

INFORMATION
ANALYSIS
DIRECTORATE



Northern Ireland Care Leavers 2016/17



Department of
Health

An Roinn Sláinte

Máinnystrie O Poustie

www.health-ni.gov.uk

Published 11 January 2018

Reader Information

Theme	Care leavers in Northern Ireland
Document purpose	To provide information on outcomes for children who have left care in Northern Ireland.
Reporting period	1 April 2016 – 31 March 2017
Authors / statisticians	Heidi Rodgers and Iain Waugh
Publication Date	11 January 2018
Issued by	Community Information Branch Information & Analysis Directorate Department of Health Stormont Estate, Belfast, BT4 3SQ, Northern Ireland Tel (028) 90522580 Email cib@health-ni.gov.uk https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/articles/care-leavers
Target Audience	Directors of Children’s Services, Chief Executives of Boards and HSC Trusts in Northern Ireland, health care professionals, academics and social care stakeholders.
Main uses of document	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.
National Statistics	The United Kingdom Statistics Authority (UKSA) has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.
Copyright	This publication is Crown copyright and may be reproduced free of charge in any format or medium. Any material used must be acknowledged, and the title of the publication specified.
Price	FREE



Statistics and research for the **Department of Health** is provided by the Information and Analysis Directorate (IAD). IAD is responsible for compiling, processing, analysing, interpreting and disseminating a wide range of statistics covering health and social care.



The statisticians within IAD are out posted from the Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency (NISRA) and the statistics are produced in accordance with the principles and protocols set out in the [Code of Practice for Official Statistics](#).

www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/doh-statistics-and-research

IAD comprises four statistical sections: Hospital Information, Community Information, Public Health Information & Research and Project Support Analysis.

This publication is produced by Community Information Branch.

Our Vision and Values

- *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*
- *be an expert voice on social care information.*

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

About Community Information Branch

The purpose of Community Information Branch (CIB) is to promote effective decision making in children and adult social services by providing quality information and analysis.

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.

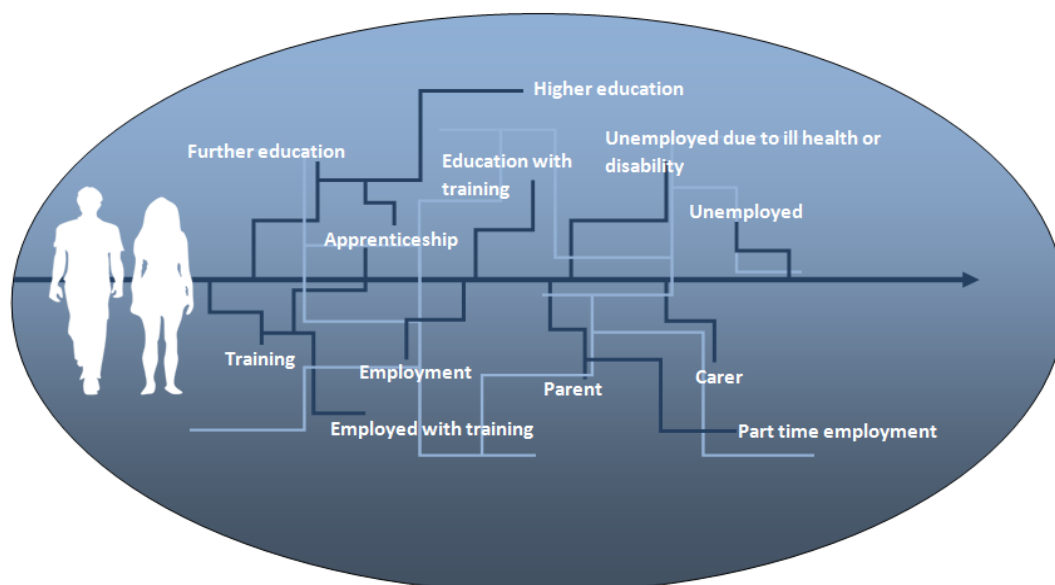
KEY FINDINGS

There were 329 care leavers aged 16-18 in 2016/17

- Some two thirds (67%) of care leavers aged 16-18 had GCSEs or other qualifications. The proportion of care leavers obtaining 5 GCSEs (A*-C) or higher was 26% which remains substantially lower than for school leavers as a whole (82%).
- Care leavers continue to have a higher proportion of young people coping with disability (12%) than the general population (6%). In terms of education, higher proportions of care leavers had a Statement of Educational Need (25%) compared with the general school population (5%).
- Of care leavers for whom information was available, almost three in five (58%) were in education or training, 12% were working and 30% were unemployed or economically inactive.

There were 253 care leavers aged 19 in 2016/17

- Some 95% of care leavers aged 19 were in contact with Health and Social Care Trusts; with 59% in contact at least once a month.
- Of the care leavers for whom information was available, 61% were in education, training or employment; the same proportion as in 2015/16 and similar to 19 year old care leavers in England (60%).
- In terms of becoming a parent, 12% of all care leavers aged 19 were parents, with 14% of female care leavers aged 19 becoming mothers on or before their 19th birthday.



CONTENT

1. NORTHERN IRELAND CARE LEAVERS	6
1.1. BACKGROUND.....	6
1.2. OC COMMUNITY INFORMATION RETURNS.....	7
1.3. CARE LEAVERS.....	7
2. CARE LEAVERS AGED 16-18	8
2.1. WHO ARE THE CARE LEAVERS AGED 16-18?	8
2.1.1. <i>Age Profile</i>	10
2.1.2. <i>Religion and Ethnicity</i>	10
2.1.3. <i>Disability</i>	10
2.1.4. <i>Special Educational Need</i>	11
2.2. WHAT WAS THEIR LAST PERIOD OF CARE?	12
2.2.1. <i>Legal Status</i>	12
2.2.2. <i>Length of Most Recent Period in Care</i>	12
2.2.3. <i>Last Placement</i>	13
2.2.4. <i>Reasons for Leaving Care</i>	14
2.3. HOW ARE THEY DOING NOW?	15
2.3.1. <i>Current Accommodation</i>	15
2.3.2. <i>Personal Education Plans</i>	15
2.3.3. <i>Educational Attainment</i>	15
2.3.4. <i>Economic Activity</i>	20
3. CARE LEAVERS AGED 19	24
3.1. WHO ARE THE CARE LEAVERS AGED 19?	24
3.1.1. <i>Religion and Ethnicity</i>	25
3.1.2. <i>Disability</i>	26
3.1.3. <i>Dependants</i>	26
3.2. WHAT WAS THEIR LAST PERIOD IN CARE?	27
3.2.1. <i>Age when leaving care</i>	27
3.2.2. <i>Legal Status</i>	27
3.2.3. <i>Last period in care</i>	27
3.3. HOW ARE THEY DOING NOW?	29
3.3.1. <i>Contact with Social Services</i>	29
3.3.2. <i>Support from Social Services</i>	30
3.3.3. <i>Accommodation</i>	31
3.3.4. <i>Economic Activity</i>	32
APPENDIX A TECHNICAL NOTES	38
APPENDIX B DEFINITIONS	41
APPENDIX C TABLES	43

1. Northern Ireland Care Leavers

1.1. BACKGROUND

Children are taken into care for a variety of reasons, the most common being to protect them from abuse or neglect. In other cases their parents could be absent or may be unable to cope due to disability or illness. Children who become looked after by the Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust have often suffered many disadvantages in their lives and many of them attain low educational achievements which are likely to impact on their future lives and chances for employment.

The *Children (Leaving Care) Act (Northern Ireland) 2002* came into force in 2005. It aims to improve the life prospects of young people who are looked after by HSC Trusts as they make the transition to independent living and become care leavers. To achieve this, the Act amended the Act placed new and enhanced duties on HSC Trusts to support young people who are leaving care.

The main aims of the Act are to prevent premature discharges from care, improve preparation, planning and consistency of support for young care leavers, and to strengthen arrangements for financial assistance. Central to the Act, are duties to assess and meet individual's needs, provide Personal Advisers and develop pathway planning for young people up to the age of 21 (or beyond if they are continuing in education)¹.

Standards for Leaving Care Services in Northern Ireland were published by the Department in 2012 which establish minimum standards for leaving and aftercare services. The Standards specify the arrangements, services and procedures that need to be in place and implemented to ensure the delivery of quality services for young people leaving care. These Standards apply to HSC Trusts and those other agencies commissioned by a HSC Trust to deliver leaving and aftercare services.

The *Going the Extra Mile (GEM) scheme*² was launched in 2006. The aim of this scheme is to promote continuity and stability of living arrangements in post-care life for young people living with foster carers by ensuring that financial support is available to assist carers to continue to meet the care, accommodation and support needs of these young people until they reach the age of 21. Allied to this, the scheme also aims to promote better outcomes for young people leaving care in relation to training, employment and education.

The Department recognises the importance of giving young people the best start in life, helping those in need, and in particular improving outcomes for Looked After Children. A new indicator has been included in the Programme for Government 2016 – 2021 to Improve

¹ The Children (Leaving Care) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005 set out in more detail the matters to be taken into account by HSC Trusts when assessing and meeting the needs of those preparing to leave care and those who have left care.

² The scheme is facilitated under the Children (Leaving Care) Act (NI) 2002, the Children (Leaving Care) Regulations (NI) 2005 and Volume 8 of the Children (NI) Order 1995 Guidance – Leaving and Aftercare.

Support for Looked After Children, with a related measure (% of 19 year old care leavers in employment, training or education) which will be monitored and reported on annually.

1.2. OC COMMUNITY INFORMATION RETURNS

The community information returns OC1, OC2 and OC3 collect data relating to children in care and care leavers in Northern Ireland, which together are designed to monitor and assess outcomes for children while they are in care and after leaving care. The OC1 return collects information on educational attainment of care leavers aged 16 to 18, the OC2 return collects information relating to the educational qualifications and health of children looked after continuously for 12 months and the OC3 return collects information on the economic activity of care leavers aged 19. This bulletin reports findings from the OC1 and OC3 surveys relating to the year ending 31 March 2016.

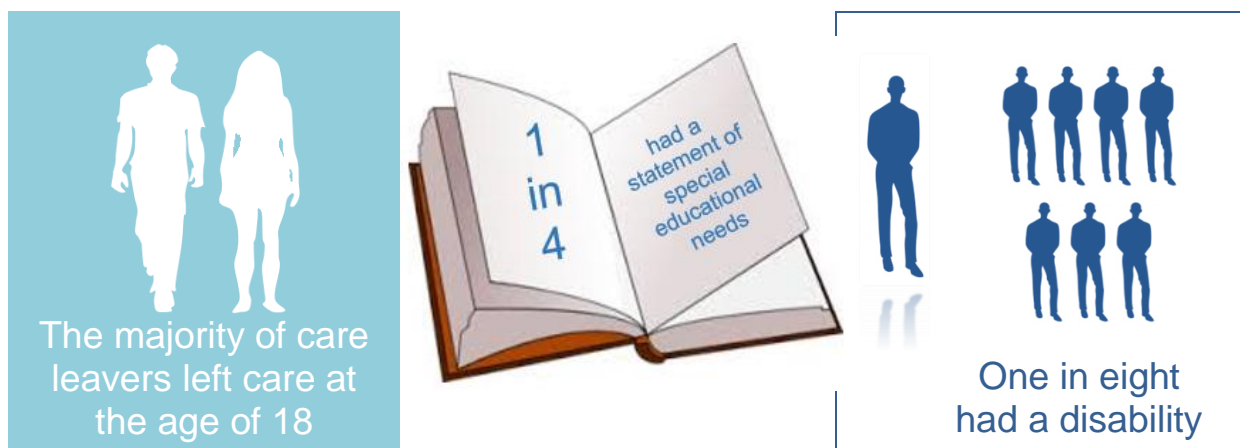
1.3. CARE LEAVERS

Children admitted to care may be discharged, if appropriate, at an age. *Care Leavers* in this bulletin cover young people aged 16-18 who left care during the year ending 31st March 2016 as well as young people who turned 19 years of age during the year ending 31st March 2016 and who had been looked after on 1st April three years previously. It excludes those young people who had been looked after under an agreed series of short-term placements (respite care).

Due to the small number of care leavers in Northern Ireland, some caution should be taken when interpreting figures presented in this bulletin, especially when the figures are broken down into sub categories. It is also worth noting, when comparing yearly figures, that each year has an individual cohort of young adults which may differ in characteristics to other years. For example, one year may include a higher number of children with special educational needs which could impact on the educational attainment figures for that year. As such, yearly variations in outcomes may be a reflection on the different cohorts of people in addition to actual trends or social care intervention.

