

Adoption and Special Guardianship Quarterly Data Collection

Headline Measures: Q3 2024/25

March 2025

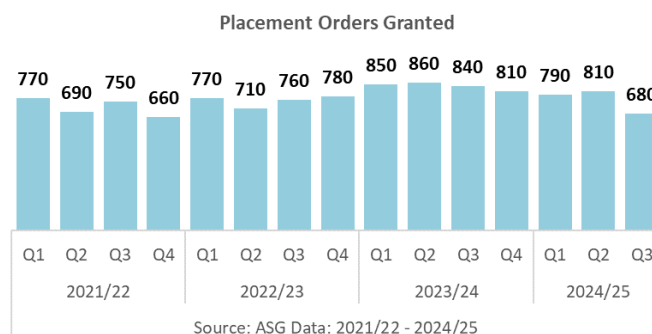
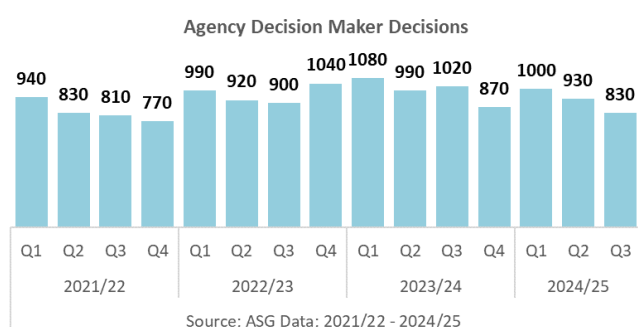
Note: The Department for Education's annual figures on adoptions and timeliness for children who have been adopted are published in the [Children looked after in England including adoption](#) SFR. This is the most robust source of information on adoption.

CHILDREN

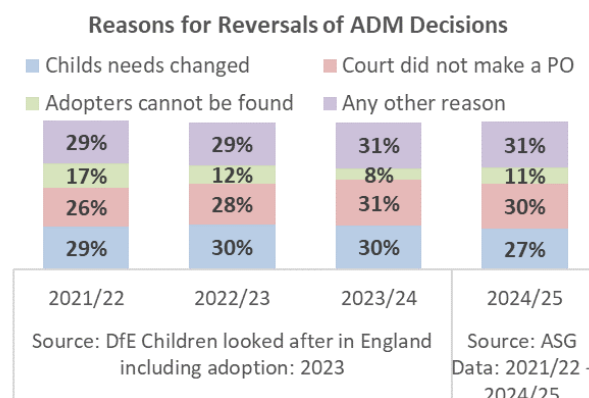
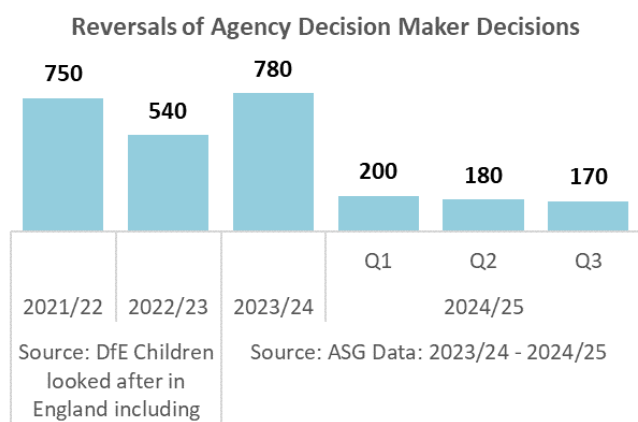
The numbers of best interest decisions for children continue to decline. Overall, less children are being matched and placed with adopters, and the numbers of children waiting with a PO continue to rise. Timeliness for children is slowing and more children are waiting longer to be placed with an adoptive family.

In Q3 2024/25 there were:

- **830** Agency Decision Maker decisions, a decrease of **11% (100n)** from Q2 2024/25, and a decrease of **19% (190n)** when compared to Q3 2023/24
- **680** Placement Orders granted, a decrease of **16% (130n)** from Q2 2024/25, and a decrease of **19% (160n)** when compared to Q3 2023/24



- **550** ADM reversals in total for Q1, Q2 and Q3, **71%** of the total for 2023/24
- **27%** of reversals were due to 'Child's needs changed', **30%** 'Court did not make a PO', **11%** 'Adopters cannot be found', and **31%** were due to 'Any other reason'

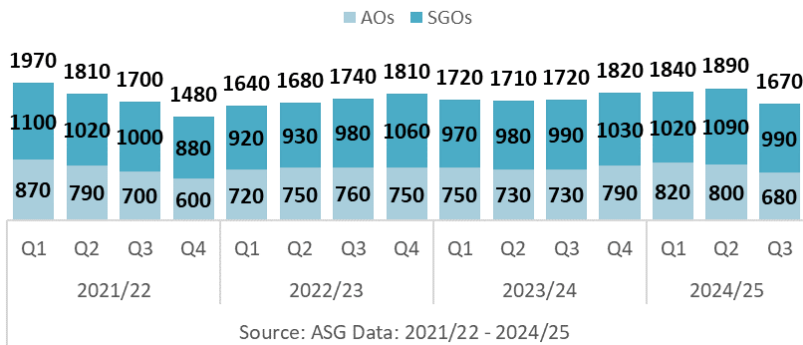


The numbers of Adoption Orders granted decreased, and the number of Special Guardianship Orders granted increased when compared to the last quarter. Total permanence was slightly lower when compared to last quarter.

