



Child welfare 2021

The number of children taken into care continued to decline in 2021

MAIN FINDINGS

- A total of 17,727 children and young people aged under 18 were placed outside the home during 2021. The number decreased from the previous year (-4 %).
- 1.6 per cent of children were placed outside the home during the year.
- During the year, 0.4 per cent of children were subject to the emergency placement of a child.
- 1.0 per cent of the children were placed in care during the year.
- In 2021, 3.7 children were child welfare clients in open care.
- A child welfare notification was submitted for 9 per cent of children.

The number of children in care (11,210) decreased (-3%) from the previous year in 2021. Before this, the number of children in care decreased previously (-1.3%) in 2016. As taking a child into care is a longer-term placement, the decrease in the number of children in care is explained by the fact that there were fewer (-11%) new cases of children taken into care (1,592) compared to a year earlier. The number of new cases decreased for the third consecutive year.

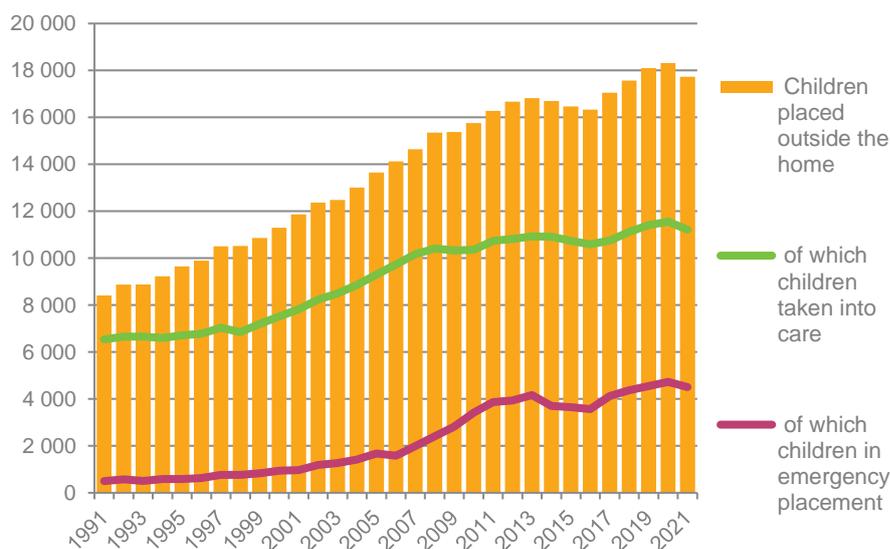
In 2018, there were 1,905 new cases of children taken into care, which means that the number of new cases has decreased by 16 per cent in three years. The drop in new cases has occurred evenly in all age groups. Emergency placements also declined from the previous year. In 2021, 4,503 children were subject to an emergency placement of a child (-5%).

In 2021, 38,343 children were child welfare clients in open care. This represents a year-on-year reduction of 983 children (-3%). The number of open care clients has decreased since 2015, when a legislative amendment emphasised the role of other social welfare services for families with children.

The amendment to the Child Welfare Act, which entered into force in 2020, enabled after-care services for former child welfare clients for children aged 21 to 24. In fact, the number of open care clients aged over 18 (10,787) increased by 19% (+1,717) compared to the previous year. During the year, 1,347 (+3%) young people aged 18 or over were placed in care.

In 2021, a child welfare notification was filed for a total of 93,705 children. Both the number of notifications (173,466) and the number of children subject to a notification increased by 7 per cent from the previous year.

Figure 1. The total of children placed outside the home, and the included numbers of children taken into care and children in emergency placement, 1991–2021*



* The same child may be included both under the cases with an emergency placement order and under children in care.

The data can be extracted from Sotkanet indicators 191, 1077 and 1078.

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Since 2018, there has been an increase in both the number of child welfare notifications (+ 19%) and children subject to them (+ 15%). The number of children subject to child welfare notifications grew the most in the age group 13–17. On average, 1.9 child welfare notifications were filed per child.

The definitions used in the statistics and indicators have been modified for this year's statistics. Previously, some of the statistics for 0–17-year-olds did not include those placed in care who turned 18 during the year. However, these placements were included in the statistics for 0–20-year-olds. In the future, the current statistics for 0–17-year-olds will include retroactively all children aged under 18 placed during the year.