

# Children Looked After and Care Experienced Young People: Who are they and what are their needs and how best to support them

Swindon Safeguarding  
Partnership



# Aims and Objectives

- To understand how children and young people become children looked after and care experience young people
- To have a basic understanding of the legal framework including consent for example, different court orders that apply, parental responsibility
- To have a greater understanding of the health needs of children looked after and care experienced young people including mental health
- To understand how best to support children looked after
- To understand the stigma children looked after and care experience young people face and how to address this





# Word Cloud





## Quiz

- Quick quiz to find out what you already know about children looked after



**1. What do the following acronyms stand for?**

LAC                      CLA                      CIC

**2. How many children were England were looked after in March 2023?**

68,450                      83,840                      75,420

**3. How many children were looked after by Swindon Local Authority March 2024?**

202                      468                      320

**4. What do you think is the main reason for children to become looked after?**

**5. What is the gender spilt for looked after children nationally?**

57% male / 43% female

67% male / 33 % female

21% male / 79% female



## 6. Which age group has the most children in care March 2023?

Under 1 year      1 to 4 years      5 to 9 years      10 to 15 years      16  
years and over

## 7. What % of looked after children met expected standards at key stage 2 across all subjects nationally?

37%      20.2%      42.3%

## 8. How frequently are looked after children likely to be excluded from school compared with their peers?

Twice as likely      Four times as likely      No different from their peers



**9. Name 3 different kinds of homes a child looked after can be placed in?**

**10. What percentage of homeless people in England have been in care?**

10%

39%

26%



## What do we mean by Children Looked After?

**Child Looked After (CLA) means the same as Looked after Children (LAC) and Children in Care (CIC)**

**Being “in care” means that the Local Authority have a legal responsibility to look after them.**

**Children Looked After have specific legal status granted by The Children Act 1989.**



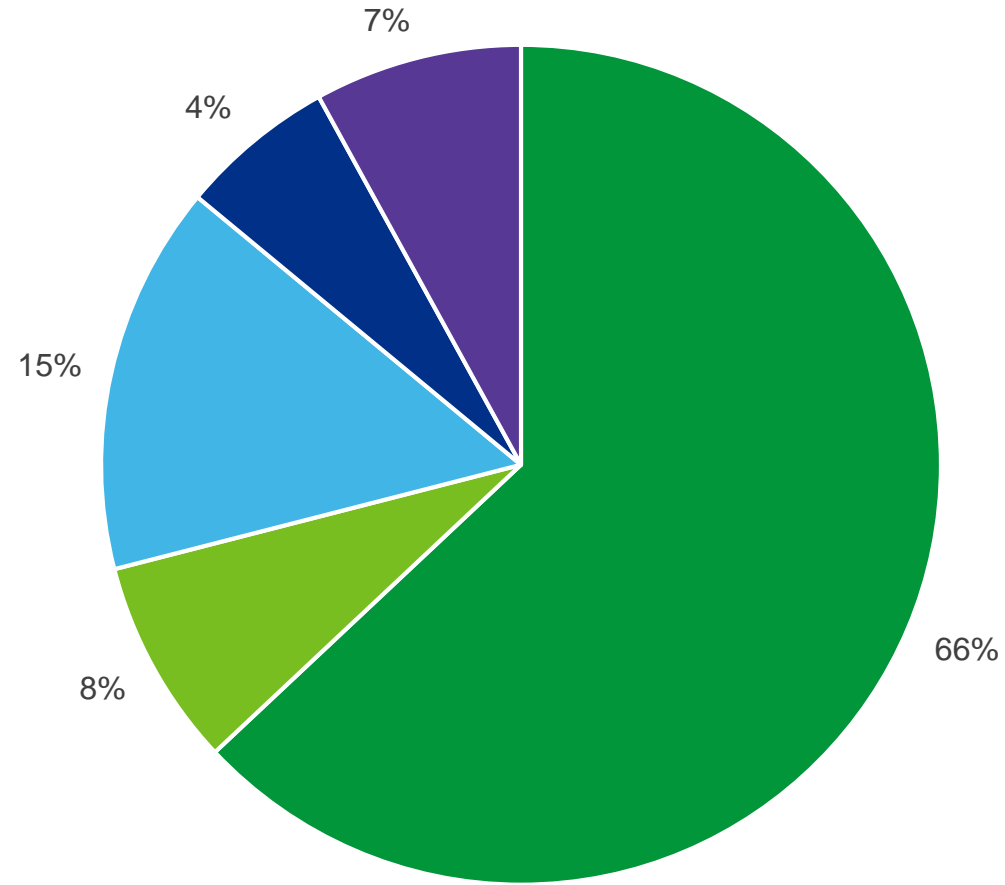
## Numbers

83,840 children and young people in care in England in 2023

320 children were in the care of Swindon children services in March 2024

In addition there are approx. 100 CLA from other local authorities placed in Swindon by other LAs

