

Adoption and Special Guardianship Quarterly Data Collection

Headline Measures: Q1 2023/24

October 2023

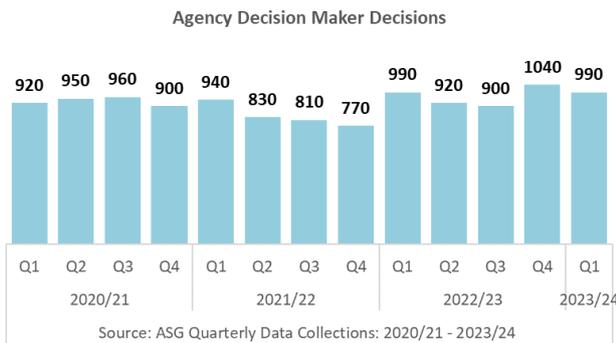
Note: The Department for Education's annual figures on adoptions and timeliness for children who have been adopted are published in the [Children looked after in England including adoption](#) SFR. This is the most robust source of information on adoption.

CHILDREN

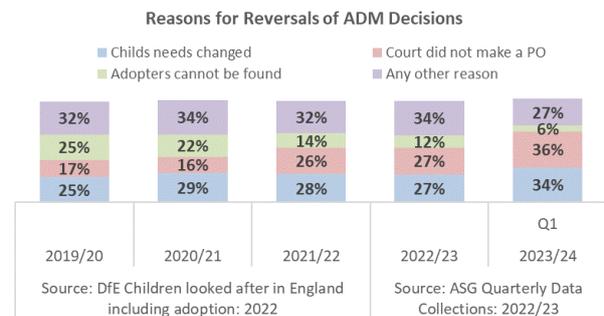
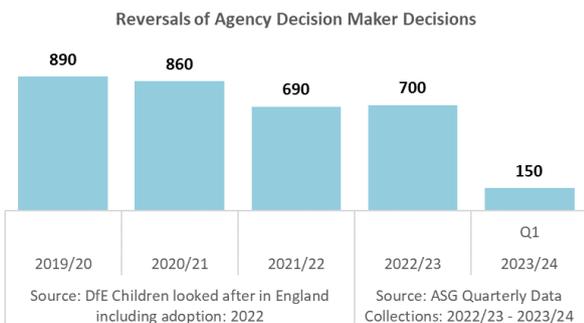
The numbers of decisions for children continues to fluctuate, with ADMs and PO being lower in Q1 2023/24 when compared to last quarter. The numbers of AOs and SGOs granted in Q1 were also lower, the number of children matched increased slightly, while the number of children placed decreased slightly. More children were waiting with a PO 18+ months since entering care, 12+ and 18+ months since grant of PO.

In Q1 2023/24 (30 June 2023) there were:

- **990** Agency Decision Maker decisions, a decrease of **5% (50n)** from Q4 2022/23 and the same when compared to Q1 2022/23
- **720** Placement Orders granted, a decrease of **8% (60n)** from Q4 2022/23 and a decrease of **6% (50n)** when compared to Q1 2022/23



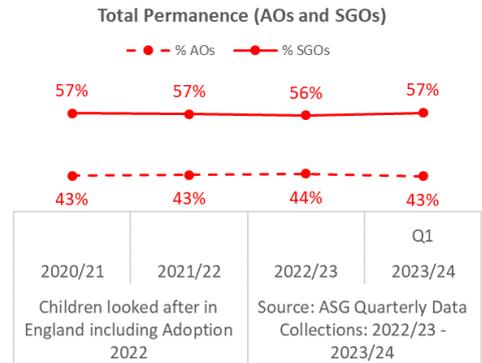
- **150** ADM reversals, **21%** of the total for 2022/23
- **36%** of reversals were due to 'Court did not make a PO', an increase of **11** percentage points when compared to 2022/23, and **6%** were due to 'Adopters cannot be found', a decrease of **6** percentage points when compared to 2022/23



The numbers of Adoption Orders and Special Guardianship Orders granted both decreased in Q1 when compared to the last quarter.

