

Children looked after census 2024-25

Background

The Children looked after census captures information on those children who are looked after by their local authority.

From 6 April 2016, Part 3 of and Schedule 2 to the Children Act 1989 (“the 1989 Act”) no longer applies to local authorities in Wales. The rights and duties under those provisions have been incorporated into the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 (“the 2014 Act”), in the main, into Part 6 of and Schedule 1 to the 2014 Act. Please see the [Code of Practice](#) in relation to Part 6 (looked after and accommodated children) of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 for further details.

Data should be submitted to the Welsh Government annually and reflect a financial year worth of data. The year will detail the financial year 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

Guidance Notes for completion and submission

There are four Excel forms that make up the Children looked after census. These forms should be used to record individual data for children looked after during **2024-25**.

Overview of the collection

For children who were looked after during the year, the information relates to their placement and legal status.

Defining ‘looked after’ children for the purposes of these statistics

The collection adheres closely to the definition of looked after children provided in law. In a small number of instances where there is scope for confusion, guidance on how to interpret the term ‘looked after’ for statistical purposes is given. This is to achieve consistency in data so that there is comparability between local authorities’ figures.

A ‘child’ is anyone under 18 years of age or anyone social services assess to be under 18 at the beginning of care. Children cease to be looked after the day before their 18th birthday. The words ‘child’ and ‘children’ are used in this sense throughout this guidance. If social services later discover an individual is over 18, they must retain the record of care and detail the individual as a care leaver with care leaver outcomes recorded according to the relevant sections below.

The term ‘looked after’ is defined in Part 6, section 74 of the 2014 Act and it is intended to be understood in this sense throughout these notes.

Section 74 of the 2014 Act states that a reference to a child who is looked after by a local authority is a reference to a child who is in its care or provided with accommodation, for a continuous period of more than 24 hours, by the authority in the exercise of any functions which are social services functions, apart from functions under section 15, Part 4, or section 109, 114 or 115.

A child is looked after by a local authority if he or she has been provided with accommodation, for a continuous period of more than 24 hours, in the circumstances set out in sections 76 and 77 of the 2014 Act, or is placed in the care of a local authority by virtue of an order made under Part IV of the 1989 Act (Part IV refers here to care orders and interim care orders).

Children in short-term break agreements comprise a special group. Short term breaks may be made under Part 4, sections 37 or 38, or Part 6, section 76 of the 2014 Act; local authorities **must** be clear under which section they are arranging a short break. Short breaks under 24 hours in duration will usually be made under Part 4. Children who are provided with a short-term break as part of a package of care and support arranged under Part 4 of the 2014 Act will not become looked after children. Only children whose short breaks are provided under Part 6 may become “looked after”; in order to become looked after the accommodation must be provided for a continuous period of more than 24 hours.

Include the following on the collection:

It follows from the definition of a looked after child that the following groups of children will all be included on the return:

- Children who receive a pattern of short breaks for a continuous period of more than 24 hours as part of a Part 6 care and support plan, and who otherwise live at home.
- Children who are placed for adoption. This is a separate placement status and must be recorded as such. If a child is placed with their existing foster carer, this must be recorded as a new placement.
- Children who are placed with prospective adoptive parents under section 81(11) of the 2014 Act and regulation 25 of the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (Wales) Regulations 2015 (“the 2015 Regulations”).
- Children aged 16 or 17 who are in semi-independent accommodation or other transitional settings in preparation for leaving care. Their looked-after status and the date they cease to be looked after should be a matter of record in the care plan, and the date of ceasing to be looked after recorded on the return should reflect this.
- Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) aged under 18 for whom the local authority conclude, as part of a formal decision-making process, that in order to safeguard and promote the child’s welfare they should be looked after. These children are regarded as being “accommodated” by voluntary agreement under section 76 of the 2014 Act; they are normally placed in foster or residential care.

- Children in an emergency foster placement with a relative or friend under regulation 26 of the 2015 Regulations. This kind of placement can last a maximum of 16 weeks.
- Children under a (criminal law) supervision order with a residence requirement to live in local authority accommodation. This is not the same as a supervision order under the 1989 Act, which is not a looked after status.
- Since 3 December 2012, when the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (LASPOA) came into force children similarly remanded to youth detention accommodation (such children are treated as “looked after” in accordance with section 104 of LASPOA).

The following are not 'looked after'

It follows that the following groups of children will not be included on the return. Please note that for some of these children the legal status may only apply to children prior to 3 December 2012, when LASPOA came into force.

- Children who are receiving a service, or support, from social services under other legal provisions (such as Part 4 of the 2014 Act). This includes short breaks of less than 24 hours provided as part of a Part 4 care and support plan.
- Episodes of being looked after of less than 24 hours in total must not be recorded on the Children looked after census.
- Young people who have left care and are receiving support under sections 105 – 115 of the 2014 Act.
- Children subject to supervision orders under the 1989 Act.
- Children subject to residence orders under the 1989 Act.
- Children who have left care because of a special guardianship order.
- Children who have appeared in court and have been 'bailed to reside where the local authority directs', but who are not accommodated by the local authority itself.
- Children who are privately fostered.
- Children who are not looked after by the local authority but who are to be adopted. These applications are usually from step-parents or relatives.
- Children in a long stay hospital if the local authority is not accommodating them, even if they were previously looked after. If they return to foster care/children's home on discharge they will resume being looked after.
- Any person aged 18 or over, including those young people who remain living with former carers under a 'When I'm Ready' placement.

The following are not looked after and do not appear on the Children looked after census except when under a concurrent care order:

- Children detained under Sections 90 to 92 of the Powers of the Criminal Courts (Sentencing) Act 2000, even if they are placed in local authority accommodation.

Information to be recorded

The data items collected for children who are looked after during the course of the year fall into three readily identifiable categories. These are:

1. Personal details of the child, such as date of birth, gender, ethnic origin.
2. Data items which relate to individual episodes of care, which either start or end during 2024-25. It is not unusual for a child to have more than one episode during the course of the year. Episodes that ceased before the start of 2024-25 should not be recorded
3. Specific "one-off" data items which relate solely to specific events or "milestones" in the child's care-history, such as being adopted. These fields are only completed if and when the milestones are reached.

An 'episode' on the return:

For the purposes of entering data onto the return, the period of time during which a child is looked after by the local authority is broken down into "episodes" of care. Each episode represents a period of being looked after under the same legal status and in the same placement. A new episode is started when either the legal status or the child's placement changes. Episodes must be recorded in consecutive date order.

When to record a new episode:

A new episode should be started:

- Every time a child starts to be looked after.
- When there is a change of legal status code. The renewal of an ongoing legal status does not require a new episode.
- When there is a change of placement. There are certain circumstances, where the change of placement is a temporary placement, where a placement change should not be recorded on the Children looked after census; see notes on 'temporary placements' in the Placement Codes section.

Where a single open episode continues unchanged from year to year, a record must still be submitted every year for that child. The actual date the episode commenced should be recorded, but the date and reason the episode ceased should be left blank if that episode is still open on 31 March. The following year's record must start with the same episode details. Enter the actual date

the episode commenced. If this episode then closes, the date and reason episode ceased should be completed.

