

# BECOME.

THE CHARITY FOR CHILDREN IN CARE  
AND YOUNG CARE LEAVERS

## Press release

16/11/2023

### **New government figures show a 62% rise in the number of children in care being moved away from their local area over the last decade**

New data released by the Department for Education (DfE) today shows a continued and significant rise in the numbers of children in care moved more than 20 miles from their local area and sent to live somewhere they don't know, often alone and without warning.

Despite promises from the Government to reform children's social care, Become Charity is highlighting that these statistics are moving in the wrong direction and with a 23% rise of children coming into care since 2013, urgent action is needed to turn this around.

Government figures show that, as at 31 March 2023:

- Across England, 17,630 children in care had been moved more than 20 miles away from home. That's over 21% of all children in care.
- There has been a 62% increase in the numbers of children in care in England moved more than 20 miles away compared to 2013. In the same period, the overall number of children in care increased by 23%.
- In some areas, moving children more than 20 miles away has become commonplace: in 19 local authorities in England, more than a third of children were living more than 20 miles away.
- Children in the care of local authorities in the East of England, the South West, the South East and the East Midlands were most likely to have been placed more than 20 miles away.
- More information, including a full breakdown by region and local authority, is available in the note to editors and data tables appended to this release.

Become's #GoneTooFar report, based on data from local authorities, shows the average child in care in England is placed more than 18 miles from their local area and the school, friends, family and networks that matter to them – equivalent to the distance from Birmingham to Coventry, with some children moved more than 500 miles away.

Today's DfE figures reveal the situation is only getting worse, with more children than ever before being moved far away not because it's in their best interests – but because of a lack of suitable places locally.

**Katharine Sacks-Jones, Chief Executive of Become, the national charity for children in care and young care leavers, says:**

“All children need love and stability to thrive. But just imagine being moved far away from your local area, often without warning, to an area you don't know, far away from everything that matters to you.

Being moved can be incredibly disruptive to children's education and relationships – including with brothers and sisters who might live miles away. Young people tell us how lonely and isolated it makes them feel and the real impact it can have on their mental health.

A decade of data paints a worrying picture of this happening more and more often - it's unacceptable that children are being moved away, not because it's the right decision for them, but because there are no suitable options closer.

Government must take urgent action to stop these numbers from continuing to get worse. We need a national commitment and strategy to keep children close to the people and places that matter to them.”

**ENDS**

For more information or to make a media enquiry, please contact Become's Communications Manager, Amy Grant, via 07951 155367 or [amy.grant@becomecharity.org.uk](mailto:amy.grant@becomecharity.org.uk)

## **NOTE TO EDITORS AND APPENDICES**

### **Note to Editors**

All statistics in the above press release are taken from the latest edition of the Department for Education's annual statistical release 'Children Looked After in England Including Adoptions', which was published on 16/11/23 and can be found [here](#).

All statistics in this document refer to children with CLA status in law who were in the care of local authorities in England and who were placed more than 20 miles away from their home on 31/03/2023.

Data tables, including national figures for every year since 2013 and local figures for every year since 2018, are provided in the appendices that follow.

Statistics for years before 2023 are taken from previous releases of 'Children Looked After in England Including Adoptions', which are available [here](#).

## Appendix A: National Data for England (2013 - 2023)

Year	Number of children >20 miles away from home	Number of children in care	Percentage of children >20 miles away
2013	10850	68110	15.9%
2014	11960	68840	17.4%
2015	12430	69540	17.9%
2016	12880	70440	18.3%
2017	13570	72670	18.7%
2018	14590	75420	19.3%
2019	15360	78150	19.7%
2020	16060	80000	20.1%
2021	16840	80850	20.8%
2022	16970	82170	20.7%
2023	17630	83840	21.0%
<b>10Y Change (2013 - 2023)</b>	<b>+6780 (+62.5%)</b>	<b>+15730 (+23.1%)</b>	<b>+5.1 percentage points</b>

See overleaf for local data tables.

