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Children's
Services

SWCU Annual Report England

January 2025-December 2025
Data Highlights



Hampshire
County Council

Secure Welfare Coordination Unit

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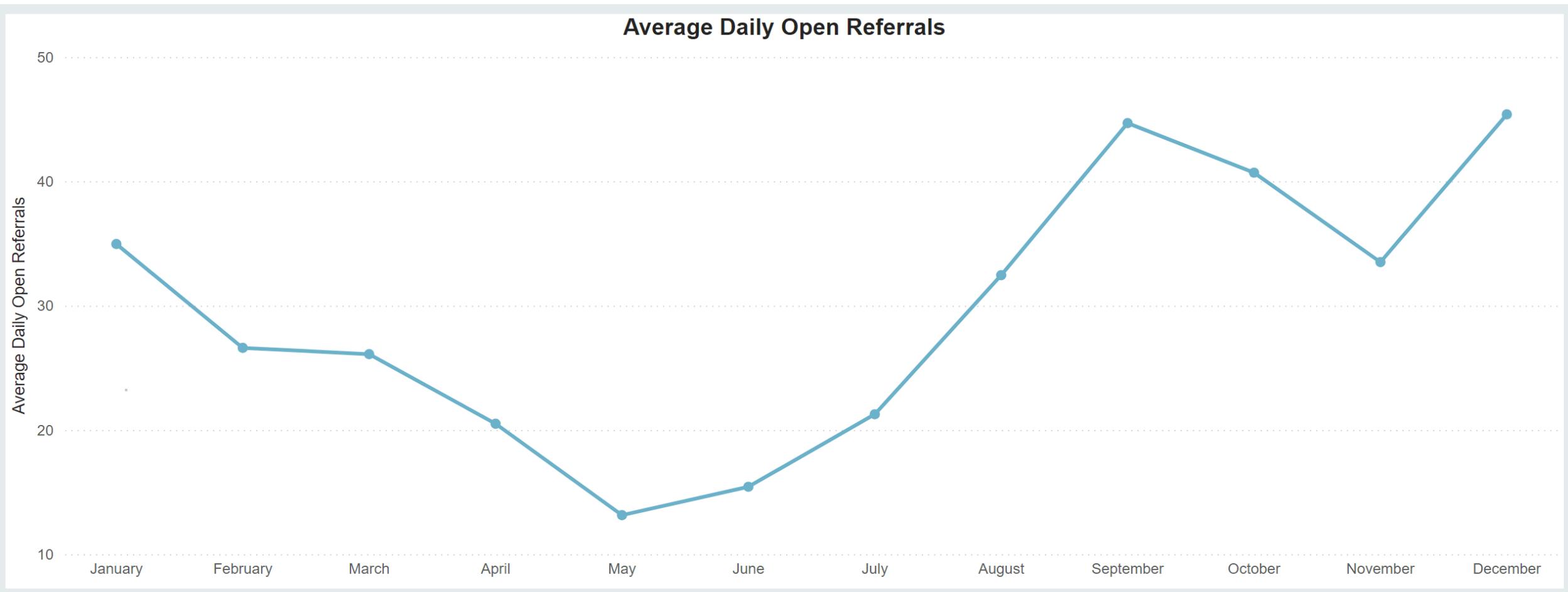
Referrals Received



In total, the SWCU received 338 English referrals in 2025, this is a slight increase when compared to 2024 in which 299 referrals were received but remains lower than the totals received in years previous to that with 366 in 2023 and 401 in 2022.

The SWCU observed a fluctuation in the volume of referrals received throughout 2025. The year began with relatively low numbers, with March recording the lowest volume. Referrals increased steadily from May, reaching a peak in August, before declining in the following months. A further rise was noted in December. Data suggests that the pattern of referrals received across the year is similar to that of 2024.

