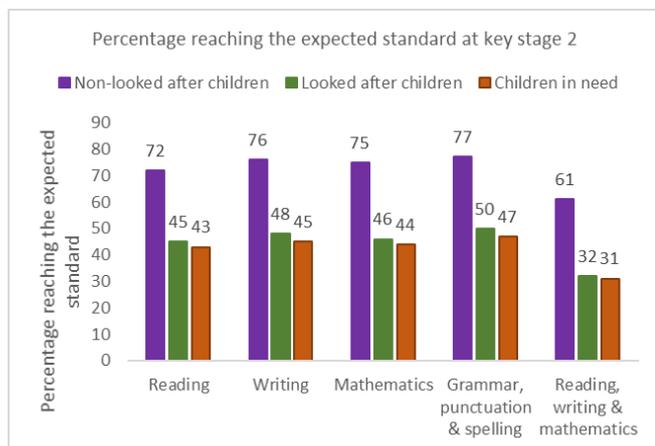




SFR 20/2018, 28 March 2018

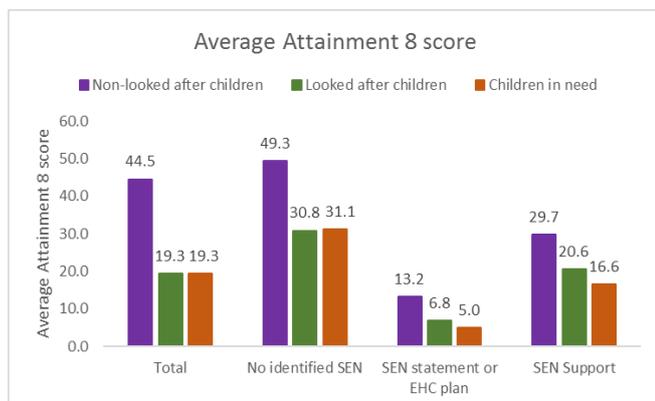
## Looked after children achieve slightly better than children in need at key stage 2



Looked after children perform slightly better than children in need<sup>1</sup> at key stage 2. However, attainment for both looked after children and children in need is much lower than for non-looked after children.

Looked after children and children in need perform better in grammar, punctuation and spelling than in other subjects and least well in reading. This pattern is similar to non-looked after children (excluding the combined reading, writing and mathematics measure).

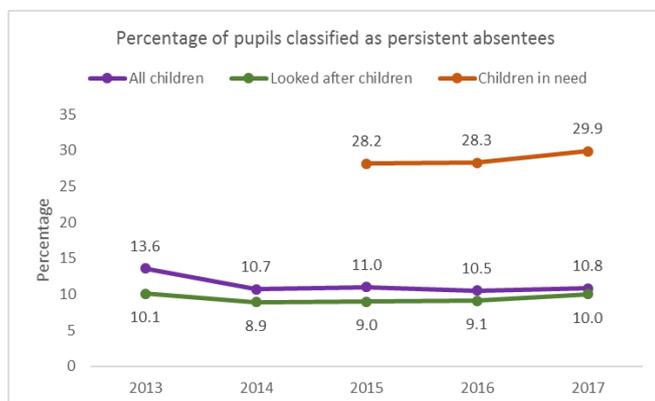
## Looked after children attainment at key stage 4 varies across SEN groups



The average Attainment 8 score for looked after children is much less than for non-looked after children, however, the difference is reduced when the proportion of children in each cohort with a special educational need (SEN) is considered.

There is a similar pattern for children in need when compared to non-looked after children.

## Looked after children are less likely to be classified as persistent absentees



The percentage of looked after children classified as persistent absentees has remained steady over recent years from 10.1% in 2013 to 10.0% in 2017.

Looked after children are less likely to be classified as persistent absentees<sup>2</sup> than all children and much less likely than children in need.

<sup>1</sup> Figures for children in need exclude looked after children.

<sup>2</sup> Children in need persistent absentee figures have only been produced on a comparable basis for the last three years.

# Contents

1.	Introduction.....	4
	What is a looked after child?.....	4
	Definitions for this publication.....	4
	Changes to this publication.....	4
2.	Attainment at key stage 1 (Table 1 & KS1 UD) .....	5
3.	Attainment and progress at key stage 2 (Table 2a, 2b & KS2 UD).....	7
	Attainment at key stage 2 .....	7
	Progress at key stage 2.....	9
4.	Attainment and progress at key stage 4 (Table 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d, 3e & KS4 UD) .....	11
	Attainment at key stage 4 .....	12
	Progress at key stage 4.....	13
5.	Special educational needs (Table 4a, 4b & SEN UD) .....	16
6.	Absence (Table 5 & Absence UD) .....	18
7.	Permanent and fixed period exclusions (Tables 6 & Exclusion UD) .....	20
8.	Attainment and progress of previously looked after children (Table A1, A2, B1, B2, B3) .....	22
	Attainment and progress at key stage 2 .....	22
	Attainment and progress at key stage 4 .....	23
9.	Accompanying tables.....	25
10.	Further information is available.....	26
11.	National Statistics .....	27
12.	Technical information.....	27
13.	Get in touch .....	28
	Media enquiries .....	28
	Other enquiries/feedback.....	28

## About this release

This statistical first release (SFR) provides national and local authority (LA) level information on the outcomes for children who have been looked after continuously for at least 12 months at 31 March 2017, by local authorities in England. LA level data is published for the local authority that looks after the child. This year, LA level data is provided as underlying data. All figures are based on data collected annually through the longitudinal children looked after return (also known as SSDA903) which is completed each spring by all local authorities in England. Further details on which children are included in the data collection can be found in the children looked after return [collection guide](#).

Information on attainment, special educational needs (SEN), absence and exclusions are based on looked after children data that has been matched to attainment, school census, alternative provision census and where applicable pupil referral unit (PRU) census data. Where possible, figures are presented for the last five years to allow comparisons back to 2013 (or 2012 in the case of exclusions).

Following on from the GCSE reforms, key stage 4 outcomes figures for 2017 reflect the changes that have been implemented in the [main key stage 4](#) SFR. In addition, there are two new tables this year at national level at key stage 4; both provide additional breakdowns of the Progress 8 measure (school type and length of most recent period of care).

Figures on the attainment of previously looked after children who left care through an adoption, special guardianship order (SGO) or child arrangements order (CAO) are included in this release. The figures are labelled as 'experimental statistics' as they are relatively new statistics with only partial coverage. This information was published for the first time in 2015 as part of the [Outcomes for children looked after by local authorities in England, 31 March 2015](#) SFR.

The methodology document for this release has been incorporated into the looked after children statistics guide that was published for the first time in December 2017. The looked after children statistics guide covers both the looked after children main SFR as well as this release and is published alongside both publications [here](#).

From 2015, data previously included in this release on health, wellbeing and offending outcomes, are published as additional tables to the [main looked after children](#) SFR in December.

## In this publication

The following tables are included in the SFR:

- SFR20\_2018\_National\_Tables (Excel .xls)
- SFR20\_2018\_Experimental\_Statistics (Excel .xls)
- Underlying data (open format .csv and metadata .txt)

The accompanying looked after children statistics guide provides information on the data sources, their coverage and quality and explains the methodology used in producing the data.

## Feedback

We are changing how our releases look and welcome feedback on any aspect of this document at.

[CLA.STATS@education.gov.uk](mailto:CLA.STATS@education.gov.uk)

# 1. Introduction

## What is a looked after child?

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is legally defined as 'looked after' by a local authority if he or she:

- is provided with accommodation for a continuous period for more than 24 hours
- is subject to a care order; or
- is subject to a placement order

A looked after child ceases to be looked after when he or she turns 18 years old. On reaching his or her 18th birthday, the status of the child changes from being looked after to being a young adult eligible for help and assistance from the local authority. Such help and assistance is usually provided in accordance with the various aftercare provisions of the Children Act.

## Definitions for this publication

For this publication, the definition of a 'looked after child' is a child who has been continuously looked after for at least 12 months up to and including 31 March 2017. This definition has been used because 12 months is considered an appropriate length of time to gauge the possible association of being looked after on educational attainment. However, note that a child may not have been in the care of a local authority for the whole of a key stage period. It is also the cohort of children for whom information on outcomes such as health, wellbeing and offending are collected through the SSDA903 return. In previous years these health, wellbeing and offending outcomes figures have been included in this publication but from 2015 they have been published in the December additional tables to the main children looked after statistical first release '[Children looked after in England including adoption](#)'.

Where reference throughout this publication is made to a 'non-looked after child', we have defined this as a child who has not been looked after continuously for 12 months as at 31 March. This will include both children who have never been looked after and also those who have been looked after but who have not met the 12 months criteria.

For comparison purposes, children in need figures are included in this release where the figures have already been published. Both looked after children and non-looked after children as defined above are likely to include children in need. Figures are taken from the additional tables to the statistical first release '[Characteristics of children in need](#)'. Data collected in the children in need census is matched to the national pupil database and where a match is found the child is included.

## Children in need

When a child is referred to children's social care, an assessment is carried out to identify if the child is in need of services, which local authorities have an obligation to provide under section 17 of the Children Act 1989. These services can include, for example, family support (to help keep together families experiencing difficulties), leaving care support (to help young people who have left local authority care), adoption support or disabled children's services (including social care, education and health provision). Figures for children in need in this publication exclude children in need who are also looked after, but include looked after children who were also the subject of a child protection plan during the year.

## Changes to this publication

Changes have been made to the outcomes presented in this publication in the following areas:

- Local authority level data
- Key stage 2
- Key stage 4

Details are given in the technical information section at the end of this document and throughout the text.

## 2. Attainment at key stage 1 (Table 1)

In 2017, 51% of looked after children reached the expected standard in reading, 39% in writing, 46% in mathematics and 60% in science. This is slightly higher than last year for reading, writing and science and the same as last year for mathematics.

Compared to non-looked after children, attainment for looked after children is much lower. The largest differences are in writing and mathematics. This is broadly similar to 2016 where the largest difference was in writing.

