

Adoption and Special Guardianship Quarterly Data Collection

Headline Measures: Q3 2023/24

March 2024

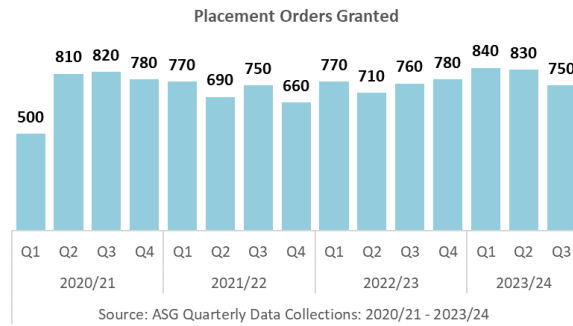
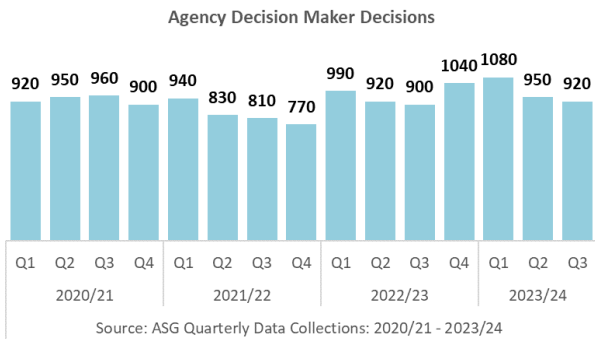
Note: The Department for Education's annual figures on adoptions and timeliness for children who have been adopted are published in the [Children looked after in England including adoption](#) SFR. This is the most robust source of information on adoption.

CHILDREN

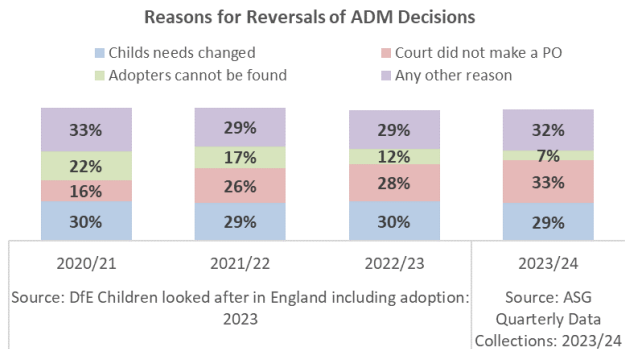
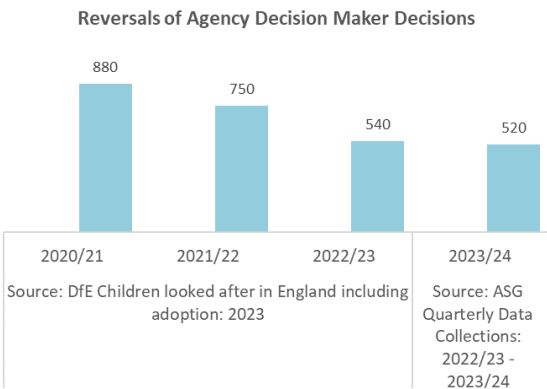
In Q3 2023/24 the numbers of decisions for children declined, with the numbers of ADMs, PO, AOs and SGOs all lower when compared to last quarter. Less children were matched and placed with an adoptive family, and more children were waiting with a PO to be placed.

In Q3 2023/24 (31 December 2023) there were:

- **920** Agency Decision Maker decisions, a decrease of **3% (30n)** from Q2 2023/24 an increase of **2% (20n)** when compared to Q3 2022/23
- **750** Placement Orders granted, a decrease of **10% (80n)** from Q2 2023/24 and a decrease of **1% (10n)** when compared to Q3 2022/23



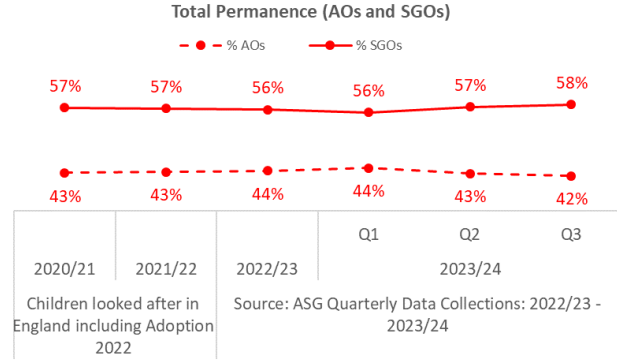
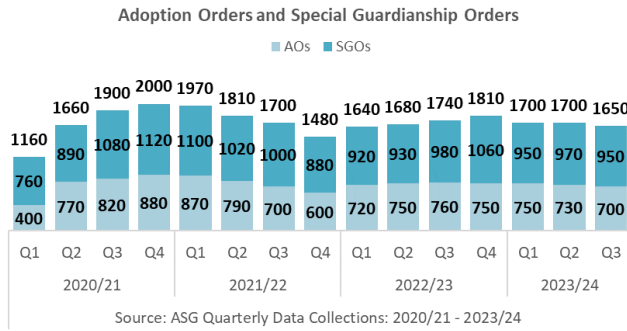
- **520** ADM reversals
- **29%** of reversals were due to 'Child's needs changed', **33%** 'Court did not make a PO', **7%** 'Adopters cannot be found', and **32%** were due to 'Any other reason'



The numbers of Adoption Orders and Special Guardianship Orders granted both decreased when compared to the last quarter.

