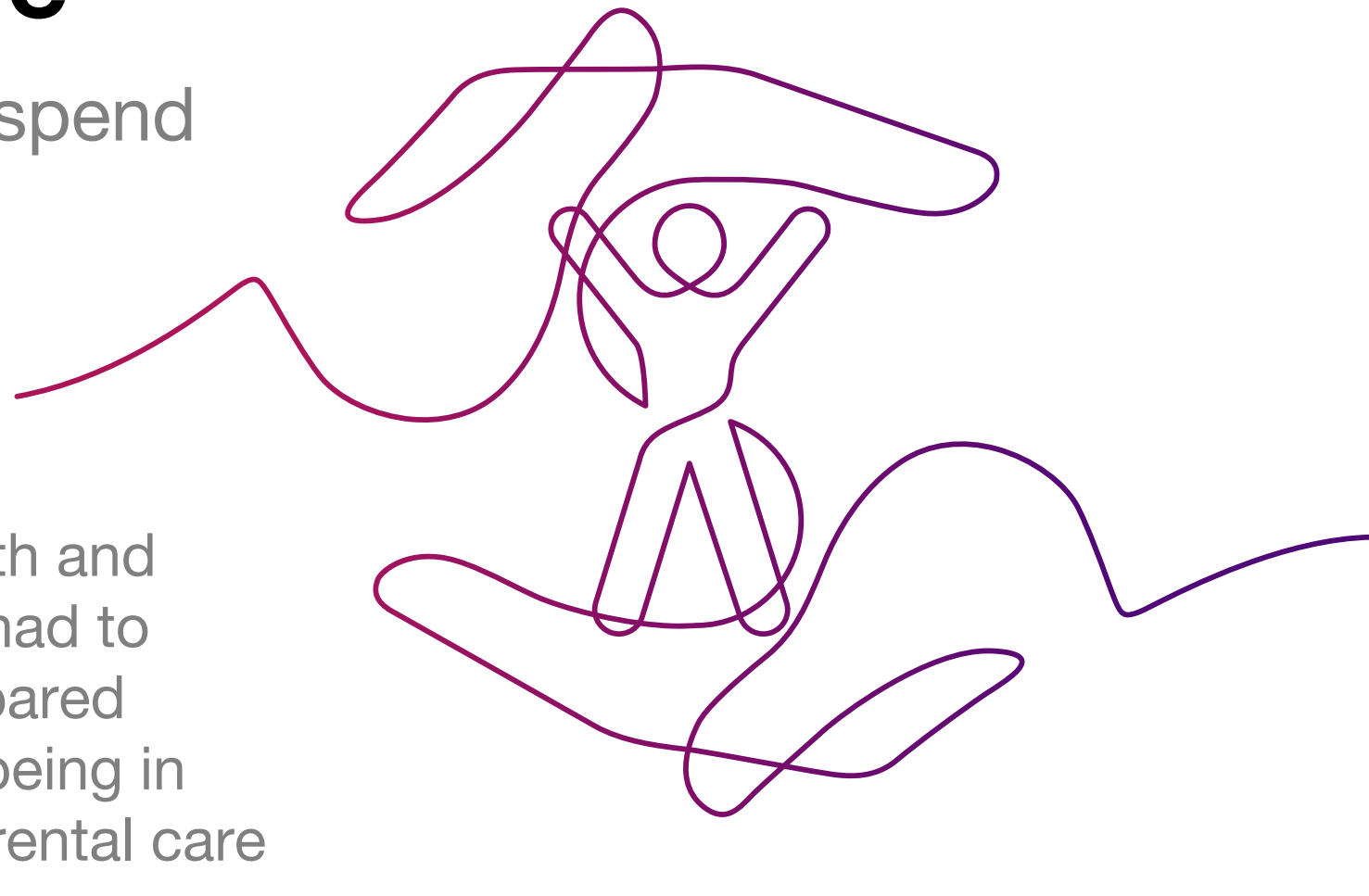


Childhood in care

We are failing those who spend their childhood in care.

Here's how.

Our research looked at the health and social outcomes of adults who had to be in care as children and compared whether they fared better after being in residential, foster, kinship or parental care

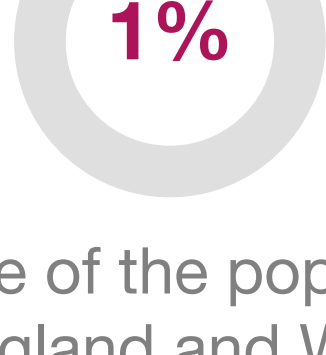


Data source

We used data from the Census-based ONS Longitudinal Study, which contains information on the lives of a 1% sample of the population of England and Wales (1 million people)