Short breaks

Short breaks are provided to children and young people with care and support needs, to provide them with opportunities to engage in activities outside the home, or to give their parents (or guardians) some “respite” from the normal duties of looking after the child, or both. They can be a one-off event, but more often they are a series of planned breaks, often in the same setting or with the same provider. An example would be a physically disabled child, who normally lives at home with its parents, but who is accommodated by a local council every weekend.

Short breaks for children may be made under either Part 4 (sections 37 or 38) or Part 6 (section 76) of the 2014 Act.

Disabled children whose short breaks are provided as part of a Part 4 care and support plan do not become looked after children, even if that break involves being away from home for more than 24 hours. Local authorities **must** be clear if a short break is provided under Part 4 or Part 6 of the 2014 Act. Further guidance on how short breaks are classified can be found in the Part 6 Code of Practice (paragraphs 290-294).

Children whose short breaks are provided under Part 6 of the 2014 Act are regarded as voluntarily accommodated under section 76 and become looked after. The local authority will need to prepare a Part 6 care and support plan for these children, but regulation 62 of the 2015 Regulations allows them to take a lighter touch to care and placement planning if these breaks are part of a planned series of short breaks in the same setting, and do not exceed 120 days of accommodation away from home in any twelve-month period.

Children provided with short breaks under Part 6 form a special group, and in order that they can be readily identified, a special legal status code (V1) is used. Strictly speaking these children are moving in and out of care. Under the terms of the 2014 Act and the 2015 Regulations, they are only actually being looked after for those days (and nights) when they are being accommodated and are not looked after when they are back home with their parents (or guardians).

Children who receive short breaks under Part 6 should not be confused with other children who start and cease to be looked after several times during the year for a variety of reasons. Children receiving short breaks exhibit a number of common characteristics, which are set out below:

- They normally live at home, and over the medium to long term, spend more time with their parents (or guardians), than being accommodated by the local authority.
- They have a Part 6 care and support plan which clearly sets out the times (or circumstances) when the child is to be accommodated and the placement (either a specific foster carer, or a named residential establishment). There must be series of breaks, i.e., at least two. A “one-off”

spell of respite for a child's parents/guardians is not sufficient for a child to be classified within this group.

- The legal status of these children is always accommodated under Part 6 section 76 of the 2014 Act. (A child under any other status or order should not be included in this return).
- There are strict limits on the duration of each break, and the total number of days of care that are allowed under these arrangements in any one year, as set out above.

If the circumstances of a child are such that he/she cannot meet all these conditions, they should not be treated as a V1 return, but as separate periods of being looked after under legal status V2.

All children looked after under a series of short breaks should be recorded in the same way.

Record the existence of a planned series of short breaks made under Part 6 using legal status code V1. This should only be done if the short breaks are with the same provider. Local authorities should also record the number of short breaks a child received.

This means that a child who is looked after every weekend under a Part 6 care and support plan will be recorded once using the legal status code V1 and recorded as having received 52 short breaks.

Completing returns

There are four forms that make up this dataset, these are:

- Child identity details: one record must be collected for every child.
- Episodes of care; one record for each period of being looked after under the same legal status and in the same placement must be collected for each child.
- Adoptions of looked after children; a record must be collected for every child who ceased to be looked after during the year on the granting of an adoption order.
- Care leavers: a record must be collected for every child who ceased to be looked after during the year and who were aged 16 years or over at the time of ceasing.

Submission for a previous year:

If, in error, a record for a child for a previous year was not submitted, separate forms must be submitted for each missing year in which the child was looked after.

Validation checks and rejected records:

The children looked after data form an important information resource and the Welsh Government attaches a high priority to improving and maintaining the accuracy of this data. The validation checks are designed to identify possible errors by checking records for internal consistency, as well as maintaining the integrity of each child's history over time by comparing each year's submission with that submitted in previous years.

Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016

These notes reflect regulations made under the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016 (“the 2016 Act”). These include the Regulated Services (Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2017 and the Regulated Services (Service Providers and Responsible Individuals) (Wales) Regulations 2017. These regulations apply to the service providers and designated responsible individuals of regulated care home services (including care homes for children), residential family centre services, secure accommodation services, and domiciliary support services. They apply to local authority, private and third sector providers of such services.

Data requirements

CLA - Child identity details

If a child remains looked after for more than one year, these details should not change significantly from year to year. Any change in local authority code, local authority child identifier, date of birth or gender of child (e.g., because a previous keying error when entering data has now been corrected) should be explained separately in an email after submitting the latest return.

Local authority code

512 Isle of Anglesey
514 Gwynedd
516 Conwy
518 Denbighshire
520 Flintshire
522 Wrexham
524 Powys
526 Ceredigion
528 Pembrokeshire
530 Carmarthenshire
532 Swansea
534 Neath Port Talbot
536 Bridgend
538 Vale of Glamorgan
540 Rhondda Cynon Taf
542 Merthyr Tydfil
544 Caerphilly
545 Blaenau Gwent
546 Torfaen
548 Monmouthshire
550 Newport
552 Cardiff

Local authority child identifier

Enter here a unique child ID (no longer than 10 characters). It must be retained from year to year. It can include alphabetic and numeric characters. Do not use other non-numeric or non-alphabetic characters. This item is the sole means of the Welsh Government computer identification of each child record. If you are planning to change child identifiers, e.g., as part of a new computer scheme, the Welsh Government must be advised at an early stage.

Gender

Gender is how the individual identifies themselves, not sex at birth. This is the last known gender as of 31 March, or when the child left care.

- 1 Male
- 2 Female
- 3 Other
- 4 Not disclosed or not known

Date of birth

The date of birth should be provided in the format DD/MM/YYYY.

Use 'leading zeroes' where necessary to ensure that all digits are completed.

Where the exact date of birth is not known, assume it was the 15th of the month. Do not use 1st day of the month as a dummy date of birth.

Unique Pupil Number (UPN)

A Unique Pupil Number (UPN) is automatically allocated to each child in maintained schools in England and Wales. It is an identifier only for use in an educational context during a child's school career and it is subject to Data Protection restrictions.

The UPN must be 13 characters in the format Annnnnnnnnnnn or AnnnnnnnnnnnA (for a temporary UPN) where A is a character and n is numeric. Temporary UPNs may only be issued as an interim measure until the permanent UPN is obtained.

Every attempt must be made by the local authority to track down a child's UPN. If a child has not been assigned a UPN by a maintained school, then they may have been assigned one by the Education Department within the local authority, which has the ability to assign a UPN for those in, for example, alternative provision. Only where it is impossible to discover the UPN should the item be left blank.

Note that maintained Nursery Schools also allocate UPNs, so children may have a UPN from the age of 2 or 3 years onwards.

Ethnicity

Ethnicity should be determined by first asking the child about their ethnic identity. If they are not yet old enough to respond, ask their primary carer.

WHT1 - Gypsy or Irish Traveller
WHT2 - Roma
WHT3 - Any other White background (including English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British)
MIX1 - White and Black Caribbean
MIX2 - White and Black African
MIX3 - White and Asian
MIX4 - Any other mixed background / multiple ethnic background
ASAB1 - Indian
ASAB2 - Pakistani
ASAB3 - Bangladeshi
ASAB4 - Chinese
ASAB5 - Any other Asian background
BBAC1 - Caribbean
BBAC2 - African
BBAC3 - Any other Black background
OOTH1 - Arab
OOTH2 - Any other ethnic group
UNKN1 - Ethnicity unknown

Disability

The following codes should be used:

Enter 0 for not a disabled child;
Enter 1 for a disabled child;
Enter 2 for unknown.

