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Introduction

This official statistics release reports on the number of children's social care providers and places and provision of residential accommodation for children in boarding schools and further education colleges for which Ofsted had regulatory or inspection responsibility for, covering the period between 30 September and 31 December 2011.¹ Children's social care providers include, children's homes, secure children's homes, residential special schools, residential family centres, boarding schools, further education colleges, secure training centres, adoption support services, voluntary adoption agencies, local authority adoption agencies and independent and local authority fostering services.

These statistics are based on a snapshot as at 31 December 2011. Ofsted will publish these data quarterly and the next release will be on 26 April 2012.

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¹ The boarding schools data relate only to boarding schools which have their welfare inspections carried out by Ofsted. Ofsted is responsible for inspecting welfare provision in schools which are not part of the Independent Schools Association or inspected by the Independent School Inspectorate.

Key findings – movement in providers and places

National number of providers and places at 31 December 2011

- There were a total of 3,155 children's social care providers and providers of residential accommodation for children in boarding schools and further education colleges in England.² There has been a decrease of 12 providers since 30 September 2011 (3,167). Most of the decrease was in the number of children's homes.
- The former North West Government Office Region (GOR) had the largest number of providers at 636 and the South East had the next largest with 490. The North East had the smallest number of providers at 170. The number of providers in individual local authorities varied from none in City of London and two in Isles of Scilly and Thurrock to 130 in Kent.
- The number of social care places is related to the number of providers: the number of registered places is likely to fall if the number of providers falls, and vice versa. For most providers the number of places has not seen much change in the period from 30 September to 31 December 2011. The exception to this is in relation to residential special schools and boarding schools where, due to the annual updating of Ofsted data, the numbers change each year, mainly in the last quarter.³
- It is not possible to provide a total for the number of places in England, as data on places are not available for many of the provider types, including fostering services, adoption agencies and secure training centres. Of those providers for which the number of places is available, there were 32,659 places.

Children's Homes at 31 December 2011⁴

- Almost two thirds (65%) of all providers in England were children's homes (2,063 homes). There were 11 fewer homes (a 0.5% decrease) than at 30 September 2011.
- There were more children's homes in the former GORs in the North than in the other regions, with 799 homes in total. This compares with 659 in the Midlands regions and 605 in the Southern regions. The North West GOR had the largest number of children's homes with 509 while the North East GOR had the smallest with 106.
- The local authority with the largest number of children's homes located in its area was Lancashire with 101 homes. Kent and then Staffordshire had the next largest number of homes, with 76 and 74 homes respectively.

² 444 boarding schools have been removed from the total as at 30 September 2011. This is because most boarding schools, as of 1 September 2011, now have their welfare inspections carried out by the Independent Schools Inspectorate and are therefore not included in Ofsted data. The data which relate to 30 September 2011 in this release, do not match the 30 September 2011 data reported in the previous release of 27 October 2011 as for that release we were unable to exclude them.

³ Ofsted data on the number of places in residential special schools and boarding schools are collected and updated once a year around the start of the new academic year. It is this data collection which has accounted for the vast majority of the changes in places. See methodology bullet point three for more details.

⁴ The figures for children's homes include those residential special schools that care for children for more than 295 days in a year and are required to register as children's homes with Ofsted.

- Six local authorities did not have any children's homes, either run by them or run by private or voluntary organisations, located in their area. Four of the six authorities were in London. Of these six authorities, four had commissioned placements for looked after children in children's homes based in other local authorities. The other two authorities either did not commission any places at all or placed all their looked after children with fostering services.⁵
- Another 25 local authorities did not run any of the children's homes located in their area. 60% these authorities commissioned all their children's homes places in homes outside their area.
- There were 11,780 registered places in children's homes in England.
- There was a moderate amount of movement in the number of places in children's homes, despite there not being much change in the number of children's homes themselves at local authority level. The largest overall change was in the number of places in children's homes located in Cheshire East, where there was a decrease of 34 places. There was also a large decrease, 30, in Lancashire and an increase in the Wirral of 23 places.