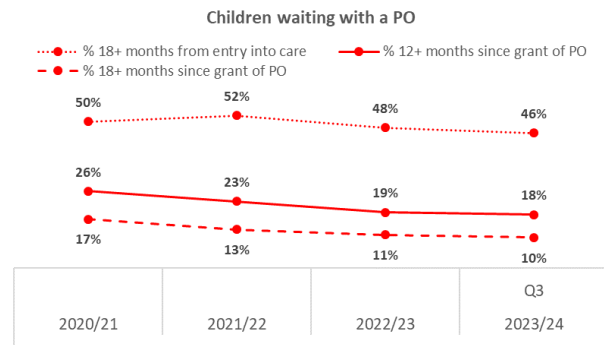
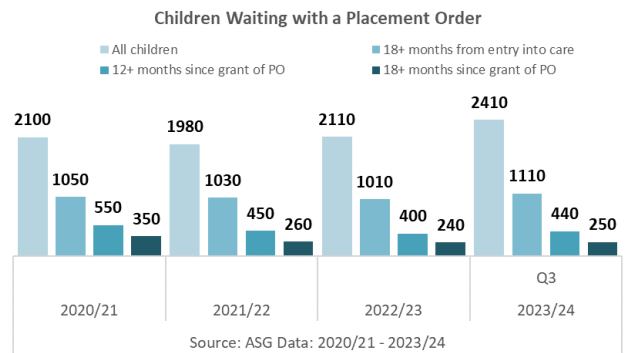
In Q3 2023/24, there were:

- **700** Adoption Orders granted, a decrease of **4% (30n)** from Q2 2023/24 and a decrease of **8% (60n)** when compared to Q3 2022/23
- **950** Special Guardianship Orders granted, a decrease of **2% (20n)** from Q2 2023/24 and a decrease of **3% (30n)** when compared to Q3 2022/23



- **1650** total permanence orders granted (AOs & SGOs), a decrease of **3% (50n)** from Q2 2023/24 and a decrease of **5% (90n)** when compared to Q3 2022/23
- SGOs accounted for **58%** of all permanence, an increase of **1** percentage point when compared to Q2 2022/22
- **420** children were placed in an FFA/CP arrangement, **65%** of the total for 2022/23

The number of children waiting with a Placement Order has increased.



In Q3 2023/24 there were:

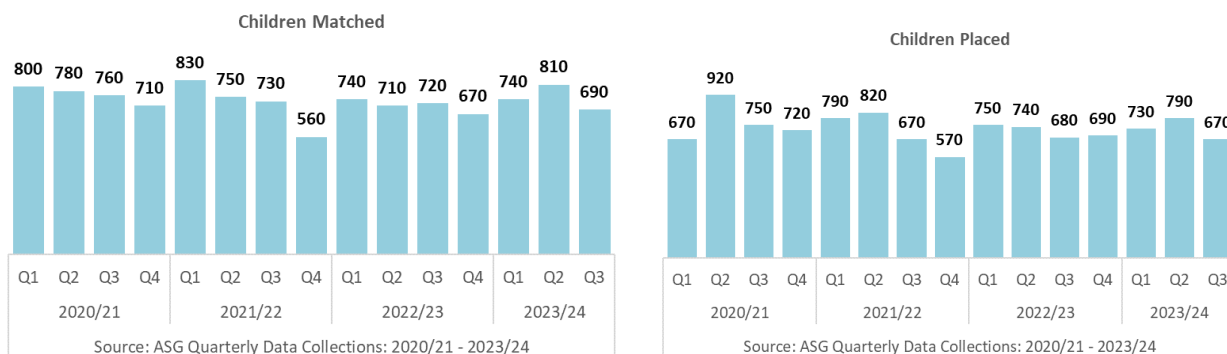
- **2410** children with a PO waiting to be placed, an increase of **14% (300n)** from 2022/23
- **1110** children with a PO waiting to be placed 18+ months since entering care, an increase of **10% (100n)** from Q2 2022/23
- **46%** of children with a PO have been waiting to be placed 18+ months since entering care
- **440** children with a PO waiting to be matched 12+ months since grant of PO, an increase of **10% (40n)** from 2022/23
- **18%** of children with a PO have been waiting to be matched 12+ months since grant of PO
- **250** children with a PO waiting to be matched 18+ months since grant of PO, an increase of **4% (10n)** from 2022/23
- **10%** of children with a PO have been waiting to be matched 18+ months since grant of PO

The number of children matched and placed with an adoptive family decreased this quarter.

