

# National Assembly for Wales

## In Figures: Looked after children Research Paper

November 2009

This paper provides a statistical overview of looked after children in Wales.



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## **National Assembly for Wales**

### **In Figures: Looked after children Research Paper**

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## Executive Summary

This paper is intended to support the National Assembly for Wales' [Children and Young People Committee](#) in conducting an inquiry into the effectiveness of systems in Wales for placing children and young people in care. The inquiry commenced in May 2009.

### *Summary of results*

At 31 March 2009, 4,941 children were looked after. This is 134 more than at 31 March 2008, an increase of 3 per cent.

During the year to 31 March 2009, 237 children were looked after under an agreed series of short-term placements. Excluding these children, the number of looked after children increased by 2 per cent, from 4,633 in 2008 to 4,704 in 2009.

At 31 March 2009, children aged 10-15 years accounted for 43 per cent of looked after children.

At 31 March 2009, 92 per cent of looked after children were of white ethnic origin.

Merthyr Tydfil was the local authority with the highest number of looked after children per 10,000 children.

At 31 March 2009, 3,632 (77 per cent) of looked after children were in foster care placements.

At 31 March 2008, there were 2,141 foster parents on local authority registers, with 3,702 places.

During the year to 31 March 2009, the largest category of need for children starting to be looked after was abuse or neglect (54 per cent of the total).

In the year ending 31 March 2009, 494 children aged 16 or over ceased being looked after. Of these young people, 45 per cent had no GCSE or GNVQ qualification.

Local authorities were in touch with 92 per cent of care leavers who had been in care on 1 April 2006 and had their 19th birthday in the year ending 31 March 2009. Of these young people, 49 per cent were in full- or part-time education, training or employment and 94 per cent were in suitable accommodation.

At 31 March 2009 there were 1,428 social workers employed by local authorities working in children's services in Wales.

In 2007-08, local authority expenditure on looked after children was £147 million. This was an increase of £1.8 million (1.3 per cent) compared with 2006-07.



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# In Figures: Looked after children

## 1 Introduction

In May 2009 the National Assembly for Wales' [Children and Young People Committee](#) commenced an inquiry into the effectiveness of systems for placing children and young people into care in Wales.

This paper aims to support the Committee's inquiry by identifying key figures, including the number of looked after children, their types of placement, their educational attainments and trends over time.

Data on looked after children are published in various sources, so this paper seeks to summarise and add to the information, bringing it together in one place. The majority of data used in this paper were originally published by the Local Government Data Unit ~ Wales (Data Unit) and the Statistical Directorate of the Welsh Government.

### *Definition of looked after children*

"Looked after" is the term used in the *Children Act 1989*<sup>1</sup> to describe all children who are the subject of a care order, or who are provided with accommodation on a voluntary basis for more than 24 hours. A care order may only be made by a court.

Children who are "looked after" include:

- children who are subject to an interim or full care order;
- children who are subject to police protection, an emergency protection or child protection order;
- children remanded or committed to local authority accommodation or made the subject of a residence requirement of a supervision order in criminal proceedings;
- children transferred to local authority accommodation under the provisions of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984;
- children accommodated in community homes, having been sentenced under Section 53 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933.

The *Children Act 1989* came into effect on 14 October 1991. This Act brought existing private and public law relating to children together into a single framework.

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<sup>1</sup> [Children Act 1989](#) [accessed 22 September 2009]

The 1989 Act was amended by the *Children Act 2004*<sup>2</sup>. The *Children Act 2004* also contains some measures relevant to looked after children, such as a duty for local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked after children.

In the [One Wales](#) agreement, the Welsh Government committed to the following in relation to looked after children:

We will seek further powers to legislate in the fields of vulnerable children, looked-after children and child poverty.

The [Vulnerable Children Legislative Competence Order](#) (LCO) gave powers to the National Assembly for Wales to bring forward the [Proposed Children and Families \(Wales\) Measure](#). This was introduced in March 2009 and has almost completed its passage through the Assembly.

An electronic version of the paper is available on the [Members' Research Service](#) pages of the National Assembly for Wales' web-site.

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<sup>2</sup> [Children Act 2004](#) [accessed 22 September 2009]

## 2 Numbers of looked after children

This section looks at evidence showing the increase in the numbers of looked after children over the last 12 years, along with current status in terms of age, gender, ethnicity and prevalence rates within local authorities in Wales.

### Key statistics

- at 31 March 2009, 4,941 children were looked after;
- since 1997 the total number of looked after children has increased by 50 per cent;
- around 45 per cent of looked after children are female, proportions have remained relatively unchanged since 1997;
- at 31 March 2009, children aged 10-15 years accounted for 43 per cent of looked after children;
- since 1997, the proportion of children in the age group 10-15 years has risen steadily, from 38 per cent to 43 per cent;
- across Wales there was an average of 74 looked after children for every 10,000 children;
- Merthyr Tydfil had the highest rate of looked after children and Flintshire the lowest.

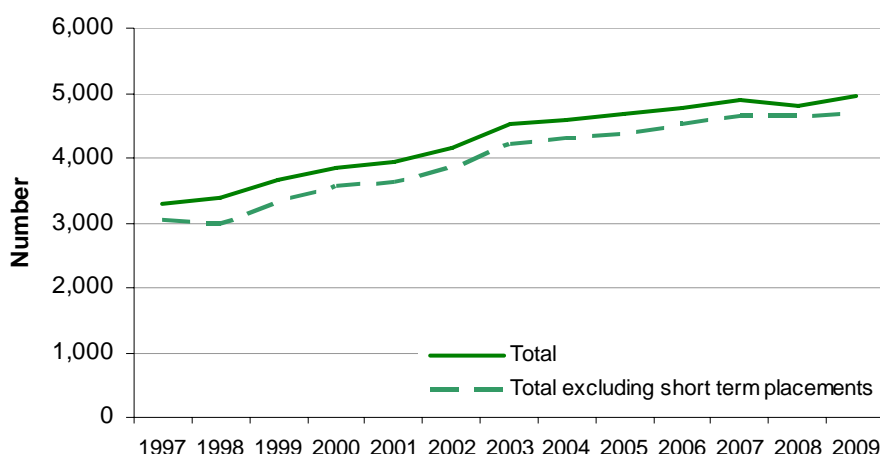
### Numbers of looked after children

**At 31 March 2009, 4,941 children were looked after.** This is 134 more than at 31 March 2008, an increase of 3 per cent. This total includes 237 children looked after under an agreed series of short-term placements<sup>3</sup>. Excluding these children, the number of looked after children increased by 2 per cent, from 4,633 in 2008 to 4,704 in 2009. Chart 1 shows the number of looked after children since 1997. **Since 1997 the total number of looked after children has increased by 50 per cent.**

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<sup>3</sup> "Short term placement" is the term used to describe children who are subject to short-term break agreements. These children normally live at home, but are accommodated by a local authority in a pattern of short periods of care in order to give their parents (or guardians) some "respite" from the normal duties of looking after a child.