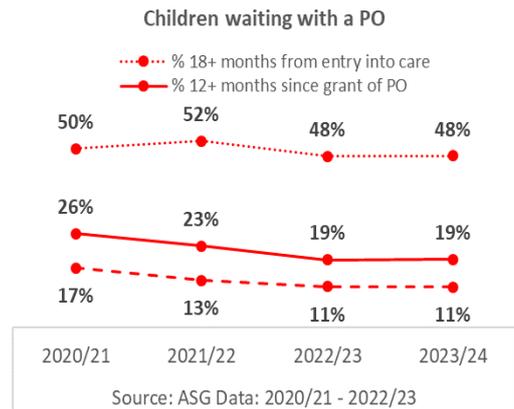
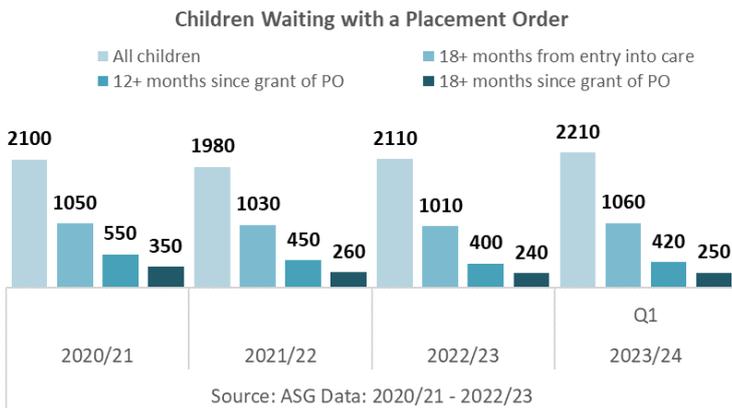
In Q1 2023/24, there were:

- **700** Adoption Orders granted, a decrease of **7% (50n)** from Q4 2022/23 and a decrease of **3% (20n)** when compared to Q1 2022/23
- **930** Special Guardianship Orders granted, a decrease of **12% (130n)** from Q4 2022/23 and an increase of **1% (10n)** when compared to Q1 2022/23



- **1630** total permanence orders granted (AOs & SGOs), a decrease of **10% (180n)** from Q4 2022/23 and a decrease of **1% (10n)** when compared to Q1 2022/23
- SGOs accounted for **57%** of all permanence, an increase of **1** percentage point when compared to 2022/22
- **110** children were placed in an FFA/CP arrangement, **19%** of the total for 2022/23

There has been an increase in the number of children waiting with a Placement Order.



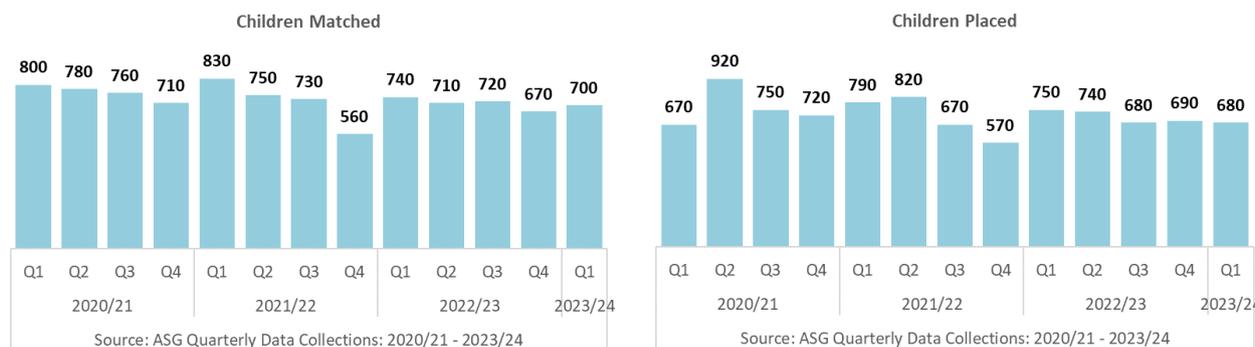
In Q1 2023/24 there were:

- **2210** children with a PO waiting to be matched, an increase of **5% (100n)** from Q4 2022/23
- **1060** children with a PO waiting to be matched 18+ months since entering care, an increase of **5% (50n)** from Q4 2022/23
- **48%** of children with a PO have been waiting to be matched 18+ months since entering care
- **420** children with a PO waiting to be matched 12+ months since grant of PO, an increase of **5% (20n)** from Q4 2022/23
- **19%** 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 Q4 2022/23
- **11%** of children with a PO have been waiting to be matched 18+ months since grant of PO

The number of children matched with an adoptive family increased while the number of children placed decreased, reflecting the number of matches in Q4 2022/23.