For the purposes of this data item, the definition of disabled contained in section 3(5) of the 2014 Act follows that of Section 6 of the Equality Act 2010, which states that:

“A person (P) has a disability if—

- (a) P has a physical or mental impairment, and
- (b) The impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on P's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.”

Child's home postcode

The postcode of the address where the child was living **when they first became looked after**; if the child becomes looked after while in hospital after being born, use the mother's home address. Enter the home postcode of the child in the following format e.g., CF10 4SD. The home postcode is not required if the last episode in the year for a child was an adoption placement (placement type codes A3, A4, A51, A52, A61, A62 and A8).

Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Child

Enter a 1 if the child is an Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Child, and a 0 if the child is not.

An asylum seeker is someone who has lodged an application for protection on the basis of the Refugee Convention or Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights, who is awaiting a decision on that application. An unaccompanied asylum-seeking child (UASC) is an unaccompanied minor, not someone who is the member of a family that was recognised as having asylum-seeking status.

Date ceased being an Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Child

Enter the date the child ceased being an Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Child (if applicable).

Code day, month, and year as DD/MM/YYYY.

CLA – Episodes of care

Local authority code

Codes and guidance can be found on page 7

Local authority child identifier

Guidance can be found on page 8

Date episode commenced

This item records the date that each episode began and is 10-character spaces in length. Where episodes are consecutive, the new episode must start on the same day that the previous episode finished. Code day, month, and year as DD/MM/YYYY

Example: 4 November 2024 should be entered as 04/11/2024

Use 'leading zeroes' where necessary to ensure that all digits are completed.

When recording an agreement to provide a series of short-term placements (legal status V1), enter in this field the date the first placement under the agreement began.

Where an episode began in a previous reporting year, but is still open on 31 March, do not complete 'Reason Episode Ceased' or 'Date Episode Ceased'. The following year's record must then start with the same episode details showing the actual date the episode commenced. (If the episode subsequently closes, both the 'Reason Episode Ceased' and the 'Date Episode Ceased' should be recorded.)

Episodes cannot start and end on the same day. If a child has two changes of legal status in one day only the second legal status is recorded.

Reason for new episode

This item records the reason why a new episode is being shown on the Children looked after census.

As an episode consists of the combination of placement and legal status, a change in either or both of these triggers a new episode, and the reason in this item reflects this.

S Started to be looked after

L Change of legal status only

P Change of placement only

B Change of both legal status and placement at same time

CT1 Care taken over from another Welsh local authority

CT2 Care taken over from another local authority outside Wales

Notes:

Use code S where a child is starting to be looked after for the first time, or had previously ceased to be looked after, and is now starting to be looked after again. Code S is also used where you are recording individual short breaks using legal status V1. For more information on short breaks see the section on Legal status codes.

Use code L where there is a change of legal status only, where the placement does not change. By 'legal status' we mean the legal status underlying the fact that the child is looked after.

Use code P where there is a change of placement only, where the legal status does not change.

There are a few particular circumstances when a change of placement can be considered as temporary and where a placement change should not be recorded on the Children looked after census record; these special cases are defined in the Placement Codes section.

Use code B where both legal status and placement change on the same day. The two changes do not need to be simultaneous or consequent one upon the other. The code simply reflects that there was a change in placement and a change in legal status, for whatever reason, on the same day.

Use code CT1 where the responsibility for care of the child has moved from another local authority in Wales. Use this code even if this move also involves a change in legal status or placement.

Use code CT2 where the responsibility for care of the child has moved from another local authority outside of Wales. Use this code even if this move also involves a change in legal status or placement.

Legal status

The legal status code on the return records the legal status underlying being 'looked after'. If a child is looked after because they are accommodated, the legal status goes some way to describe (in legal terms at least) why the child is being looked after.

There are other legal statuses arising from the 1989 Act, the 2014 Act, or the youth justice system, which have no bearing on whether a child is 'looked after' or not. These are not recorded on the Children looked after census, and no legal status codes are provided for them.

Changes in legal status: general principles:

Renewal of existing legal status: A renewal of an existing legal status does not generate a new episode. If the legal status code does not change, a new episode is not required, (unless there happens to be a change of placement at the same time).

Example:

If a child is already looked after under an interim care order, a renewal of the interim care order does not change the legal status; no new episode is required. However, if a child looked after under an interim care order becomes the subject of a full care order, then a new episode is required, to record the full care order.

More than one legal status at the same time: In certain circumstances a child being looked after can have more than one 'looked after' legal status. In general, this happens when a child who is already 'looked after' under a Children Act care order comes into contact with the youth justice system, and as a result is detained in local authority accommodation under a second legal status which would also make him or her 'looked after'. Two legal statuses cannot be shown as current on the return. In such cases the latest legal status should be recorded and the episode under the previous status should be closed.

Some youth justice legal statuses do not make a child 'looked after', even if the child is accommodated in a secure unit.

Legal status code list:

Care orders:

Interim care order C1

Full care order C2

Placement order:

Placement order granted E1

Voluntary accommodation:

Accommodated under agreed series of short-term breaks V1

Single period of accommodation under section 76 of the 2014 Act V2

Detained on child protection grounds in local authority accommodation:

Under police protection and in local authority accommodation L1

Emergency protection order L2

Under child assessment order and local authority accommodation L3

Youth justice legal statuses:

Remanded to local authority accommodation or to youth detention accommodation J1

Detained in LA accommodation under PACE J2

Wardship:

Wardship granted in High Court and child in LA accommodation W1

Legal Status Codes: Notes and Definitions

Care orders

C1: Interim care order

Children Act 1989, section 38 Lasts up to 8 weeks then has to be renewed. Renewal does not cause a new episode on the Children looked after census, as legal status has not changed.

C2: Care Order

Children Act 1989, section 31 (1) (a) Not time limited.

This code should also be used for:

Care order extended by appeal court CA 1989 s 40 (5)

Care order pending appeal CA 1989 s 40 (1) or (3)

Care order transferred from Scotland, Northern Ireland, Channel Islands or Isle of Man. CYPA 1969 sections 26(1) and 26(2)

Placement order

E1: Placement order

Adoption and Children Act 2002, section 21

A placement order is a court order which gives a local authority the legal authority to place a child for adoption with any prospective adopters who may be chosen by the authority. Only local authorities may apply for placement orders. The effect of a placement order is that parental responsibility for the child is shared – to the extent decided by the local authority – between the local authority and the child's parents. The order continues in force until it is revoked, an adoption order is made in respect of the child, the child marries or forms a civil partnership, or the child reaches 18. While the placement order is in force the child retains its looked after status. Any existing Children Act 1989 Section 8 order – child arrangement orders, a prohibited steps order, a specific issue order – or a supervision order cease to have effect and any current care order is suspended (and replaced by the placement order unless revoked). If a care order and placement order are granted on the same day, record only the placement order on the return.

Voluntary accommodation

V1: Accommodated under an agreed series of short-term breaks

Various terms are used to refer to this group of children, including 'short breaks', 'family link placements', 'shared care' and 'respite care'.

This is a specific group of children who:

Normally live at home and are not otherwise 'looked after' and are provided with breaks away from home for short periods, normally going to the same carer or the same residential establishment.