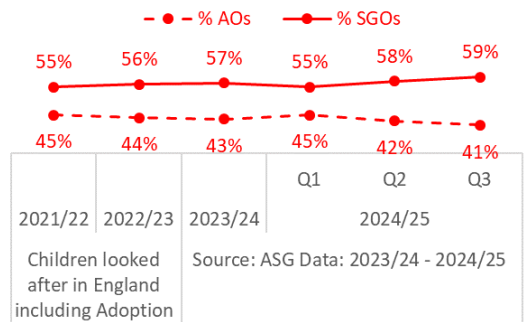
In Q3 2024/25 there were:

- **680** Adoption Orders granted, a decrease of **15% (120n)** from Q2 2024/25, and a decrease of **7% (50n)** when compared to Q3 2023/24
- **990** Special Guardianship Orders granted, a decrease of **9% (100n)** from Q2 2024/25, and the same when compared to Q3 2023/24
- **1670** total permanence orders granted (AOs & SGOs), a decrease of **12% (220n)** from Q2 2024/25, and a decrease of **3% (50n)** when compared to Q3 2023/24
- SGOs accounted for **59%** of all permanence, an increase of **1** percentage point when compared to 2023/24
- **420** children were placed in an FFA/CP arrangement in Q1, Q2 and Q3, **76%** of the total for 2023/24

Adoption Orders and Special Guardianship Orders

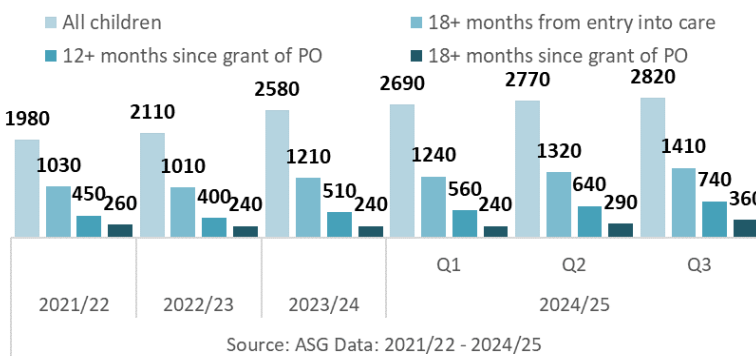


Total Permanence (AOs and SGOs)

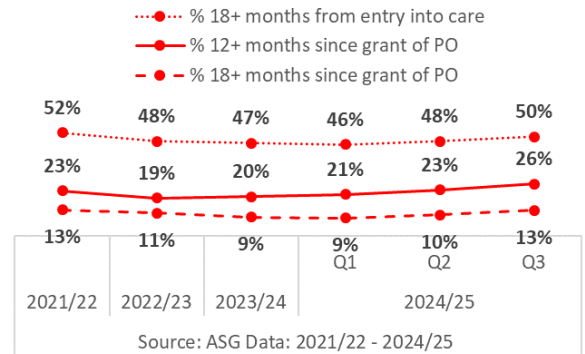


The number of children waiting with a Placement Order, and waiting longer has increased.

Children Waiting with a Placement Order



Children waiting with a PO

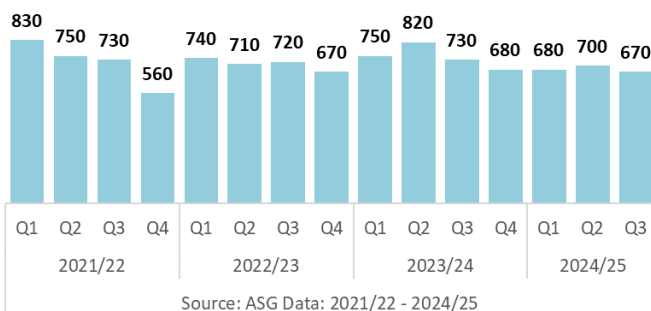


In Q3 2024/25 there were:

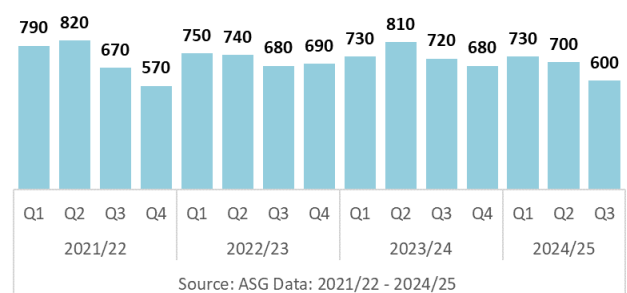
- **2820** children with a PO waiting to be placed, an increase of **2% (50n)** from Q2 2024/25
- **1410** children with a PO waiting to be placed 18+ months since entering care, an increase of **7% (90n)** from Q2 2024/25
- **50%** of children with a PO have been waiting to be placed 18+ months since entering care
- **740** children with a PO waiting to be matched 12+ months since grant of PO, an increase of **16% (100n)** from Q2 2024/25
- **26%** of children with a PO have been waiting to be matched 12+ months since grant of PO
- **360** children with a PO waiting to be matched 18+ months since grant of PO, an increase of **24% (70n)** from Q2 2024/25
- **13%** 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 has decreased this quarter.

Children Matched



Children Placed

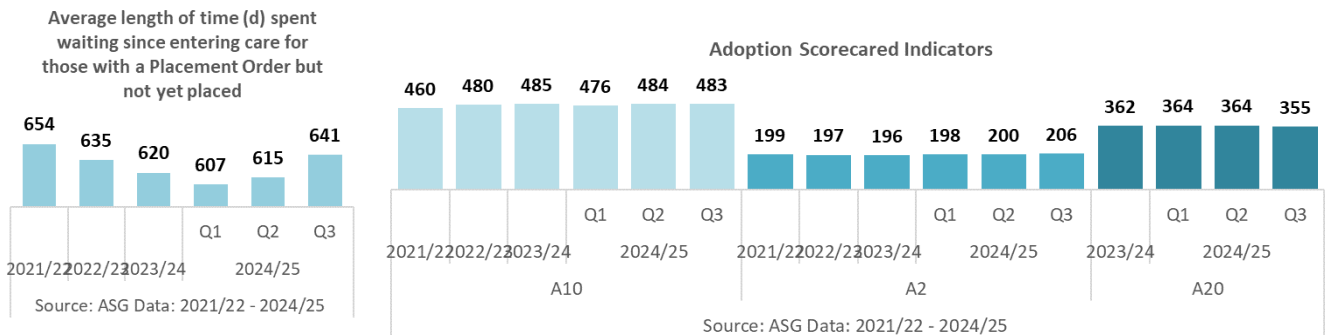


In Q3 2024/25 there were:

- **670** children matched with an adoptive family, a decrease of **4% (30n)** from Q2 2024/25, and a decrease of **8% (60n)** when compared to Q3 2023/24
- **600** children placed with an adoptive family, a decrease of **14% (100n)** from Q2 2024/25, and a decrease of **17% (120n)** when compared to Q3 2023/24

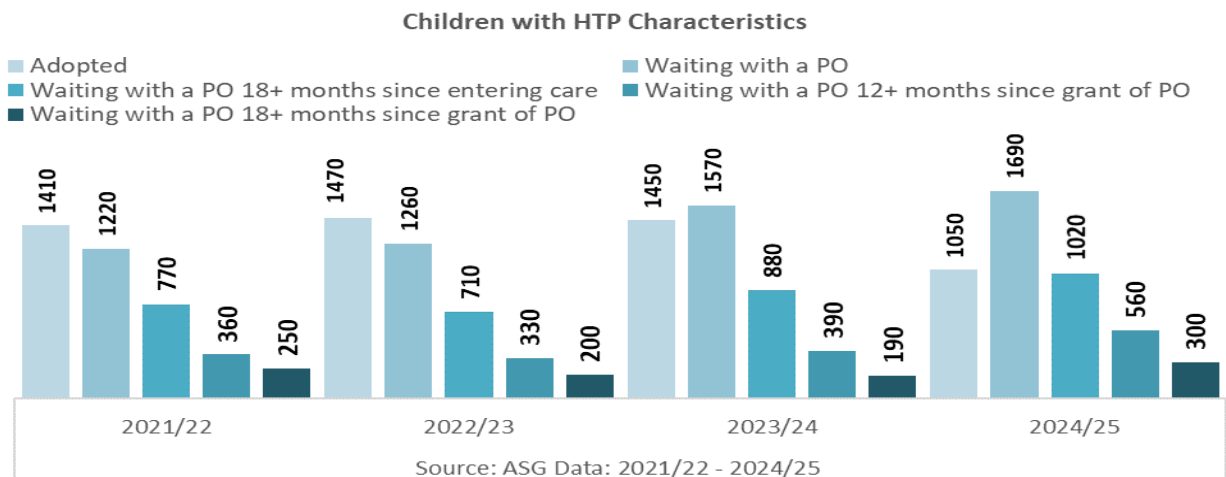
Timeliness has improved for some children and slowed for others. In Q3 2024/25:

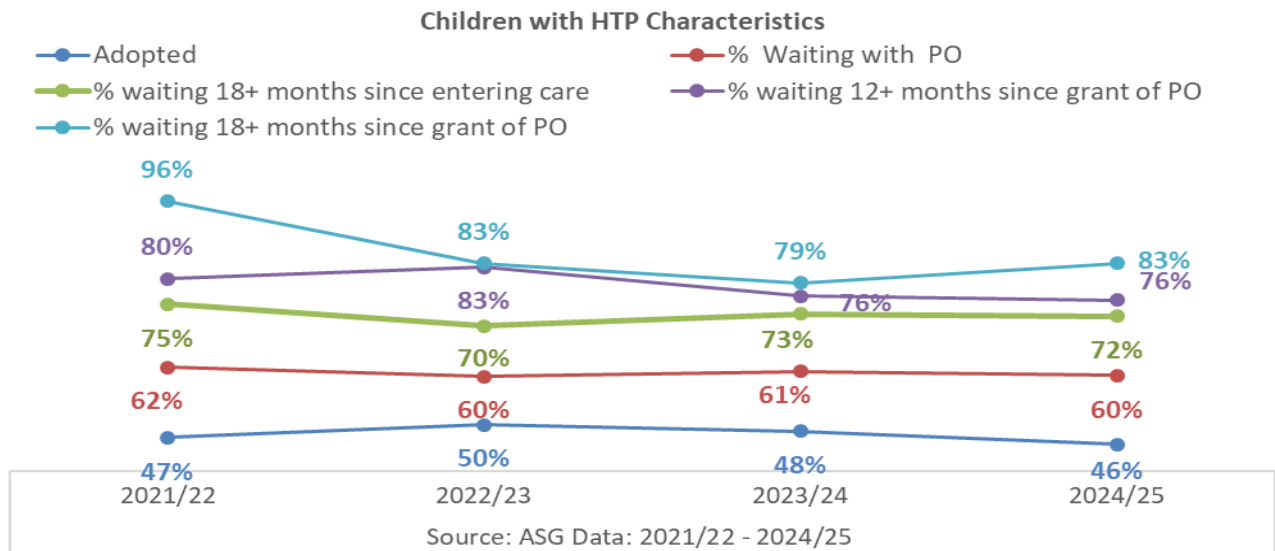
- The average number of days spent waiting to be placed with Placement Order since entering care was **641 days**, an increase of **26 days** from Q2 2024/25
- Scorecard Indicator A10 (average number of days between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family adjusted for foster care adoptions) was **483 days**, a decrease of **1 day** from Q2 2024/25
- 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 **206 days**, an increase of **6 days** from Q2 2024/25
- Scorecard Indicator A20 (average time between a child entering care and an LA receiving court authority to place a child) was **355 days**, a decrease of **9 days** from Q2 2024/25



