

# Adoption and Special Guardianship Data

## Adopter Characteristics

**October 2024**

## HEADLINE SUMMARY

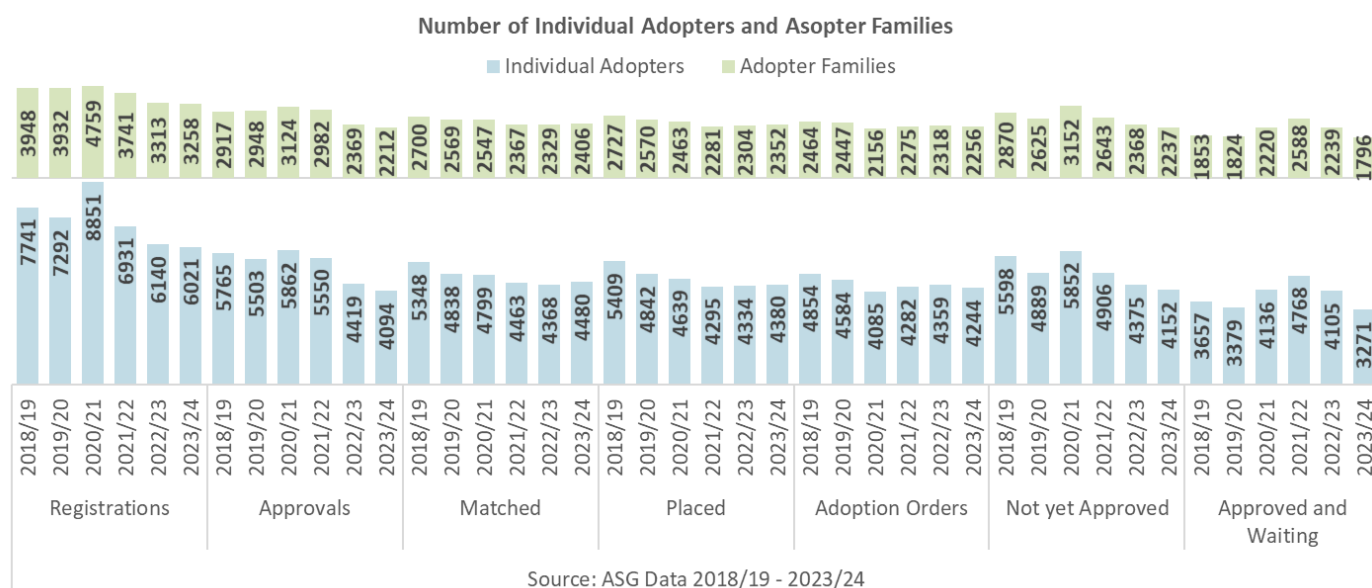
During the period 2018/19 to 2023/24 there has been:

- A decline in the number of individual adopters and adopter families at all stages of the adoption process. In 2023/24, there were **3271** individual adopters and **1796** adopter families approved and waiting.
- A decline in the number and proportion of VAA individual adopters and adopter families. In 2023/24, **21%** of adopters approved and waiting were VAA adopters.
- An increase in the proportions of one person adopter families, except at the adoption order stage which has remained the same. In 2023/24, **10%** of adopter families approved and waiting were one person adopter families.
- No change in the proportion of adopters recorded as having a disability, except for an increase at not yet approved. In 2023/24, **1%** of adopters approved and waiting, and **2%** of adopters not yet approved were recorded as having a disability.
- No change in the proportion of adopters identifying as male or female. In 2023/24, **49%** of adopters approved and waiting identified as male, and **50%** identified as female.
- An increase in the proportion of one person adopter families who identify as male, which is now starting to decrease. In 2023/24, **8%** of one person adopters identified as male.
- No change in adopters aged 30 to 39 accounting for the largest proportion of registrations, approvals, matched, placed, and not yet approved, and adopters aged 40 to 49 accounting for the largest proportion of adoption orders, and approved and waiting. In 2023/23, **48%** of adopters approved and waiting were aged 40 to 49.
- An increase in the proportion of Ethnic Minority adopters, except at adoption orders where the proportion has remained the same. Asian or Asian British us the largest represented Ethnic Minority. In 2023/24, **18%** of adopters approved and waiting were from an Ethnic Minority, and **11%** were Asian or Asian British.
- A decrease in the proportion of adopters who are recorded as having a religion. Christian remains the largest represented religion. In 2023/24, **51%** of adopters approved and waiting were recorded as having a religion, and **37%** stated that they were Christian.
- An increase in the proportion of adopters who identify as LGBTQIA+. In 2023/24, **18%** of adopters approved and waiting identified as LGBTQIA+.
- A decrease in the proportion of two person adopters who were recorded as married. In 2023/24, **67%** of adopters approved and waiting were married.
- A decrease in the proportion of adopting couples who are different sex, and an increase in adopting couples who are same sex. In 2023/24, **20%** of adopters approved and waiting were in same sex couples: **14%** identified as both male and **6%** identified as both female.
- An increase in the average time from enquiry to adoption order. In 2023/24, the average time from enquiry to adoption order for a RAA/LA adopter was **29 months**, and **35 months** for a VAA adopter.
- No change in the trend for Ethnic Minority adopters to have the longest journey to adoption. In 2023/24, Ethnic Minority adopters had been approved and waiting on average for **16 months**.

## INDIVIDUAL AND ADOPTER FAMILIES

The chart below shows the number of individual adopters, and adopter families for adopter registrations, approvals, matched, placed, adoption orders, not yet approved, and approved and waiting from 2018/19 to 2023/24.

The number of individual adopters and adopter families has decreased across all stages since 2018/19.

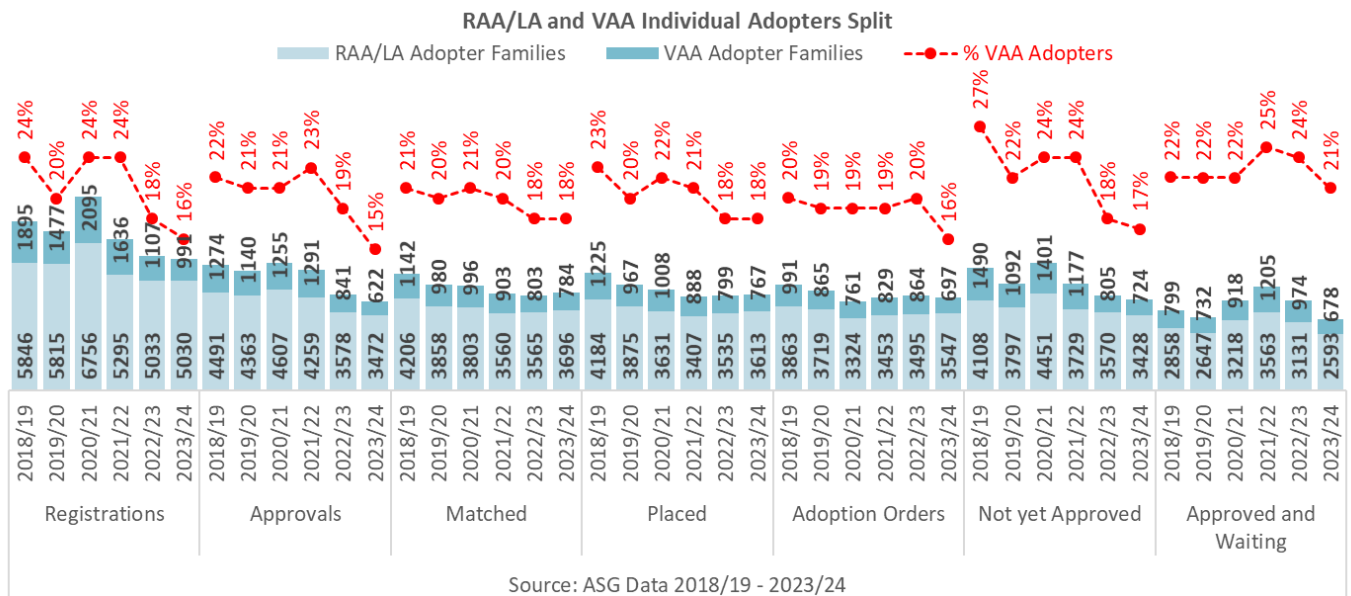


In 2023/24 there were:

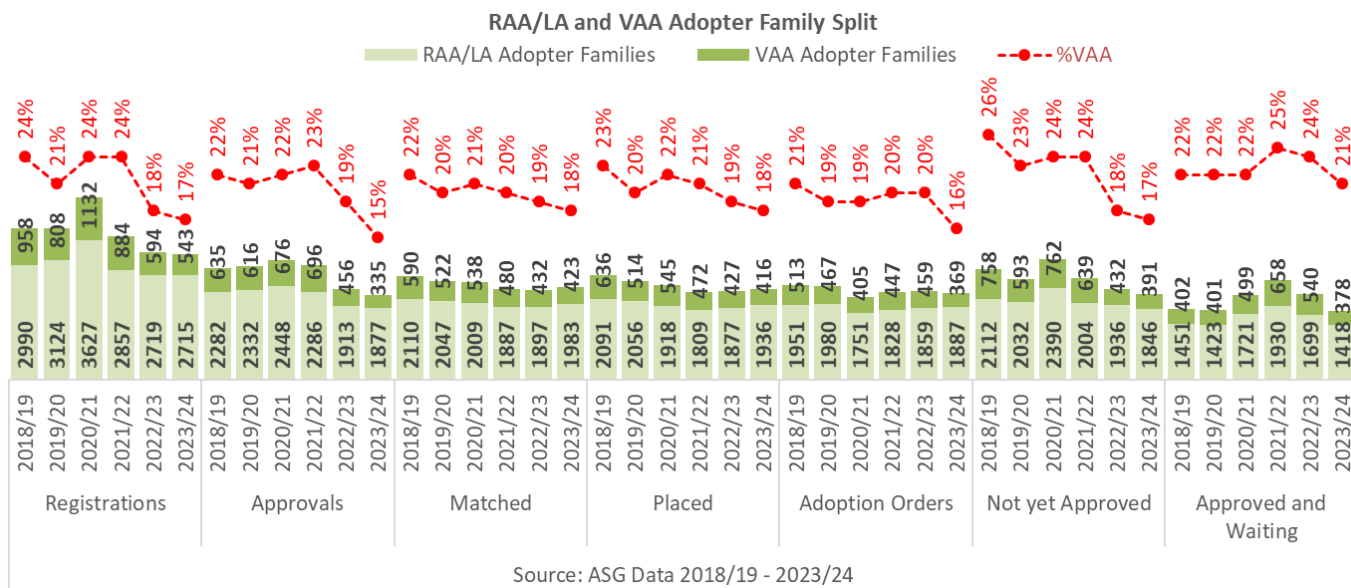
- **6021** individual adopter registrations; **3258** adopter families, a **22% (1720n)** decrease in the number of individual adopters, and a **17% (690n)** decrease in the number of adopter families 2018/19
- **4094** individual adopter approvals; **2212** adopter families, a **29% (1671n)** decrease in the number of individual adopters and a **24% (705n)** decrease in the number of adopter families from to 2018/19
- **4480** individual adopters matched; **2406** adopter families, a **16% (868n)** decrease in the number of individual adopters and a **11% (294n)** decrease in the number of adopter families from to 2018/19
- **4380** individual adopters with a child placed; **2352** adopter families, a **19% (1029n)** decrease in the number of individual adopters and a **14% (375n)** decrease in the number of adopter families from to 2018/19
- **4244** individual adopters who had an adoption order granted; **2256** adopter families, a **13% (610n)** decrease in the number of individual adopters and a **8% (208n)** decrease in the number of adopter families from 2018/19
- **4152** individual adopters not yet approved; **2237** adopter families, a **26% (1446n)** decrease in the number of individual adopters and a **22% (633n)** decrease in the number of adopter families from 2018/19
- **3271** individual adopters approved and waiting; **1796** adopter families, a **11% (386n)** decrease in the number of individual adopters and a **3% (57n)** decrease in the number of adopter families from 2018/19

For context there were **2580** children waiting with a Placement Order (PO), a decrease of **8% (220n)** from 2018/19

The two charts below show the number of individual adopters, and adopter families for RAAs/LAs and VAA, and the proportion of VAA adopters for adopter registrations, approvals, matched, placed, adoption orders, not yet approved, and approved and waiting from 2018/19 to 2023/24.



The proportion of VAA adopters has decreased across all stages since 208/19.

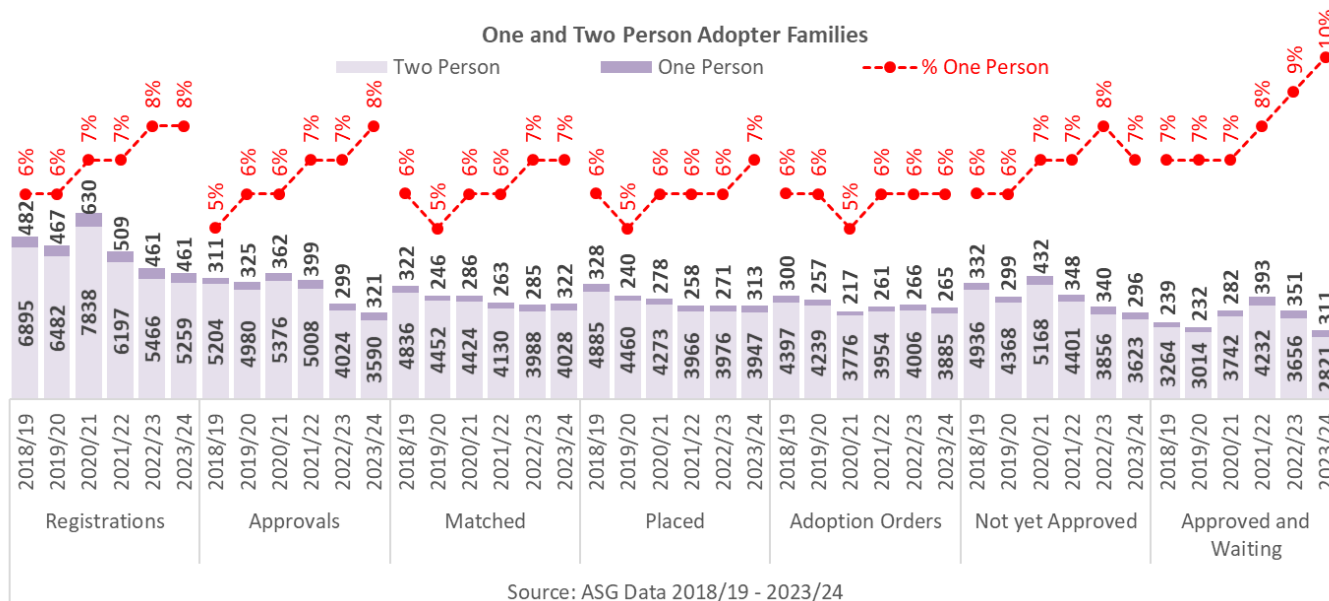


In 2023/24 VAA adopter families accounted for:

- **17%** adopter registrations, a decrease of **7** percentage points from 2018/19
- **15%** adopter approvals, a decrease of **7** percentage points from 2018/19
- **18%** adopters matched, a decrease of **4** percentage points from 2018/19
- **18%** adopters with a child placed, a decrease of **5** percentage points from 2018/19
- **16%** adopters who had an adoption order granted, a decrease of **5** percentage point from 2018/19
- **17%** adopters not yet approved, a decrease of **9** percentage points from 2018/19
- **21%** adopters approved and waiting, a decrease of **1** percentage point from 2018/19

## ONE AND TWO PERSON ADOPTER FAMILIES

The chart below shows the numbers of one and two person adopters, and the proportion of one person adopter families for adopter registrations, approvals, matched, placed, adoption orders, not yet approved, and approved and waiting from 2018/19 to 2023/24.