Residential Special Schools at 31 December 2011⁶

- There were 197 residential special schools; 5 fewer than at 30 September 2011 (a 2.5% decrease).
- The largest number of residential special schools is in the South East GOR (71) and the smallest number in the London GOR (5). The local authority with the largest number is Surrey (16) while 86 local authorities do not have any located in their area.
- The largest proportion of change nationally in the number of places was in residential special schools where there was a 19% increase between 30 September and 31 December 2011 (an increase from 5355 places to 6395 places). The data on the number of places was collected, in autumn 2011, via an annual census. The census this year requested data regarding the total number of approved places for each provider. It is clear that in the past, some data have been collected, incorrectly, from some providers, only on the number of filled places. This shift from collecting a mixture of data on capacity and occupancy, to collecting data solely on capacity, is likely to have led to the increase in the numbers of places recorded.
- At the local authority level, the largest changes in residential special school places were increases in Surrey (104), Devon (90) and Hampshire (80), but with Devon decreasing by one provider and no increase in the number of associated providers in the other two.

Boarding Schools at 31 December 2011

- There was a decrease in the number of boarding schools (from 89 to 85) and a 5.5% decrease in the number of places (from 10,156 to 9,602) compared to 30 September 2011.

⁵ Local authority looked after children commissioned services data as at 31 March 2011. Further details can be found on the Ofsted website <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/commissioned-services-data-analysis-tool>.

⁶ The figures for residential special schools relate to provisions registered with Ofsted as residential special schools. Residential special schools that care for children for more than 295 days in a year are required to register as children's homes and are included within the children's homes figures.

- At the local authority level, the largest change in boarding school places were decreases in Cambridgeshire (396) and Hertfordshire (180) but with no decrease in the number of associated providers.

Independent Fostering Services at 31 December 2011

- The London GOR has the largest number of independent fostering services based within its area with 66 while the Yorkshire and the Humber GOR has the smallest number with 12. The local authority with the largest number is Kent (27) while 47 local authorities do not have any located in their area.

Methodology

1. The data in this publication are taken from Ofsted's Regulatory Support Application (RSA) database, which holds information about all registered social care providers, and the Inspection Tracking System (ITS) which hold information about secure training centres. Data relate to the position as at the end of each month, up to 31 December 2011.
2. Information about the number of places is collected at different intervals for different providers which will affect the changes seen in the number of places when looking at quarterly data.
3. The data collected on the number of places in boarding schools, residential special schools and further education colleges with residential accommodation is collected via an annual census. The data are used to update Ofsted systems around the start of each academic year. The census this year explicitly asked for data regarding the total number of approved places the provision had (i.e. capacity) and not about the number of filled places they had (i.e. occupancy). This is likely to have led to an increase in the numbers of places recorded.
4. The data used in this publication are taken from the same source but extracted using a different method. The new method involves using the Office for National Statistics' postcode database. This has meant some slight movement in providers between local authorities based purely on the different method used rather than on actual physical movement of the providers. The data which relate to 30 September 2011 in this release therefore do not match the 30 September 2011 data reported in the previous release of 27 October 2011. An annex has been included at the end of this key findings document which shows where the data are different.
5. In addition to the different method used in relation to postcodes, most of the boarding schools included in previous releases are no longer included in the data. On 1 September 2011 their welfare inspections became the responsibility of the Independent Schools Inspectorate rather than Ofsted. Therefore the data which relate to 30 September 2011 in this release do not match the 30 September 2011 data reported in the previous release of 27 October 2011 as for that release we were unable to exclude them from the data at that time.

6. For more information on how Ofsted regulates and inspects children's social care, please go to the Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Forms-and-guidance/Browse-all-by/Care-and-local-services/Children-s-social-care

Additional information

All the tables and charts shown in this release, along with additional analysis by month and at regional and local authority level, are available in Excel format on the Ofsted website in the same location as this document. Underlying data are not yet available in Excel and comma separated values (.csv) formats. The aim is to have them available for future publications.

