



# Data to Insight: RIIA Benchmarking Quarterly Review – Q2 24/25

*Led by local authorities with support from the ADCS, DfE, Ofsted, and DLUHC,  
we're working to help LAs make better use of data in children's services*



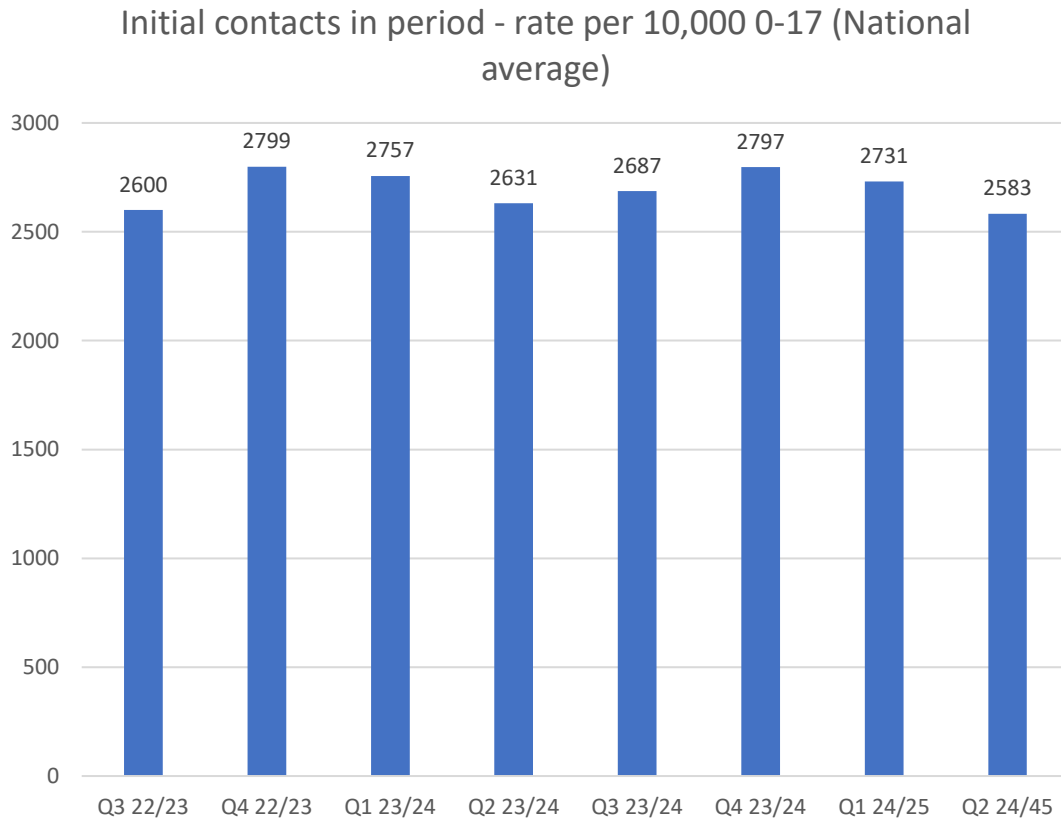
# About Data to Insight

- Data to Insight (D2I) is **the sector-led service for local authority children's data professionals**
- D2I is hosted by East Sussex County Council, led by local authorities, and supported by the ADCS, DfE, DLUHC and Ofsted, helping local authorities make **better use of data**
- D2I supports a **national community** of data professionals in designing, developing and maintaining useful data tools, connecting like-minded people, and helping good practice spread across regional boundaries
- D2I enhances a **proven partnership of LAs** working together for the sector – our depth and breadth of expertise and community reach gives data projects the best chance possible of succeeding in producing **meaningful insight**
- Tools and datasets we've helped to develop include:
  - ChAT – Children's Analysis Tool
  - BmT – Children's Services Benchmarking Tool
  - Demand Modelling Tool for CLA Placements
  - Statutory Returns Validation Tools
  - National RIIA Quarterly Data Collection
  - National Early Help Quarterly Data Collection