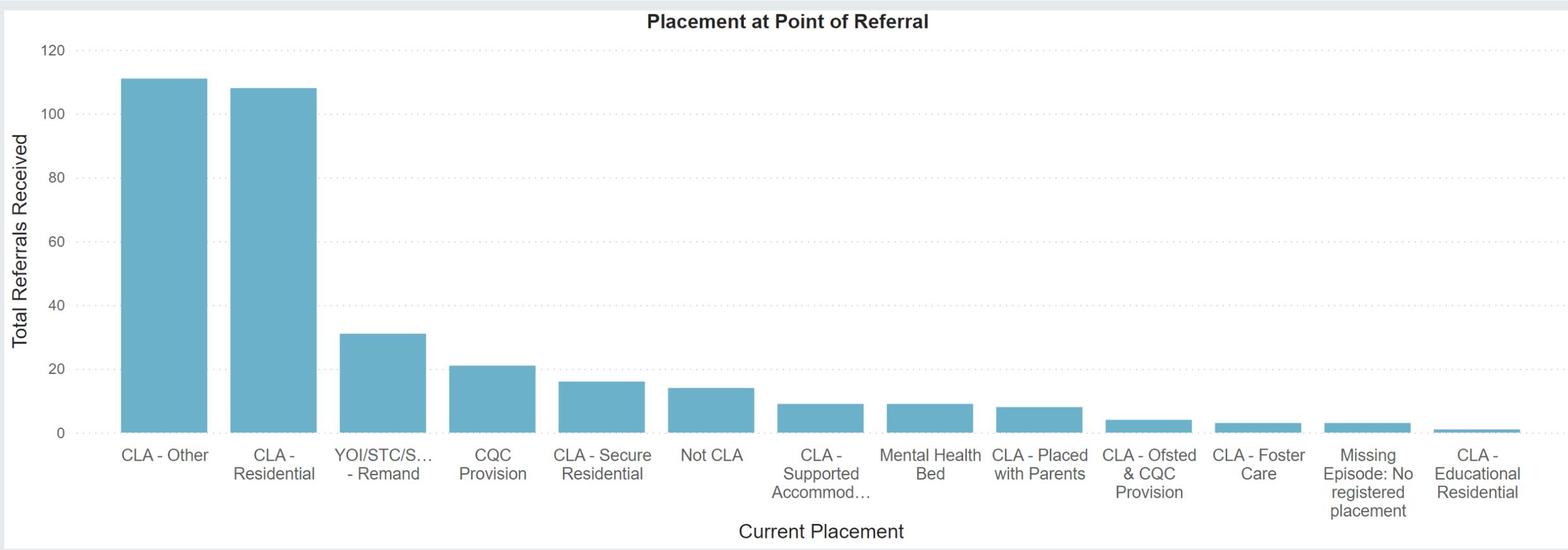
Open Referrals



The volume of open referrals reached its lowest for the year in June at 10 open referrals, marking the lowest level since February 2019. The volume of open referrals peaked at 55 at the end of December. This is a slight decrease compared to 2024 where the highest level of open referrals was 61.

On average during 2025 there were 30 referrals open daily; this is a decrease from 42 during 2024.

Placement at Point of Referral



During 2025, the data identified 'CLA - Other' placements as the highest recorded placement at the point of referral. This is consistent with the data recorded since 2022 when the unit identified a change from 'CLA - residential' placements no longer being the most frequently recorded placement at point of referral. Although, the volume of 'CLA-Other' and 'CLA-Residential' placements in 2025 is more similar to each other than in recent years.

Time in Care for Referrals Received



The data highlights that the majority of children referred for a secure placement had been in care for over five years, this follows the trend identified across previous years.

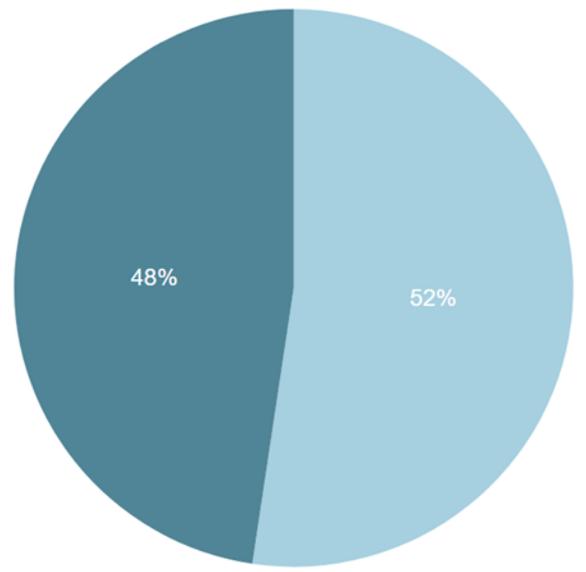
The data continues to identify a low number of children referred that were 'Not looked after' at 2.7%, which is a decrease from 3.3% in 2024.