During the breaks, children are accommodated under Part 6 section 76 of the 2014 Act. The breaks must form part of a regular programme of support agreed between social services and the child and their parents/ guardians.

No single break can exceed four weeks continuous care (regulation 62 of the 2015 Regulations). A series of short breaks collectively lasting up to 120 days of accommodation away from home may take place under a single agreement in any twelve-month period.

Record the existence of a planned series of short breaks as a single on-going episode of care. This means that a child who is looked after every weekend under a Part 6 care and support plan will be recorded once using the legal status code V1 and recorded as having received 52 short breaks.

V2: Single instance of accommodation under section 76 of the 2014 Act.

Use for all instances of 'voluntary accommodation' apart from the special case covered by code V1.

Do not include breaks that are part of a planned series of short breaks under an ongoing arrangement.

Detained in LA accommodation on child protection grounds

L1: Child under police protection in LA accommodation

Children Act 1989 section 46 (1)

Used where the police have taken a child into protection in the course of their duties. This power is time-limited to 72 hours.

L2: Emergency protection order

Children Act 1989 sections 44 and 45

A court order granted on application of a local authority or the NSPCC, duration is initially limited to eight days, with a possible single extension of up to seven days (section 45(5)).

Where a child under an Emergency Protection Order (EPO) is in hospital, treat the child as looked after if the LA is the applicant or the order has been transferred to the LA.

L3: Under child assessment order and in LA accommodation

Children Act 1989 section 43

A court order which allows an LA to make an assessment of a child's state of health or welfare.

The child is only looked after if he/she is taken into LA accommodation for the purpose of carrying out the assessment.

Youth justice legal statuses

J1: Remanded to local authority accommodation or to youth detention accommodation

From 3 December 2012, when the relevant sections of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act ("LASPOA") came into effect, any child remanded by the youth court in criminal proceedings will be looked after, whether the child is remanded to local authority accommodation or to youth detention accommodation.

Prior to the commencement of the LASPOA children could be remanded under two separate pieces of legislation, both of which have been repealed by LASPOA. These were:

A: Remanded to the local authority which has the responsibility to accommodate CYPA 1969 s 23 (1) as inserted by CJA 1991 s 60 and CA 1989 s 21 (2);

B: Court ordered secure remand and held in authority accommodation Crime and Disorder Act 1998 s.97.

Group A refers to young persons who are remanded to the care of a local authority, where release on bail has not been granted. In these cases, the local authority arranges the accommodation, which can include the young person being placed with own parents.

Group B refers to young persons who were the subject of a Court Ordered Secure Remand (COSR). These children are looked after if they are placed in local authority accommodation, including secure accommodation.

Do not use this code for remands on bail where the LA accommodates; accommodation is under Section 76 of the 2014 Act, use code V2.

J2: Detained in local authority accommodation under PACE

Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, section 38(6); and section 77(2)(b) of the 2014 Act.

Use when a young person under 18 is detained in local authority accommodation under PACE, pending first court hearing. If the period in LA accommodation is less than 24 hours, do not record on the Children looked after census.

Do not confuse this legal status with a supervision order made under section 31 or 35 of the 1989 Act, which is not a 'looked after' status.

Reason the child became looked after

This code indicates the main reason why a child is receiving care and support services under Part 6 of the 2014 Act.

Use the 'need code' most relevant **at the time the current period of being looked after began**.

The same code should continue to be recorded on the Children looked after census so long as the period of being looked after continues, even if this lasts for a number of years.

If a child is transferred in from another local authority, record the reason the child continues to be looked after at the time the case transfer was accepted.

In instances where a child has been looked after for many years, we ask local authorities to choose an appropriate code to the circumstances surrounding the child's initial entry to care wherever this is possible.

Abuse or neglect N1:

Children in need **as a result of, or at risk of**, abuse or neglect; also includes children at risk because of domestic violence.

Disability or illness N2:

This return should be submitted on Objective Connect by 30 May 2025
Enquiries regarding the content of the form – Phone: 03000 251 274

E-mail: stats.pss@gov.wales

Children and their families whose main need for services arises **because** of the child's disability, illness, or intrinsic condition.

Parental disability or illness N3:

Children whose main need for services arises **because** the capacity of their parents (or carers) to care for them is impaired by the parent's (or carer's) **disability, physical or mental illness, or addictions**.

Family in acute stress N4:

Children whose needs arise from living in a family that is going through a **temporary crisis** that diminishes the parental capacity to adequately meet some of the children's needs.

Family dysfunction N5:

Children whose needs primarily arise from living in a family where the **parenting capacity is chronically inadequate**.

Socially unacceptable behaviour N6:

Children and families whose need for services primarily arise out of the **child's behaviour** impacting detrimentally on the community.

Absent parenting N8:

Children whose needs for services arise mainly from having **no parents available** to provide for them.

Adoption disruption N9:

Main reason for the commencement of a period of being looked after was the **disruption of an adoption**. This code should be chosen when it is relevant to the circumstances for the start of the current period of care. The code is only to be used where the council regards that the adoption has disrupted and should not be used where the adoptive parent or parents have died or are ill or disabled, when existing codes can be used. The code should not be used for agreed short term respite placements where the adoption continues.

Placement

For the purposes of this data return this category can be defined as indicating where the child is living. There can be instances where a child remains living at the same location, but the placement code changes, and a new episode is required.

Changes of placement on the data return:

These happen either when a child:

- moves to a new placement (even if this does not require using a different placement code), this is the most frequent kind of placement change; or

- if the child remains at the same location, but the placement code changes for any other reason (e.g., the child becomes 'placed for adoption' with previous foster parents). This is less common, but care should be taken to record this change correctly.

In both instances the fact that it is a change of placement is indicated by the use of 'Reason for New Episode' codes P or B.

Examples:

- A child in a foster placement moving from one foster carer to another will require a new episode, (although in many cases the placement code in the new episode will be the same).
- A child moving from a foster placement to a community home will require a new episode and a new placement code.
- A child in a foster placement who is placed for adoption with the same foster carer will require a new episode and a new placement code (although the child is living in the same place).

Placements which are not recorded

For statistical purposes, the following principles must be consistently followed.

The only instances where placements are not recorded are the following:

- Temporary periods in hospital (e.g., for treatment for an injury or temporary illness). These are not subject to a time limit. These are not the same as permanent, planned placements in a medical or nursing setting (such as dedicated units for children with special needs which are provided by an NHS Trust).
- Temporary absences of the child on holiday. 'Holiday' for this purpose means a situation where the child goes away temporarily, with or without his or her carers, for recreational purposes. It covers the same kinds of break in the same kinds of holiday setting that a non-looked after child might receive and includes activities such as school trips and scout/guide camps. There is no time limit for such holidays.
- Foster carer's holiday. A temporary, planned stay with a substitute carer because the child's regular foster carer is away from home on a holiday, or is having a break from caring for the child. The child may move to stay with a different foster carer or to a residential unit or may be cared for by a substitute foster carer coming into the home of the child's regular carer.
- But: Breaks of longer than 21 days should be recorded on the Children looked after census and included in the calculation of performance indicators. If more than two such breaks of between 8 and 21 days inclusive start during the year ending 31 March the third and subsequent breaks should be recorded.

