

Scotland regional data

The biggest challenge facing the fostering sector today is the retention and recruitment of high-quality foster carers who can meet the needs of children in care. A lack of available foster carers in the right place at the right time means children are missing out on vital support. Children in need of care are at risk of being moved away from their communities, hobbies, siblings, having to change schools and leave behind what is important to them, which has a detrimental impact on their wellbeing, stability and development.

Local authority	No. of children in foster care	Local authority	No. of children in foster care	Local authority	No. of children in foster care
Aberdeen City	219	East Renfrewshire	22	Orkney Islands	11
Aberdeenshire	157	Falkirk	123	Perth and Kinross	98
Angus	89	Fife	355	Renfrewshire	156
Argyll and Bute	29	Glasgow City	574	Scottish Borders	60
City of Edinburgh	425	Highland	156	Shetland Islands	12
Clackmannanshire	84	Inverclyde	36	South Ayrshire	87
Dumfries and Galloway	105	Midlothian	62	South Lanarkshire	196
Dundee City	205	Moray	52	Stirling	32
East Ayrshire	136	Na h-Eileanan Siar	3	West Dunbartonshire	103
East Dunbartonshire	43	North Ayrshire	153	West Lothian	143
East Lothian	68	North Lanarkshire	161		

- Total number of children in foster care as of March 2022: 4,155
- Total number of fostering households: 3,415

We estimate that a further 500 fostering households need to be recruited this year in Scotland.

Recommendations:

- **A greater focus and investment in retention and recruitment of foster carers** – we need the right number of foster carers, with the right skills, in the right location, at the first time of asking to fully meet children's needs. We welcome the recent investment and focus on foster care retention and recruitment, however this needs to be the start of the journey of ongoing focus and investment.
- **To retain highly skilled foster carers they must be treated as equal members of the team around the child and recognised as key members of the social care workforce** – foster carers should have their knowledge and expertise listened to, be empowered to take appropriate and timely decisions about the children in their care, be supported and trained in order to continue to provide the best possible care for children and sufficiently paid for their time, skills and expertise.