

Adoption and Special Guardianship Leadership Board

Headline Measures: Q4 2019/20

October 2020

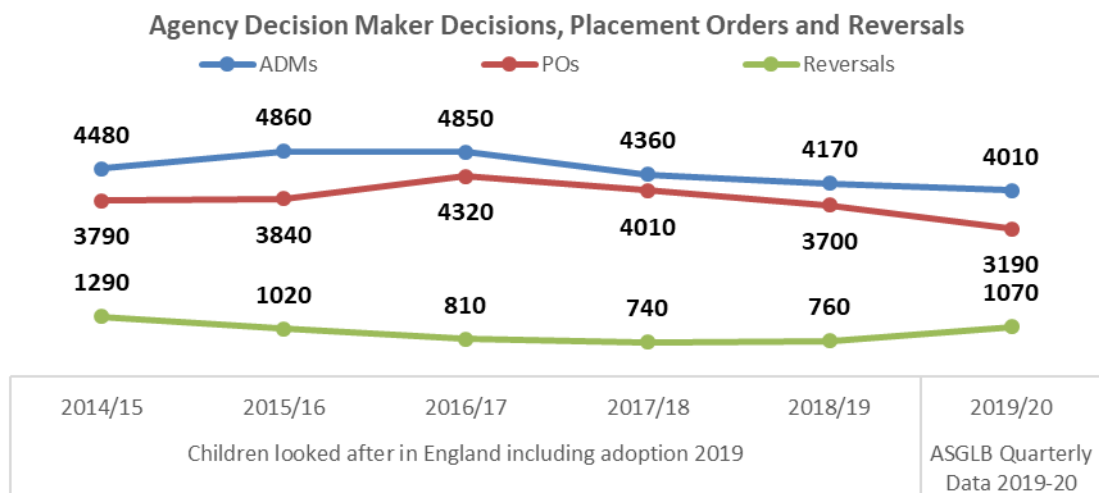
Note: The Department for Education's annual figures on adoptions and timeliness for children who have been adopted are published in the [Children Looked after in England including Adoption](#) SFR. This is the most robust source of information on adoption.

CHILDREN

The number of children moving into and through the adoption process is declining due to a decrease in the number of best interest decisions being made. The children who already have a best interest decision are waiting longer for permanence.

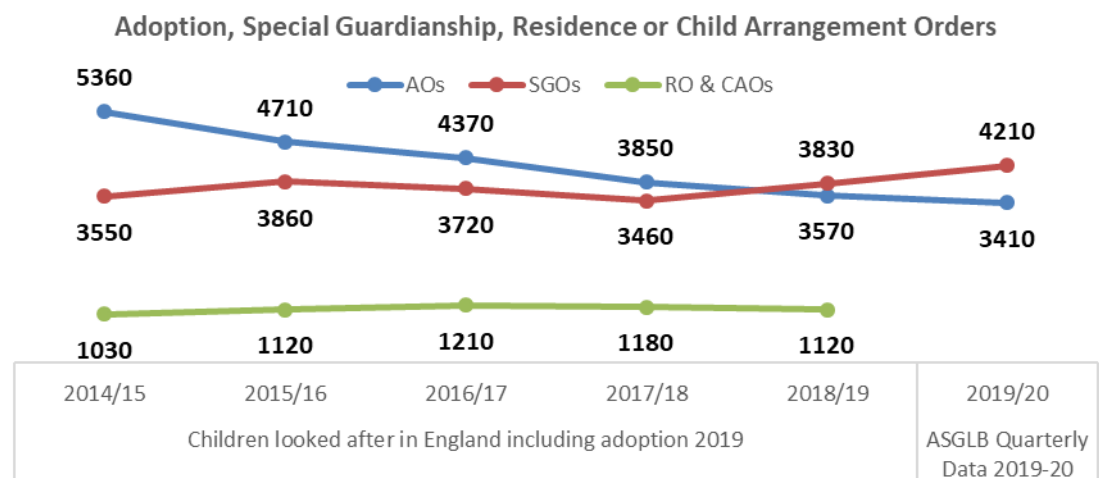
There continues to be a decline in the number of Agency Decision Maker decisions (ADMs) and Placement Orders (POs), and an increase in the number of reversals of ADMs (reversals) being made. In 2019/20 there were:

- **4010** ADMs, a decrease of **4% (160n)** from 2018/19
- **3190** POs granted, a decrease of **14% (510n)** from 2018/19
- **1070** reversals, an increase of **41% (310n)** from 2018/19

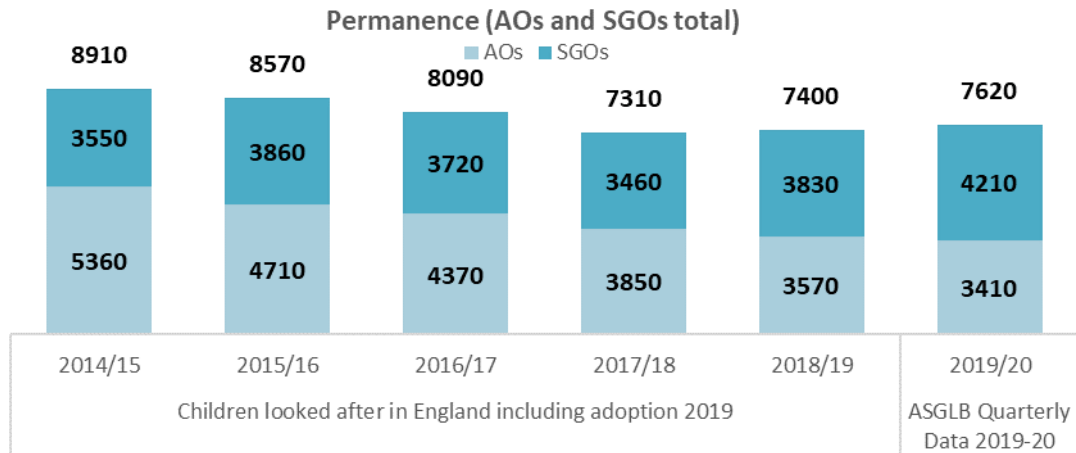


The number of Adoption Orders (AOs) granted continued to decline and the number of Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs) granted continued to increase. In 2019/20 there were:

- **3410** AOs granted, a decrease of **4% (160n)** from 2018/19
- **4210** SGOs granted, an increase of **10% (380n)** from 2018/19
- In total there were 7620 permanence orders (AOs and SGO), an increase of **3% (220n)** from 2018/19