Please see data tables listed below:

Table 1: Children's social care providers and places (national or Government Office Region or local authority)

[Please see Table 1 in the Excel workbook in the same zip file as this document]

Table 2: Children's social care providers and places (national and Government Office Region and local authority)

[Please see Table 2 in the Excel workbook in the same zip file as this document]

Table 3: National number of children's social care providers at the end of each quarter, by provision type

[See table 3 below]

Map 1: Number of children's homes, by former Government Office Region, at the end of the current quarter

[See map 1 below]

Map 2: Number of children's homes places, by former Government Office Region, at the end of the current quarter

[See map 2 below]

Table 3

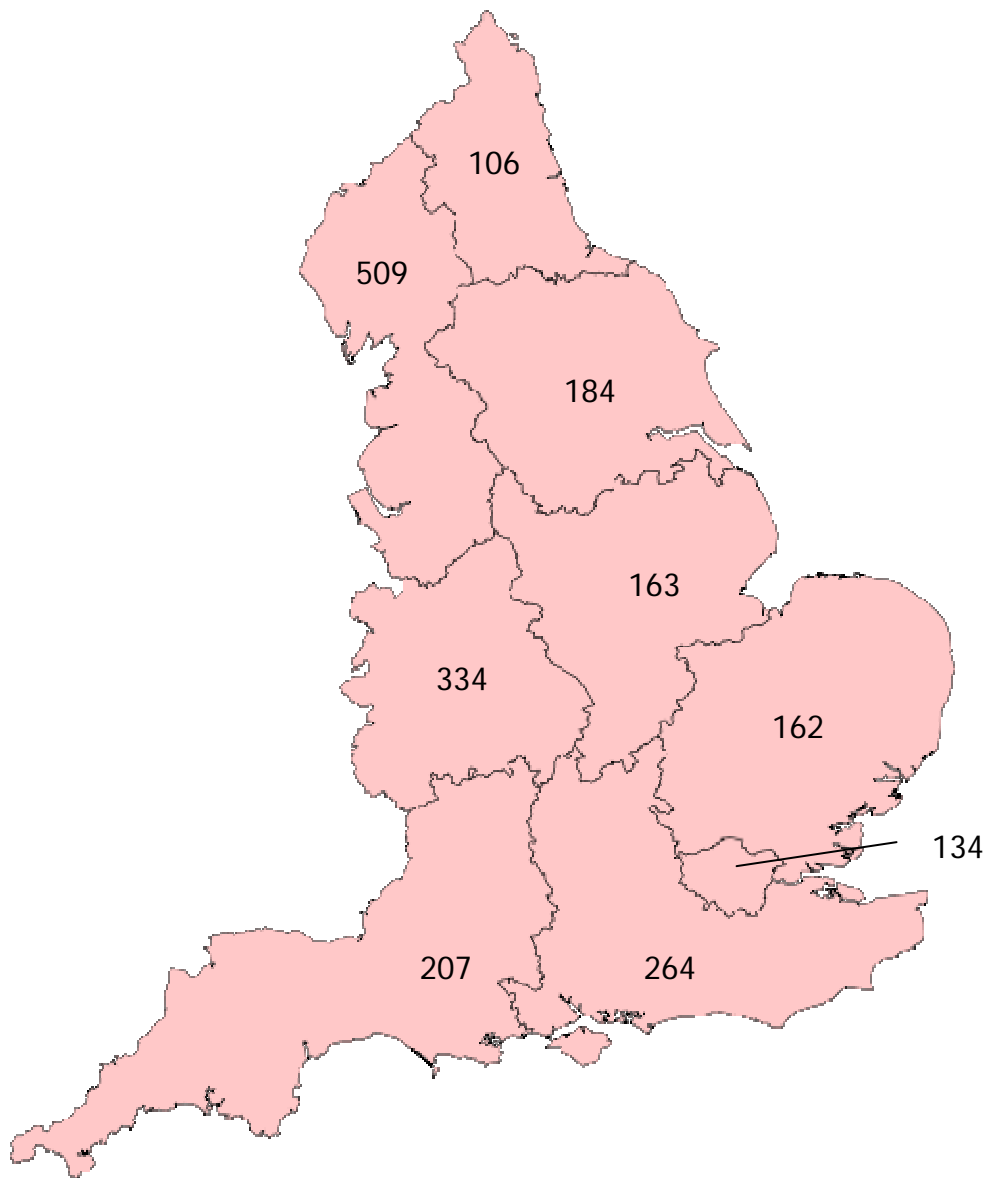
National number of children's social care providers and places at the end of each quarter, by provision type