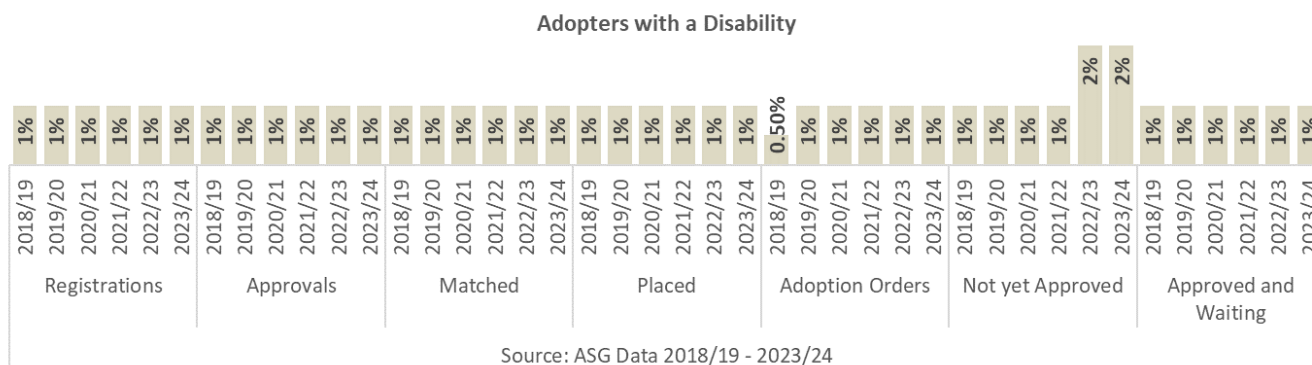
There has been an increase in the number and proportion of one person adopter families.

In 2023/24 single adopter families accounted for:

- **8%** adopter registrations, an increase of **2** percentage points from 2018/19
- **8%** adopter approvals, an increase of **3** percentage points from 2018/19
- **7%** adopters matched, an increase of **1** percentage point from 2018/19
- **7%** adopters with a child placed, an increase of **1** percentage point from 2018/19
- **6%** adopters who had an adoption order granted, the same as 2018/19
- **7%** adopters not yet approved, an increase of **1** percentage point from 2018/19
- **10%** adopters approved and waiting, an increase of **3** percentage points from 2018/19

## Adopters with a Disability

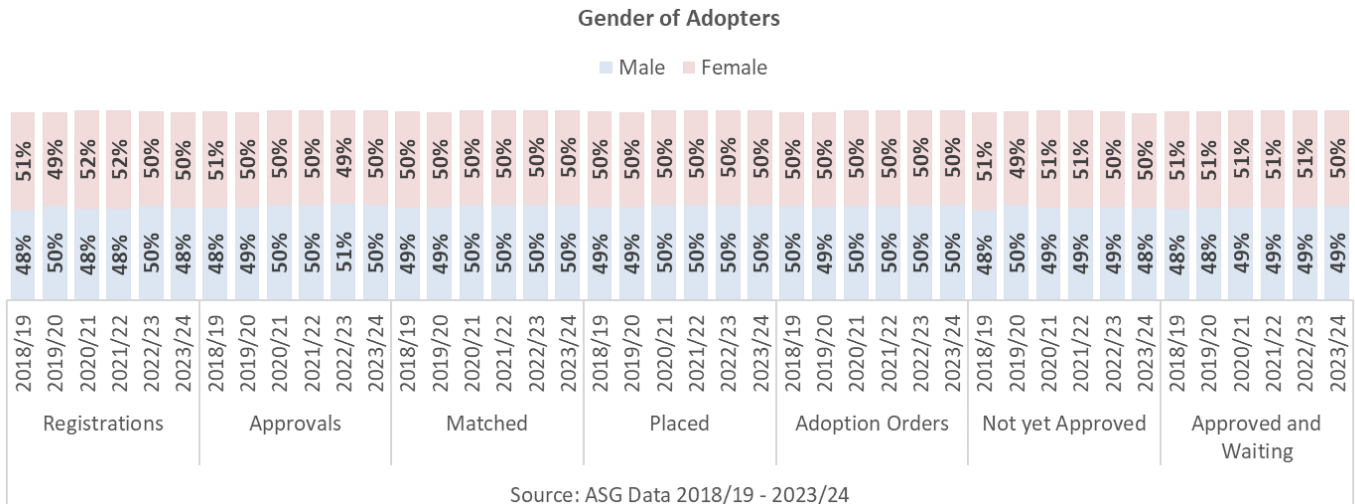
The chart below shows the proportion of adopters with a disability by registrations, approvals, matched, placed, adoption orders, not yet approved, and approved and waiting from 2018/19 to 2023/24. The proportion of individual adopters with a disability has remained stable at **1%** of all adopters, with an increase to **2%** for adopters not yet approved in 2022/23 and 2023/24.



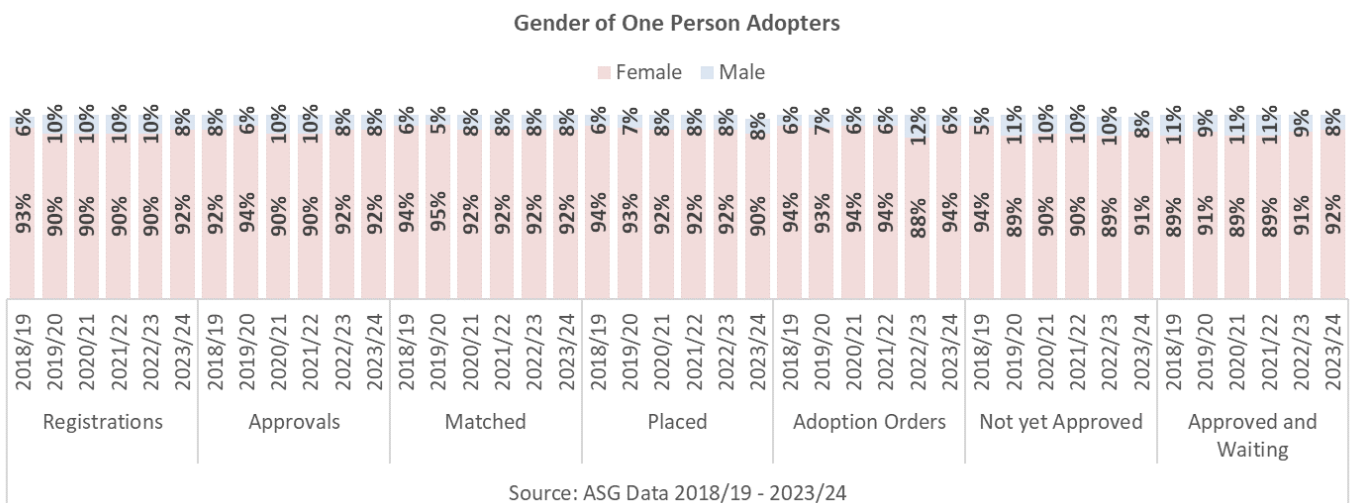
## Gender of Adopters

The chart below shows the proportion of male and female adopters for adopter registrations, approvals, matched, placed, adoption orders, not yet approved, and approved and waiting from 2018/19 to 2023/24.

Overall, the proportions of adopters identifying as male and female adopters have remained stable, with there being slightly more adopters identifying as female than male.



