

Adoption and Special Guardianship Leadership Board

Foster Care Adopters: 2021/22

March 2023

FOSTER CARE ADOPTERS

INTRODUCTION

Analysis has been undertaken on foster carer adoptions from the perspective of the adopter (the adopted child's former foster carer) for the last four years to see if the data can tell us anything that can be used to inform and support foster carers adoptions. This analysis focuses on timeliness by stage, regional differences and the individual adopter characteristics.

Foster carer adopters are defined as adopter families who the adopted child's former foster carer

Standard adopters are defined as all other adopter families who are not the adopted child's former foster carer

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The decline in number and proportion of foster care adoptions has continued in 2021/22.

In 2021/22, foster care adoptions continue to move through each stage from registration to adoption order quicker than standard adopters, consistent with the past 3 years and what is expected.

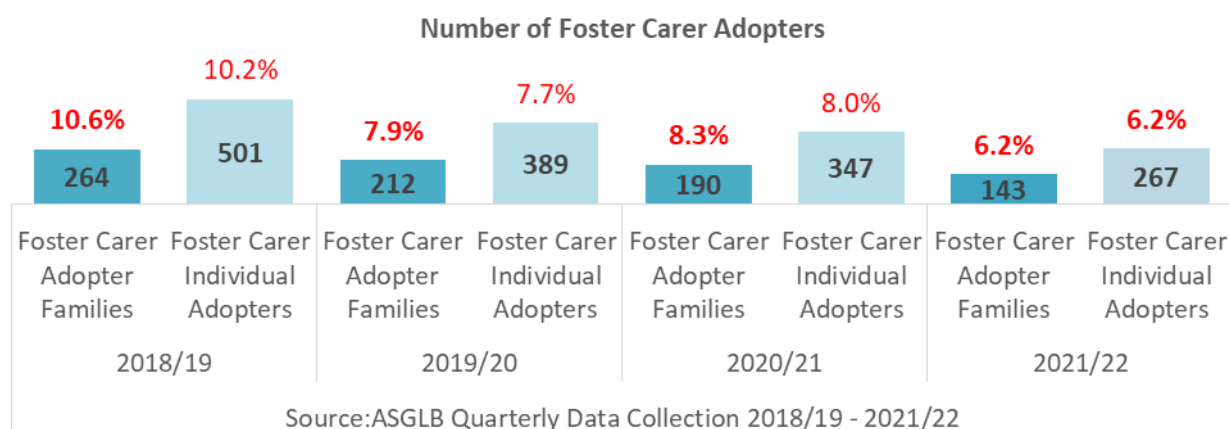
Compared to 2020/21, foster care adoptions are now more likely to have a disability and less likely to be from an ethnic minority (excluding white minorities) than standard adoptions. However they remain more likely to be female, identify with a religion, be a single adopter, be aged over 50, and heterosexual. The greatest difference remains age, with **37%** of foster carer adopters were over the age of 50, compared to **8%** of standard adopters.

Another notable change from 2020/21, is that adopters identifying as gay, lesbian or bisexual, and same sex couples, both decreased by nearly half in 2021/22.

NUMBER OF FOSTER CARE ADOPTIONS

Over the last four years there has been a decline in the number and proportion of foster carer adoptions. In 2021/22 there were **143** foster carer adopter families with an adoption order granted to them, **6.2%** of all adopter families who had an adoption granted, a decline from **190**, **8.3%** in 2020/21. The number and proportion of individual adopters who make up the foster carer adopter families also declined, from **347** in 2020/21 to **267** in 2021/22, and from **8%** to **6.2%** over the same period.

The chart below shows the number and proportion of foster carer adopter families and individual adopters.



