

INFORMATION
ANALYSIS
DIRECTORATE



Children Adopted from Care in Northern Ireland 2015/16



Reader Information

Document purpose	This bulletin details statistical information relating to children adopted from care in Northern Ireland during the year ending 31 March 2016.
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- *Provide up-to-date, quality information on children and adult social services and community health;*
- *to disseminate findings widely with a view to stimulating debate, promoting effective decision-making and improvement in service provision; and*
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We collect, analyse, and publish a wide range of community information that is used to help monitor the delivery of personal social services policy. Information collected by CIB is used to assess HSC Trust performance, for corporate monitoring, policy evaluation, and to respond to parliamentary/assembly questions.

Information is widely disseminated through a number of regular key statistical publications and ad hoc reports, details of which are available online.

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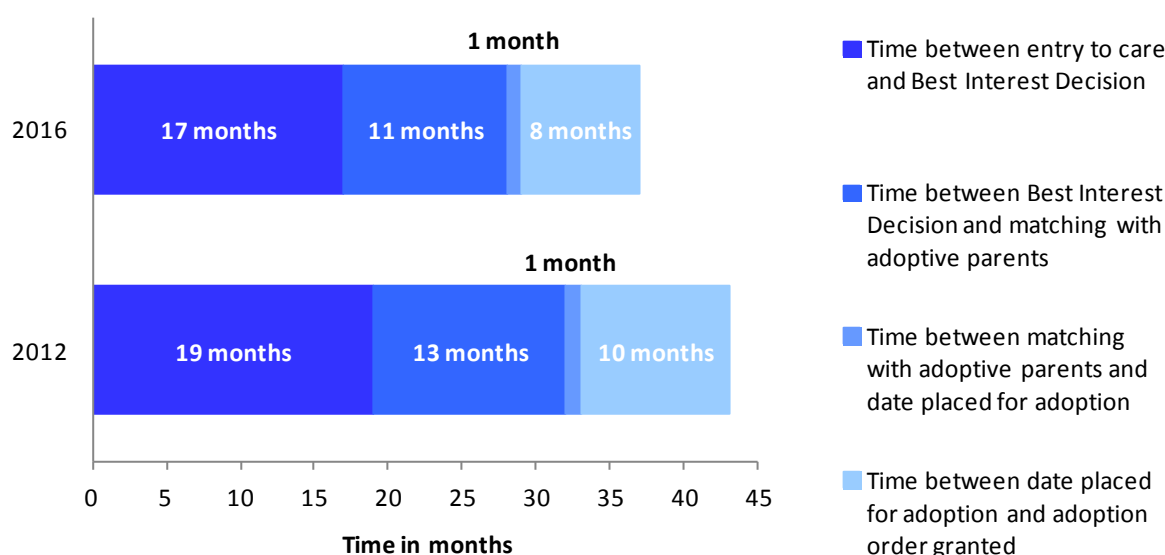
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Key findings

This bulletin details statistical information relating to children adopted from care in Northern Ireland during the year ending 31 March 2016, including a range of information about these children and their adopters, and durations between different stages in the adoption process. The bulletin is based on the Department of Health’s statistical return AD1 2015/16¹, collected from each of the Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland.

- Eighty nine children were adopted from care during the year ending 31 March 2016, seventeen more than in 2015 (72);
- The average age of children at the time of adoption was 4 years 5 months;
- From the last entry into care, the average length of time for a child to be adopted in 2015/16 was 2 years 11 months. This was 2 months shorter than in 2014/15;
- For children adopted in 2015/16, the average duration from the Trust LAC² Best Interest Proposal to adoption was 2 years 3 months, one month less than in 2014/15;
- Fifty one children were adopted by their foster carers in 2015/16. This represented 57% of the overall number of adoptions;
- Children adopted by their foster carers were in general slightly older at the time of adoption than the other adopted children however the average duration of the adoption process was the same (2 years and 11 months).

Average duration of the adoption process 2011/12 & 2015/16



Note: The time between different stages of the adoption process may not add to the total time as a small number of cases have been excluded from some of the interim calculations due to missing values.

¹ Please see Appendix

² LAC – Looked After Child

Introduction

Adoption, unlike any other permanence option, involves the ending of a child's legal relationship with their parents and family and the creation of a lifelong relationship with new parents. The facilities to be provided as part of the adoption service, including arrangements for assessing children and prospective adopters and placing children for adoption, and the particular procedures to be followed before and after a child is placed for adoption are therefore specified in legislation – the Adoption (Northern Ireland) Order 1987 and the Adoption Agencies Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1989.

This legal framework and the processes that Social Workers are expected to adhere to in carrying out their duties in relation to Adoption Services are further explained in the Adoption Regional Policy and Procedures³.