**Chart 1: Number of looked after children in Wales, at 31 March, 1997 - 2009**



Source: [Social Services Statistics Wales 2007-08](#) Table 1.1 and Welsh Government statistical publication [SDR127/2009](#)

### ***Age and gender of children looked after***

Females account for 45 per cent of looked after children. There has been little change in the proportional split of males and females since 1997.

**Table 1: Number of looked after children by gender, at 31 March**

	<i>Number</i>		
	Boys	Girls	Children
1997 (a)	1,715	1,439	3,290
1998 (b)	1,627	1,491	3,400
1999	1,958	1,699	3,657
2000	2,090	1,759	3,849
2001	2,133	1,798	3,931
2002	2,243	1,897	4,140
2003	2,464	2,052	4,516
2004	2,507	2,084	4,591
2005	2,538	2,130	4,668
2006	2,635	2,149	4,784
2007	2,672	2,212	4,884
2008	2,632	2,175	4,807
2009	2,736	2,205	4,941

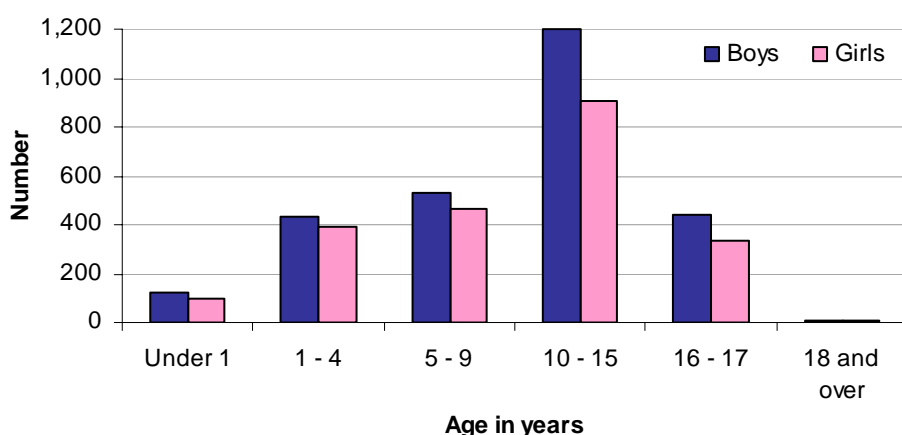
Source: [Social Services Statistics Wales, 2007-08](#), Table 1.1 and Local Government Data Unit ~ Wales

(a) The total includes 136 children whose gender was not recorded.

(b) The total includes 282 children whose gender was not recorded.

Chart 2 shows that at 31 March 2009, children aged 10-15 years accounted for 43 per cent of looked after children. Children aged 9 years and under accounted for 41 per cent, with those aged 16 years and over accounting for 16 per cent.

**Chart 2: Number of looked after children, by age and gender, at 31 March 2009**



Source: Local Government Data Unit ~ Wales

Table 2 shows the number of looked after children in each age group since 1997. Since 1997, the proportion of children in the age group 10 to 15 years has risen steadily, from 38 per cent to 43 per cent. Since 1997, the proportion of children in the 16 and over age group has decreased from 21 per cent to 16 per cent. During the same period, the proportion of children in the other groups has fluctuated.

**Table 2: Number of looked after children, by age group, at 31 March**

	Age in years						Number
	Under 1	1 - 4	5 - 9	10 - 15	16 - 17	18 and over	All ages
1997 (a)	82	481	706	1,208	525	152	3,290
1998 (b)	91	537	727	1,205	468	90	3,400
1999	106	674	932	1,438	470	37	3,657
2000	115	724	1,021	1,487	458	44	3,849
2001	116	722	1,032	1,574	470	17	3,931
2002	148	712	1,096	1,693	448	43	4,140
2003	160	781	1,148	1,830	550	47	4,516
2004	165	787	1,144	1,901	556	38	4,591
2005	211	752	1,104	2,006	559	36	4,668
2006	201	783	1,110	2,054	619	17	4,784
2007	191	809	1,064	2,101	706	13	4,884
2008	206	771	1,031	2,069	715	15	4,807
2009	222	823	1,000	2,109	772	15	4,941

Source: [Social Services Statistics Wales, 2007-08](#), Table 1.1 and Local Government Data Unit ~ Wales

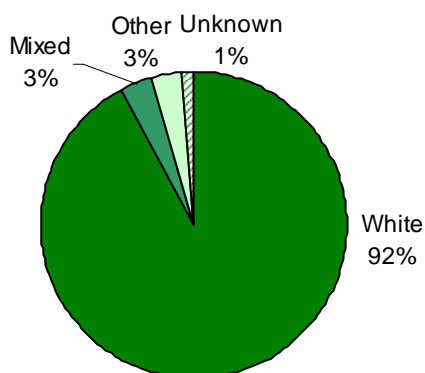
(a) Includes 136 children for whom dates of birth were not supplied by local authorities.

(b) Includes 282 children for whom dates of birth were not supplied by local authorities.

### ***Ethnicity of looked after children***

At 31 March 2009, 4,337 (92 per cent) of the 4,704 children looked after were white. Ethnicity was unknown for 1 per cent of children. Since 2002, there has been little change in the proportion of looked after children in each ethnic group, although the proportion of children with unknown ethnicity has decreased.

**Chart 3: Ethnicity of children looked after, at 31 March 2009 (a) (b)**



Source: Local Government Data Unit ~ Wales

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

(b) "Mixed" includes White and Black Caribbean, White and Black African, White and Asian, and any other mixed background. "Other" includes Asian, or Asian British, Black or Black British, and any other ethnic group.