The data identified a high number of placement moves previous to a secure welfare referral being submitted. The highest recorded number of placement moves was 46 placement moves at point of a secure welfare referral being submitted.

Nine referrals received in 2025 were recorded as 'unknown' as they had been adopted and therefore their placement history prior to adoption was unavailable. Furthermore, two referrals were recorded as 'unknown', as they had initially been Looked After by another local authority and the current local authority did not have the previous placement history available.

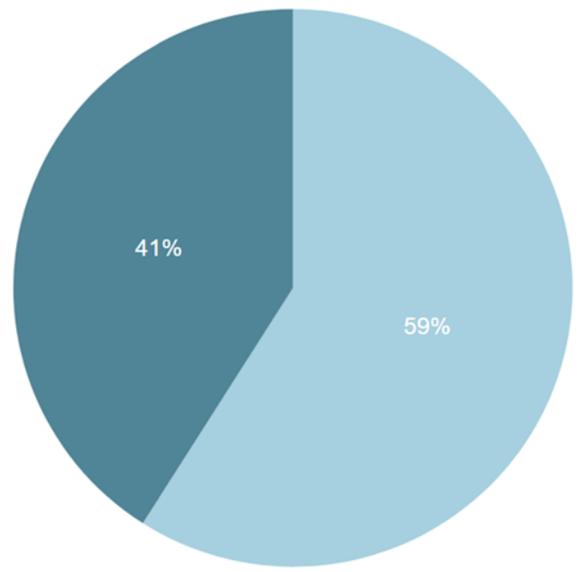
Placements Offered by Gender

Gender of Referrals Received



● Male ● Female

Gender of Children Offered Placements



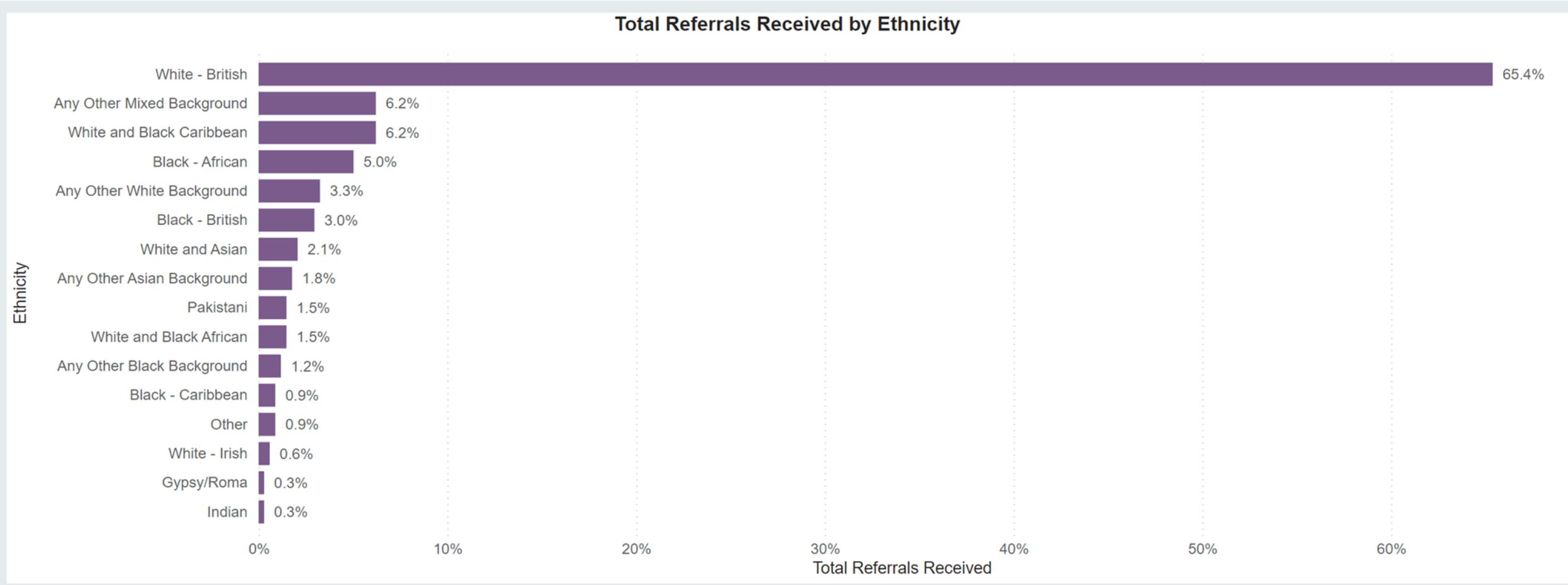
● Male ● Female

During 2025, the overall volume of male referrals received was higher than female referrals. The volume of female referrals has decreased slightly from 49% during 2024 to 48% during 2025. Similar to 2024, there has been a continuation of identified trends prior to 2023, where throughout the year in 2025, the number of male and female referrals has fluctuated from month to month.