Other stays away from the established placement of seven consecutive days or less to maintain contact between the child and a relative (such as 'trial periods' at home). This can include children accommodated under section 76 of the 2014 Act (see note below). To calculate when seven days

has elapsed for this purpose; take the first date away from the second. For example: if a child left a placement on 1st March and returned to the placement on 8th March, treat this period as seven days duration.

All the exemptions outlined above specifically refer to circumstances where there is a clear expectation that the child will be returning to the established placement. If there was no clear expectation that the child would be returning to the same placement, or if the child did not return (regardless of the intention), this would be shown as a placement change and should be reflected by starting a new episode on the Children looked after census.

There will be other cases of short placement changes (either planned or unplanned) where there is no clear expectation that the child is about to return to the established placement. These changes must be recorded, regardless of duration.

Planned trial periods at home when a child is accommodated under section 76 of the 2014 Act:

Unlike the situation when a child is under a care order (when the 2015 Regulations would govern trial periods of being placed at home), it could be said that when a child accommodated under section 76 is on a trial home break the 'period of care' is broken. In such circumstances, if the home break lasts seven days or less, is a planned, intentional break, and the child returns as planned to the original placement, the break should be ignored and the accommodation under section 76 treated as a single ongoing placement. Periods of eight days or more duration should be treated as periods out of care when the child is not looked after and have to be shown as breaks in the period of care on the Children looked after census.

Care of a child regularly shared between two settings:

This refers to situations where the guidance above on temporary placements does not apply. Care of a child may be shared between two or more settings on a regular basis, e.g., at a special school and at a foster home. Where the pattern of sharing is on a stable and planned basis, e.g., 3 nights in one setting and 4 nights in another, or term time in one setting and vacations in another, it should be recorded as a single continuous episode and coded according to the placement at which the child spends most time.

(This guidance does not apply to children under an agreed series of short-term breaks, who form a special group identified by use of legal status V1 - see notes on Legal Status).

When a foster carer moves house:

If the old home and new home are both inside your LA boundary, a placement change is not recorded.

If the old home and new home are both outside your LA boundary, a placement change is not recorded.

If the old home was inside your LA boundary, and the new home is outside, or vice versa a placement change is recorded, because the classification of the placement changes.

This return should be submitted on Objective Connect by 30 May 2025
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Placements with friends or relatives:

If a foster placement commences as an immediate and emergency placement with a friend or relative under regulation 26 of the 2015 Regulations and the carer goes on to become an approved foster carer looking after the same child, the placement should continue to be coded as F1 (or F4) and a new episode should not be recorded.

Joint funding arrangements:

If the accommodation has been arranged by the local authority, and there is social services department involvement in planning and expenditure on the placement, then for Children looked after census purposes the child will normally be regarded as 'looked after'.

Placement code list:

Family placements

Foster placements:

Carer lives inside LA Boundary

Placement with connected person (e.g., relative/friend) F1

Placement with other foster carers provided by own LA F2

Placement with other foster carers provided by a different LA F21

Placement with other foster carer, arranged through third sector Independent Foster Agency F31

Placement with other foster carer, arranged through private Independent Foster Agency F32

Parent and child foster placement F7

Carer lives outside LA Boundary

Placement with connected person (e.g., relative/friend) F4

Placement with other foster carers, provided by own LA F5

Placement with other foster carers provided by a different LA F51

Placement with other foster carer, arranged through third sector Independent Foster Agency F61

Placement with other foster carer, arranged through private Independent Foster Agency F62

Parent and child foster placement F8

Placed for adoption with consent:

Placed for adoption with consent (under section 19 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002) with current foster carer A3

Placed for adoption with consent (under section 19 of the 2002 Act) not with current foster carer A4

Placed for adoption with placement order:

Placed for adoption with placement order with consent (under section 21 3(a) of the 2002 Act) with current foster carer A51

Placed for adoption with placement order where consent is dispensed with (under section 21 3(b) of the 2002 Act) with current foster carer A52

Placed for adoption with placement order with consent (under section 21 3(a) of the 2002 Act) not with current foster carer A61

Placed for adoption with placement order where consent is dispensed with (under section 21 3(b) of the 2002 Act) not with current foster carer A62

Placed with prospective adoptive parents before a placement order is made:

Placed with prospective adoptive parents before a placement order is made (under section 81(11) of the 2014 Act and regulation 25 of the 2015 Regulations) A8

Placed with own parents:

Placed with own parents or other person with parental responsibility P1

Other placements in the community

Independent living, e.g., in flat or lodgings without onsite formal support staff, or in bedsit, B&B or with friends P2

Residential employment P3

Placements in residential settings

Looked after, and placed in secure unit:

Secure unit inside LA boundary H1

Secure unit outside LA boundary (within Wales) H21

Secure unit outside Wales H22

Placements in homes subject to the regulations covering a care home service for children.

These are the Regulated Services (Service Providers and Responsible Individuals) (Wales) Regulations 2017 where the care home service (within the meaning of Part 1 of the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016) is provided wholly or mainly to children. If a child is placed in a children's home in England, the relevant regulations are the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015.

Homes inside LA boundary H3

Homes outside LA boundary H4

Placements in hostels and supportive residential settings other than a care home service for children:

Residential accommodation not subject to the regulations covering a care home service for children H5

Placements in other residential settings:

NHS/Health Trust or other establishment providing medical or nursing care R2

Residential family centre or mother and baby unit R3

Youth Offender Institution or prison R5

Schools:

All residential schools, except where dual-registered as a school and a care home for children S1

Other placements not listed above:

Other placements Z1

Placement Codes: Notes and Definitions

F1: Placement with connected person (e.g., relative/friend): located within boundary of LA

Includes both immediate and emergency placements under regulation 26 of the 2015 Regulations, where the person is not an approved foster parent, and placement with an approved foster carer who is a relative or friend. Where a placement starts as a regulation 26 placement and the carer then becomes an approved foster carer, do not start a new episode but retain the same code if the child continues to be placed with that carer. 'Inside LA boundary' means that the carer lives within the geographical area of your LA.

F2: Foster placement with other carer, provided by own LA. Carer located within LA boundary

Use where placement is:

Not with a relative or friend, but with another approved foster carer;

Your LA has provided placement in-house;

Carer lives within geographical area of your LA.

F21: Foster placement with other carer, provided by a different LA. Carer located within LA boundary

Use where placement is:

Not with a relative or friend, but with another approved foster carer;

Another LA has provided placement in-house;

Carer lives within geographical area of your LA.

F31: Foster placement with other carer, arranged through third sector Independent Foster Agency. Carer located within LA boundary

Use where placement is:

Not with a relative or friend, but with another approved foster carer;

Your LA has arranged the placement through a third sector Independent Foster Agency. This includes placements arranged through other LAs;
Carer lives within geographical area of your LA.

F32: Foster placement with other carer, arranged through private Independent Foster Agency. Carer located within LA boundary

Use where placement is:

Not with a relative or friend, but with another approved foster carer;

Your LA has arranged the placement through a private Independent Foster Agency. This includes placements arranged through other LAs;

Carer lives within geographical area of your LA.

F7: Parent and child placement with a foster carer. Carer located within LA boundary

Use where:

Parent(s) and child are placed with a foster carer.

It is a specialist placement designed to offer support and guidance to improve parenting skills so that they are able to safely care for their child on their own.