### ***Looked after children, by local authority***

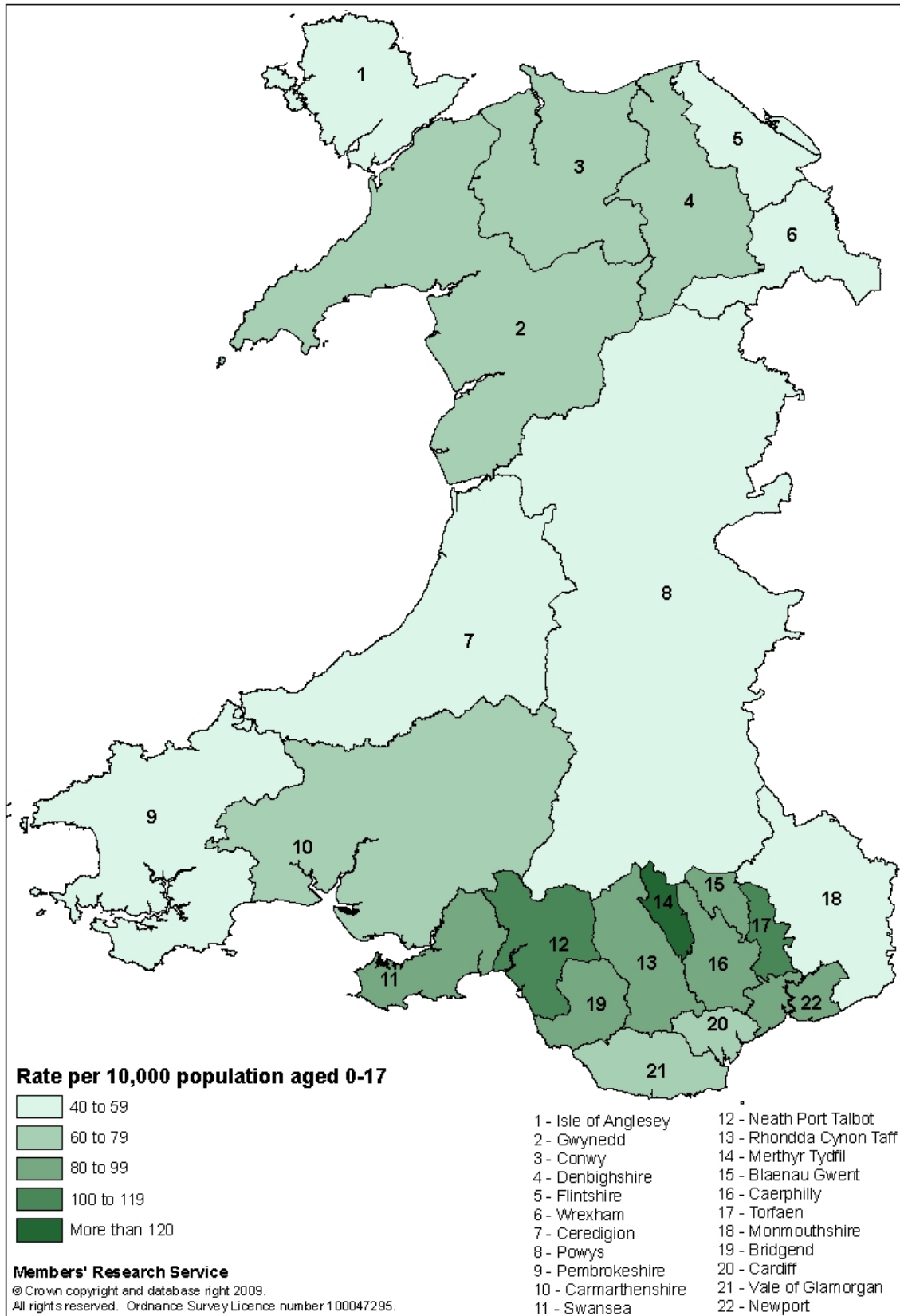
For disclosure purposes, the numbers of looked after children in each local authority, published by the Data Unit, are rounded to the nearest 5.

At 31 March 2009, in terms of actual numbers, **Ceredigion and the Isle of Anglesey were the local authorities with the fewest looked after children (70)** **Cardiff had the greatest number of looked after children (520).**

To make meaningful comparisons between local authorities the rate of children looked after has been calculated. The rate shown is the number of looked after children per 10,000 children living in each local authority. The rates have been calculated using the Registrar General's estimate of population aged under 18, at 30 June 2007. Map 1 shows the rates of looked after children in each local authority as at 31 March 2009.

**Across Wales there was an average of 74 looked after children for every 10,000 children.** In general, the highest rates of looked after children were in local authorities in south Wales. **Merthyr Tydfil had the highest rate of looked after children**, followed by Torfaen and Neath Port Talbot. **The lowest rate of looked after children was in Flintshire.**

**Map 1: Rate of looked after children per 10,000 population aged under 18, at 31 March 2009**



Source: Local Government Data Unit ~ Wales

### 3 Placements of looked after children

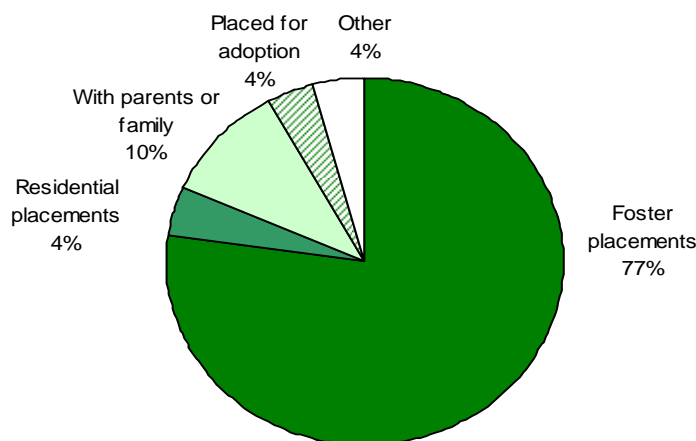
#### Key statistics

- at 31 March 2009, 77 per cent of looked after children were with approved foster carers;
- of the 3,632 children in foster care, 29 per cent were placed outside the local authority area. In 1998, 8 per cent of children were placed outside the local authority;
- the proportion of children placed in foster care with a relative or friend has increased from 6 per cent in 1998 to 18 per cent in 2009;
- since 2002, the number of foster parents has increased by 15 per cent and the number of places has increased by 11 per cent;
- seventy-one per cent of looked after children had only one placement during the year to 31 March 2009, 10 per cent had three or more placements.

#### Placements of looked after children

Children who are looked after by the local authority can be placed in a number of different care settings such as with foster parents, in a residential care home or with other family members. Chart 4 shows that at 31 March 2009, 77 per cent of looked after children were with approved foster carers, 10 per cent were placed with parents or family, 4 per cent were in residential placements, 4 per cent were placed for adoption and 4 per cent were in other settings (this includes those living independently e.g. in a flat or with friends, in residential employment, those absent from the agreed placement, as well as other settings).

Chart 4: Looked after children, by placement, at 31 March 2009 (a)



Source: Local Government Data Unit ~ Wales

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



Since 1997, the number of looked after children who are placed with **approved foster carers has increased** from 2,303 to 3,632, an **increase of 58 per cent**. As a proportion of all placements, the percentage of looked after children who are placed in foster care has fluctuated between 70 and 77 per cent, although since 2004 the percentage has increased each year from 71 per cent to 77 per cent.