The gender of the placements offered correlates with the referrals received. Not all offered placements resulted in a child residing in a secure children's home, predominantly due to no longer meeting threshold or finding an alternative provision to meet needs.

As of the end of 2025, the search remains ongoing for 50 of these children.

Ethnicity of Young People Referred



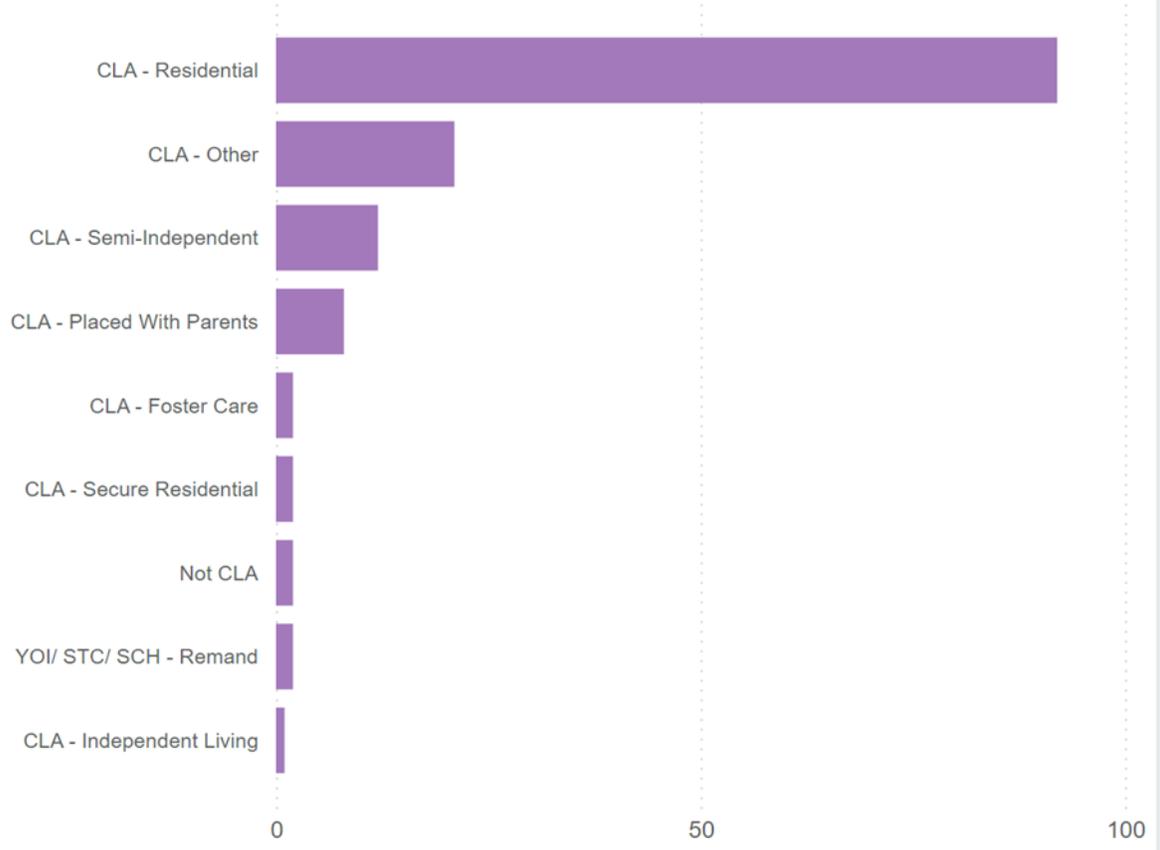
Throughout the year, the majority of referrals received were for 'White- British' children, identified as 65.4% of the referrals; this is consistent with 2024.