Placement is inside the geographical area of your LA.

Include parent and baby placements regardless of whether they are provided in-house or independently.

F4: Placement with connected person (e.g., relative/friend): located outside LA boundary

Includes both immediate and emergency placements under regulation 26 of the 2015 Regulations, where the person is not an approved foster parent, and placement with an approved foster carer who is a relative or friend. Where a placement starts as a regulation 26 placement and the carer then becomes an approved foster carer, do not start a new episode but retain the same code if the child continues to be placed with that carer. 'Outside LA boundary' means that the carer lives outside the geographical area of your LA.

F5: Foster placement with other carer, provided by own LA. Carer located outside LA boundary

Use where placement is:

Not with a relative or friend, but with another approved foster carer;

Your LA has provided placement in-house;

Carer lives outside geographical area of your LA.

F51: Foster placement with other carer, provided by a different LA. Carer located outside LA boundary

Use where placement is:

Not with a relative or friend, but with another approved foster carer;

Another LA has provided placement in-house;

Carer lives outside geographical area of your LA.

F61: Foster placement with other carer, arranged through third sector Independent Foster Agency. Carer located outside LA boundary

Use where placement is:

Not with a relative or friend, but with another approved foster carer;

Your LA has arranged the placement through a third sector Independent Foster Agency. This includes placements arranged through other LAs;

Carer lives outside geographical area of your LA.

F62: Foster placement with other carer, arranged through private Independent Foster Agency. Carer located outside LA boundary

Use where placement is:

Not with a relative or friend, but with another approved foster carer;

Your LA has arranged the placement through a private Independent Foster Agency. This includes placements arranged through other LAs;

Carer lives outside geographical area of your LA.

F8: Parent and child placement with a foster carer. Carer located outside LA boundary

Use where:

Parent(s) and child are placed with a foster carer.

It is a specialist placement designed to offer support and guidance to improve parenting skills so that they are able to safely care for their child on their own.

Placement is outside the geographical area of your LA.

Include parent and baby placements regardless of whether they are provided in-house or independently.

A3, A4, A51, A52, A61 and A62: Placed for adoption

Adoption and Children Act 2002, section 42, and Adoption Agencies Regs 1983, Reg. 12

When an adoption agency (which for this purpose includes an LA) has formally decided that the prospective adopters are suitable, the child has to live with them for at least 10 weeks before an adoption order can be made. This placement code should be used for these circumstances. When a child is placed with its existing foster carers, this code should be used and a new episode is required, even though the child does not move.

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The date to be recorded on the Children looked after census return as the start of the placement for adoption is determined as follows:

- Where the adoptive parent is not the same as the existing foster carer use A4/A61/A62 as the placement code and take the date that the child moves to the placement and starts living with the prospective adopters on a permanent basis.
- Where a child is placed for adoption with the child's foster carer, with the LA's agreement, use A3/A51/A52 as the placement code take the date that the LA formally decides, in its role as an adoption agency, that the child will be placed for adoption with this prospective adoptive parent. (This is sometimes known as the "date of matching child and adopters" and is not necessarily the same as the date of the panel's recommendation).
- Where a child's existing foster carer applies to adopt the child without LA support, use A3/A51/A52 as the placement code and take the date the adoption application is lodged with the court.

Section 19 of Adoption and Children Act 2002 states:

(1) Where an adoption agency is satisfied that each parent or guardian of a child has consented to the child

(a) being placed for adoption with prospective adopters identified in the consent, or

(b) being placed for adoption with any prospective adopters who may be chosen by the agency, and has not withdrawn the consent, the agency is authorised to place the child for adoption accordingly.

Section 21 3 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 states the conditions for when a court may make a placement order

(3) The court may only make a placement order if, in the case of each parent or guardian of the child, the court is satisfied—

(a) that the parent or guardian has consented to the child being placed for adoption with any prospective adopters who may be chosen by the local authority and has not withdrawn the consent, or

(b) that the parent's or guardian's consent should be dispensed with.

A8: Placed with prospective adoptive parents before a placement order is made

Use for situation where a child is placed with prospective adoptive parents with whom the child has been matched before a placement order is made (under section 81(11) of the 2014 Act and regulation 25 of the 2015 Regulations).

P1: Placed with own parents or other person with parental responsibility

Use for any placement with a child's own parents, or other person with parental responsibility (as defined in the 1989 Act). This placement code is not limited to children under care orders.

However:

- Short, planned home breaks for children accommodated under section 76 of the 2014 Act should be coded in line with our instructions, and regarded for Children looked after census and performance indicator purposes as periods out of care if they last eight days or more.

P2: Independent living e.g., in a flat or lodgings without formal onsite support staff, or in a bedsit, B&B or with friends

Use for situation where the young person is living independently, and there are no formal onsite support staff living on the premises or in attendance during the day.

Placements in category P2 are therefore distinguished from those in H5 (independent living where formal support is available).

P3: Residential employment

Use for apprenticeships and employment training where there is a clear employment component, and accommodation is provided.

H1: Placed in secure accommodation, within LA boundary.

Use for all instances of placement in secure accommodation located inside your LA boundary, either where section 119 of the 2014 Act applies (or would apply after 72 hours), or where the child is subject to a court ordered secure remand. Record as separate placements even if the secure accommodation forms part of a child's home and the child is normally placed in that home. Do not use code H1 for:

- Detention and Training Orders under section 73 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, or for
- Children detained under Sections 90 to 92 of the Powers of the Criminal Courts Act 2000, even if they are placed in local authority accommodation.

These are not recorded on Children looked after census.

H21: Placed in secure accommodation, located outside LA boundary but within Wales.

Subject to the same definition as code H1 but use where the secure accommodation is located outside the boundary of your LA but within Wales.

H22: Placed in secure accommodation, located outside Wales

Subject to the same definition as code H1, but use where the secure accommodation is outside Wales, with application for secure accommodation outside Wales made under section 25 of the 1989 Act.

H3: Homes subject to the regulations covering a care home service for children inside LA boundary

Use for all a care home service for children' inside your LA boundary which fall within the Regulated Services (Service Providers and Responsible Individuals) (Wales) Regulations 2017.

A care home service for children registered under the [Regulation and Inspection of Social Care \(Wales\) Act 2016](#) is defined in Schedule 1 to that Act.

H4: Homes subject to the regulations covering a care home service for children - outside LA boundary

Use for all care home services for children registered under the 2016 Act outside your LA boundary defined as for code H3. Also include children's homes in England, and those which fall under the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015.

H5: Hostels and supportive residential settings other than a care home service for children not subject to the regulations covering care home services for children registered under the 2016 Act

Use for residential accommodation not subject to the regulations covering care home services for children registered under the 2016 Act, but where some supervisory or advice staff are employed (although they do not have to live on the premises). See [Regulations, statutory guidance and National Minimum Standards: Adult & Children services | Care Inspectorate Wales](#) for more information.

Includes hostels, foyers, YMCAs, and homes subject to regulations covering a care home service for adults only. Also includes lodgings, flats, and bedsits where supervisory staff or advice workers are specifically employed and available to provide advice and support to the residents. These support staff do not have to live on the premises but must be an integral part of a formal support service provided by the place of residence.

Placements in category H5 are therefore distinguished from those in P2 (independent living where no formal support structure is provided as part of the accommodation).