Date	Data type	Children's Home	Secure Children's Home	Residential Special School	Residential Family Centre	Boarding School	Further Education College with Residential Accommodation	Secure Training Centre	Adoption Support Agency	Voluntary Adoption Agency	Local Authority Adoption Agency	Independent Fostering Service	Local Authority Fostering Service	All
30 June 2011	Providers	2,076	16	205	58	533	43	4	44	48	149	288	150	3,614
30 September 2011	Providers	2,074	16	202	61	89	43	4	43	48	150	288	149	3,167
31 December 2011	Providers	2,063	16	197	64	85	44	4	43	48	150	292	149	3,155
30 June 2011	Places	11,862	300	5,147	392	71,985	4,226							
30 September 2011	Places	11,844	281	5,355	417	10,156	4,290							
31 December 2011	Places	11,780	281	6,395	425	9,602	4,177							

The decrease in the overall number of children's social care providers and boarding schools between 30 June and 30 September 2011 is due to most boarding schools moving to having their welfare inspections carried out by the Independent Schools Inspectorate rather than Ofsted and therefore no longer being included in the data.

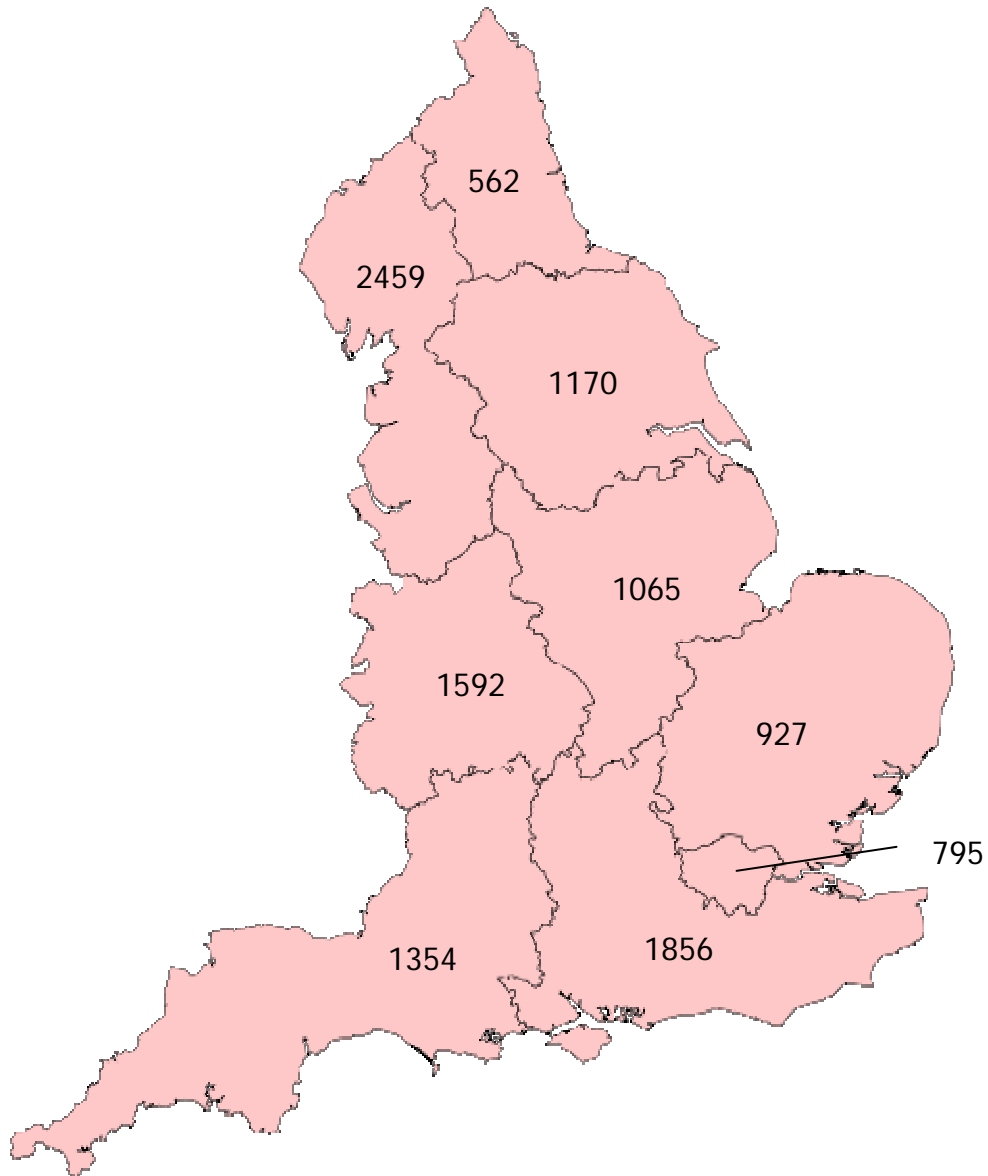
Map 1

Number of children's homes, by former Government Office Region, at the end of the current quarter



Map 2

Number of children's homes places, by former Government Office Region, at the end of the current quarter



Glossary

Adoption agencies

The focus of all adoption agencies is on placing children successfully into adoptive families who the agency recruits, assesses, prepares and supports, so they will meet the children's needs and enable them to develop and achieve throughout their lives. The services maintained by local authorities are described in section 3(1) of the Adoption and Children Act 2002. Local authorities place children with adoptive families recruited and approved by themselves, by other local authorities or by voluntary adoption agencies who must register with Ofsted. Adoption agencies may also provide birth records, counselling and intermediary services to adoptees and birth relatives.

Adoption support agencies