In Q3 2023/24 there were:

- **690** children matched with an adoptive family, a decrease of **15% (120n)** from Q2 2023/24 and a decrease of **4% (30n)** when compared to Q3 2022/23

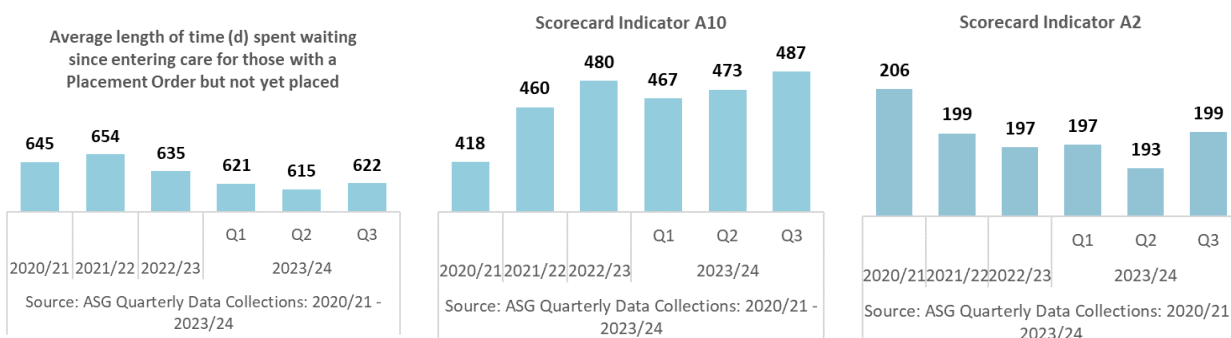
- **670** children placed with an adoptive family, a decrease of **15% (120n)** from Q2 2023/24 and a decrease of **1% (10n)** when compared to Q3 2022/23



Timeliness is slowing for children adopted, with some children’s journey to permanence taking longer.

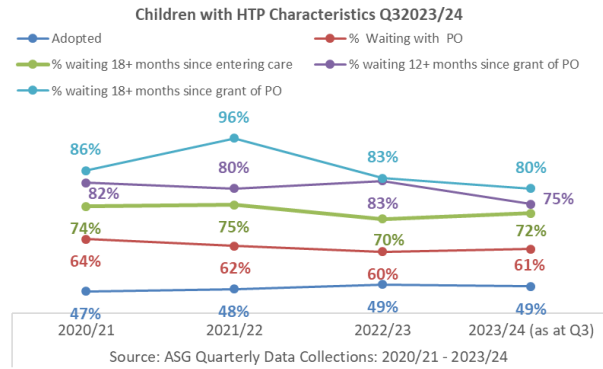
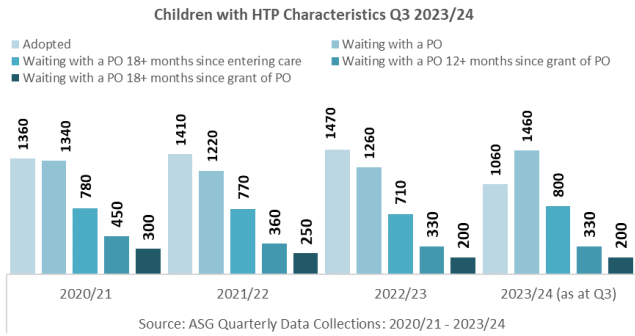
In Q3 2023/24:

- The average number of days spent waiting to be placed with Placement Order since entering care was **622 days**, an increase of **7 days** from Q2 2023/24
- Scorecard Indicator A10 (average number of days between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family adjusted for foster care adoptions) was **487 days**, an increase of **14 days** from Q2 2023/24
- Scorecard Indicator A2 (average time between an LA receiving court authority to place a child and deciding on a match to an adoptive family) was **199 days**, an increase of **6 days** from Q2 2023/24

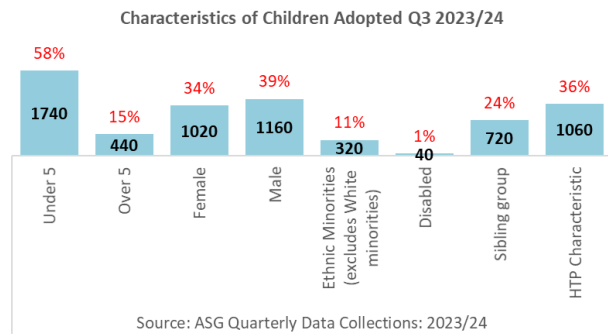
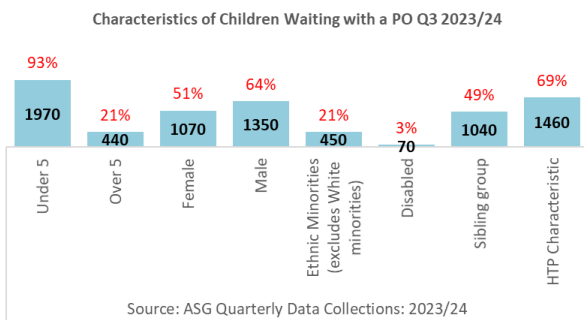


In Q3 2023/24 there were:

- **1060** children with HTP characteristics adopted, **49%** of all children adopted
- **1460** children with HTP characteristics waiting with a PO, **61%** of all children waiting with a PO
- **800** children with HTP characteristics waiting with a PO 18+ months since entering care, **72%** of all children waiting with a PO
- **330** children with HTP characteristics waiting 12+ months since grant of PO, **75%** of all children waiting 12+ months since grant of PO
- **200** children with HTP characteristics waiting 18+ months since grant of PO, **80%** of all children waiting 18+ months since grant of PO



The charts below give a breakdown of the number of children adopted and waiting with a PO by characteristics.



