**References for further information**

As of March 31, 2024, there were **83,630 children in the care** of local authorities in England. [Children looked after in England including adoptions, Reporting year 2024 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK](https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoptions/2024)

**Age distribution**:

* 36% looked-after children aged under 10 years
* 39% of were aged 10-15 years.
* 25% were aged 16 years and over.

**Placement type:**

* foster 67%;
* residential 10%;
* Semi-independent accommodation 7%
* Someone with parental responsibility 6%
* other 10%

**Criminal justice system**:

* More than half (52%) of looked-after children born in the academic year ending 1994 who attended school in England had a criminal conviction by the age of 24 years compared with 13% of children who had not been in care.
* Imprisonment was a relatively unusual outcome, however, 1 in 7 (15%) looked-after children had received an immediate custodial sentence by the age of 24 years; that is over 10 times the proportion of children who had not been in care.
* A further 37% of looked-after children had received a non-custodial conviction, such as a fine or caution; this is compared with 12% of children who had not been in care.

[The education background of looked-after children who interact with the criminal justice system - Office for National Statistics](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/educationandchildcare/articles/theeducationbackgroundoflookedafterchildrenwhointeractwiththecriminaljusticesystem/december2022).

* Government data indicates that approximately 25% of the adult prison population have previously been in care: [Prisoners’ childhood and family backgrounds](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/278837/prisoners-childhood-family-backgrounds.pdf) [care-experience-matters.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6409b28ed3bf7f02f6e38008/care-experience-matters.pdf)

**Not in education, employment, or training** (NEET). As of March 2022, 38% of care leavers aged 19 to 21 years were NEET, a decrease from 41% in 2021. For the general population of 19- to 21-year-olds, the NEET rate was 13% [Children looked after in England including adoptions, Reporting year 2022 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK](https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoptions/2022)

**Educational Attainment**:

Just 9% of care leavers enter higher education by their 19th birthday, compared to 47% of the wider population. [Civitas: Institute for the Study of Civil Society Breaking the Care Ceiling](https://www.civitas.org.uk/publications/breaking-the-care-ceiling/)

Looked After Children have lower Attainment 8 measures (the average achievement of pupils in up to 8 qualifications at GCSE) at 19%, compared to 45% in the general population. [Outcomes for children in need, including children looked after by local authorities in England, Reporting year 2024 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK](https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/outcomes-for-children-in-need-including-children-looked-after-by-local-authorities-in-england/2024)

**Housing**

54% Increase in Homelessness Among Care Leavers Aged 18-20: Between 2018-19 and 2023-24, the number of young care leavers aged 18 to 20 facing homelessness in England rose from 2,790 to over 4,300, marking a 54% increase. [Huge rise in number of young care leavers facing homelessness - BBC News](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cj4dyy9kgrro)

Care Leavers Constitute 20-30% of the **Adult Homeless Population:** While specific figures on care leavers making up 25% of the adult homeless population are not detailed in the provided sources, it’s acknowledged that care leavers are disproportionately represented among homeless individuals [Report-Provision-for-young-care-leavers-at-risk-of-homelessness-FINAL.pdf](https://www.wcpp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Report-Provision-for-young-care-leavers-at-risk-of-homelessness-FINAL.pdf)

**Suitable accommodation**:

• 17-year-old care leavers: 7% are in accommodation considered unsuitable.

• 18-year-old care leavers: 3% are in unsuitable accommodation.

• Care leavers aged 19-21: 6% are in unsuitable accommodation.

Department for Education’s data on care leavers by accommodation suitability. (GOV.UK 2023). [17-21 year old care leavers by whether their accommodation is suitable - NATIONAL, Data set from Children looked after in England including adoptions - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK](https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-catalogue/data-set/c6fa09b3-4eef-462f-b7ab-b582bad2a3e9)

Ensuring that care leavers have access to suitable accommodation is crucial for their successful transition to independence. These statistics highlight the need for continued efforts to improve housing support for this vulnerable group.

‘**Local connection rules’**

Care leavers have now been exempted from having to demonstrate their local connection to be supported in social housing. ([Care leavers exempted from local connection requirement to access social housing - Community Care](https://www.communitycare.co.uk/2024/09/25/care-leavers-exempted-from-local-connection-requirement-to-access-social-housing/) ). This was the subject of a JUJI Parliamentary visit in December 2024.

**Racial disparities** in the UK’s care and adoption systems are well-documented in government statistics. As of March 31, 2023:

• Representation in Care: Black children constituted 7% of the looked-after children population, despite making up only 5% of the under-18 population.

• Adoption Rates: Only 2% of Black children in care were adopted, compared to 7% in the care system. (GOV.UK 2023)

These statistics are sourced from [Ethnicity facts and figures – GOV.UK](https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/)