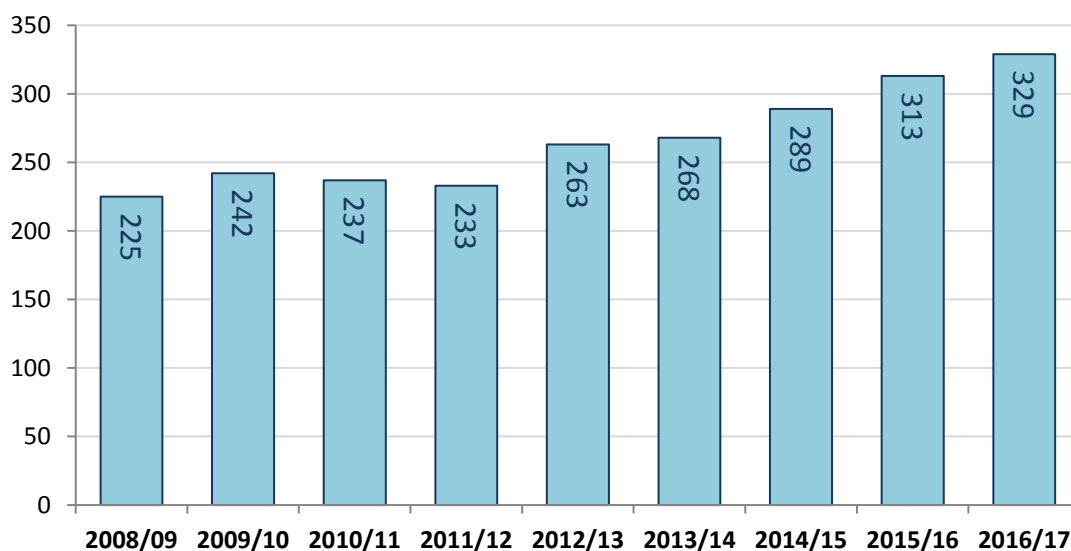
2. Care leavers aged 16-18

2.1. WHO ARE THE CARE LEAVERS AGED 16-18?



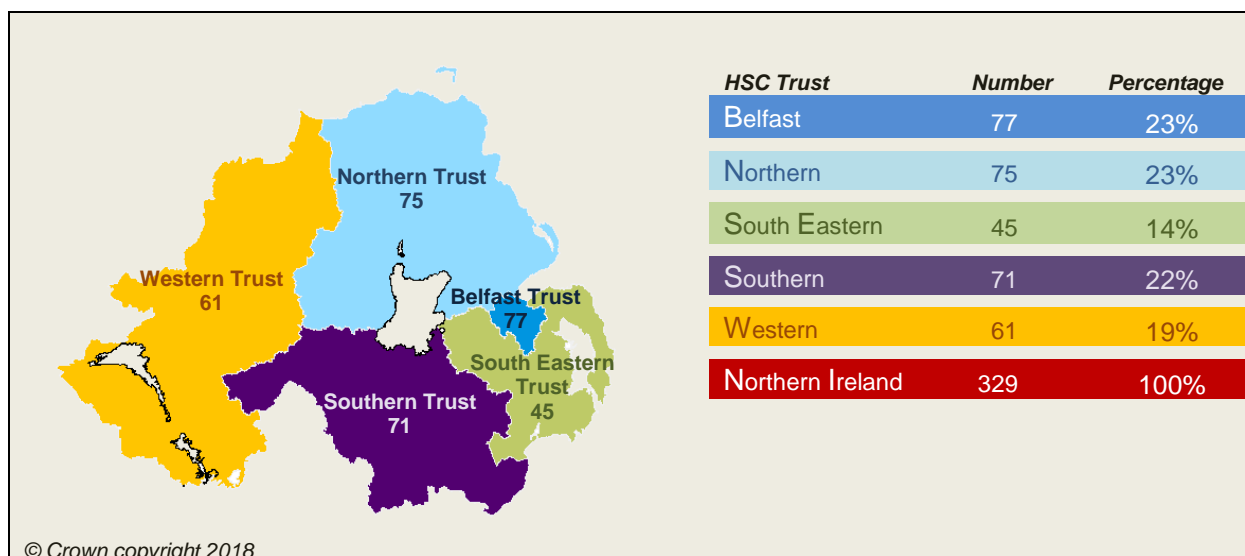
During the year ending 31 March 2017, 329 young people aged 16–18 left care in Northern Ireland. This was sixteen more than the previous year. The number of care leavers has steadily increased between 2011/12 and 2016/17, after a period of relative stability in the preceding years. A rise in the number of care leavers would be expected following a continuing increase in the numbers of looked after children in recent years³.

Figure 1 Number of care leavers aged 16-18 in Northern Ireland (2008/09 – 2016/17)



³ Figures for Looked After Children can be found in 'Children's Social Care Statistics for Northern Ireland 2017'

Figure 2 Number of care leavers aged 16-18 – HSC Trust profile (2016/17)



There were more female care leavers than male in 2016/17 (53% and 47% respectively). This breakdown was similar to the general population of that age group in Northern Ireland, where 51% were males and 49% females⁴.

As in the past three years, the Belfast Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust had the highest number of care leavers aged 16-18. Between 2015/16 and 2016/17, the Northern HSC Trust saw the largest increase in care leavers from 62 to 75 (21%). Only the South Eastern HSC Trust had a reduction in the number of care leavers from 57 to 45 (-21%).

The care leavers' individual geographical location was linked with the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2017⁵ to identify the deprivation quintile rank of home location before last entry into care and after leaving care⁶. For the children where geographical information was available⁷, similar proportions had been living in the most deprived areas of Northern Ireland before the last entry into care (38%) as after leaving care (39%). Further analysis showed that 50% of the care leavers were living in an area of same deprivation rank when leaving care as before last entry into care. Furthermore, a quarter (25%) had moved into an area ranked of higher deprivation with a quarter (25%) had moved into areas ranked with less deprivation.

⁴ 2016 Mid-Year Population Estimate (NISRA 2017)

⁵ Source: Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, 2017 (<https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/deprivation/northern-ireland-multiple-deprivation-measure-2017-nimdm2017>)

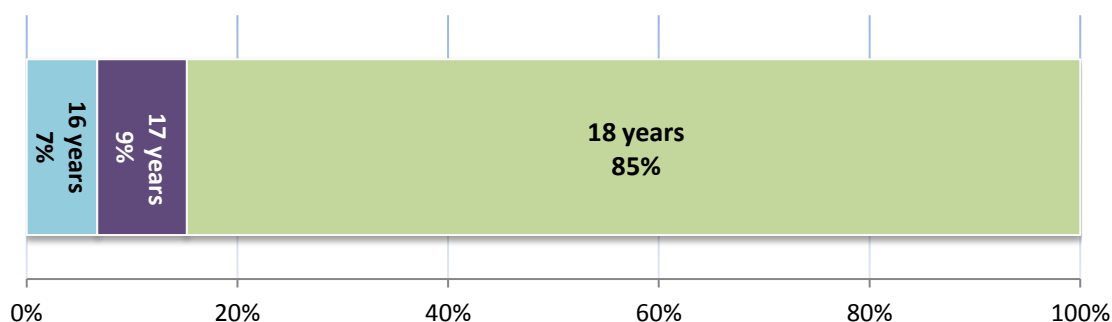
⁶ These analyses were only carried out for care leavers with Northern Ireland geographical location.

⁷ Northern Ireland geographical information prior to entering care was available for 94% of the care leavers and information was available for 94% upon leaving care. Information was supplied for 90% of the care leavers for both prior to entering care and after leaving care.

2.1.1. Age Profile

Of the care leavers in 2016/17, most had stayed in care until they reached the age of 18 years (85%). Some 15% left care at the age of 16 or 17 years. This was similar to 2015/16. At HSC Trust level, there was little variation in the age profile of the care leavers, they all mirrored the regional figures unlike in previous years when greater differences have been observed.

Figure 3 Age of care leavers (2016/17)



2.1.2. Religion and Ethnicity

Information on religion and ethnicity of care leavers is collected for equality monitoring purposes. There were lower numbers of care leavers from a Protestant community background (42%) than a Catholic community background (48%) in 2016/17, with 11% from 'Other' denominations, including those with no religion, or whose religion was unknown or not recorded. The proportion of Protestant care leavers was 4 percentage points lower in 2016/17 than in 2015/16 with a 6 percentage point increase in the proportion of Catholic care leavers.

The vast majority of care leavers in 2016/17 had a White ethnic background (95%). This was similar to the figures recorded in 2015/16.

2.1.3. Disability

Having a disability can have an impact upon a person's life chances. People with disabilities can suffer from multiple disadvantage, being more likely to live in poverty, less likely to have educational qualifications and more likely to be economically inactive. Of the care leavers in 2016/17, 12% (40) were disabled. Of these, just over half (53%) had a learning disability, over a two fifths (43%) were on the autistic spectrum and 15% had a mental health condition⁸.

There are no directly comparable disability figures for this age group in Northern Ireland. However, the 2011 Census reported that just over 6% of all young people of this age (16-18) in Northern Ireland had a long-term limiting illness⁹. Furthermore, 4% of 16-17 year olds

⁸ Please note that some of the children had multiple disabilities. For example, a small number of the children with a learning disability were also included in the percentage of children with mental health disabilities.

⁹ <http://www.nisra.gov.uk/census/2011Census.html>

received Disability Living Allowance in August 2017¹⁰. These comparisons continue to suggest that a disproportionate number of young care leavers are coping with disabilities.

2.1.4. *Special Educational Need*

Children have special educational needs if they have a difficulty which calls for specific educational provision to be made for them. Further definitional and background information on this is detailed in the 'Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs', which is available from the Department of Education for Northern Ireland¹¹.

One in four care leavers in 2016/17 (25%) had a statement of special educational need, five percentage points higher than the proportion in 2015/16 (20%). Although not directly comparable, 5% of the general school population in Northern Ireland¹² had a statement of Special Educational Needs. Furthermore, 6% of school leavers in Northern Ireland had a statement of Special Educational Needs (2015/16)¹³. As indicated in respect of proportion of young people with disabilities, the above comparison again suggest that a disproportionate number of young care leavers have specific educational needs compared with the general population.

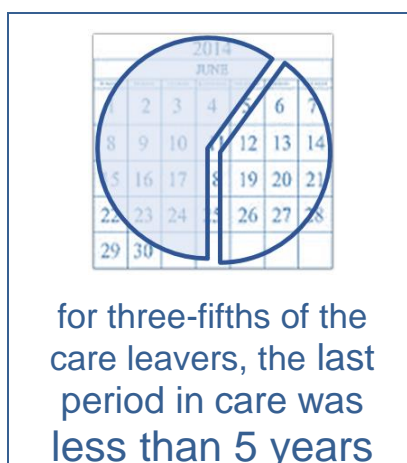
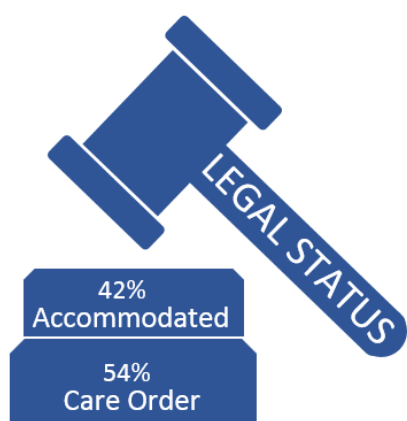
¹⁰ Department for Communities, August 2017 'Northern Ireland Benefits Statistics Summary', <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/publications/benefits-statistics-summary-publication-national-statistics-august-2017>

¹¹ DENI, <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/special-educational-needs-code-practice>

¹² DENI, 'Annual enrolments at schools and in funded pre-school education in Northern Ireland 2016/17', <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/school-enrolments-201617-statistical-bulletins>

¹³ DENI, 'Qualifications and destinations of Northern Ireland school leavers 2015/16', <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/school-leavers-201516-statistical-bulletin>

2.2. WHAT WAS THEIR LAST PERIOD OF CARE?



2.2.1. *Legal Status*

In regards to the legal status¹⁴ of the care leavers aged 16-18, the majority had been placed in care under a Care Order (54%), with two fifths (42%) Accommodated (Article 21). The remaining 5% of care leavers had other legal statuses including Interim Care Orders.

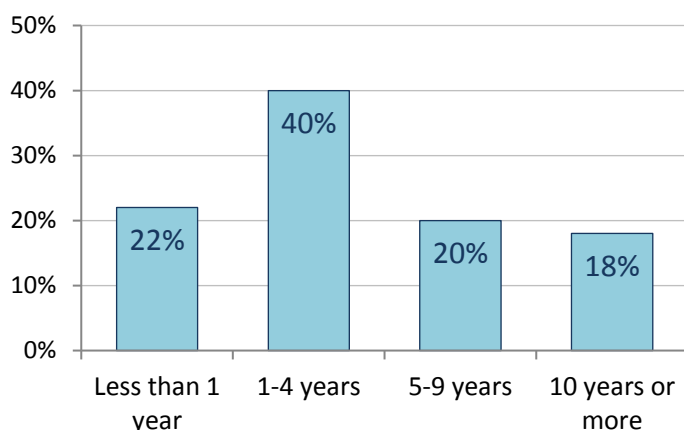
2.2.2. *Length of Most Recent Period in Care*

Every child's care history is unique and some children may experience more than one episode of care. For this publication, only information on the duration of the last period of care is collected.

Two fifths (40%) of the young care leavers had been looked after for between 1 to 4 years in their latest period of care, with a further fifth (18%) looked after for more than ten years. On average, a girl's last period of care was longer (4 years 8 months) than a boy's (4 years 3 months).

¹⁴ Definitions of the different legal statuses are set out in Appendix B.

Figure 4 Care leavers aged 16-18 – Length of most recent period of care



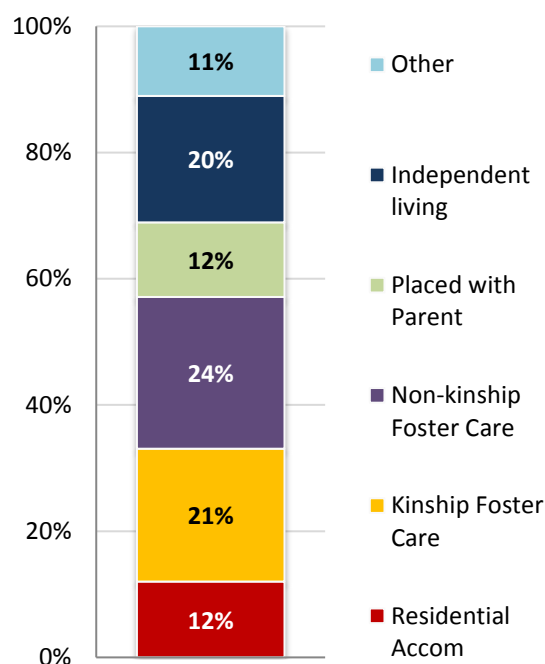
The last period of care for the largest proportion of care leavers in each HSC Trust area was 1-4 years. This ranged from 29% of care leavers in the South Eastern HSC Trust to 47% in the Belfast HSC Trust.

2.2.3. Last Placement

As in previous years, the majority of care leavers in 2016/17 had been in foster care prior to leaving care (46%); 21% in kinship foster care (placed with relatives or a person known to the child) and 24% in non-kinship foster care¹⁵. Furthermore, 20% had been in independent living arrangements, this was divided between those with formal support (16%) and those without (4%). Some 11% had been in 'other'¹⁶ placement types which included placements such as supported accommodation projects, bed & breakfast, hospital and friends.

Due to the small numbers involved, caution must be taken when analysing last placement type by gender. However, a greater proportion of the female care leavers aged 16-18 were in foster care compared with males (51% and 40% respectively).

