

Adoption and Special Guardianship Leadership Board

Headline Measures: Q4 2021/22

August 2022

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.

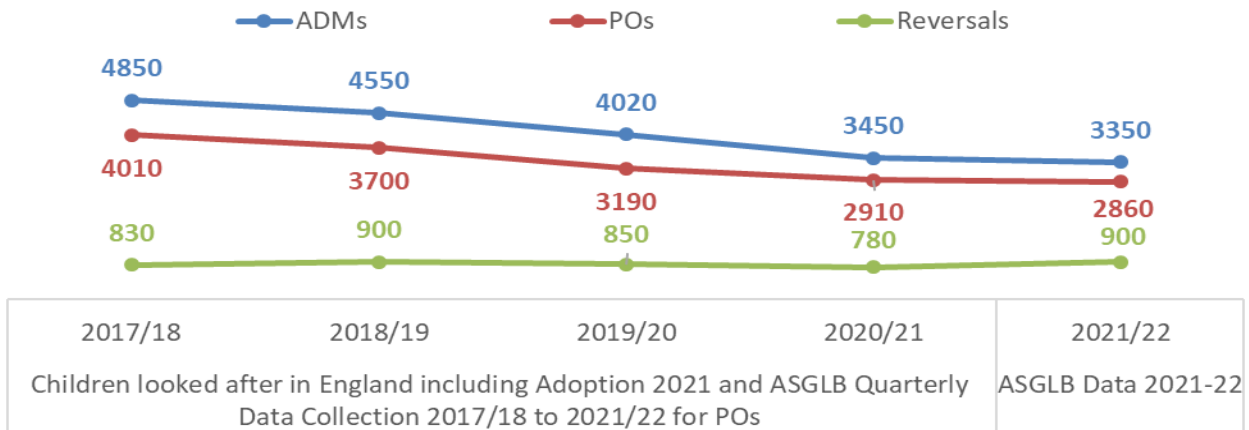
CHILDREN

The number of children moving into and through the adoption process continued to decline, and those children who already have a best interest decision are waiting longer for permanence.

In 2021/22 there were:

- **3350** Agency Decision Maker decisions, a decrease of **3% (100n)** from 2020/21
- **2860** Placement Orders granted, a decrease of **2% (50n)** from 2020/21
- **900** Reversals of the Agency Decision Maker Decision, an increase of **15% (120n)** from 2020/21

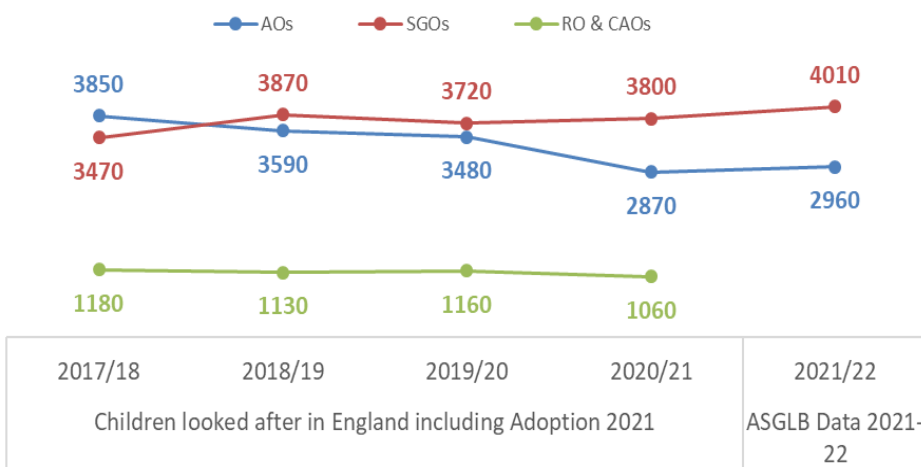
Agency Decision Maker Decisions, Placement Orders and Reversals



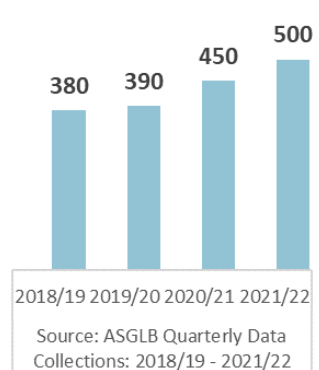
The number of Adoption Orders (AOs) and Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs) granted have increased. In 2021/22 there were:

- **2960** Adoption Orders granted, an increase of **3% (90n)** from 2020/21
- **4010** Special Guardianship Orders granted, an increase of **6% (210n)** from 2020/21
- In total there were **6970** permanence orders (AOs and SGO), an increase of **4% (270n)** from 2020/21
- **500** FFA/CP placements, an increase of **11% (50n)** from 2020/21

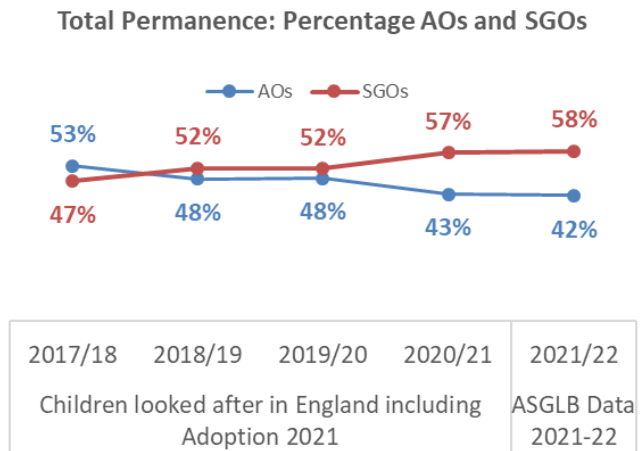
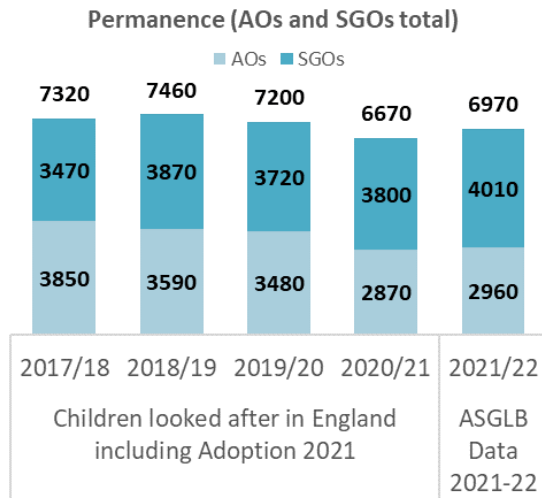
Adoption, Special Guardianship, Residence or Child Arrangement Orders



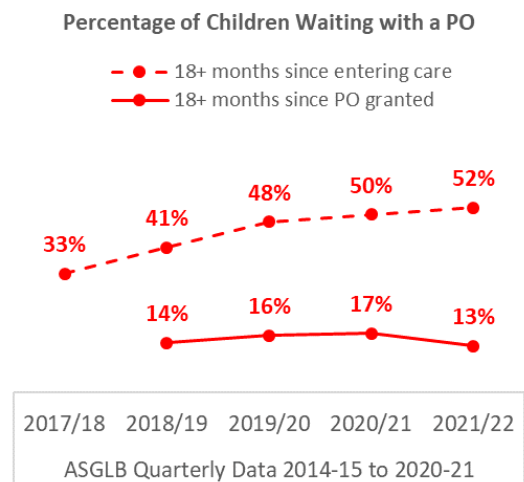
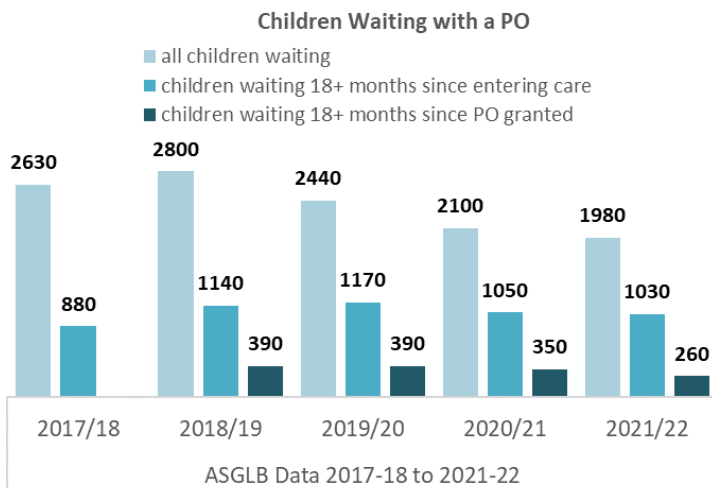
Children placed in an Early Permanence Placement FFA or CP