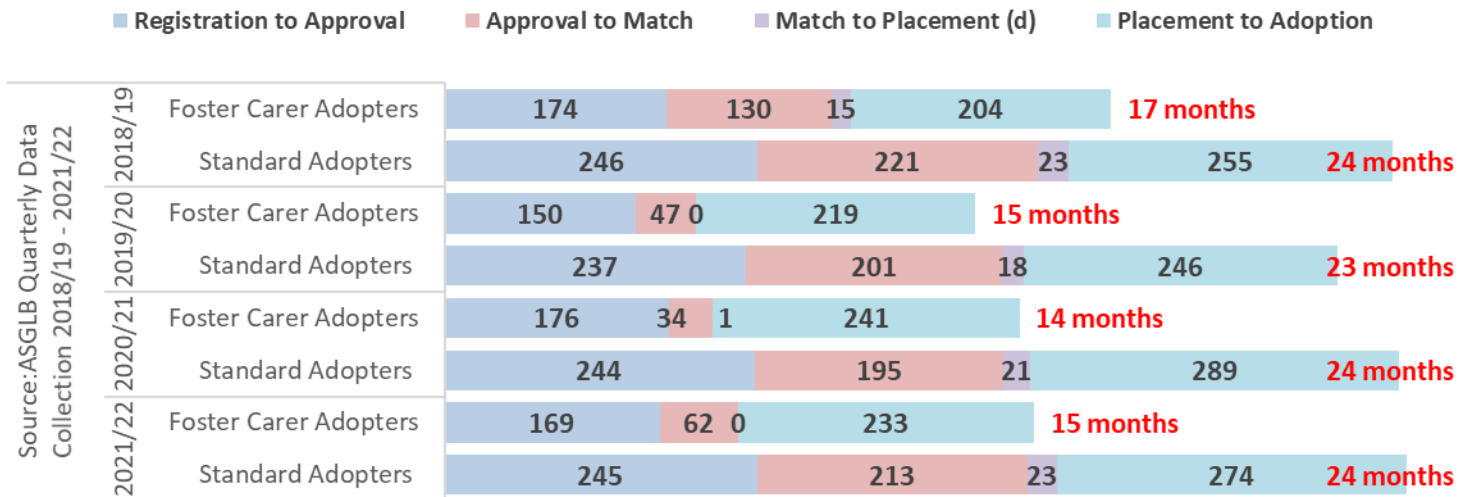
TIMELINESS

The chart below shows the average times by stage from registration to adoption order for foster carer adopters and standard adopters.

Consistent with the past 3 years, foster carer adopters still move through each stage from registration to adoption order quicker than standard adopters as the child they will adopt is already placed with them.

In 2021/22 the average time from adopter registration to adoption order granted was **15 months** for foster carer adopters, **9 months** shorter when compared to standard adopters in the same year, and **1 months** longer when compared to 2020/21.

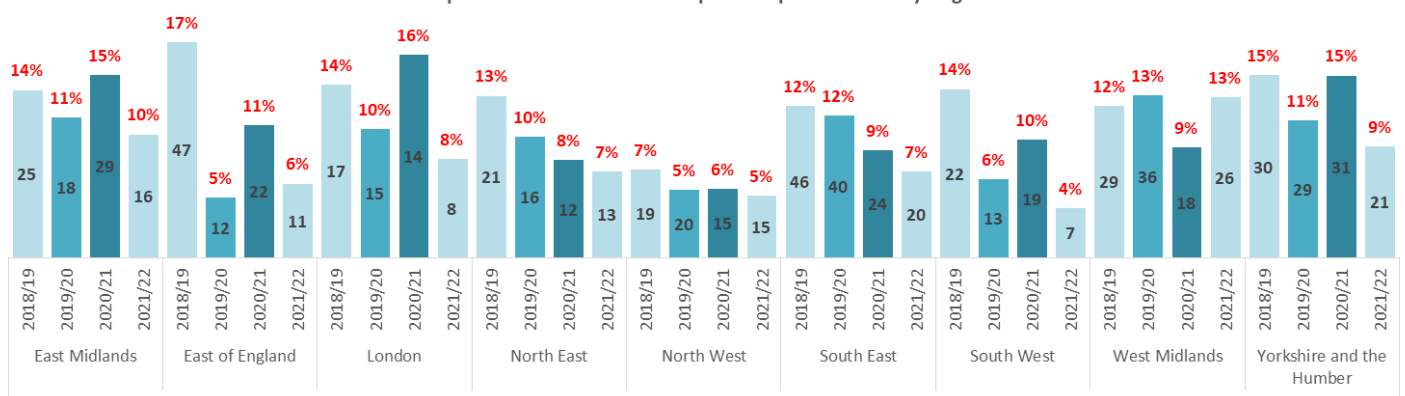
Breakdown of Average Time (days) from Registration to Adoption



DISTRIBUTION BY REGION

The chart below shows the number of adoption orders by region for foster carer adopters, together with the proportion of all adoptions by region.