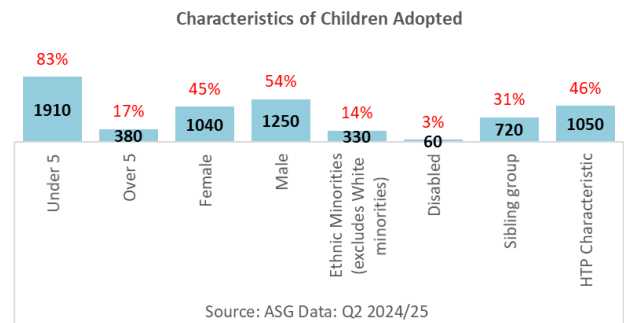
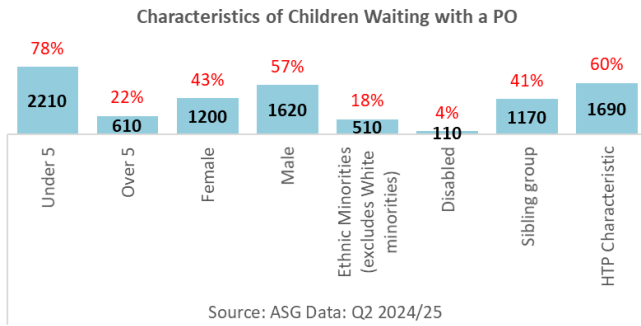
For the first three quarters of 2024/25 there were:

- **1050** children with HTP characteristics adopted, **46%** of all children adopted
- **1690** children with HTP characteristics waiting with a PO, **60%** of all children waiting with a PO
- **1020** children with HTP characteristics waiting with a PO 18+ months since entering care, **72%** of all children waiting with a PO 18+ months since entering care
- **560** children with HTP characteristics waiting 12+ months since grant of PO, **76%** of all children waiting 12+ months since grant of PO
- **300** children with HTP characteristics waiting 18+ months since grant of PO, **83%** of all children waiting 18+ months since grant of PO





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



In Q3 2024/25 there were

- 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.

CHILDREN'S TIMELINESS BY CHARACTERISTIC

In 2024/25, the average time from entry into care to waiting with a PO as at Q3 for all children was **641** days, **19** days longer than Q2 2024/25. Children aged 5 year and over waited the longest; **926** days, followed by children with a disability: **833** days, and Ethnic Minority children: **737** days.

Average time in days waiting with a PO to report date from entry into care

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Q1 2024/25	Q2 2024/25	Q3 2024/25
All Children	398	454	502	545	620	615	622	641
Aged under 5 years old	243	377	441	492	548	551	555	563
Aged 5 years old and over	427	495	571	680	942	878	884	926
Female	394	439	490	551	599	597	604	620
Male	401	466	513	540	638	629	635	658
Ethnic minority (exc White minorities)	423	478	532	614	725	704	710	737
Disabled	407	486	535	593	856	770	836	833
Part of sibling group	392	445	490	553	671	674	678	708
Harder to place	429	483	541	586	700	700	706	730

The average time from grant of PO and waiting as at Q3 for all children was **288** days, **21** days longer than Q2 2024/25. Children aged 5 year and over waited the longest since grant of PO; **486** days, followed by children with a disability: **448** days, and Ethnic Minority children: **345** days.

Average time in days waiting with a PO to report date from grant of PO

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Q1 2024/25	Q2 2024/25	Q3 2024/25
All Children	178	176	182	187	247	255	267	288
Aged under 5 years old	62	98	126	141	199	211	217	233
Aged 5 years old and over	200	216	245	304	460	436	466	486
Female	175	161	178	184	230	242	253	271
Male	180	187	185	189	262	265	279	300
Ethnic minority (exc White minorities)	220	200	206	238	309	296	317	345
Disabled	258	270	310	331	425	395	432	448
Part of sibling group	182	171	168	181	265	282	297	322
Harder to place	208	204	212	215	291	303	319	342

The average time from entry into care to adoption for all children was **838** days, **3** days less than Q2 2024/25. Children aged 5 year and over had the longest journey to adoption; **1258** days, followed by children with a disability: **1128** days, and children in a sibling group: **971** days.

Average time (days) from entry into care to adoption

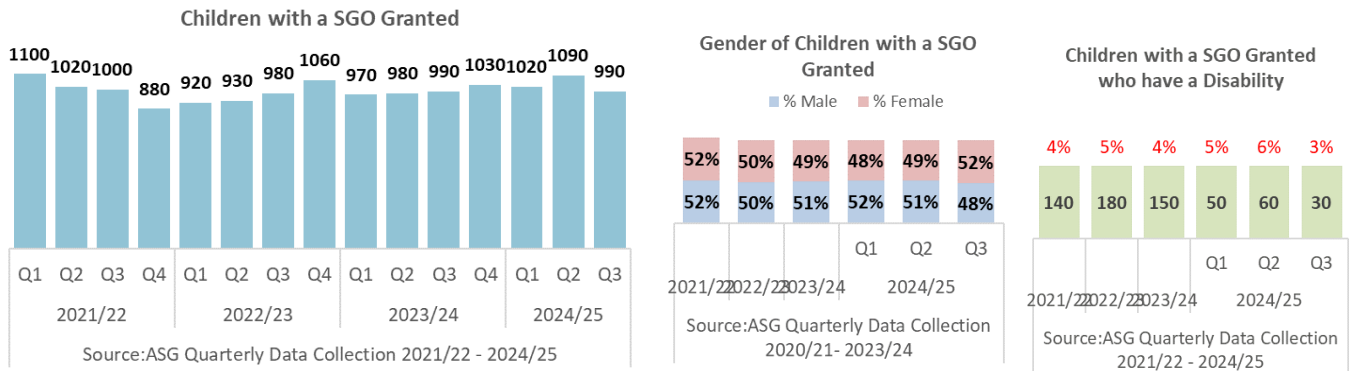
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Q1 2024/25	Q2 2024/25	Q3 2024/25
All Children	719	795	828	871	864	845	841	838
Aged under 5 years old	632	705	728	768	754	750	753	755
Aged 5 years old and over	1177	1196	1259	1286	1315	1266	1273	1258
Female	708	781	815	854	852	820	821	823
Male	730	806	840	885	877	864	857	850
Ethnic minority (exc White minorities)	785	894	902	922	930	915	898	897
Disabled	1170	1000	1165	1170	1234	964	1222	1128
Part of sibling group	862	929	959	1008	981	977	990	971
Harder to place	860	927	967	996	994	978	974	966