In Q3 2023/24:

- Children who were aged under 5, female and not from an Ethnic Minority (excludes White minorities) background continue to be more likely to be adopted and less likely to be waiting with a PO
- Children aged over 5, male, from an Ethnic Minority (excludes White minorities) background, with a disability and in a sibling group continue to be more likely to be waiting with a PO and less likely to be adopted

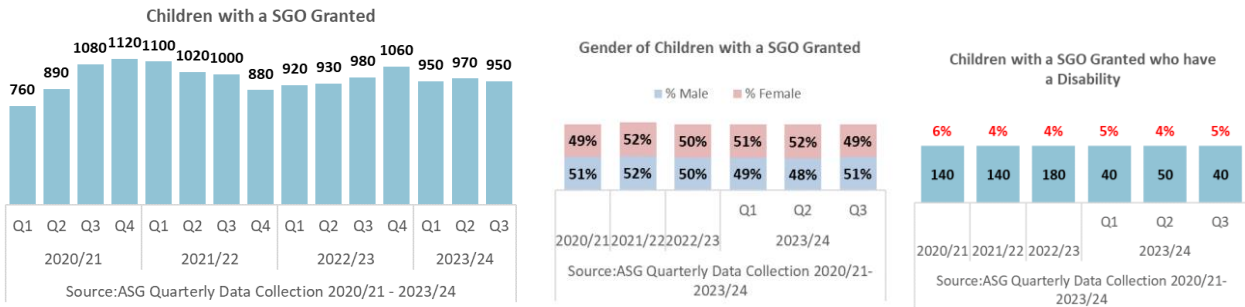
NB: "Harder to place" is defined as a child who is any of the following: 5 years or over, with an Ethnic Minority (excludes White minorities) background, disabled, or part of a sibling group. Children with more than one harder to place characteristic will be counted in each characteristic.

SPECIAL GUARDIANSHIP ORDERS

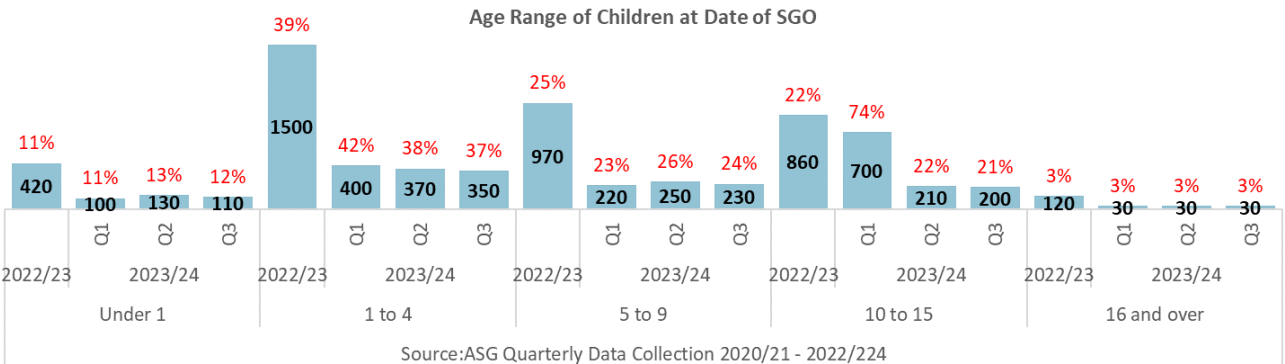
The number of Special Guardianship Orders granted in Q3 202/23 declined when compared to the last quarter. More children are still leaving care with via a SGO than an adoption order, with SGOs accounting for **58%** of all permanence.

In Q3 2023/24, there were:

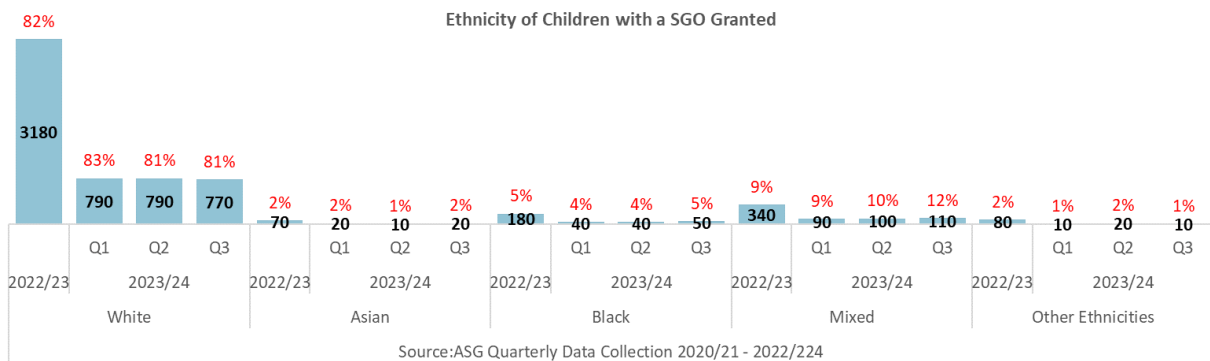
- **950** SGOs granted, a decrease of **2% (20n)** from Q2 2023/24 and a decrease of **3% (30n)** when compared to Q3 2022/23
- **51%** of the children were male, **49%** female and **5%** had a disability, **19%** were from an Ethnic Minority (excluding White minorities), and **45%** were in a sibling group



