

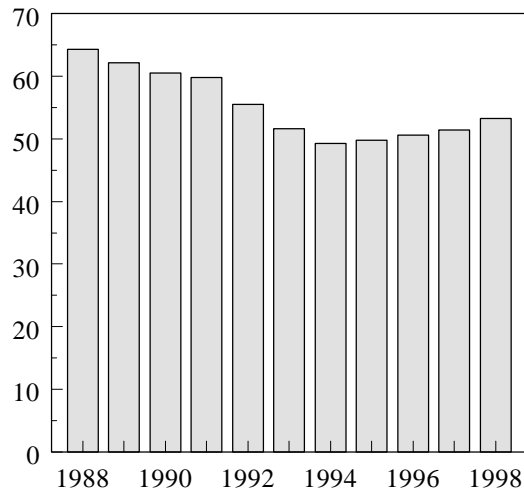
# SUMMARY

The main findings for children looked after in England are as follows:

## Children looked after at 31 March 1998

- provisional estimate - 53,300 children, 4% higher than a year earlier (51,400) and 8% higher than in 1994 (49,300)
- average age - 10 years 6 months and falling
- proportion aged under 10 years old - 42%
- proportion of boys - 55% and rising steadily
- legal status - 60% under care orders, 36% under single voluntary agreements
- placement - 66% in foster placements, 10% in community homes, 10% placed with parents

**Number of children looked after at 31 March**  
thousands of children



## Children who started to be looked after during the year ending 31 March 1998

- estimated number - 29,700 (29,900 a year earlier)
- 68% started under single voluntary agreements, down from 79% in 1993/4
- 12% started under interim care orders, up from 6% in 1993/4
- 26% had been or were at risk of being abused or neglected, up from 18% in 1993/4

## Children who ceased to be looked after during the year ending 31 March 1998

- estimated number - 29,300 (30,300 a year earlier)
- average time spent being looked after - 563 days, compared with 586 days in 1993/4
- the number of 16 year old care leavers - 3,600 in 1998 (up from 3,000 in 1993/4); the number leaving care on their 18th birthday - 2,700 (down from 4,300 in 1993/4)
- number adopted - 2,000 (compared with 2,300 in 1993/4)

## Children looked after at any time during the year ending 31 March 1997

- estimated total number - 87,500 (77 per 10,000 children aged under 18)
- of these 11,000 (13%) were looked after under one or more series of short term placements