The chart below shows the proportion one persona adopter families identifying as male or female for registrations, approvals, matched, placed, adoption orders, not yet approved, and approved and waiting from 2018/19 to 2023/24.



In 2023/24 single male adopters accounted for:

- **8%** adopter registrations, an increase of **2** percentage points from 2018/19
- **8%** adopter approvals, the same as 2018/19
- **8%** adopters matched, an increase of **2** percentage points from 2018/19
- **8%** adopters with a child placed, an increase of **2** percentage points from 2018/19
- **6%** adopters who had an adoption order granted, the same as 2018/19
- **8%** adopters not yet approved, an increase of **3** percentage points from 2018/19
- **8%** adopters approved and waiting, a decrease of **3** percentage points from 2018/19

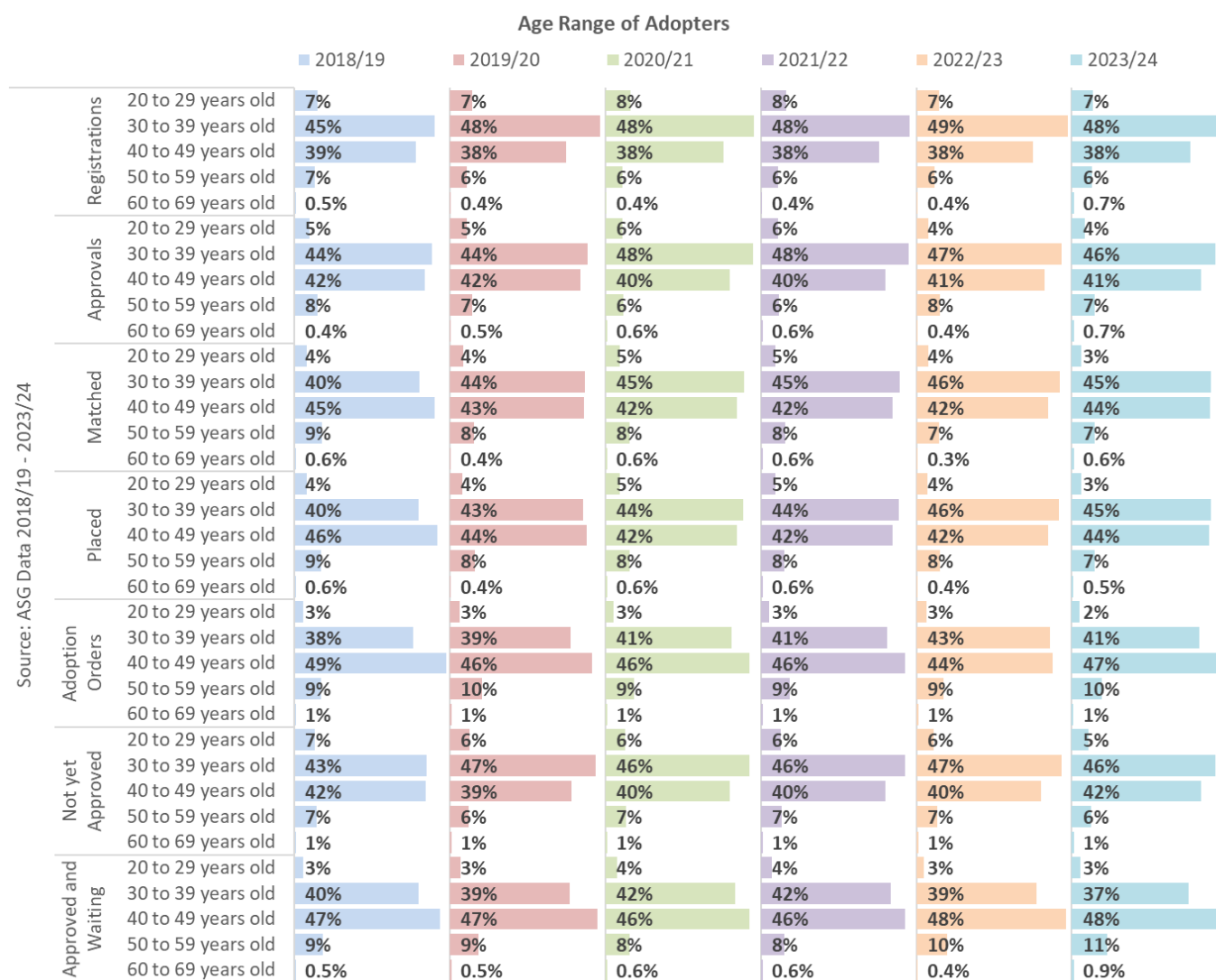
*NB: In 2023/24 additional gender descriptions were added to the adopter level data collection template. The current numbers reported are for the additional descriptions are small and so are suppressed for confidentiality.*

## Age Range of Adopters

The chart below shows the proportion adopters by age range, for adopter registrations, approvals, matched, placed, adoption orders, not yet approved, and approved and waiting from 2018/19 to 2023/24.

Adopters aged 30 to 39 accounted for the largest proportion of adopter registrations and approvals, matched, with a child placed, and not yet approved, and adopters aged 40 to 49 accounting for the largest proportion of adopters with an adoption order, and approved and waiting. This suggests that adopters are likely to be at the older end of the 30 to 39 age range and move into the 40 to 49 age range as they progress through the adoption process.

The proportions of adopters aged 20 to 29, 50 to 59, 60 to 69 have remained stable since 2018/19.



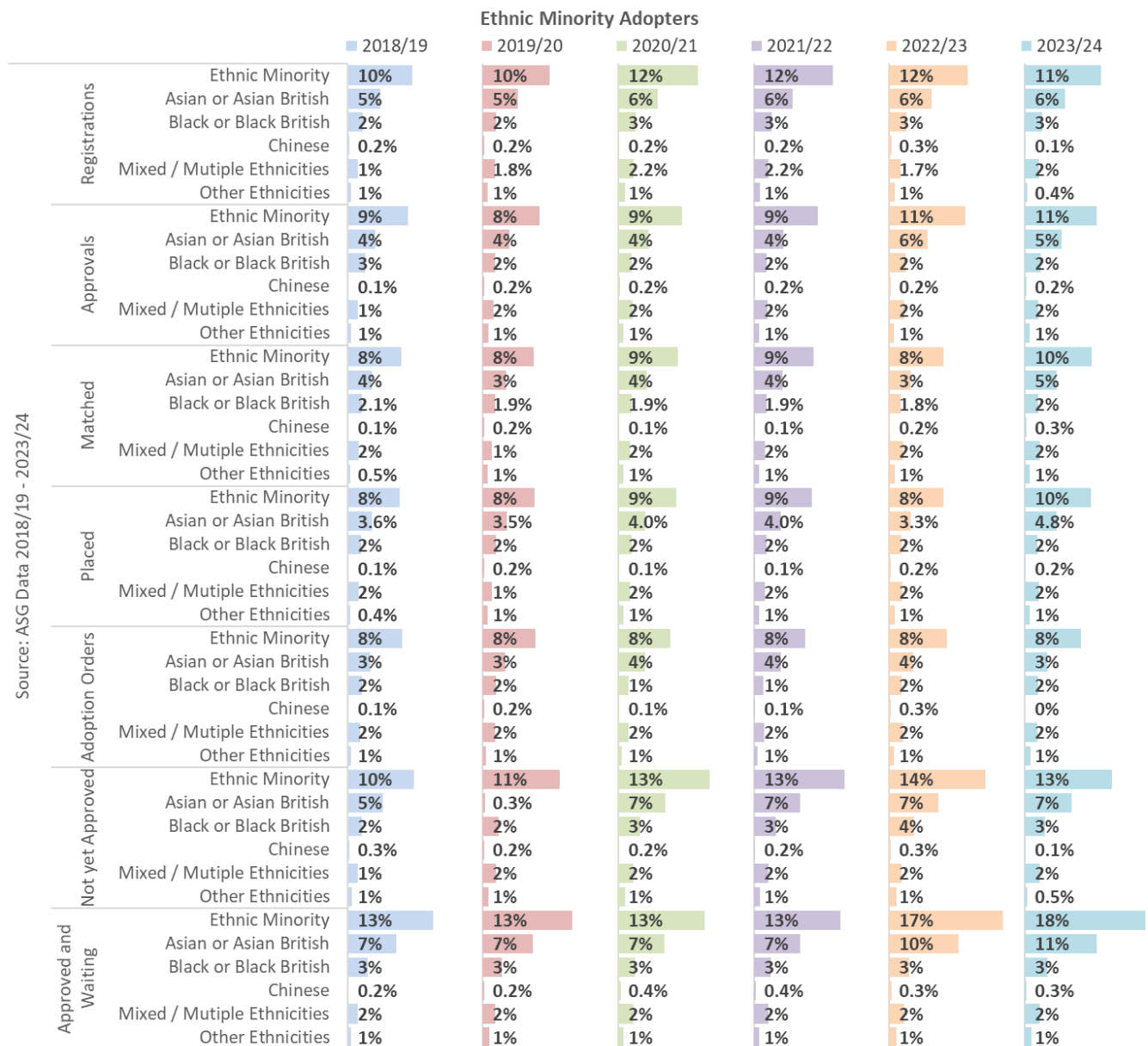
In 2023/24:

- **48%** of registrations were for adopters aged 30 to 39, an increase of **2** percentage points from 2018/19
- **46%** of approvals were for adopters aged 30 to 39, an increase of **2** percentage points from 2018/19
- **45%** of matched, were for adopters aged 30 to 39, an increase of **5** percentage points from 2018/19
- **45%** with a child placed, were for adopters aged 30 to 39, an increase of **5** percentage points from 2018/19
- **47%** of adoption orders, were for adopters aged 40 to 49, a decrease of **2** percentage points from 2018/19
- **46%** of adopters not yet approved were aged 30 to 39, an increase of **3** percentage points from 2018/19
- **48%** of adopters approved and waiting were aged 40 to 49, an increase of **1** percentage point from 2018/19

## Ethnicity of Adopters

The chart below shows the proportion of Ethnic Minority adopters for adopter registrations, approvals, matched, placed, adoption orders, not yet approved, and approved and waiting from 2018/19 to 2023/24.

There has been an increase in the proportion of Ethnic Minority adopter across all stages of the adoption process except for adoption orders which has remained the same. The proportion of Ethnic Minority registrations decreased this year by 1 percentage point when compared to the previous three years.



In 2023/24 Ethnic Minority adopters accounted for:

- **11%** adopter registrations, an increase of 1 percentage point from 2018/19
- **11%** adopter approvals, an increase of 2 percentage points from 2018/19
- **10%** adopters matched, an increase of 2 percentage points from 2018/19
- **10%** adopters with a child placed, an increase of 2 percentage points from 2018/19
- **8%** adopters who had an adoption order granted, the same as 2018/19
- **13%** adopters not yet approved, an increase of 3 percentage points from 2018/19
- **18%** adopters approved and waiting, an increase of 5 percentage points from 2018/19

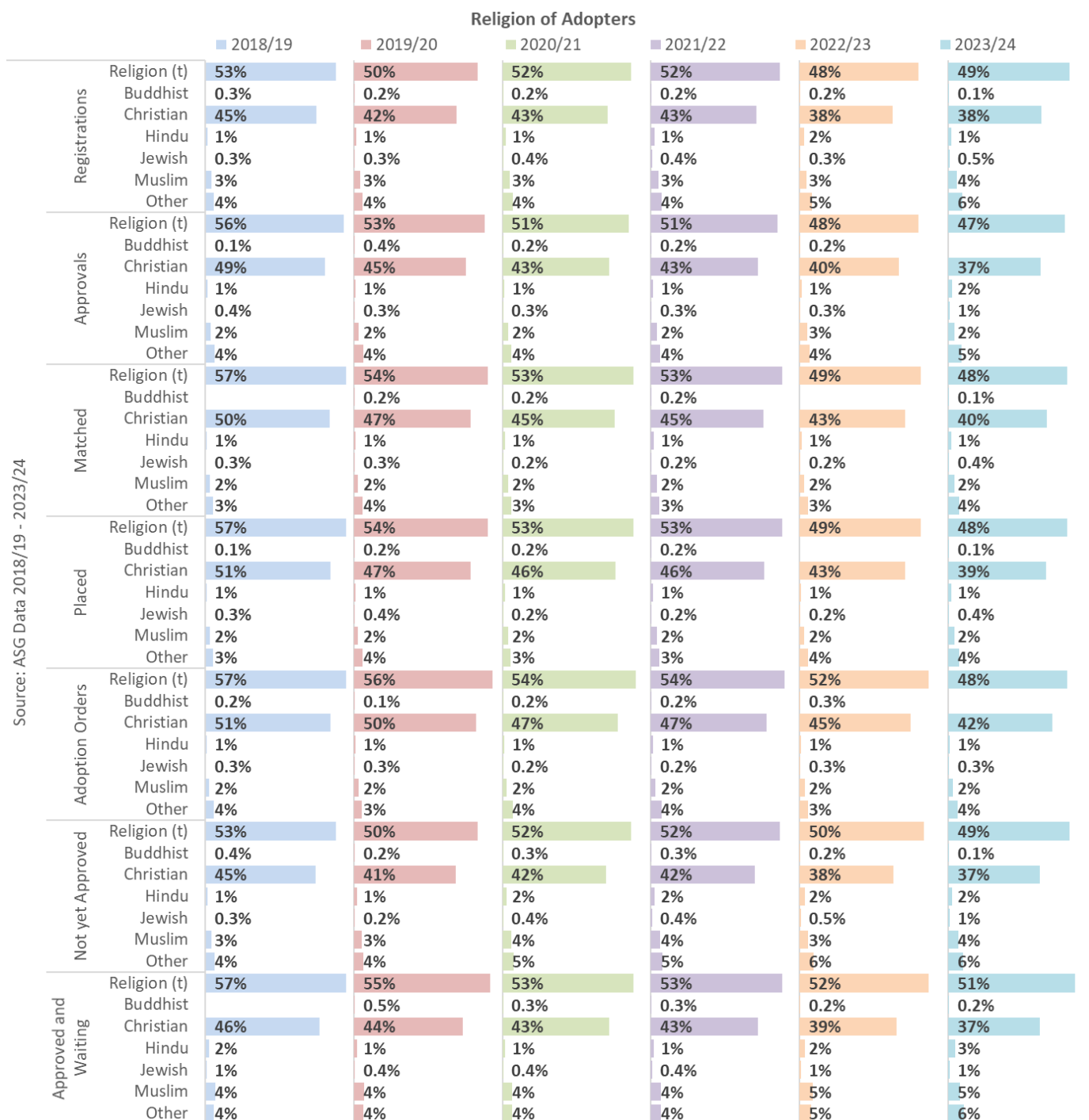
For context **18%** of children waiting with a PO are from an ethnic minority, compared to **17%** in 2018/19



## Religion of Adopters

The chart below shows the proportion of adopters with a religion for adopter registrations, approvals, matched, placed, adoption orders, not yet approved, and approved and waiting from 2018/19 to 2023/24.