In Q1 2023/24 there were:

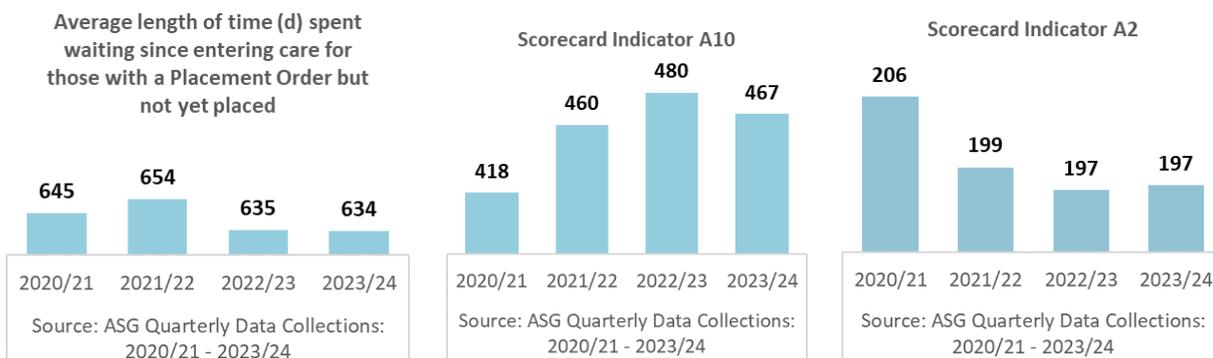
- **700** children matched with an adoptive family, an increase of **4% (30n)** from Q4 2022/23 and a decrease of **5% (40n)** when compared to Q1 2022/23
- **680** children placed with an adoptive family, a decrease of **1% (10n)** from Q4 2022/23 and a decrease of **9% (70n)** when compared to Q1 2022/23



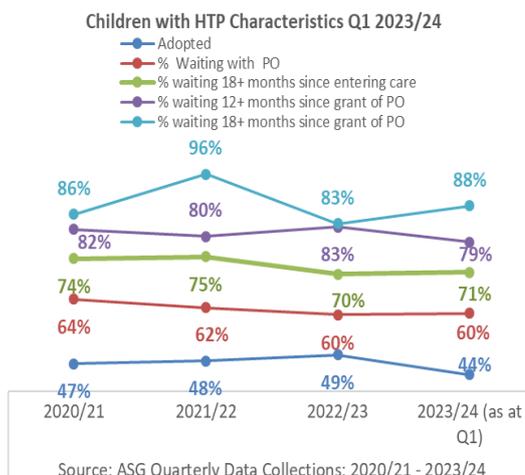
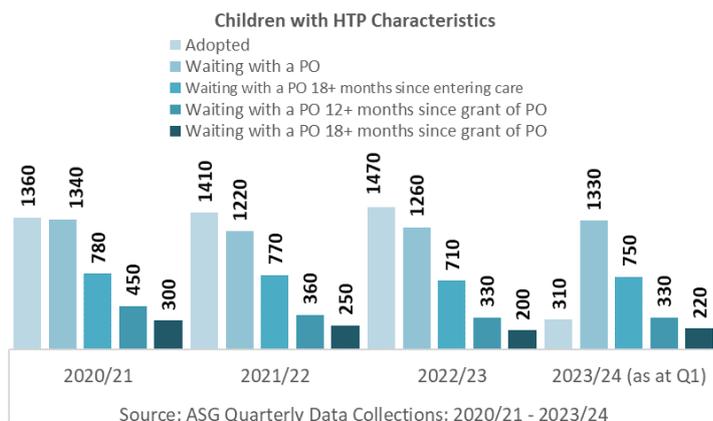
Timeliness is improving for children adopted, with some children’s journey to permanence taking less time.

In Q1 2023/24:

- The average number of days spent waiting to be placed with Placement Order since entering care was **634 days**, a decrease of **1 day** from Q4 2022/23
- 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 **467 days**, a decrease of **13 days** from Q4 2022/23
- 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 **197 days**, the same as Q4 2022/23