The number of children placed with **parents or family has increased by 68 per cent** since 1997. During this period, as a proportion of all placements, children placed with family and friends increased each year between 1998 and 2005 before seeing a decrease.

The number of children in **residential placements has decreased** compared with 1997. During the period, residential placements have fluctuated between 4 and 7 per cent of all placements.

Since 1997 the **number of children staying with their prospective adopters has more than doubled** (from 93 to 189). However, during this period, as a percentage of all placements, children placed for adoption has remained between 3 and 6 per cent.

**Table 3: Placements of looked after children, at 31 March (a)**

	<i>Number</i>					
	Foster placements	Residential placements (b)	With parents or family	Placed for adoption	Other	Total
1997	2,303	237	289	93	368	3,290
1998	2,550	238	286	87	239	3,400
1999	2,519	239	319	92	144	3,313
2000	2,691	234	364	138	147	3,574
2001	2,690	235	408	176	135	3,644
2002	2,831	247	445	232	100	3,855
2003	3,015	287	552	249	116	4,219
2004	3,075	277	579	231	153	4,315
2005	3,194	234	596	201	155	4,380
2006	3,353	228	556	202	190	4,529
2007	3,467	222	527	234	192	4,642
2008	3,487	213	532	212	189	4,633
2009	3,632	205	486	189	192	4,704

Source: [Social Services Statistics Wales, 2007-08](#), Table 1.2 and Local Government Data Unit ~ Wales

(a) Excluding children looked after in short-term placements, except 1997 and 1998 which includes children in an agreed series of short-term placements.

(b) Includes local authority homes and private and voluntary homes.

## *Types of care provision*

The care settings for looked after children are varied and include a range of accommodation managed by the local authority, such as foster placements and residential care homes; private / independent provision in the form of residential care or private foster placements; and also some voluntary sector provision such as a placements in a supported lodgings schemes for an older looked after child.

Private / independent care settings should not be confused with the term private fostering, which occurs when a child under 16 (under 18 if disabled) is cared for by an adult, who is not a relative, under a private arrangement between parent and carer that lasts for 28 days or more<sup>4</sup>.

In the table below, the term 'provider' is used to indicate an organisation. Each provider organisation may have multiple care settings which can be foster carers, children's homes or residential special schools.

The figures shown in table 4 are taken from the Children's Commissioning Support Resource (CCSR) database of providers<sup>5</sup>.

**Table 4: Registered care providers and settings, at 1 October**

	2007				2008				<i>Number</i>
	Local authority	Independent /Private providers		Total	Local authority	Independent /Private providers		Total	
		Voluntary				Voluntary			
Registered care providers	31	56	15	102	32	59	10	101	
Registered care settings	1,970	556	161	2,687	2,023	735	127	2,885	

Source: Welsh Government statistical publication [SDR 175/2008](#), Table 3

## *Foster services and placements*

Of the 3,632 children in foster care at 31 March 2009, **29 per cent were placed outside the local authority area**. The proportion of children placed in foster care outside the local authority has increased over the last decade. In **1998, 8 per cent** of children were placed outside the local authority. Due to the small numbers of children in foster care in some local authorities it is difficult to look at trends and draw many conclusions about placements at the level of local authority.

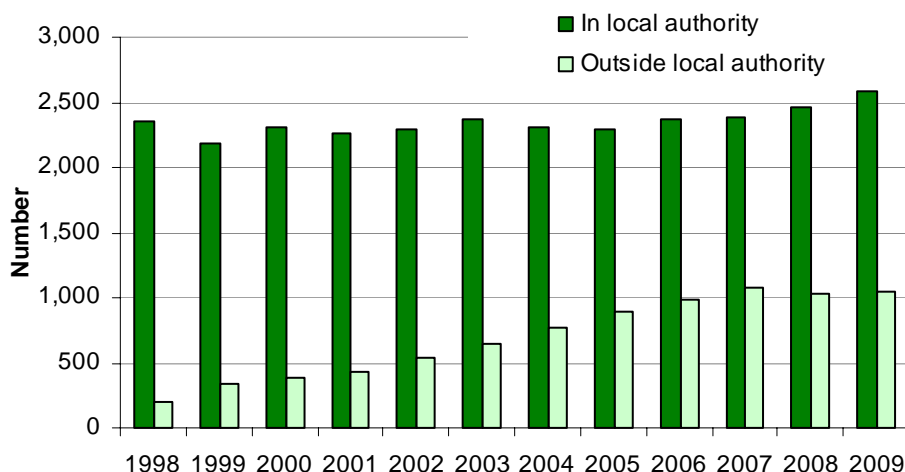
Information on how far from their home a foster child is placed or whether they are placed outside of Wales is not published.

<sup>4</sup> See section 7 for further information on private fostering.

<sup>5</sup> The [Children's Commissioning Support Resource \(CCSR\)](#) is a joint venture between the Welsh Government, the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA), the Association of Directors of Social Services in Wales (ADSS Cymru) and the Care and Social Services Inspectorate in Wales (CCSIW). It aims to support the process of finding appropriate care settings for looked after children.

The proportion of children placed in foster care with a relative or friend has also increased over the last decade, increasing from 6 per cent in 1998 to 18 per cent in 2009.

Chart 5: Children looked after in foster placements, at 31 March 1998 – 2009 (a)



Source: [Social Services Statistics Wales, 2007-08](#), Table 1.4 and Local Government Data Unit ~ Wales  
(a) Excluding children looked after in short-term placements.

Table 5: Children looked after in foster placements, at 31 March (a)

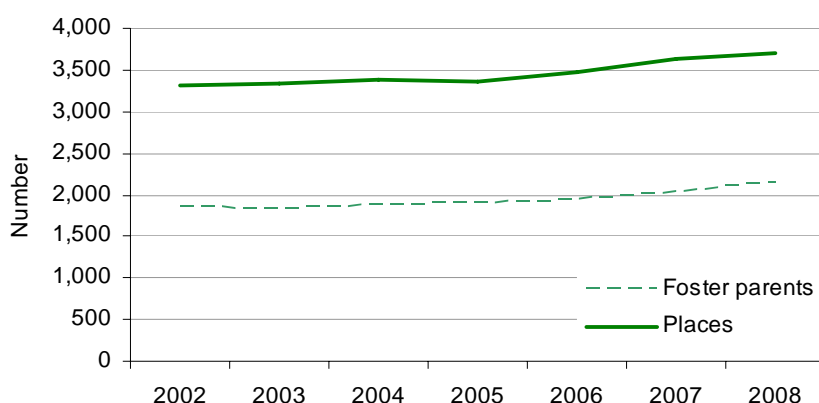
	Type of placement		Area of placement		Number
	With relative or friend	With other foster carer (b)	In local authority area	Outside local authority area	Total
	1998	145	2,405	2,348	202
1999	333	2,186	2,183	336	2,519
2000	413	2,278	2,302	389	2,691
2001	404	2,286	2,262	428	2,690
2002	547	2,284	2,298	533	2,831
2003	618	2,397	2,366	649	3,015
2004	627	2,448	2,309	766	3,075
2005	621	2,573	2,294	900	3,194
2006	637	2,716	2,374	979	3,353
2007	662	2,805	2,392	1,075	3,467
2008	656	2,831	2,456	1,031	3,487
2009	671	2,961	2,591	1,041	3,632

Source: [Social Services Statistics Wales, 2007-08](#), Table 1.4 and Local Government Data Unit ~ Wales  
(a) Excluding children looked after in short-term placements.  
(b) With other foster carer provided by the local authority or arranged through an agency.