For the last four years there have been more SGOs granted than AOs granted with SGOs accounting for **58%** of permanence orders, an increase from **57%** in 2021/22



There has been a decrease in the number of children waiting with a PO, a decrease in the number but an increase in the proportion of children waiting with a PO 18+ months since entering care, and a decrease in the number and proportion of children waiting with a PO 18+ months since grant of PO.

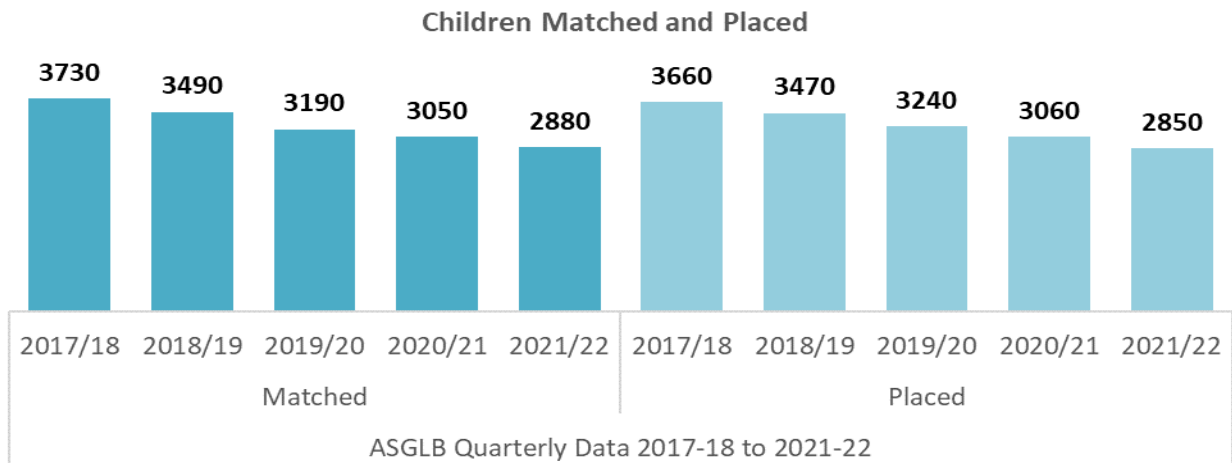


- **1980** Children with a PO waiting to be matched, a decrease of **6% (120n)** from 2020/21
- **1030** Children with a PO waiting to be matched 18+ months since entering care, a decrease of **2% (20n)** from 2020/21
- **52%** of children with a PO have been waiting to be matched 18+ months since entering care, an increase of **2** percentage points from 2020/21
- **260** Children with a PO waiting to be matched 18+ months since grant of PO, a decrease of **26% (90n)** from 2020/21
- **13%** of children with a PO have been waiting to be matched 18+ months since grant of PO, a decrease of **4** percentage points from 2020/21

The decrease in the number of ADM and POs granted and the increase in the number of ADM reversals has impacted on the decline in the number of children waiting with a PO.