## Reasons for Coming into Care



■ Abuse or neglect

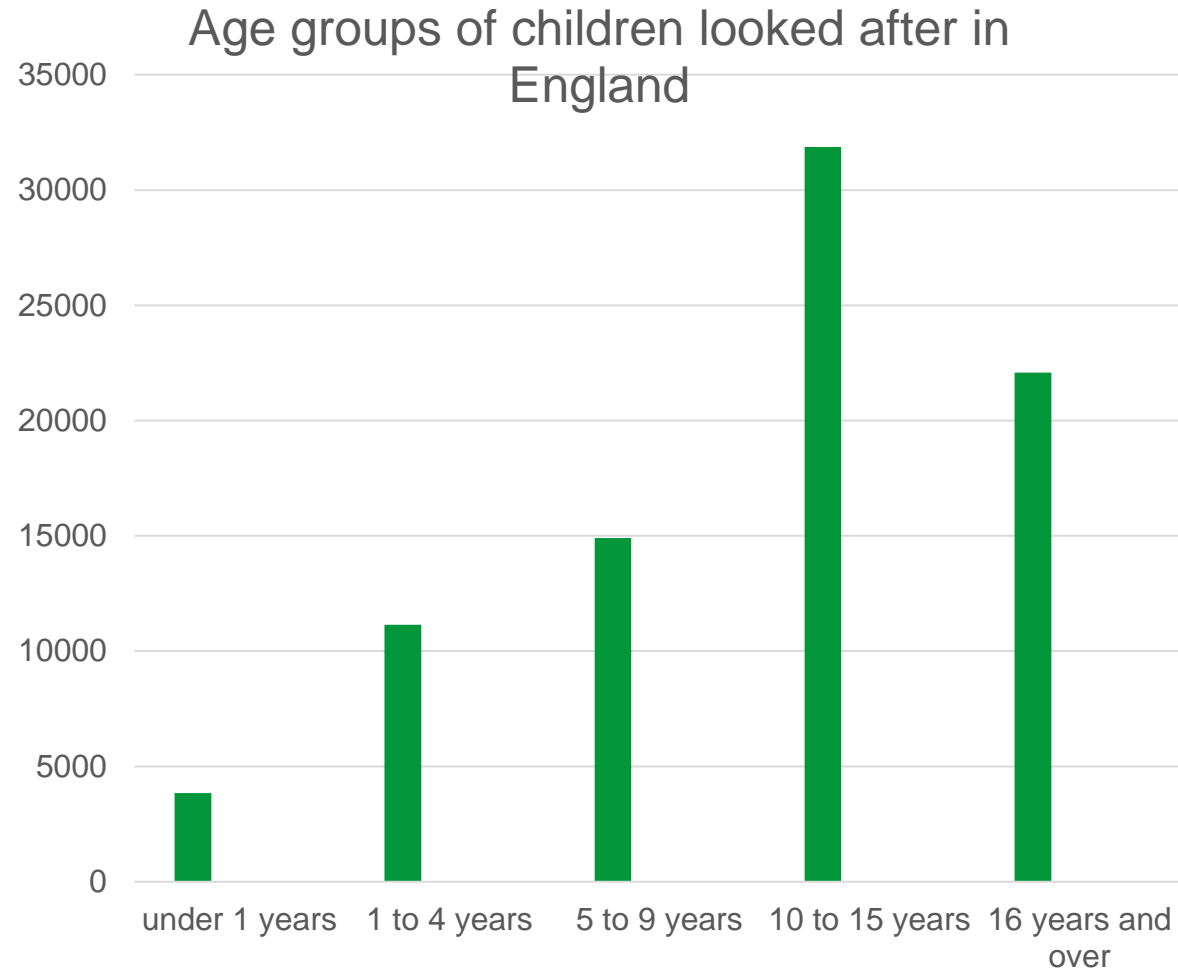
■ Family in acute stress

■ Family dysfunction

■ Absent parenting

■ Other

## Age groups and gender split and ethnicity



- Males account for 57% of children, females account for 43%. Males are slightly over-represented in the CLA population (compared to 51% in the overall child population)
- Children of White ethnicity account for 71% of CLA, 10% were Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups, 7% Black, African, Caribbean or Black British, 5% were Asian or Asian British, 5% other ethnicities, and ethnicity was not known or not yet recorded for 1%. Children of mixed ethnic group are over-represented and children from Asian ethnic group are unrepresented.