Local authorities collect data on the number of approved foster parents registered with them and the places available.

At 31 March 2008, there were 2,141 foster parents on local authority registers with a total of 3,702 places. Since 2002, the number of foster parents has increased by 15 per cent and the number of places has increased by 11 per cent.

**Chart 6: Number of foster parents and places, at 31 March 2002 – 2008**



Source: [Social Services Statistics Wales 2007-08](#), Table 1.19

The number of foster parents and places varies by local authority, as shown in table 6. In terms of foster places per 10,000 children aged under 18, Merthyr Tydfil has the highest rate of places with 110. Section 2 of this paper showed that Merthyr Tydfil was the local authority with the highest number of looked after children per 10,000 children. With 41 places per 10,000 children, the Isle of Anglesey has the lowest rate of foster places.

**Table 6: Number of foster parents and places on local authority registers, 31 March 2008**

	Number of approved foster parents on the local authority register	Number of places specified with these foster parents	Rate of places per 10,000 children aged under 18 (a)
Isle of Anglesey	33	58	41
Gwynedd	72	133	54
Conwy	82	140	62
Denbighshire	64	132	65
Flintshire	84	140	43
Wrexham	78	119	42
Powys	73	153	56
Ceredigion	51	102	74
Pembrokeshire	68	121	47
Carmarthenshire	122	207	55
Swansea	158	296	65
Neath Port Talbot	129	244	84
Bridgend	116	195	67
The Vale of Glamorgan	87	140	50
Cardiff	162	280	42
Rhondda Cynon Taf	190	290	57
Merthyr Tydfil	69	138	110
Caerphilly	112	201	51
Blaenau Gwent	46	78	51
Torfaen	117	146	72
Monmouthshire	50	85	45
Newport	178	304	93
Wales	2,141	3,702	58

Source: [Local Government Data Unit ~ Wales dissemination tool](#) Fostering Services data & MRS calculations  
 (a) Calculated using 2007 mid-year population estimates from the Office for National Statistics.

## Number of placements

Seventy-one per cent of looked after children had only one placement during the year to 31 March 2009. Between 2002 and 2008, the proportion of the children looked after who had one placement during the year fluctuated between 66 and 68 per cent. Ten per cent of looked after children had three or more placements. This is a decrease compared with 2002 (14 per cent).

Chart 7: Number of placements of looked after children, during the year to 31 March, 2002 - 2009 (a)



Source: [Social Services Statistics Wales, 2007-08](#), Table 1.3 and Local Government Data Unit ~ Wales  
(a) Excluding children looked after in short-term placements.

## 4 Reason for the need for care

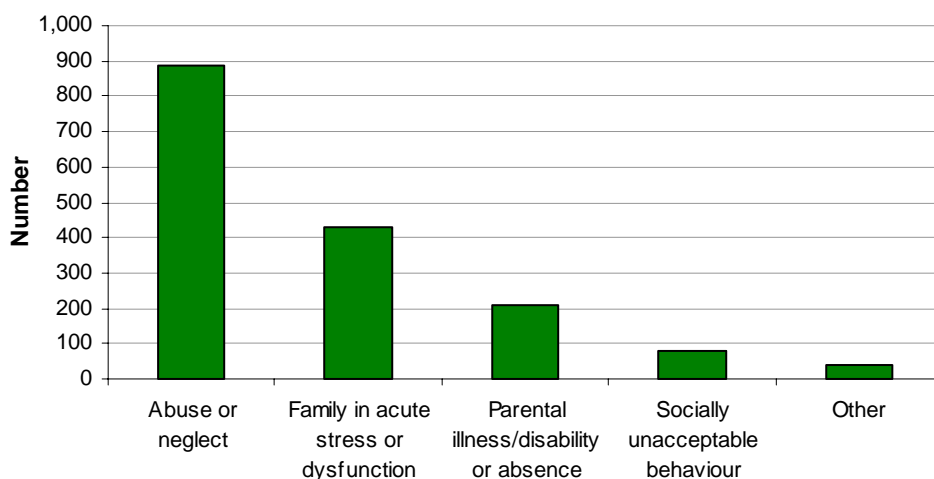
### Key Statistics

- in the year to 31 March 2009 1,640 children started to be looked after, an increase of 13 per cent compared with 2008. This is the first increase seen in the number of children starting to be looked after since 2004;
- the largest category of need for children starting to be looked after was abuse or neglect (54 per cent).

**Compared with 2002**, there has been an **increase of 29 per cent in the number of children starting to be looked after due to abuse or neglect** (from 686 children to 885). The year ending 31 March 2009 shows the first increase in the number of children starting to be looked after since 2004.

As a percentage of all children starting to be looked after, the proportion starting to be looked after due to abuse or neglect has increased since 2002. In 2002, 45 per cent of children were starting to be looked after due to abuse or neglect. By 2009 this had increased to 54 per cent. The number of children starting to be looked after due to **socially unacceptable behaviour has decreased** since 2002, from 190 to 78 (a decrease of 59 per cent).

**Chart 8: Children starting to be looked after by need for care, year ending 31 March 2009**



Source: Welsh Government statistical publication [SDR127/2009](#)

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

**Table 7: Children starting to be looked after by need for care, year ending 31 March***Number*

	Abuse or neglect	Parental illness/disability or absence	Family in acute stress or dysfunction	Socially unacceptable behaviour	Other	Total
2002	686	271	367	190	27	1,541
2003	790	262	407	167	25	1,651
2004	808	246	492	144	25	1,715
2005	817	241	474	143	34	1,709
2006	811	221	480	131	30	1,673
2007	777	194	428	107	31	1,537
2008	753	162	383	102	46	1,446
2009	885	211	427	78	39	1,640

Source: [Social Services Statistics Wales, 2007-08](#) and Welsh Government publication [SDR127/2009](#)

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

## 5 Education

### Key statistics

- the attainment results for looked after children are considerably lower than the average for all pupils;
- in the year to 31 March 2009, 14 per cent of looked after children had experienced one or more changes of school during a period of being looked after;
- the average external qualifications points score for looked after children aged 16 was 146, this compares with 356 for all pupils;
- 55 per cent of children aged 16 or over who ceased being looked after had at least one GCSE or GNVQ, this compares with 36 per cent in 2002.