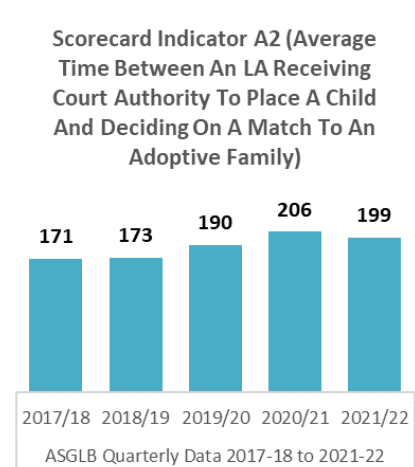
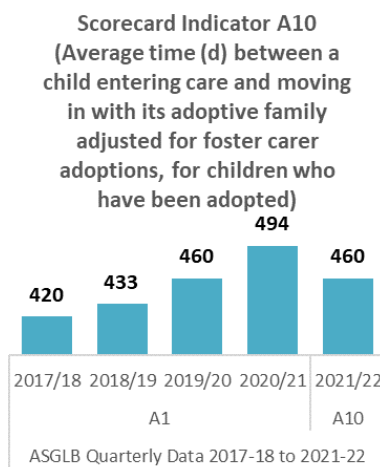
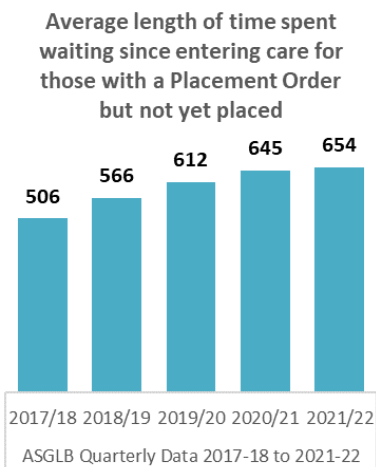
In 2021/22 there were:

- **2880** Children matched with an adoptive family, a decrease of **6% (170n)** from 2020/21
- **2850** Children placed with an adoptive family, a decrease of **7% (210n)** from 2020/21



Timeliness for children is changeable. In 2021/22:

- The average number of days spent waiting to be placed with placement order since entering care was **654** days, an increase of **9** days from 2020/21
- 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 **460** days
NB: A1 measure has been replaced with A10 from Q1 2021/22 and are therefore previous figures are not comparable
- 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, a decrease of **7** days from 2020/21

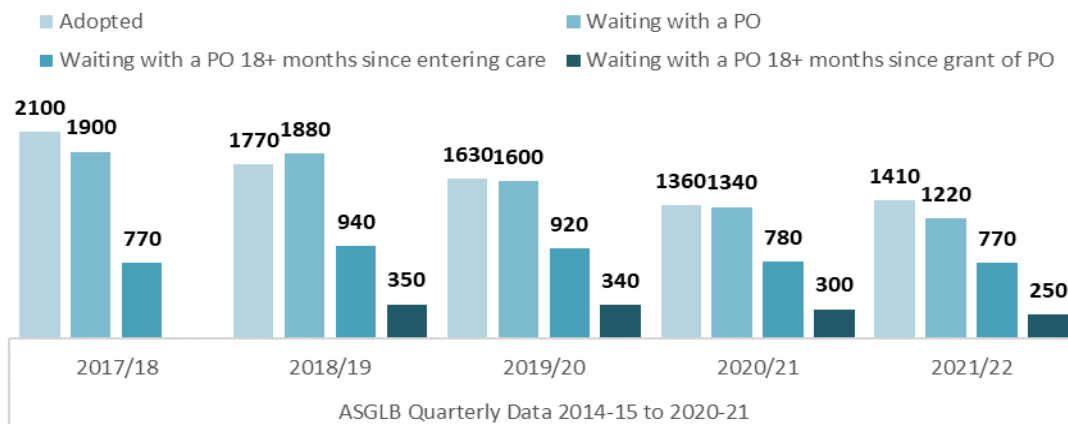


There has been a decrease in the number of children with harder to place (HTP) characteristics waiting with a PO, waiting with a PO 18+ months since entering care and waiting with a PO 18+ months since grant of PO. These decreases can be attributed to the overall decline in the number of all children waiting with a PO.

In 2021/22 there were:

- **1410** children with HTP characteristics adopted, an increase of **17% (50n)** from 2020/21
- **1220** children with HTP characteristics waiting with a PO, a decrease of **9% (120n)** from 2020/21
- **770** children with HTP characteristics waiting with a PO 18+ months since entering care, a decrease of **1% (10n)** from 2020/21
- **250** children with HTP characteristics waiting with a PO 18+ months since grant of PO, a decrease of **17% (50n)** from 2020/21