# Purpose of session and agenda

- All data has either been averaged or made non-identifiable
- Slightly more than 2 full years of data
- Informal session – we know that you are looking at this data in your regions but appreciate there can be a lot to get through in your quarterly sessions. Having a space to just discuss possible themes in performance, and hopefully make new connections will be helpful.
- Please feel free to jump in and ask questions or make comments at any time.
- Not looking at all measures in every session.
- Question – does everyone know how to access RIIA benchmarking?
- In this session we'll also be referring to the following statistical releases from the DfE, which were released since our last session:
  - [Children in need: 2023 to 2024 - GOV.UK](#)
  - [Children looked after in England including adoptions, Reporting year 2024 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK](#)
- These are all summarised in our free, regularly updated benchmarking tool, accessible via our [website](#).

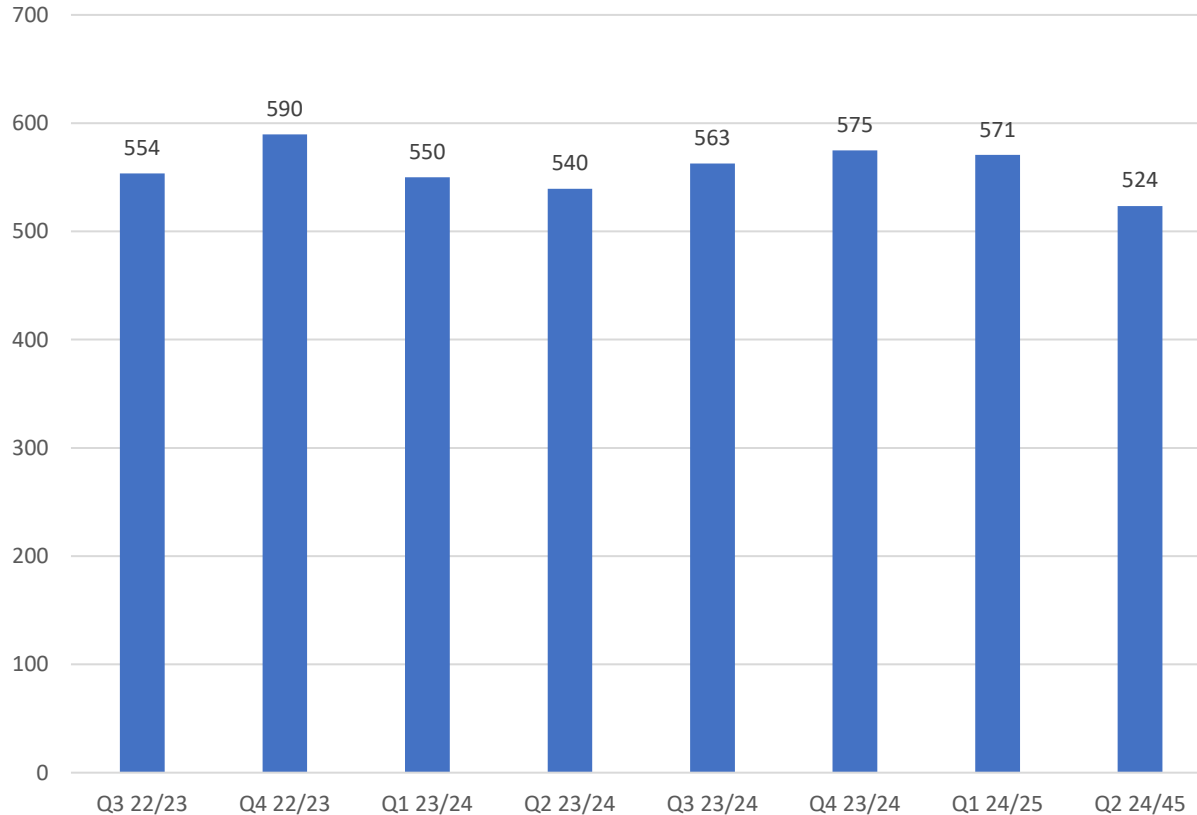
# Initial contacts received in period – rate per 10k 0-17