### *Changes of school*

The numbers of looked after children who have experienced one or more changes of school, during a period or periods of being looked after are collected as part of the local authority performance measurement framework. The figures exclude transitional arrangements, where children have moved from infant school to primary school, primary school to junior school, junior school to secondary school and secondary school to sixth form college, but include changes of school on becoming looked after.

**In the 12 months to 31 March 2009, 14 per cent of looked after children had experienced one or more changes of school during a period of being looked after.** The figure varies by local authority, with 48 per cent of looked after children in Gwynedd experiencing one or more change of school compared with 5 per cent in Cardiff.

### *Educational attainment of looked after children*

Information on the educational attainment of looked after children is collected as part of the local authority performance measurement framework. The indicators on educational attainment were introduced by the Welsh Government in 2007-08.

The attainment results for looked after children are considerably lower than the average for all pupils.

In the year ending 31 March 2009, **40 per cent of looked after children** who were eligible for assessment at **Key Stage 2 achieved the Core Subject Indicator**. This compares with **75 per cent for all pupils**. For **Key Stage 3, 21 per cent** of looked



after children achieved the Core Subject Indicator. The equivalent figure for all pupils was **60 per cent**. The **average external qualifications points** score for looked after children aged 16 was **146**. This compares with 356 for all pupils<sup>6</sup>.

**Table 8: Educational attainment of looked after children (a)**

	2008 (b)		2009 (c)	
	Looked after children	All pupils	Looked after children	All pupils
The percentage achieving the Core Subject Indicator at the end of Key Stage 2	38%	74%	40%	75%
The percentage achieving the Core Subject Indicator at the end of Key Stage 3	18%	57%	21%	60%
Average point score in external qualifications (d)	123	344	146	356

Source: Welsh Government statistical publications [SDR 127/2009](#), [SDR129/2008](#), and [Schools in Wales: Examination Performance 2007](#) and [2008](#), Tables 1.4, 1.5 and 2.1

(a) Children who have been looked after for more than 12 months at 31 March.

(b) The data refers to outcomes in the 2006/07 school year.

(c) The data refers to outcomes in the 2007/08 school year.

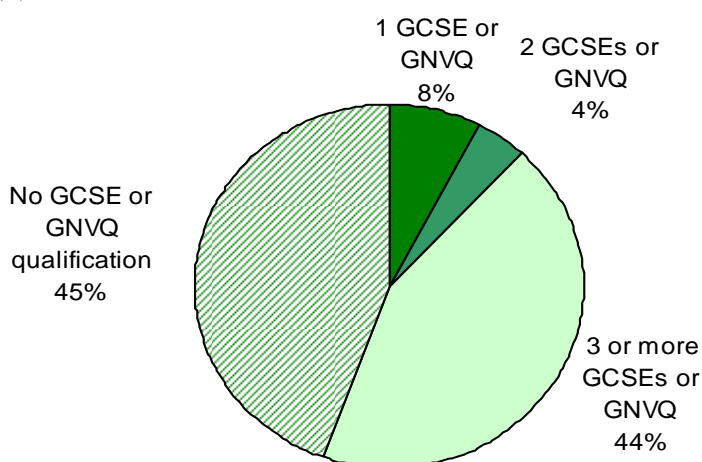
(d) Aged 15 at 31 August prior to the academic year in maintained schools.

### ***Educational qualifications of care leavers***

In the year to 31 March 2009, 494 children aged 16 or over ceased being looked after. At the time of leaving care, 51 per cent of these young people had no GCSE or GNVQ qualification, 29 per cent had five or more GCSEs graded A\*-G. If those who were due to sit examinations later or were prevented by illness or disability are excluded from the total, the figures are 45 per cent and 33 per cent respectively.

**Chart 9: Children who ceased to be looked after, by educational qualifications, at 31 March 2009**

(a)



Source: Local Government Data Unit ~ Wales

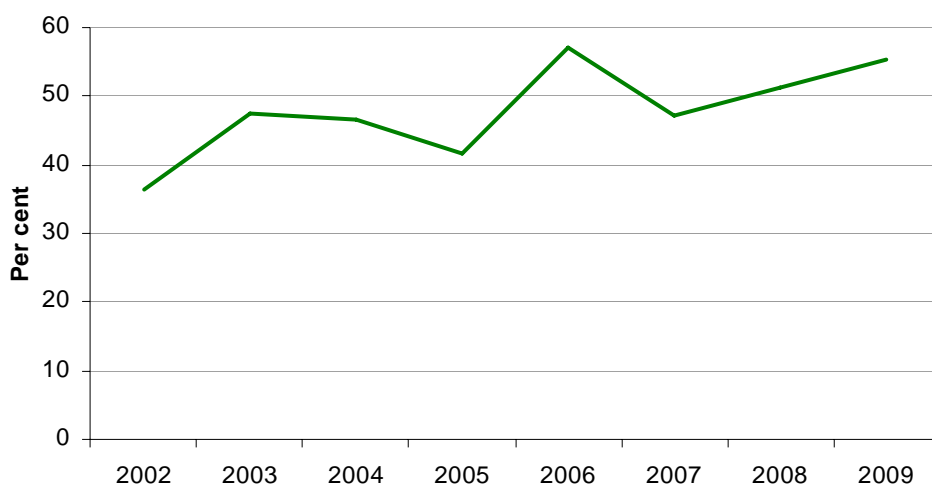
(a) Excludes those who were due to sit examinations later or were prevented by illness or disability.

Since 2002, the proportion of children who ceased being looked after and had at least one GCSE or GNVQ qualification has increased. In 2002, 36 per cent of children aged 16 or over who ceased being looked after had at least one GCSE or GNVQ. This

<sup>6</sup> See Annex A for further information about key stage achievements and points score.

compares with 55 per cent in 2009 (these figures exclude those who were due to sit examinations later or were prevented by illness or disability and children whose qualification data was not available). It is difficult to draw many conclusions from the qualifications data over time, due to the small numbers involved and missing qualification data for a number of children in some years.