The second most frequently recorded ethnicities were 'Any Other Mixed Background' and 'White and Black Caribbean'. The presence of 'White and Black Caribbean' in this position aligns with usual trends, whereas there has been a 1.9% increase in the recording of 'Any Other Mixed Background' compared to 2024.

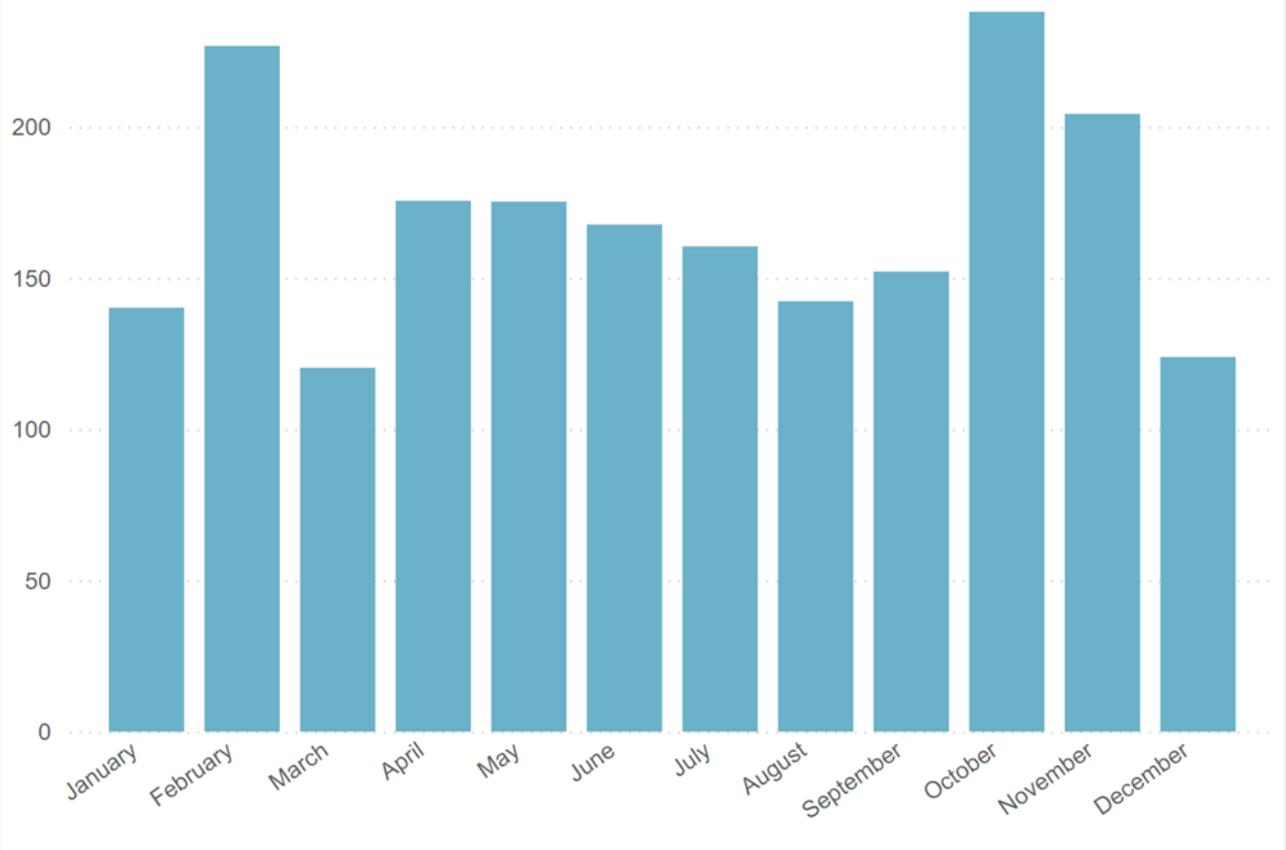
Of the 'White British' children referred 44.31% were male and 55.7% female. Of the further ethnicities received, 32.5% were female and 67.5% were male.

Discharges from Secure Welfare

Discharge Placements



Average Length of Secure Welfare Placement (Days)



During 2025, the majority of English children that were discharged from a secure children's home were placed within a residential children's home setting. Data collected by the SWCU since 2017 has identified that children are most commonly discharged from a secure placement to a residential children's home. The second highest discharge placement was 'Other'; examples of these were unregistered placements, hospital and police custody.

The average length of a secure welfare placement was 171 days, which is lower than the average for the preceding year which was 187 days.