SPECIAL GUARDIANSHIP ORDERS

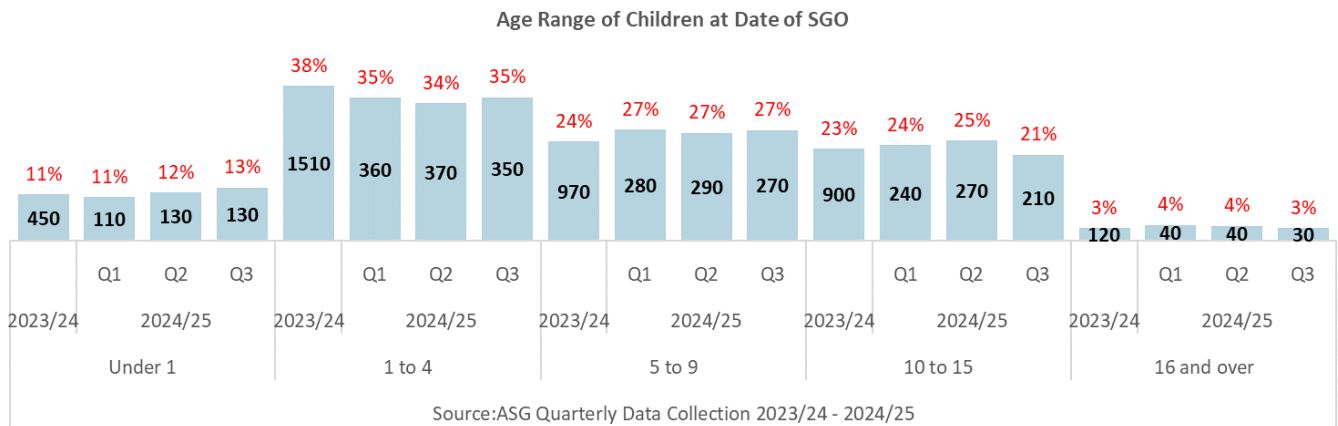
The number of Special Guardianship Orders granted in Q3 2024/25 decreased when compared to the last quarter. More children leave care with an SGO than an adoption order, with SGOs accounting for **59%** of all permanence.

In Q3 2024/25, there were:

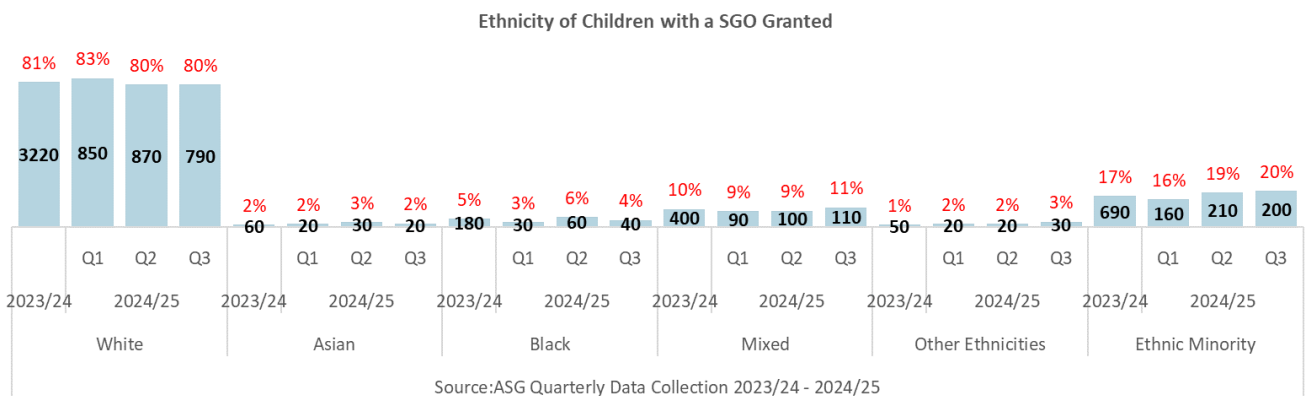
- **990** SGOs granted, a decrease of **9% (100n)** from Q2 2024/25, and the same when compared to Q3 2023/24
- **52%** of the children were male, **48%** female, **3%** had a disability, **20%** were from an Ethnic Minority (excluding White minorities), and **44%** were in a sibling group



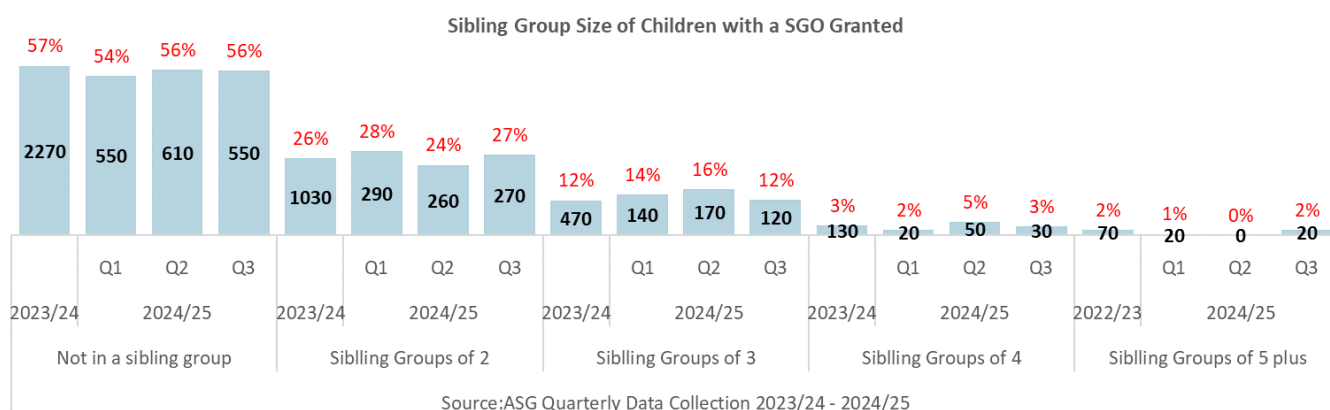
Children aged 1 to 4 are the largest group of children who leave care with an SGO (**35%**), followed by children aged 5 to 9 (**27%**)