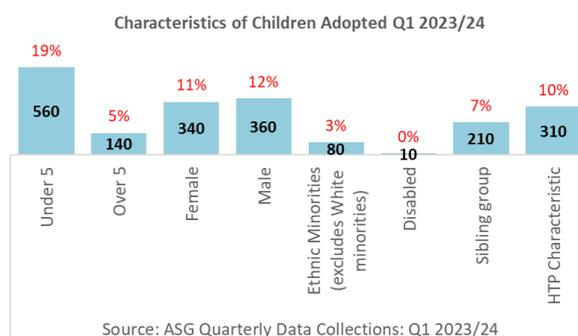
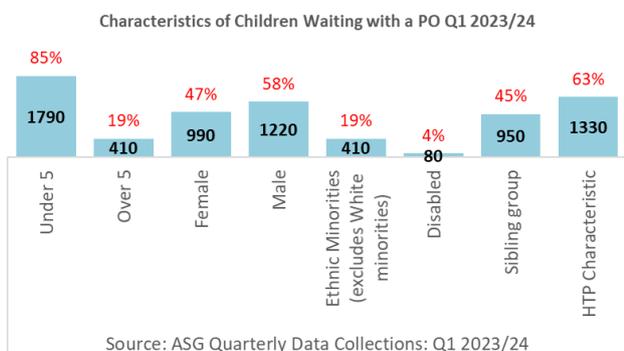
There has been a decrease in the proportion of children adopted who have harder to place characteristics.



In Q1 2023/24 there were:

- **310** children with HTP characteristics adopted, **21%** of the total number of children with HTP characteristics adopted in 2022/23
- **1330** children with HTP characteristics waiting with a PO, an increase of **6% (70n)** from Q4 2022/23
- **750** children with HTP characteristics waiting with a PO 18+ months since entering care, an increase of decrease of **6% (40n)** from Q4 2022/23
- **220** children with HTP characteristics waiting with a PO 18+ months since grant of PO, a decrease of **10% (20n)** from Q4 2022/23

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



In Q1 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

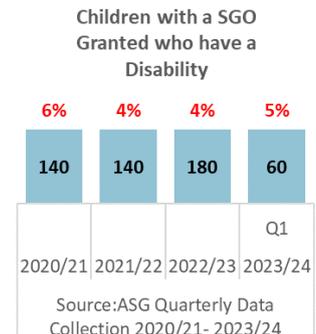
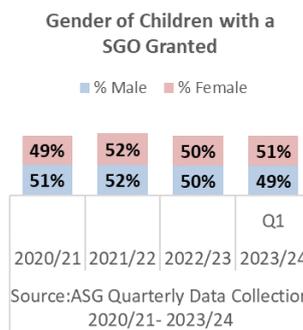
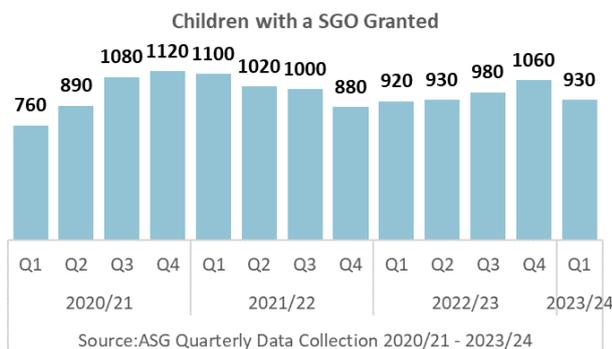
NB: "Harder to place" is defined as a child who is any of the following: 5 years or over, with an Ethnic Minority (excludes White minorities) background, disabled, or part of a sibling group. Children with more than one harder to place characteristic will be counted in each characteristic.

SPECIAL GUARDIANSHIP ORDERS

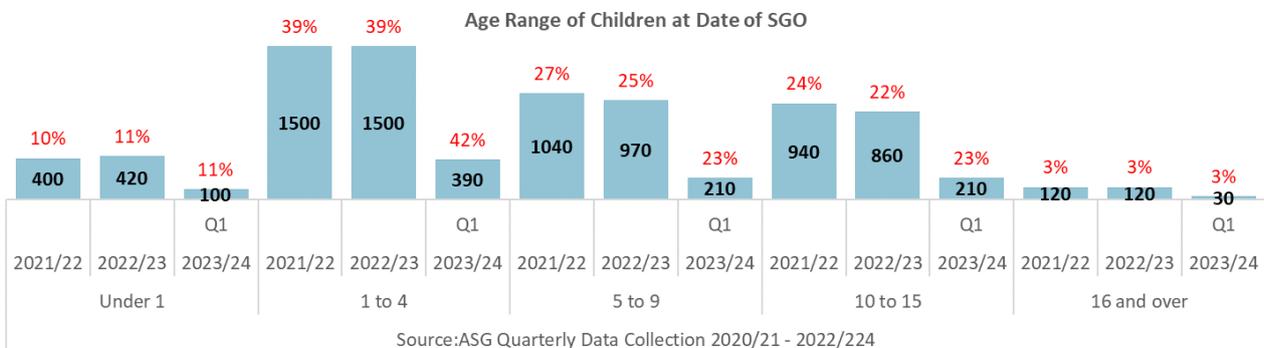
The number of Special Guardianship Orders granted in Q1 2023/24 declined when compared to the last quarter. More children are still leaving care with via a SGO than an adoption order with SGOs accounting for **57%** of all permanence.