R2: NHS/health trust or other establishment providing medical/nursing care.

Use for hospitals of all kinds when the child is placed there as part of the care plan. (Temporary spells in hospital receiving treatment for injuries or illness does not fall within this category and are not normally recorded on the Children looked after census). Also use for other facilities provided by health trusts.

R3: Residential family centre or mother and baby unit

Use for placement in a residential family centre, as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 1 to the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016 or a placement in a residential facility for mothers and babies (except hospitals and other NHS facilities).

R5: Young Offender Institute or Prison

Use for looked after young people who are accommodated in one of these settings. These will generally be children (either on remand or serving a sentence) who have a concurrent care order.

S1: School

Paragraph 1 of Schedule 1 to the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016 defines which schools fall outside the definition of a regulated care home service under that Act.

Z1: Other placement, not listed above.

Use this code exceptionally, where the placement does not reasonably fit any of the other categories provided above. It does not mean 'information not known' or 'not available'. A list of any uses of this placement must be enclosed with the Children looked after census submission, describing the placement in each case.

Date episode ceased

This item records the date that each episode ended. This date will always fall in the current data year. Code day, month, and year DD/MM/YYYY.

For example: 4 November 2024 should be entered as 04/11/2024.

When completing this item:

- An episode cannot start and end on the same day;
- A continuation episode must start on the same day as the previous episode finished.

Periods in LA accommodation of less than 24 hours must not be recorded on this form.

If the episode does not end during the course of the year (and the child is being looked after on the night of the 31 March 2025), this field must be left blank.

When a child ceases to be looked after because of adoption (reason episode ceased code E11, E12), the date episode ceased is the date the court grants the adoption order.

When a child ceases to be looked after because he/she dies whilst being looked after (reason episode ceased code E2), the date episode ceased must be the same as the date of death as recorded on the death certificate.

Reason episode ceased

A single code, X1, is used to signify that an episode has ended and that a further episode has started. All other codes record the circumstances when a child ceases to be looked after.

If an episode does not end during the course of the year (and the child is being looked after on the night of the 31 March 2025), this field must be left blank.

New episode follows, remains looked after:

Episode ceases, and new episode begins on same day, for any reason X1

Care ends, no longer looked after:

Adopted - application unopposed E11

Adopted - consent dispensed with E12

Died E2

Care taken over by another LA in Wales E31

Care taken over by another LA outside of Wales E32

Returned home to live with parents, relatives, or other person with parental responsibility, supplemented by: E4

- Special guardianship order made to former foster carers E43
- Special guardianship order made to carers other than former foster carers E44

Moved into independent living arrangement and no longer looked after: supportive accommodation providing formalised advice/support arrangements (e.g., most hostels, YMCAs, foyers, and care leavers projects) E5

Moved into independent living arrangement and no longer looked after: accommodation providing no formalised advice/support arrangements (e.g., B&B, bedsit, own flat, living with friends) E6

Turned 18 years old and continuing to live with former foster parent(s) in a When I Am Ready arrangement E10

Transferred to care of adult social services E7

Period of being looked after ceased for any other reason E8

Sentenced to custody E9

Child's placement postcode

Enter the child's postcode for where they are placed, using the following format e.g., CF10 4SD.

The placement postcode is not required for adoption placements (placement type codes A3, A4, A51, A52, A61, A62, and A8).

Short breaks

For children who were looked after in a series of short-term breaks (legal status V1), record the number of short breaks the child received. Note that there must be a planned series of breaks, i.e. at least two in number.

Adoptions of Children Looked After

This return should be completed in respect of all children who ceased to be looked after during the year ending 31 March 2025, on the granting of an adoption order. All of these children will have been placed with their adoptive parents before adoption. During this period, they should be treated as being 'placed for adoption' and should only be recorded as ceasing to be looked after on the day the adoption was granted.

If a child has been adopted during the course of the year, it is important that all date items relating to the adoption are completed.

The dates required for children adopted from care refer to the various steps in the adoption process. In each case, the date required is the final decision date of your local authority, and not the date of the adoption panel's recommendations. There is a logical sequence to these decisions, which should be reflected in the dates on which they occur.

Local authority code

Codes and guidance can be found on page 7

Local authority child identifier

Guidance can be found on page 8

Gender

Codes and guidance can be found on page 8

Date of birth

Guidance can be found on page 8

Date started to be looked after in latest period of care

This item records the date that the latest episode of care began and is 10-character spaces in length. Where episodes are consecutive, the new episode must start on the same day that the previous episode finished. Code day, month, and year as DD/MM/YYYY.

Example: 4 November 2024 should be entered as 04/11/2024

Use 'leading zeroes' where necessary to ensure that all digits are completed.

Date of LA's decision that adoption is in the child's best interest

This is the date on which the local authority (in its capacity as the adoption agency) formally decides that adoption would be in the best interest of the child.

If the child is adopted from care *without* the support of the local authority, or in cases where the local authority is not involved as the adoption agency, enter the date the adoption was lodged with the court.

Date of matching child and adopters

This is the date on which the local authority decides (in its role as the adoption agency), that the child will in due course be placed for adoption with its prospective adoptive parent(s).

If the child is adopted from care *without* the support of the local authority, or in cases where the local authority is not involved as the adoption agency, enter the date the adoption was lodged with the court.

Date of placement for adoption

This is the date the child was placed for adoption and should match the date placed for adoption on the Episodes of care section.

Date of adoption

This is the date the child was adopted and ceased being 'looked after'. It should match the 'date episode ceased' on the Episodes of care section.

Adopted by former foster carers

Enter 1 if the child was adopted by former foster carer(s).

Enter 0 if child was not adopted by former foster carer(s).

Where a child is only placed with prospective adoptive parents (under section 81(11) of the 2014 Act and regulation 25 of the 2015 Regulations), treat as not adopted by former foster carer(s).

Number of adopters

Enter the number of adopters in the numerical format e.g., 1 or 2.

Gender of adopters

Enter M, F or O for single adopter, MM, FF, OO, MF, MO or FO if couple.

Where M is for male, F is for female and O is for other.

Legal status of adopters

Enter the legal status of adopters from following list:

Single adopter LS0

Married or civil partnership couple (different sex) LS11

Married or civil partnership couple (same sex) LS12

Unmarried couple (different sex) LS3

Same sex couple not married or in civil partnership LS4

Ethnicity of adopters 1

Enter the ethnicity of the adopter from the list below:

WHTE1 - Gypsy or Irish Traveller

WHTE2 - Roma

WHTE3 - Any other White background (including English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British)

MIXD1 - White and Black Caribbean
MIXD2 - White and Black African
MIXD3 - White and Asian
MIXD4 - Any other mixed background / multiple ethnic background
ASAB1 - Indian
ASAB2 - Pakistani
ASAB3 - Bangladeshi
ASAB4 - Chinese
ASAB5 - Any other Asian background
BBAC1 - Caribbean
BBAC2 - African
BBAC3 - Any other Black background
OOTH1 - Arab
OOTH2 - Any other ethnic group
UNKN - Unknown

If a couple adopting, please also complete Ethnicity of adopters 2.