**Chart 10: Proportion of children who ceased being looked after, with at least one GCSE or GNVQ qualification, year ending 31 March, 2002 – 2009 (a)**



Source: [Social Services Statistics Wales, 2007-08](#), Table 1.13 and Local Government Data Unit ~ Wales

(a) Excludes those who were due to sit examinations later or were prevented by illness or disability and those children whose qualification data was not available.

**Table 9: Educational qualifications of children who ceased to be looked after aged 16 and over, year ending 31 March**

	Qualifications						Reason for no qualification		Number Total leaving care
	With 1 GCSE A* - G or GNVQ	With 2 GCSEs A* - G or GNVQ	With 3 or more GCSEs A* - G or GNVQ	With 5 or more GCSEs A* - C	No GCSE or GNVQ qualification	With other vocationally related qualifications (a)	Young person was due to sit exam (b)	Young person did not sit exam or did not obtain qualifications (c)	
2002 (d)	11	10	92	20	247	32	50	165	376
2003 (e)	16	8	105	21	187	29	44	112	327
2004 (f)	16	16	117	27	216	40	45	131	371
2005	22	14	110	16	251	47	46	158	397
2006 (g)	17	21	143	32	183	30	47	106	382
2007	14	16	128	29	212	66	36	110	370
2008	23	26	172	38	256	73	45	138	477
2009	34	18	191	43	251	72	56	123	494

Source: [Social Services Statistics Wales, 2007-08](#), Table 1.13 and Local Government Data Unit ~ Wales

(a) Includes other substantial qualifications such as NVQs, advanced level GNVQs, and A levels or any other qualifications approved for use in schools under Section 400 of the [Education Act 1996](#).

(b) Includes young people due to sit exams later in the school year, after having ceased to be looked after, and a health condition or disability has prevented them from sitting exams.

(c) Includes young people who sat at least one exam but obtained no qualifications, and young people that did not sit exams or were not due to sit exams and were not prevented from doing so by a health condition or disability.

(d) The total includes 16 children where qualification data was not available.

(e) The total includes 11 children where qualification data was not available.

(f) The total includes 6 children where qualification data was not available.

(g) The total includes 18 children with unknown reason for no qualification.

## 6 Care leavers on their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday

Information on care leavers is collected via a statistical return which is completed in respect of all young people, who were formerly looked after by the local authority. They can be described as: “all those who were looked after on 1 April in their 17<sup>th</sup> year with a standard legal status”. For the 2008-09 data collection, this group, by definition, then includes all those who were either aged 16, or had reached their 17<sup>th</sup> birthday, on 1 April 2006<sup>7</sup>.

**Local authorities were in touch with 92 per cent of care leavers who had been in care on 1 April 2006 and had their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday in the year ending 31 March 2009.** The number of care leavers in touch with the local authority has increased in recent years, from 66 per cent in 2002.

Of those in touch with the local authority, **49 per cent were known to be in full- or part-time education, training or employment.** Since 2002, the percentage in education, training or employment has fluctuated between 40 per cent and 55 per cent.

Of those in touch with the local authority, **94 per cent were known to be in suitable accommodation.** Since 2002, the percentage of care leavers known to be in suitable accommodation has fluctuated between 83 per cent and 94 per cent.

**Table 10: Care leavers on their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday, year ending 31 March**

	<i>Number</i>					
	Total leaving care	Number in touch with local authority (a)	In education, training or employment	Not in education, training or employment	Suitable accommodation	Unsuitable accommodation
2002	204	134	64	70	121	12
2003	214	160	72	78	136	14
2004	273	191	105	86	178	13
2005	270	236	124	112	208	28
2006	305	270	107	159	225	41
2007	292	264	129	135	242	22
2008	324	302	148	154	276	26
2009	353	324	158	166	304	20

Source: [Social Services Statistics Wales, 2007-08](#), Table 1.15 and Local Government Data Unit ~Wales

(a) Includes those whose activity or accommodation was unknown.

(b) The published statistics do not define what is deemed by ‘suitable’ accommodation. The guidance states that the decision depends on the circumstances of the individual case, and that those collecting the information should use their own judgment.

<sup>7</sup> [OC3 \(statistical return on care leavers on their 19th birthday\) guidance notes](#) [accessed 22 September 2009]

## 7 Private fostering arrangements

Private fostering occurs when a child under 16 (under 18 if disabled) is cared for by an adult, who is not a relative, under a private arrangement between parent and carer that lasts for 28 days or more.

Usually, private foster carers will be from the child's extended family, for example, a cousin or great uncle or aunt. A person who is defined as a relative under the *Children Act 1989*<sup>8</sup> i.e. a grandparent, brother or sister, aunt or uncle, or a step-parent, will not be a private foster carer. A private foster carer may be a friend of the family, the parent of a friend of the child, or someone previously unknown to the child's family who is willing to privately foster a child.

Children in private fostering are not classified as looked after by a local authority under the *Children Act 1989*. However, under the 1989 Act, local authorities have responsibilities towards these children, to ensure that the welfare of children privately fostered is satisfactorily safeguarded and promoted. These responsibilities include making visits to the children.

The data on private fostering may be an underestimate of the total number of children in private fostering arrangements as there is doubt over whether all parents, carers and other relevant third parties currently report the existence of these arrangements to the local authority. Arrangements to strengthen and enhance the notification scheme were made in the *Children Act 2004*<sup>9</sup>. The Welsh Government revised the legislation and guidance in respect of private fostering in 2006 and these changes were subsequently reviewed by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales in 2008<sup>10</sup>.

During the year to 31 March 2008, **73 new private fostering arrangements began**, compared with 60 in the previous year, and 69 children received an initial visit. Of these visits, 47 (68 per cent) began within 7 working days of the fostering arrangement.

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<sup>8</sup> [Children Act 1989](#) [accessed 22 September 2009]

<sup>9</sup> [Children Act 2004](#) [accessed 22 September 2009]

<sup>10</sup> [Review of Welsh Local Authorities Arrangements for Private Fostering 2008](#), Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales [accessed 22 September 2009]

**Table 11: Private fostering arrangements, year ending 31 March (a)**

				<i>Number</i>
	Number of new arrangements that began during the year	Number of children who had an initial visit during the year	Number of initial visits within 7 working days (b)	Number of children under private fostering arrangements
2002	..	..	..	55
2003	..	..	..	56
2004	..	..	..	36
2005	43	25	19	56
2006	48	44	40	43
2007	60	57	39	45
2008	73	69	47	59

Source: [Social Services Statistics Wales 2007-08](#), Table 1.20

.. means not available

(a) Prior to 2005 only the numbers of private fostering arrangements and numbers of children were collected.

(b) Initial visits within 7 working days of the beginning of the private fostering arrangement.