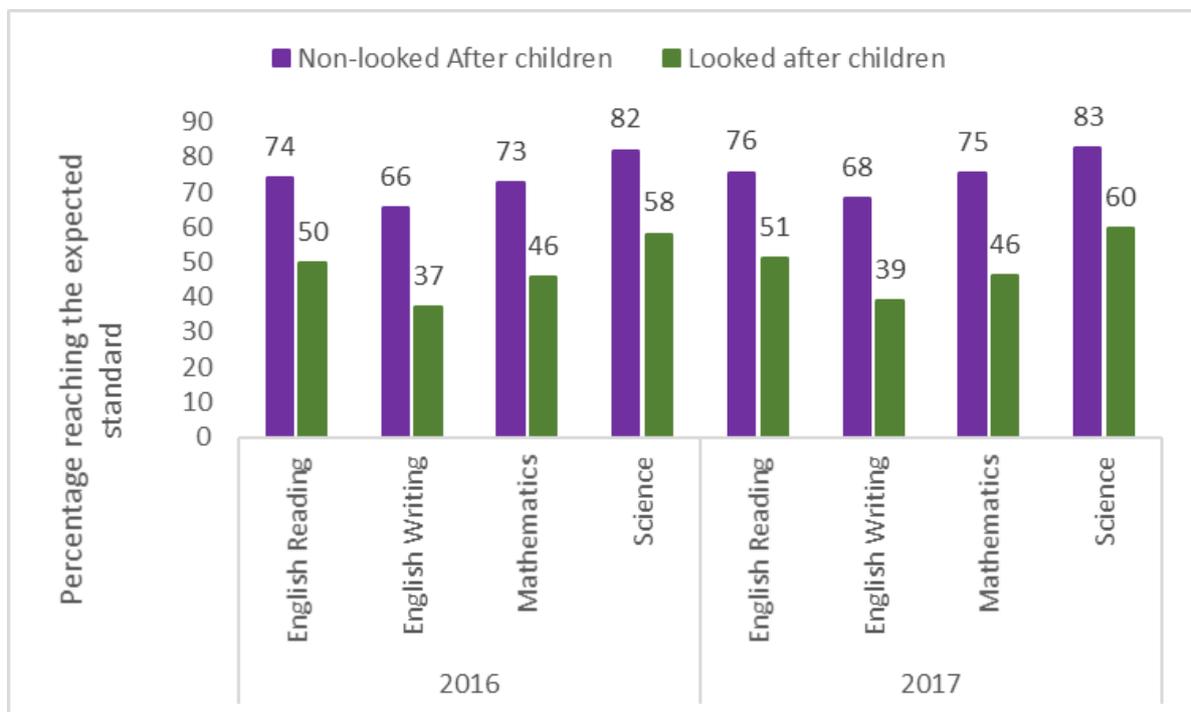
The percentage point difference between the attainment of looked after children and non-looked after children has increased slightly in mathematics in 2017.

### Key stage 1 assessments

Teacher assessment judgments in English reading, English writing, mathematics and science are reported for each pupil at the end of key stage 1 (typically aged 7). Teacher assessments are based on a broad range of evidence from across the curriculum and knowledge of how a pupil has performed over time and in a variety of contexts. Pupils are required to take tests in English and mathematics at the end of key stage 1, however teacher assessments is the only data used in school performance accountability at the end of key stage 1.

New key stage 1 assessments were introduced in 2016 to assess the new, more challenging national curriculum and the expected standard was raised. As a result, figures from 2016 onwards are not comparable to earlier years.

**Figure 1: Percentage of looked after children and non-looked after children reaching the expected standard at key stage 1, 2016 to 2017, England.**

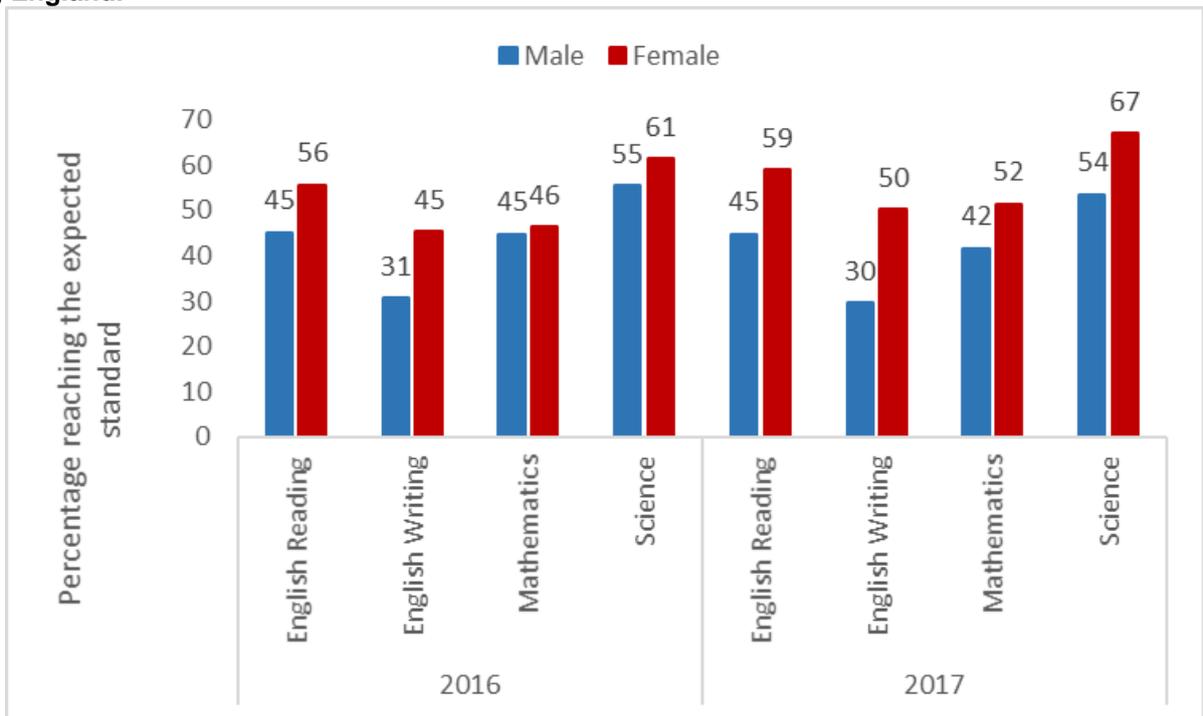


Source: CLA-NPD

Within the looked after group of children, girls continue to outperform boys in all subjects. The largest difference is in reading and writing, where in 2017 looked after girls outperformed looked after boys by 14 and 20 percentage points respectively. This is broadly similar to previous years and similar to patterns in the gender attainment difference for non-looked after children. However, there has been an increase in the percentage point difference between looked after girls and looked after boys in all subjects, with the largest

increase being in mathematics and science. In contrast to this, there hasn't been an increase in the percentage point difference between non-looked after girls and non-looked after boys in any of the subjects.

**Figure 2: Percentage of looked after children reaching the expected standard at key stage 1, by gender, 2016 to 2017, England.**



Source: CLA-NPD

### 3. Attainment and progress at key stage 2 (Table 2a, 2b & KS2 UD)

In 2017, 32% of looked after children reached the expected standard in the headline measure reading, writing and mathematics. This is lower than the percentage reaching the expected standard in individual subjects which ranges from 45% in reading to 50% in grammar, punctuation and spelling.

Compared to non-looked after children, attainment for looked after children is much lower. However, attainment of looked after children is slightly higher than children in need.

From 2016 to 2017, the percentage achieving the expected standard across all subjects, has increased for all three groups; looked after children, non-looked after children and children in need.

Overall, looked after children progress less well than non-looked after children at key stage 2. However, when SEN is considered, looked after children progress more than non-looked after children for those with no identified SEN and those with SEN support.

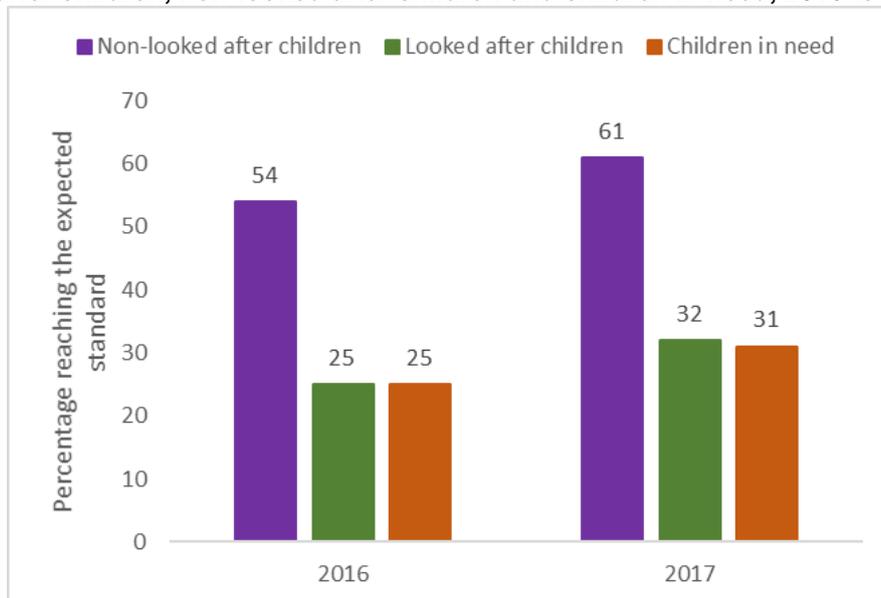
#### Attainment at key stage 2

##### Key stage 2 assessments

At the end of key stage 2, pupils are assessed by national curriculum tests in reading, mathematics and grammar, punctuation and spelling. Pupils also receive a teacher assessment outcome in writing, science, reading and mathematics based on the standards in the [interim frameworks](#) for teacher assessment. The combined measures use the reading and mathematics test results and the outcome of the writing teacher assessment

New key stage 2 assessments were introduced in 2016 to assess the new, more challenging national curriculum and the expected standard was raised. As a result, figures from 2016 onwards are not comparable to earlier years.

