire.

The rate of registrations from these initial and pre-birth Case Conferences ranged between 0.9 per 1,000 in East Renfrewshire to 10.7 per 1,000 in North Ayrshire.

Notably, for 664 out of 4,397 total initial and pre-birth Case Conferences (15%), no investigation was recorded within 90 days prior to the Case Conference. This suggests that the investigations for these may be missing from the figures shown. There may be other legitimate reasons for the investigation not being within 90 days prior to the Case Conference.

Table 2.5: Number and rate per 1,000 of Child Protection Investigations, initial and pre-birth Case Conferences, and associated registrations by local authority, 2020-21^{[1],[2]}

Local authority	Child Protection Investigations		Initial and pre-birth Case Conferences			
	Total	Rate ^{[1],[2]}	Number with an investigation recorded within 90 days of Case Conference	Number with no investigation recorded within 90 days of Case Conference ^[3]	Total	Rate ^{[1],[2]}
Aberdeen City	199	5.6	154	2	156	4.4
Aberdeenshire	400	8.2	100	2	102	2.1
Angus	238	12.6	36	73	109	5.8
Argyll and Bute	97	7.7	28	26	54	4.3
City of Edinburgh	818	10.3	145	49	194	2.5
Clackmannanshire	295	33.2	82	12	94	10.6
Dumfries and Galloway	269	11.7	67	17	84	3.6
Dundee City	730	30.5	140	7	147	6.1
East Ayrshire	344	16.5	175	2	177	8.5
East Dunbartonshire	192	9.8	84	4	88	4.5
East Lothian	451	22.9	40	14	54	2.7
East Renfrewshire	12	0.6	10	8	18	0.9
Falkirk	393	14.1	132	19	151	5.4
Fife	905	14.1	289	0	289	4.5
Glasgow City	1,171	11.7	545	0	545	5.4
Highland	350	9.1	6	102	108	2.8
Inverclyde	171	13.8	88	26	114	9.2
Midlothian	501	27.7	103	0	103	5.7
Moray	258	16.1	32	21	53	3.3
Na h-Eileanan Siar	42	10.2	39	3	42	10.2
North Ayrshire	454	20.4	281	0	281	12.6
North Lanarkshire	680	10.9	263	10	273	4.4
Orkney Islands	72	20.2	5	2	7	2.0
Perth and Kinross	340	14.0	98	6	104	4.3
Renfrewshire	310	10.3	130	49	179	5.9
Scottish Borders	136	7.2	52	3	55	2.9
Shetland Islands	80	19.2	15	6	21	5.1
South Ayrshire	92	5.3	37	0	37	2.1
South Lanarkshire	780	14.0	323	24	347	6.2
Stirling	45	3.0	1	68	69	4.6
West Dunbartonshire	234	15.1	108	46	154	9.9
West Lothian	667	18.9	125	63	188	5.3
Scotland	11,726	12.8	3,733	664	4,397	4.8

Table 2.5 Continued

Registrations from initial and pre-birth Case Conferences					
Local authority	Number with an investigation recorded within 90 days of Case Conference	Number with no investigation recorded within 90 days of Case Conference	Total	Rate^{[1],[2]}	
Aberdeen City	135	2	137	3.8	
Aberdeenshire	90	2	92	1.9	
Angus	34	59	93	4.9	
Argyll and Bute	28	20	48	3.8	
City of Edinburgh	118	42	160	2.0	
Clackmannanshire	62	12	74	8.3	
Dumfries and Galloway	35	17	52	2.3	
Dundee City	138	7	145	6.1	
East Ayrshire	119	2	121	5.8	
East Dunbartonshire	63	1	64	3.3	
East Lothian	32	14	46	2.3	
East Renfrewshire	10	8	18	0.9	
Falkirk	106	12	118	4.2	
Fife	255	0	255	4.0	
Glasgow City	342	0	342	3.4	
Highland	5	92	97	2.5	
Inverclyde	45	14	59	4.8	
Midlothian	83	0	83	4.6	
Moray	25	19	44	2.7	
Na h-Eileanan Siar	9	0	9	2.2	
North Ayrshire	238	0	238	10.7	
North Lanarkshire	197	10	207	3.3	
Orkney Islands	5	1	6	1.7	
Perth and Kinross	77	5	82	3.4	
Renfrewshire	83	28	111	3.7	
Scottish Borders	51	2	53	2.8	
Shetland Islands	12	6	18	4.3	
South Ayrshire	31	0	31	1.8	
South Lanarkshire	218	14	232	4.2	
Stirling	1	65	66	4.4	
West Dunbartonshire	51	21	72	4.6	
West Lothian	92	59	151	4.3	
Scotland	2,790	534	3,324	3.6	

^[1] Rate per 1,000 population aged 0-15. Source: National Records of Scotland, mid-year 2020 population estimates.