- Similar pattern over last two years with contacts highest in Q1/Q4 (January to June) and lowest in Q3 and Q2 (July to December)
- Overall, very similar levels of contacts this year.
- The annualised rate now 2583 contacts per 10,000 under 18s.
- Historical data not widely available, but data from Safeguarding Pressures report suggests that in 13/14 contact rate was c. 2000, and in 2009/10 was around 1500.

# Referrals

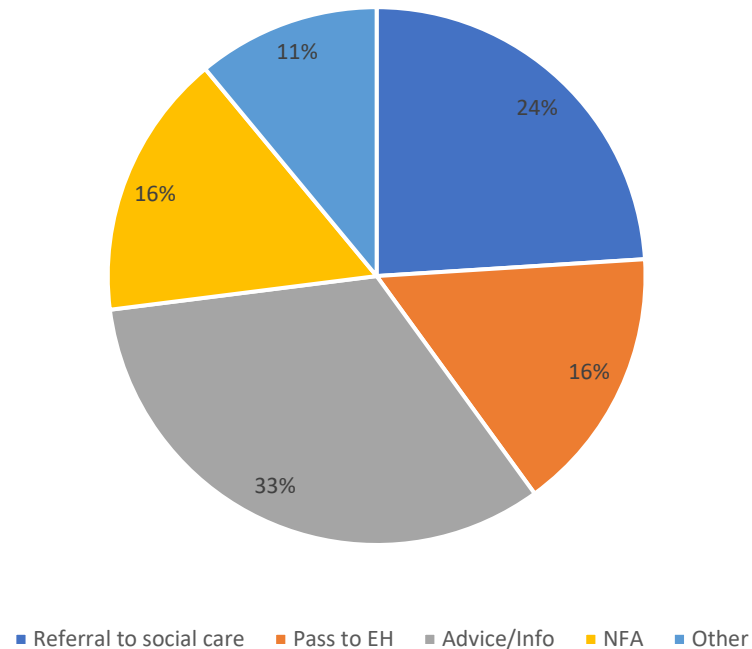
Referrals received in period - rate per 10,000 0-17 (National average)



- There appears to be a slight decline in referrals over the past two years, which is consistent with national reporting in the CiN return where in 13/14 the referral rate was 573
- This creates an interesting picture where demand at the front door through contacts has increased over the last 10 years, but the rate of referrals is steadily decreasing (or at least staying broadly consistent).

# What happens to contacts?

Contact Outcomes (taken from Safeguarding Pressures Phase 8 (21/22))



- As part of the RIIA, we don't collect contacts outcomes and it's hard to find any national data.
- The Safeguarding Pressures report – Phase 8 (21/22) does outline outcomes (right)
- This data suggests that the link between contacts and referrals is not that strong, with only about 24% of contacts going on to referral – our data for Q2 suggests this has fallen further to about 20%

## How CSC is changing:

The growth of Early Help – we looked at this last quarter (the next slide is taken from that report) and saw evidence that the shape of social care may be changing, with more children supported at an EH level. This will differ between LAs, but the thresholds between CiN and EH appears to vary between LAs:

*“Each local authority determines their own thresholds for interventions, often (but not always) set out in a ‘threshold document’. This can mean that in one local authority for example a child facing a particular issue will be assessed as a child in need, while in another they will be referred for targeted early help.”*

[‘What is this plan for?’ The purpose and content of child in need plans – Children’s Commissioner \(Nov 24\)](#)

If we have finite resources, increasing demand and fluid thresholds, it seems plausible to imagine a reshaping of social care such that children at a statutory level will have more complex needs and require more intensive support than in the past. Some children currently receiving Early Help may well have been supported at a statutory level in the past.