**Figure 3: Percentage of children reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at key stage 2, for looked after children, non-looked after children and children in need, 2016 to 2017, England.**



Source: CLA-NPD, CIN-NPD

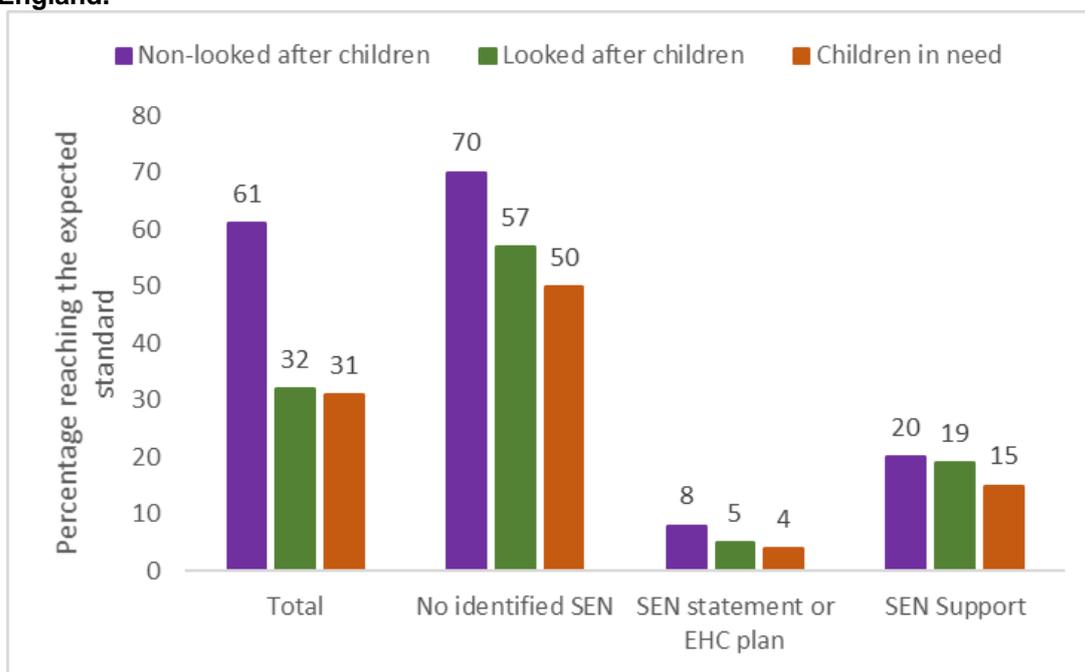
As highlighted above, in 2017, 32% of looked after children reached the expected standard in the headline measure reading, writing and mathematics, which is much lower than the 61% for non-looked after children. However, the figures show that 59% of looked after children at the end of key stage 2 have a special

educational need (SEN) identified, compared to 49%<sup>3</sup> of children in need and 17% of non-looked after children and attainment rates for children with a SEN are much lower.

Looking at children with no identified SEN, the attainment difference between looked after children and non-looked after children is less than for the overall total. For example, 57% of looked after children with no identified SEN achieved the expected standard or above in the headline measure reading, writing and mathematics, compared to 70% of non-looked after children, which reduces the attainment difference for this measure by 16 percentage points from the overall total attainment difference. Children in need attainment by SEN is published for the first time this year. There is a similar pattern for children in need when compared to non-looked after children.

In addition, for pupils with an identified SEN, the difference in attainment for looked after children and children in need compared to non-looked after children is much smaller at 5 percentage points or less.

**Figure 4: Percentage of children achieving the expected standard in the headline measure reading, writing and mathematics at key stage 2, for looked after children, non-looked after children and children in need, by SEN, 2017, England.**

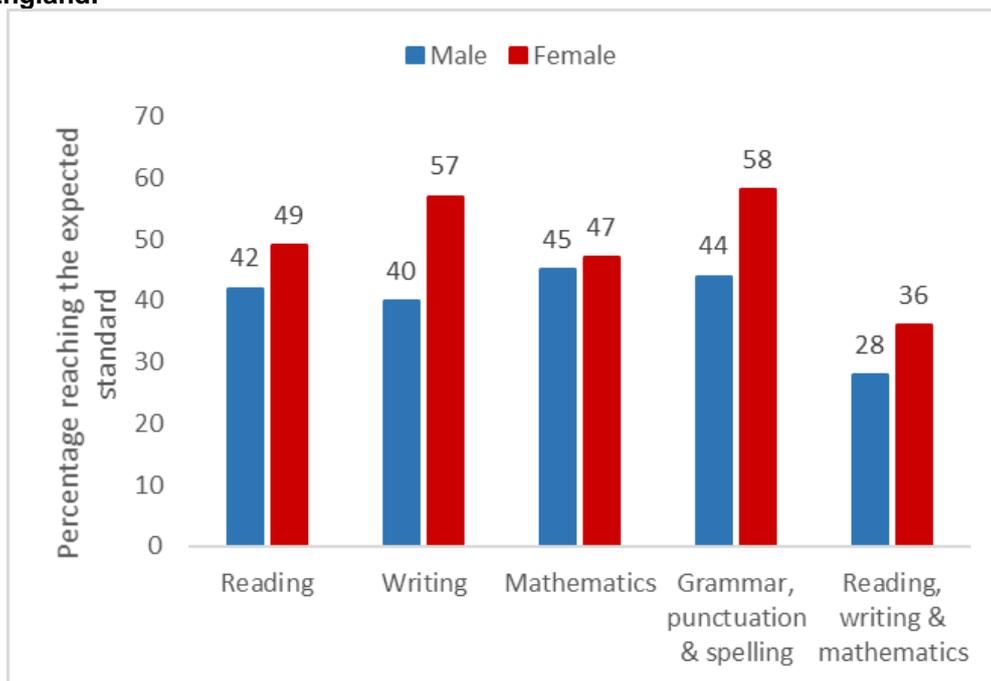


Source: CLA-NPD, CIN-NPD

Within the looked after children group, girls outperform boys in all subjects. Generally, the gender attainment difference for looked after children is similar to previous years and similar to patterns seen for non-looked after children. Children in need attainment by gender is published for the first time this year and follows a similar pattern to other comparison pupil groups. Children in need have the largest gender attainment percentage point difference for all subjects, across all three groups, with the largest difference (21 percentage points) in writing.

<sup>3</sup> Children in need data uses school census for SEN provision. Looked after children and non-looked after children data uses school census and alternative provision census for SEN provision.

**Figure 5: Percentage of looked after children reaching the expected standard or above at key stage 2, by gender, 2017, England.**



Source: CLA-NPD

## Progress at key stage 2

These progress measures aim to capture the progress that pupils make from the end of key stage 1 (typically age 7) to the end of primary school (typically age 11). They are a type of value-added measure, which means that pupils' results are compared to the results of other pupils nationally with similar prior attainment. Progress scores are calculated for each of reading, writing and mathematics.

The [progress methodology](#) was further refined in 2017 to allow greater number of prior attainment groups and better comparisons between pupils working below the standard of the tests. Pupils in special schools were included in the calculation of prior attainment groups for the progress measures in 2017. In addition, pupils who were entered for the test but were not awarded a scaled score were also included in progress calculations (whereas they were excluded in 2016).

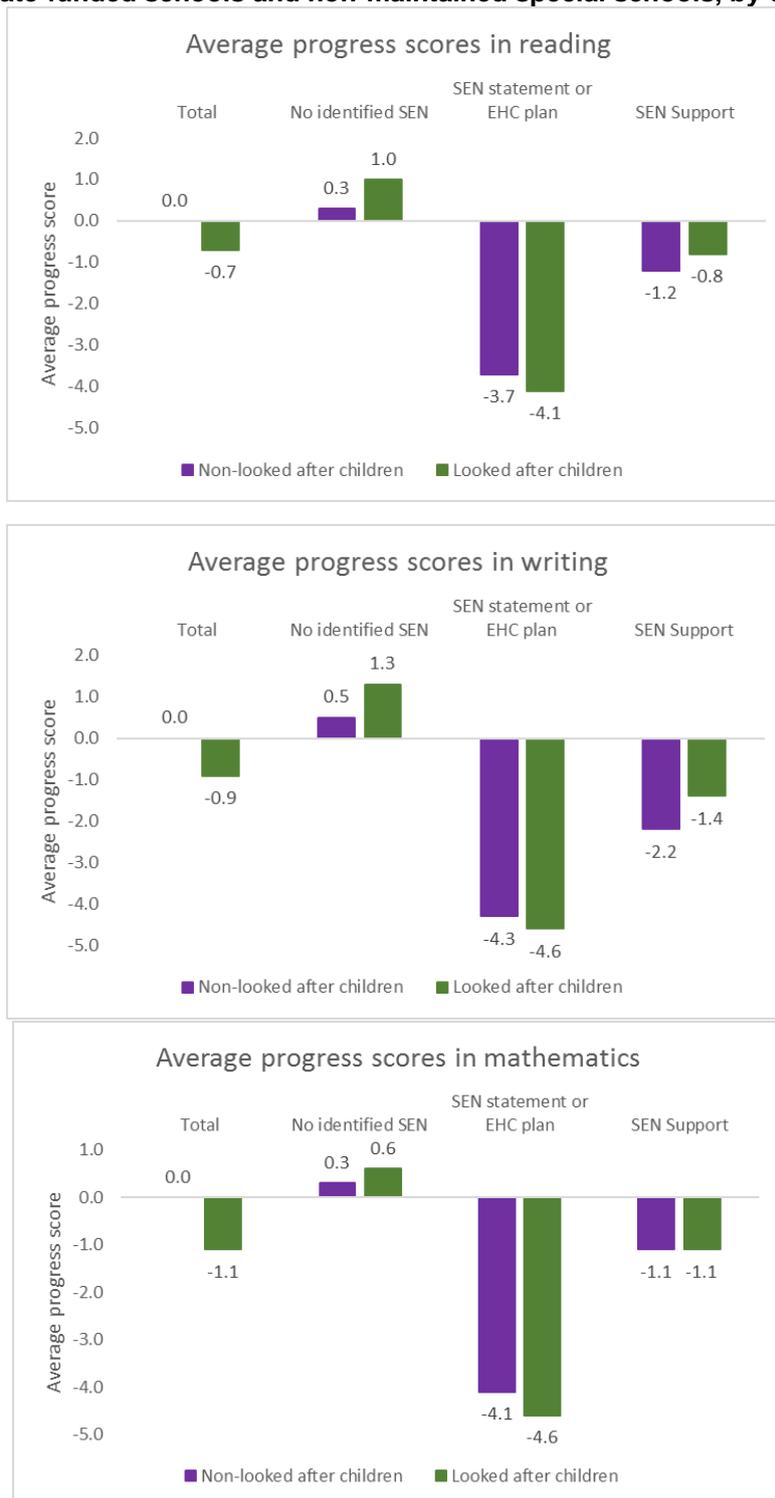
Progress measures are more meaningful when we can compare between groups. For instance whether groups of pupils, such as those with a particular characteristic, or pupils in particular local authorities, made more or less progress compared to other pupils with similar prior attainment.