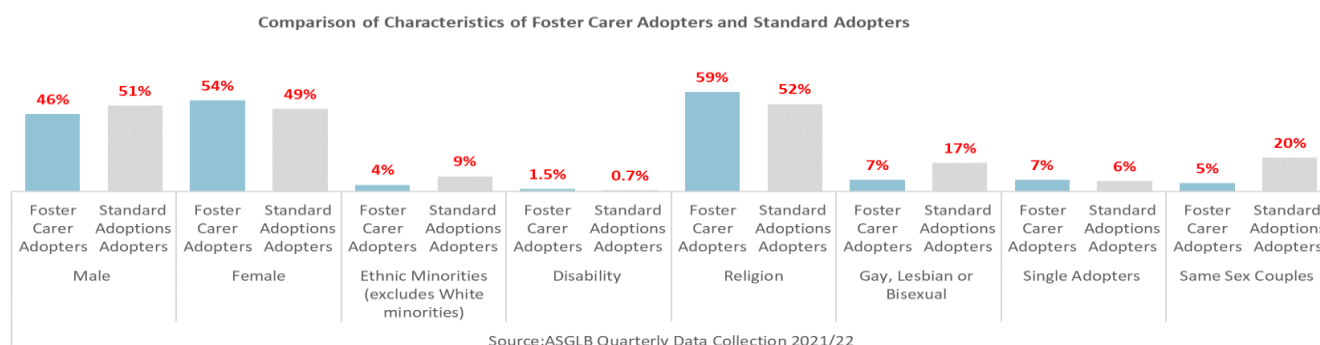
Proportion of Foster Carer Adopter Adoption Orders by Region



- In 2021/22 West Midlands had the highest proportion of foster carer adopter adoption orders, **13%** (26n), followed by East Midlands, **10%** (16n) and Yorkshire and the Humber, **9%** (21n)
- In contrast, the North West had the lowest proportion of foster carer adopter adoption orders, **4%** (7n)

CHARACTERISTICS OF ADOPTERS

The chart below shows the 2021/22 breakdown of the characteristics of individual foster carer adopters, and the percentage of individual adopters by characteristic compared to the England averages for standard adopters.



In 2021/22 when compared to standard adopters, foster carer adopters were:

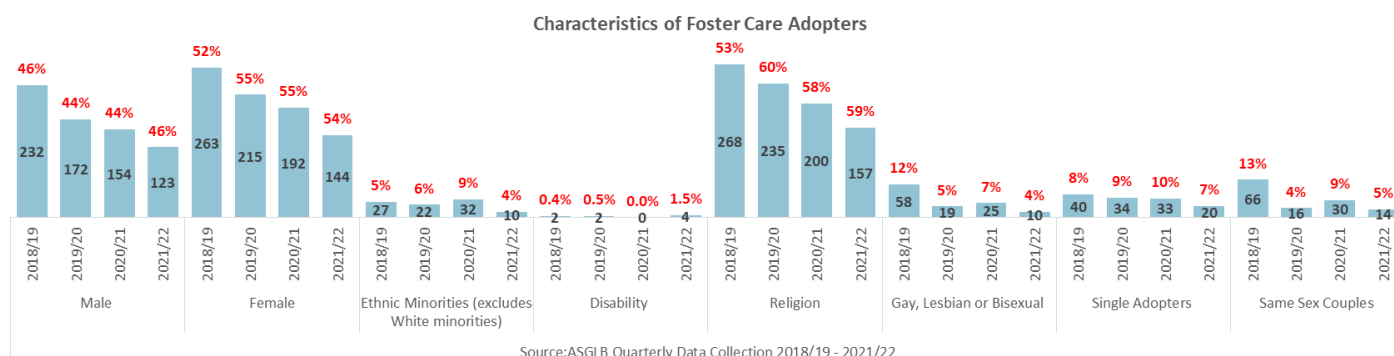
More likely to:

- Be female, **54%** compared to **49%**
- Have a disability, **1.5%** compared to **0.7%**
- Identify with a religion, **59%** compared to **52%**
- Be a single adopter, **7%** compared to **6%**

Less likely to:

- Be male, **46%** compared to **51%**
- Be from an ethnic minority (excluding white minorities), **4%** compared to **9%**
- Identify as gay, lesbian or bisexual, **7%** compared to **17%**
- In a same-sex couple, **5%** compared to **20%**

The chart below shows the change in foster carer adopter characteristics over the last four years.