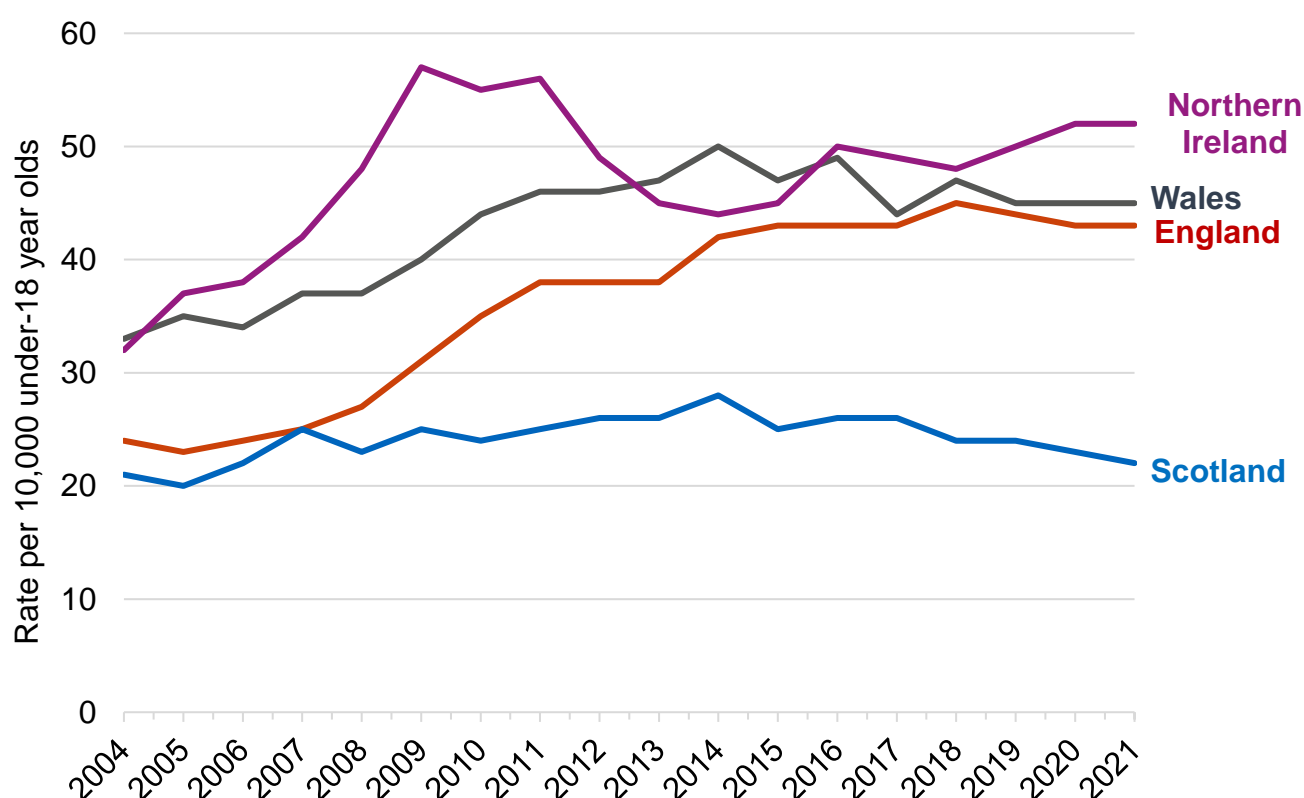
^[2] The rate shown in this table includes unborn children who are on the register.