Ethnicity of adopters 2

Enter the ethnicity of the adopter from the list below:

WTE1 - Gypsy or Irish Traveller
WTE2 - Roma
WTE3 - Any other White background (including English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British)
MIXD1 - White and Black Caribbean
MIXD2 - White and Black African
MIXD3 - White and Asian
MIXD4 - Any other mixed background / multiple ethnic background
ASAB1 - Indian
ASAB2 - Pakistani
ASAB3 - Bangladeshi
ASAB4 - Chinese
ASAB5 - Any other Asian background
BBAC1 - Caribbean
BBAC2 - African
BBAC3 - Any other Black background
OOTH1 - Arab
OOTH2 - Any other ethnic group
UNKN - Unknown

Complete only if a couple adopting. If only one adopter, only complete Ethnicity of adopters 1.

Care leavers

This return should be completed in respect of all children who ceased to be looked after during the year ending 31 March 2025 (including those looked after exclusively under a series of short breaks) and who were aged 16 years or over at the time of ceasing. If a child ceased to be looked after more than once during the year, then it is only the last occasion that should be included.

Local authority code

Codes and guidance can be found on page 7

Local authority child identifier

Guidance can be found on page 8

Gender

Codes and guidance can be found on page 8

Date of birth

Guidance can be found on page 8

Date started to be looked after in latest period of care

This item records the date that the latest episode of care began and is 10-character spaces in length. Where episodes are consecutive, the new episode must start on the same day that the previous episode finished. Code day, month, and year as DD/MM/YYYY.

Example: 4 November 2024 should be entered as 04/11/2024

Use 'leading zeroes' where necessary to ensure that all digits are completed.

Date ceased to be looked after

This item records the date that care ended, and the child ceased to be looked after. This date will always fall in the current data year. Code day, month, and year DD/MM/YYYY.

Reason care ceased

Record the most appropriate code from the Reason Episode Ceased data item in the Episodes of care section. Please use a capital letter for the alpha part of the code.

The codes are as follows:

Adopted - application unopposed E11

Adopted - consent dispensed with E12

Died E2

Care taken over by another LA in Wales E31

Care taken over by another LA outside of Wales E32

Returned home to live with parents, relatives, or other person with parental responsibility, supplemented by: E4

Special guardianship order made to former foster carers E43

Special guardianship order made to carers other than former foster carers E44

Moved into independent living arrangement and no longer looked after: supportive accommodation providing formalised advice/support arrangements (e.g. most hostels, YMCAs, foyers, and care leavers projects) E5

Moved into independent living arrangement and no longer looked after: accommodation providing no formalised advice/support arrangements (e.g., B&B, bedsit, own flat, living with friends) E6

Turned 18 years old and continuing to live with foster parent(s) in a When I Am Ready arrangement E10

Transferred to care of adult social services E7

Care ceased for any other reason E8

Sentenced to custody E9

Episode ceases and new episode begins on same or next day. This episode will only be used for a care leaver in the rare circumstance when a period of continuous care ends and is immediately followed by an agreed series of short-term placements (regulation 62 of the 2015 Regulations) X1

Personal Adviser

Record whether a category 2, 3, or 4 care leaver has been appointed a Personal Adviser.

Care leaver had been appointed a personal adviser 1

Care leaver had not been appointed a personal adviser 0

Care leaver not eligible for a personal adviser 9

This data item only applies to category 2, 3 or 4 care leavers and not to category 1 young persons or category 5 or 6 care leavers. Categories of young persons are defined in the section 104 of the 2014 Act and are further described in Code of Practice in relation to Part 6 of the 2014 Act.

Category 2, 3, or 4 care leavers are defined as:

- category 2 young person - someone who is 16 or 17, who is not being looked after by the local authority and who was a category 1 young person immediately before ceasing to be looked after;
- category 3 young person - someone who was a category 1 or a category 2 young person but who is now 18;
- category 4 young person - someone to whom the duties of a local authority had ceased under category 3 but who wishes to re-engage for the purposes of a programme of education or training up to age 24 or beyond, if the programme they are engaged in extends beyond their 25th birthday.

Pathway Plan

Record whether a category 2, 3 or 4 care leaver had a Pathway Plan.

Care leaver had a pathway plan 1

Care leaver did not have a pathway plan 0

Care leaver not eligible for a pathway plan 9

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A category 1 young person should have a pathway plan but is not yet a care leaver, so should not be counted here. A category 1 young person is someone who is aged 16 or 17, has been in care for a total of 13 weeks since their 14th birthday, and remains in the care of the local authority.

Accommodation

Record the care leaver's accommodation at date of ceasing to be looked after.

The first digit is alphabetical and represents the type of accommodation that the young person is living in.

With parents or relative B

Residential or nursing care such as an NHS establishment C

Semi-independent, transitional accommodation (e.g. supported hostel, trainer flats); self-contained accommodation with specialist personal assistance support (e.g. for young people with disabilities, pregnant women and single parents); and self-contained accommodation with floating support D

Supported lodgings (where supervisory staff or advice workers are available to provide formal advice or support) E

Ordinary lodgings without formal support. In general, this will include young people lodging with former foster carers K

Foyers and similar supported accommodation which combines the accommodation with opportunities for education, training or employment T

Independent living e.g., independent tenancy of flat, house or bedsit, including local authority or housing association tenancy, accommodation provided by a college or university. Includes flat sharing U

Emergency accommodation (e.g., night shelter, direct access, emergency hostel). V

Bed and breakfast W

In custody X

Other accommodation Y

The second digit is numerical and indicates whether you judge the accommodation 'suitable' or 'unsuitable'. Use '1' for 'suitable' and '2' for unsuitable.

Accommodation codes must be in this two-digit alpha numeric sequence, for example B1 meaning accommodation with parents or relatives (B) that is suitable (1).

Accommodation is to be regarded as suitable if it provides safe, secure and affordable provision for young people. It would generally include short-term accommodation designed to move young people on to stable long-term accommodation but would exclude emergency accommodation used in a crisis.

Accommodation that clearly exposes the person to risk of harm or social exclusion by reason of its location or other factors should be coded as 'unsuitable'.

Accommodation categories V and X should usually be considered 'unsuitable'. An explanation will need to be given if any of these accommodation types are deemed 'suitable'. Accommodation category W should always be considered 'unsuitable'.

Young people who report that they are 'staying with friends' will in general be in one of two situations:

- homeless, and temporarily staying with friends as an emergency measure. This should be coded as Y2. It should always be regarded as 'unsuitable'.
- taking part in an agreed flat-share with friends. Typically, there will be a tenancy agreement which names the young person, an agreed rent and agreed period of notice. This should generally be classified under code U, 'independent tenancy'. You should judge separately, according to individual circumstances, whether this is 'suitable' or 'unsuitable'.

Annex

Change Log 2024-25 Version 0.1

- Dates rolled forward from 2023-24 to 2024-25
- Inclusion of footnotes into main text to improve accessibility for users of screen readers.
- Update of Gender fields to “Other” from “Non-Binary”
- Changed Episodes of care section title from “LAC – Episodes of care” to “CLA – Episodes of care”.
- Inclusion of additional text in “Defining ‘looked after’ children for the purposes of these statistics.
- Update of R5: Young Offender Institute or Prison to read “children” rather than “boys”.
- Amendment of definition of “category 3” young person to remove “or older up to the age of 21” to align with legislation and regulations.
- Update of Short breaks to include text “Note that there must be a planned series of breaks, i.e., at least two in number”.
- General update of punctuation and grammar to improve clarity.