ONS Longitudinal Study

Office for National Statistics



Sample of the population of England and Wales

1971

1981

1991

2001

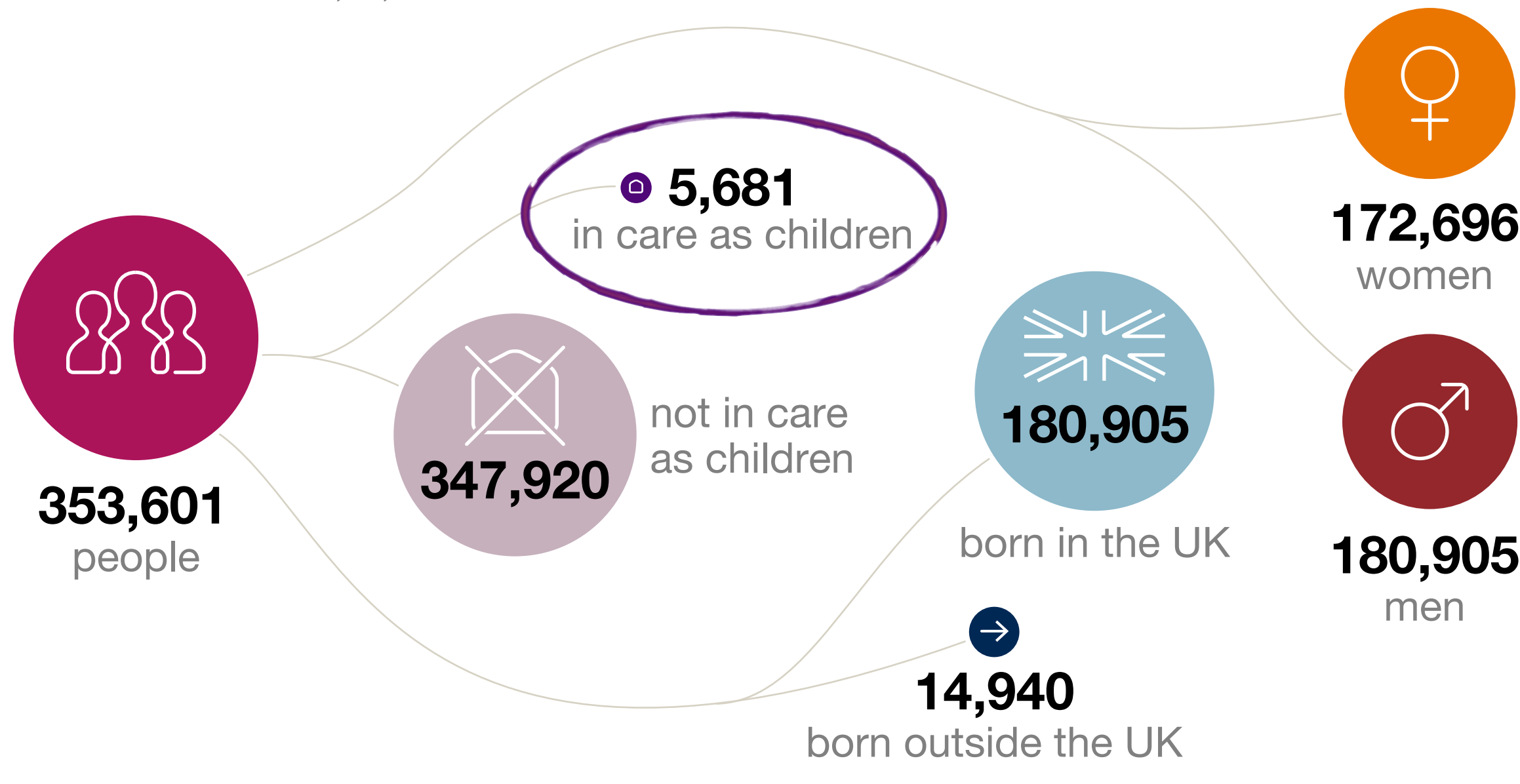
2011

Over 40 years' follow up

Data from UK national census and life events records

Sample

From over 350,000 members of the study who we looked at for our research, 5,681 had been in care as children



Study 1: Mortality

Adults who were placed in care in childhood were much more likely to die prematurely than those who lived with their parents. That likelihood increased substantially over time



1971

1981

1991

2001

Having to be placed in care increased the likelihood of dying from unnatural causes such as self-harm, accidents or things related to mental illness