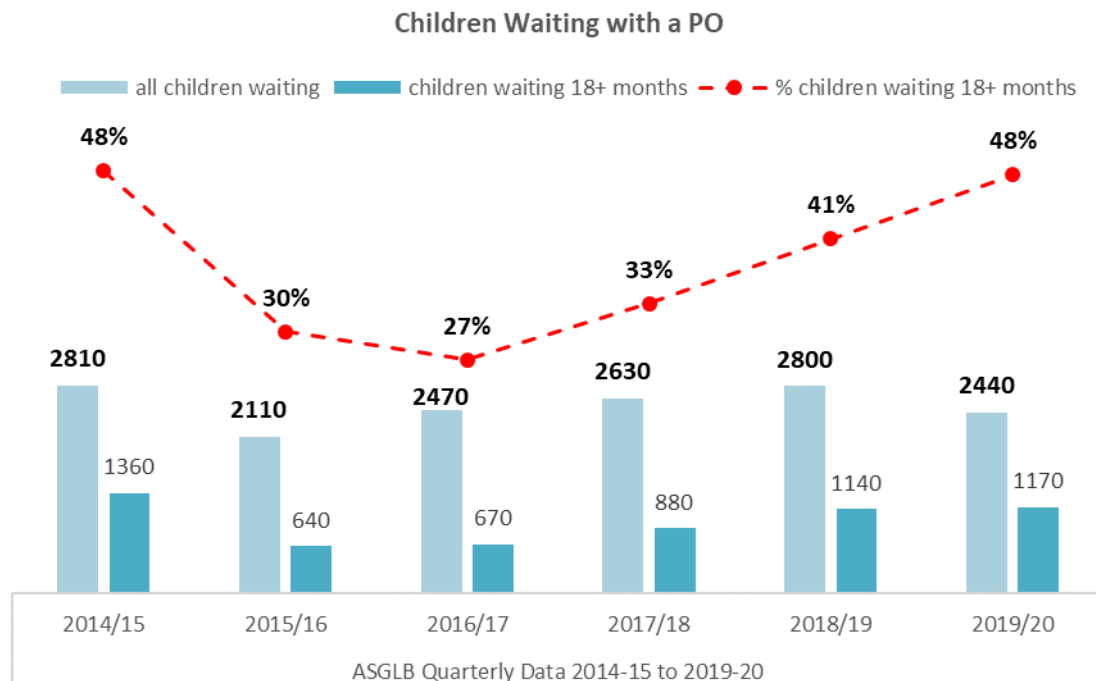


For the last two years there have been more SGOs granted than AOs granted. SGOs accounted for **55%** of permanence orders, an increase from **52%** in 2018/19.



There has been a decrease in the number of children waiting with a PO, however, the number of children waiting with a PO 18+ months increased; 48% of all children waiting with a PO have been waiting 18+ months. In 2019/20 there were:

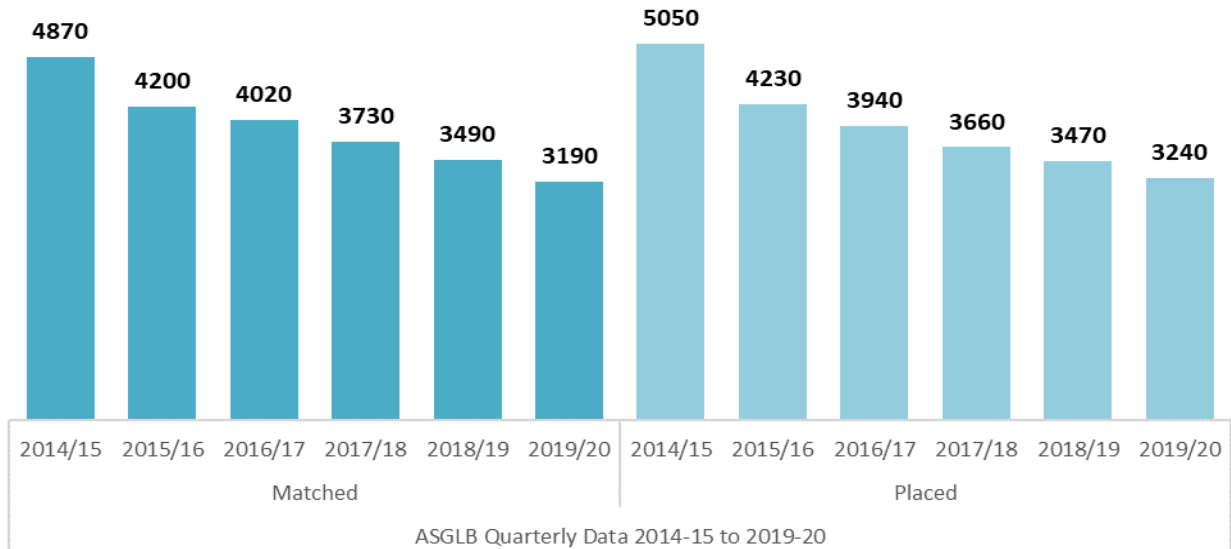
- **2440** children with a PO waiting to be matched, a decrease of **13% (360n)** from 2018/19
- **1170** children with a PO waiting to be matched 18+ months, an increase of **3% (30n)** from 2018/19
- **48%** of children with a PO have been waiting to be matched 18+ months, an increase of **7 percentage points** from 2018/19



The decrease in the number of children waiting with a PO can be attributed to the decrease in POs granted in 2018/19 as there continues to be a decrease in the number of children matched and placed with adoptive families. In 2019/20 there were:

- **3190** children matched with an adoptive family, a decrease of **9% (300n)** from 2018/19
- **3240** children placed with an adoptive family, a decrease of **7% (230n)** from 2018/19