## Education

- Educational attainment
- 31% of children looked after reached the expected Key stage 2 standards compared with 59% of the general school population
- Exclusions
- 9.8% of children looked after were suspended in the year compared with 2.28% of all pupils



# Placements

foster placements either local authority or independent agencies

Residential placement (children's homes)

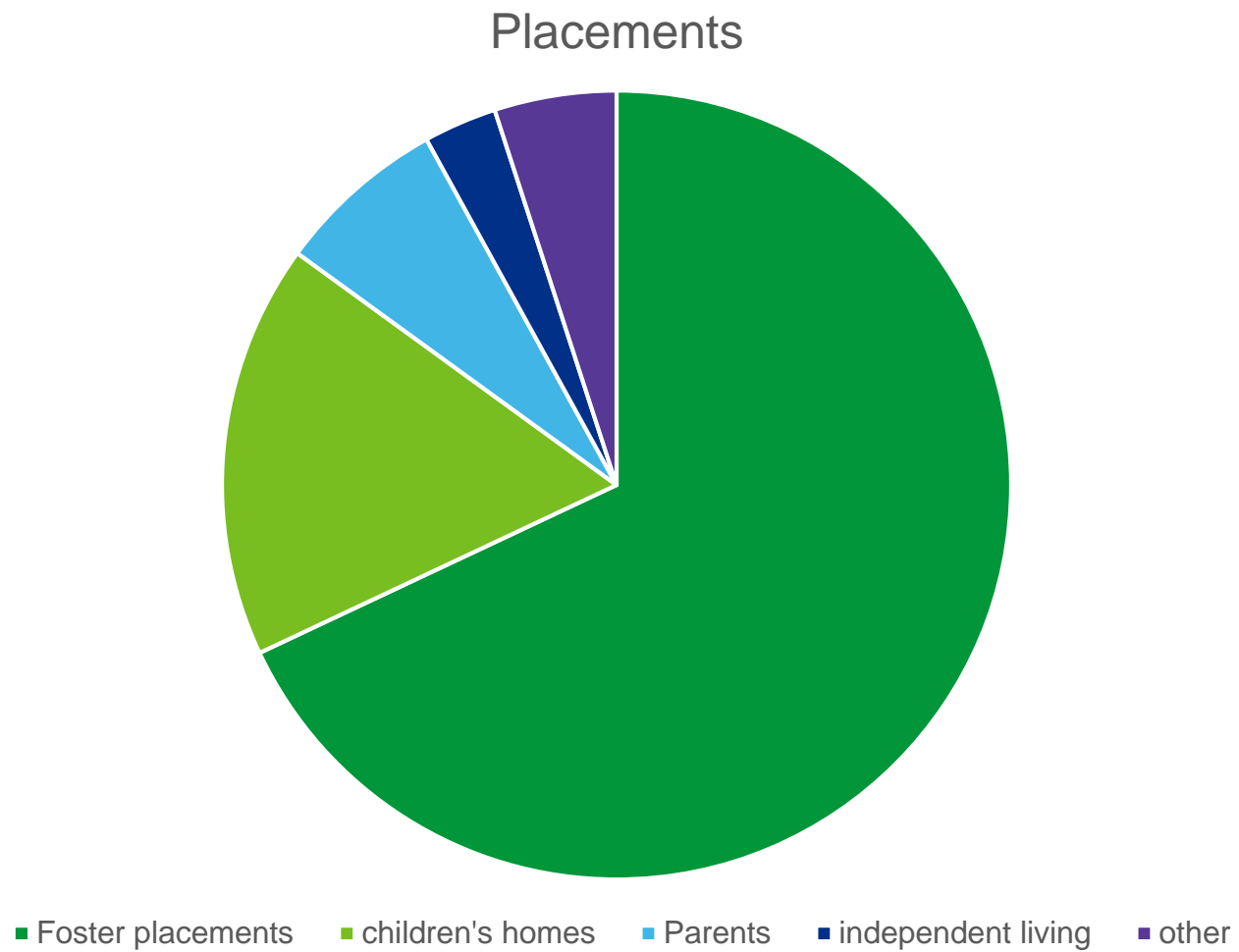
Pre-adoption placements

Connected persons (family or friends)

Independent or semi-independent living (16-18 year olds)



## Children Looked After by placement type 2023



## Later life risks

- 39% of the homeless population have been in care at some time in their childhood
- Adults who have been in care disproportionately make up those in prison and those using mental health services

# Routes into Care and Legal status

Voluntary  
Accommodated  
(Section 20)

Orders

Remanded

Separated  
Minors



# Relevant orders

Police Protection Order (up to 72 hours)

Emergency Protection Order (up to 8d)

Interim Care Order

Care Order

Supervision Order

Placement Order

Adoption Order

Special Guardianship Order

Private Fostering

# Consent and Parental Responsibility

Birth Parents continue to have parental responsibility, if there is a Court Order this is shared with the local authority.