Adoption support agencies are defined by section 8 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 and provide services to anyone touched by adoption and are registered with Ofsted. This includes counselling and help for children and adults to gain information about their adoption or to trace birth relatives. Adoption support agencies can be either organisations or individuals, and may be contracted by a local authority to provide support services.

Boarding Schools

The vast majority of boarding schools are independent and belong to associations which are members of the Independent Schools Council. As both education and welfare in these schools are inspected by their own inspectorate, Ofsted does not inspect these schools and so they are not included in the data. The remainder are maintained boarding schools where both education and the welfare of boarders are the subject of Ofsted inspection and independent boarding schools which are members of the Bridge Schools Inspectorate or Schools Inspection Service and who receive their education inspections by these organisations and their welfare inspections by Ofsted.

Children's homes

A children's home is defined in section 1 of the Care Standards Act 2000, and is an establishment that provides care and accommodation wholly or mainly for children. Children's homes vary in size and nature. They fulfil a range of purposes designed to meet the different needs of those children and young people who are assessed as needing a residential care placement. Some homes, for example, provide short breaks which are needed to help support children and their family. Some residential special schools, 34 as at 30 June 2011, are registered as children's homes because boarders are resident for more than 295 days per year.

Fostering services

Local authority fostering services are defined by section 4 of the Care Standards Act 2000. Local authority fostering services and independent fostering agencies recruit, prepare, assess, train and support foster carers. Independent fostering agencies (IFAs) are private companies or charities, who are registered with Ofsted and provide placements to children and young people with foster carers approved by them. IFAs work closely with Local Authorities to deliver these placements.