## Appendix B: Local Data by Region and Local Authority (2018 - 2023)

The data tables below provide a full breakdown of the percentages of children in care in each **region** and **local authority** who were placed more than 20 miles away from home on 31<sup>st</sup> March, for each of the five years from 2018 to 2023.

Percentage of children in the given region placed more than 20 miles away on 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2023							
REGION	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	5Y % Point Change
<b>England</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>+2</b>
North East	11	11	11	12	11	12	+1
North West	14	15	14	14	14	14	0
Yorkshire and the Humber	16	16	16	16	16	17	+1
East Midlands	24	24	26	27	27	28	+4
West Midlands	16	16	16	17	17	18	+2
East of England	29	31	31	32	32	32	+3
London	19	18	18	19	17	17	-2
South East	25	26	27	29	28	28	+3
South West	26	29	29	31	31	31	+5
Inner London	19	18	17	18	16	16	-3
Outer London	19	18	18	19	18	18	-1

See overleaf for local authority tables.

**Percentage of children in the given local authority placed  
more than 20 miles away on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023**

<b>LOCAL AUTHORITY</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>5Y % point Change</b>
Barking and Dagenham	21	20	20	24	21	17	-4
Barnet	19	17	-	16	16	21	+2
Barnsley	-	-	-	8	9	9	N/A
Bath and North East Somerset	21	19	26	30	25	20	-1
Bedford	15	17	21	25	28	29	+14
Bexley	15	15	16	20	18	20	+5
Birmingham	12	12	12	13	12	12	0
Blackburn with Darwen	-	-	-	-	13	13	N/A
Blackpool	21	-	22	-	-	18	-3
Bolton	6	8	11	8	7	6	0
Bournemouth	15	13	-	-	-	-	N/A
Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole	-	-	14	16	17	22	N/A
Bracknell Forest	30	27	-	28	31	24	-6
Bradford	12	10	11	12	14	17	+5
Brent	19	19	20	20	16	17	-2
Brighton and Hove	16	16	15	17	16	15	-1
Bristol, City of	16	16	18	18	20	20	+4
Bromley	22	17	16	17	20	18	-4
Buckinghamshire	39	40	40	41	42	38	-1
Bury	9	10	8	12	11	11	+2
Calderdale	9	9	12	10	11	11	+2
Cambridgeshire	45	48	46	48	45	43	-2
Camden	16	17	14	13	14	18	+2
Central Bedfordshire	22	22	21	23	25	28	+6
Cheshire East	22	23	24	23	22	23	+1
Cheshire West and Chester	-	-	-	19	18	22	N/A
City of London	-	-	-	-	-	-	N/A
Cornwall	40	41	43	39	41	41	+1
County Durham	-	-	-	12	14	15	N/A

**Percentage of children in the given local authority placed  
more than 20 miles away on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023**

<b>LOCAL AUTHORITY</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>5Y % point Change</b>
Coventry	17	17	16	16	15	16	-1
Croydon	10	12	11	11	12	13	+3
Cumbria	58	59	54	53	56	56	-2
Darlington	-	-	-	-	-	13	N/A
Derby	34	30	35	37	34	33	-1
Derbyshire	25	26	31	29	32	30	+5
Devon	36	37	37	40	43	40	+4
Doncaster	18	-	-	-	18	18	0
Dorset	-	-	44	47	46	43	N/A
Dudley	-	14	13	11	11	11	N/A
Ealing	20	22	21	20	18	17	-3
East Riding of Yorkshire	38	43	47	46	38	34	-4
East Sussex	20	18	21	24	20	24	+4
Enfield	16	16	13	13	13	14	-2
Essex	29	28	27	27	28	28	-1
Gateshead	7	-	-	-	9	7	0
Gloucestershire	21	25	24	28	27	31	+10
Greenwich	30	27	25	26	25	23	-7
Hackney	16	15	13	16	16	12	-4
Halton	11	-	-	14	12	15	+4
Hammersmith and Fulham	16	16	16	16	16	18	+2
Hampshire	30	29	32	35	37	35	+5
Haringey	18	20	16	21	20	24	+6
Harrow	16	15	17	20	15	17	+1
Hartlepool	8	8	9	11	10	10	+2
Havering	15	13	18	18	15	16	+1
Herefordshire, County of	22	24	26	-	23	21	-1
Hertfordshire	21	24	25	26	25	27	+6
Hillingdon	18	17	20	22	19	21	+3