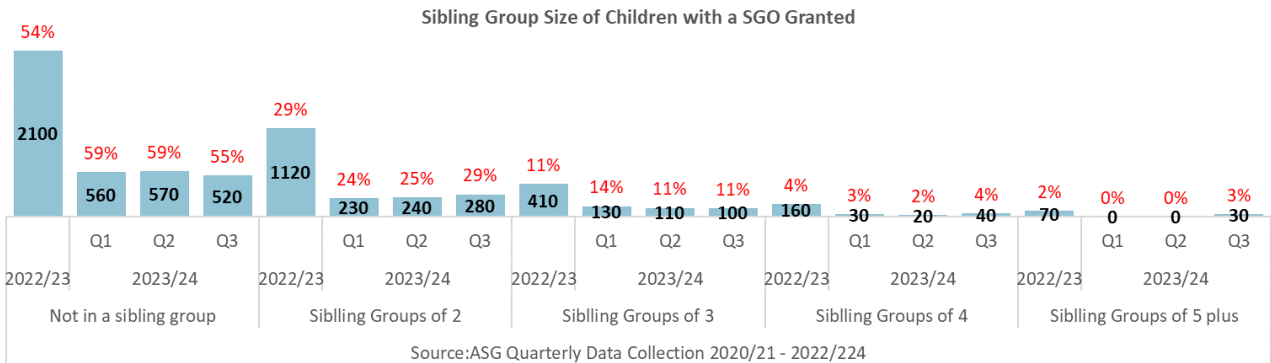
Children aged 1 to 4 are the largest group of children who leave care with an SGO (**37%**), followed by children aged 5 to 9 (**24%**)



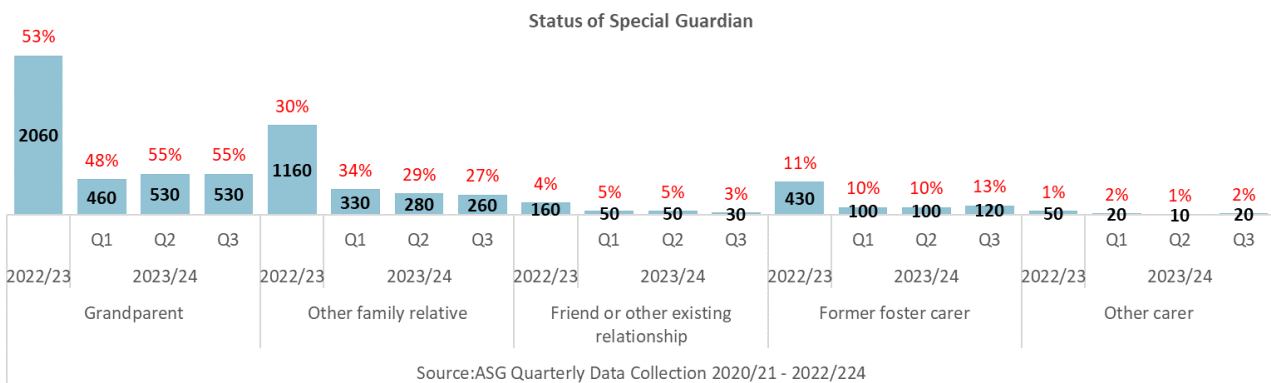
- **19%** of SGOs were granted for children from an Ethnic Minority (excludes White minorities, with children with a Mixed Ethnicity are the biggest represented Ethnic Minority)



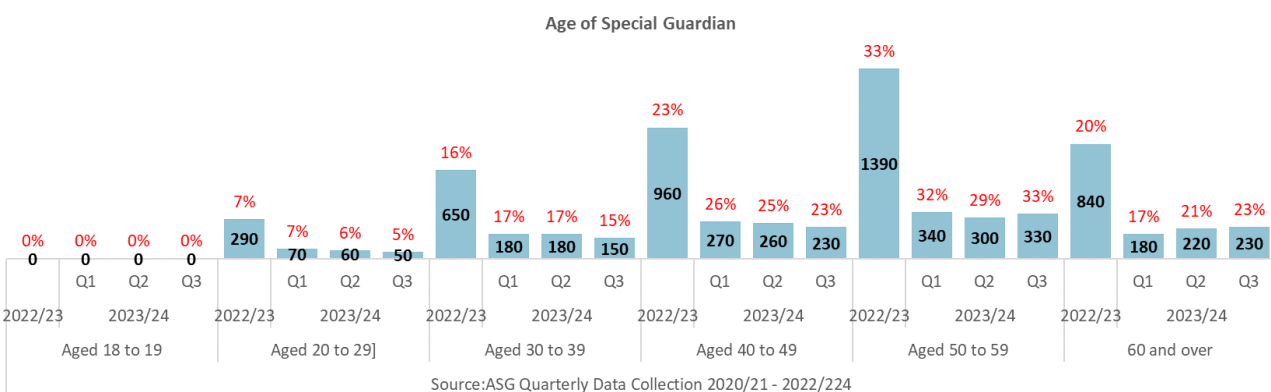
- Children not in a sibling group continue to be the largest group of children who leave care with an SGO (55%), followed by children in a sibling group of 2 (29%)