For all children included in the progress measure calculations (state-funded schools and non-maintained special schools):

- Looked after children progress less well than non-looked after children in the overall total, with the largest difference being in mathematics, where looked after children have an average progress score of -1.1 compared to non-looked after children who make average progress (progress score of 0.0).
- As described above, 59% of looked after children at the end of key stage 2 have a SEN identified, compared to 17% of non-looked after children. The figures also show that the progress of children with a SEN is much less than those with no identified SEN. Once the effects of the proportion of children with SEN in each group are removed, by looking at those with no identified SEN, those with SEN statements or EHC plans and those with SEN support separately the message is different.
  - i) No identified SEN – looked after children progress better than non-looked after children in reading, writing and mathematics.
  - ii) SEN support – looked after children progress better than non-looked after children in reading and writing and equally in mathematics.

iii) SEN statement or EHC plan – non-looked after children progress better than looked after children.

**Figure 6: Progress in reading, writing and mathematics at key stage 2, for looked after children and non-looked after children, state-funded schools and non-maintained special schools, by SEN, 2017, England.**



Source: CLA-NPD

- Generally girls progress better than boys in reading and writing but boys progress better than girls in mathematics. However, once the effects of the proportion of children with SEN in each group are removed, by looking at those with no identified SEN, those with SEN statements or EHC plans and those with SEN support separately, the gender difference is reversed for reading for those with SEN and for writing for looked after children with statements or EHC plans.

## 4. Attainment and progress at key stage 4 (Table 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d, 3e & KS4 UD)

The average Attainment 8 score for looked after children is 19.3 compared to 44.5 for non-looked after children and 19.3 for children in need.

Although looked after children have a similar average Attainment 8 score as children in need, they perform slightly less well than children in need in the other headline measures; achieving a pass in English and mathematics, entering EBacc and achieving EBacc.

In 2017 there has been an increase in the percentage of looked after children achieving an a pass in English and mathematics from 17.4% to 17.5% and also in entering EBacc. This comparison uses the grade 4 or above version of the measures (see additional measures information above).

Looked after children progress less well than non-looked after children but slightly better than children in need.

In 2017, pupils sat reformed GCSEs in English language, English literature and maths for the first time, graded on a 9 to 1 scale. New GCSEs in other subjects are being phased in, first being taught from September 2016 to 2018. To ensure all pupils benefit from the reformed qualifications, only the new GCSEs will be included in secondary school performance measures as they are introduced for each subject (for example, only reformed GCSEs in English and maths will be included in 2017 measures). When comparing 2017 headline measures to the equivalent revised data from 2016, it is important to note the changes in methodology underpinning the 2017 data.

### Attainment 8

Attainment 8 measures the average achievement of pupils in up to 8 qualifications including English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), maths (double weighted), three further qualifications that count in the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) and three further qualifications that can be GCSE qualifications (including EBacc subjects) or any other non-GCSE qualifications on the [DfE approved list](#).

Users should be cautious when comparing Attainment 8 scores between 2017 and 2016. In 2017, Attainment 8 scores were calculated using slightly different point score scales in comparison to 2016, in order to minimise change following the introduction of 9-1 reformed GCSEs. This means that Attainment 8 scores are likely to look different in 2017, as a result of changes to the methodology.

### Progress 8

Progress 8 aims to capture the progress a pupil makes from the end of key stage 2 to the end of key stage 4. It compares pupils' achievement – their Attainment 8 score – with the average Attainment 8 score of all pupils nationally who had a similar starting point (or 'prior attainment'), calculated using assessment results from the end of primary school. Progress 8 is a relative measure, therefore the national average Progress 8 score for mainstream schools is very close to zero. When including pupils at special schools the national average is not zero as Progress 8 scores for special schools are calculated using Attainment 8 estimates based on pupils in mainstream schools. More information on Attainment 8 and Progress 8 can be found [here](#).

Progress 8 is part of the new secondary accountability system being implemented from 2016. Progress 8 is a relative measure, which means that the overall national score remains the same between years. In 2017, a new methodology was implemented which changed the basis for calculating key stage 2 prior attainment. Previously attainment had been calculated using an average for English (reading and writing) and maths scores. This was revised to be just reading and maths. This resulted in a larger proportion of pupils with higher key stage 2 prior attainment scores. The Progress 8 measure should not be compared year on year. More information on the calculation of this measures is available in the [Progress 8 guidance](#).

### Attainment in English and maths (grades 5 or above)

From 2017, this measure looks at the percentage of pupils achieving a grade 5 or above in both English and maths. Pupils can achieve the English component of this with a grade 5 or above in English language or literature. There is no requirement to sit both exams.

### The English Baccalaureate (EBacc) entry and achievement

The EBacc was first introduced into the performance tables in 2009/10. It allows people to see how many pupils reach the attainment threshold in core academic subjects at key stage 4. The EBacc is made up of English, maths, science,

a language, and history or geography. To count in the EBacc, qualifications must be on the [English Baccalaureate list of qualifications](#).

In 2017, the headline EBacc achievement measure includes pupils who take exams in both English language and English literature, and achieve a grade 5 or above in at least one of these qualifications. Pupils must also achieve a grade 5 or above in mathematics and a grade C or above in the remaining subject areas.

### Additional measures

For transparency and to allow comparison to 2016, the threshold attainment measures are also published at grade 4 or above, as additional measures. These additional measures are:

#### Attainment in English and maths (grades 4 or above)

From 2017, this measure looks at the percentage of pupils achieving grade 4 or above in both English and maths. Pupils can achieve the English component of this with a grade 4 or above in English language or literature. There is no requirement to sit both exams.

#### English Baccalaureate (EBacc) achievement

This measure includes pupils who take exams in both English language and English literature, and achieve a grade 4 or above in at least one of these qualifications. Pupils also need to achieve a grade 4 or above in maths and a grade C or above in the remaining subject areas.

## Attainment at key stage 4

**Figure 7: Average Attainment 8 score, percentage achieving a pass in English and mathematics and percentage entering and achieving EBacc, for looked after children, non-looked after children and children in need, 2016 to 2017, England.**



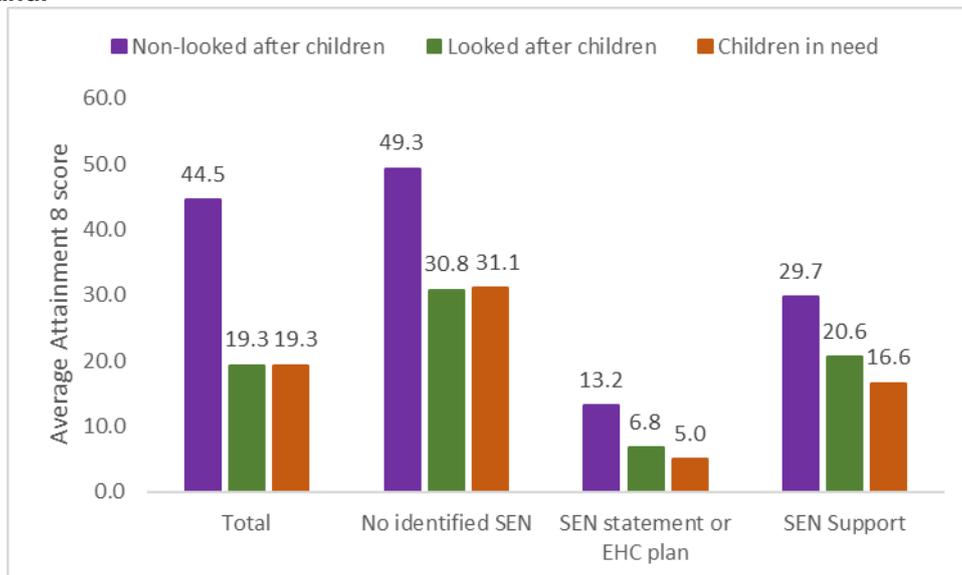
Source: CLA-NPD, CIN-NPD

As detailed above, the average Attainment 8 score for looked after children is 19.3 compared to 44.5 for non-looked after children and 19.3 for children in need. However, the figures show that 56% of looked after

children at the end of key stage 4 have a special educational need (SEN) identified, compared to 48%<sup>4</sup> of children in need and 14% of non-looked after children and attainment rates for children with a SEN are much lower.

The attainment difference between looked after children and non-looked after children for this measure is reduced when the effects of the proportion of children with SEN in each group are removed, by looking at those with no identified SEN, those with SEN statements or EHC plans and those with SEN support separately. Children in need attainment by SEN is published for the first time this year. There is a similar pattern for children in need when compared to non-looked after children.

**Figure 8: Average Attainment 8 score for looked after children, non-looked children and children in need, by SEN, 2017, England.**



Source: CLA-NPD, CIN-NPD

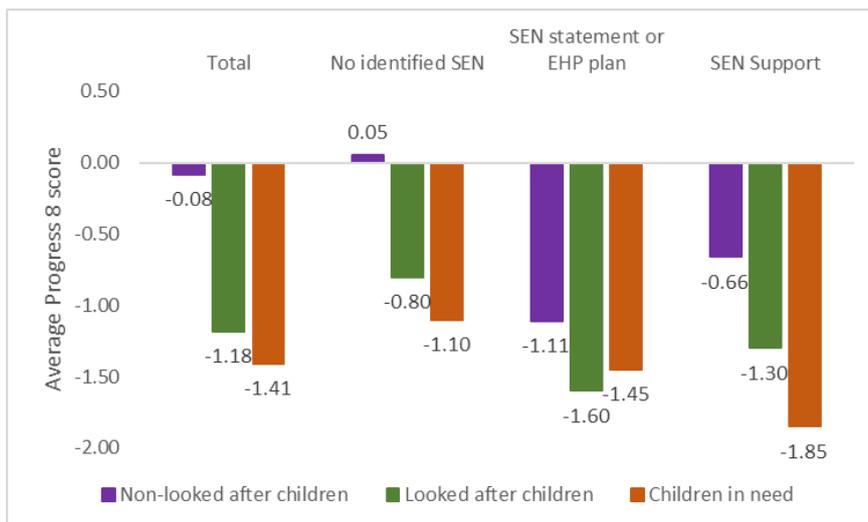
Children in need attainment by gender is published for the first time this year. Generally, for looked after children, non-looked after children and children in need, girls perform better than boys.

### Progress at key stage 4

For all children included in the progress measure calculations (state-funded schools, non-maintained special schools and alternative provision), looked after children progress less well than non-looked after children but slightly better than children in need.