Places

The term 'places' used in this report refers to the number of places that the social care provider is registered to provide. This number usually will not, therefore, be the same as the actual number of children who are receiving services from the provider. Ofsted holds data relating to places for:

children's homes; secure children's homes; residential special schools; residential family centres; boarding schools; and further education colleges. For some of these providers Ofsted does not hold data relating to places. Where this is the case, the number of places has been estimated. For all other provision types, and aggregated provision types, places data are not available.

Providers

Children's social care providers are those institutions or organisations or agencies that provide services to the relevant children and young people. The providers commented on within this report include children's homes, secure children's homes, residential special schools, residential family centres, boarding schools, residential further education colleges, secure training centres, adoption support agencies, voluntary adoption agencies, local authority adoption agencies, private fostering arrangements, independent fostering agencies and local authority fostering agencies.

Residential accommodation in further education colleges

The welfare provision of further education colleges that provide, or arrange, residential accommodation for one or more students under the age of 18 years.

Residential family centres

Residential family centres are defined in section 4(2) of the Care Standards Act 2000 as establishments at which: a) accommodation is provided for children and their parents; b) the parents' capacity to respond to the children's needs and to safeguard their welfare is monitored and assessed; and c) the parents are given such advice, guidance and counselling is considered necessary.

Residential special schools

Residential special schools are defined in section 59 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006. They vary in size and nature. The sector includes large non-maintained special schools which make provision for very specific needs and take children as full boarders from all over the country, to smaller more local providers catering for children with a range of different special needs and disabilities who may be resident at the school only during the week. Some residential special schools, 34 as at 30 June 2011, are registered as children's homes because boarders are resident for more than 295 days per year.

Secure children's homes

Secure children's homes, as defined in section 25 Children Act 1989, accommodate children and young people who are remanded or have been sentenced for committing a criminal offence. They also accommodate children and young people who are placed there by a court because their behaviour is deemed to present a significant and immediate threat to their safety or the safety of others, unless they are placed in a secure environment.

Secure training centres

Secure training centres are defined in section 43(1) (d) of the Prison Act 1952. Ofsted inspects both the care and educational provision for children in four secure training centres. They accommodate young people between the ages of 12 and 17 who have been remanded or sentenced by the courts. The centres are under contract to the Youth Justice Board, which monitors their compliance with requirements. Ofsted does not regulate secure training centres but

has an agreement with the Youth Justice Board to inspect care twice a year and education once a year.

Annex

The data used in this publication are taken from the same source, but extracted using a different method. The new method involves using the Office for National Statistics' postcode database. This has meant some slight movement in providers between local authorities based purely on the different method used rather than on actual physical movement of the providers. The table below details where providers have moved between authorities based purely on the different method used to extract the data. The providers below account for the changes between the 30 September 2011 data published in the previous release on 27 October 2011.⁷

Originally identified local authority	Provision type	Number of places	Newly identified local authority
Essex	Independent fostering service	Not applicable	Barking & Dagenham
City of London	Local authority adoption agency	Not applicable	Islington
Derbyshire	Children's home	6	Staffordshire
Staffordshire	Children's home	3	Derbyshire
Wolverhampton	Children's home	6	Staffordshire
Hampshire	Children's home	3	West Sussex
West Sussex	Children's home	7	Surrey
Reading	Children's home	4	West Berkshire
Peterborough	Children's home	4	Lincolnshire
East Sussex*	Children's home	4	Essex
Lancashire	Residential family centre	7	Wigan
Salford	Residential special school	11	Manchester

* The original placement of this children's home in East Sussex was an error.

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⁷ In addition 444 boarding schools have been removed from the total as at 30 September 2011. This is because most boarding schools, as of 1 September 2011, now have their welfare inspections carried out by the Independent Schools Inspectorate and are therefore not included in Ofsted data. The data which relate to boarding school providers and places at 30 September 2011 in this release also do not match the 30 September 2011 data reported in the previous release of 27 October 2011 as for that release we were unable to exclude them.