This might help to explain seemingly incompatible themes – LAs report being busier than ever, but caseloads/referrals are stable. We have similar numbers of children in care, but placement costs are increasing etc.

## How CSC is changing (cont...):

33% of contacts were listed with an outcome of advice/info, which represents the largest category of outcomes.

It's somewhat unclear what we are reporting here, and worth looking at in more detail.

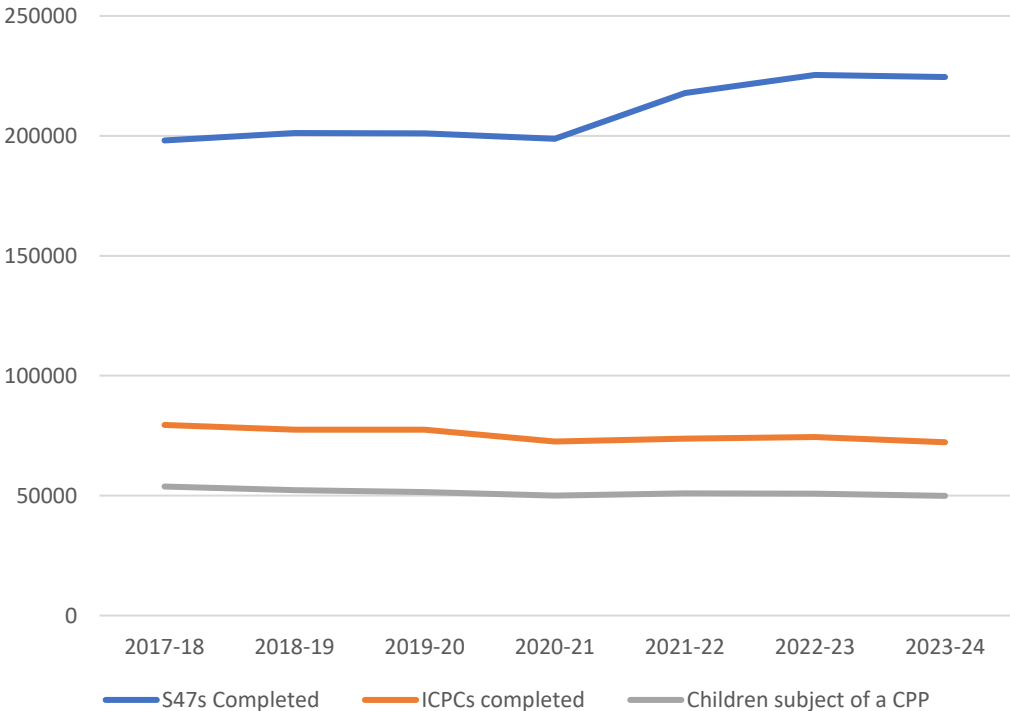
- Some of the queries may be for signposting – though many LAs will now discourage contacts for this, instead asking people/agencies to refer to a signposting section of their website.
- Information sharing – we've had feedback that this makes up a large portion of contacts in this category – if a professional is working with a child, they may get in touch to see whether there is a social care involvement. Similarly, where a professional is working with a child and they know there is a SC involvement, they may provide an update through a contact.
- The large number of contacts in the system that are just for info suggests that this is a key mechanism by which multi-agency working is enabled. Presumably, there is a large flow of info going the other way as social workers etc. update agencies or request info from partners.
- It seems like there's good evidence here for better data sharing between agencies that doesn't involve making a phone call.