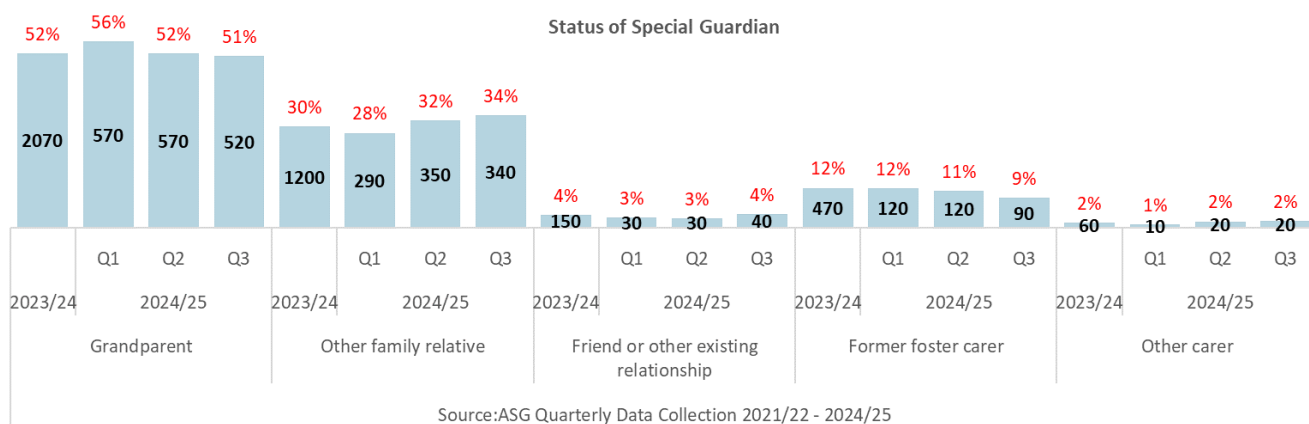
- **20%** of SGOs were granted for children from an Ethnic Minority (excludes White minorities, with children with a Mixed Ethnicity are the biggest represented Ethnic Minority)



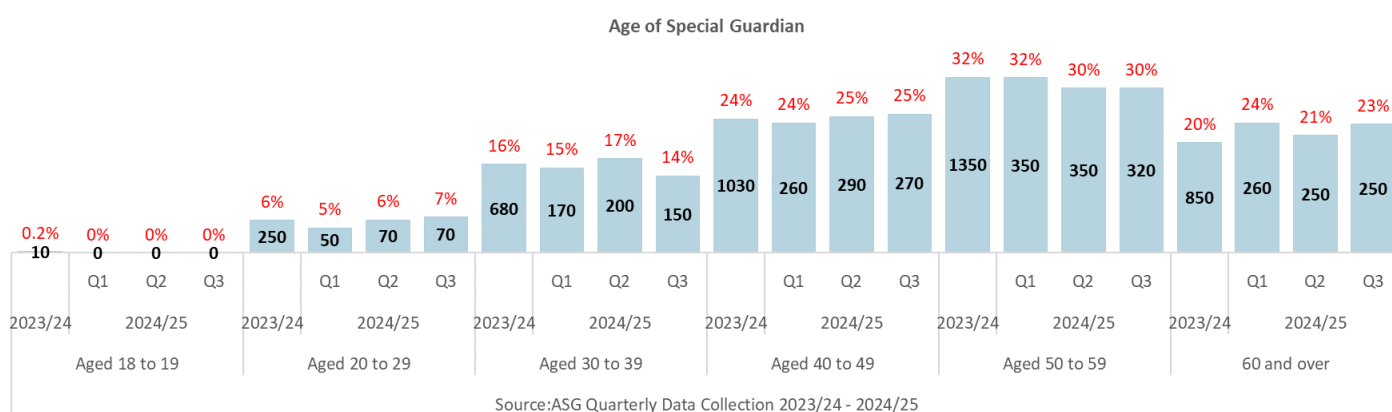
- Children not in a sibling group continue to be the largest group of children who leave care with an SGO (54%), followed by children in a sibling group of 2 (27%)



- Grandparents are the largest represented group of Special Guardians, with 51% of SGOs granted to grandparents, followed by other family relatives (34%)



- Special Guardians aged 50 to 59 are the largest represented age group (30%), followed by and special guardians aged 40 to 49 (25%)