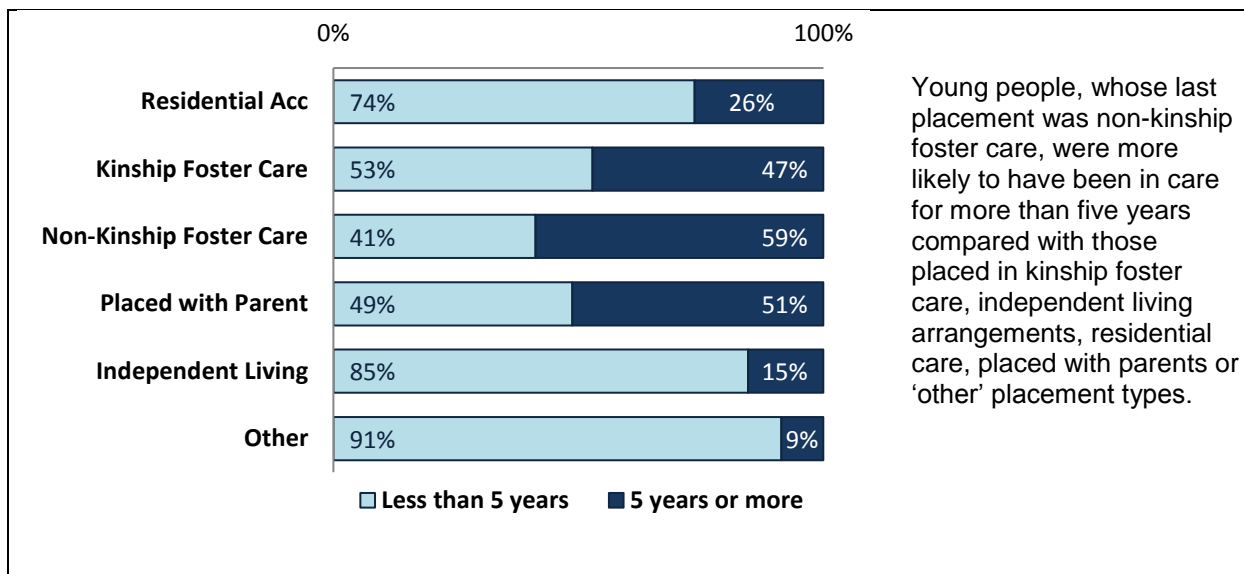
Figure 5 Care leavers aged 16-18 – Last placement type (2016/17)



¹⁵ Please see appendix B for placement definitions.

¹⁶ Note: 'Independent Living' has in previous publications been included in the 'Other' placement category

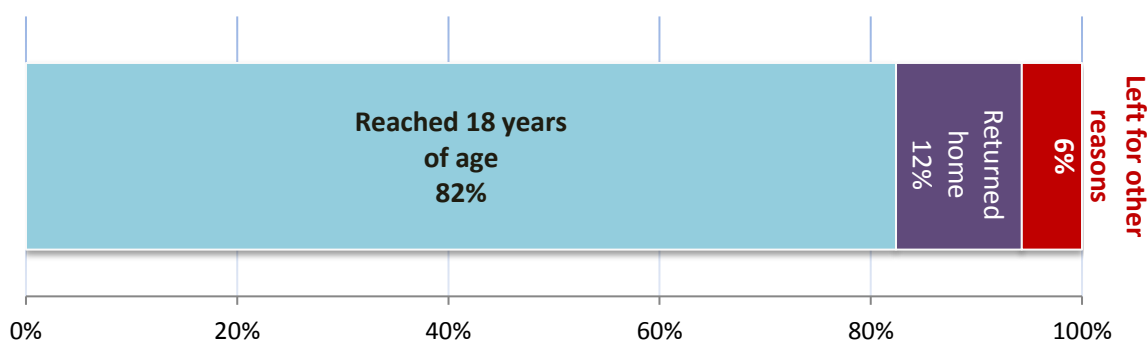
Figure 6 Care leavers aged 16-18 – Last placement by time in care (2016/17)



2.2.4. Reasons for Leaving Care

Of the 329 care leavers aged 16-18 years in 2016/17, the majority (82%) left care because they had reached 18 years of age¹⁷, with a further 12% left to return home to live with their birth parents.

Figure 7 Care leavers aged 16-18 – Reason care ceased



Note: "Left for other reasons" includes "Moved into supported accommodation", "Transferred to adult social services" and "Other".

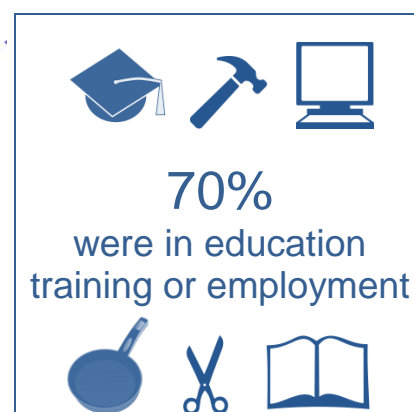
Note: "Reached 18 years of age" includes a small number of care leavers aged 17 whose 18th birthday was within one week of leaving care.

Those who left care to return to their birth parents were more likely to be aged 16 or 17 years. Furthermore, this age group's last period of care was typically shorter, with an average duration of around a year. Those who left care due to reaching the age of 18 years had on average a last period of care lasting just over five years. This may indicate that those who leave care prior to turning 18 may be a cohort of children with different care needs to those who stay in care until they reach adulthood.

¹⁷ This includes a small number of care leavers aged 17 whose 18th birthday was within one week of leaving care.

2.3. HOW ARE THEY DOING NOW?

Two thirds
of the care leavers
(16-18) had **GCSE** or
other **qualification**



2.3.1. Current Accommodation

After having left care, just over a quarter (27%) of the care leavers aged 16-18 were still living with their former foster carers (kinship and non-kinship). Most of these (77 out of 88) were in GEM placements¹⁸. A fifth (22%) were living with their parents, with a further fifth (19%) living independently. Some 16% of care leavers were living in supported accommodation and the remaining 16% of care leavers were divided between residential accommodation, living with friends, living with family, custody and other accommodation.

2.3.2. Personal Education Plans

A Personal Education Plan (PEP) should be completed for every looked after child. It is a continuous running record of a child's educational history, identifying actions needed to enable the individual to fulfil his or her potential by establishing targets for the child relating to learning achievements. Just over a half (55%) of care leavers aged 16-18 in 2016/17 had a completed Personal Education Plan. Of those with a PEP, 39% had a review of their education plan during the previous 12 months.

1 in 2
care leavers
aged 16-18
had a Personal
Educational Plan

2.3.3. Educational Attainment

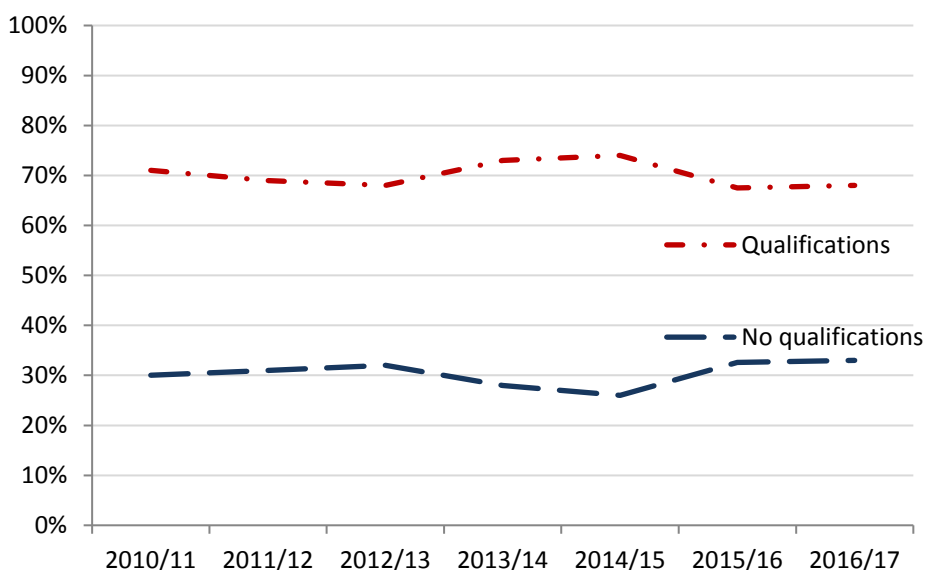
Educational attainment can be an important predictor of success in later life. Looked after children have often suffered many disadvantages in their lives and many of them have had low educational achievements which may impact on their future lives and chances for employment.

In 2016/17, 67% of the care leavers aged 16-18 achieved GCSEs or other qualifications whereas 33% had no qualifications¹⁹. The Figure below sets out the yearly trend of young people with and without educational qualifications at the time of leaving care.

¹⁸ The *Going the Extra Mile scheme* was launched in 2006 and aims to promote continuity and stability in post care life for young people living with foster carers

¹⁹ Figures exclude 7 care leavers with severe learning difficulties.

Figure 8 Care leavers aged 16-18 – Care leavers’ educational qualifications (2010/11 - 2016/17)



Note: Excludes a small number of care leavers with a statement of SEN because of a severe learning disability.

As the characteristics of the cohort of care leavers can vary year on year, the educational outcomes may also vary. However the proportion of young people leaving care with qualifications in 2016/17 was the same as in 2015/16.

Of those with qualifications, two fifths (39%) achieved 5 GCSEs A*-C or above. A further 32% achieved 1-4 GCSEs A*-C and 6% 1 or more GCSEs D-G. Some 23% had other qualifications.

As in 2015/16, a higher proportion of females (33%) than males (18%) obtained 5 GCSE’s grades A*-C or higher. Of all male care leavers, some two fifths (40%) left care with no qualifications compared to just over a quarter (27%) of females (see Tables in Appendix C for details).

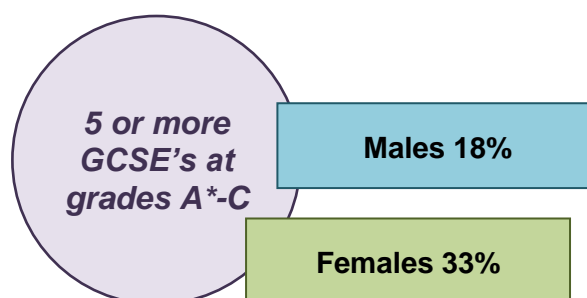
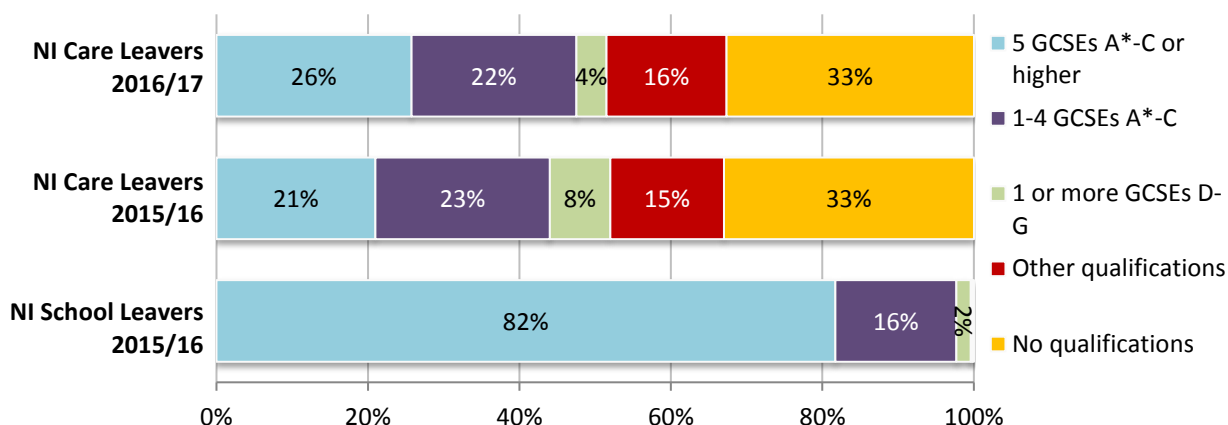


Figure 9 Care leavers aged 16-18 – Highest qualification of care leavers & Northern Ireland school leavers²⁰



Note: Excludes a small number of care leavers with a statement of SEN because of a severe learning disability.

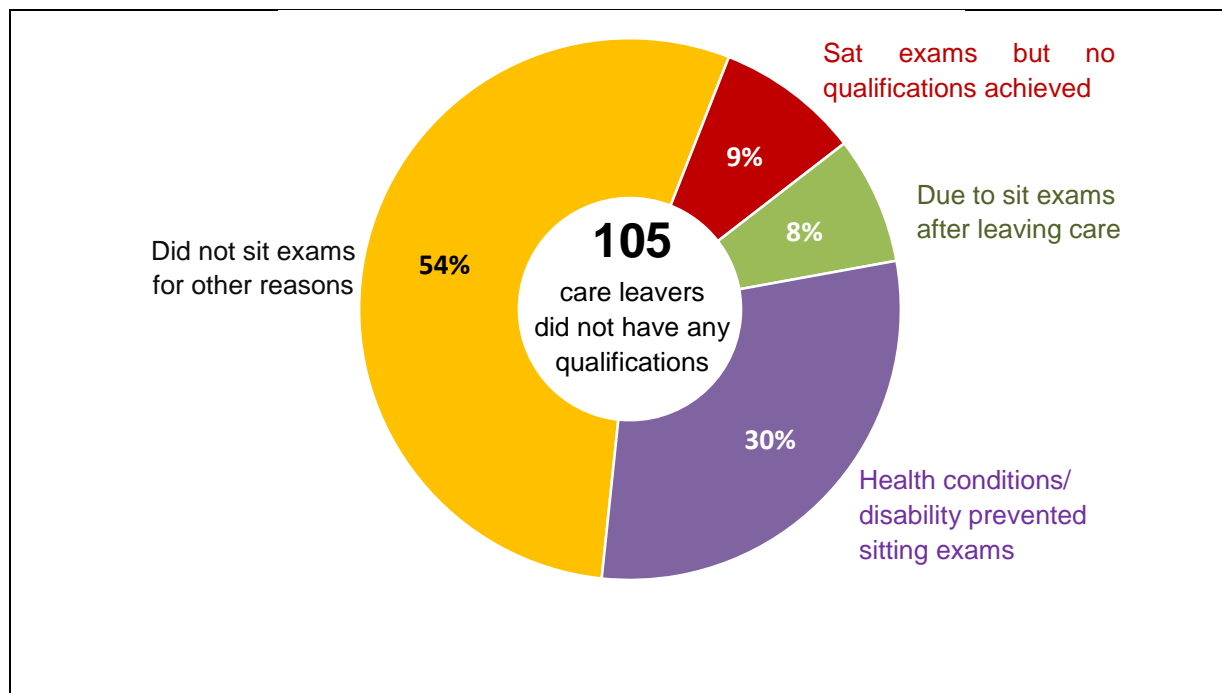
Although the groups are not directly comparable, the above Figure details educational qualifications obtained by care leavers in 2016/17, compared with Northern Ireland school leavers as a whole (latest figures relate to 2015/16²¹). Care leavers for 2015/16 have also been included for comparison.

The figure shows that there are important differences in educational attainment between care leavers and school leavers generally. For example, 26% of care leavers left care with 5 GCSE's (grades A*-C) or higher, compared with four fifths (82%) of general school leavers. A third of all care leavers (33%) left care with no qualifications, compared with less than 1% of general school leavers. In this context it is worth noting the before mentioned higher proportion of care leavers with special educational needs (25% compared with 5% of the general school population). It is expected that this would influence and inflate the difference in the level of qualifications between the two groups, although it would only to some degree explain the attainment gap.