Under half of the adopter population had a religion, and since 2018/19 the proportion of individual adopters with a religion has declined across all stages of the adoption process

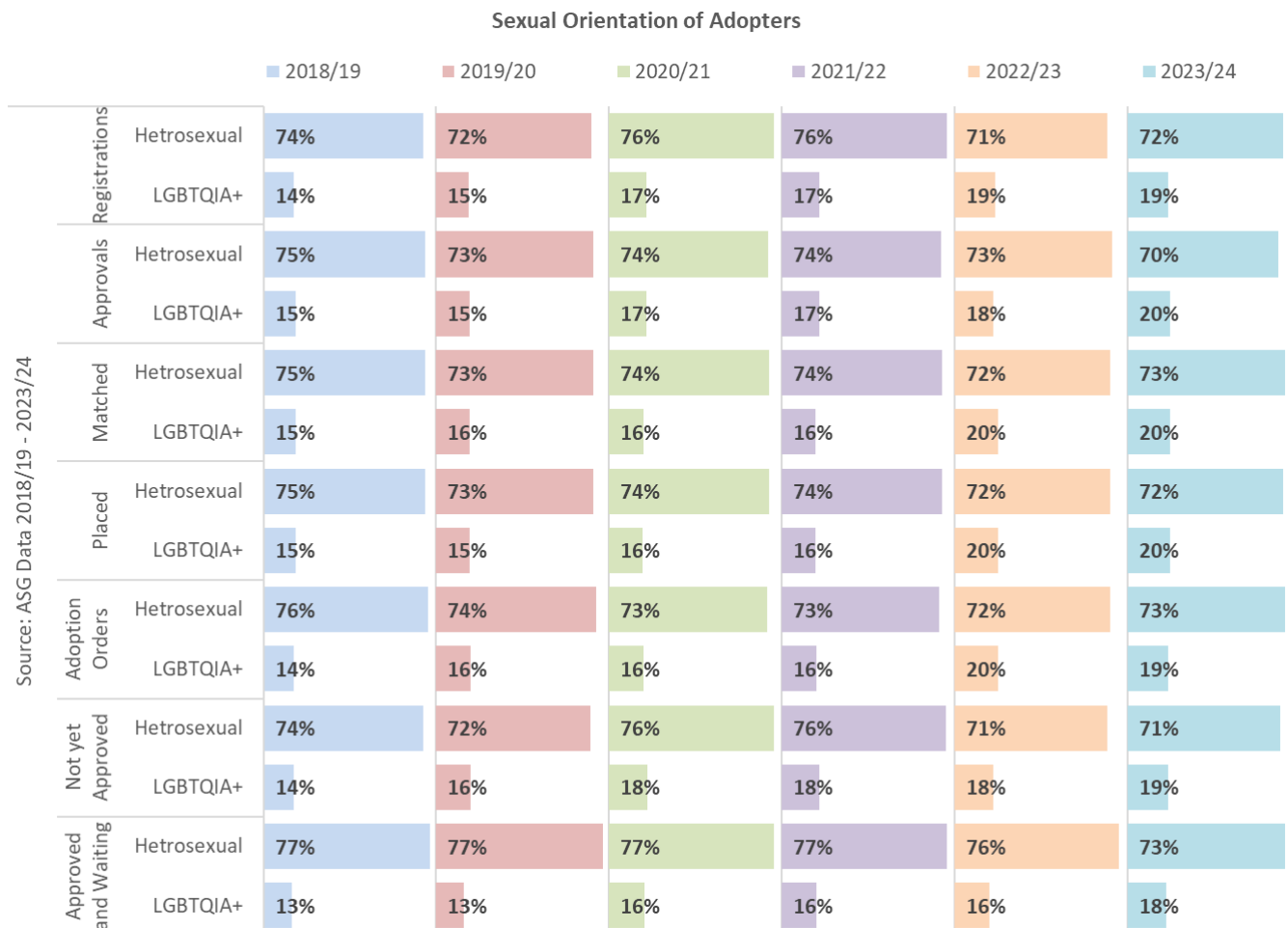


Adopters with a Christian religion account for the largest proportion of registrations, approvals, matched, with a child placed, adoption orders, not yet approved and approved and waiting, followed Other religion, Muslim, Hindu, Jewish and Buddhist.

## Sexual Orientation of Adopters

The chart below shows the proportion adopters by sexual orientation, for adopter registrations, approvals, matched, placed, adoption orders, not yet approved, and approved and waiting from 2018/19 to 2023/24.

There has been an increase in the adopter population who identify as LGBTQIA+ across all stages of the adoption process.



In 2023/24 LGBTQIA+ adopters accounted for:

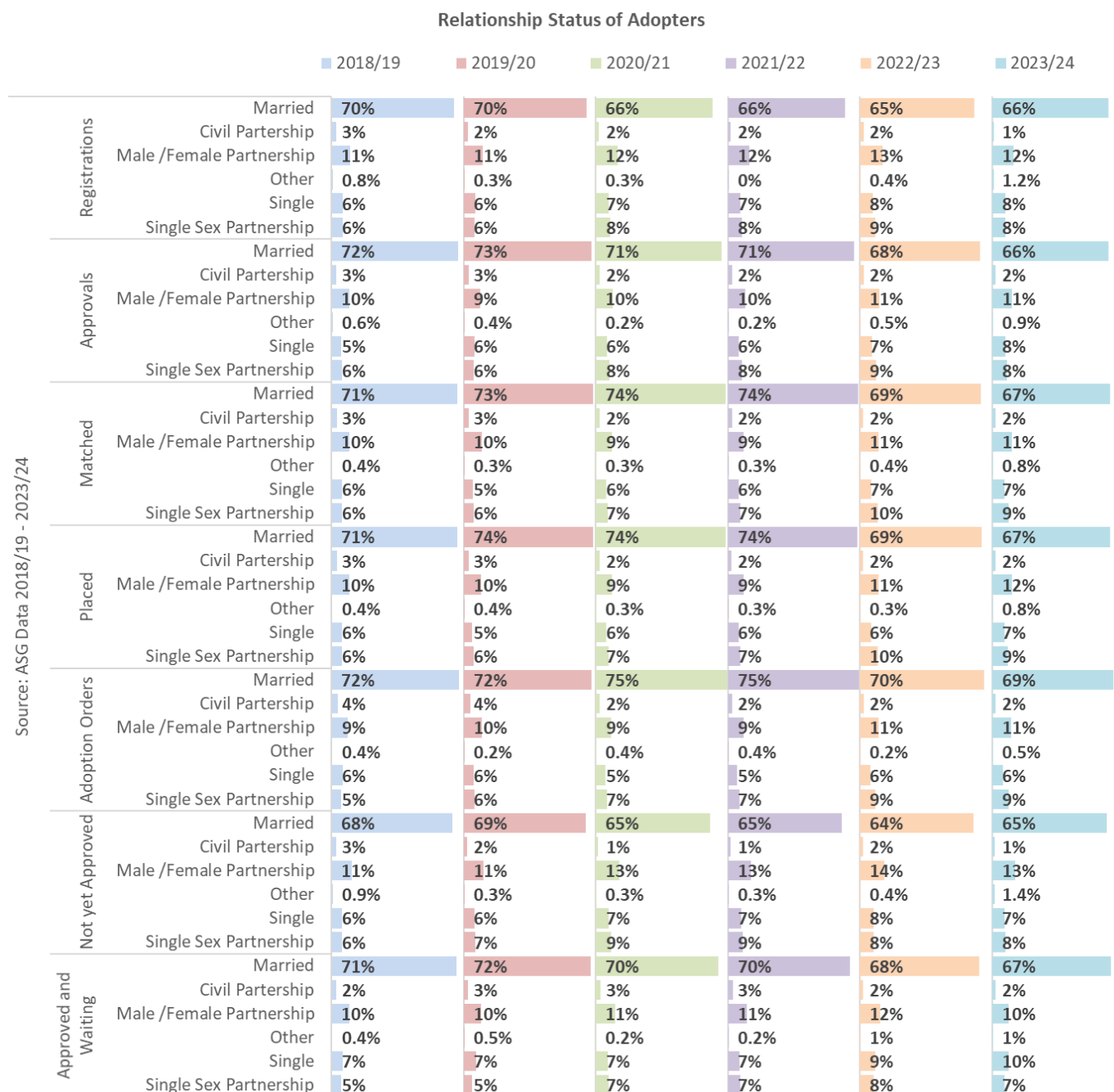
- **19%** adopter registrations, an increase of **5** percentage points from 2018/19
- **20%** adopter approvals, an increase of **5** percentage points from 2018/19
- **20%** adopters matched, an increase of **5** percentage points from 2018/19
- **20%** adopters with a child placed, an increase of **5** percentage points from 2018/19
- **19%** adopters who had an adoption order granted, an increase of **5** percentage points from 2018/19
- **19%** adopters not yet approved, an increase of **5** percentage points from 2018/19
- **18%** adopters approved and waiting, an increase of **5** percentage points from 2018/19