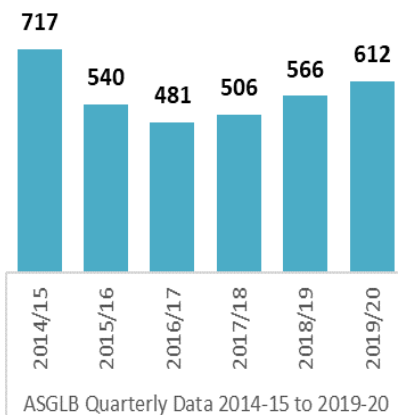
Children Matched and Placed



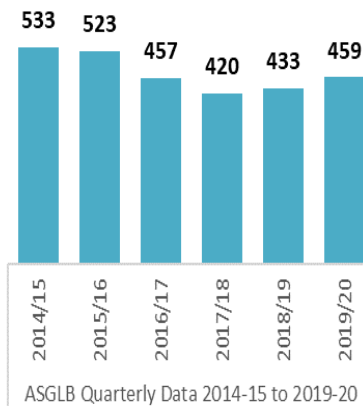
Timeliness for children is increasing with children waiting longer for permanence. In 2019/20:

- The average number of days spent waiting to be placed with placement order since entering care was **612** days, an increase of **46** days from 2018/19
- Scorecard Indicator A1 (average number of days between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family) was **459** days, an increase of **26** days from 2018/19
- 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 **190** days, an increase of **17** days from 2018/19

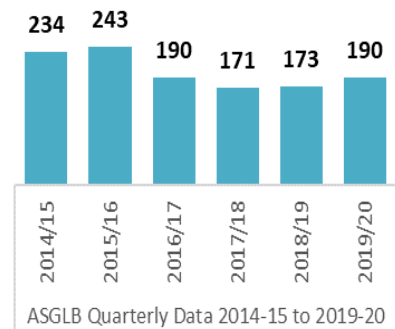
Average length of time spent waiting since entering care for those with a Placement Order but not yet placed



Scorecard Indicator A1 (Average Number Of Days Between A Child Entering Care And Moving In With Its Adoptive Family)



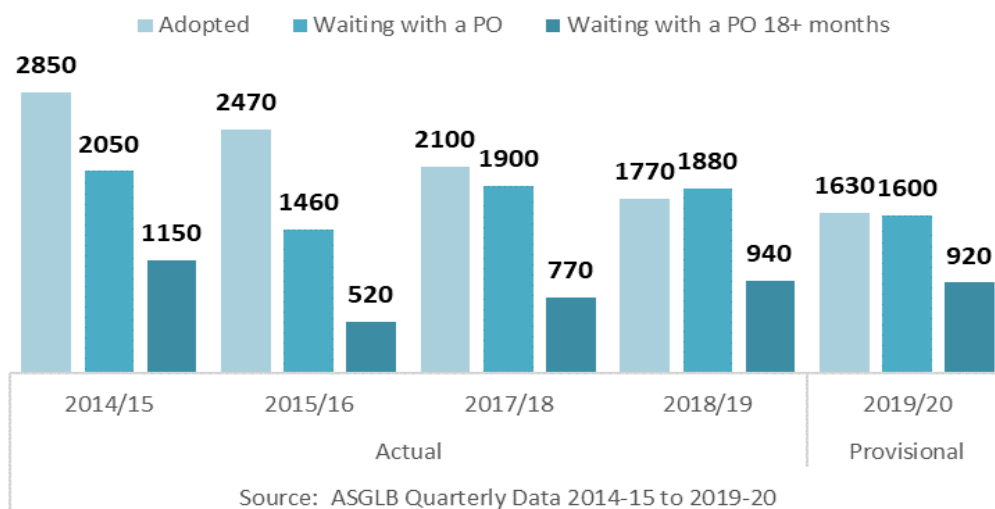
Scorecard Indicator A2 (Average Time Between An LA Receiving Court Authority To Place A Child And Deciding On A Match To An Adoptive Family)



There has been a decrease in the number of children with harder to place (HTP) characteristics waiting with a PO, and waiting with a PO 18+ months. However, these decreases can also be attributed to the decrease in POs granted in 2018/19 rather than more children with HTP characteristics being matched and placed with an adoptive family. There has also been a decrease in the number of children with harder to place characteristics adopted. In 2019/20 there were:

- **1630** children with HTP characteristics adopted, a decrease of **8% (140n)** from 2018/19
- **1600** children with HTP characteristics waiting with a PO, a decrease of **15% (280n)** from 2018/19
- **920** children with HTP characteristics waiting with a PO 18+ months, a decrease of **2% (20n)** from 2018/19

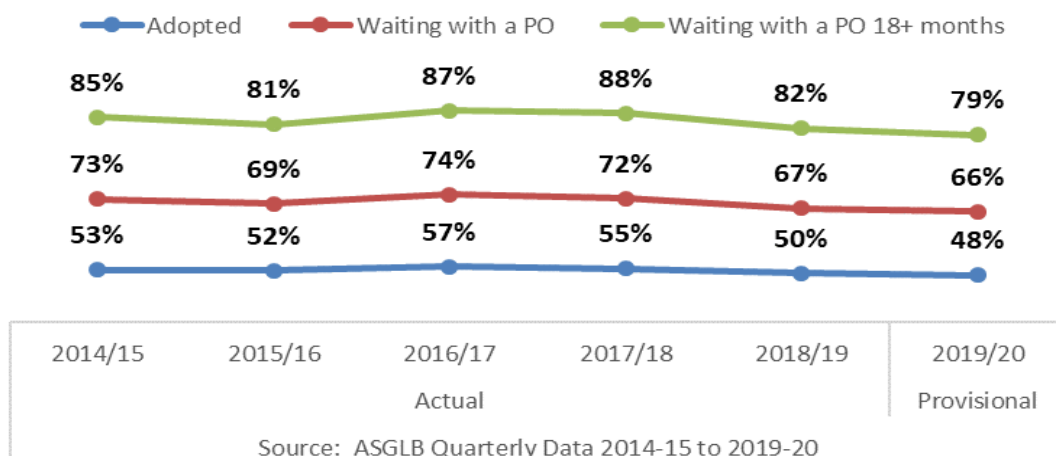
Child Characteristics - Harder to Place



In 2019/20:

- **48%** of all children adopted had HTP characteristics, a decrease of **2%** from 2018/19
- **66%** of all children waiting with a PO had HTP characteristics, a decrease of **1%** from 2018/19
- **79%** of all children waiting with a PO 18+ months had HTP characteristics, a decrease of **3%** from 2018/19

Child Characteristics - Percentage who had Harder to Place Characteristics

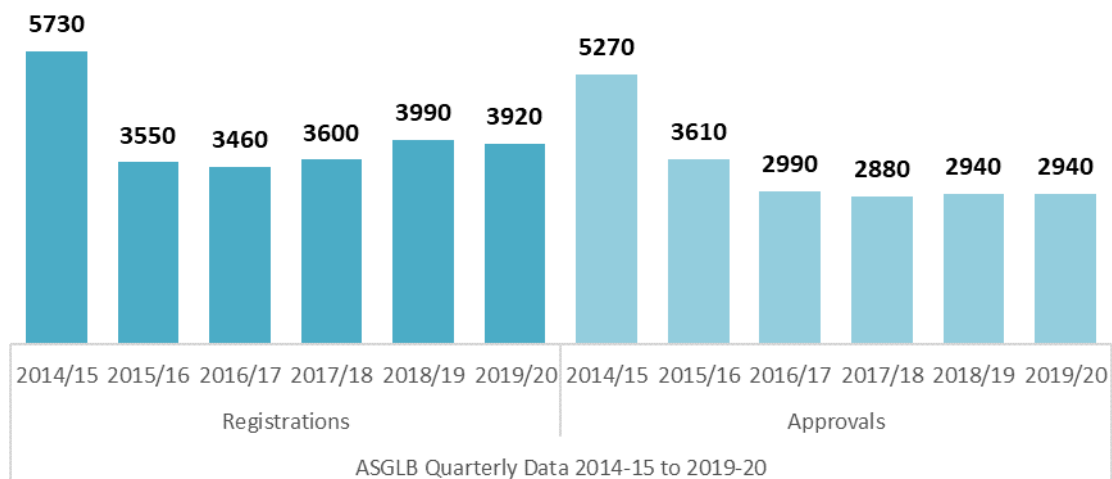


ADOPTERS

The number of available approved adoptive families is declining. After two years of increases in the number of registrations and one year for approvals, there was a decrease in the number of adopter registrations and approvals remained the same. In 2019/20 there were:

- **3920** Registrations, a decrease of **2% (70n)** from 2018/19
- **2940** Approvals, the same as 2018/19

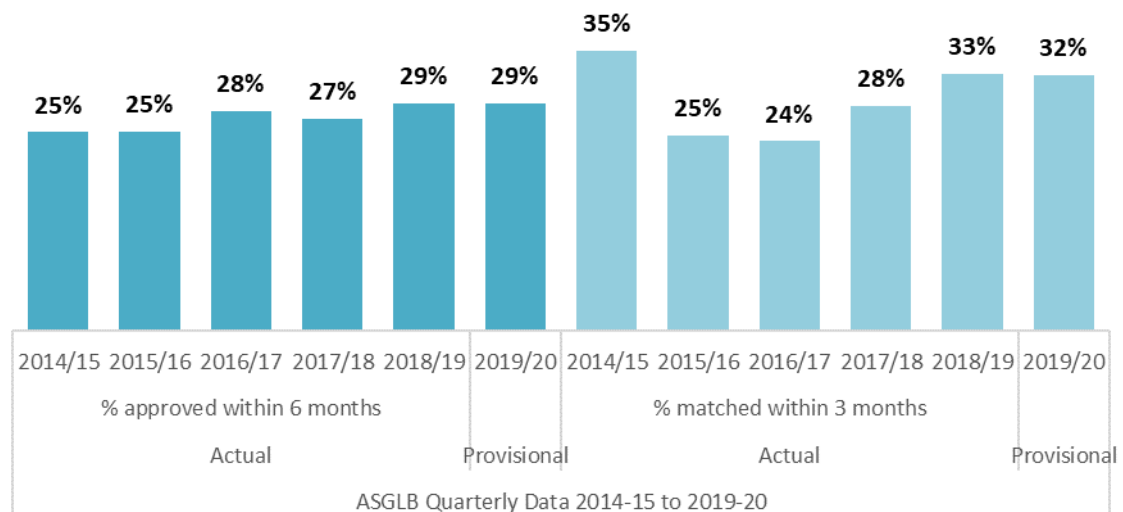
Adopter Registrations and Approvals



Adopter timeliness has remained stable.

- **29%** of prospective adopters were approved within 6 months
- **32%** of approved adopters were matched within 3 months of approval, a decrease of 1 percentage point from 2018/19.