^[3] 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 comparisons

The proportion of children on the Child Protection Register has remained broadly stable in Scotland over the last decade, and is notably lower compared with the rest of the UK ([Chart 8](#)). Scotland did not experience the large increases in children on the Child Protection Register during 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](#).

Chart 8: Cross-UK rate per 10,000 of children on the Child Protection Register 2004-2021^{[1],[2],[3],[4],[5]}



^[1] Scotland data used here is as at 31st March 2021 for comparability purposes with other UK countries. Please refer to [Cross-UK comparability](#) background notes for further information.

^[2] England data source: [Characteristics of children in need 2021](#)

^[3] Wales data source: [Children on the child protection register](#)

^[4] Northern Ireland Source: [Children's Social Care Statistics for Northern Ireland 2020/21](#)

^[5] Rate per 10,000 calculates using NRS mid 2020 population estimates for those aged under 18 years.

Secure Care Accommodation

Bed complement

There were 84 beds available in five secure units in Scotland for children and young people under the age of 18 ([Table 3.1](#)). This remains unchanged from the previous year. All units, with the exception of Edinburgh Secure Services, reported having at least one [emergency or short-term use bed](#).

Table 3.1: Secure care unit bed complement at 31 July 2021^[1]

Unit	Number of secure care beds
Edinburgh Secure Services	6
Good Shepherd Secure Unit	18
Kibble	18
Rossie Secure Accommodation Services	18
St Mary's Kenmure	24
All units	84

^[1] Excluding emergency or short-term respite beds

Capacity and usage



The [average number](#) of residents decreased to 76 from 82 in the previous year.



The average number of nights that emergency beds were used was 40 – a significant decrease from 209 since the previous year.



The number of residents using emergency beds was 17 – a decrease from 28 in the previous year.



The average number of residents from within Scotland decreased to 47, while residents from outside Scotland (i.e. England and Wales) increased slightly to 29.

Table 3.2: Secure care accommodation capacity^[1] and usage, 2014-2021

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	% change 2020-21
Places at year end	90	90	90	84	84	84	84	84	0%
Admissions during the year	232	249	256	248	210	217	194	177	-9%
Discharges during the year	226	245	253	257	213	210	194	178	-8%
Average number of residents during the year	74	82	85	76	80	79	82	76	-7%
Residents from within Scotland	67	76	72	56	45	53	53	47	-11%
Residents from outside Scotland	7	6	13	19	35	26	28	29	4%
Minimum number of residents during the year	60	71	77	67	73	71	75	64	-15%
Maximum number of residents during the year ^[1]	84	89	90	87	86	88	88	84	-5%
Number of nights emergency and short term beds used during the year ^{[2],[3]}	5	146	50	90	284	398	209	40	-81%
Number of residents emergency and short term beds used for during the year ^{[2],[3]}	3	13	11	25	42	55	28	17	-39%

^[1] Capacity: Young people can be admitted and discharged more than once during the year.

^[2] Four units reported having at least one emergency/ short term bed: Rossie School; Good Shepherd; Kibble; and St. Mary's Kenmure (see background notes for definition of an emergency bed).

^[3] The large drop in the use of emergency beds may have partly been due to a decrease in average occupancy rates and/or impacts of COVID-19.

Resident characteristics and length of stay

56% of residents were male

72% of residents were over the age of 15

44% of residents were female

23% of residents had at least one disability

Table 3.3: Young people in secure care accommodation by sex, age, disability and length of stay, 2014-2021^[1]

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	% of 2021 total
Sex of residents^[2]									
Male	52	59	65	46	39	60	44	44	56%
Female	29	26	23	34	43	24	37	34	44%
Age of Residents									
13 years old or under	5	7	9	14	12	*	5	9	12%
14 years	12	18	18	18	18	*	13	13	17%
15 years	31	28	27	26	25	21	26	16	21%
16 years or over	33	32	34	22	27	55	37	40	51%
Residents with disability									
Yes	-	-	34	27	39	27	7	18	23%
No/unknown	-	-	54	53	43	57	74	60	77%
Length of stay of residents at year end									
Less than 1 month	13	17	20	26	10	21	17	17	22%
1 month to under 2 months	14	16	14	13	14	16	14	10	13%
2 months to under 3 months	14	13	14	12	13	9	6	5	6%
3 months to under 6 months	23	26	24	25	27	22	18	29	37%
6 months to under 1 year	9	*	10	*	14	11	16	14	18%
1 year or more	8	*	6	*	0	5	*	*	*
Total	81	85	88	80	82	84	81	78	100%

^[1] As at 31 July of each year.