In Q1 2023/24, there were:

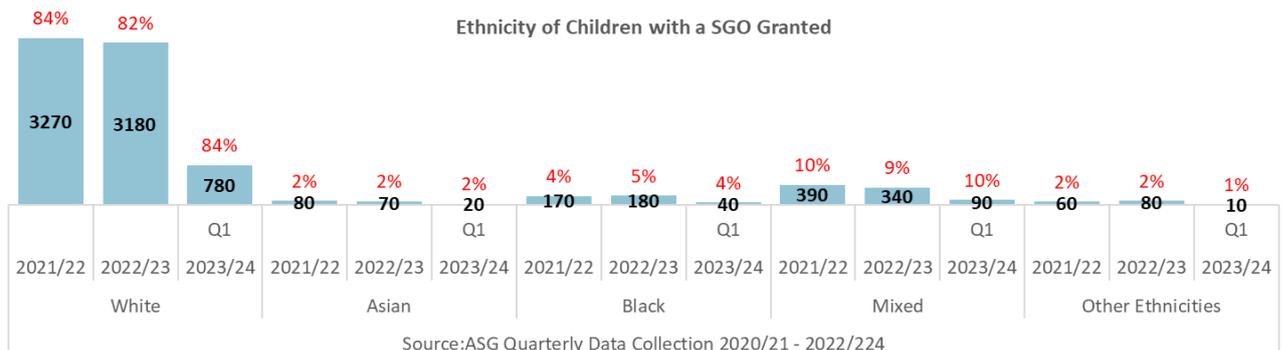
- **930** SGOs granted, a decrease of **12% (130n)** from Q4 2021/22 and an increase of **1% (10n)** when compared to Q1 2022/23
- **49%** of the children were male, **51%** female and **5%** had a disability, **16%** were from an Ethnic Minority (excluding White minorities), and **46%** were in a sibling group



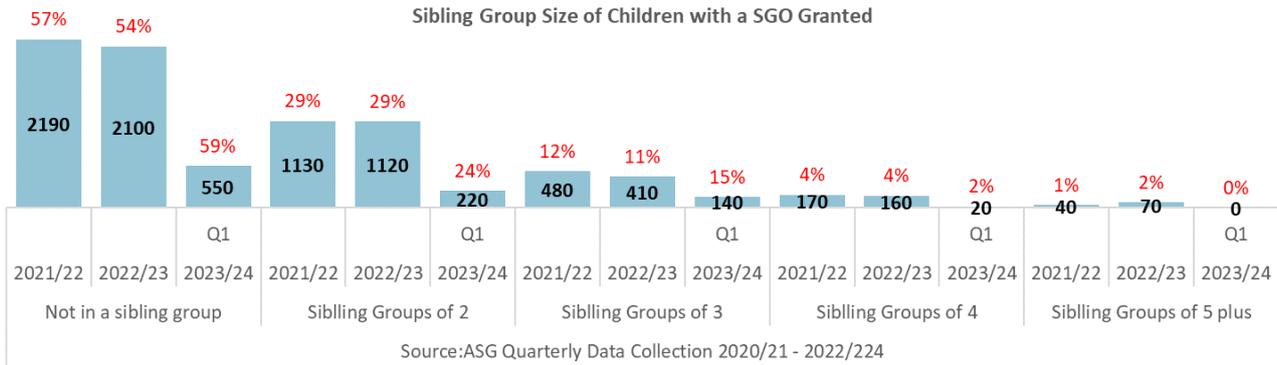
Children aged 1 to 4 continue to be the largest group of children who leave care with an SGO (**42%**), followed by children aged 5 to 9 (**23%**).