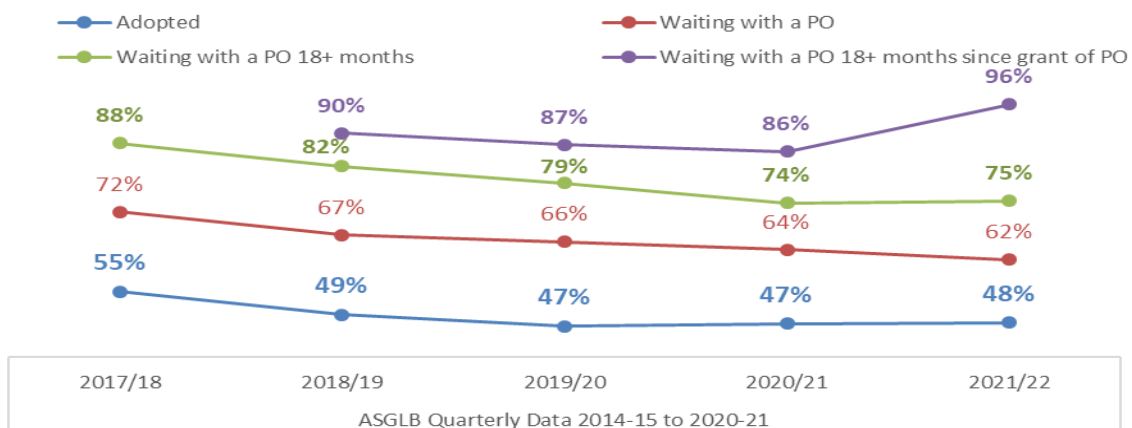
Child Characteristics - Harder to Place



In 2021/22:

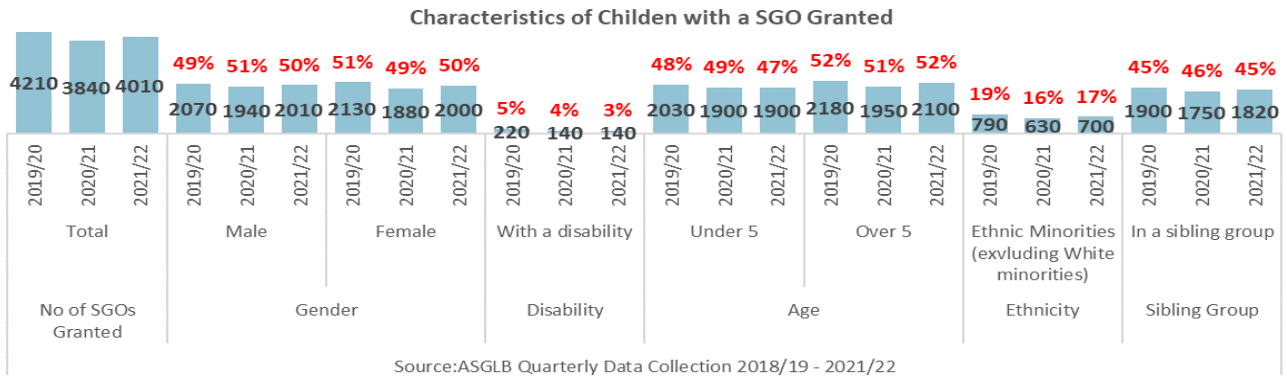
- **48%** of all children adopted had HTP characteristics, an increase of **1%** from 2020/21
- **62%** of all children waiting with a PO had HTP characteristics, a decrease of **2%** from 2020/21
- **75%** of all children waiting with a PO 18+ months since entering care had HTP characteristics, an increase of **1%** from 2020/21
- **96%** of all children waiting with a PO 18+ months since grant of PO had HTP characteristics, an increase of **10%** from 2020/21