<sup>4</sup> Children in need data uses school census for SEN provision. Looked after children and non-looked after children data uses school census and alternative provision census for SEN provision.

**Figure 9: Average Progress 8 score for looked after children and non-looked after children, by SEN, 2017, England.**

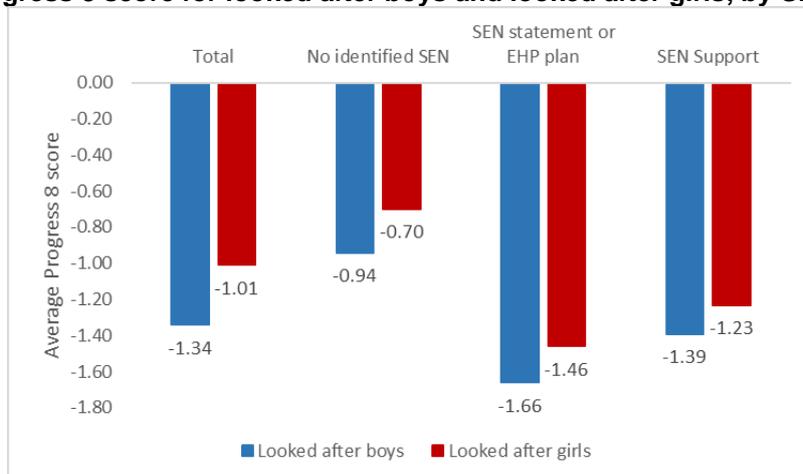


Source: CLA-NPD, CIN-NPD

Children in need progress by SEN is published for the first time this year. In contrast to key stage 2, even when we consider the effects of the proportion of children with SEN in each group, by looking at those with no identified SEN, those with SEN statements or EHC plans and those with SEN support separately, looked after children and children in need progress less well than non-looked after children in all groups. However, for those with statements or EHC plans, children in need progress slightly better than looked after children.

Looked after boys progress less well than looked after girls in all groups, a similar pattern is seen for non-looked after children.

**Figure 10: Average Progress 8 score for looked after boys and looked after girls, by SEN, 2017, England.**



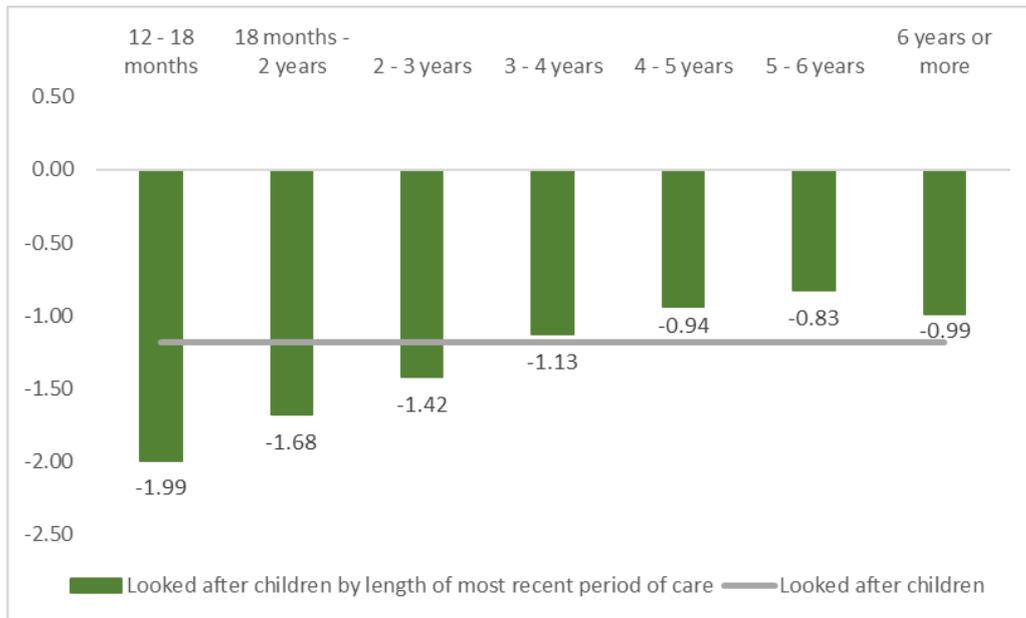
Source: CLA-NPD

Progress 8 by school type and length of most recent period of care is published for the first time this year, for looked after children and non-looked after children.

Looked after children in free schools progress more than in other school types, however this is to be treated with caution as the number of looked after children in free schools is relatively small. Non-looked after children in free schools also progress better than other school types. For both looked after children and non-looked after children, children in alternative provision progress least well.

Looked after children in long term care have higher progress scores than pupils whose most recent period of care is much shorter.

**Figure 11: Average Progress 8 score for looked after children, by length of most recent period of care, 2017, England.**



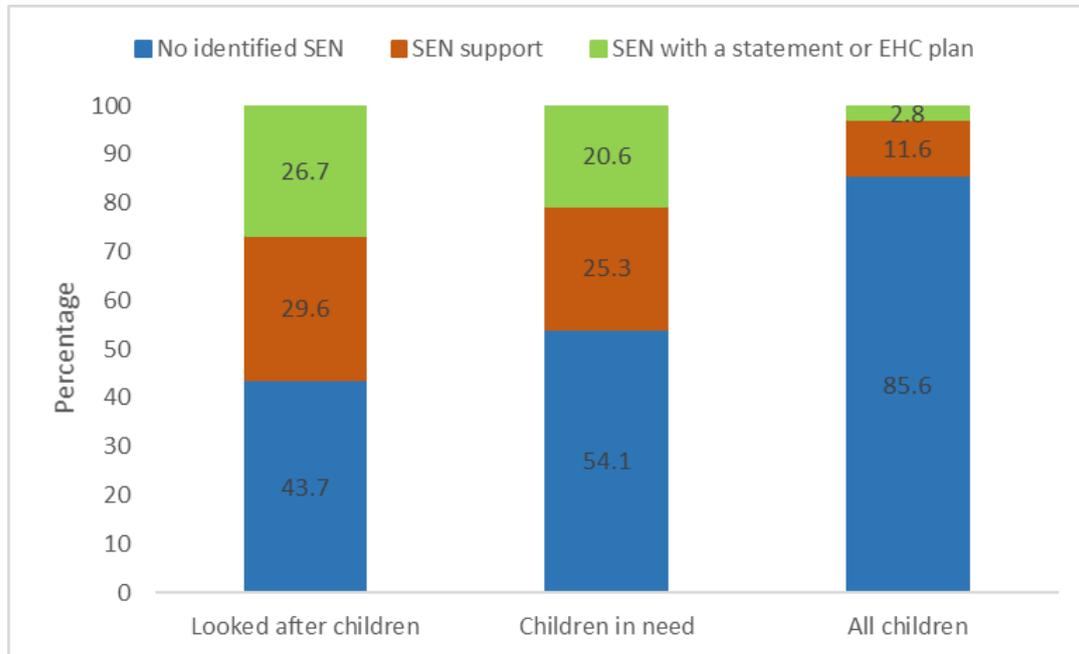
Source: CLA-NPD

## 5. Special educational needs (Table 4a, 4b & SEN UD)

Looked after children are almost four times more likely to have a special educational need (SEN) than all children and are almost 10 times more likely to have a statement of special educational need or education, health and care (EHC) plan than all children.

In 2017, 56.3% of looked after children have a special educational need, compared to 45.9% of children in need and 14.4% of all children.

**Figure 12: Special educational needs of looked after children, children in need and all children, 2017, England.**



Source: CLA-NPD, CIN-NPD

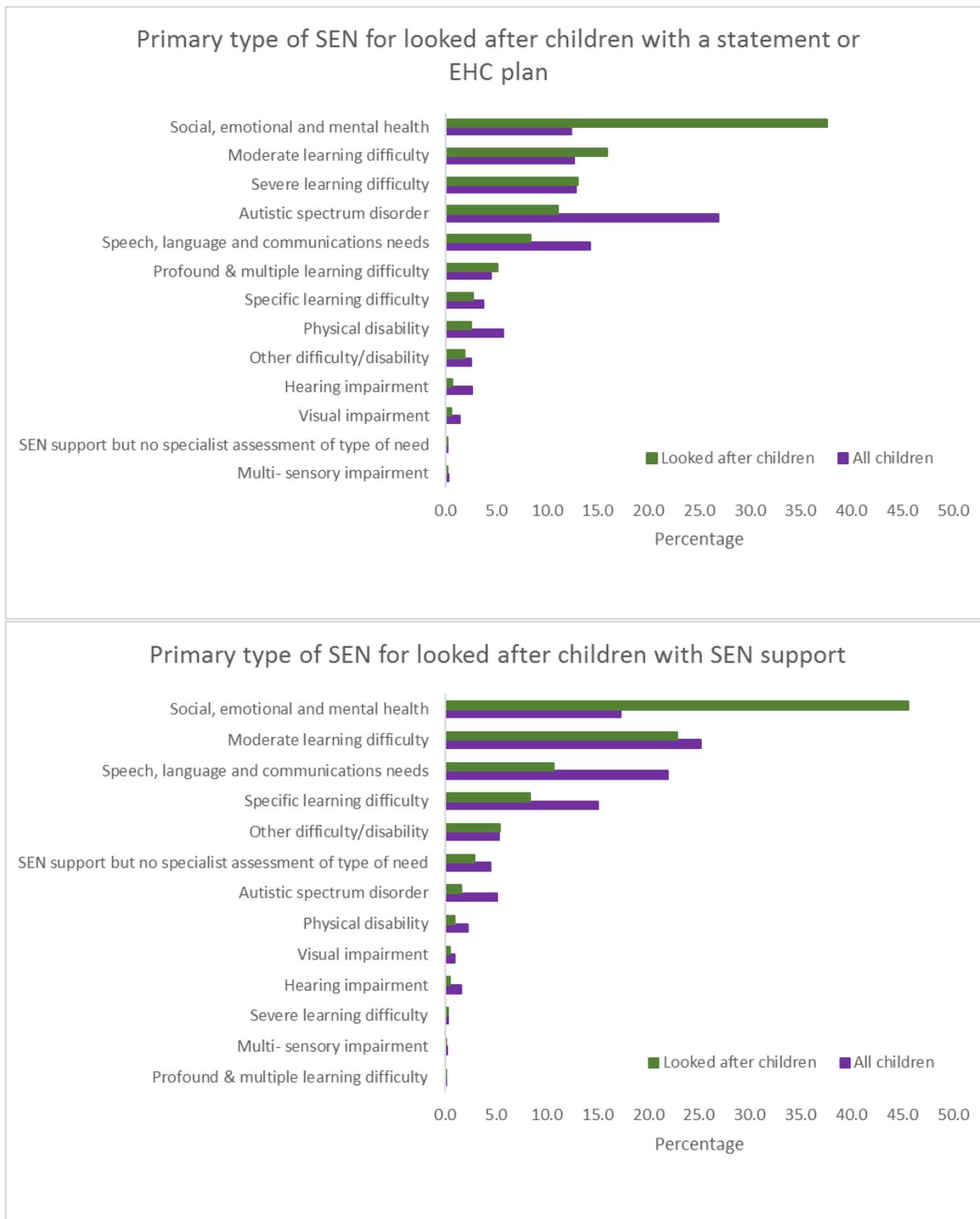
Information on primary type of special educational need is collected for those with a statement or EHC plan and those with SEN support<sup>5</sup>. For both groups, social, emotional and mental health is the most common primary type of special educational need for looked after children, covering 37.6% of those with a statement or EHC plan and 45.6% of those with SEN support. This contrasts with the child population as a whole<sup>6</sup> where 12.4% of those with a statement or EHC plan and 17.3% of those with SEN support have social, emotional and mental health as their primary type of special educational need.