**Percentage of children in the given local authority placed  
more than 20 miles away on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023**

<b>LOCAL AUTHORITY</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>5Y % point Change</b>
Hounslow	21	21	26	24	20	19	<b>-2</b>
Isle of Wight	12	11	11	12	10	11	<b>-1</b>
Isles of Scilly	-	-	0	-	-	-	<b>N/A</b>
Islington	24	22	19	20	17	20	<b>-4</b>
Kensington and Chelsea	15	12	16	13	14	16	<b>+1</b>
Kent	19	20	20	21	21	20	<b>+1</b>
Kingston upon Hull, City of	12	13	13	16	18	16	<b>+4</b>
Kingston upon Thames	22	21	25	26	27	23	<b>+1</b>
Kirklees	18	17	13	12	12	11	<b>-7</b>
Knowsley	-	-	-	-	9	8	<b>N/A</b>
Lambeth	18	19	17	15	15	13	<b>-5</b>
Lancashire	19	19	19	19	19	19	<b>0</b>
Leeds	12	12	13	12	12	17	<b>+5</b>
Leicester	16	13	16	-	18	18	<b>+2</b>
Leicestershire	22	21	18	19	19	20	<b>-2</b>
Lewisham	21	17	21	19	18	18	<b>-3</b>
Lincolnshire	43	43	48	45	47	45	<b>+2</b>
Liverpool	9	10	9	9	9	10	<b>+1</b>
Luton	30	32	33	34	29	26	<b>-4</b>
Manchester	10	10	9	9	8	8	<b>-2</b>
Medway	17	16	21	25	28	31	<b>+14</b>
Merton	19	17	12	17	15	10	<b>-9</b>
Middlesbrough	-	-	-	13	14	15	<b>N/A</b>
Milton Keynes	15	20	21	27	25	26	<b>+11</b>
Newcastle upon Tyne	10	10	11	10	8	5	<b>-5</b>
Newham	18	17	14	12	10	9	<b>-9</b>
Norfolk	33	35	33	36	38	36	<b>+3</b>
North East Lincolnshire	13	13	18	19	23	27	<b>+14</b>
North Lincolnshire	14	11	13	11	9	6	<b>-8</b>

**Percentage of children in the given local authority placed  
more than 20 miles away on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023**

<b>LOCAL AUTHORITY</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>5Y % point Change</b>
North Northamptonshire	-	-	-	-	24	28	<b>N/A</b>
North Somerset	27	30	23	24	18	19	<b>-8</b>
North Tyneside	-	-	-	-	7	9	<b>N/A</b>
North Yorkshire	34	34	33	33	30	28	<b>-6</b>
Northamptonshire	22	22	24	24	-	-	<b>N/A</b>
Northumberland	20	23	-	-	25	26	<b>+6</b>
Nottingham	17	19	16	18	19	21	<b>+4</b>
Nottinghamshire	20	22	24	25	26	28	<b>+8</b>
Oldham	9	-	-	-	8	9	<b>0</b>
Oxfordshire	38	39	43	42	42	41	<b>+3</b>
Peterborough	30	30	30	32	31	29	<b>-1</b>
Plymouth	19	18	20	25	23	25	<b>+6</b>
Poole	9	12	-	-	-	-	<b>N/A</b>
Portsmouth	12	11	10	12	11	11	<b>-1</b>
Reading	35	-	31	32	29	31	<b>-4</b>
Redbridge	24	21	18	19	16	13	<b>-11</b>
Redcar and Cleveland	10	12	10	10	9	12	<b>+2</b>
Richmond upon Thames	19	19	27	23	26	28	<b>+9</b>
Rochdale	10	13	10	8	9	9	<b>-1</b>
Rotherham	19	21	21	-	15	12	<b>-7</b>
Rutland	-	-	-	-	24	44	<b>N/A</b>
Salford	7	5	6	6	7	7	<b>0</b>
Sandwell	11	10	10	11	9	9	<b>-2</b>
Sefton	-	-	-	-	-	10	<b>N/A</b>
Sheffield	15	11	12	11	11	13	<b>-2</b>
Shropshire	27	29	27	30	29	31	<b>+4</b>
Slough	25	-	-	32	32	25	<b>0</b>
Solihull	9	9	9	11	10	7	<b>-2</b>
Somerset	35	39	38	43	45	41	<b>+6</b>