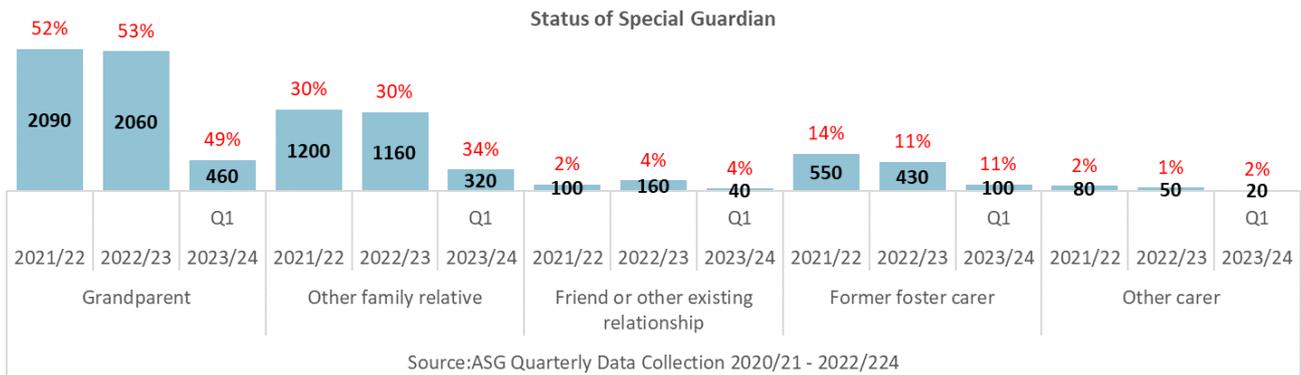
- **84%** of SGOs were granted for children with a White ethnic background and **16%** of SGOs were granted for children from an Ethnic Minority (excludes White minorities). Children with a Mixed Ethnicity are the biggest represented Ethnic Minority.



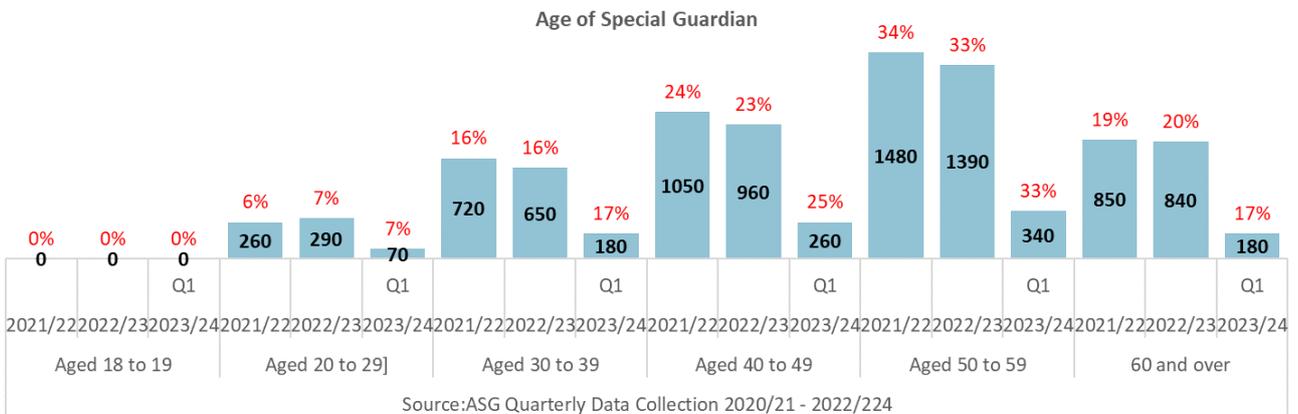
- Children not in a sibling group continue to be the largest group of children who leave care with an SGO (59%), followed by children in a sibling group of 2 (24%)



- Grandparents continue to be the largest represented group of Special Guardians, (49%) SGOs were granted to grandparents, followed by other family relatives (30%)



- Special Guardians aged 50 to 59 continue to be the largest represented age group (33%), followed by and special guardians aged 40 to 49 (25%)



ADOPTERS

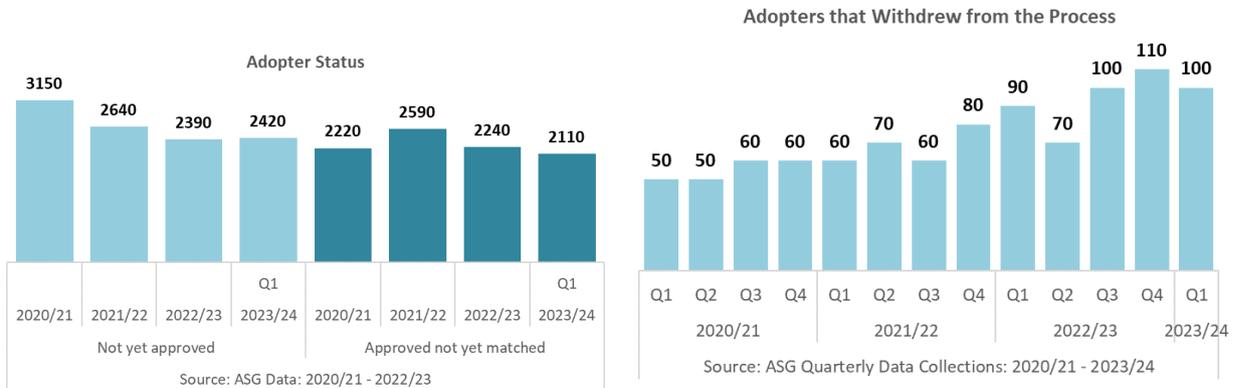
The number of approved adoptive families continues to decline. There has been a slight increase in the number of adopters not yet approved, however the number of adopters approved and waiting to be matched have decreased, along with Adopter registrations and approvals.