Where, as part of review of the child's care plan, it is decided that adoption is the preferred option for permanence, the Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust must follow statutory processes from providing information and counselling to the child and parents, gathering information (including ascertaining the wishes and feelings of the child and parents) and referring a report to the Adoption Panel and Adoption Agency Decision-maker for consideration of the Best Interests Decision (whether the child should be placed for adoption). Usually the HSC Trust will work to find a suitable match for the child with prospective adopters whilst Freeing Order proceedings are commenced. Following formal placement for adoption of the child with the prospective adopters, the adopters can apply to the Court for an Adoption Order to be made.

In respect of applications by Prospective Adopters, the Adoption Agency must follow prescribed processes in relation to the applicant, from the Initial Enquiry/ Counselling Interview through to the Preliminary Checks, Preparation Course, Pre-Assessment Checks, the Assessment Process and finally, a consideration by the Adoption Agency's Adoption Panel as to the suitability of the applicant.

Work is currently underway to introduce new Adoption legislation, an Adoption and Children Bill. It is intended that the Bill will largely replace the 1987 Order, effecting most of the proposals outlined in the Department's draft adoption strategy, *Adopting the Future 2006*. The Bill will also amend the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, which is the primary law relating to the care and protection of children. As most children are adopted from the care system, the amendments are designed to improve planning and permanence for children in care.

**Family and Children's Policy Directorate
Department of Health
November 2016**

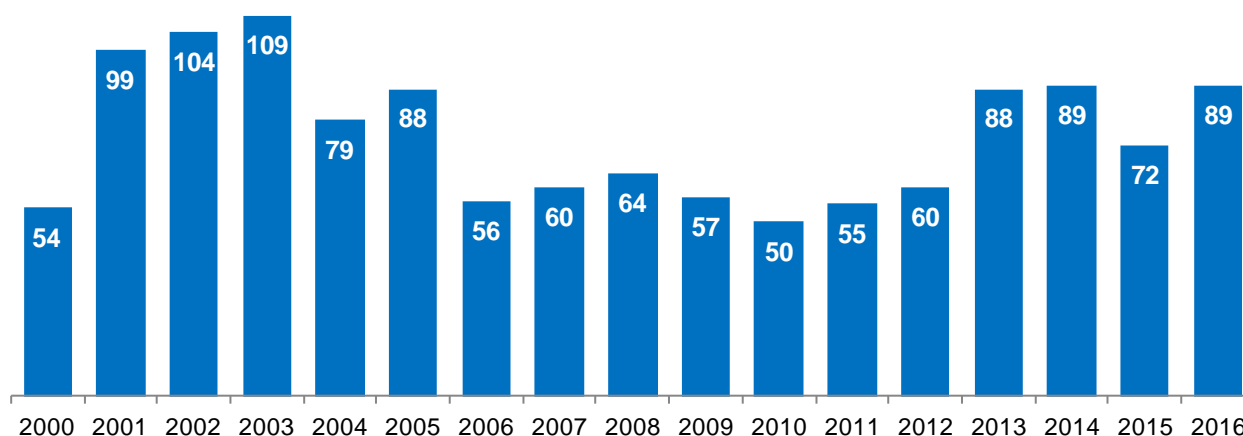
³ *The Adoption Regional Policy and Procedures Dec 2010*
<http://www.southerntrust.hsnl.net/pdf/adoptionregionalpolicyandprocedures.pdf>

Children Adopted from Care in Northern Ireland 2015/16

During the year ending 31 March 2016, 89 children were adopted from care in Northern Ireland⁴. This was 17 more than in 2014/15 however it was similar to the two previous years.

Figure 1 sets out the yearly number of adoptions from care. It shows that adoption numbers were notably higher between 2001 and 2003 – this is thought to be due to an emphasis by all Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts on encouraging prospective adopters to register as foster carers, resulting in a placement for children at the earliest juncture with foster carers who would then go on to adopt the child⁵. Between 2005/06 and 2011/12, the numbers of adoptions were steady, however somewhat lower (between fifty and just over sixty children a year). The increase from 2013 could be linked with renewed focus on adoption and the timeliness of the adoption process, for example with the establishment of Adoption Regional Information System to help identify suitable parents for children in a timely fashion.

Figure 1 Number of children adopted from care in Northern Ireland year ending 31 March



Source for years 2000 and 2001: *Adopting Best Care*, Social Services Inspectorate, DHSSPS May 2002