^[2] Trans, intersex and non-binary individuals are grouped with males for the purposes of maintaining confidentiality.

* Cells represent numbers that are suppressed to maintain confidentiality.

Cross-UK comparisons

Cross UK comparisons for Secure Care Accommodation data for Scotland, England, and Wales can be found in [Table 3.4](#).

Table 3.4: Secure children's homes/units, places approved, and children accommodated at year end across the UK, 2014-2021

		2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
England ^{[1],[2],[3]}	Number of secure homes	16	14	14	14	14	14	13	13
	Places approved	276	232	232	232	233	237	232	231
	Children accommodated	211	194	192	184	189	162	171	130
Wales ^{[1],[2],[3]}	Number of secure homes	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Places approved	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22
	Children accommodated	18	11	18	19	15	10	13	12
Scotland ^{[4],[5]}	Number of secure units	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
	Places approved	90	90	90	84	84	84	84	84
	Children accommodated	80	85	84	81	81	84	82	72

^[1] Source for England and Wales: [Statistics: secure children's homes](#)

Please note that the legal routes into secure care can vary between the UK countries.

^[2] For Northern Ireland, official/national statistics are not produced on secure care accommodation

^[3] The figures from outside Scotland include children placed on welfare grounds only.

^[4] Please note that Scotland totals may include young people who are from elsewhere in the UK.

Similarly, the totals for England and Wales may include some children from other parts of the UK – these numbers are not published separately.

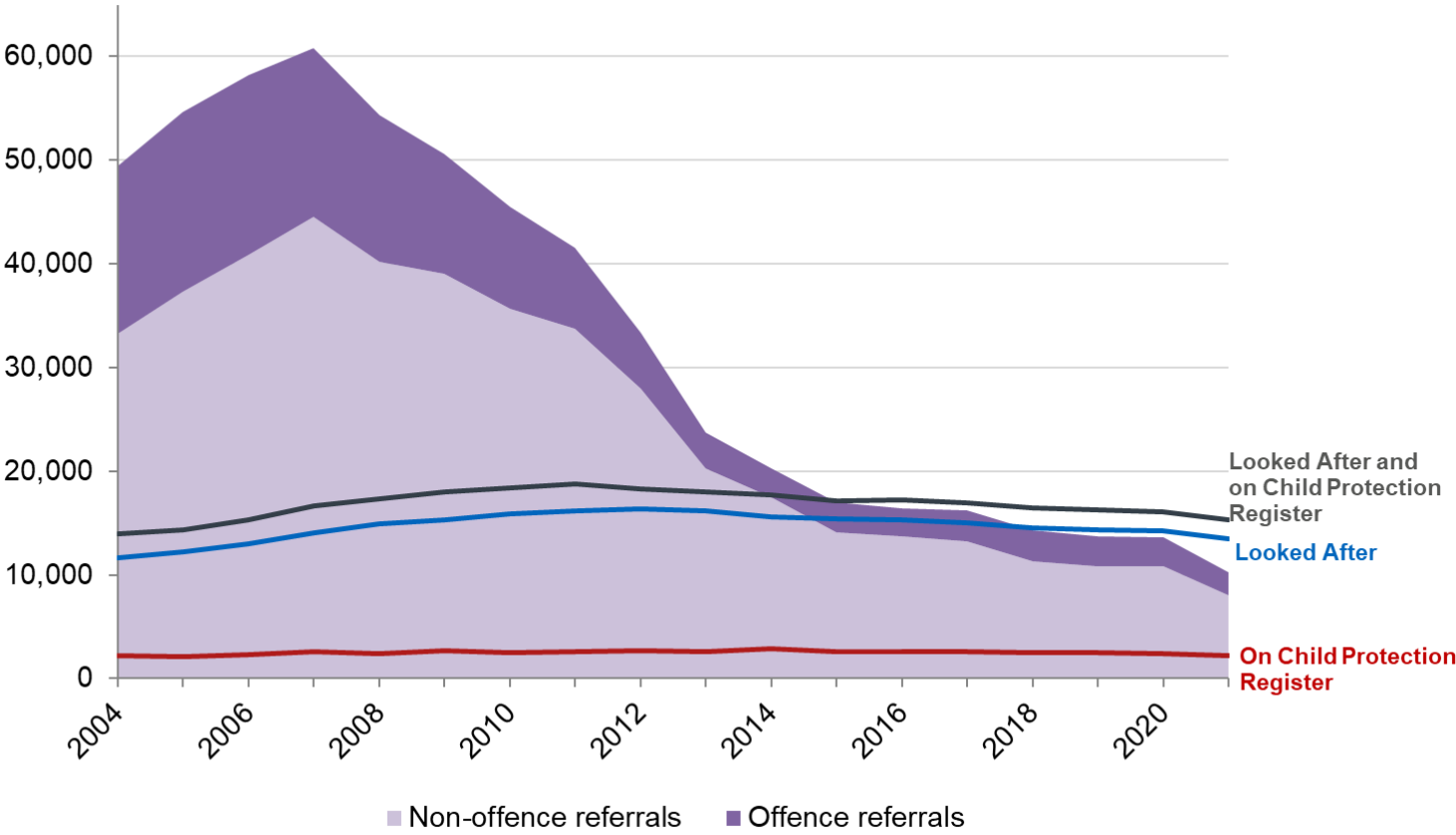
^[5] To allow for comparison with England and Wales Scotland's data within this table is 'at 31 March' for all years with the exception of 2020 for which it is 'at 29 February'.