There are two exceptions:

Special Guardianship Orders – the special guardian has PR in most circumstances and limited PR is retained by the birth parents

Adoption Orders – PR is removed from the birth parents and given to the adopter/s

Children looked after can give consent as any other child (Fraser Competencies)

# Private Fostering

- When an adult who is not a grandparent, aunt or uncle or sibling over the age of 18 looks after a child for more than 28 days.
- Any professional has a duty to inform the local authority if they become aware of a private fostering arrangement. The link to the Swindon LA website page for private fostering is in the resource section.

# Care Leavers/Care Experienced Young People

- When a CLA reach the age of 16, they begin preparing to leave the care system as young adults. As they transition YP are provided with a Personal Advisor (PA) to help support them from childhood to adulthood until they are 25 years old.
- During this crucial period of transition from 'care' to independence, services aim to prevent or reduce the long-term negative impact of a traumatic transition, providing support with:
  - finding a suitable place to live
  - securing and sustaining constructive education, training or employment
  - establishing and maintaining supportive relationships including health
- **Without support, Care Experienced individuals are at increased risk of homelessness, mental health problems, substance misuse, becoming young parents and entering the criminal justice system.**

# Language and Stigma

As already mentioned, language is important. Children looked after and care experienced young people suffer stigma by virtue of being in care.

Please watch this short video

[Care Leavers speak out \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)



# Break Out rooms

In the breakout rooms please discuss this question

**How can I and my organisation reduce stigma for children looked after and care experienced young people**



# Feed back



# Impact on children and young people

Think about what it must be like for a child to come into care

Someone else making decision about where and who you live with

Moving away from family, friends, pets

Maybe moving to a part of the town or country you don't know

Moving into someone else's home with different rules, routines and food

Maybe moving school

Not understanding what is happening and when you will see family and friends.





# How children might react

Withdrawn

Angry

Dysregulated

Self – harm

Guilty

Going missing

Lonely



# Care experience young people

- Most 16-18 year olds continue to live at home and many post 18 year olds live at home.
- If young people go to University, they have a home to come back to in the holidays
- Most care experience young people go into independent or semi-independent living at 16-18.
- Some may stay with foster carers – staying put
- Some may return to birth families



# Support available to care experience young people



Bath and North East Somerset,  
Swindon and Wiltshire  
Integrated Care Board

- Personal advisors
- Help with housing – they are responsible for the tenancy agreement
- Support with education, training and employment
- Financial support – this varies from council to council
- Care Leavers Covenant



# Attachment

Attachment is the emotional bond that forms between a parent or carer from birth or pre-birth and has a huge impact on development. It gives the template for future relationships.

When early attachments are negative it can lead to difficulties with relationships and mental wellbeing.



# Adverse Childhood Experiences ACES

ACEs research shows the correlation between early adversity and poor outcomes later in life.

- Examples of ACEs:
- Physical abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Living with someone who abused drugs
- Living with someone who abused alcohol
- Exposure to domestic violence
- Living with someone who has gone to prison
- Living with someone with serious mental illness
- Losing a parent through divorce, death or abandonment



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# Trauma

Experiencing or witnessing traumatic events in childhood can have particularly devastating consequences, and is associated with adaptations in brain structure and function and impact a child or young person's cognitive, emotional and social development . We know that childhood trauma is associated with increased risk of later mental health problems, difficulties in personal and social relationships, as well as increased risk of new stressful experiences, including repeated abuse.



# And Finally

I recently received an email which reminded me why working with children looked after and care experienced young people does make a difference.

A young person contacted one of the professionals she had worked with when she was in care. She has specifically asked that her personal thanks were passed on to all the professional involved in supporting her.

When she was in care, she had significant self-harm and spent some time in hospital. A multi-agency approach helped to support her out of hospital and into the care of someone who could support her long term. She said at the time she wanted to work in health care.

She's has now got her first job, in healthcare as she wanted and is now in a really great place and feeling positive and excited about her future.





# Resources

- Anna Freud <https://www.annafreud.org>
- UK Trauma Council <https://uktraumacouncil.org>
- Care Leavers Covenant <https://mycovenant.org.uk/>
- Refugee Council <https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk>
- Swindon fostering service [Types of fostering | Swindon Borough Council](#)
- Private fostering Swindon – all Council websites will have a page [https://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20115/foster\\_with\\_swindon/780/private\\_fostering](https://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20115/foster_with_swindon/780/private_fostering)



# Resources 2

- SSP Information on Legislative Framework and Definitions – see section resources for professionals [SSP Safeguarding Theme Think Family August 2024 - Swindon Safeguarding Partnership](#)
- SSP Practice Brief [Trauma-informed practice learning from reviews - Practice brief - Swindon Safeguarding Partnership](#)
- SSP Webpage [Neglect - Swindon Safeguarding Partnership](#)
- [Safeguarding theme June 2024 - Child neglect - Swindon Safeguarding Partnership](#)