²⁰ Excludes 7 care leavers with severe learning difficulties

²¹ DENI, 'Qualifications and destinations of Northern Ireland school leavers 2015/16', <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/school-leavers-201516-statistical-bulletin>

Figure 10 Care leavers aged 16-18 – Reasons for having no qualifications (2016/17)



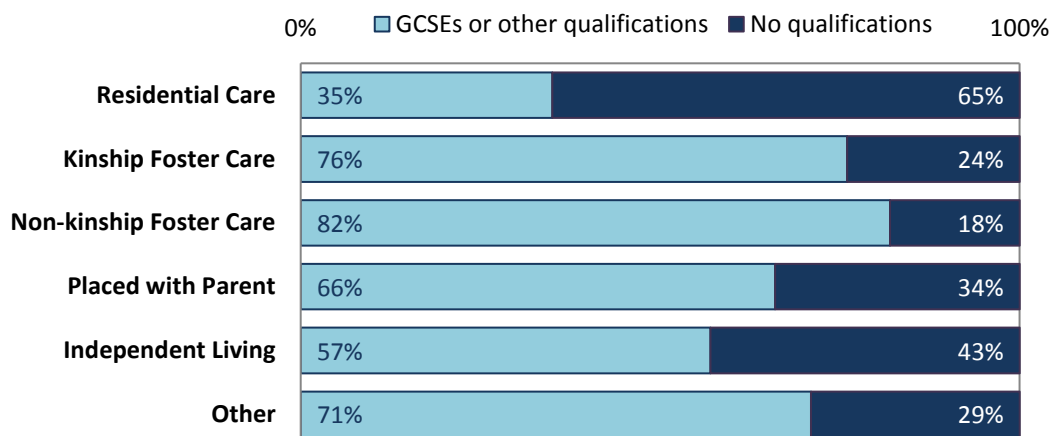
Of the 105 care leavers aged 16-18 with no qualifications, 57 did not sit any examinations, even though they had reached an appropriate age to do so; 9 sat examinations but did not obtain any qualifications, and 8 were due to take examinations after leaving care.

The following analyses compare those care leavers aged 16–18 with GCSE’s or other qualifications (217, 67%) and those with no qualifications (105, 33%).

Educational achievement for care leavers from Catholic and Protestant community backgrounds differed, with 72% of Protestants compared to 63% of Catholics, leaving care with GCSEs or other qualifications.

Some 79% of care leavers previously in foster care placements (82% in kinship and 76% in non-kinship) achieved GCSEs or other qualifications, followed by 71% of those in ‘other’ placements. A third (35%) of those in residential care had no qualifications when leaving care.

Figure 11 Care leavers aged 16-18 – Qualifications achieved by latest placement type (2016/17)

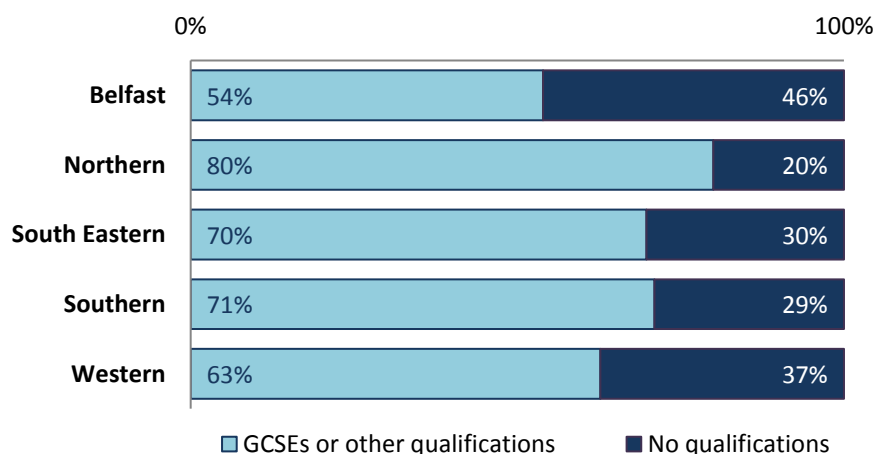


Note: Excludes a small number of care leavers with a statement of SEN because of a severe learning disability.

Length of time of the last period of care also appeared to be important in terms of educational attainment. Children in care for ten years or more tended to do better academically than those in care for less than ten years; over four fifths (83%) of care leavers in care for 10 years or more had obtained GCSE's or other qualifications, compared with almost two thirds (64%) of those in care for less than 10 years. However, this difference may also be related to different placement types experienced by these two groups of care leavers.

Care leavers from the Northern HSC Trust performed best academically, with 80% leaving care with educational qualifications compared to 71% in the Southern HSC Trust, 70% in the South Eastern HSC Trust, 63% in the Western HSC Trust and 54% in the Belfast HSC Trust. Please note that due to the small numbers involved these figures may be subject to high volatility.

Figure 12 Care leavers aged 16-18 – Qualification achieved by HSC Trust (2016/17)



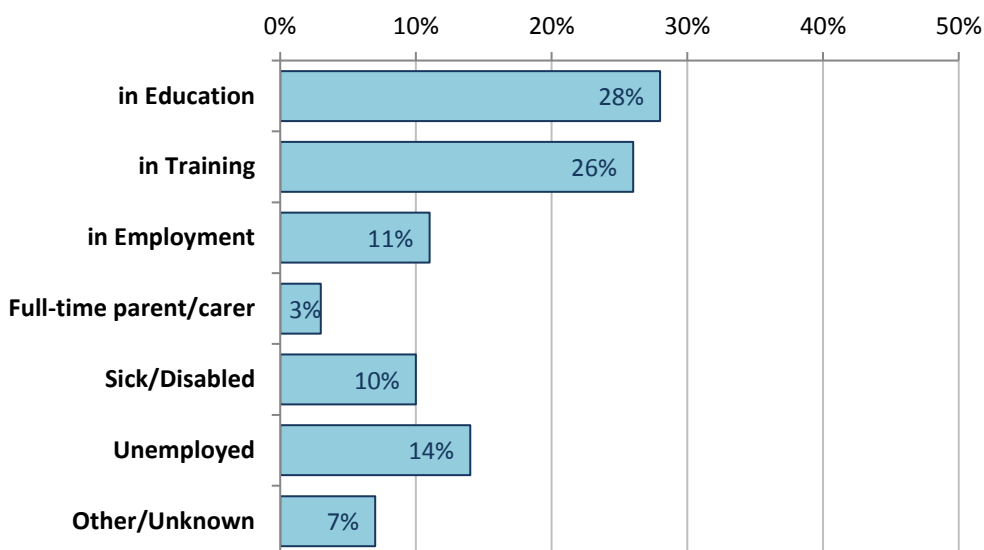
Note: Excludes a small number of care leavers with a statement of SEN because of a severe learning disability.

2.3.4. Economic Activity

Figure 13 below details economic activity for care leavers aged 16-18 for 2016/17. Most of the young people were in training or education at the time of leaving care (26% and 28% respectively). Some 10% were economically inactive due to sickness or disability and a further 3% were economically inactive due to caring responsibilities. Most of the 14% who were unemployed when leaving care, were either actively seeking employment or were lacking motivation to engage in education, training or employment.

Economic activity amongst care leavers compared less favourably with that for young people of similar age; for example, 23% of young people in the general population aged 16-18 years were employed, compared with 11% of young care leavers²².

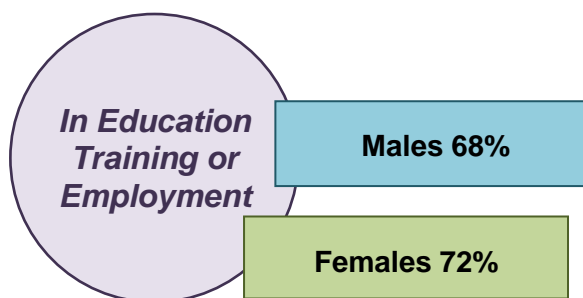
Figure 13 Care leavers aged 16-18 – Economic activity (2016/17)



²² Information provided by NISRA from the Labour Force Survey July – September 2017. Reliable estimates were not available on numbers unemployed.

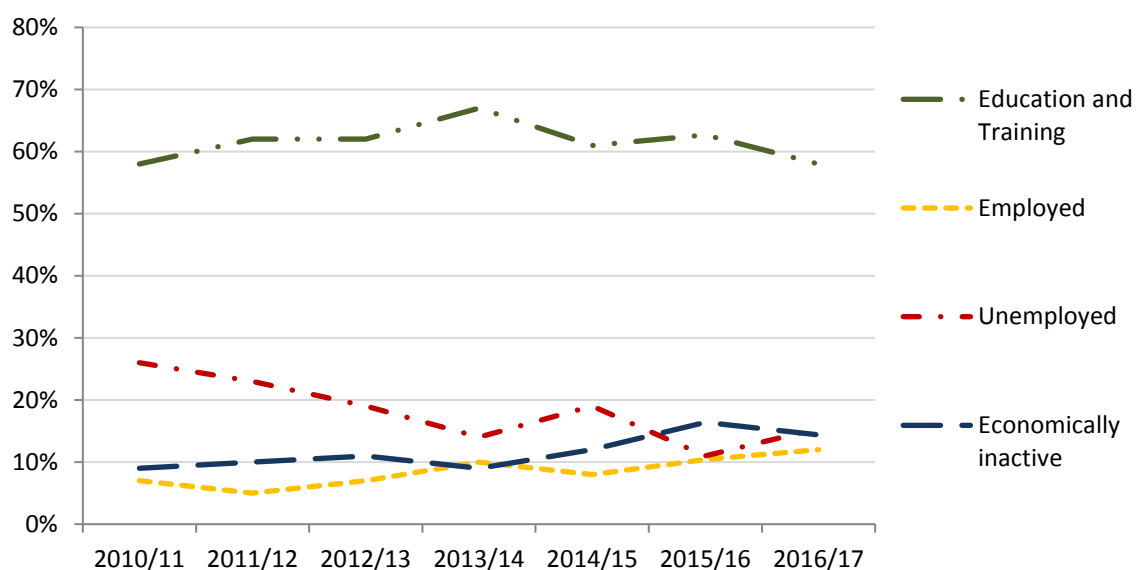
The findings of this section relate only to those for whom economic activity was reported²³

Of the 306 care leavers in 2016/17, whose economic activity was reported, 70% were in education, training or employment. Males leaving care were more likely than females to be unemployed or economically inactive.



In 2016/17, almost three fifths of the care leavers were in education or training (58%), 15% were unemployed, 12% were in employment, and 14% were economically inactive through caring responsibilities or sickness/disabilities. This has been the general trend the last years, however, as can be seen in the Figure below, the proportion of young care leavers who were unemployed has reduced somewhat since 2010/11 whilst there has been an increase in the proportion of economically inactive care leavers the last couple of years.

Figure 14 Care leavers aged 16-18 – Economic activity on leaving care (2016/17)



Note: Excludes care leavers where economic activity was not known.

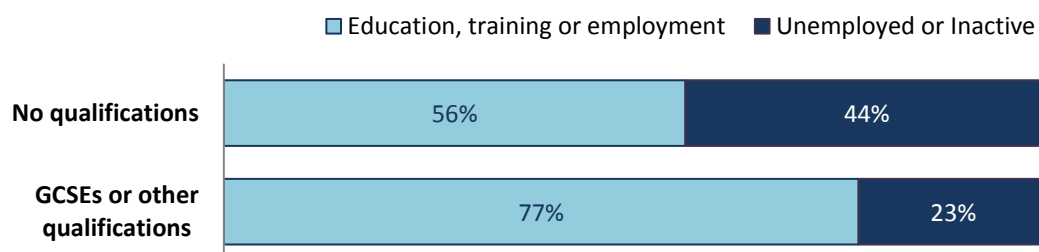
The proportion of care leavers from a Catholic community background in education, training or employment rose from 69% in 2015/16 to 73% in 2016/17. Amongst those from a Protestant community background, the proportion of those in education, training or employment dropped from 76% in 2015/16 to 72% in 2016/17.

Having qualifications correlated highly with economic activity as 77% of those with GCSEs or other qualifications were in education, training or employment compared with 56% of those

²³ Economic activity was not known for 23 of the care leavers aged 16 – 18 in 2016/17 (7%)

without qualifications. Furthermore, care leavers with no qualifications were more than twice as likely as care leavers with qualifications to be unemployed or economically inactive.

Figure 15 Care leavers aged 16-18 – Economic activity and educational achievement

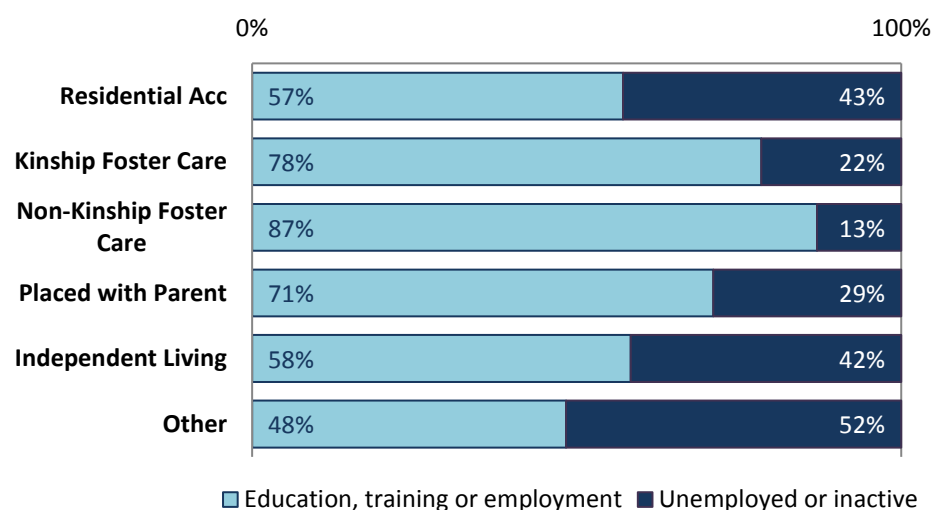


Note: Excludes care leavers where economic activity was not known.

Young care leavers whose last placement was foster care (both kinship and non-kinship) fared better in terms of economic activity on leaving care, with 78% and 87% respectively, in education, training or employment.

Those who had been placed in residential accommodation or were living independently fared less well, with two fifths unemployed or economically inactive (43% and 42% respectively). Just over half (52%) of those whose last placement was “other” placement types were unemployed or economically inactive. “Other” placement types include placements like supported accommodation projects, bed & breakfast, hospital and friends.