Child Characteristics - Percentage who had Harder to Place Characteristics



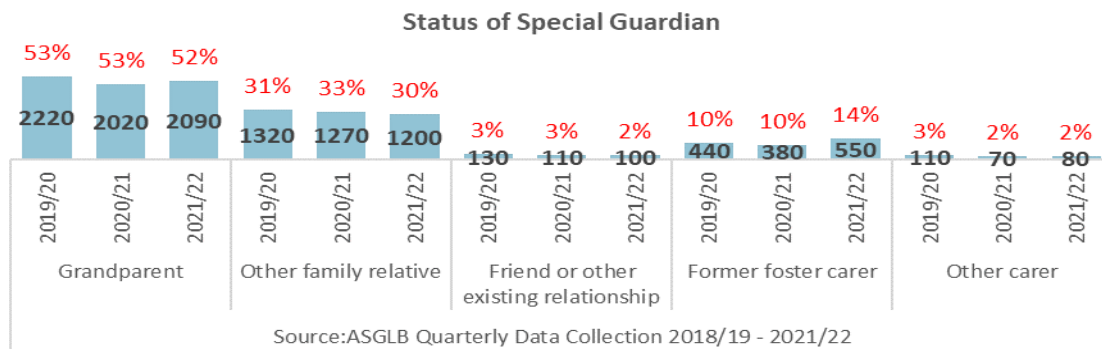
SPECIAL GUARDIANSHIP ORDERS

In 2021/22 there were **4010** Special Guardianship Orders granted, an increase of **4% (170n)** from 2020/21.

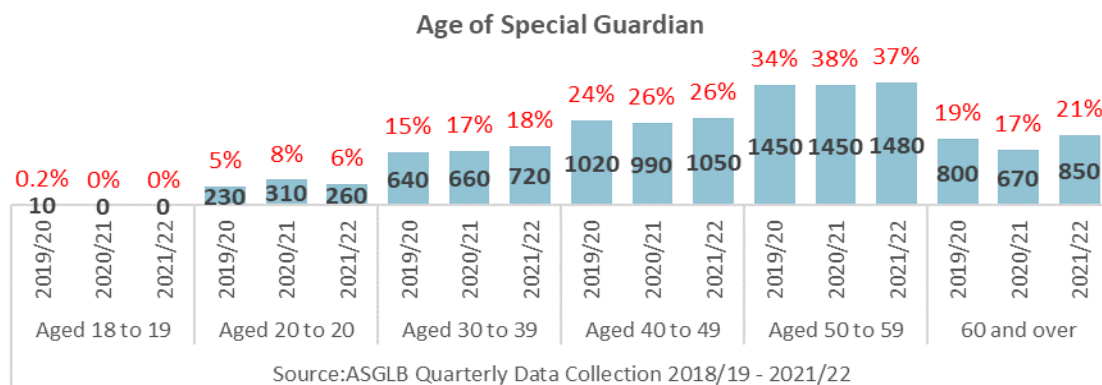


- **50% (2010n)** of the children were male, **50% (2000n)** were female
- **3% (140n)** SGOs were granted for children with a disability
- **47% (1900n)** SGOs were granted for children under 5 years
- **17% (700n)** SGOs were granted from children with an Ethnic Minority (excludes White minorities) background
- **45% (1820n)** children were in a sibling group of two or more

Grandparents aged between 50 to 59 were the most represented demographic of special guardian.



- **52% (2090n)** children were placed with grandparents and **37% (1480n)** of special guardians were in the age range 50 to 59



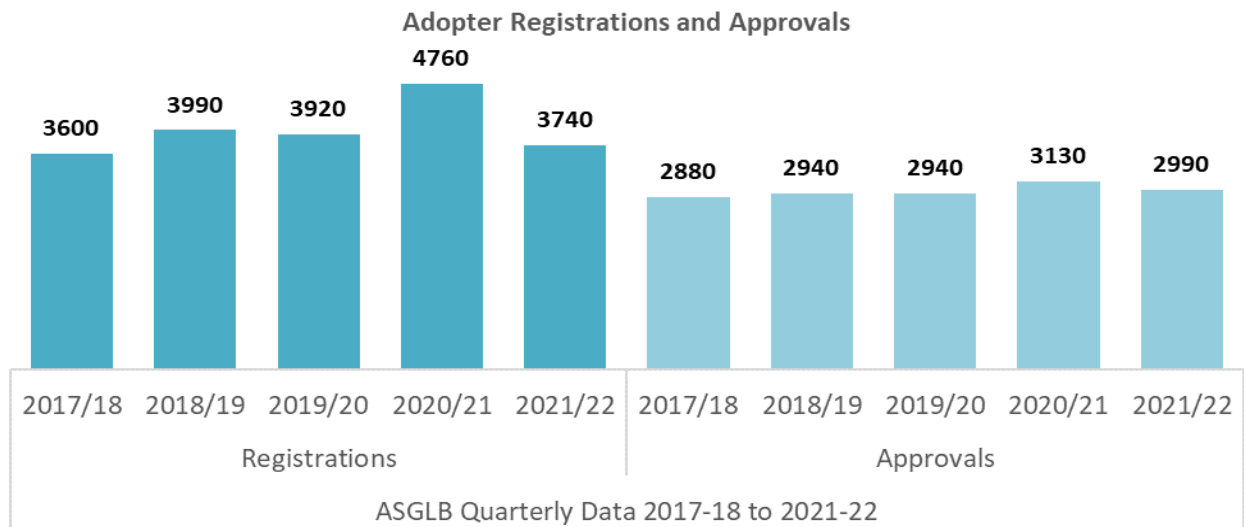
Please note some figures may not add to the total due to rounding