Looked after children with a statement or EHC plan are much less likely to have hearing impairment, visual impairment, autistic spectrum disorder, physical disability, or speech, language and communication needs as their primary type of special educational need than all children.

<sup>5</sup> The special educational needs and disability (SEND) provisions in the Children and Families Act 2014 were introduced on 1 September 2014. From then, any children or young people who are newly referred to a local authority for assessment are considered under the new Education Health and Care (EHC) plan assessment process. The legal test of when a child or young person requires an EHC plan remains the same as that for a statement under the Education Act 1996. In addition, the previous 'school action' and 'school action plus' categories were replaced by a new category 'SEN support'.

<sup>6</sup> Figures for all children are available in table 8 of the SFR: [Special Educational Needs in England, 2017](#)

**Figure 13: Looked after children and all children by primary type of special educational need, 2017, England.**



Source: CLA-NPD

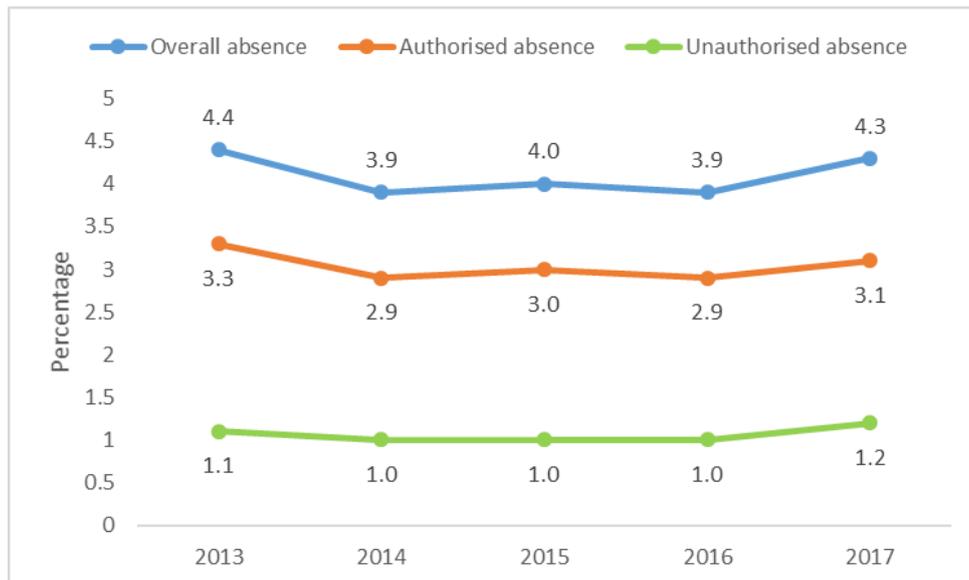
## 6. Absence (Table 5 & Absence UD)

Absence rates for looked after children have increased from last year – overall absence increased from 3.9% of sessions missed in 2016 to 4.3% in 2017.

The percentage of looked after children classified as persistent absentees has remained steady over recent years from 10.1% in 2013 to 10.0% in 2017.

Authorised absence has increased slightly from 2.9% of sessions missed to 3.1%. Unauthorised absence has also increased slightly from 1.0% of sessions missed to 1.2%.

**Figure 14: Overall, authorised and unauthorised absence rates (%) for looked after children, 2013 to 2017, England.**

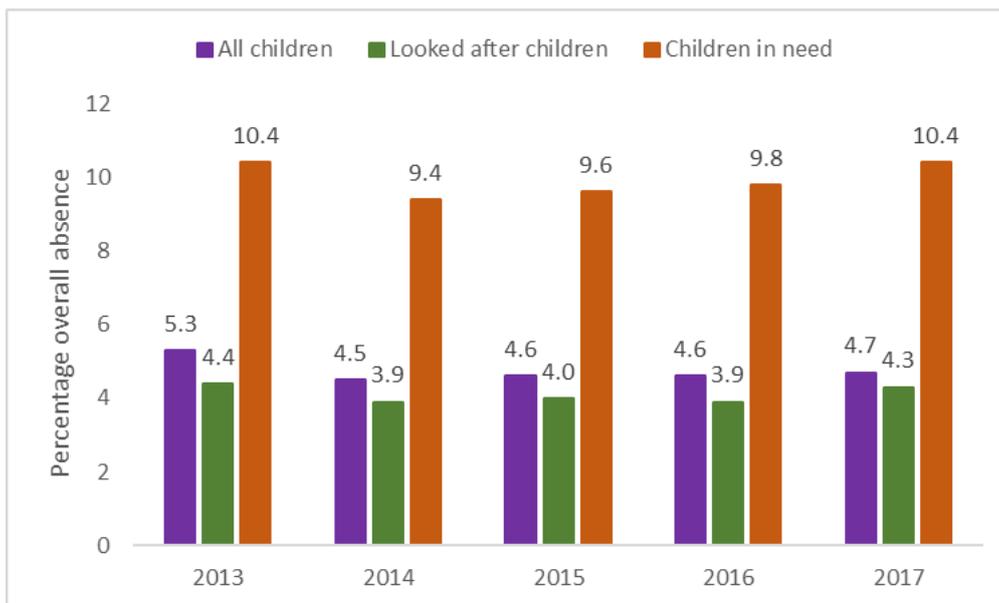


Source: CLA-NPD

Overall absence rates for looked after children are lower than for all children (who missed 4.7% of sessions in 2017) and much lower than for children in need (10.4% in 2017).

Comparing to all children, the difference in overall absence rates is due to looked after children having lower authorised absence rates. In 2017, 3.1% of sessions for looked after children were missed due to authorised absence, compared to 3.4% of sessions for all children.

**Figure 15: Overall absence rates (%) for looked after children, all children and children in need, 2013 to 2017, England.**



Source: CLA-NPD, CIN-NPD

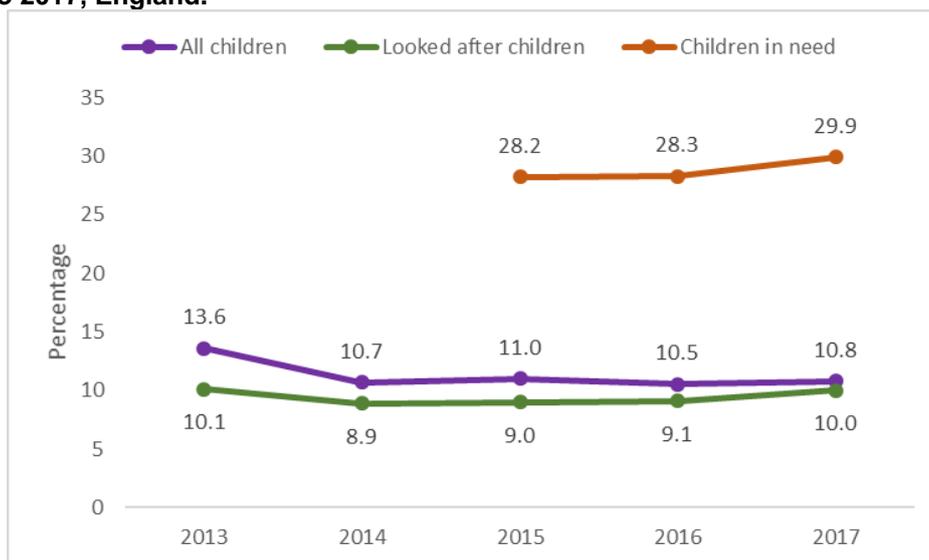
### Persistent absentees

The definition of persistent absence has changed from the 2015/16 academic year. Pupil enrolments missing 10 or more percent of their own possible sessions (due to authorised or unauthorised absence) are classified as persistent absentees. The information presented for years prior to 2015/16 has been produced using the same methodology in order to allow users to make comparisons on a consistent basis over time. See Chapter 3 of the [guide to absence statistics](#) for more information.

Note that, although the measure was only in place from September 2015, figures based on the 10 per cent methodology have been calculated for previous years in order to provide a time series.

Looked after children are less likely to be classified as persistent absentees<sup>7</sup> than all children and much less likely than children in need.

**Figure 16: Percentage of looked after children, all children and children in need classified as persistent absentees, 2013 to 2017, England.**



Source: CLA-NPD, CIN-NPD

<sup>7</sup> Children in need persistent absentee figures have only been produced on a comparable basis for the last three years.

## 7. Permanent and fixed period exclusions (Table 6 & Exclusion UD)

The rate of permanent exclusions for looked after children is higher than the rate for all children, but continues to be less than the rate for children in need.