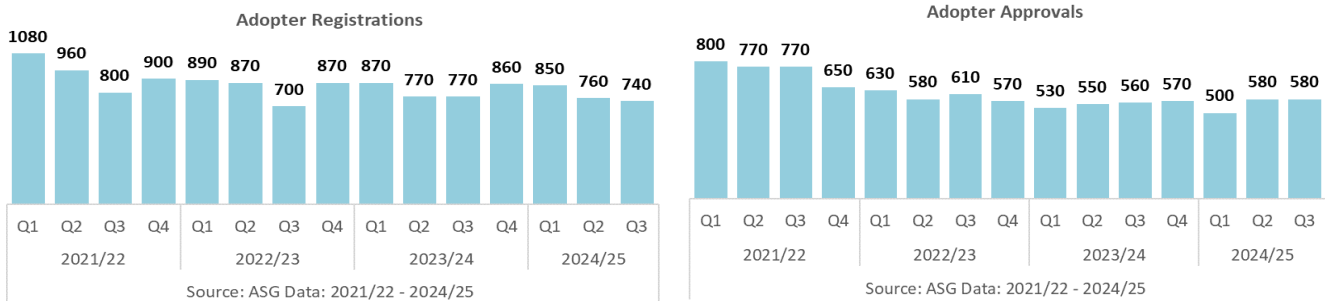


ADOPTERS

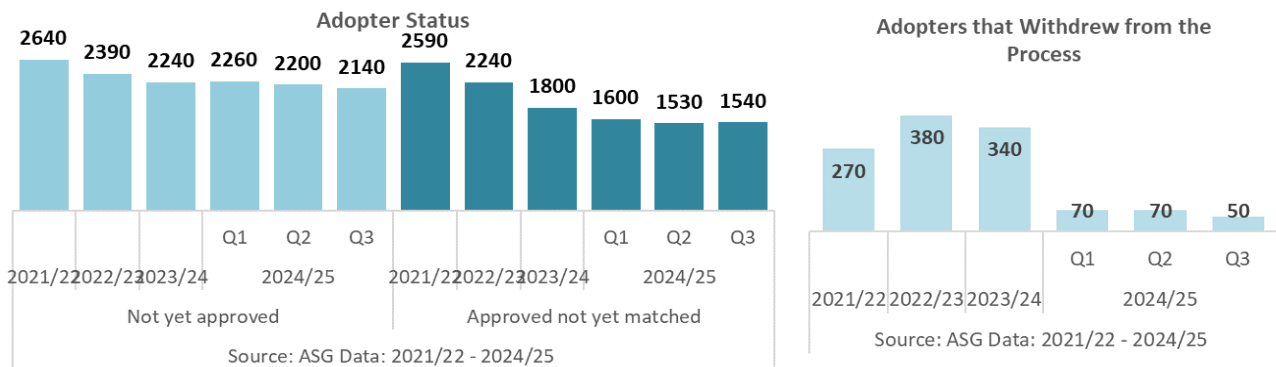
Adopter recruitment continues to decline, reducing the number of available approved adoptive families to be matched with the children waiting with a PO.

In Q3 2024/25 there were:

- **740** Registrations, a decrease of **3% (20n)** from Q2 2024/25, and a decrease of **4% (30n)** when compared to Q3 2023/24
- **580** Approvals, the same as Q2 2024/25, and an increase of **4% (20n)** when compared to Q3 2023/24



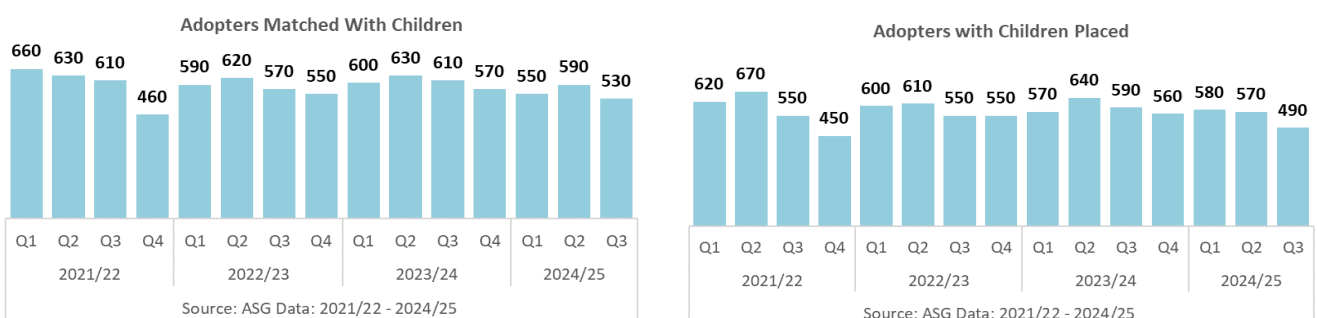
- **2140** Prospective adoptive families not yet approved, a decrease of **3% (60n)** from Q2 2024/25
- **1540** Approved adoptive families waiting to be matched, an increase of **1% (10n)** from Q2 2024/25
- **190** approved adopters withdrew from the process after approval in Q1, Q2 and Q3, **56%** of the total for 2023/24



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

In Q3 2024/25 there were:

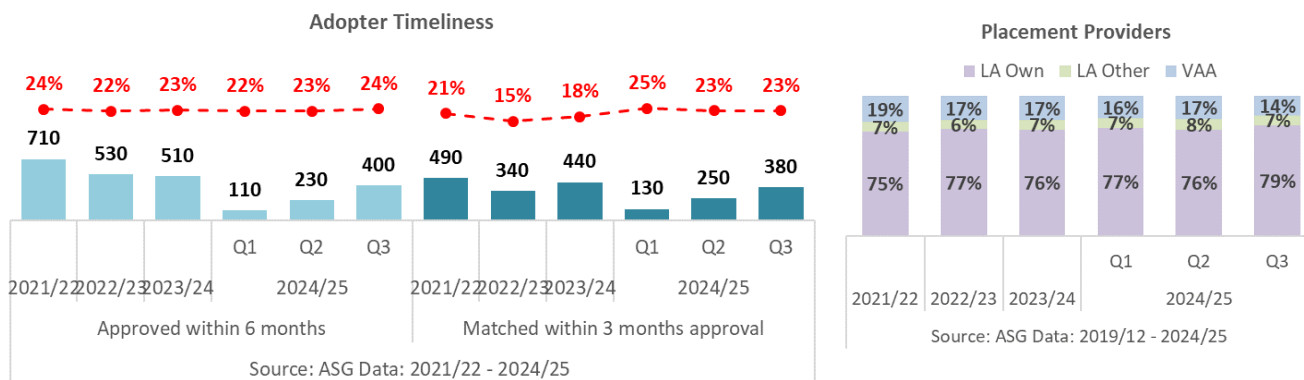
- **530** Adoptive families matched to children, a decrease of **10% (60n)** from Q2 2024/25, and a decrease of **13% (80n)** when compared to Q3 2023/24
- **490** Adoptive families with a child placed, a decrease of **14% (80n)** from Q2 2024/25, and a decrease of **17% (100n)** when compared to Q3 2023/24



A higher proportion of adopters were approved within 6 months of registrations, and the same proportion of adopters were matched within 3 months of approval.

