



## Children We Care for and Care Leavers

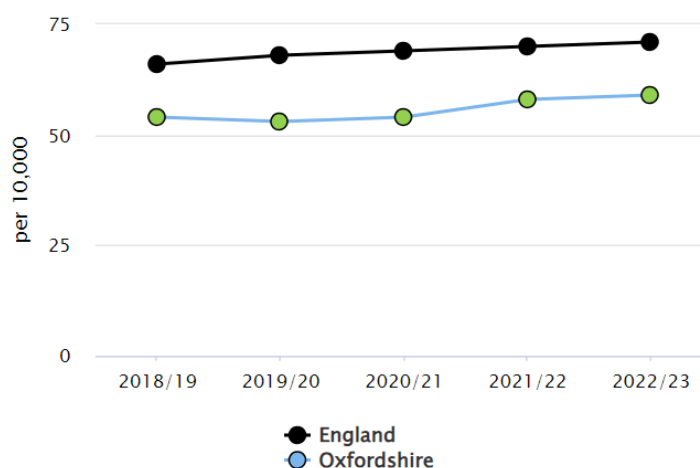
*Children We Care for (CWCF) and Care Leavers face significantly worse outcomes than children without any care experience. Inequalities have been identified for physical and mental health, education, employment, accommodation, and social class [1, 2, 3].*

*This Bitesize outlines the data for CWCF and Care Leavers in Oxfordshire. Data from the most recent JSNA<sup>[4]</sup> is supplemented with additional facts, figures, and research findings.*

### Rates of Social Care Interventions

- The rate of CWCF in Oxfordshire has been increasing year on year, although the change is not significant and data submitted for 2023/24 shows that the number of CWCF fell 12.7% in the year from 882 to 770 [4, 5, 6, 7].
- This reflects wider increases in need, with higher rates of children who were the subject of a child protection plan, and number of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children reported [4, 6, 8].
- Oxfordshire has consistently lower rates of CWCF than the England average [6, 7].

Rates of CWCF, per 10,000, in England and Oxfordshire<sup>[7]</sup>



### Wellbeing and Health

- CWCF face a range of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), with the three most common categories of need in 2023 being ‘abuse or neglect’ (58%), ‘absent parenting’ (12%), and ‘family in acute stress’ (9%) [5].
- Care leavers nationally face poorer outcomes than individuals with no care experience in terms of premature death, self-reported health, and rates of limiting long-term illness. [1, 3] A national survey in 2017 found that after leaving care, 79% of care leavers reported anxiety, 75% reported feeling depressed, and 29% reported having self-harmed [9].

### Placement Location and Contact

- Around 29% of new placements in 2023 were outside of the Oxfordshire local authority boundary\*<sup>[5]</sup>.
- In 2023, the local authority was in touch with 93% of care leavers aged 19-21. The percentage of care leavers who are not in touch increases with age, at 68%, 71%, 79%, and 87% for 22-, 23-, 24-, and 25-year-old care leavers respectively [5].

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## Education, Employment and Training

- In 2023, 24% of CWCF aged 17-18 were not in education, employment or training (NEET). This increases to 39% for care leavers aged 19-21 <sup>[5]</sup>.
- Mid-year school moves can cause disruption to the education of CWCF. In 2023, 19% of CWCF who had been in care for 2 years or more had one or more mid-year school moves during the previous 2 years, with 12% of CWCF who had been in care for less time having experienced a mid-year move <sup>[5]</sup>.
- For 2021/2022, the average attainment 8 score of children in care in Oxfordshire was 18.7, lower than the England average of 20.3 and in the 2<sup>nd</sup> worst quintile nationally <sup>[10]</sup>.

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\*This is an amalgamated figure. 3% of new placements in 2023 were placed outside local authority boundary less than 20 miles from home and 26% of new placements were placed outside local authority boundary more than 20 miles from home.

[1] [The Nuffield Foundation, Looked After Children Grown Up](#), Accessed August 2024.

[2] [The Nuffield Foundation, Care Leavers Transition into the Labour Market in England](#), Accessed August 2024.

[3] Murray, E et al. Non-parental care in childhood and health up to 30 years later: ONS Longitudinal Study 1971-2011. *European Journal of Public Health*. 2020; 30: 6: 1121-1127.

[4] [Oxfordshire Insight, Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2023](#), Accessed August 2024.

[5] [GOV.UK, Children Looked After in England including Adoptions](#), Accessed August 2024.

[6] [Department for Education \(DfE\), Statistics: Looked-after children](#), Accessed August 2024.

[7] [Department of Education, from Office for Health Improvement and Disparities. Public health profiles, Children in Care: Crude rate per 10,000](#), © Crown copyright 2024, Accessed August 2024.

[8] [GOV.UK, Local Authority Interactive Tool](#), Accessed August 2024.

[9] [The Care Leavers Association. Caring for Better Health](#), Accessed August 2024.

[10] [Department for Education \(DfE\), from Office for Health Improvement and Disparities. Public health profiles, Average Attainment 8 Score of Children in Care](#), © Crown copyright 2024, Accessed August 2024.

We welcome your comments, please email [jsna@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:jsna@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

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