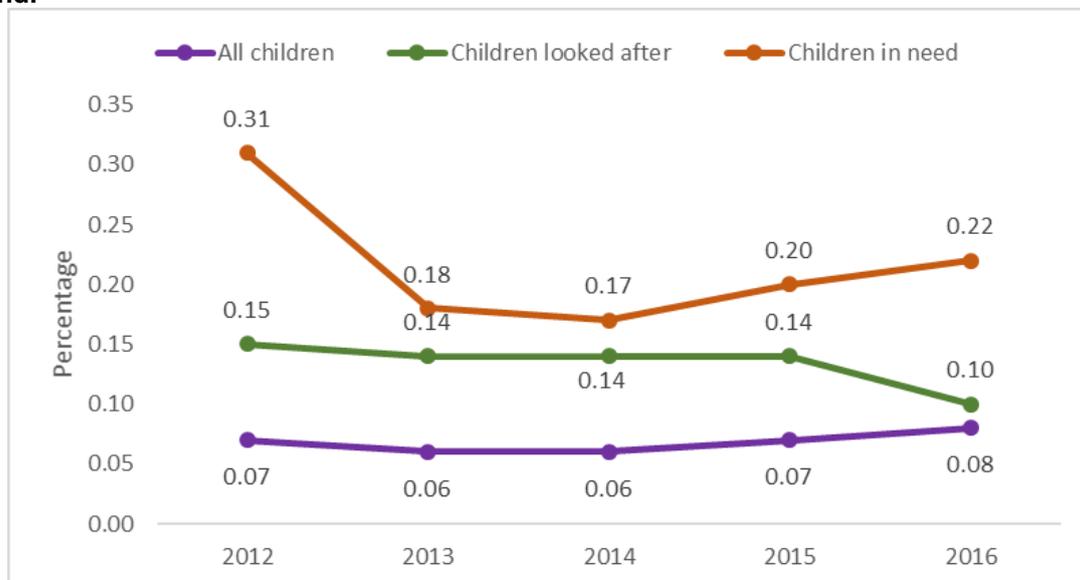
Looked after children are more than five times more likely to have a fixed period exclusion than all children, around one and a half times more likely than children in need.

### Exclusions data

Exclusions data are collected two terms in arrears, so the latest exclusions data available is from the academic year 2015/16. This is matched to the looked after children from year ending 31 March 2016. This is a year earlier than the other information in this statistical release. In 2016, 29,860 looked after children aged 5 to 15 were matched to the school census.

In 2016, 0.10% of looked after children were permanently excluded from school, compared to 0.08% of all children. The percentage of looked after children permanently excluded has decreased from 0.14% in 2012 to 0.10% in 2016, this is the lowest it has been in the five year period 2012 to 2016.

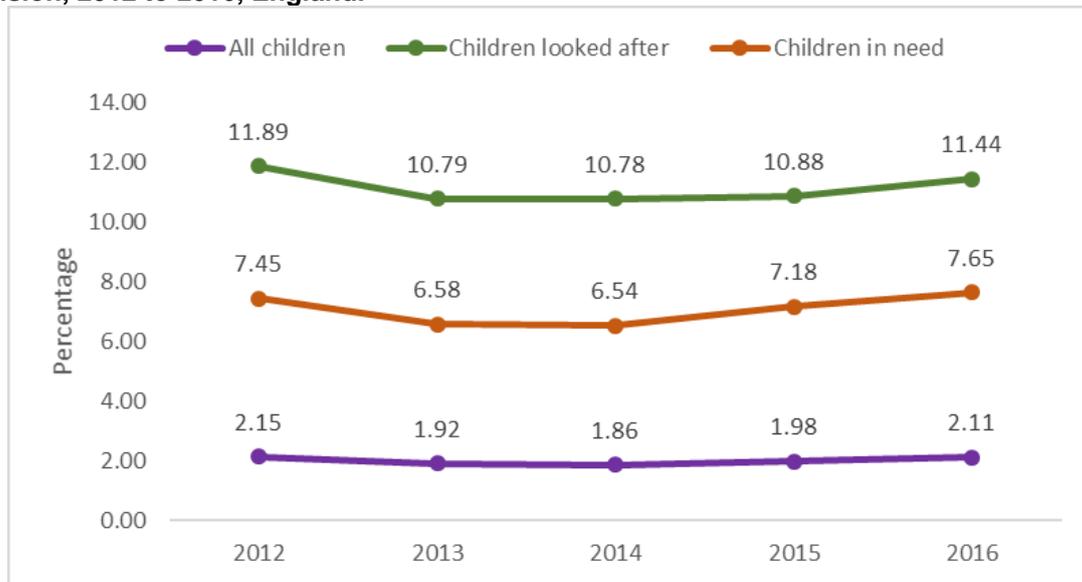
**Figure 17: Permanent exclusion rates (%) for looked after children, all children and children in need, 2012 to 2016, England.**



Source: CLA-NPD, CIN-NPD

In 2016, 11.44% of looked after children had at least one fixed period exclusion, an increase from 10.88% in 2015. There has also been an increase for all children and children in need.

**Figure 18: Percentages of looked after children, all children and children in need who had at least one fixed period exclusion, 2012 to 2016, England.**



Source: CLA-NPD, CIN-NPD

## 8. Attainment and progress of previously looked after children (Table A1, A2, B1, B2, B3)

The percentage of pupils at key stage 2 who had previously been looked after who achieved the expected standard at reading, writing and mathematics increased since 2016 to 38 per cent.

Pupils who were the subject of a child arrangements order are more likely to achieve this standard than those who were adopted or the subject of a special guardianship order.

The percentage of pupils at key stage 4 who had previously been looked after who achieved a pass in English and mathematics increased from 31.6 per cent to 32.8 per cent since 2016. However, the proportion of pupils who achieved the English Baccalaureate decreased slightly from 7.5 per cent to 7.1 per cent.

Adopted pupils performed better at key stage 4 than those who were the subject of a special guardianship order or a child arrangements order.

Table A1 to B3 show information on the attainment and progress of previously looked after children who ceased to be looked after through an adoption order, a special guardianship order (SGO) or a child arrangements order (CAO).

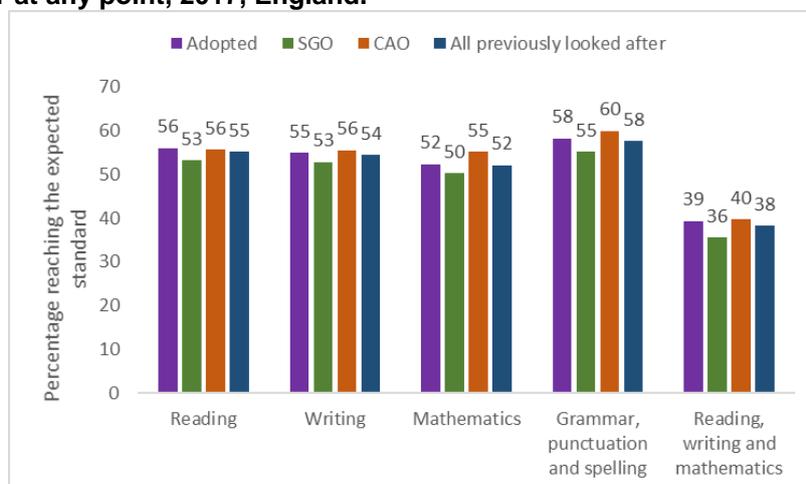
The identification of these children relies upon self-declaration by the parents. This declaration can take place at any time that the child is in education and usually occurs when the child starts at the school. We estimate that in 2017, around 60 per cent of these children have been accounted for in primary schools by the time they reach the end of key stage 2 and equivalent figures of around 30 per cent in secondary schools by the end of key stage 4. This coverage is slightly less than that seen in 2016. This information was first published in 2015 and since then the statistics have been designated as 'experimental statistics' due to issues associated with low coverage which may lead to possible biases in the figures. Comparisons across years should be treated with caution as changes may be due to improvements in coverage rather than any real change in attainment.

### Attainment and progress at key stage 2

In 2017, 38 per cent of pupils who were identified as being previously looked after achieved the expected standard at reading, writing and mathematics. This is an increase from 30 per cent in 2016 but comparisons across years should be treated with caution due to the experimental nature of the statistics.

Pupils who were the subject of a CAO were more likely (40 per cent) to achieve this standard than those who were adopted (39 per cent) or who were the subject of a SGO (36 per cent). The pattern was similar across individual subjects. A higher proportion of previously looked after pupils reach the expected standard in GPS than in other subjects.

**Figure 19: Percentage of children reaching the expected standard at key stage 2, for children who were previously looked after at any point, 2017, England.**



Source: NPD

As with attainment scores, pupils who were the subject of a CAO had better average progress scores than those who were the subject of a SGO, who in turn had better average progress scores than those who were adopted.

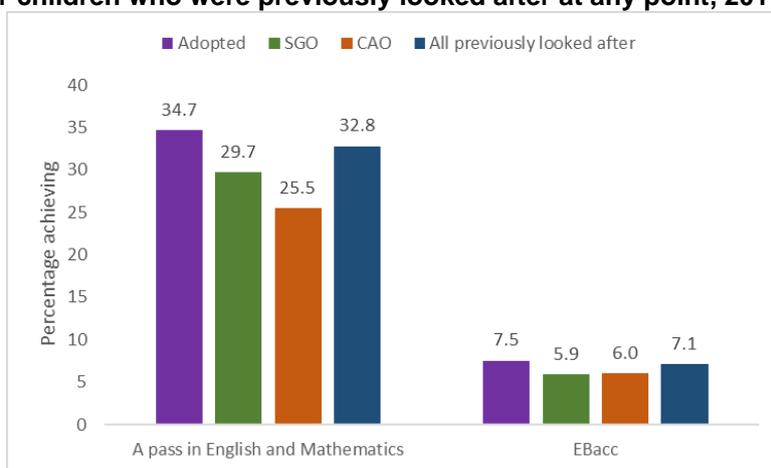
Pupils who had been previously looked after had lower average progress scores if they had SEN than those without. Children who were adopted had lower average progress scores than children who were the subject of a SGO or a CAO, regardless of the provision for SEN.

### Attainment and progress at key stage 4

In 2017, 32.8 per cent of pupils who were identified as being previously looked after achieved a pass in English and mathematics. Adopted children (34.7 per cent) were more likely to achieve this than children who were the subject of a SGO (29.7 per cent) or CAO (25.5 per cent).

18.0 per cent of children previously looked after were entered for the EBacc in 2017, which is a slight drop from 18.8 per cent in 2016. 7.1 per cent of children previously looked after achieved the EBacc and adopted children were more likely to achieve this than children who were the subject of a SGO or CAO.