*NB: In 2023/24 additional sexual orientation descriptions were added to the adopter level data collection template. The current numbers reported for the additional descriptions are small and so are suppressed for confidentiality.*

## Relationship Status of Adopters

The chart below shows the proportion of adopters by relationship status, for adopter registrations, approvals, matched, placed, adoption orders, not yet approved, and approved and waiting from 2018/19 to 2023/24.

Married Adopters account for the highest proportion of adopters across all the stages of the adoption process. Since 2018/19, the proportion of married adopters has declined, while single adopters and adopters in single sex partnerships have increased



Source: ASG Data 2018/19 - 2023/24

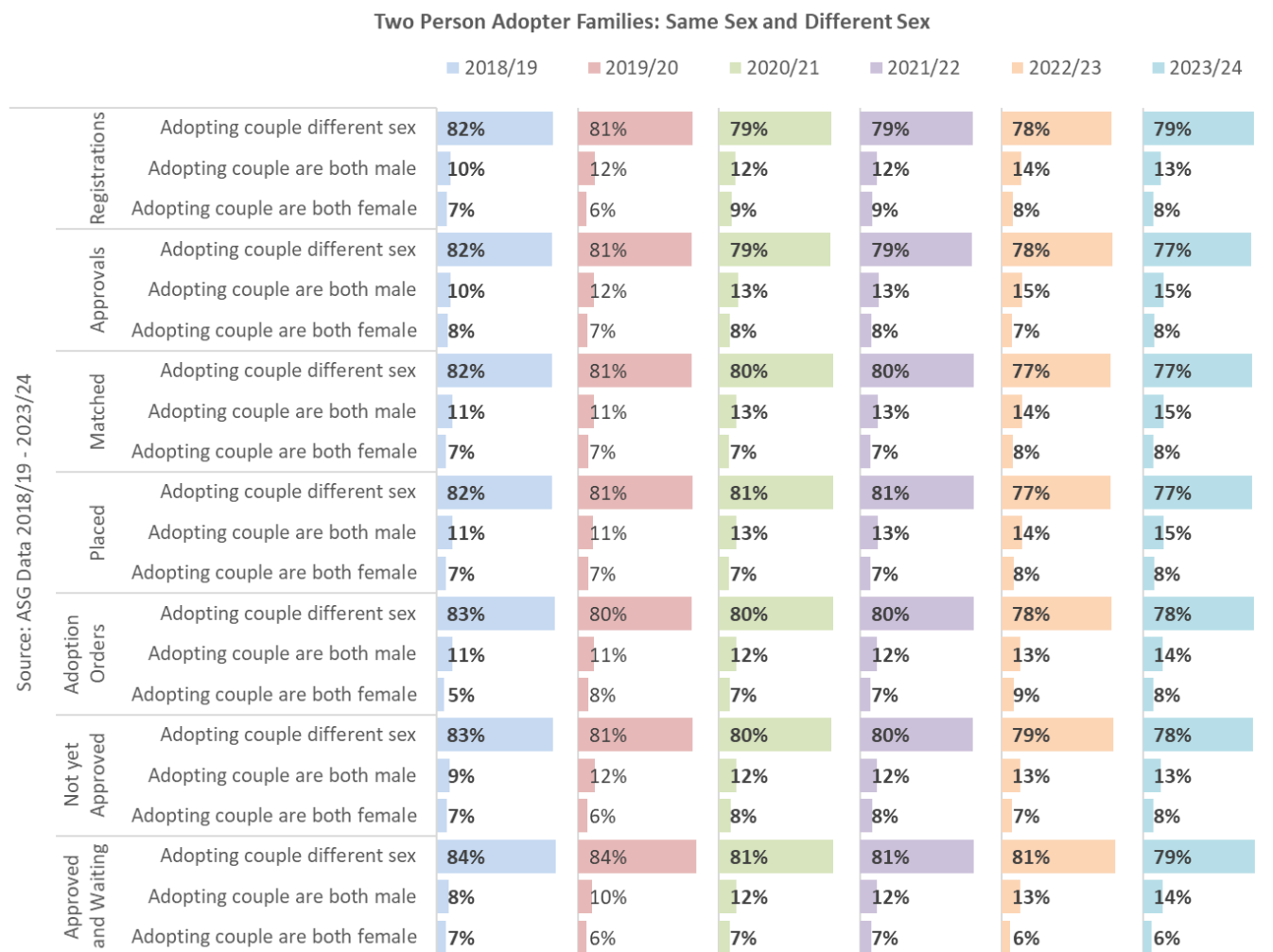
Since 2018/19 the proportion of:

- Single adopters have increased by 2 to 3 percentage points across all stages of the adoption process
- Adopters in single sex partnerships has increase by 2 to 3 percentage points across all stages of the adoption process

## Two Person Adopter Families

The chart below shows the proportion of two person adopter families for adopter registrations, approvals, matched, placed, adoption orders, not yet approved, and approved and waiting from 2018/19 to 2023/24.

There has been a decrease in the proportion of two person adopter families where the adopting couple are different sex, and an increase in adopting couples where both are the same sex. There is a higher proportion of same sex couples where both adopters identify as male than female.