Since 2020/21:

- The gender split has continued to move towards more female foster carer adopters than male adopters
- Foster care adopters from an Ethnic Minority (excludes White minorities) background have decreased, changing the trend.
- The number of foster carers with a disability has increased from zero to 1.5%.
- There has been an increase in foster carer adopters identifying with a religion, after a decrease in previous years.
- Adopters identifying as gay, lesbian or bisexual decreased by nearly half
- There has been a decrease in single adopters and adopters in same sex couples, compared to an increase in previous years.

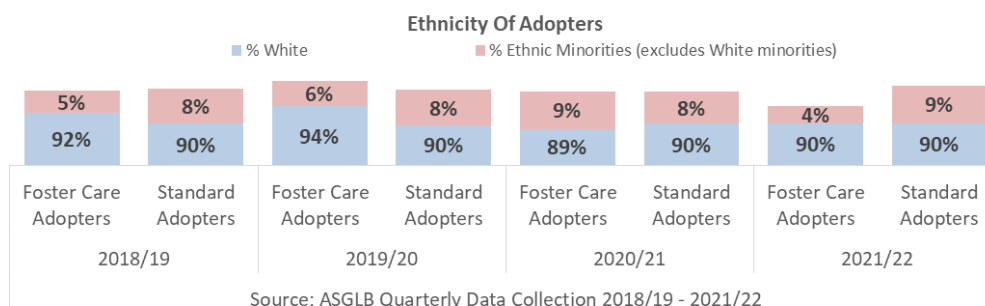
NB: Percentages calculated on total number of adopters and may not add due to missing characteristics

COMPARISON OF ADOPTER CHARACTERISTICS

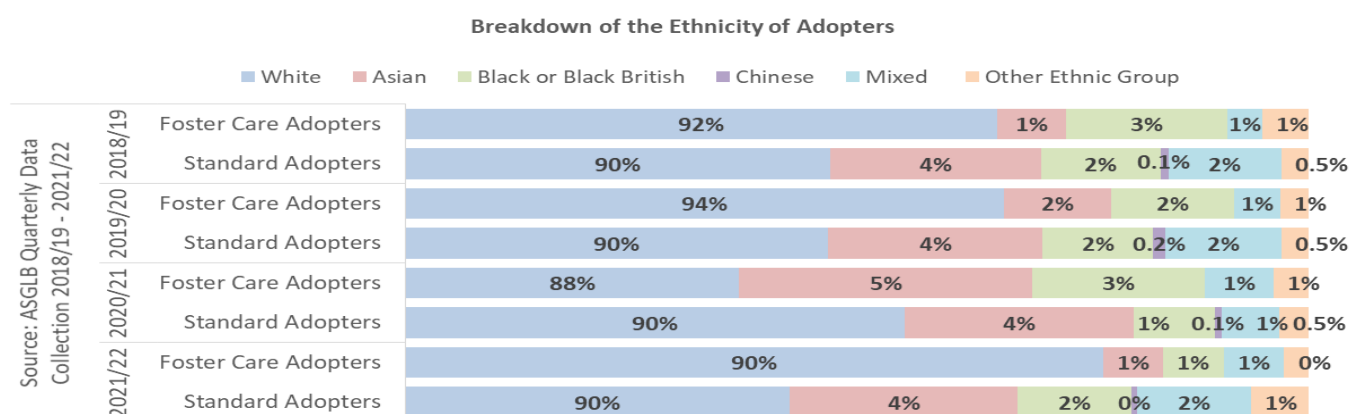
ETHNICITY

The chart below shows the ethnic breakdown of foster carer adopters compared with standard adopters.

