

# Proportion of children born into care in England now one in 200

June 23 2020

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Academics at the University of Huddersfield and University of Central Lancashire have revealed that the number of babies being taken into state care in their first week of life is almost 50% higher than previously believed.

Following Freedom of Information (FOI) requests issued to the Department for Education, which provided access to national data collected from local authorities in England, researchers found that in the decade to 2018, the proportion of children in England born into care rose from 26 to 48 per 10,000 [live births](#)—or from around one baby in 400 to one in 200.

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This data also highlighted a strong correlation between deprivation of Local Authorities and the proportion of children born into care. For example, in Blackpool, one child in every 46 births was born into care in 2017, while in Richmond Upon Thames, this decreased to one child in 813 in the same year.

Of these children born into care between 2008 and 2018, 90% were never returned to their parents. Over 50% were adopted and another 33.5% were placed with special guardians long-term. This highlights that care in the first week of life is rarely to provide parents with temporary respite or opportunities to resolve problems.

Professor Paul Bywaters, Professor of Social Work at the University of Huddersfield, said: "Early separation can have a long-lasting impact on

families, even when children are adopted by loving parents. Surely, we can find better ways to support families and to reduce the huge inequalities in children's life chances our research reveals."

Professor Andy Bilson, Emeritus Professor of Social Work at the University of Central Lancashire, said: "This pattern of children being immediately placed into care highlights a need for the government to closely examine its family policy, and the support that is currently provided to [parents](#).

"Growing poverty and economic insecurity in work, the [housing crisis](#) and welfare reforms all undoubtedly play their part, and [local authorities](#) and central government must take steps to address this and, where appropriate, seek alternatives to young [children](#) being taken into care."

**More information:** Andy Bilson et al, Born into care: Evidence of a failed state, *Children and Youth Services Review* (2020). [DOI: 10.1016/j.chilyouth.2020.105164](#)

Provided by University of Huddersfield

Citation: Proportion of children born into care in England now one in 200 (2020, June 23) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-06-proportion-children-born-england.html>

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