In Q1 2023/24 there were:

- **810** Registrations, a decrease of **7% (60n)** from Q4 2022/23 and a decrease of **9% (80n)** when compared to Q1 2022/23
- **510** Approvals, a decrease of **11% (60n)** from Q4 2022/23 and a decrease of **19% (120n)** when compared to Q1 2022/23



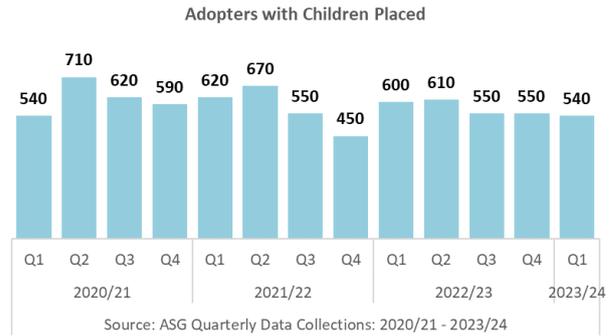
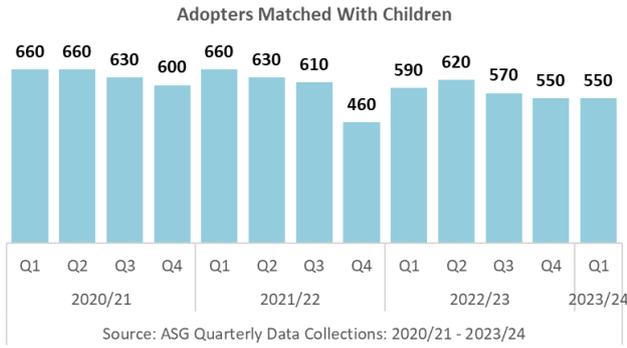
- **2420** Prospective adoptive families not yet approved, an increase of **1% (30n)** from Q4 2022/23
- **2110** Approved adoptive families waiting to be matched, a decrease of **6% (130n)** from Q4 2022/23
- **100** approved adopters withdrew from the process after approval, a decrease of **9% (10n)** when compared with Q4 2022/23



The number of adopters being matched and having a child placed has remained at similar levels.

In Q1 2023/24 there were:

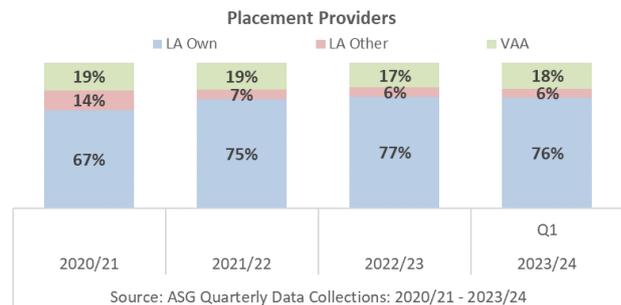
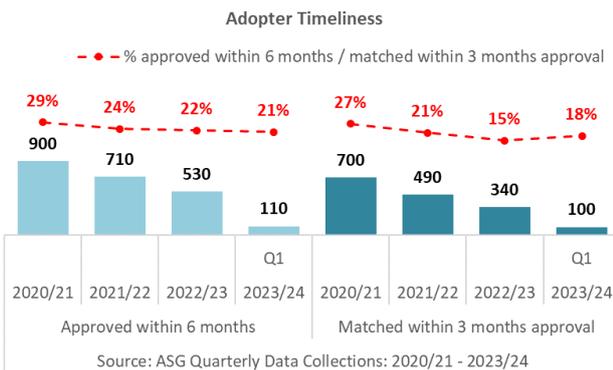
- **550** Adoptive families matched to children, the same as Q4 2022/23 and a decrease of **7% (40n)** when compared to Q1 2022/23
- **540** Adoptive families with a child placed: a decrease of **2% (10n)** from Q1 2022/23 and a decrease of **10% (60n)** when compared to Q1 2022/23



Timeliness for adoptive family approvals has declined and increased for adoptive families being matched.