Trends in other Children's Social Work Data

Since 2011, the number of children referred to the [Children's Reporter](#) decreased by 75% ([Chart 9](#)), while the number of Looked After Children or on the Child Protection Register has remained broadly stable over the same period. The decrease is the result of falls in both the number of offence and non-offence referrals. Offence referrals now account for 23% of all referrals.

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.

Chart 9: Number of children referred to the Children's Reporter^[1] and numbers looked after/on child protection register, 2004-2021



^[1] [Source: Scottish Children's Reporter Administration \(SCRA\) – Official Statistics](#)

Background notes

1. Context and related publications

- 1.1. Children most commonly become Looked After following a referral to the Children's Reporter. The majority of referrals to the Reporter are on care and protection grounds, although a small proportion are on offence grounds. Child protection procedures are initiated when police, social work or health professionals determine that a child may have been significantly harmed or may be at risk of significant harm. Young people are placed in Secure Care Accommodation 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 as part of [SCRA's Official Statistics](#). The most recent figures on referrals of young people from the criminal justice system to the social work system are published as part of the [Criminal justice social work statistics: 2020 – 2021](#).
- 1.2. Education Outcomes for Looked After Children statistics are produced on a subset of children who are looked after – those whose Scottish Candidate Numbers have been supplied to Scottish Government. The latest [Education Outcomes for Looked After Children Statistics](#) are for 2019-20.
- 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. These statistics are available on p.19 of the [Civil Justice Statistics in Scotland 2019-20](#).
2. The Scottish Government published [Covid-19 Supplementary National Child Protection Guidance](#) on 31 March 2020 to respond to the issues identified by local areas and support evolving approaches. In addition to this, [Coronavirus \(Scotland\) Act 2020](#) provisions were also developed to improve capacity and flexibility of local child protection processes and prioritisation of children at greatest risk.

3. Cross-UK comparability

- 3.1. Although it is possible to draw comparisons between these statistics of the four UK countries, it should be noted that there are differences in legislation, children's Social Work systems and definitions of categories that will affect these figures.
- 3.2. While Scotland's data collection year runs from 1 August to 31 July, the collection year in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland runs from 1 April to 31 March. To allow for cross-UK comparisons, the Scotland figures below are as at the 31st March where relevant
- 3.3. The Scottish Government has undertaken work with 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 can be found on [UK Comparability of Children's Social Services Statistics](#).

3.4. 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 can be found on [UK Comparability of Children's Social Services Statistics](#).