- Grandparents are the largest represented group of Special Guardians, with 53% of SGOs granted to grandparents, followed by other family relatives (27%)



- Special Guardians aged 50 to 59 are the largest represented age group (33%), followed by and special guardians aged 40 to 49, and 60 and over (23%)

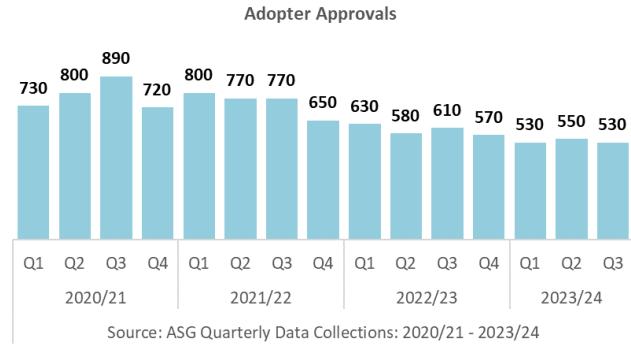
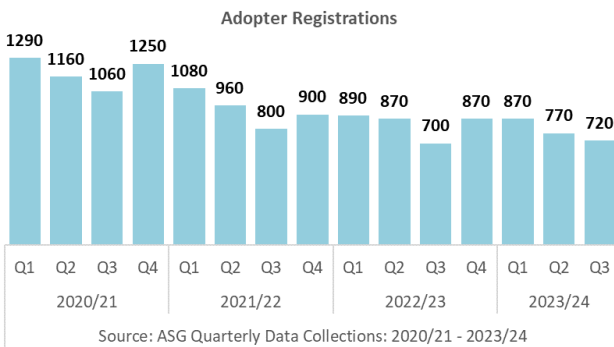


ADOPTERS

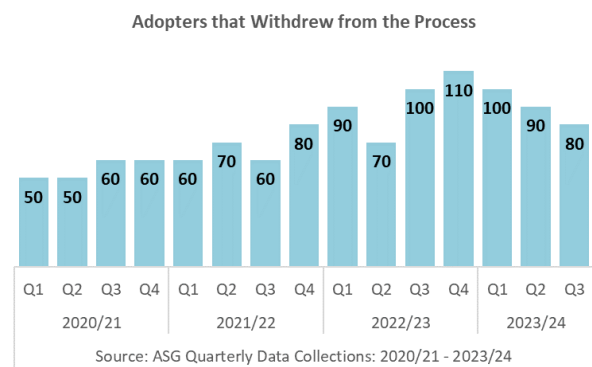
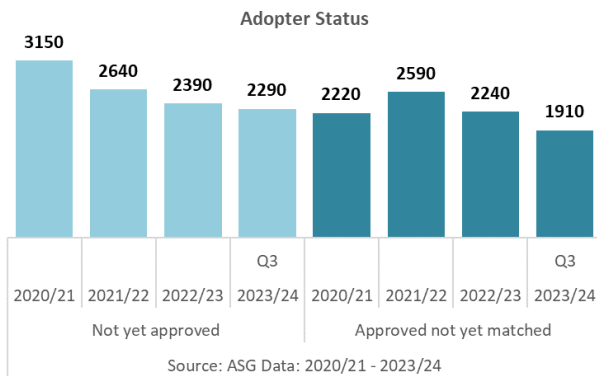
Adopter recruitment continues to decline, reducing the number of available approved adoptive families to be matched with the children waiting with a PO. Adopter registrations, approval, matches were all lower this quarter, resulting in fewer adopters not yet approved, and fewer available adopters approved and waiting.

In Q3 2023/24 there were:

- **720** Registrations, a decrease of **6% (50n)** from Q2 2023/24 and an increase of **3% (20n)** when compared to Q3 2022/23
- **530** Approvals, a decrease of **4% (20n)** from Q2 2023/24 and a decrease of **13% (80n)** when compared to Q3 2022/23



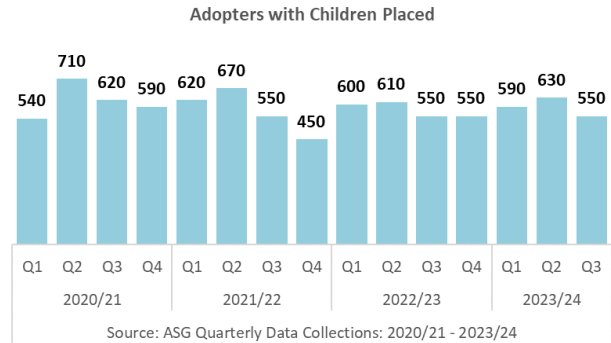
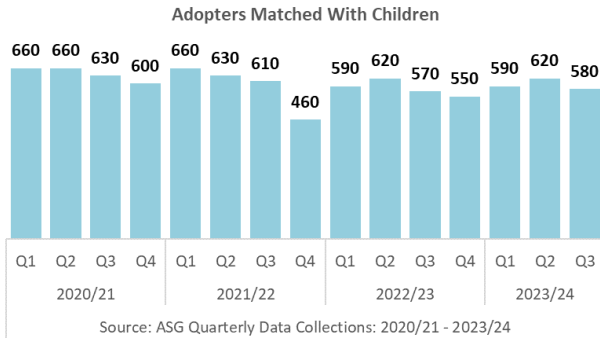
- **2290** Prospective adoptive families not yet approved, a decrease of **4% (100n)** from 2022/23
- **1910** Approved adoptive families waiting to be matched, a decrease of **15% (330n)** from 2022/23
- In the first two quarters of 2023/24, a total of **270** approved adopters withdrew from the process after approval, **73%** of the total for 2022/23