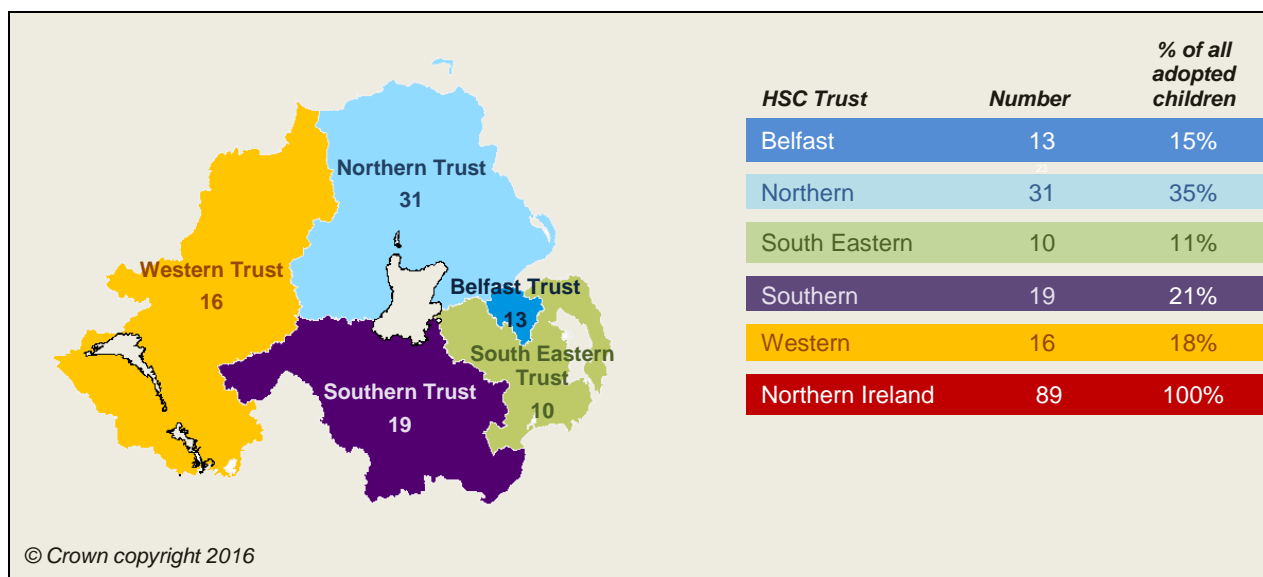
Source from 2003: AD1 Surveys <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/articles/children-adopted-care>

Note: Number of adoptions has been estimated for the years 2002, 2007, 2009 and 2011.

⁴ This figure may be different from other sources, e.g. NIGALA, due to categorisation.

⁵ *Adopting Best Care*, Social Services Inspectorate, DHSSPS May 2002

Figure 2 Number of children adopted from care by HSC Trust year ending 31 March 2016 (percentage of all children adopted from care)



The Northern HSC Trust had the largest number of looked after children adopted from care in 2015/16 (31 children), followed by the Southern HSC Trust where 19 looked after children were adopted. In the Western and Belfast HSC Trusts 16 and 13 looked after children were adopted respectively. In the South Eastern HSC Trust 10 children were adopted from care (Figure 2). As the number of children adopted in each HSC Trust is quite small, they can vary quite a bit year on⁶, care must therefore be taken when making year on year comparisons.

The adopters

Some 97% of adopters were married couple adopters. Of all the adopters, 7% had previously adopted a child or children⁷, and 17% had dependent birth children in the household. The age of the adopters ranged from late twenties to late fifties, with the majority of the adopters being in their forties at the time of the adoption (60%).

⁶ Please see Appendix for yearly figures.

⁷ Please note that this is based on the 89 adoptions taken place in 2016, hence adopters who have adopted more than one child in 2016 will have been counted more than once.

Children adopted from care

Table 1 sets out the main characteristics of looked after children adopted from care in Northern Ireland from 2011/12 to 2015/16. There were more boys than girls adopted during 2015/16, a change compared to 2014/15 however in line with previous years. In 2015/16, the age of children adopted from care ranged from 1 year 3 months to 11 years 9 month. Some 70% of the children were aged between 1 and 4 years at the time of adoption.

Table 1 Looked after children adopted from care 2012-2016 (year ending 31 March)

	Number					Percentages				
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
All children	60	88	89	72	89					
Boys	32	49	47	33	46	53%	56%	53%	46%	52%
Girls	28	39	42	39	43	47%	44%	47%	54%	48%
Age at adoption										
Under 1	<5	<5	<5	52*	0	-	-	-	72%*	0%
1-4	26	50	53		62	43%	57%	60%		70%
5-9	30	35	34	20	23	50%	40%	38%	28%	26%
10-15	<5	<5	<5	0	4	-	-	-	-	4%
16+	0	0	0	0	0	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Average age (yrs:months)	5:0	4:10	4:4	4:1	4:5					
Minimum age (yrs:months)	0:9	0:12	0:12	0:11	1:3					
Maximum age (yrs:months)	10:8	15:8	11:9	9:1	11:9					

In order to avoid personal disclosure, some cells have been suppressed or merged when the actual figure is less than 5.

' - ' Represents a percentage that has been suppressed in order to prevent the actual figure from being calculated.

**Please note that age categories under and 1 - 4 have been merged due to small numbers*

The majority of the children adopted from care were of white ethnic background with less than five of other or mixed ethnicity. Fourteen (16%) had special needs or a disability

Most of the children were adopted as a single child adoption (62%) whereas 38% were adopted as part of a sibling group. Just over half of the 89 children were adopted by their former foster carers⁸ (57%); less than five of these were kinship foster carers (person related or connected to the child).