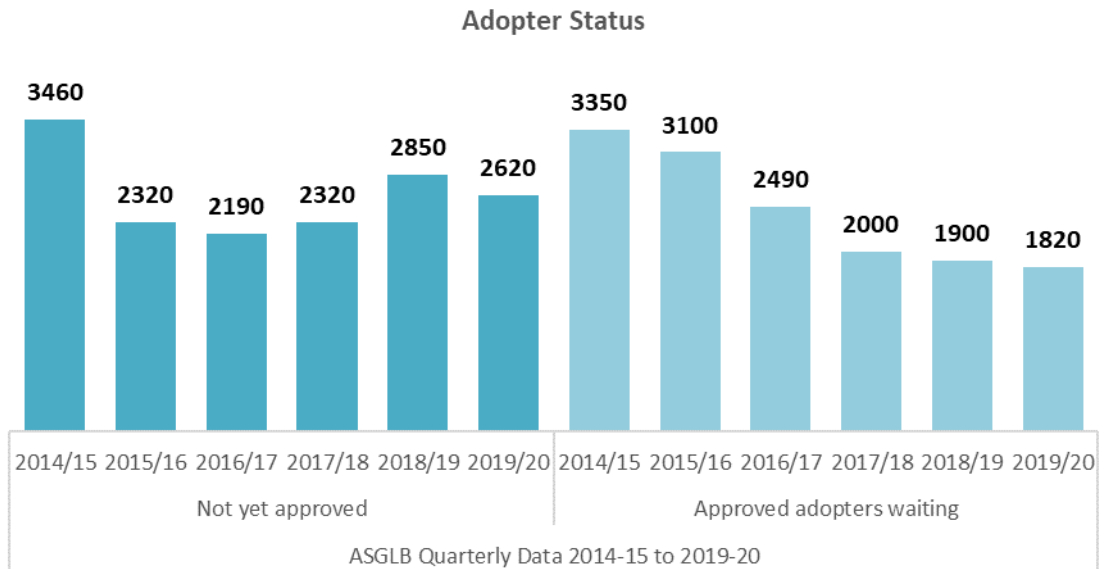
Adopter Timeliness



There has been a decrease in the number of prospective adopters not yet approved and the number of approved adopters waiting to be matched with a child. In 2019/20 there were:

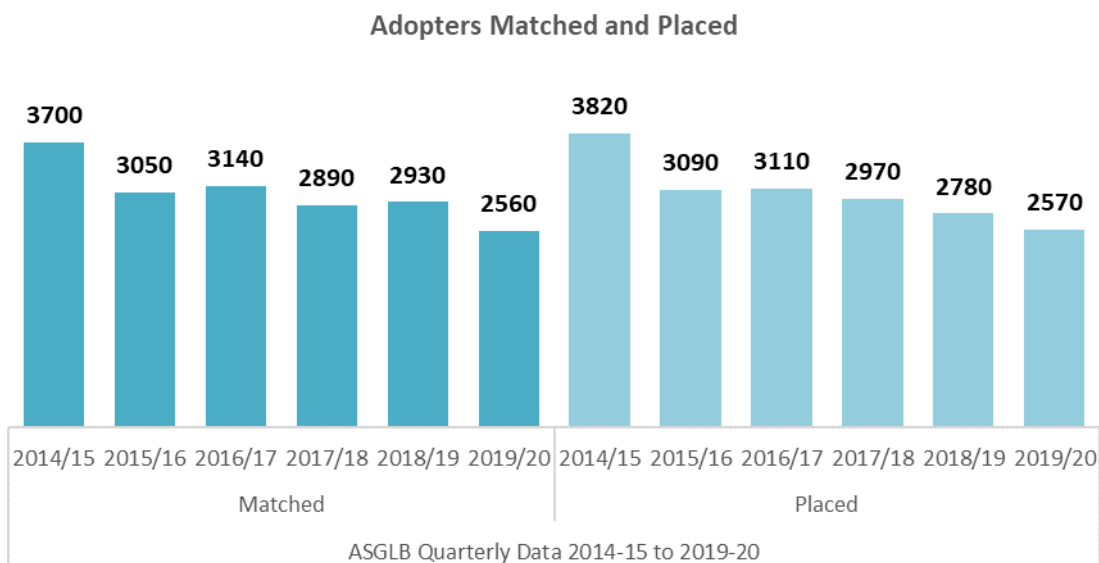
- **2620** prospective adoptive families not yet approved, a decrease of **8% (230n)** from 2018/19
- **1820** approved adoptive families waiting to be matched, a decrease of **4% (80n)** from 2018/19

The 1820 approved adoptive families waiting have been waiting on average 7 months to be matched with a child.



There has also been a decrease in the number of families matched to a child and with a child placed with them. There were:

- **2560** adoptive families matched to a child, a decrease of **13% (370n)** from 2018/19
- **2570** adoptive families with a child placed, a decrease of **8% (210n)** from 2018/19



DATA SOURCES

ASGLB Quarterly Data Collection

In quarter 4 2019/20 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.

NB: Estimates are made by scaling to the regional level based on the number of adoptions in each LA during 2018-19 (from the SSDA903 data).

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 [Looked After Children Statistical First Release](#) (SFR) and the [Adoption Scorecards](#). The most recent data covers the year ending 31 March 2019.

Ofsted Data

Ofsted have previously published annual data on the recruitment of adopters and the children placed with them. From quarter 4 2014-15 the Ofsted data collection became part of the quarterly survey.

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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