# The role of Early Help:

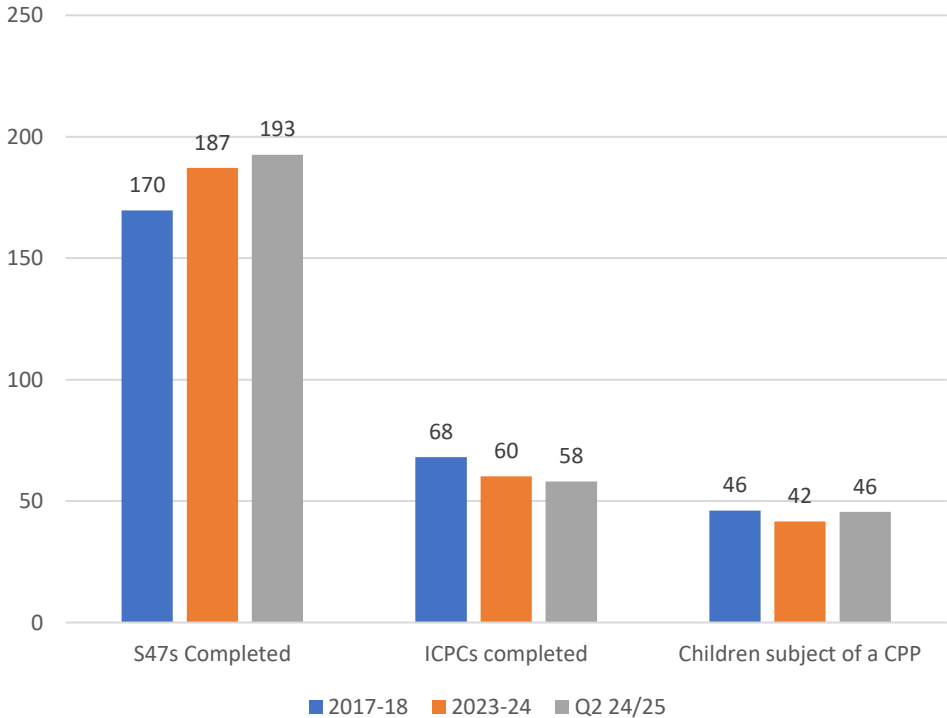
- Our EH collection only started in 2023, and finding historical data to understand whether we can quantify a growth of Early Help support is challenging. We can get some idea of the growth in Early Help. However, again using the ADCS Safeguarding Pressures 8 Report, we see a table showing rates of open EH (children were asked for, but some LAs could only report families so the author does warn there may be an undercount). In 2017/8 LAs reported a rate of 139 per 10k 0-17 years olds) in the latest EH Benchmarking report, we have reported an average rate of 200 children and increases in the rate of children starting episodes.
- Obviously drawing definitive conclusions on that limited (and by the authors admission, potentially flawed) data is not possible, but an increase in the provision of early help is suggested.
- LAs themselves report a similar picture:
  - “On the back of austerity, Covid-19 and a cost-of-living crisis, our early help offer has been a main vehicle in supporting families and combatting reactive and expensive statutory interventions. While relying on often small pots of funding, widespread and positive differences to our families and with our community partners have been achieved.”  
*Pauline Turner, DCS Hull – ADCS Blog August 2024*
- The picture here is complex, with the interplay between statutory services and wider Early Help provision difficult to confidently evidence. However, broadly we can see a large increase in contacts – this is resulting in a slight increase in the number of children accessing statutory services, with a much larger increase in the number of children accessing Early Help. What seems clear is that Early Help is an utterly integral part of the social care system and a critical part of how LAs manage need in their communities.
- There are clearly risks with this dynamic – how can we be assured that provision is equitable when LAs’ offers differ, and understanding the effectiveness of interventions is difficult when our data is not comparable. Further, EH funding is not statutory and likely more vulnerable than social care.

# Child Protection

S47s, ICPCs and children subject of a CPP (from CiN return)



S47s, ICPCs and children subject of a CPP - rates per 10k U18 (from CiN Return and RIIA)