ADOPTERS

There has been a decrease in the number of adopter registrations and approvals, prospective adopters not yet approved. The number of approved adopters waiting to be matched with a child has continued to increase.

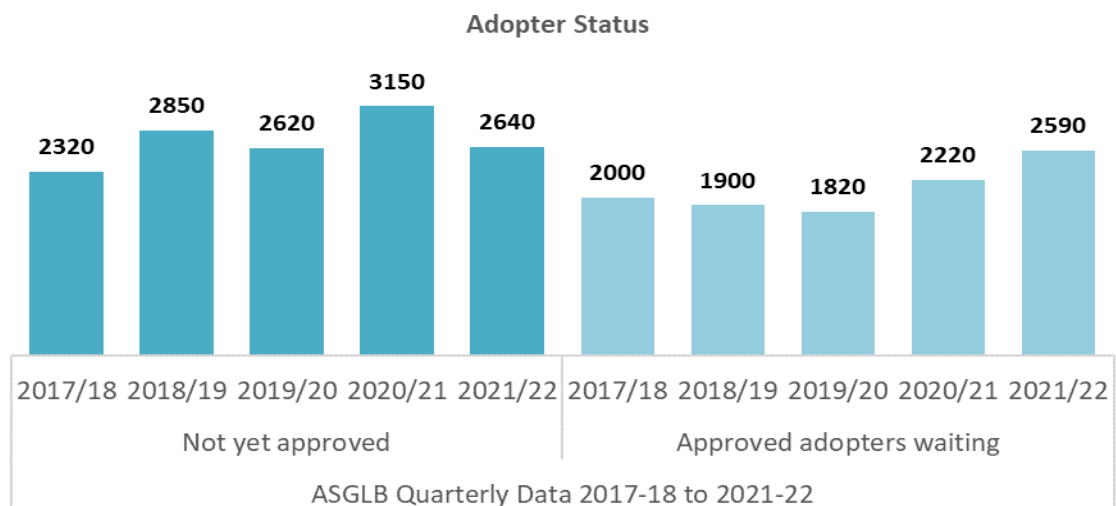
In 2021/22 there were a total of:

- **3740** Registrations, a decrease of **22% (1020n)** from 2020/21
- **2990** Approvals, a decrease of **4% (140n)** from 2020/21