1 in 3
children were
adopted as part of
a sibling group

⁸ Please also see section "Foster Care Adoptions" overleaf.

Timing of the adoption process

For some children entering care, adoption is the preferred means to secure permanency and stability and as the agreed care plan would be identified at an early juncture. For other children, adoption may not be considered until the child has spent some time in care, for example after changes to the child's family situation which makes it unlikely that the child can return home to birth parents.

The average length of time of the date the child's last period of care started to the adoption order was made was 2 years 11 months in 2015/16. This was two months shorter than the previous year but on par with 2013/14. For just over half (54%) of the adoptions the final period of care lasted less than 3 years.

Table 2 Duration of final period of care 2012-2016 (year ending 31 March)

Duration of final period of care	Number					Percentages				
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Under 2 years	11	7	20	14	17	18%	8%	22%	19%	19%
2 years to under 3 years	17	30	34	20	31	28%	34%	38%	28%	35%
3 years to under 5 years	21	46	33	32	36	35%	52%	37%	44%	40%
5 years & Over	11	5	2	6	5	18%	6%	2%	8%	6%
	60	88	89	72	89	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Average duration (yrs:months)	3:5	3:5	2:11	3:1	2:11					
Minimum duration (yrs:months)	0:9	0:12	0:5	0:9	0:7					
Maximum duration (yrs:months)	7:11	15:3	10:7	7:11	6:5					

A number of reasons may cause delays to the timing of the adoption process. Although every child's situation is unique, with regards to the children adopted during 2015/16, it has been highlighted that some delays were influenced by extra consideration required of the child's physical, behavioural or emotional situation; additional assessments of family members had to be carried out; and for some children appeals within the Courts delayed the adoption process.

Table 3 sets out the duration between different stages of the adoption process. The average duration from last admission into care to Trust LAC Best Interest Proposal for children adopted in 2015/16 was 10 months, slightly shorter than in 2014/15 (1 year 1 month). The Trust LAC Best Interest Proposal is the child's LAC review where it is agreed to pursue adoption as an option and refer the child's circumstances to the Adoption Panel for recommendation. In general it took 7 months from the Trust LAC Best Interest Proposal to when the Trust accepted the adoption panel's recommendation that adoption was in the best interest of the child (Best Interest Decision); this period ranged from 1 month to 3 years 2 months for the children adopted. Furthermore, the average duration from LAC Best Interest Proposal to the date the Trust accepted the Panel's recommendation that adopters were suitable for the child was 1 year 6 months, ranging from a minimum of 3 months to a maximum of 3 years and 9 months.

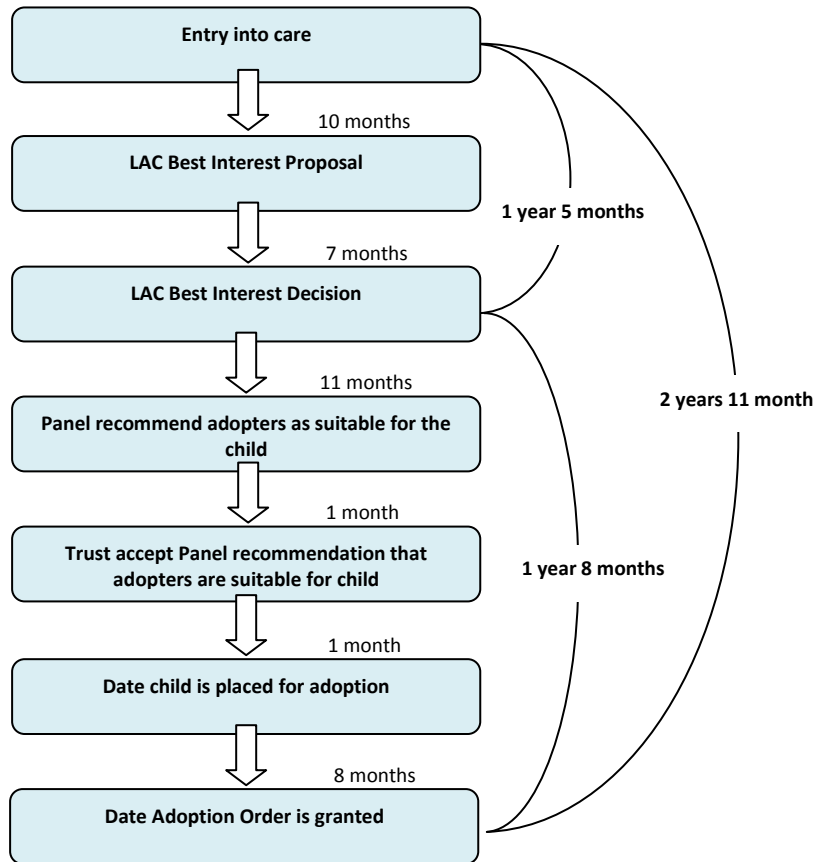
For children adopted in 2015/16, the average duration from the Trust LAC Best Interest Proposal to adoption was 2 years 3 months, slightly shorter than in 2014/15 (2 years 4 months). This ranged from 12 months to 4 years 9 months.