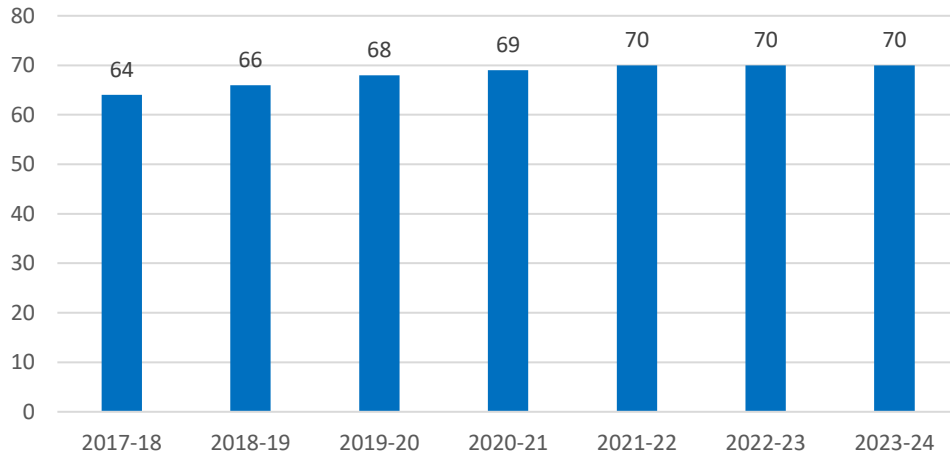


# Child Protection

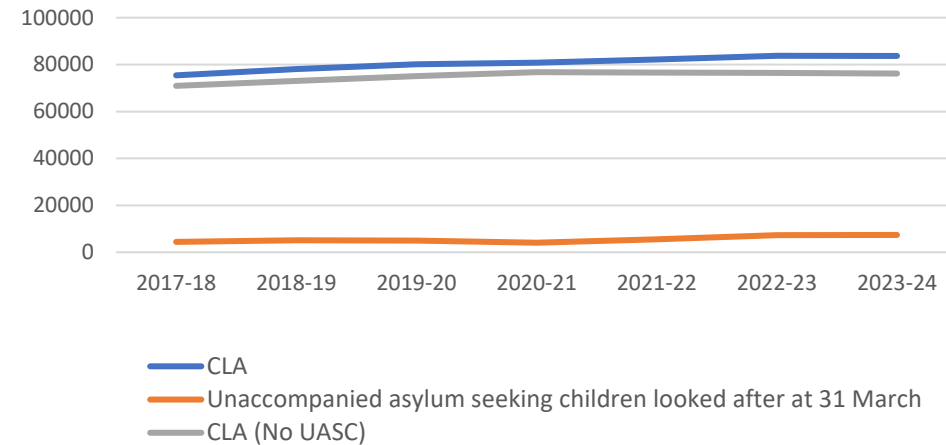
- According to DfE Stats, Local Authorities in England completed around 26,000 more S47 enquiries annually in 23/24 than in 2017/18.
- RIIA data suggests that this trend has continued into 2024/25, with more S47 completed and fewer ICPCs completed.
- The number of children becoming the subject of a Child Protection Plan has decreased from 2017/18 to 23/24, as has the number of children subject to a CPP at 31/3.
- There might be a couple of possibilities:
  - Are LAs more risk averse, tending to use a strategy discussion where it may not have been used in the past?
  - Has the way we use the child protection process changed? Is a strategy discussion now used as the most effective way to convene a multi-agency meeting?
  - Is there a link to increases in extra-familial harm, where LAs may want to bring in multi-agency partners, but the CP pathway is not always felt to be the most appropriate way forward?

# Children Looked After

Rate of children looked after at 31 March per 10,000 children aged under 18 years (DfE stats)