After there being a move toward foster carer adopters and standard adopters having a similar ethnic breakdown up to 2020/21, the difference has widened again in 2021/22 with **4%** of foster carer adopters being from an Ethnic Minority (excludes White minorities), compared with **9%** of all standard adopters.

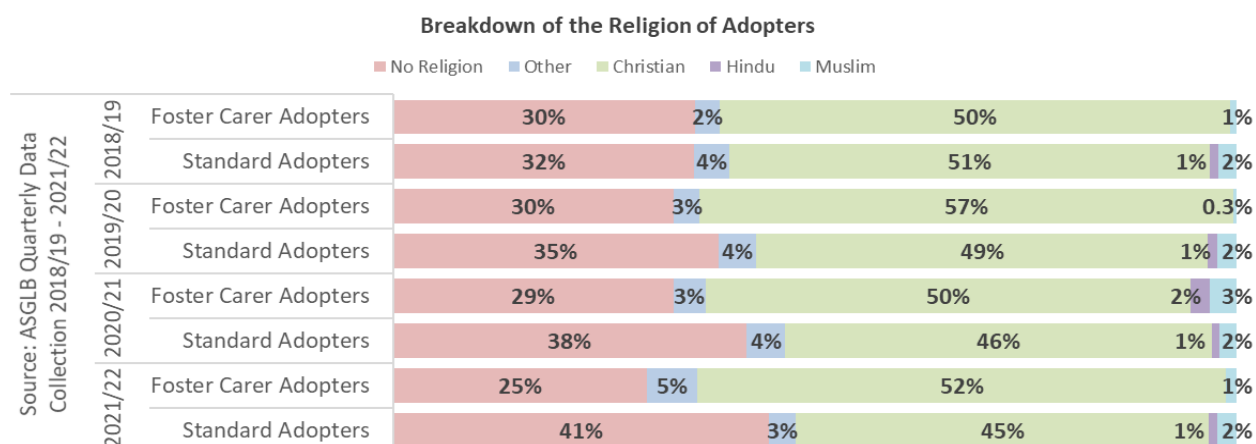


The chart below shows the breakdown and comparison of adopters by Ethnic Groups. There has been a decrease in Asian foster carer adopters, resulting in there being less foster care adopters from an Asian, Black or Black British, Mixed and Other ethnic group background than standard adopters.



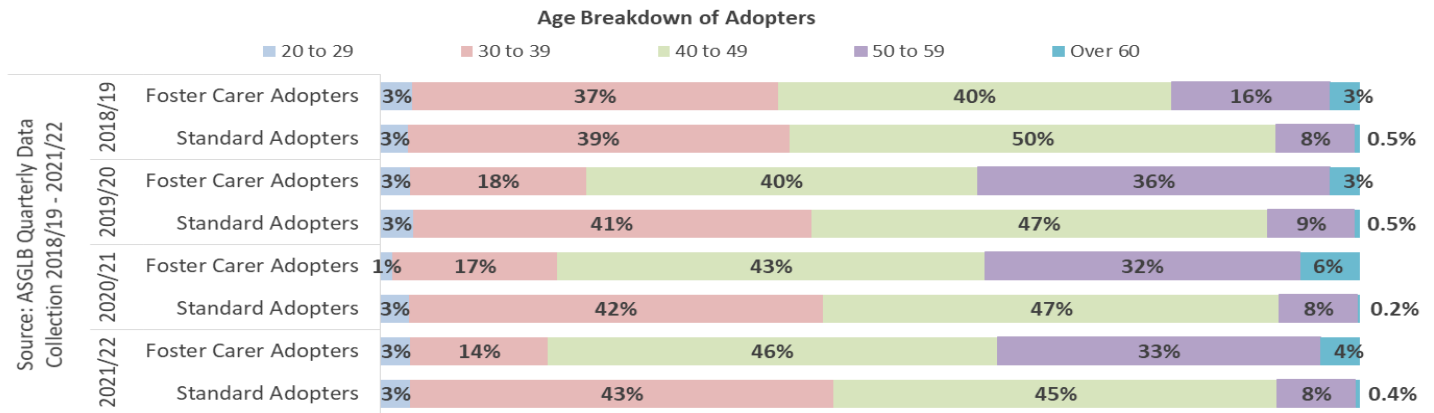
RELIGION

The chart below shows the religion breakdown of foster carer adopters compared with standard adopters. When compared to standard adopters, foster carer adopters are more likely to identify as having a religion. In 2021/22, the percentage of foster care adopters who identify as having no religion, as Hindu, and as Muslim, decreased.