## 8 Social workers

Limited statistical information is available on social workers in Wales. The Data Unit collects some information on the numbers of staff directly employed by local authority social services departments. Information such as age, gender, professional development of the workforce and vacancies is not collected. The Care Council for Wales is the regulatory body for the social care profession in Wales and holds a register of qualified social workers. However, this register was not designed to be used for statistical purposes so it is not feasible to obtain data from this source or use it to consider issues such as the qualification levels held by those working with children or staff turnover.

In recent years, social workers have accounted for around 60 per cent of staff employed by local authorities in social work services for children and young people.

**At 31 March 2009 there were 1,428 social workers, employed by local authorities, working in children's services in Wales.** The whole time equivalent number of social workers in children's services was 1,314. The **number of social workers in children's services has increased by 22 per cent since 2005.**

**Table 12: Social workers in Wales at 31 March**

	Social workers		Staff in social work services for children and young people	
	Number	Whole time equivalent	Number	Whole time equivalent
2005 (a)	1,171	1,077	1,921	1,770
2006	1,235	1,115	2,069	1,880
2007	1,331	1,229	2,139	1,986
2008	1,296	1,193	2,127	1,967
2009	1,428	1,314	2,305	2,121

Source: [Local Government Data Unit ~ Wales dissemination tool](#), Staffing tables

(a) Excludes social workers in residential or community services for children.

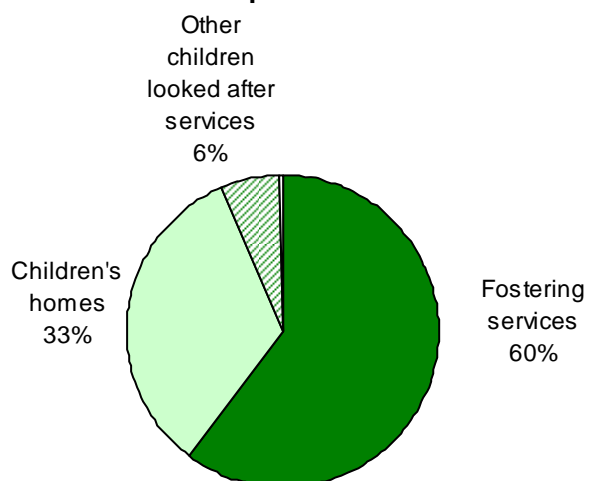
## 9 Expenditure on looked after children

Financial figures in this section show local authority net current expenditure on looked after children. Expenditure funded by specific government grants is included within the figures. The figures have not been adjusted to take account of inflation.

**In 2007-08, expenditure on looked after children was £147 million.** This was an **increase of £1.8 million (1.3 per cent)** compared with 2006-07. Within the service area of looked after children, **fostering services** was the **only area with an increase** in expenditure between 2006-07 and 2007-08.

In 2007-08, the largest proportion of the expenditure was on fostering services (60 per cent). **In the last two years fostering services has risen from 52 per cent of expenditure to 60 per cent.**

**Chart 11: Net current expenditure on children looked after, 2007-08**



Source: StatsWales [001984]

**Table 13: Net current expenditure on looked after children**

	Service				Total children looked after services
	Children's homes	Secure accommodation (welfare)	Fostering services	Other children looked after services	
2001-02	33.5	1.3	38.1	3.8	76.7
2002-03	35.9	0.6	44.3	5.9	86.6
2003-04	44.4	0.6	54.0	7.6	106.7
2004-05	51.2	0.4	63.9	8.4	123.9
2005-06	54.1	0.1	70.3	11.2	135.6
2006-07	52.5	0.5	82.3	9.9	145.2
2007-08	49.0	0.5	88.5	9.0	147.0

Source: StatsWales [001984]

## Useful links and further information

The links below provide further information about the data sources used in this paper and also contain links to further information about the social care sector in Wales.

[Social Services Statistics Wales 2007-08](#) published by the Local Government Data Unit ~ Wales

[Local Government Data Unit ~ Wales](#) dissemination tool

[Social Care statistical publications](#) published by the Welsh Government

[Local Government Finance Data](#) published by the Welsh Government

[Association of Directors of Social Services Cymru](#) (ADSS Cymru)

[Care Council for Wales](#) (CCW)

[Care and Social Services Inspectorate in Wales](#) (CCSIW)

[Voices from Care Cymru](#)

[The Fostering Network](#)

[British Association for Adoption & Fostering](#) (BAAF)



## Annex A: Definitions

“Looked after” is the term used in the *Children Act 1989*<sup>11</sup> to describe all children who are the subject of a care order, or who are provided with accommodation on a voluntary basis for more than 24 hours.

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

The Children’s Commissioning Support Resource (CCSR) aims to support local authorities in their commissioning role and is a joint venture between the Welsh Government, the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA), the Association of Directors of Social Services in Wales (ADSS Cymru) and the Care and Social Services Inspectorate in Wales (CCSIW).

A “registered provider” is an organisation registered by the CSSIW or its equivalent body in England, the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted), to provide residential care for looked after children.

Each provider organisation may have multiple care settings which can be foster carers, children's homes or residential special schools.

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

Key stage assessments are used to monitor a pupil’s ongoing progress and are based on teacher assessment. The core subject indicator represents the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level or above in the core National Curriculum subjects of English or Welsh (first language), Mathematics and Science in combination. Broadly, Key Stage 2 covers pupils aged 7-11 years and Key Stage 3 covers pupils aged 11-14 years.

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

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

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<sup>11</sup> [Children Act 1989](#) [accessed 22 September 2009]

Mathematics and Science in combination. Level 5 or 6 is the level of achievement expected of most pupils at the end of Key Stage 3.

GCSE - General Certificate of Secondary Education

GNVQ - General National Vocational Qualification

External Points Score – All externally approved qualifications (pre-16 and 16-18) have a score allocated to them. For example, an A\* grade in a GCSE full course has a score of 58. Points are allocated according to the equivalencies detailed on the Open Qualifications database:

<http://www.openquals.org.uk/openquals/SimpleSearch.aspx?nav=key>

Approved external qualifications are listed under section 99 of the *Learning and Skills Act 2000*<sup>12</sup>, for the purposes of section 96 of that Act. A complete list of the approved external qualifications can be found on the Welsh Government website (Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills):

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/?lang=en>

Information on Key Stage assessments for all school pupils for 2008 was published by the Statistical Directorate of the Welsh Government in SDR 129/2008 [National Curriculum Assessments of 7, 11 and 14 Year Olds: Wales, 2008](#). Information on point scores for all pupils was published in [Schools in Wales: Examination Performance, 2008](#).

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<sup>12</sup> [Learning and Skills Act 2000](#) [accessed 22 September 2009]