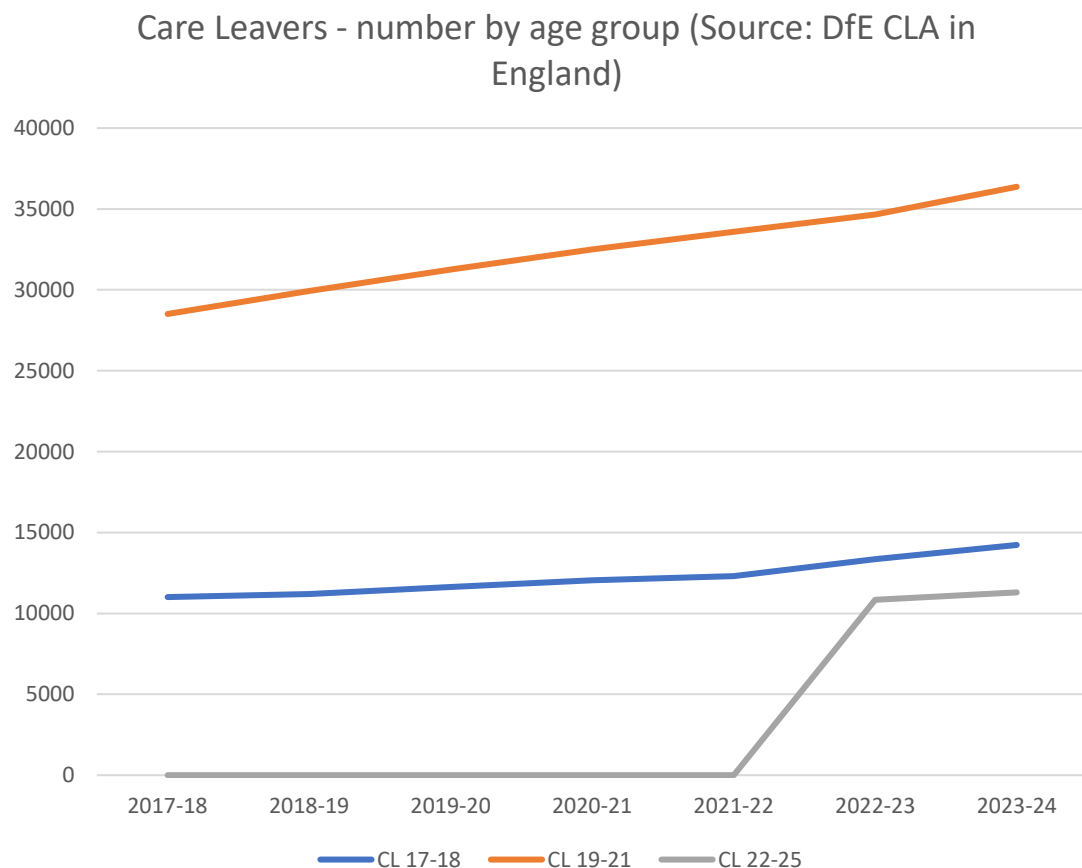
Children looked after and those who are UAS  
Children - national



- The number of CLA in England fell slightly from 83760 in 22/23 to 83630 in 23/24.
- This is the first decrease we've seen since 2007.

- However, a significant factor in rising numbers of children looked after has been an increase in unaccompanied asylum seeking (UAS) children.
- DfE stats show UAS children represented 9% of all CLA in 23/24, with similar levels seen in the latest RIIA reporting.
- This proportions varies greatly between LAs ranging from 2% to 29%.
- UAS children represented 22% of all children starting to be looked after in 23/24 ranging from 79% to 3% for individual LAs.
- The number of non-UAS CLA began to fall in 2021/22.

# Care Leavers



- Clearly, the increased numbers of CLA over the last decade will have an ongoing impact on the number of Care Leavers.
- It's more difficult to understand how formerly UAS children are represented in this cohort as it's not part of the DfE's official statistics.
- RIIA data suggests around 25% of care leavers were former UAS children, though again this varies greatly between LAs.

# Summary

- In November, the DFE released their main two annual statistical releases related to children's social care, these data have been added to the benchmarking tool on our website.
- The RIIA tool works alongside these to provide a more current view of a smaller number of KPIs.
- Some of the RIIA KPIs are particularly useful, as they focus on data that is not available in more formal benchmarking.
- Data suggests that CSC data is becoming more complex, with a growing disparity between the traditional KPIs and the experience of LAs.
- It's becoming more important than ever to look behind the data headlines, though this is not always easy as benchmarking data can be hard to obtain.