Figure 16 Care leavers aged 16-18 – Economic activity by latest placement type (2016/17)

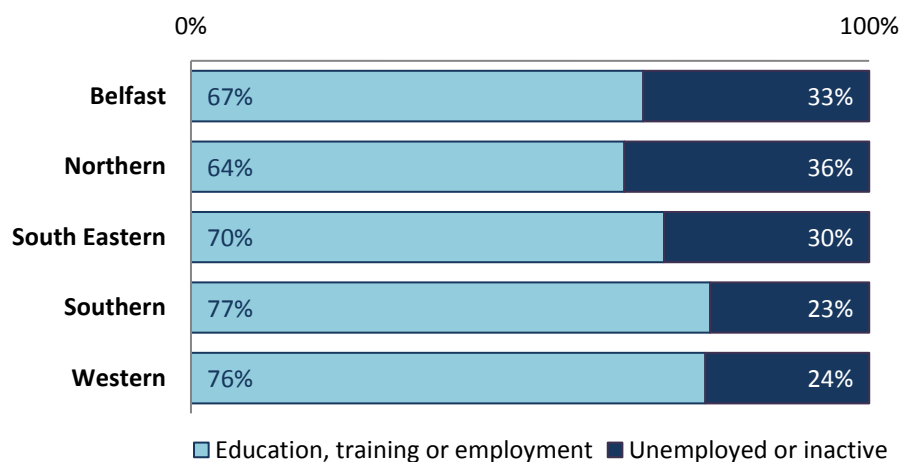


Note: Excludes care leavers where economic activity was not known.

Those in care for less than 10 years were more likely than those in care for more than ten years to be unemployed or economically inactive (31% compared to 25%). Those in care for more than ten years were more likely to be in education or employment.

Around three quarters of care leavers in the Southern and Western HSC Trusts were in education, training or employment. In the Northern HSC Trust the equivalent figure was 64%.

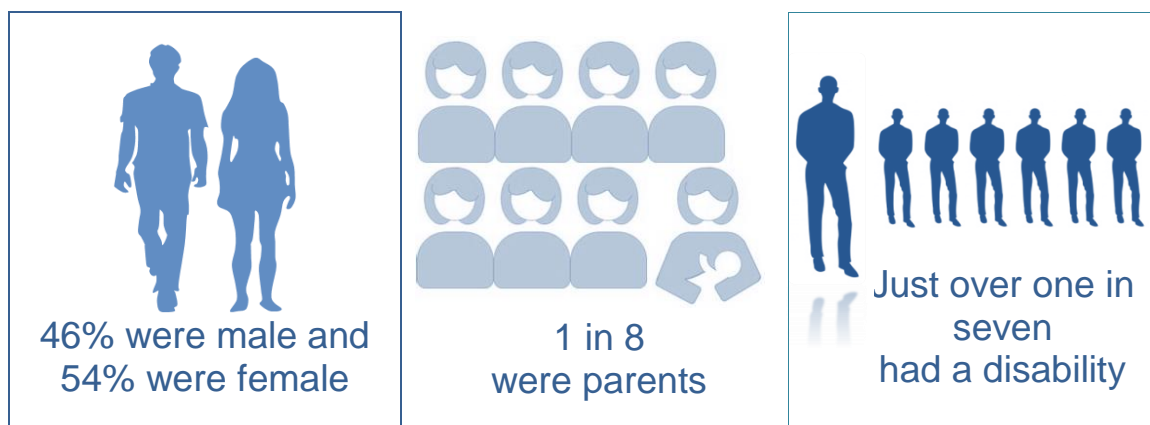
Figure 17 Care leavers aged 16-18 – Economic activity by HSC Trust (2016/17)



Note: Excludes care leavers where economic activity was not known.

3. Care Leavers Aged 19

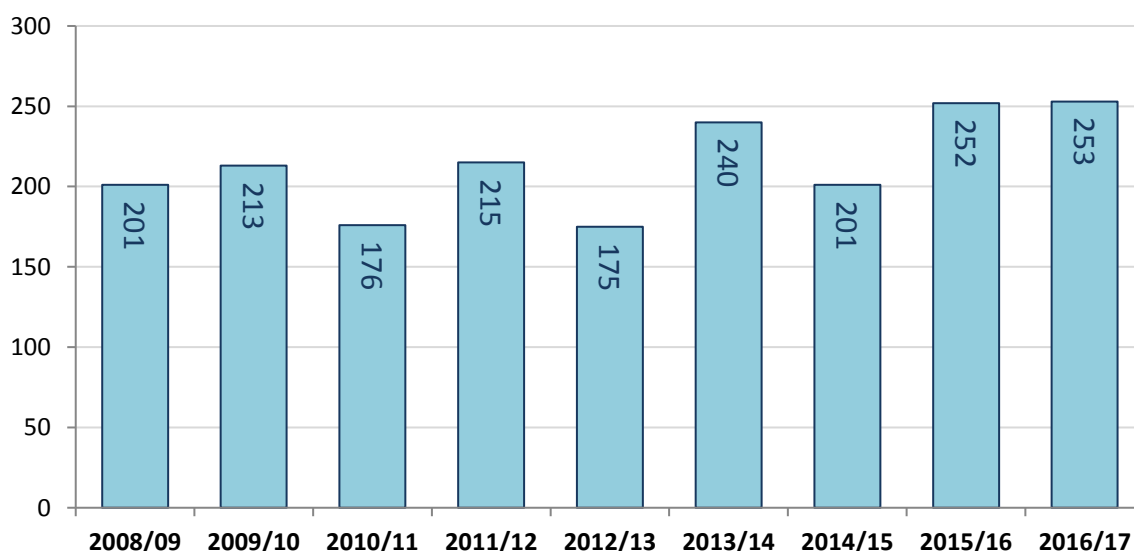
3.1. WHO ARE THE CARE LEAVERS AGED 19?



During the year ending 31 March 2017, there were 253 young people in Northern Ireland, who had been in care on 1 April 2014, and who reached their 19th birthday during the year ending 31 March 2017. This was similar to the previous year.

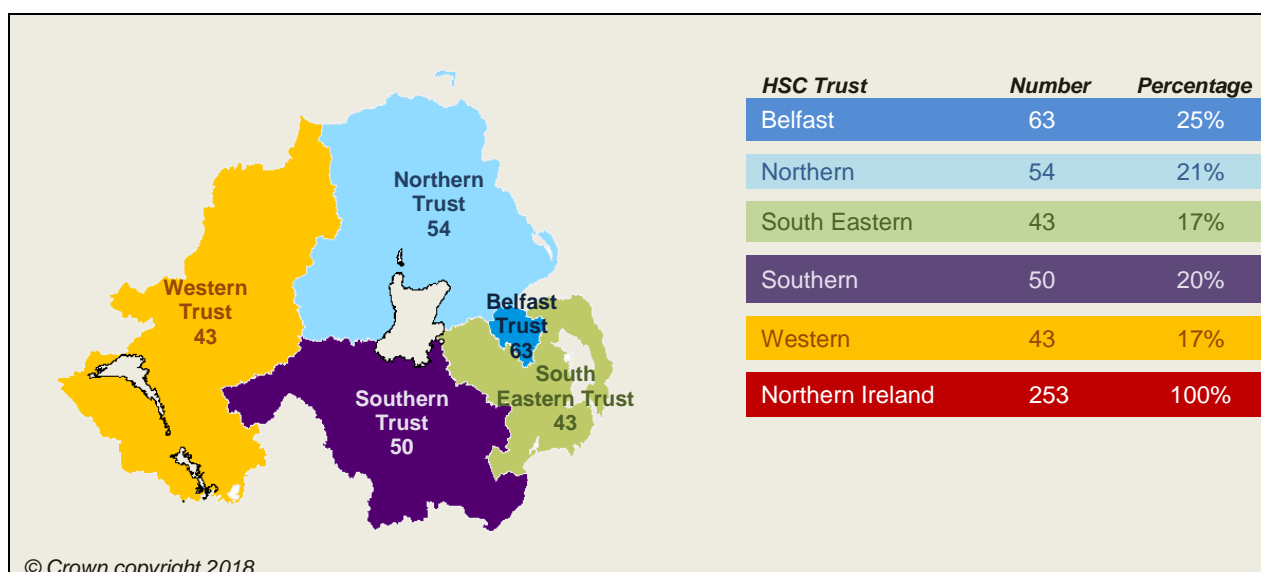
Of the 253 care leavers aged 19, 117 (46%) were male and 136 (54%) were female. This gender split differed from that in the general population of that age group in Northern Ireland, where 52% were males and 48% females²⁴.

Figure 18 Number of care leavers aged 19 in Northern Ireland (2008/09 – 2016/17)



²⁴ 2016 Mid Year Population Estimate (NISRA 2017)

Figure 19 Number of care leavers aged 19 by HSC Trust (2016/17)



The highest proportion of care leavers aged 19 were in the Belfast Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust (25%) compared to 17% in both the Southern and South Eastern HSC Trusts.

The care leavers' geographical location was linked with the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2017²⁵ to identify the deprivation quintile rank of home location before last entry into care and after leaving care²⁶. For the children where geographical information was available²⁷, a slightly lower proportion had been living in the most deprived areas of Northern Ireland before the last entry into care (33%) than after leaving care (35%). Further analysis showed that just over two fifths of the care leavers (43%) were living in an area of same deprivation rank when leaving care as before last entry into care. The remaining care leavers were evenly split between those who had moved into an area ranked of higher deprivation and those who had moved into areas ranked with less deprivation.

3.1.1. Religion and Ethnicity

Information on religion and ethnicity of care leavers is collected for equality monitoring purposes. In terms of religion, there was an even split between the proportion of care leavers at 19 that had a Catholic community background (45%) and those from a Protestant community background (45%). Some 11% were of 'Unknown', 'None' or 'Other' religious backgrounds, which was similar to the previous year.

Almost all (96%) of the care leavers aged 19 had a white ethnic background.

²⁵Source: Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, 2017 (<https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/deprivation/northern-ireland-multiple-deprivation-measure-2017-nimdm2017>)

²⁶ These analyses were only carried out for care leavers residing in Northern Ireland.

²⁷ Northern Ireland geographical information prior to entering care was available for 95% of the care leavers and information was available for 87% upon leaving care. Information was supplied for 83% of the care leavers for both prior to entering care and after leaving care.

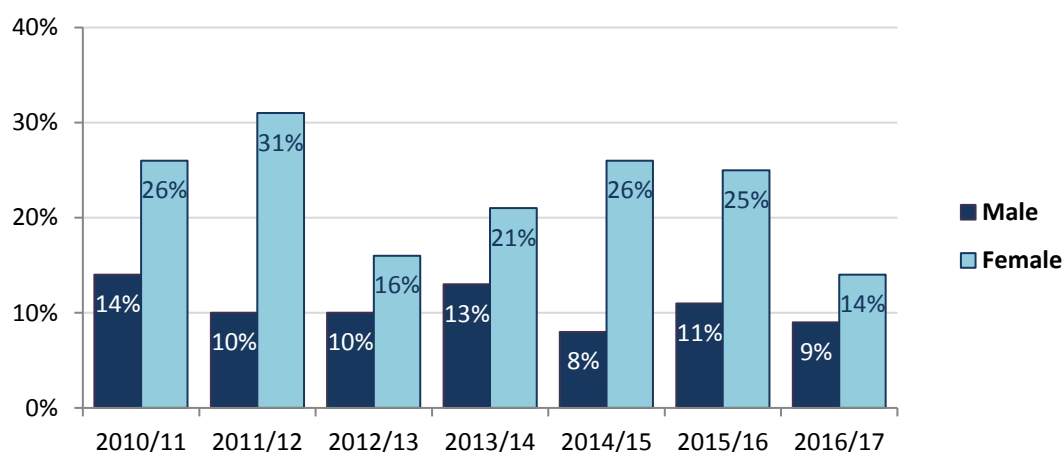
3.1.2. Disability

Just over one in seven (15%) of the care leavers aged 19 had a disability (39 care leavers). Of the care leavers with a disability, almost half had a learning disability²⁸ (49%). Although not directly comparable, figures from the 2011 Census indicated that 7% of 18-19 year olds in Northern Ireland had a disability²⁹. This suggests that a disproportionately high number of care leavers have a disability.

3.1.3. Dependants

Findings from the 2016/17 OC3 survey indicated that 12% of care leavers aged 19 were parents, 19 young women and 11 young men. The proportion of care leavers with dependent children can fluctuate extensively year on year. This can be seen in the Figure below which sets out the proportion of care leavers who had dependants by gender.

Figure 20 Care leavers aged 19 with dependants by gender (2010/11 – 2016/17)



One in seven (14%) of female care leavers aged 19 in 2016/17 became mothers on or before their 19th birthday. During 2016, 3% of all births in the general population in Northern Ireland were to teenage mothers³⁰. Although these figures are not directly comparable, it does indicate a higher prevalence of teenage mothers in the cohorts of care leavers.

²⁸ Please note that the care leavers may have had multiple disabilities with other disabilities alongside learning disability.

²⁹ Census 2011 – 18 to 19 year olds with long term health problem limiting day to day activities

³⁰ Source: Registrar General Annual Report 2016 Births, Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency 2017.

3.2. WHAT WAS THEIR LAST PERIOD IN CARE?



3.2.1. Age when leaving care

The majority of care leavers aged 19 left care on reaching 18 years of age (88%)³¹ with 12% leaving at 16 or 17 years. This is similar to previous years.

3.2.2. Legal Status

The former legal status³² of care leavers aged 19 showed that almost two thirds (66%) had been looked after under a Care Order, with 32% voluntarily accommodated (Article 21) and a further 2% of young people were in care under 'Other'³³ arrangements.

In terms of the length of time spent in the last period of care, 52% of those who had been looked after for less than 5 years had been voluntarily accommodated (Article 21), in comparison, 89% of those looked after for 10 years or more had been looked after under a Care Order.

3.2.3. Last period in care

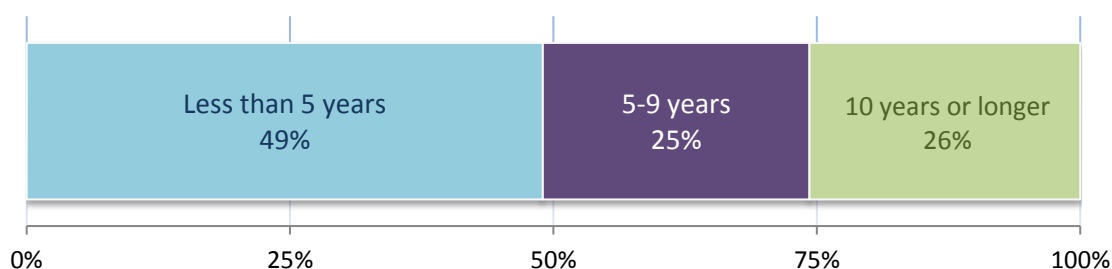
Prior to leaving care, the average length of time in care was 6 years and 3 months; seven months longer than in 2015/16 (5 years and 8 months). The average last period in care was slightly longer for males compared with females (6 years 6 months and 6 years and 0 months respectively). For almost half (49%) of the care leavers, the duration of the last period in care was less than five years whereas for just over a quarter (26%) of the care leavers it lasted for ten years or longer.