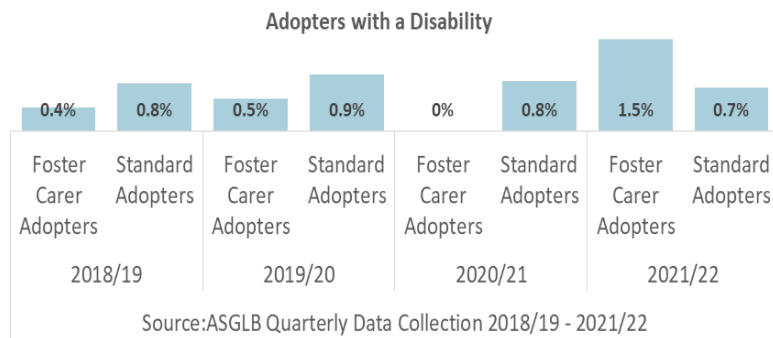
AGE

The chart below shows the religion breakdown of foster carer adopters compared with standard adopters. Foster carer adopters are more likely to be older, with **37%** of foster carer adopters were over the age of 50, compared to **8%** of standard adopters in 2021/22, little change since 2020/21. The proportion of foster carer adopters aged 50 and over has increased over the past four years by **18%**, and the proportion under the age of 39 has decreased by **23%**.



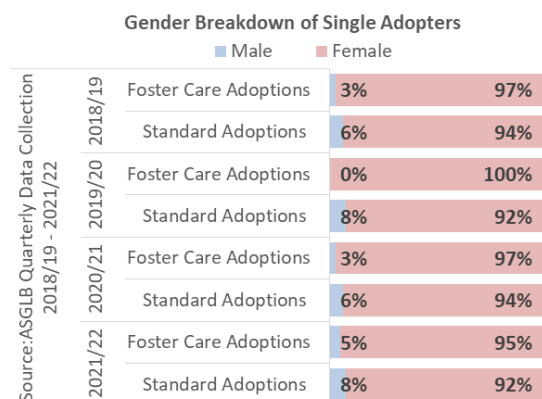
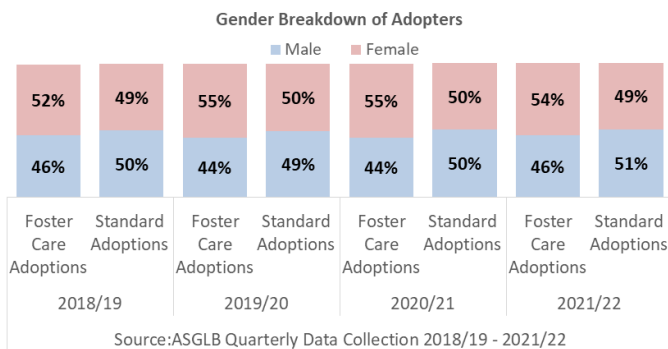
DISABILITY

The chart below shows the disability breakdown of foster carer adopters compared with standard adopters. In 2021/22, foster carer adopters were more likely to have a disability, compared to the previous three years when foster carer adopters were less likely to identify as having a disability than standard adopters.