**Percentage of children in the given local authority placed  
more than 20 miles away on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023**

<b>LOCAL AUTHORITY</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>5Y % point Change</b>
South Gloucestershire	15	19	18	20	17	18	<b>+3</b>
South Tyneside	11	9	10	12	-	13	<b>+2</b>
Southampton	20	21	22	25	27	22	<b>+2</b>
Southend-on-Sea	16	16	19	21	20	21	<b>+5</b>
Southwark	25	21	22	23	21	19	<b>-6</b>
St. Helens	-	7	8	8	8	7	<b>N/A</b>
Staffordshire	23	23	26	25	25	27	<b>+4</b>
Stockport	-	-	-	-	9	9	<b>N/A</b>
Stockton-on-Tees	9	7	8	-	6	9	<b>0</b>
Stoke-on-Trent	16	18	20	21	21	24	<b>+8</b>
Suffolk	36	39	41	42	39	40	<b>+4</b>
Sunderland	-	-	-	-	13	12	<b>N/A</b>
Surrey	33	37	36	36	33	35	<b>+2</b>
Sutton	35	30	30	31	29	28	<b>-7</b>
Swindon	21	27	25	25	33	37	<b>+16</b>
Tameside	11	11	14	12	10	12	<b>+1</b>
Telford and Wrekin	17	18	18	16	18	19	<b>+2</b>
Thurrock	18	17	21	22	24	19	<b>+1</b>
Torbay	27	34		29	30	31	<b>+4</b>
Tower Hamlets	16	16	19	20	16	17	<b>+1</b>
Trafford	-	6	-	-	6	6	<b>N/A</b>
Wakefield	16	15	15	14	15	18	<b>+2</b>
Walsall	14	13	11	14	14	18	<b>+4</b>
Waltham Forest	17	15	16	17	14	12	<b>-5</b>
Wandsworth	15	16	16	17	16	10	<b>-5</b>
Warrington	8	10	12	14	15	12	<b>+4</b>
Warwickshire	22	22	23	25	25	25	<b>+3</b>
West Berkshire	25	26	28	26	23	23	<b>-2</b>
West Northamptonshire	-	-	-	-	22	24	<b>N/A</b>

Percentage of children in the given local authority placed more than 20 miles away on 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2023							
LOCAL AUTHORITY	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	5Y % point Change
West Sussex	21	24	26	28	29	34	+13
Westminster	17	17	15	17	14	12	-5
Wigan	6	8	-	-	8	8	+2
Wiltshire	31	31	34	37	32	34	+3
Windsor and Maidenhead	25	26	-	25	33	17	-8
Wirral	9	11	11	9	10	8	-1
Wokingham	25	22	21	18	15	19	-6
Wolverhampton	12	13	11	13	-	11	-1
Worcestershire	17	15	15	18	17	19	+2
York	17	-	-	-	22	24	+7

**Note:** a '-' denotes that the data was not provided. In most cases, this is because the number of children that the datapoint in question would refer to was so small that reporting it would entail revealing potentially identifying information about those children. In other cases, this is because the local authority failed to report.

## About Become

Become is the national charity for care-experienced children and young people. We put young people at the heart of everything we do, supporting them to get the help they need now and empowering them to bring about change in their own lives, the care system and society.

To find out more, visit <https://becomecharity.org.uk>