Table 3 Average durations between different stages of the adoption process 2012-2016 (year ending 31 March)

Stages of the adoption process	Average Duration (Years : Months)				
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Last admission into care to Trust LAC Best Interest Proposal	1:1	0:12	0:11	1:1	0:10
Trust LAC Best Interest Proposal to:					
Trust Best Interest Decision	0:6	0:7	0:6	0:6	0:7
Date Panel recommend adopters as suitable for child	1:5	1:9	1:6	1:5	1:6
Date Trust accept Panel recommendation that adopters are suitable for child	1:7	1:10	1:7	1:6	1:6
Date child placed with adopters for adoption	1:9	1:11	1:8	1:7	1:7
Date Adoption Order granted	2:4	2:7	2:3	2:4	2:3

Note: Some children may be excluded from calculations due to missing values.

Figure 3 Average durations between different stages of the adoption process during the year ending 31 March 2016

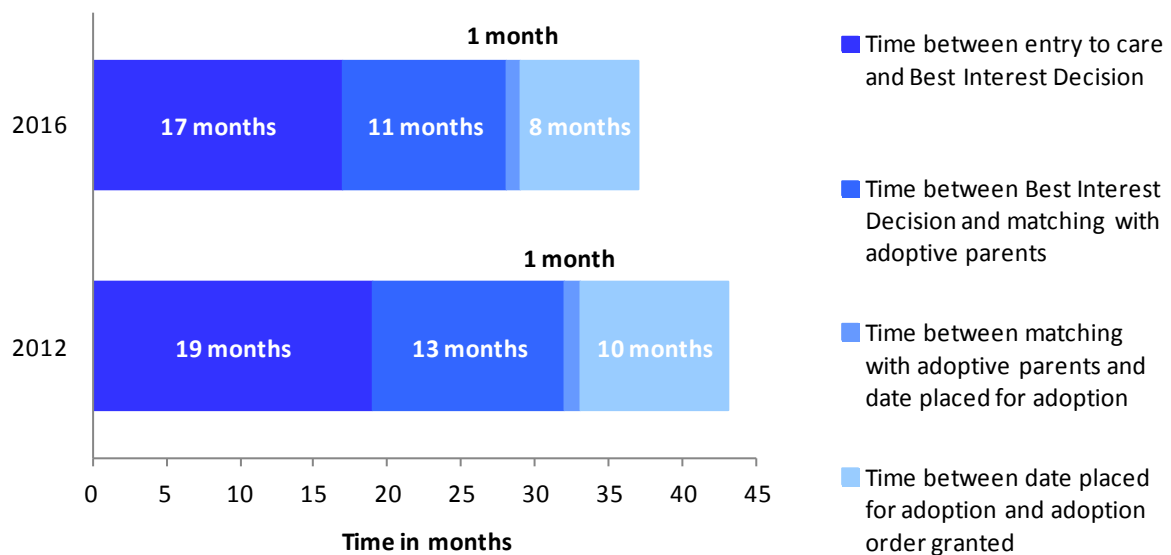


Note: The time between different stages of the adoption process may not add to the total time as a small number of cases have been excluded from some of the interim calculations due to missing values.

Figure 4 below compares the average duration of the adoption process for children adopted from care during 2011/12 and 2015/16. It shows that there has been a reduction in the overall duration of the adoption process from 3 years 5 months in 2011/12 to 2 years 11 months in 2015/16.

The reduction relates to most stages of the adoption process, both prior to the decision being made to pursue adoption for the child (Best Interest Decision); the time between this decision and matching with adoptive parents (HSC Trust accept Panel recommendation that adopters are suitable for the child) as well as the time between the child has been placed for adoption and the Adoption Order is granted. The last period relates mainly to processes within the courts whereas the prior periods relates to processes both within social services as well as the courts.

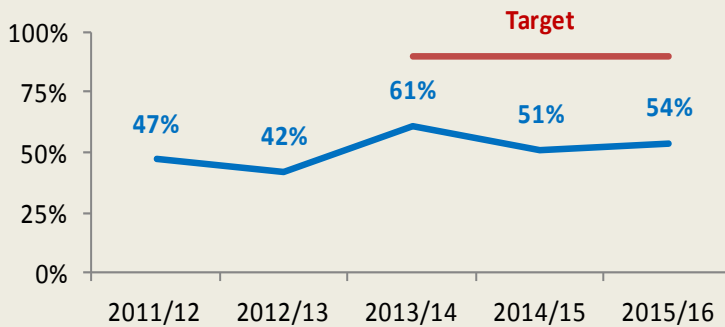
Figure 4 Average duration of the adoption process 2011/12 & 2015/16



Note: The time between different stages of the adoption process may not add to the total time as a small number of cases have been excluded from some of the interim calculations due to missing values.