3.5. Equivalent data across the UK is presented in the table below:

UK country	Looked After Children Statistics	Child Protection Statistics	Secure Care Accommodation Statistics
England	Children looked after in England including adoptions 2021	Characteristics of children in need 2021	Children accommodated in secure children's homes: 31 March 2021
Wales	Children Looked After 2021	Children on the child protection register	Children accommodated in secure children's homes: 31 March 2021
Northern Ireland	Children's Social Care Statistics for Northern Ireland 2020/21	Children's Social Care Statistics for Northern Ireland 2020/21	Official/ National Statistics are not produced. However, there is one Secure Unit which, when at full capacity, can house sixteen 11-18 year olds.

4. Data sources and coverage

4.1. 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 2020 and 31 July 2021.

4.2. The **Looked After Children** data was collected at an individual level from local authorities. Data were collected on all children/young people who were looked after between 1 August 2020 and 31 July 2021, on every episode of being looked after which occurred at some point in this 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 who are eligible for aftercare.

4.3. The **Child Protection** data was 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. If a member of the public or a professional report concern about a child, a referral will be made to an agency such as the local authority social work team. If it is decided 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.

- 4.4. The **Secure Care Accommodation** statistics in this publication were collected from five secure care units which were open from 1 August 2020 till 31 July 2021. 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.
- 4.5. The Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) can provide information on staffing and vacancies of services, where a Secure Care Accommodation has provided that information to the Care Inspectorate, although this is not necessarily published. Their 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 Care Accommodation services, you can visit the [Scottish Social Services Council Data website](https://www.sssc.org.uk/data) or contact: dataenquiries@sssc.uk.com.

5. Definitions and notations

- 5.1. The survey forms, data specifications and guidance notes for the statistics presented in this publication are available on the [Scottish Government's Scottish Exchange of Data website](https://www.scotland.gov.uk/information-exchange). The data specifications include standard validation checks undertaken for quality assurance. Online documentation can be found for each of the specific data collections: [Looked After Children](#), [Child Protection](#), and [Secure Care Accommodation](#).

Looked After Children

- 5.2. 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'.
- 5.3. **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 their 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.

- 5.4. **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 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.

5.5. **Types of placements**

In the community

- **At home with parents:** A child becomes looked after at home when the Children's Hearings system imposes a supervision requirement with no condition of residence. There are two main instances in which this happens:
 - as a starting point for planned intervention, where the balance of risk indicates that it is not essential to remove the child from the care of their parents, but that the situation must be monitored
 - where children are returning home after being looked after away from home, where some risks still remain and home supervision aims to help reunite the family

A child looked after at home continues to live at their normal residence (usually the family home), but receives regular visits from social workers to ensure that the objectives of the home supervision order are being met.

- **Kinship Care:** when a child is looked after by their extended family or close friends if they cannot remain with their birth parents. Under the Looked After Children (Scotland) Regulations 2009, a kinship carer is defined as "a person who is related to the child (through blood, marriage or civil partnership) or a person with whom the child has a pre-existing relationship". Kinship care includes both:
 - looked after children who have been placed with kinship carers by the local authority
 - non-looked after children who live in an informal kinship care arrangement (these children may be subject to an order under Section 11 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 or may be living in a completely private

arrangement with extended family, with no local authority involvement). 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.

- **Foster Care:** when a child cannot be cared for by their birth parents, or by kinship carers they can be cared for by an approved foster family. Any adult can apply to become a foster carer by sending an application to their local authority or to a voluntary or independent provider registered with the Care Inspectorate. Foster care can be a temporary arrangement that can end when a child returns to their birth parents, or is adopted. Other placements can be long term if this is in the best interests of the child. Foster cares can be:
 - Provided by local authority
 - Purchased by local authority
- **Adoption:** a formal legal process in which all the rights and responsibilities relating to a child are transferred to the adoptive parents.
- **In other community:** this could be any other placement in the community, such as for example, supported accommodation.

Residential accommodation

- Residential care homes offer young people, usually of secondary school age, a safe place to live together with other children away from home. They provide accommodation, support and, in some cases, education (though in most cases, the child is educated at a school nearby).
- 5.6. **Care Plan** – When children become looked after, a care plan is produced by the local authority. The care plan includes 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.
- 5.7. For more information on the process by which children come be Looked After, and associated legislation please visit [Looked After Children section on the Scottish Government Website](#).
- 5.8. **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.