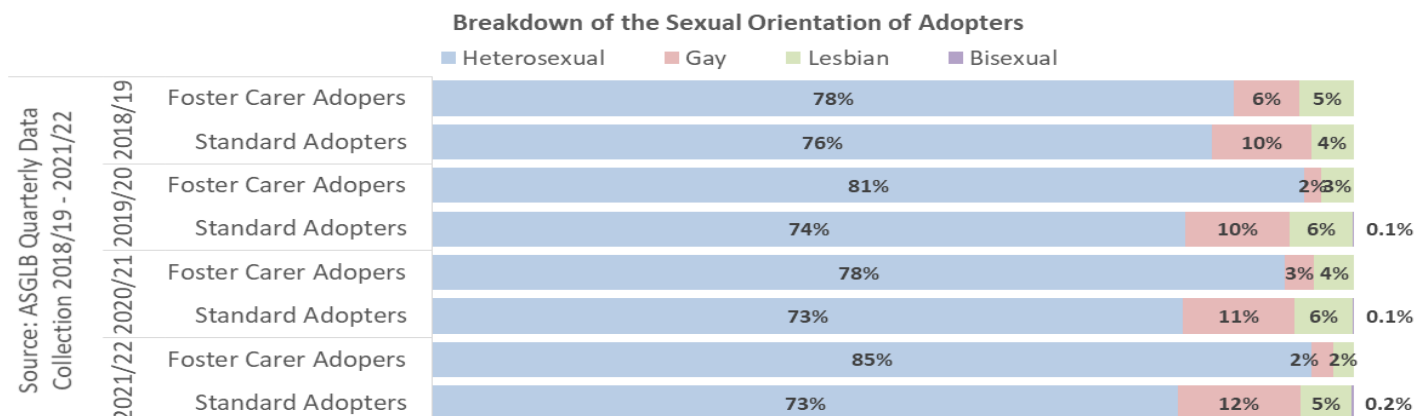
GENDER

The charts below show the gender breakdown of foster carer adopters compared with standard adopters. The gender split for standard adopters continues to be slightly more even than for foster carer adopters. Single foster carer adopters are more likely to be female, and the proportion of single male foster carer adopters is lower when compared with standard adopters.



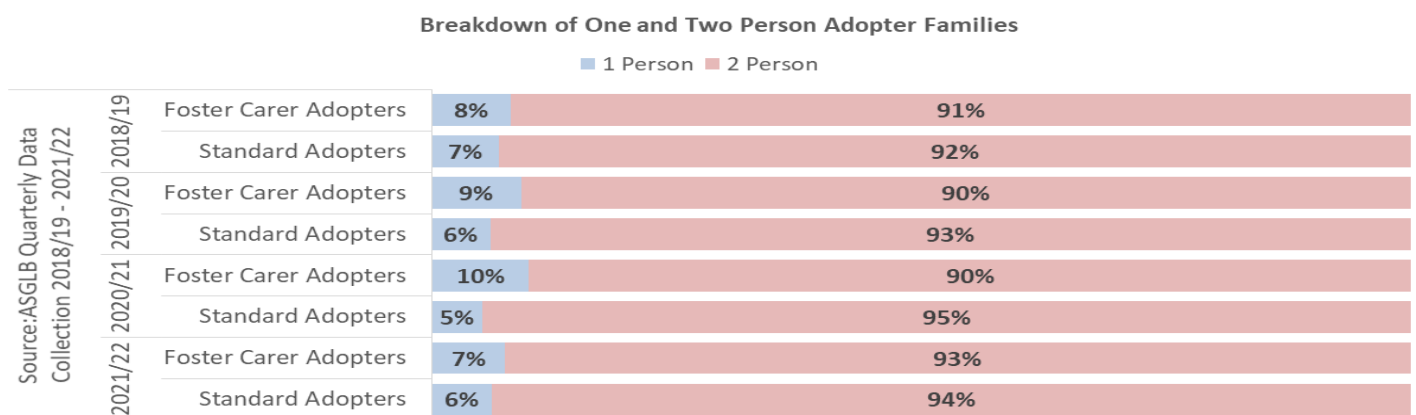
SEXUAL ORIENTATION

The chart below show the sexual orientation breakdown of foster carer adopters compared with standard adopters. Overall, foster carer adopters are more likely to identify as heterosexual. This likelihood has been increasing, from 78% in 2018/19 to 85% in 2021/22.



ONE AND TWO PERSON ADOPTER FAMILIES

The charts below show the breakdown of the size of foster carer adopters compared with standard adopters. The proportion of one person foster care adopter families has decreased and increased for standard adopter families.



SAME SEX TWO PERSON ADOPTER FAMILIES

The charts below show the breakdown of the sex of two person foster carer adopter families compared with standard adopter families. Two-person foster carer adopter families are more likely be male and female, when compared to two-person standard adopter families. Over the last four years there has been a **decrease** in same sex two person foster carer adopter families (*both male and both female*) to 5%.