**The Health and Social Care Commission Plan and
Indicators of Performance Direction (Northern Ireland) 2016**

Percentage of all children adopted from care who were adopted within 3 years of last entering care



Length of time for Best Interest Decision to be reached in the adoption process.

	Years: Months
2009/10	1:9
2011/12	1:7
2012/13	1:6
2013/14	1:4
2014/15	1:5
2015/16	1:5

Adoption is not the best option for every child who is in care; however for those children where adoption would be in their best interest, it is important that this is identified early to ensure that the child can be placed in a stable family setting. Ensuring the timeliness of the adoption process is a priority for the Department of Health. This is reflected in its Commissioning Plan Direction⁹ which includes a target and an indicator relating to the timing of the adoption process.

The target sets out that 90% of all adoptions from care should be completed within three years of last entering care. This target has not been met.

The overall adoption process involves court activity which may affect delays in the adoption process. The time up to the Best Interest Decision however reflects the part of the process that is mainly down to the HSC Trusts. As set out in the table, the time from the start of the final period in care to the Trust's decision that adoption is in the best interest for the child was under one and a half years in 2015/16.

⁹ <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/ministerial-priorities>

Table 4 sets out the average age of the child at different points in the adoption process. In 2015/16, the average age of children at the time of their last admission into care was 1 year 6 months ranging from between less than one month to 8 years 10 months, whilst the average age at adoption was 4 years 5 months.

Table 4 Average ages of children at each stage of the adoption process 2012-2016 (year ending 31 March)

Stages of the adoption process	Average Age (Years : Months)				
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Last admission into care	1:7	1:5	1:6	0:12	1:6
Trust LAC Best Interest Proposal	2:8	2:4	2:3	2:1	2:3
Trust Best Interest Decision	3:2	2:11	2:8	2:4	2:9
Date panel recommend adopters as suitable for child	4:2	4:0	3:7	3:3	3:7
Date Trust accept Panel recommendation that adopters are suitable for child	4:3	4:1	3:7	3:4	3:8
Date child placed with adopters for adoption	4:6	4:2	3:9	3:5	3:9
Date Adoption Order granted	5:0	4:10	4:4	4:1	4:5

Note: Some children may be excluded from calculations due to missing values.

Adoption process by age group

Of the children adopted in 2015/16, over half (56%) had entered their final period of care when under one year of age. Sixteen percent entered the final period of care when they were aged 1, eleven percent when aged two and seventeen percent were aged 3 or over. Table 6 (overleaf) sets out the adoption process broken down by the age of the child at the time of entering the last period of care.

Although there was a variance of up to 8 months for the different age groups of the time between last entry to care and the Adoption Order, there was no major difference in the duration of the stages of the adoption process. It is however worth noting that the numbers involved are small which can make them both quite volatile year on year and influenced by extreme values. In general, no specific trend by age can be seen in the data presented in Table 6 (overleaf).

The average duration from the Trust LAC Best Interest Proposal to adoption is set out in Table 5 below by the age of the child at the time of the LAC Best Interest Proposal. This shows that duration for a child aged under one year at the time of the LAC Best Interest Proposal is generally shorter than those aged one year and older. However we must be careful in drawing conclusions due to the small numbers involved in some categories.

Table 5 Average duration between Trust LAC best interest proposal and adoption by age, year ending 31 March 2016

Age at Trust LAC Best Interest Proposal	Number of Children ¹	Average Duration from LAC Best Interest Proposal to Adoption (Years:Months)
Under 1	49	2:0
1	14	2:8
2	10	2:4
3 & Over	15	2:7
All Children	88	2:3

¹ One child has been excluded from this analysis.

Table 6 Average duration between different stages of the adoption process by age at the start of the last period in care 2013-2016 (year ending 31 March)

(Years : Months)

Age at start of last period of care	Average duration between entry into care and Trust LAC Best Interest Proposal				Average duration between date of Trust LAC Best Interest Proposal and matching of child and adopters				Average duration between date of matching and date placed for adoption				Average duration between date placed for adoption and granting of the adoption order				Average duration between last entry into care and adoption			
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2013	2014	2015	2016	2013	2014	2015	2016	2013	2014	2015	2016	2013	2014	2015	2016
Under 1	1:1	0:11	0:11	0:9	1:9	1:4	1:6	1:4	0:1	0:1	0:1	0:1	0:8	0:8	0:9	0:7	3:4	2:8	2:11	2:9
1	0:11	0:10	1:3	0:9	2:1	1:12	1:6	1:11	0:1	0:0	0:1	0:1	0:8	0:8	0:9	0:8	3:10	3:1	3:7	3:3
2	0:10	0:11	1:2	0:12	1:9	1:9	1:7	1:7	0:1	0:2	0:1	0:1	0:9	0:7	0:8	0:10	3:4	2:11	3:0	3:1
3 & over	0:11	1:2	1:4	0:10	2:1	1:6	1:7	1:10	0:1	0:1	0:0	0:1	0:9	0:8	0:8	0:10	3:6	3:1	3:7	3:2
All Children	0:12	0:11	1:1	0:10	1:10	1:7	1:6	1:6	0:1	0:1	0:1	0:1	0:8	0:8	0:9	0:8	3:5	2:11	3:1	2:11