**Figure 20: Percentage of children achieving a pass (at grade 4 or above) in English and mathematics and EBacc at key stage 4, for children who were previously looked after at any point, 2017, England.**

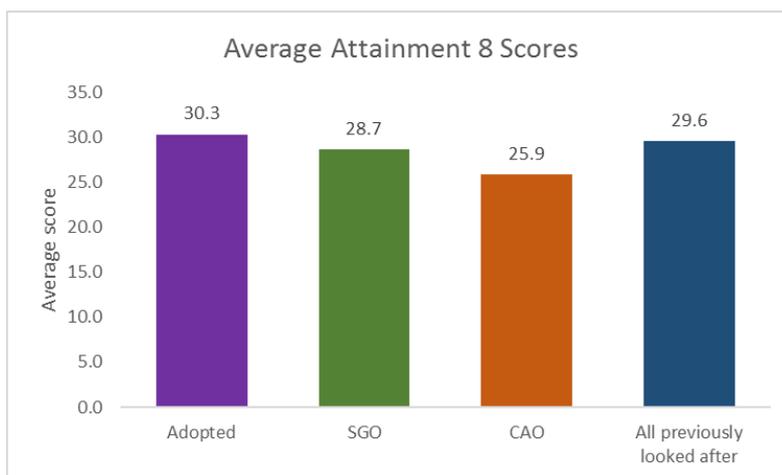


Source: NPD

The average Attainment 8 score for children who were previously looked after was 29.6. Adopted pupils had the highest Attainment 8 score for this group of pupils at 30.3 and the averages for children who were the subject of a SGO and a CAO were 28.7 and 25.9 respectively.

Females had a higher average Attainment 8 score than males. The average score for females who were previously looked after was 31.6 compared to 27.5 for males. This was the case for all three subgroups of previously looked after children but the gender gap was narrower for children who were adopted than for those who were the subject of a SGO or a CAO.

**Figure 21: Average Attainment 8 scores at key stage 4, for children who were previously looked after at any point, 2017, England.**



Source: NPD

Children who were adopted had higher average Progress 8 scores than children who were the subject of a SGO or CAO. Adopted children had an average Progress 8 score of -0.53 compared to -0.63 for children who were the subject of a SGO and -0.72 for children who were the subject of a CAO. The average Progress 8 score for all pupils who were previously looked after was -0.57. Females had higher average scores than males for all three subgroups of previously looked after children.

## 9. Accompanying tables

The following tables are available in Excel format on the [department's statistics website](#):

### National Tables

- 1 Key stage 1 eligibility and performance of children who have been looked after continuously for at least twelve months, by gender, 2016 to 2017
- 2a Key stage 2 eligibility and performance of children who have been looked after continuously for at least twelve months, by SEN and gender, 2016 to 2017
- 2b Key stage 2 average progress scores of children who have been looked after continuously for at least twelve months, by SEN and gender, 2017
- 3a Key stage 4 eligibility and performance of children who have been looked after continuously for at least twelve months, by SEN and gender, 2013 to 2017
- 3b Key stage 4 average Attainment 8 scores of children who have been looked after continuously for at least twelve months, by SEN and gender, 2016 to 2017
- 3c Key stage 4 average Progress 8 scores of children who have been looked after continuously for at least twelve months, by SEN and gender, 2017
- 3d Key stage 4 average Progress 8 scores of children who have been looked after continuously for at least twelve months, by school type and gender, 2017
- 3e Key stage 4 average Progress 8 scores of children who have been looked after continuously for at least twelve months, by length of most recent period of care, 2017
- 4a Children who have been looked after continuously for at least twelve months, children in need and all children with special educational needs (SEN), 2017
- 4b Children who have been looked after continuously for at least twelve months, by primary type of special educational need (SEN), 2017
- 5 Absence by type of school for children who have been looked after continuously for at least twelve months, children in need and all children, 2013 to 2017
- 6 Exclusions by type of school for children who have been looked after continuously for at least twelve months, children in need and all children, 2012 to 2016

### Experimental Statistics

- A1 Key stage 2 eligibility and performance of former looked after children who have been adopted, or were the subject of a special guardianship order or a child arrangements order, by SEN and gender, 2016 to 2017
- A2 Key stage 2 average progress scores of former looked after children who have been adopted, or were the subject of a special guardianship order or a child arrangements order, by SEN and gender, 2017
- B1 Key stage 4 eligibility and performance of former looked after children who have been adopted, or were the subject of a special guardianship order or a child arrangements order, by SEN and gender, 2015 to 2017
- B2 Key stage 4 average Attainment 8 scores of former looked after children who have been adopted, or were the subject of a special guardianship order or a child arrangements order, by SEN and gender, 2016 to 2017
- B3 Key stage 4 average Progress 8 scores of former looked after children who have been adopted, or were the subject of a special guardianship order or a child arrangements order, by SEN and gender, 2017

When reviewing the tables, please note that:

---

Rounding conventions	<p>The National Statistics Code of Practice requires that reasonable steps should be taken to ensure that all published or disseminated statistics produced by the Department for Education protect confidentiality.</p> <p>National and regional figures have been rounded to the nearest 10. For confidentiality purposes, numbers from one to five inclusive have been replaced in the published tables by a cross (x). To ensure the suppressed number cannot be identified by simple arithmetic secondary suppression may be required. In this case the next smallest number is also suppressed.</p> <p>Percentages have been rounded to whole numbers for key stage 1 and key stage 2 and rounded to one decimal place for key stage 4. Exclusions have been rounded to two decimal places. Averages have been rounded to one decimal place at key stage 2 and at key stage 4 for attainment and to two decimal places at key stage 4 for progress. This is in line with the department's rounding protocols for the main attainment releases. Where the numerator in a percentage was five or less or the denominator was 1 to 10, the percentages has been suppressed and replace by a cross (x). Not all percentages will sum to 100 due to these rounding conventions. Averages that are based on 1 to 5 have been suppressed and replaced by a cross (x).</p> <p>In addition, the following convention has been used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>'.' means not applicable</li><li>..' means not available</li><li>'-' means negligible – used to represent a percentage that would appear as 0 when rounded but is not zero</li></ul>
----------------------	---

---

UK comparability of looked after children's statistics	Data is collected and published independently by each of the 4 countries in the UK. Although there are similarities between the data collected by the 4 nations, there are also differences which may be down to different policies and legislation, and differing historical data collections.
--	---

---

## 10. Further information is available

---

Children looked after in England, including adoption	Information about <a href="#">looked-after children in England for the year ending 31 March 2017</a> was published on 28 September 2017 (with additional tables published in December 2017). It includes the number of looked after children, the reasons why children are looked after, their legal status and type of placement, and the number of children who started to be, or ceased to be, looked after during the year ending 31 March 2017. It also covers the number of looked after children who were placed for adoption, the number of looked after children adopted and the average time between different stages of the adoption process.
Children in need and child protection statistics for England	Information on referrals, assessments and children who were the subject of a child protection plan (taken from the Children in Need census) is available for 2017 on the <a href="#">children in need statistics website</a> .

---

Information on care proceedings in England	The Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS) publish information on <a href="#">care proceedings applications</a> made by local authorities where CAFCASS has been appointed by the court to represent the interests of children.
Local authority children in care and adoption statistics	Children in care and adoption <a href="#">performance tables</a> and adoption scorecards show how local authorities and looked after children's services compare with others in England (2012 to 2014). From 2015, children in care and adoption performance is included in the <a href="#">local authority interactive tool (LAIT)</a> .
Local authority expenditure	Information on local authority <a href="#">planned expenditure</a> on schools, education, children and young people's services is available for the financial year 2016-17. This data is returned to DfE by local authorities via the Section 251 Budget Return.
Ofsted statistics	<a href="#">Ofsted</a> publish inspection outcomes for local authority children's services and children's social care providers in England as well as data on the placements of children looked after.
Scotland	Statistics on the outcomes of children looked after in Scotland are available for 2015-16 on the Scottish Government <a href="#">website</a> .
Wales	Statistics on the outcomes of children looked after in Wales are available for the period up to 31 March 2016 on the Welsh Government <a href="#">website</a> .
Northern Ireland	Statistics on the outcomes of children looked after in Northern Ireland are available for 2015-16 and are published on the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety <a href="#">website</a> .

## 11. National Statistics

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods, and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

The Department has a set of [statistical policies](#) in line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

## 12. Technical information

A looked after children statistics guide accompanies this release. It provides further information on the data sources, their coverage and quality and explains the methodology used in producing the data, including how it is validated and processed. It also includes information on changes to this release highlighted below.

- Local authority level data

In this release, local authority data is published as underlying data instead of formatted tables, for the most recent year.

- Key stage 2

The progress methodology was further refined to allow a greater number of prior attainment groups and better comparisons between pupils working below the standard of the tests.

Local authority key stage 2 attainment data has been updated to align with the main key stage 2 SFR. The national level data remains the same as in previous years and excludes pupils with missing or lost test results and pupils where results are suppressed pending the outcome of a maladministration investigation. The local authority level data excludes pupils with lost results but includes those with missing results or pending maladministration. It also excludes children that have recently arrived from overseas. As a result, national level England figures don't match national figures from local authority data.

- Key stage 4

Following on from the GCSE reforms, key stage 4 outcomes figures for 2017 reflect the changes that have been implemented in the [main key stage 4](#) SFR.

In addition, there are two new tables this year at national level at key stage 4; both provide additional breakdowns of the Progress 8 measure (school type and length of most recent period of care).

Local authority key stage 4 attainment data has been updated to align with the main key stage 4 SFR. The local authority attainment data has children recently arrived from overseas removed. As a result, national level England figures don't match national figures from local authority data.

## 13. Get in touch

### Media enquiries

Press Office News Desk, Department for Education, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BT.

Tel: 020 7783 8300

### Other enquiries/feedback

Bree Waine, Children Looked After Data Team, Department for Education, Level 2 Bishopsgate House, Darlington, DL1 5QE.

Tel: 01325 340824 Email: [CLA.STATS@education.gov.uk](mailto:CLA.STATS@education.gov.uk)



Department  
for Education



© Crown copyright 2018

This publication (not including logos) is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

To view this licence:

visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3)

email [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk)

write to Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London, TW9 4DU

About this publication:

Bree Waine, Children Looked After Data Team, Department for Education, Level 2 Bishopsgate House, Darlington, DL1 5QE.

Tel: 01325 340824 Email: [CLA.STATS@education.gov.uk](mailto:CLA.STATS@education.gov.uk)

Reference: SFR 20/2018



Follow us on Twitter:  
[@educationgovuk](https://twitter.com/educationgovuk)



Like us on Facebook:  
[facebook.com/educationgovuk](https://facebook.com/educationgovuk)