The number of adopters being matched with a child, and having a child placed with them were lower this quarter.

In Q3 2023/24 there were:

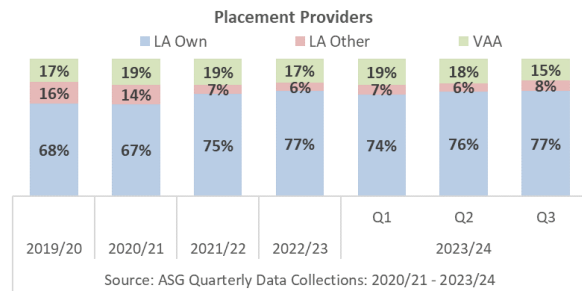
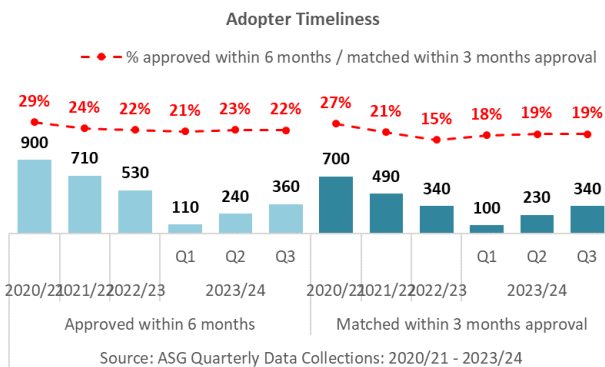
- **580** Adoptive families matched to children, a decrease of **6% (40n)** from Q2 2023/24 and an increase of **2% (10n)** when compared to Q3 2022/22
- **550** Adoptive families with a child placed: a decrease of **13% (80n)** from Q2 2022/23, and the same when compared to Q3 2022/22



Timeliness for adoptive family approvals has also slowed.

In Q3 2023/24:

- **22%** of adoptive families were approved within 6 months of registration, a decrease of **1** percentage points from Q2 2023/24
- **19%** of approved adoptive families had a child matched with them within 3 months of approval, the same as Q2 2023/24



There has been a decline in the proportion of VAA placements from **18%** in Q2 to **15%** in Q3.

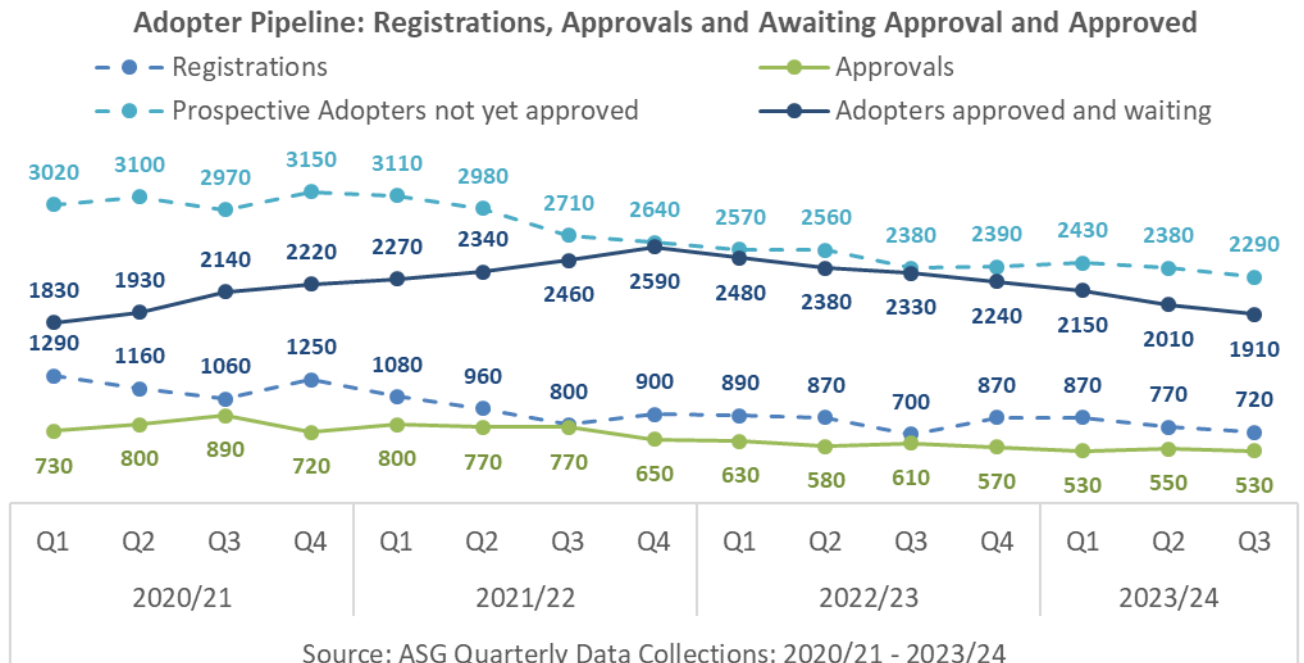
In Q3 2023/24:

- **77%** of placements were provided by LAs themselves (via their RAAs)
- **8%** of placements were provided by other LAs (other RAAs)
- **15%** of placements were provided by VAAs

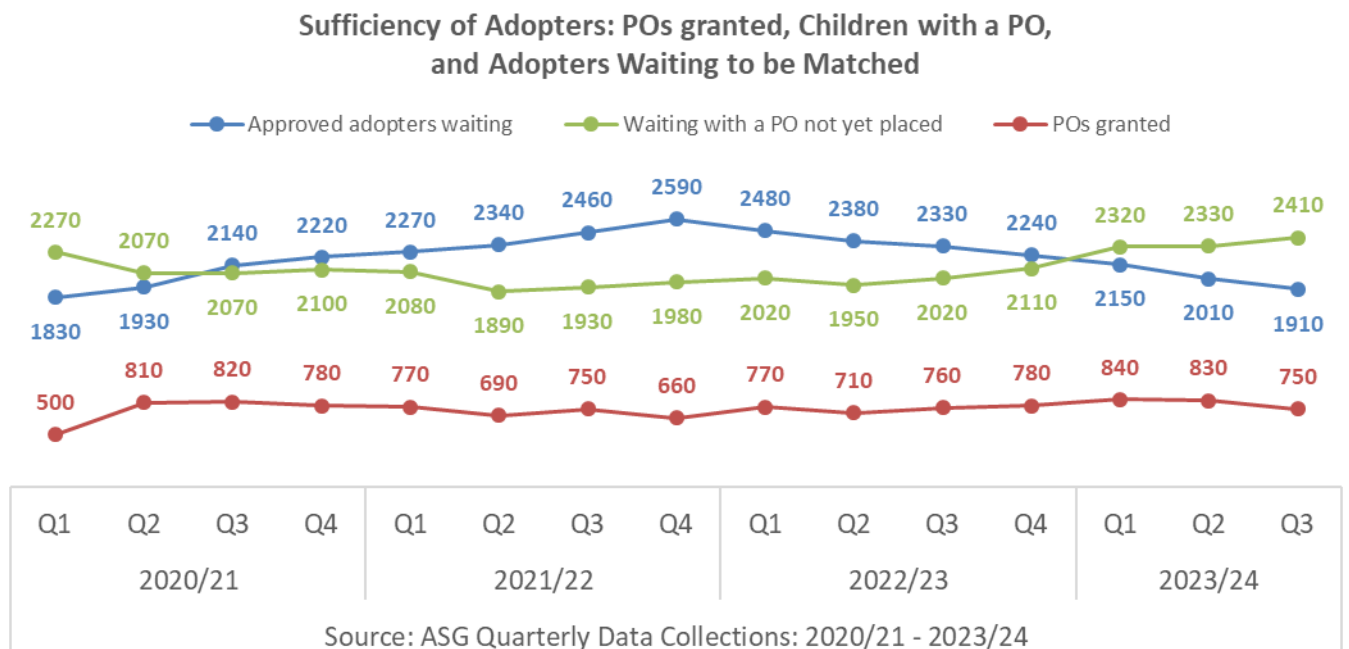
NB: Percentages may not add due to rounding of numbers

SUFFICIENCY OF ADOPTERS

Adopter Recruitment is declining, reducing the number of approved adopters available for the children waiting with a PO. This quarter there has been a decrease in adopter registrations, approvals, prospective adopters not yet approved and adopters approved and waiting.



There are now **509** more children waiting with a placement order than approved adopters waiting (*based on one adoptive family per child waiting*).



The gap between the number of approved adopters waiting and POs granted is narrowing indicating that children are moving into the adoption process at a higher rate than approved adopters are becoming available.

DATA SOURCES

ASG Quarterly Data Collection

In quarter 3 2023/24 the response rate from local authorities for the child level section was 100% and the adopter level sections was 100%. The response rate for the adopter level section from Voluntary Adoption Agencies was 100%. Therefore, national and regional figures on adoptions and adopters do not include estimates made for non-responses.

SSDA 903 Data Collection

Local authorities provide data on their looked after children using the SSDA903 collection. Data are collected from all local authorities. The information is collected at child level and includes information about the child's characteristics and their dates for each stage of the care process, including adoption. The data goes through thorough quality assurance and local authorities are able to update their historic data annually. We therefore view this as the most robust source of information on adoption. It is used to produce the [Children looked after in England including adoption](#) (SFR). The most recent data covers the year ending 31 March 2023.

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.

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