In Q3 2024/25 there were

- **24%** of adoptive families were approved within 6 months of registration, an increase of **1** percentage point when compared to Q2 2024/25
- **23%** of approved adoptive families had a child matched with them within 3 months of approval, the same when compared to Q2 2024/25



There has been a decrease in the proportion of VAA placements and placements to other LAs.

In Q3 2024/25:

- **79%** of placements were provided by LAs themselves (via their RAAs)
- **7%** of placements were provided by other LAs (other RAAs)
- **14%** of placements were provided by VAAs

NB: Percentages may not add due to rounding of numbers

SUFFICIENCY OF ADOPTERS

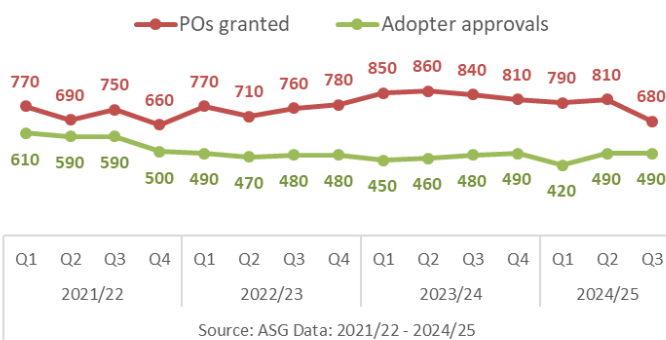
Adopter Recruitment is declining, reducing the number of approved adopters available for the children waiting with a PO. This quarter there has been a decrease in adopter registrations and prospective adopters not yet approved. Adopter approvals have remained at the same level as last quarter, and there has been a small increase in the number of adopters approved and waiting.

Adopter Pipeline: Registrations, Approvals and Awaiting Approval and Approved

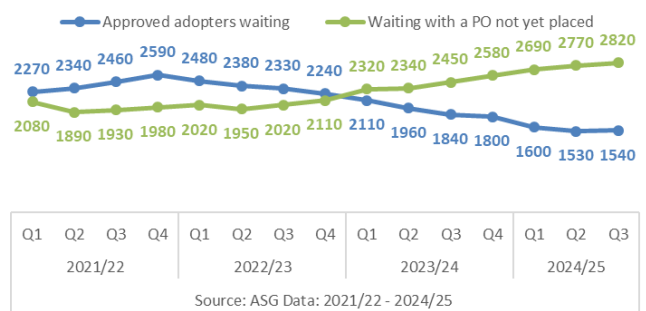


Adopter sufficiency continues to decline, with more children waiting with a PO to be placed with a family than approved adopters waiting. There are more POs granted each quarter than adopters approved, resulting in a higher number of children reaching the matching stage compared to adopters.

ADOPTER SUFFICIENCY: Children and Adopters



Children and Adopters Waiting to be Matched

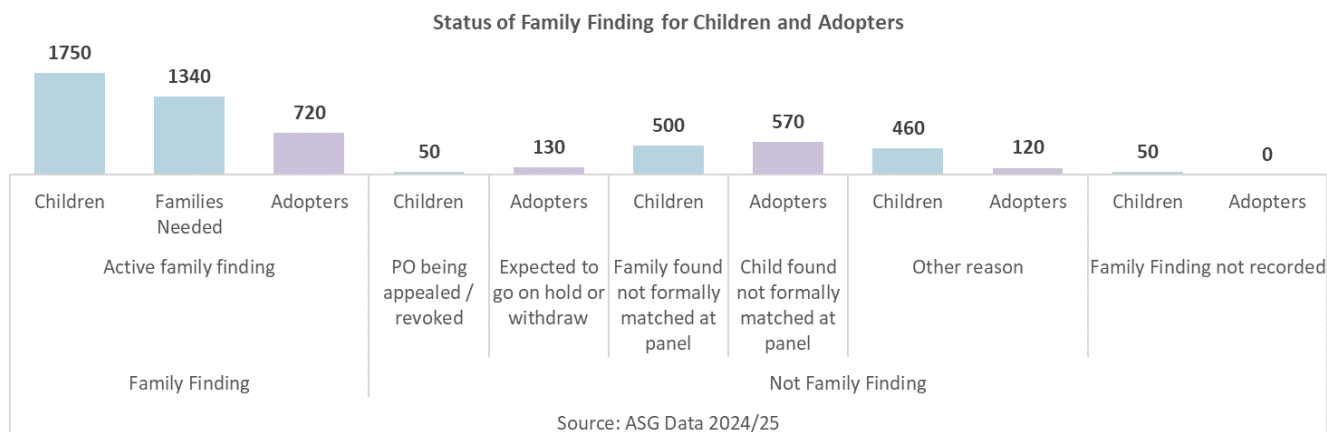


In Q3 2024/25 there were:

- **680** POs granted, and **490** adopter approvals; a gap of **190**
- **2820** children waiting with a PO not yet placed, and **1540** approved adopters waiting for a child to be placed; a gap of **1280**

Comparison of the family finding status for all children and all adopters waiting show that there are:

- **1750** children with active family finding
- **1340** adopter families need *(based on the number of single children and sibling groups waiting to be placed)*
- **720** adopter families with active family finding
- **620** shortfall of adopter families
- **54%** adopter sufficiency (proportion of families available for families needed)



DATA SOURCES

ASG Quarterly Data Collection

In quarter 3 2024/25 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 2024.

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: [ASG Quarterly Data](#)

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