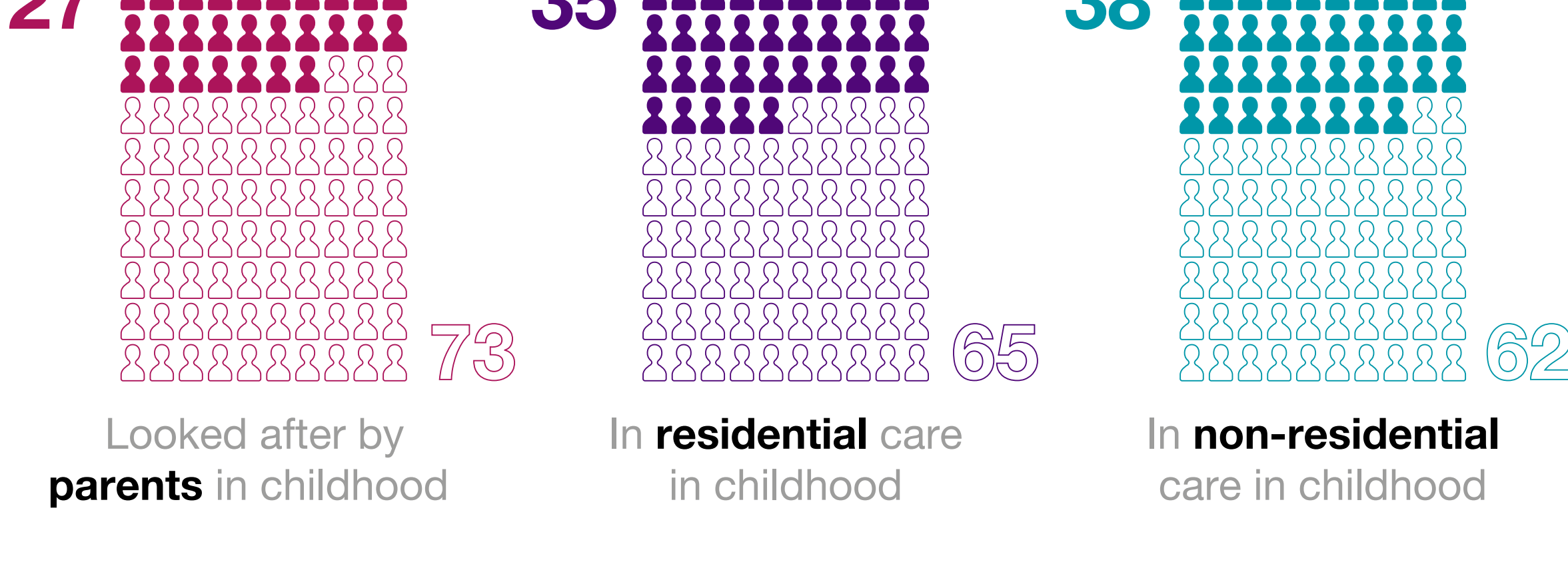
Cause of death



Unnatural



Other



Study 2: Healthiness

Our research also showed that having to grow up in care has long lasting impacts on people's health across all ages, especially for those in residential care