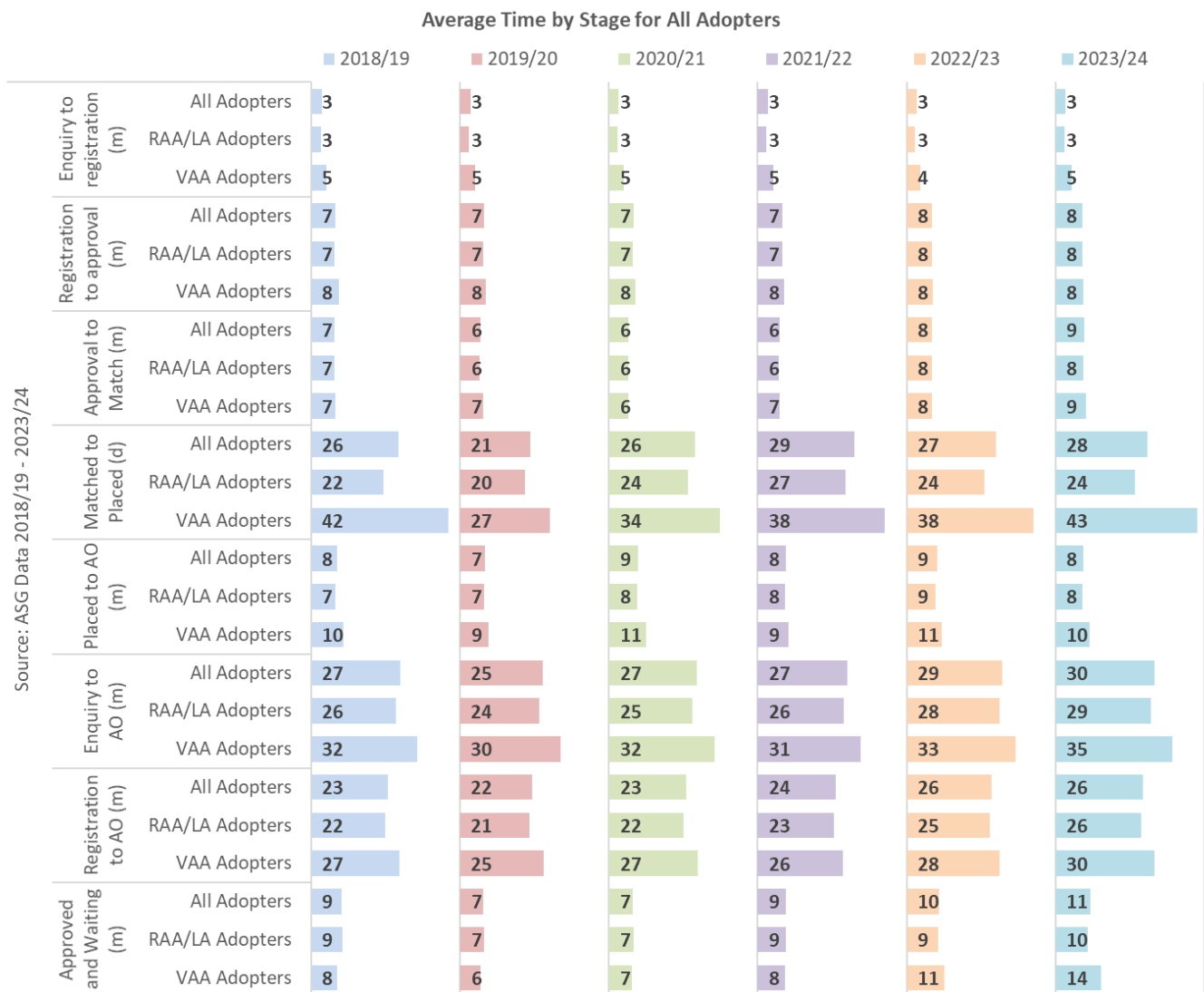


In 2023/24 same sex couples accounted for:

- **21%** of adopter registrations, an increase of **4** percentage points from 2018/19
- **23%** adopter approvals, an increase of **5** percentage points from 2018/19
- **23%** adopters matched, an increase of **5** percentage points from 2018/19
- **23%** adopters with a child placed, an increase of **5** percentage points from 2018/19
- **22%** adopters who had an adoption order granted, an increase of **6** percentage points from 2018/19
- **21%** adopters not yet approved, an increase of **5** percentage points from 2018/19
- **20%** adopters approved and waiting, an increase of **5** percentage points from 2018/19

## Timeliness for Adopters

The chart below shows the average time by stage from enquiry, to registrations, approvals, matched, placed, adoption orders, not yet approved, and approved and waiting from 2018/19 to 2023/24, for all adopters, RAA/LA adopters and VAA adopters.



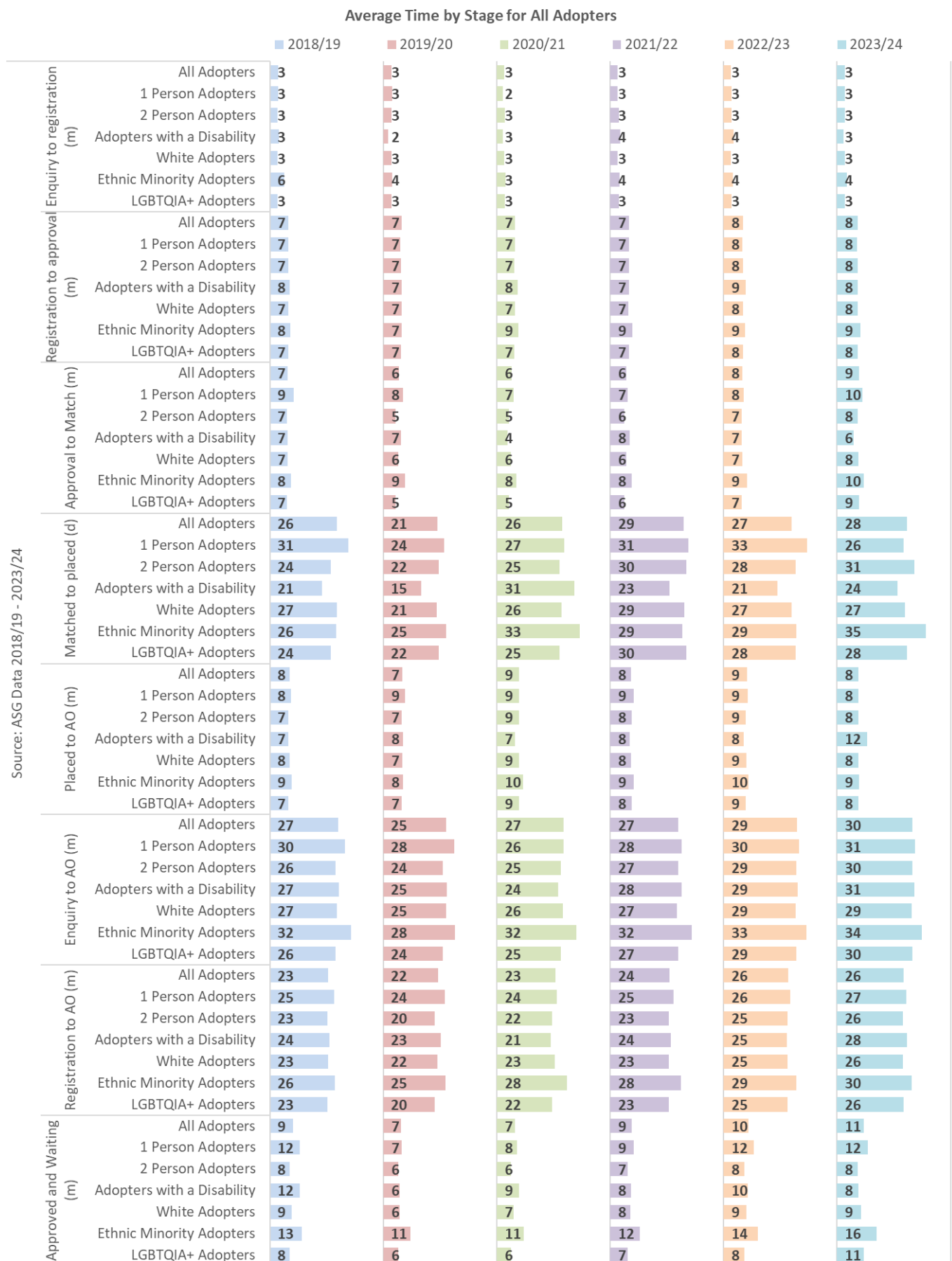
In 2023/24 the average time from:

- Enquiry to registration was **3 months**, the same 2018/19
- Registration to approval was **8 months**, an increase of **1 month** from 2018/19
- Approval to matched was **9 months**, an increase of **2 months** from 2018/19
- Matched to placed was **28 days**, an increase of **2 days** from 2018/19
- Placed to AO was **8 months**, the same as 2018/19
- Approved and waiting was **11 months**, an increase of **2 months** from 2018/19

In 2023/24:

- RAA/LA adopters had been approved and waiting for an average of **10 months**, an increase of **1 month** from 2018/19
- VAA adopters had been approved and waiting for an average of **14 months**, an increase of **6 months** from 2018/19

The chart below shows a comparison of the average time (months) for each stage of the adoption process by diversity of adopters.



## ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

This publication was produced by The Children and Social Care Secretariat, delivered by Coram-i on behalf of the Department for Education.

download: [Adopter Characteristics: 2018/19 to 2022/24](#)

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