Child Protection

5.9. **Child Protection Case Conference** – a meeting where the risk of harm or neglect of a child is addressed.

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 with the child or family situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Child remains on register or– Child is deregistered
Transfer	a child already on the Child Protection Register moving between local authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Child is deregistered or– Child remains on register

5.10. **Registrations** – when children who were the subject to a Case Conference and were subsequently added to the Child Protection Register between 1 August 2020 and 31 July 2021.

5.11. **De-registrations** – when children who were the subject to a Transfer or Review Conference and were subsequently removed from the Child Protection Register between 1 August 2020 and 31 July 2021.

5.12. For more information on the Child Protection process, and associated legislation please visit: [National guidance for child protection in Scotland 2014](#). More recent guidance is available on [National guidance for child protection in Scotland 2021](#).

Secure Care Accommodation

5.13. **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.

- 5.14. 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 who, together, 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.
- 5.15. 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.
- 5.16. A young person convicted of an offence in court can be sentenced to detention in Secure Care 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.
- 5.17. Before a child or young person can be placed in Secure Care 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:
- 5.18. 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
- 5.19. the child is likely to engage in self harming conduct
- 5.20. the child is likely to cause injury to another person.
- 5.21. **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.
- 5.22. **Ethnicity and Religion** – Data was collected on ethnicity and religion of young people in Secure Care Accommodation, but we are unable to publish this due to the small numbers and data confidentiality issues.
- 5.23. **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

- 5.24. Prior to 2011, data was collected on '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 included in all three data collections. The question is 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 means that disability data/categories are not comparable 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 at the beginning of the [Definitions and notations section 4.1](#).

Notations

5.25. 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.

Rounding

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

6. Data quality and revisions

6.1. The data for all three parts of this publication 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.

6.2. Automated validation checks are undertaken at the point the data are submitted. These validations are outlined in the relevant data specifications. Further information is available in the online documentation listed at the beginning of the [Definitions and notations section 4.1](#).

6.3. 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 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 Accommodation 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.

6.4. 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.

7. Comparability over time

Looked After Children

7.1. 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.

7.2. 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.

7.3. The only 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

7.4. 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 are given the option to revise their data for the previous year. This report reflects those updates provided by local authorities for 2019-20.

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

Secure Care Accommodation

7.6. 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 2020-21 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 2021

Looked after children

Chart 1a Children looked after per 1,000 children under 18 by type of placement 1987-2021

Table 1.1 Number and percentage of children looked after in each type of placement, 2009-2021

Table 1.2 Children looked after with and without a current care plan, at 31 July 2021

Chart 1b Number of children starting and ceasing to become looked after at 31 July, 2003-2021

Chart 2 Children Starting and Ceasing to be Looked After by month, 2020 and 2021

Table 1.3 and 1.3a Number and percentage of children starting to be looked after by age and sex, 2003-2021

Table 1.4 and 1.4a Number and percentage of children ceasing to be looked after by length of time looked after and age, 2003-2021

Table 1.5 and 1.5a Percentage of children ceasing to be looked after, by destination, 2002-2021

Table 1.6 Pathway plans and nominated pathway coordinators of young people who were 16 or over on the date they ceased to be looked after during 2020-21

Table 1.7 Number and percentage of young people eligible for aftercare services, at 31 July 2021, by age and economic activity

Table 1.8 Children in Continuing Care

Chart 3 Cross-UK comparison of rate of looked after children per 10,000 children, 2004-2021

Child protection

<u>Chart 4</u>	Concerns identified at the Case Conferences of children who were on the Child Protection Register, 2000-2021
<u>Table 2.1</u>	Number of children on the Child Protection Register by age and sex, 2000-2021
<u>Chart 5</u>	Concerns identified at the Case Conferences of children who were on the Child Protection Register, 2020-21
<u>Table 2.2</u>	Number of registrations following an initial, pre-birth or transfer-in Case Conference by length of time since previous deregistration, 2007-2021
<u>Table 2.3</u>	Number of deregistrations from the Child Protection Register by length of time on register and reason for deregistration, 2007-2021
<u>Chart 6</u>	Child protection registrations and deregistrations by month, 2019-20 and 2020-21
<u>Chart 7</u>	Percentage of deregistrations by length of time on the Child Protection Register, 2007-2021
<u>Table 2.4</u>	Number of children on the Child Protection Register and rate per 1,000 population aged 0-15 by local authority, 2007-2021
<u>Table 2.5</u>	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, 2020-21
<u>Chart 8</u>	Cross - UK Comparison of Rate of children on the Child Protection Register per 10,000 under 18s, 2004-2021

