



Educational Attainment of Adopted Children QSD on 14 May 2019

This briefing identifies relevant reports and useful documents, including recent parliamentary materials and press articles, which may be of assistance to Members in preparing for the following debate:

Lord Triesman to ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have for schools to improve the educational experience and attainment of adopted children, including those adopted from abroad.

Copies of the materials are available for collection from the Library.

Key Information

- Department for Education, [Outcomes for Children Looked After by Local Authorities in England, 31 March 2018: Additional Tables](#), 9 May 2019

Data on educational attainment outcomes for children who had left local authority care due to adoption. The data showed that 40 percent of adopted children reached the expected level at key stage 2, a higher proportion than for local authority looked after children (35 percent) but lower than for non-looked after children (65 percent). A similar pattern of attainment was found key stage 4—the average 'attainment 8' score (an average across eight subjects including English and mathematics) for adopted children was 31.1, compared to 18.8 for looked after children and 44.4 for non-looked after children.

- Brown, Andrew et al, '[A Systematic Review of the School Performance and Behavioural and Emotional Adjustments of Children Adopted from Care](#)', *Adoption and Fostering* (£), 2017, vol 41 issue 4, pp 346–368

Review of academic literature on the educational attainment of adopted children, which found that adoption was “associated with lower academic attainment and elevated levels of behavioural problems” compared to non-adopted comparison groups. The authors concluded that there was a need for greater monitoring and scrutiny of data on adopted children’s educational outcomes. N.B. This article is only available from the Library in hard-copy format.

- Adoption UK, [Bridging the Gap: Giving Adopted Children an Equal Chance in School](#), 3 July 2018

Report which concluded that an ‘attainment gap’ existed in the educational outcomes of adopted children. The report recommended that outcomes could be improved by: better collection and analysis of outcomes data for adopted children; continuing professional development for teachers dealing with adopted children; parity of funding and provision of specialist support in schools; and the prioritisation of emotional and social development in addition to academic achievement.

- Department for Education, [Promoting the Education of Looked-After Children and Previously Looked-After Children: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities](#), February 2018

Guidance for local authorities providing educational support for previously looked-after children, including guidance on training for educational practitioners on issues such as special educational needs (SEN), mental health services provision, and school exclusions.

Parliamentary Debate, Statements and Questions

- House of Commons, [‘Written Question: Adoption Support Fund’](#), 30 April 2019, 247118
- House of Commons, [‘Written Question: Children: Social Services’](#), 13 November 2018, 188262
- House of Lords, [‘Written Question: Adoption’](#), 12 July 2016, HL886

Press Articles and Comment

- Sally Weale, [‘Adopted Children ‘Barely Surviving’ in High-Pressure Schools’](#), *Guardian*, 27 June 2018
- Roger Baird, [‘Adopted Children Lag Behind Peers at GCSE’](#), *Times Educational Supplement*, 23 August 2018
- Adoption UK, [‘Adopted Children 20 Times More Likely to Be Excluded’](#), 21 March 2018

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