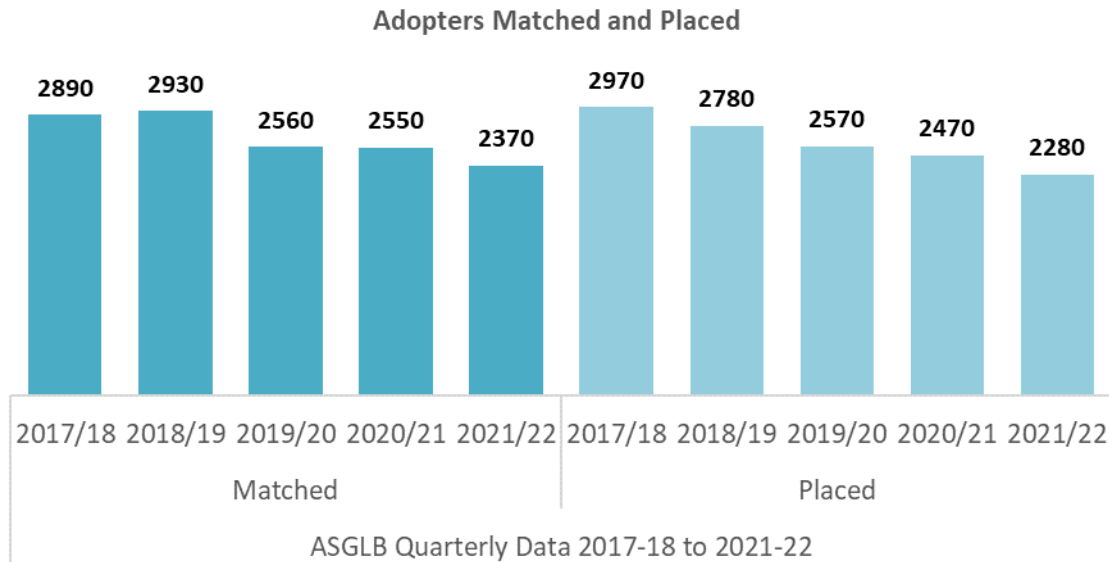
There has been a decrease in the number of adopters not yet approved and an increase in the number of approved adopters waiting to be matched with a child. In 2021/22 there were a total of:

- **2640** Prospective adoptive families not yet approved, a decrease of **16% (510n)** from 2020/21
- **2590** Approved adoptive families waiting to be matched, an increase of **17% (370n)** from 2020/21



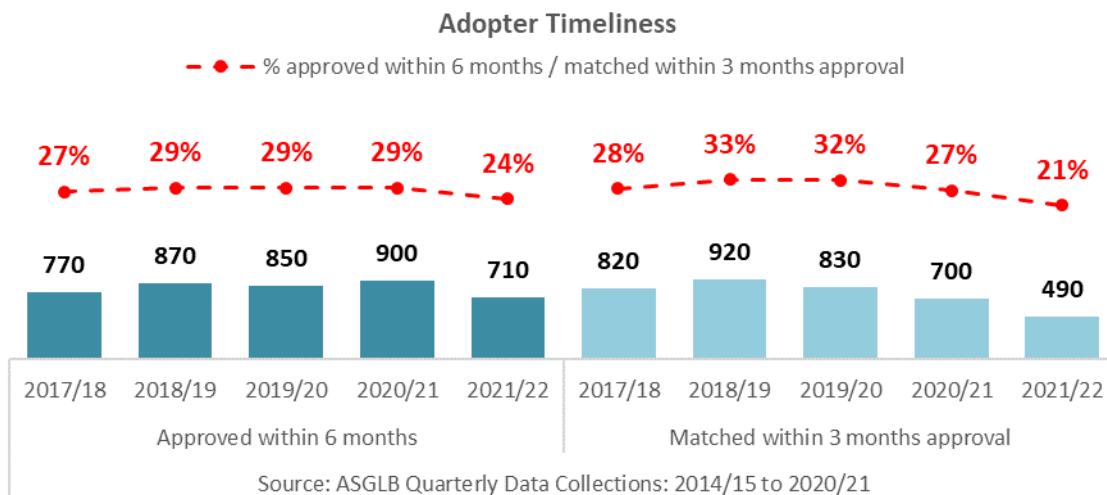
There continues to be a decline in both the number of adoptive families matched with a child, and the number of adoptive families with a child placed with them, which reflects the trends in the decrease in the number of ADMs and POs granted. In 2021/22 there were a total of:

- **2370** Adoptive families matched to children, a decrease of **7% (180n)** from 2020/21
- **2280** Adoptive families with a child placed, a decrease of **8% (190n)** from 2020/21
-



Adoptive family approvals and matching is declining. In 2021/22,

- **24%** of adoptive families were approved within 6 months of registration, a decrease of 5 percentage points from 2020/21
- **21%** of approved adoptive families had a child matched with them within 3 months of approval, a decrease of 6 percentage points from 2020/21



DATA SOURCES

ASGLB Quarterly Data Collection

In quarter 4 2021/22 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) and the [Adoption Scorecards](#). The most recent data covers the year ending 31 March 2020.

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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