Secure care

<u>Table 3.1</u>	Secure Care Accommodation bed complement at 31 July 2021
<u>Table 3.2</u>	Secure Care Accommodation capacity and usage, 2013-2021
<u>Table 3.3</u>	Young people in Secure Care Accommodation by sex, age, disability and length of stay, 2015-2021

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, 2020-21

Other

Chart 9 Children Referred to the Children's Reporter and numbers looked after/on Child Protection Register, 2004-2021

Annex B

Children's Social Work Statistics 2020-21 Additional Tables

1. Looked After Children

Characteristics of Looked After Children

Table 1.1 by age group and sex

Table 1.2 by ethnic group

Table 1.3 by additional support needs status

Table 1.4 by type of placement

Children starting to be looked

Table 1.5 by age group and sex

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 sex

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 placement 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 during the past year

Young people eligible for aftercare services on 31 July

Table 1.17 by age and type of placement

Table 1.18 by sex and economic activity

Table 1.19 by ethnic group and economic activity

Table 1.20 by disability status and economic activity

Table 1.21 episodes of homelessness since becoming eligible for aftercare services

Table 1.22 with pathway plan and pathway coordinator

2. Looked after data over time

Table 2.1 Number looked after by age and sex, 2002-2021

Table 2.2 Number looked after by type of placement , 2002-2021

Table 2.3 Number looked after by ethnic origin, 2003-2021

Table 2.4 Number looked after by additional support needs status, 2002-2021

Table 2.5 and 2.5a Number by legal reason for being looked after

Table 2.6 Number looked after by number of placements during the past year, 2012-2021

Table 2.7 Number ceasing to be looked after, by destination and age, 2002-2021

Table 2.8 Cross UK comparison of the number of Looked After Children and rate per 10,000 children under 18, 2005-2021

3. Looked after data by local authority

Local authority breakdowns of

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<u>Table 3.3</u>	Children looked after by type of placement
<u>Table 3.4</u>	Percentage of care leavers beyond minimum school leaving age with a pathway plan and a pathway coordinator
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<u>Table 3.6</u>	Number and young people ceasing to be looked after, by destination and local authority
<u>Table 3.7</u>	Comparison of reported and derived counts of Looked After Children

4. Child protection

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<u>Table 4.2</u>	Number on the Child Protection Register by ethnic group, additional support need status and religion, 2007-2021
<u>Table 4.3</u>	Concerns identified at the case conferences of children who were on the Child Protection Register, 2012-2021

Children on the Child Protection Register, by local authority

<u>Table 4.4 2020-21</u>	Concerns identified at the case conferences of children on the Child Protection Register at 31 July 2021, by age, ethnicity, disability status and religion
<u>Table 4.4 2019-20</u>	Concerns identified at the case conferences of children on the Child Protection Register at 31 July 2020, by age, ethnicity, disability status and religion
<u>Table 4.5</u>	Movement on and off the Child Protection Register, 2020-21
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<u>Table 4.6 2019-20</u>	Main abuser recorded at case conferences held during 2019-20
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<u>Table 4.7 2019-20</u>	Main abuser recorded at pre-birth, initial and transfer in case conference 2019-20
<u>Table 4.8</u>	Rate of children on the Child Protection Register per 10,000 children across UK, 2007-2021
<u>Table 4.9</u>	Rate of children on the Child Protection Register per 10,000 children across the UK, 2007-2021

5. Secure care accommodation

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<u>Table 5.3</u>	Number of human papillomavirus (HPV) immunisations received by females discharged from secure accommodation
<u>Table 5.4</u>	Number and rate of young people admitted to secure care accommodation by local authority, 2013-2021
<u>Table 5.5</u>	Young people admitted to secure care accommodation: placement prior to admission, by sex

Table 5.6 Young people admitted to secure care accommodation: legal reason for admission, by sex

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