³¹ This figure includes four care leavers aged 19 when leaving care.

³² Description of legal statuses is included in the appendix.

³³ This includes Interim Care Orders

Figure 21 Care leavers aged 19 – Length of latest period of care (2016/17)

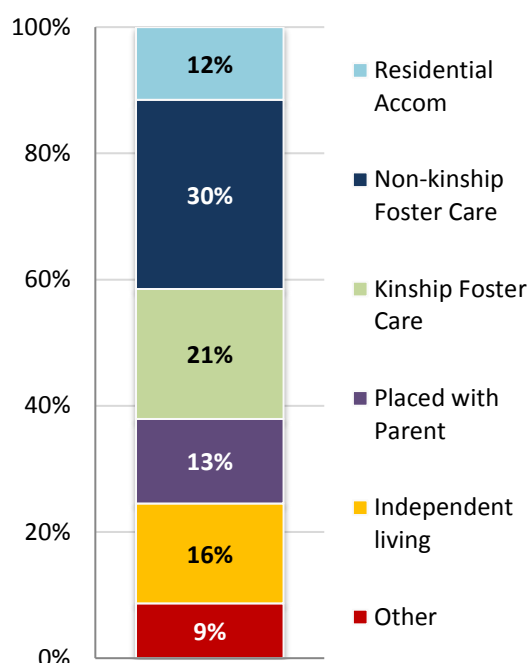


Appendix B sets out definitions of the different types of placements of care that are covered below. Before leaving care, over half (51%) of care leavers aged 19 had been in foster care (30% non-kinship and 21% kinship foster placements), with 13% placed with parents, 12% in residential care, 16% had been living independently³⁴ and 9% had been in Other³⁵ placement types.

Foster care (in particular non-kinship foster care) had been the most common placement for both males and females prior to leaving care. A larger proportion of males were in residential accommodation as their latest placement compared with females (15% and 8% respectively).

Non-kinship foster care was the most common placement for care leavers prior to leaving care for those looked after for five years or longer. The most common placement for those young people looked after for less than five years was independent living³⁶.

Figure 22 Care leavers aged 19 – Latest placement prior to leaving care (2016/17)

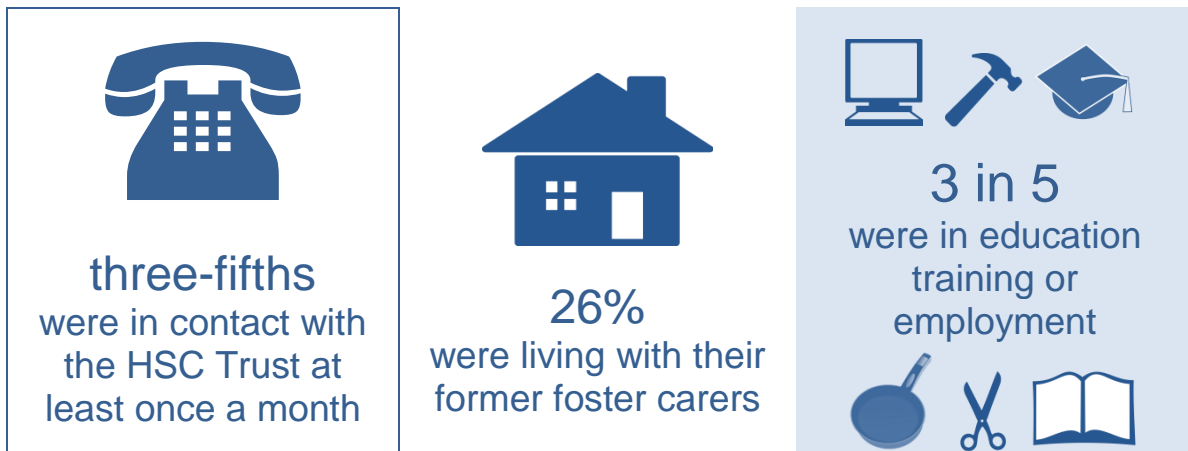


³⁴ Independent Living includes living with and without formal support.

³⁵ Other placement types include; supported accommodation, hospital and living with relatives.

³⁶ See Tables for further details

3.3. HOW ARE THEY DOING NOW?

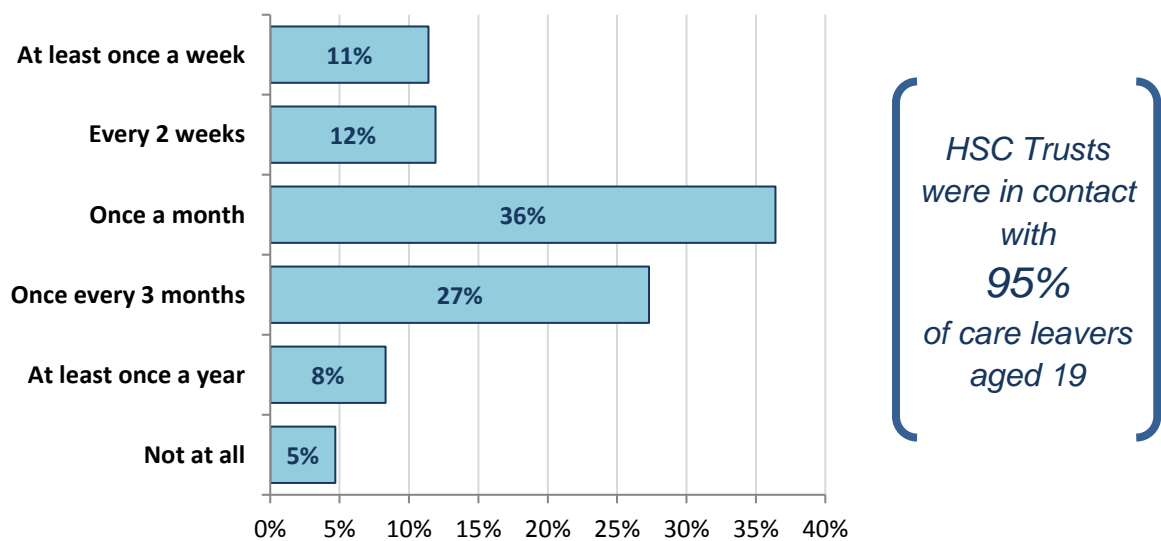


3.3.1. Contact with Social Services

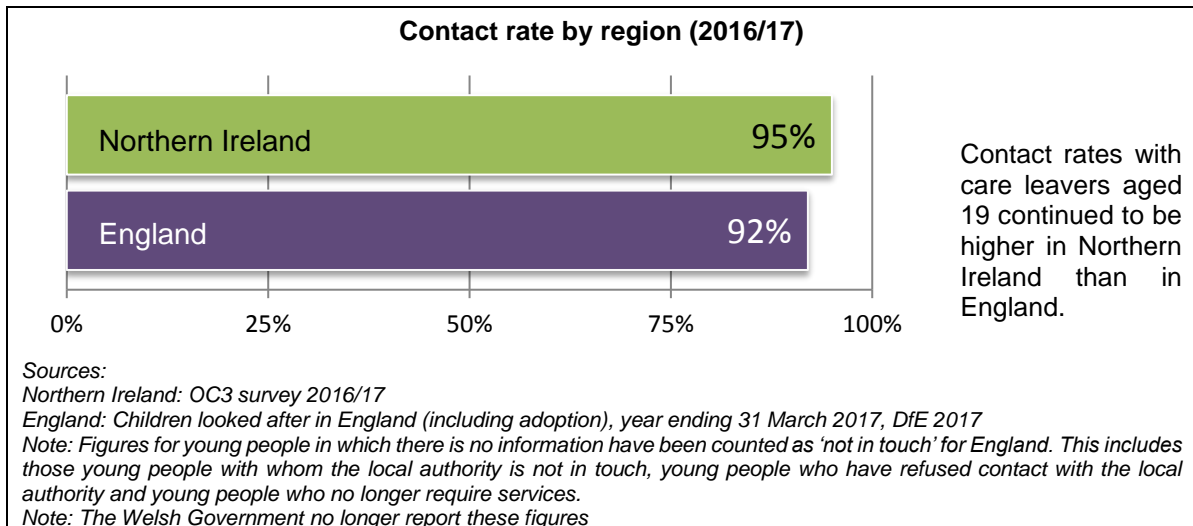
The ‘Children (Leaving Care) Act (Northern Ireland) 2002’ requires HSC Trusts to take reasonable steps to maintain contact with care leavers. For 2016/17, HSC Trusts reported contacts with 241 (95%) of the 253 care leavers aged 19. This was an increase of 23 percentage points since 2003/04³⁷ when the contact rate was 72%. In 2016/17 Social Services were in contact with 59% of the care leavers at least once a month.

In regards to the last placement of the care leavers, contact rates were ranged between 93% and 98% across all placement types.

Figure 23 Care Leavers aged 19 – Contact Rates by Frequency of Contact (2016/17)

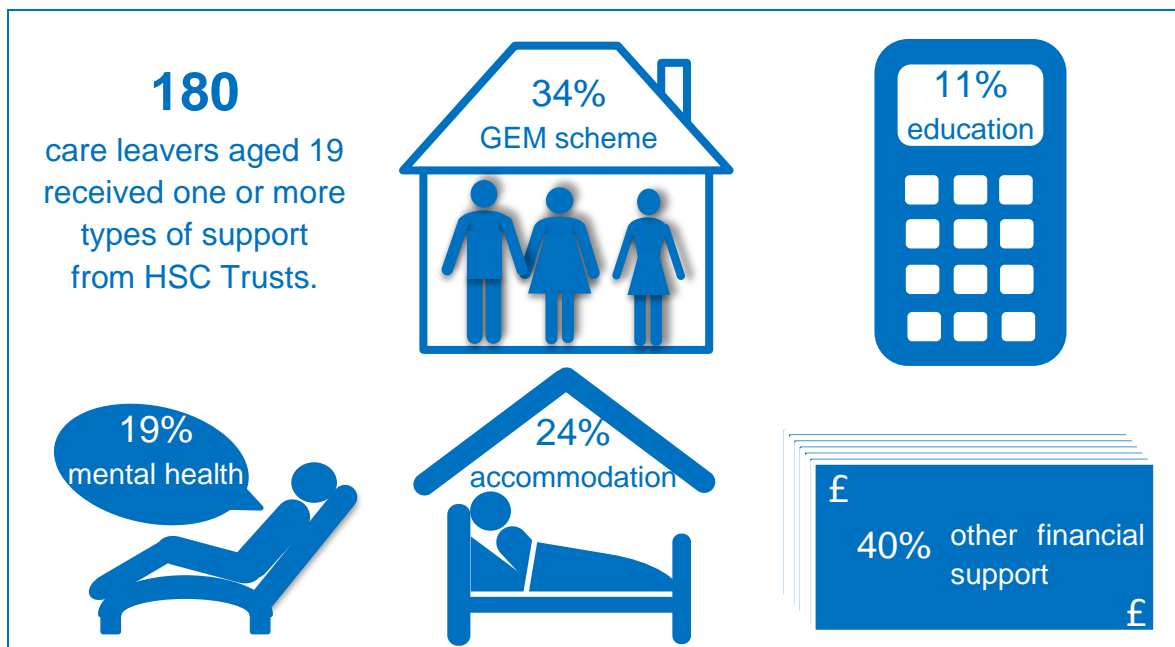


³⁷ Former Care Leavers in Northern Ireland 2003/04, DHSSPS 2006



3.3.2. Support from Social Services

Some 180 (71%) of the 253 care leavers aged 19 were receiving some form of ongoing support from social services³⁸. Of those young people receiving support, 72 (40%) were receiving financial support³⁹, 61 (34%) were receiving support for a 'Going the Extra Mile' (GEM) placement⁴⁰, 44 (24%) were receiving financial support towards accommodation, 34 (19%) had support for mental health issues, 20 (11%) were accepting financial support for their education and 8 (4%) were getting other forms of support.



Note: Care leavers may receive more than one service. Some 4% were getting other forms of support.

³⁸ Care leavers may be receiving more than one service.

³⁹ Financial support towards travel, groceries, leisure etc.

⁴⁰ The Going the Extra Mile scheme was launched in 2006 and aims to promote continuity and stability in post care life for young people living with foster carers

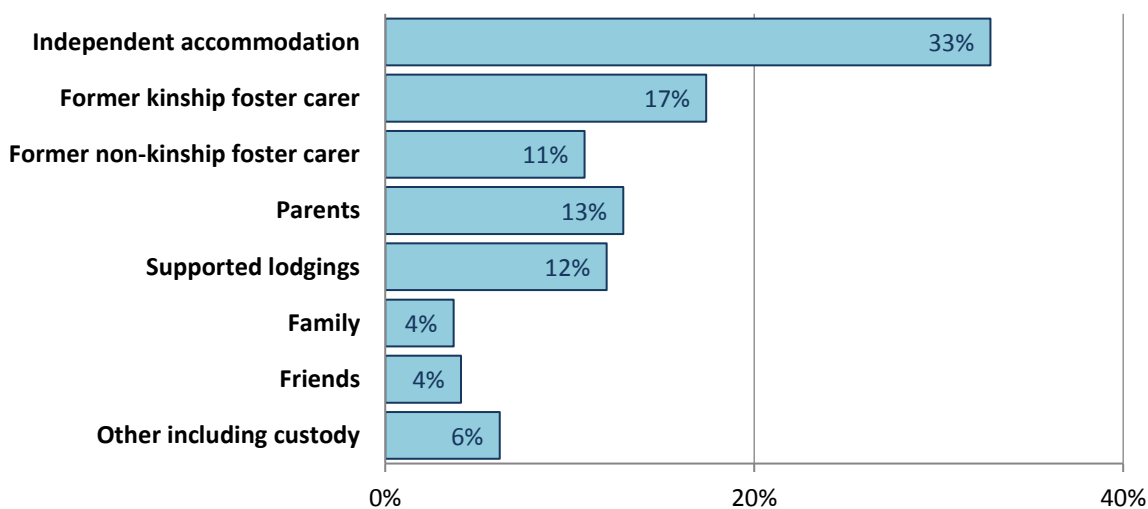
A slightly higher proportion of males (73%) than females (70%) were receiving support from social services having left care. Care leavers with a disability were more likely to be receiving support (79%) than those without a disability (70%).

The length of the last care placement would also appear to have an impact on whether or not a young person is in receipt of support. Some 80% of those who had been looked after for ten years or longer were being supported by social services compared to 65% of those who had been in care for less than five years.