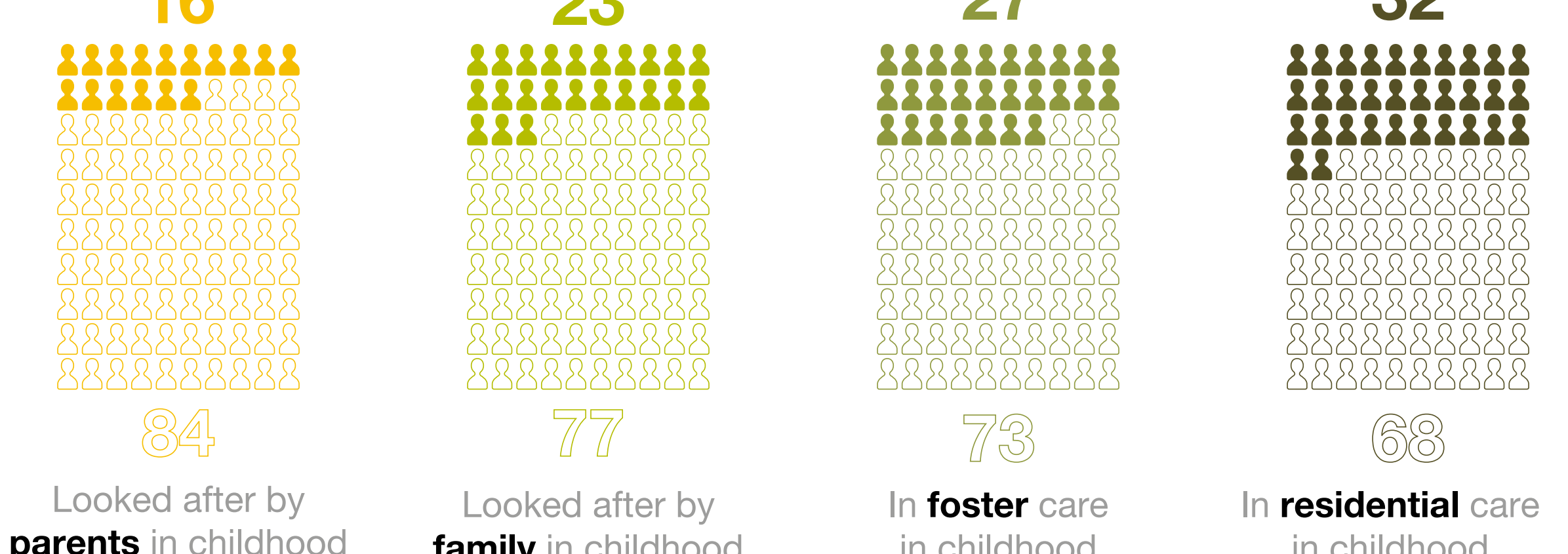
Poor health

Good health

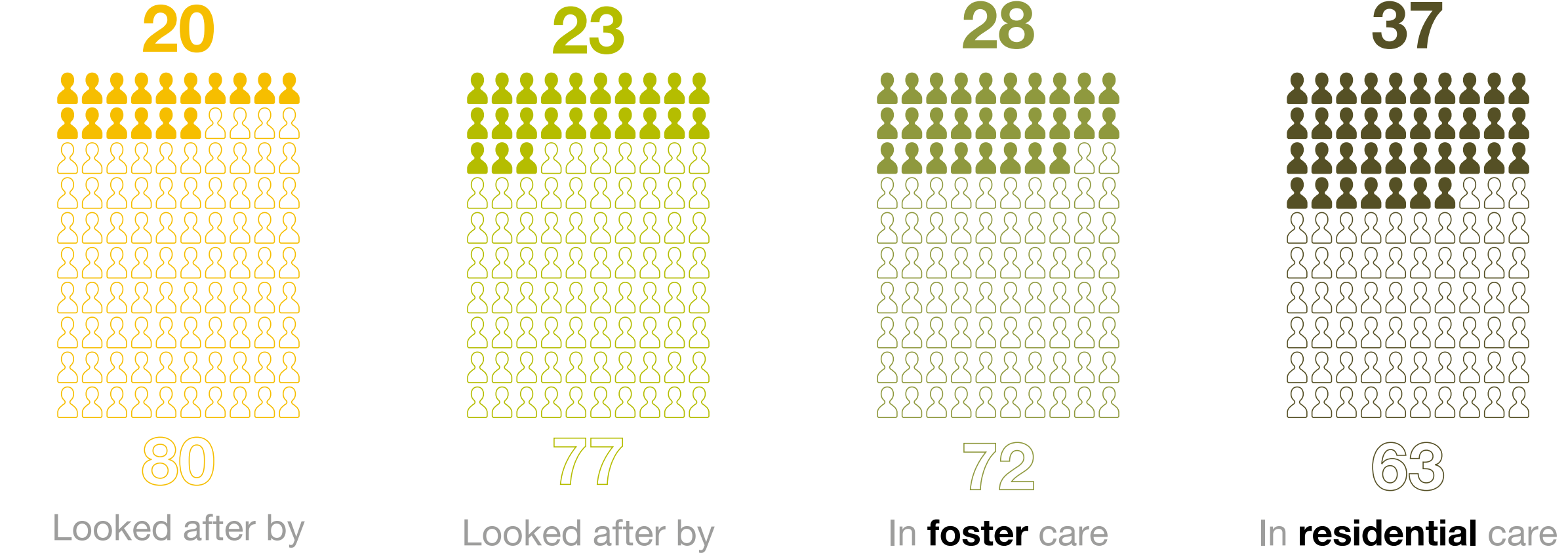
Ages 20–29



Ages 30–39



Ages 40–49



These results hold true, even when we use statistical modelling to account for differences in:

Age Sex Cohort Country of birth Childhood demographics
Marital status Employment status Educational achievement
Social class Children in household Social circumstances

Recommendations

Most people are living longer healthier lives but children who must be in care are not, and the situation has got worse not better for them. This needs to change now.

We have two key recommendations:

1 Long term thinking

Choose care that will benefit children for the rest of their lives - a matter of public health as well as social welfare



2 Monitor mental health

GPs to offer regular mental health MOTs to care leavers across their adult lives - a priority for health authorities



More information:

www.nuffieldfoundation.org/project/looked-after-children-grown-up

With thanks to:



The permission of the Office for National Statistics to use the Longitudinal Study is gratefully acknowledged, as are the help provided by the ONS Secure Research Service and staff of the Centre for Longitudinal Study Information & User Support (CeLSIUS). CeLSIUS is supported by the ESRC Census of Population Programme (Award Ref: ES/V003488/1). The authors alone are responsible for the interpretation of the data.

This work contains statistical data from ONS which is Crown Copyright. The use of the ONS statistical data in this work does not imply the endorsement of the ONS in relation to the interpretation or analysis of the statistical data. This work uses research datasets which may not exactly reproduce National Statistics aggregates.