In Q1 2023/24:

- **21%** of adoptive families were approved within 6 months of registration, a decrease of **1** percentage points from Q4 2022/23
- **18%** of approved adoptive families had a child matched with them within 3 months of approval, an increase of **3** percentage points from Q4 2022/23



The proportion of placement providers has remained stable.

In Q1 2023/24:

- **76%** of placements were provided by LAs themselves (via their RAAs)
- **6%** of placements were provided by other LAs (other RAAs)
- **18%** of placements were provided by VAAs

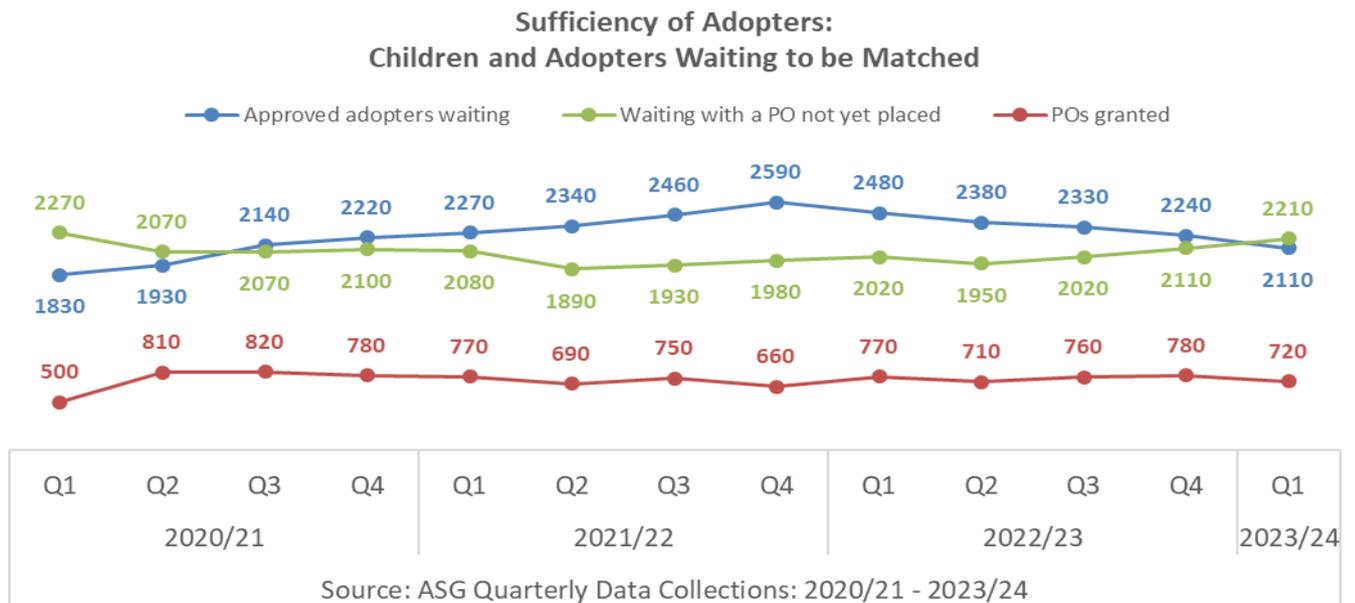
NB: Percentages may not add due to rounding of numbers

SUFFICIENCY OF ADOPTERS

The number of Adopter Registrations, Adopter Approvals and Adopters Approved and Waiting are in decline. The last two quarters saw the numbers of Prospective Adopters not yet approved rise in line with the higher rate of adopter Registrations in 2022/23.



The chart below shows the comparison of approved adopters waiting to be matched, together with the number of placement orders granted and children waiting with a placement order.



There are now more children waiting with a placement order than approved adopters waiting (*based on one adoptive family per child waiting*). Less adoptive families are required when taking into consideration sibling groups, and the supply of Prospective Adopters not yet approved will continue to feed into the numbers of approved adopters waiting each quarter.

DATA SOURCES

ASG Quarterly Data Collection

In quarter 1 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) and the [Adoption Scorecards](#). The most recent data covers the year ending 31 March 2022.

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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