3.3.3. Accommodation

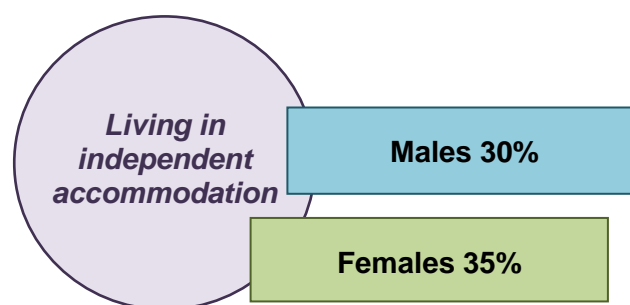
Care leaver's were living in a variety of types of accommodation on their 19th birthday. A third (80) were living in independent accommodation (33%), with just over a quarter living with their former foster cares (17% with kinship foster carers and 11% with non-kinship foster carers). Furthermore, 61 of these 68 former foster care placements were GEM arrangements. Almost one in seven (13%) were living with their parents and 12% were in supported lodgings⁴¹.

Figure 24 Care leavers aged 19 – Type of accommodation



Note: Excludes care leavers who were not in contact with their HSC Trust.

Young men and young women differed in the types of accommodation in which they were most likely to be living: a higher proportion (35%) of young women than young men (30%) were living in independent accommodation. In contrast, 17% of young men were living with their parents, compared with 9% of young women.

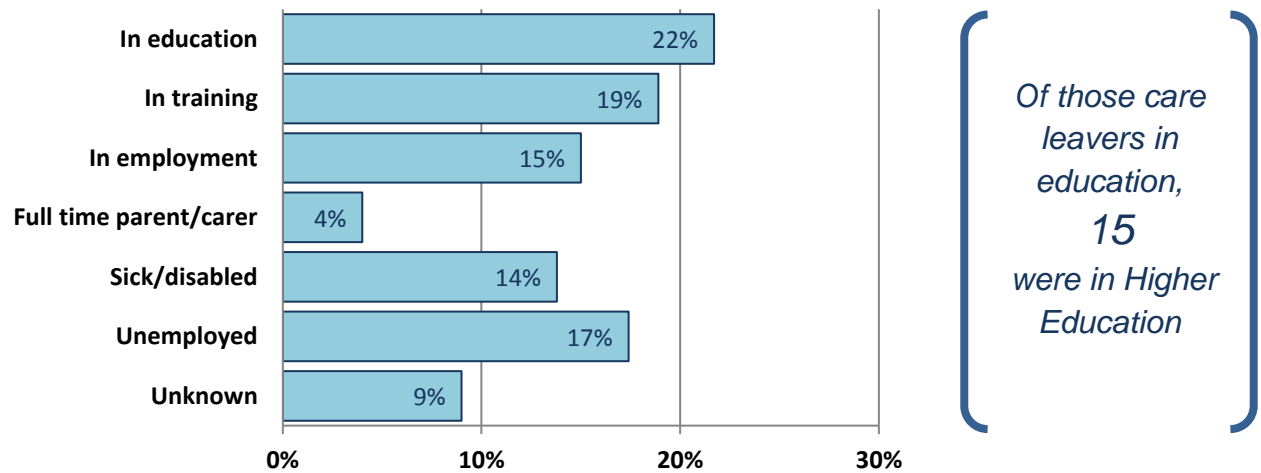


⁴¹ Figures relate to those care leavers in contact with their HSC Trust.

3.3.4. Economic Activity

Of all care leavers aged 19 in 2016/17, a quarter were in education (22%) with a fifth attending training (19%). Some 17% were unemployed, and 79 care leavers were economically inactive due to either being a full time carer or due to illness/disability. The economic activity was not known for 9% of the care leavers.

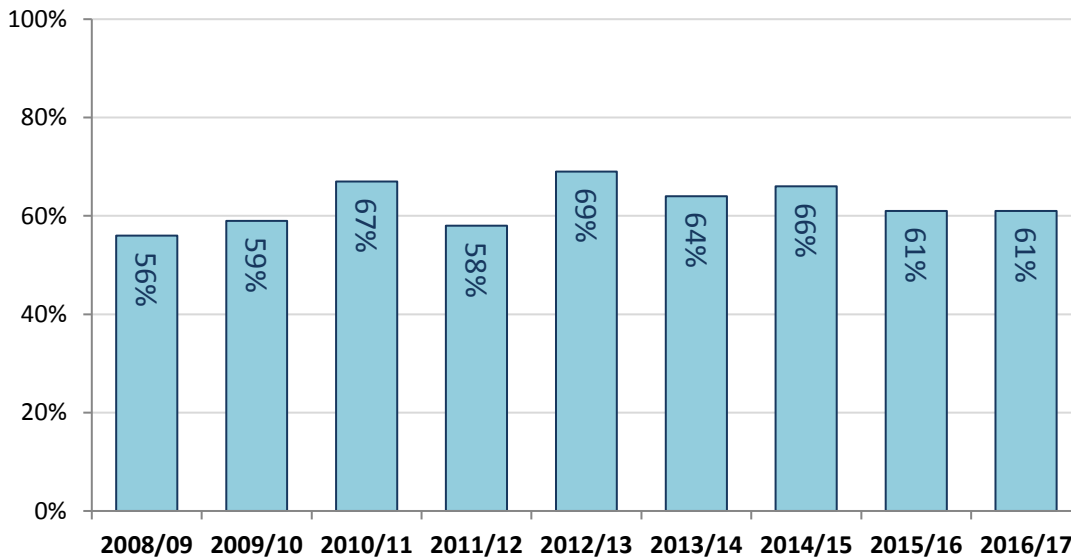
Figure 25 Care leavers aged 19 – Proportion of care leavers by current activity⁴²



⁴² Higher education is defined as studies beyond A Level, leading to a degree or higher qualification. This includes diplomas in higher education, teaching and nursing qualifications, HNDs, ONDs and BTEC. This includes full-time and part-time study if it is considered the main activity

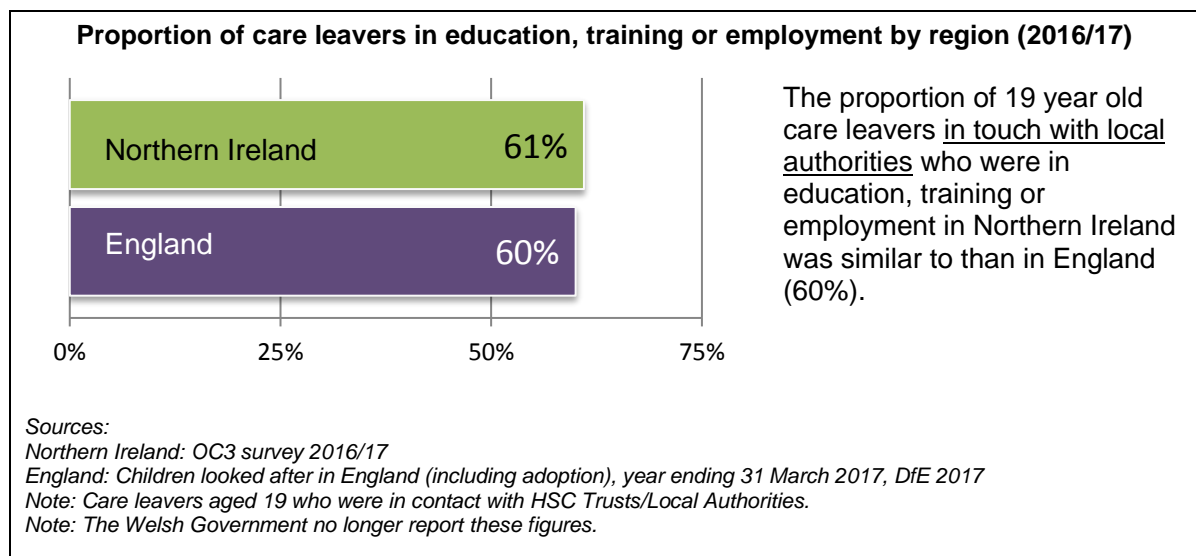
All information below, referring to the economic activity of care leavers aged 19, relates to care leavers who had been in contact with social services during the 12 months up to 31 March 2017, and whose economic activity was known.

Figure 26 Care leavers aged 19 – Proportion of care leavers in education, training or employment (2008/09 – 2016/17)

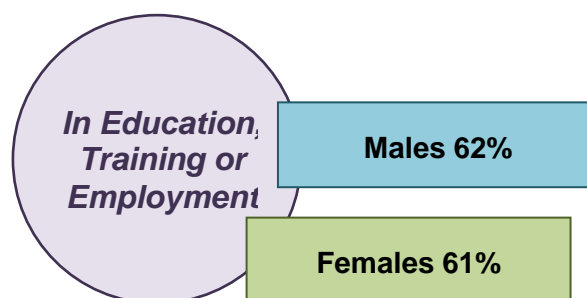


Note: Excludes care leavers who were not in contact with their HSC Trust.

In 2016/17, 61% of all care leavers in contact with HSC Trusts, and whose economic activity was known, were in education, training or employment. Just under two fifths (39%) were unemployed or economically inactive.

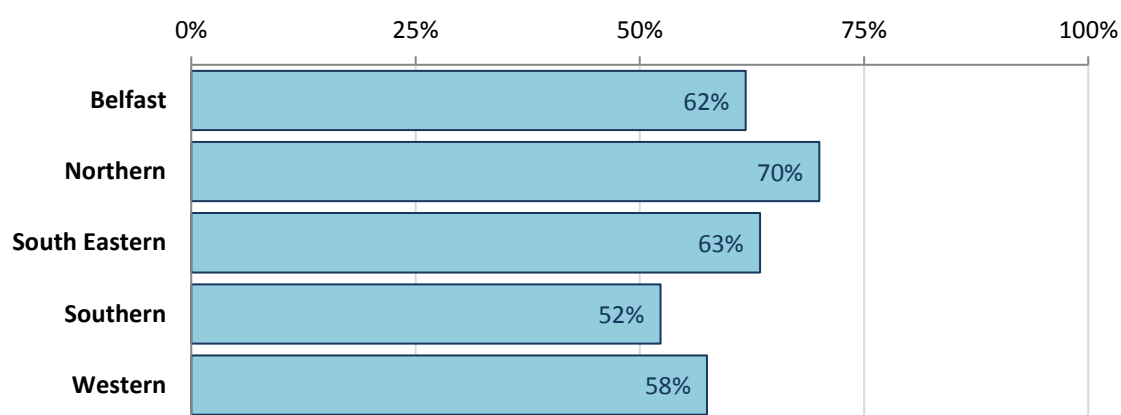


Similar proportions of male (62%) and female (61%) care leavers aged 19 were in education, training or employment (see tables in appendix for details).



Some 70% of care leavers in the Northern HSC Trust were in education, training or employment compared to 52% in the Southern HSC Trust. There were increases in the proportion of care leavers in education, training or employment in the Northern, South Eastern and Belfast HSC Trusts from the previous year (see Tables for details).

Figure 27 Care leavers aged 19 – Care leavers in education, training and employment by HSC Trust

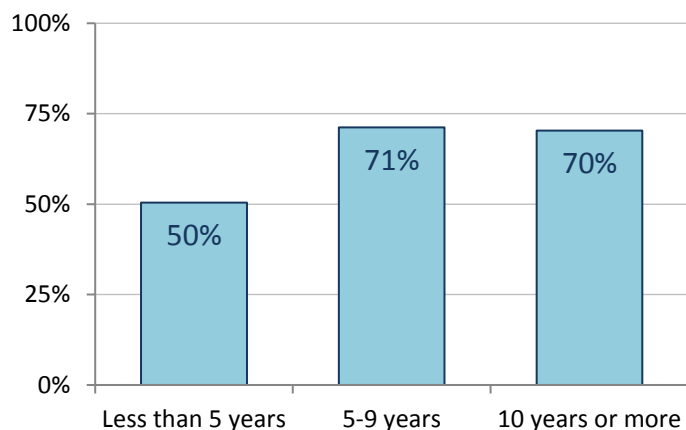


Note: Excludes care leavers who were not in contact with their HSC Trust.

A third (35%) of the care leavers aged 19 who had dependent children, were in education, training or employment; 2 percentage points more than in 2015/16 (33%). It is however worth noting that due to small numbers of care leavers with dependants, the figures may be subject to high year on year volatility.

In 2016/17, those with a disability were just as likely to be in education, training or employment as those without a disability (62% and 61% respectively). This may reflect that support can be in place that will affect the relationship between economic activity and disability. It must also be considered that each relatively small cohort of young people who have passed through this study is different. There may be more people with severe learning disabilities in one year compared with the next or greater/lesser numbers of able bodied care leavers who will not engage in education. These factors will all impact upon the outcomes.

Figure 28 Care leavers aged 19 – Care leavers in education, training and employment by length of time in care (2016/17)

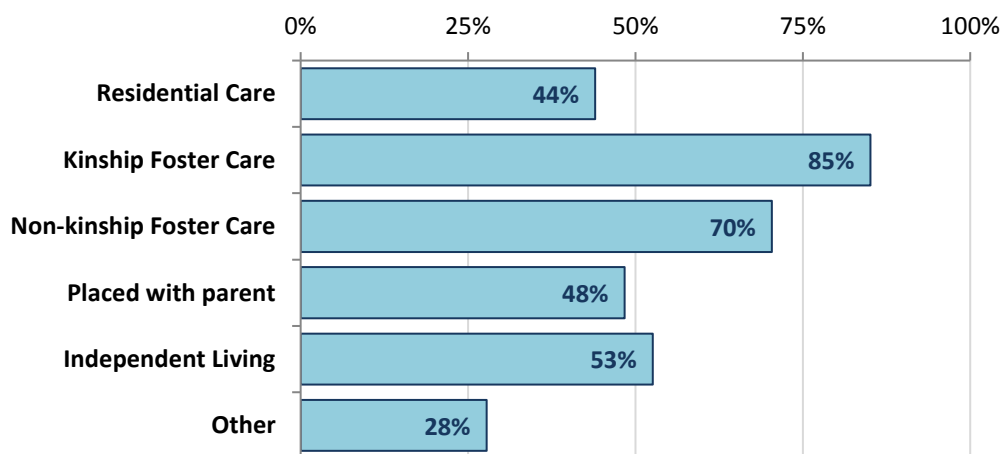


Note: Excludes care leavers who were not in contact with their HSC Trust.

As highlighted previously, time in care and placement type seem to be linked. In relation to this, education, training and employment rates were higher for those in care for longer and for those whose last placement was foster care.

One in seven (70%) of those who had been looked after for more than 10 years were in education, training or employment, compared with 50% for those in care for less than 5 years. This trend is similar to previous years.