Note: The time between different stages of the adoption process may not add to the total time as some cases may be excluded from the in-between calculations.
0:0 is less than 1 month

Foster care adoptions

The length of the adoption process may be different according to whether the child is being adopted by their foster carers or people who are strangers. As a child who is to be adopted by their foster carers and who is already living with his or her proposed adoptive parents and is therefore in a stable home situation, there may not be the same urgency going through the stages of the adoption process. Conversely, if the foster carers are dually approved as adopters, the timings in the adoption process may reduce. It is not possible to explore the difference between the type of foster carers further within these analyses. Therefore, in the following, only comparisons between those adopted by strangers and those adopted by any type of foster carer will be made.

57%
of adoptions were
foster care

Fifty-one looked after children were adopted by their foster carers in 2015/16, more than in 2014/15 (38 children). Of these, 28 were boys and 23 were girls.

Table 7 Foster care adoptions year ending 31 March 2016

	Numbers		Percentages	
	Not adopted by foster carers	Adopted by foster carers	Not adopted by foster carers	Adopted by foster carers
All Children	38	51	43%	57%
Boys	18	28	47%	55%
Girls	20	23	53%	45%
Age at adoption*				
4 and under	29	33	76%	65%
5 & Over	9	18	24%	35%
Average age (yrs:months)	4:1	4:8		
Minimum age (yrs:months)	1:5	1:3		
Maximum age (yrs:months)	10:5	11:9		

*Age categories have been suppressed to avoid personal disclosure

The average age of children adopted by their foster carers was higher than those who were adopted by non foster carers (4 years 8 months compared with 4 years 1 month). For both groups however, the largest proportion of the children were aged 4 and under at the time of adoption.

In 2015/16, there was no difference between children adopted by non-foster carers and those adopted by foster carers in regards to the average duration from last entry into care to adoption (Table 8). However, both the minimum and maximum durations in care for those adopted by foster carers were longer than those not adopted by foster carers.

Table 8 Foster care adoptions by duration of final period in care, year ending 31 March 2016

	Numbers		Percentages	
	Not adopted by foster carers	Adopted by foster carers	Not adopted by foster carers	Adopted by foster carers
Duration of final period of care				
Under 1 year	-	-	-	-
1 year to under 2 years	-	-	-	-
2 years or under 3 years	11	20	29%	39%
3+	18	23	47%	45%
All	38	51	100%	100%
Average duration (yrs:months)	2:11	2:11		
Minimum duration (yrs:months)	0:7	0:9		
Maximum duration (yrs:months)	6:2	6:5		

In order to avoid personal disclosure, some cells have been suppressed when the actual figure is less than 5. '-' Represents a percentage that has been suppressed in order to prevent the actual figure from being calculated.

UK adoption statistics comparison

There is no common legislative framework operating across the United Kingdom relating to adoption, hence any statistics will not necessarily provide like-for-like comparisons. Bearing this in mind, Table 9, below, sets out a comparison of some of the statistics published in Northern Ireland, England and Wales.

Table 9 Adoption statistics for Northern Ireland, England and Wales at year ending 31 March 2016

	Northern Ireland	England ¹	Wales ²
Number of children adopted from care	89	4,960	340
Adoptions per 1,000 children in Care at 31 March 2015	31	70	60
Age at adoption (proportions)			
Less than one	0%	5%	1%
1-4	70%	72%	75%
5-9	26%	22%	24%
10-15	4%	1%	<1%
16 and over	0%	0%	<1%
Average time of last period of care (years : months)			
	2:11	2:3	2:3
Proportion of foster care adoptions			
	57%	°°	9%

°° Not published

¹ - ' Represents a percentage that has been suppressed in order to prevent the actual figure from being calculated.

¹ Source: Children looked after in England (including adoption) year ending 31 March 2016

² Source: Adoptions, outcomes and placements for children looked after by local authorities in Wales 2015/16

Note: There is no common legislative framework operating across the United Kingdom relating to adoption, hence any statistics will not necessarily provide like-for-like comparisons.

Around three quarters of the children adopted from care in both England (76%) and Wales (75%) in 2015/16 were in the age group 1-4 years. This compares with 70% in Northern Ireland.