Figure 29 Care leavers aged 19 – Care leavers in education, training and employment by latest placement (2016/17)



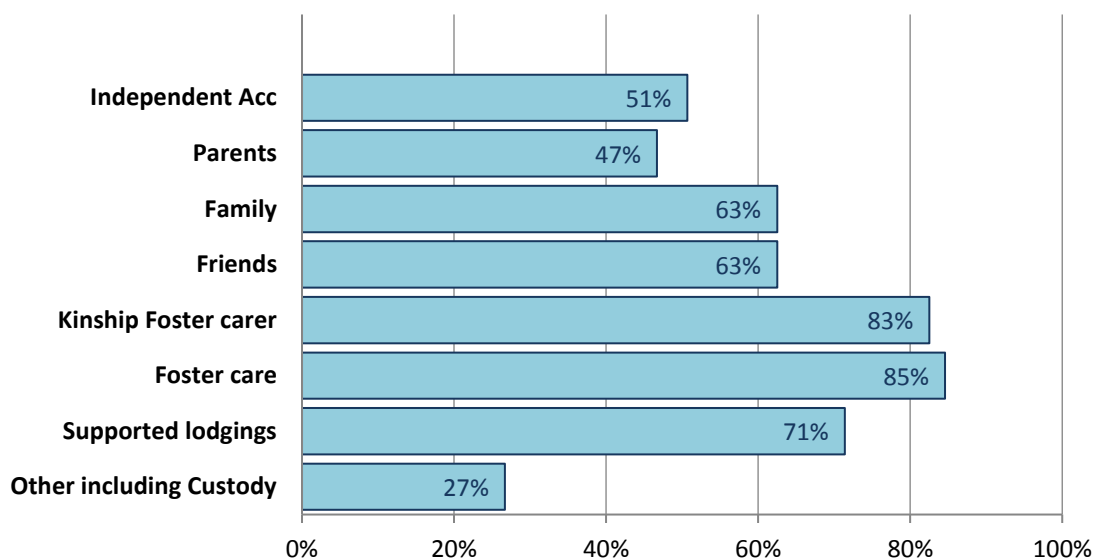
Note: Excludes care leavers who were not in contact with their HSC Trust.

Just over three quarters of those whose final placement had been in foster care were in education, training or employment (70% in non-kinship and 85% in kinship care), compared

with between 28% and 53% in all other placement types. Due to small numbers of care leavers in each placement group, trend figures have been somewhat variable; however those with foster care as last placement have consistently shown better outcomes. Although each person's journey through the care system is unique, it appears that longer time in care may be linked to placement stability which again may impact on the life outcomes such as economic activity.

The care leavers current accommodation at age 19 also seems to be linked to economic activity. Some 83% of the 19 year olds who were living with their former foster carers (kinship and non-kinship) were in education, training or employment. This was considerably higher than all other accommodation types.

Figure 30 Care leavers aged 19 – Care leavers in education, training and employment by current accommodation (2016/17)



Note: Excludes care leavers who were not in contact with their HSC Trust.

NEET

The term NEET refers to young people not in education, employment or training. The term was first used in the 1990s and is now in common usage.

Calculating NEET depends on the information sources available. As such, there may be some difference, for example, between NEET figures for Northern Ireland in general and that of care leavers in this survey. In this survey, care leavers who are NEET refers to those who were not in part- or full time education, training^A or employment. Those care leavers whose activity was not known were excluded from the calculations.

In general, care leavers defined as NEET were either economically inactive, due to illness/disability or full time caring responsibilities, or they were unemployed.

^A Includes a small number of non-Government supported training programmes.

*In 2016/17,
39%
of care leavers
aged 19
were NEET.*

Appendix A Technical Notes

Care Leaver Statistics for Northern Ireland

Statistics on care leavers have previously been published in two separate publications; “Care leavers Aged 16-18 in Northern Ireland” and “Care Leavers Aged 19 in Northern Ireland”. Due to the similarities of topic and to allow for better use of resources producing the publications, these two publications were merged to the bulletin “Northern Ireland Care Leavers”. This is the third publication of “Northern Ireland Care Leavers”. Historic publications on care leavers in Northern Ireland can be downloaded from the Department of Health’s (DoH) website:

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/doh-statistics-and-research>

OC1 and OC3 Surveys

The information presented in this bulletin derives from the ninth OC1 survey of care leavers aged 16-18 in Northern Ireland and the eighth OC3 survey of care leavers at the age of 19. These survey returns were provided by each of the five Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts in Northern Ireland to Community Information Branch (CIB) in the DoH.

OC1 and OC3, together with its companion survey OC2 (children in care for 12 months or longer at 30 September), provide a comprehensive series of data on looked after children in Northern Ireland. It is a stated aim of DoH to improve outcomes for children in care, by improving the quality and stability of placements and improving educational opportunities for young people as they make the transition to adulthood. These publications help to measure the Department’s progress in meeting these stated aims.

The OC1 survey, introduced in 2002, reports the circumstances of young people at 31 March aged 16-18 who had left care during the previous financial year. It collects a range of information, including educational achievement, economic activity, disability, duration in care and placement prior to leaving care.

The OC3 survey, introduced in 2004, reports the circumstances of care leavers at the time of their 19th birthday. It collects information on frequency of contacts with social services, economic activity and accommodation.

To help put some figures within their wider social context, comparative information with, for example, the general school population and looked after children in other countries in the United Kingdom have been included where possible. Users of these statistics find such comparisons interesting; though it should be stressed that they are not like-for-like comparisons and may merely reflect differences between different cohorts of children.

Data Collection

The survey used to collect this information has one record for each young person fitting the parameters of the collection. The survey is completed online by nominated HSC Trust staff using a secure web-based survey returns application. All records are anonymised to protect the confidentiality of these young people.

For inclusion in OC1, care leavers had to be aged 16-18 years when leaving care and left care during the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017. The information collected related to the last period in care.

The OC3 return relates to care leavers at the time of their 19th birthday. It provides data on all care leavers at age 19, who had been looked after on 1st April, 3 years previously.

All references made to 'Year' refer to the financial year, 1st April to 31 March, i.e. for the 2016/17 collection the reference period was 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017.

Guidance notes and other documents associated with the completion of the OC surveys are available to view or download from the DoH website:

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/care-leavers-returns-and-quality-reports>

Rounding/Disclosure Conventions

Percentages have been rounded to whole numbers and as a consequence some percentages may not sum to 100. It has been necessary to suppress other figures whenever it would be possible to calculate the value of a suppressed number by means of simple arithmetic. The rule applied in these circumstances has been to suppress the next smallest data item.

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. CIB perform further checks, using historical data to monitor annual variations and emerging trends.

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.

Related Publications

Details of statistics on looked after children published by other countries in the UK (United Kingdom) can be found as detailed below.

Scotland

Children's Social Work Statistics 2015/16 published in March 2017, further information can be found at the following link:

<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2017/03/6791>

Wales

Children Looked After by Local Authorities 2016/17 are produced by the Local Government Data Unit and the Welsh Assembly Government. Data for the period up to the end of March 2017 were released in December 2017 and can be found at:

<http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/children-looked-after-local-authorities/?lang=en>

England

Statistics on Children Looked After in England (including adoption) are produced annually by the Department of Children, Schools and Families. Figures for the year ending 31 March 2017 were published in September 2017, and are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption-2016-to-2017>

Other statistics produced by the DoH relating to looked after children and other areas of children's social care with relevant web links are detailed below:

Children's Social Care Statistics for Northern Ireland

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/childrens-social-care-statistics-northern-ireland>

Children in Care in Northern Ireland

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/articles/looked-after-children>

Child Protection Register

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/articles/child-protection-register>

Children Adopted from Care in Northern Ireland

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/articles/children-adopted-care>

A further source of information on issues relating to children and young people in care and care leavers is the virtual library hosted by the Voice of Young People in Care (VOYPIC) charity. This virtual library can be accessed via the following link:

www.libraryinthesky.org

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.

A National Statistics Publication

Survey forms and guidance notes for the care leavers surveys can be found on the Department's website at the following link:

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/care-leavers-returns-and-quality-reports>

Appendix B Definitions

Placement

Foster care is when a child is placed by a Trust, or by its parents (or those with parental responsibility), with other persons who will care for, and rear the child. Foster Carers are approved by a Health and Social Care Trust and receive an allowance for their caring responsibilities from the approving Trust.

Kinship foster care (approved) is when a looked after child is placed by a Trust with a relative, friend or other person with a prior connection to the child, who will care for and rear the child. A person with a prior connection could be someone who knows the child in a professional capacity such as a childminder, a teacher or a youth worker although these are not exclusive categories. Kinship Foster Carers are approved by a Health and Social Care Trust and receive an allowance for their caring responsibilities from the approving Trust.

Placed for adoption refers to a child that has been approved to be adopted and is placed with his/her prospective adoptive parents pending affirmation from the courts. It can be distinguished between children who are placed for adoption with their former foster carers and those who are placed for adoption with 'others' (not former foster carers).

Residential care is when a looked after child is placed by a Trust in a Children's Home. Residential care for children/Children's Homes are there to ensure that the needs of children are met when they cannot live with their own family. They are a place for children to develop and grow, as well as providing food, shelter, and space for play and leisure in a caring environment. Children's Homes look after children with many different needs.

Secure accommodation is provided for children on a short term basis when it is likely that the child, in any other setting, will injure him/herself or abscond and is likely to suffer significant harm when absconding.

Placed with parent (in previous publications called "Placed with Family") refers to children for whom a Care Order exists and who are placed with their parents, a person who is not a parent but who has parental responsibility for the child or where a child is in care and there was a residence order in force with respect to him/her immediately before the care order was made, and who are placed with a person in whose favour the residence order was made.

Emergency foster care is when a looked after child is placed by a social worker in an emergency (short term) arrangement, for example emergency kinship foster care. Emergency kinship foster carers would normally not have been previously approved by a Health and Social Care Trust as foster carers.

Independent living arrangements refers to children placed in independent accommodation. This would refer to young people between 16-18 years old. Independent living arrangements can further be categorised into with or without formal support from Trust.

Other placements refers to any placement reported that are not covered by other categories given. This may include children in assessment centres, boarding schools etc, and also special arrangements relating to one Trust. The categories included may change from year to year.

Legal Status

The legal framework for compulsory intervention in the care and upbringing of children. If more than one legal status is indicated or in force for the child at 31 March, the latest one only is recorded.

Emergency Protection Order (Article 63 & 64): An Emergency Protection Order (EPO) is intended for use in urgent cases to protect a child in the short-term. Almost anyone with a concern can apply for an EPO, although in most circumstances a Trust will seek one. Where the applicant is a Trust or the NSPCC they must show that in the course of fulfilling their duty to investigate they are being unreasonably frustrated in gaining access to the child. Anyone else applying for an EPO they must show that the child is likely to suffer significant harm unless removed to, or allowed to remain, in a safe place.

An EPO last for eight days but can be extended on one occasion for a further seven days. An application to discharge the order cannot be made within the first 72 hours giving a Trust sometime to decide what actions to take in respect of the child. The person to whom the order is addressed also gains parental responsibility for the child for the duration of the order.

Accommodated (Article 21): Children with this legal status have been accommodated by a HSC Trust if there is no one who has parental responsibility for them, they have been lost or abandoned or of the person who has been caring for them has been prevented, for whatever reason, from providing them with suitable accommodation or care. Children are often accommodated with the permission of their parents.

Care Order (Article 50 or 59): A Care Order accords the HSC Trust parental responsibility and allows for the child to be removed from the parental home. This does not extinguish the parental responsibility of the child's parents but means that they cannot exercise this responsibility while the Care Order is in place. For a Court to make a Care Order it must be satisfied that the child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm and that the harm or likelihood of harm is attributable to, the care given to the child, or likely to be given to the child, not being what it would be reasonable to expect a parent to give or the child being beyond parental control.

Interim Care Orders (Article 57): An Interim Care Order is put in place following an adjournment of proceedings for a Care Order or in any family proceedings in which a Court orders a Trust to investigate the circumstances of a child. An Interim Care Order can be in place for up to eight weeks initially and for a further four weeks upon renewal and subsequent occasions that Court deems an Interim Order necessary.

Supervision Order: This order requires the Trust to advise, assist and befriend the supervised child and can only be granted if the same threshold conditions that apply for Care Orders are met. This Order does not give the Trust parental responsibility. It does allow a social worker to issue directions about the child's upbringing including place of residence and involvement in certain programmes. Schedule 3 of the Children Order sets out the full range of matters that may be addressed in a Supervision Order.

Interim Supervision Orders (Article 57): An Interim Supervision can be put in place following an adjournment of proceedings for a Supervision Order or in any family proceedings in which a question arises with respect to the welfare of any child, it appears to the court that it may be appropriate for a supervision order to be made with respect to him, the court may direct the appropriate authority to undertake an investigation of the child's circumstances.

Appendix C Tables

The tables are available in excel format on the DoH website

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/articles/care-leavers>

- Table 1: Care leavers aged 16 – 18 (2012 – 2017)
- Table 2: Care leavers aged 16 – 18: Last placement type (2012 – 2017)
- Table 3: Care leavers aged 16 – 18: Length of time in care (2012 – 2017)
- Table 4: Care leavers aged 16 – 18: Reasons for leaving care (2012 – 2017)
- Table 5: Care leavers aged 16 – 18: Educational attainment (2012 – 2017)
- Table 6: Care leavers aged 16 – 18: Current activity (2012 – 2017)
- Table 7: Care leavers aged 16 – 18: Economic activity for care leavers whose activity was known (2012 – 2017)
- Table 8: Care leavers aged 16 – 18: Health & Social Care Trust (2016/17)
- Table 9: Care leavers aged 19 (2012 – 2017)
- Table 10: Care leavers aged 19: Length of latest period of care (2016/17)
- Table 11: Care leavers aged 19: Latest placement prior to leaving care (2016/17)
- Table 12: Care leavers aged 19: Legal status prior to leaving care (2016/17)
- Table 13: Care leavers aged 19: Contact rates (2016/17)
- Table 14: Care leavers aged 19: Current activity (2012 – 2017)
- Table 15: Care leavers aged 19: Education, training or employment (2012 – 2017)
- Table 16: Care leavers aged 19: Type of accommodation (2012 – 2017)
- Table 17: Care leavers aged 19: Type of accommodation by gender (2016/17)
- Table 18: Care leavers aged 19: Health and Social Care Trust (2016/17)

This statistical bulletin and other statistical bulletins published by
Community Information Branch are available to download from

[https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/dhssps-statistics-and-research-social-
services/social-care-statistics](https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/dhssps-statistics-and-research-social-services/social-care-statistics)