The average duration from last entry into care to the granting of the adoption order was 2 years 3 months in both England and Wales. In Northern Ireland the average duration was 2 years 11 months.

Just over half of all adoptions in Northern Ireland were foster care adoptions compared with about one in ten in Wales (the proportion of foster care adoptions is not published for England).

Appendix A – Technical Notes

Data Collection

The figures for “Children adopted from care in Northern Ireland 2015/16” are derived from the ninth ‘AD1’ survey of children adopted from care in Northern Ireland. The AD1 survey return was provided by each of the five Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland to Community Information Branch within the Department of Health (DoH).

The AD1 survey was introduced in 2004, and its primary aim is to monitor the numbers of children adopted from care and the timescales between different stages in the adoption process. It is an individual level survey, with one record for each young person fitting the parameters for the collection. Returns are completed online by nominated HSC Trust staff using a secure web-based application. Records are anonymised to protect the confidentiality of the young people whose details are included in the return.

Guidance notes and other documents associated with the completion of the AD1 survey are available to view or download from the DoH [website](#).

Rounding/Disclosure Conventions

Calculations relating to average durations within and between key dates in the adoption process are based on information available from Trust survey returns. Summing average durations between key dates may give a different result when the same duration is calculated directly without using intervening dates. These differences may be further compounded through rounding errors.

Data Quality

All information submitted by HSC Trusts was validated at the point of entry, where Trust staff correct or amend data as required, and provide appropriate explanations if information is missing. AD1 returns are checked and quality assured by HSC Trust managers before being submitted to CIB within the DoH. CIB perform further checks, using historical data to monitor annual variations and emerging trends.

A detailed quality report for the AD1 survey statistics is available on our [website](#).

Main Uses of Data

The main uses of these data are to monitor the delivery of social care services to children, to help assess Trust performance, corporate monitoring, to inform and monitor related policy, and to respond to parliamentary/assembly questions. The bulletin is also used by academics/ researchers, the voluntary sector and those with an interest in children in care.

Key Definitions

The Trust Looked After Children (LAC) Best Interest Proposal is when the Health and Social Care Trust refers the child’s circumstances to its Adoption panel for consideration and recommendation as to whether adoption is in the best interest of the child.

The Trust Best Interest Decision is the date when the Health and Social Care Trust (the equivalent of a local authority in the rest of the UK) accepts the Adoption Panel's recommendation that adoption is in the best interests of the child.

A National Statistics Publication

National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value.

All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the Authority's regulatory arm. The Authority considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate.

It is the Department of Health's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected of National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the Authority promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

If you have any comments on this publication, please contact Community Information Branch on Email: cib@health-ni.gov.uk or Tel: 028 90522580

Related Publications

Statistics on all children adopted in Northern Ireland (from care and not from care) can be sourced from the Northern Ireland Guardian Ad Litem Agency annual reports.

<http://www.nigala.hscni.net/publications.htm>

Details of statistics on children adopted from care published by other countries within the UK (United Kingdom) can be found as detailed below.

England

Statistics on 'Children looked after in England' (including adoption and care leavers) are produced annually by the Department for Education. Figures for the year ending 31 March 2016 are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption-2015-to-2016>

Wales

Statistics on Adoptions, Outcomes and Placements for Children Looked After by Local Authorities are produced annually by the Welsh Assembly Government. Figures for the year ending 31 March 2016 are available through the link below:

<http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/adoptions-outcomes-placements-children-looked-after/?lang=en>

Scotland

'Children's Social Work Statistics Scotland' is published on an annual basis by the Scottish Government, with the latest published figures relating to year ending 31 July 2014. Figures relating to adoption can be found in the additional tables at the following link:

<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/03/5133>

Appendix B - Additional Tables

Table 10 Number of Children adopted from Care in Northern Ireland 2000 – 2016 (year ending 31 March)

Year	Number of children adopted from care
2000	54
2001	99
2002	104
2003	109
2004	79
2005	88
2006	56
2007	60
2008	64
2009	57
2010	50
2011	55
2012	60
2013	88
2014	89
2015	72
2016	89

Source for years 2000 to 2001: *Adopting Best Care*, Social Services Inspectorate, DHSSPS May 2002

Source from 2003: AD1 Surveys - <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/articles/children-adopted-care>

Note: Number of adoptions has been estimated for the years 2002, 2007, 2009 and 2011

Table 11 Number of Children adopted from Care in Northern Ireland by HSC Trust 2012 – 2016 (year ending 31 March)

HSC Trust	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Belfast	17	27	18	19	13
Northern	17	16	23	12	31
South Eastern	7	11	25	13	10
Southern	14	18	16	20	19
Western	5	16	7	8	16
Total	60	88	89	72	89

This **statistical bulletin** and other statistical bulletins published by Community Information Branch (CIB) are available to download from the internet at:

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/dhssps-statistics-and-research-social-services/social-care-statistics>

For further information on children adopted from care in Northern Ireland please contact:

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