

INFORMATION
ANALYSIS
DIRECTORATE



Quarterly Child Protection Statistics for Northern Ireland (July – September 2016)



Department of
Health

An Roinn Sláinte

Máinnystrie O Poustie

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Target Audience	Social Services Directors, Directors of Children's Services, Chief Executives of HSC Board and Trusts in Northern Ireland, health care professionals, academics and social care stakeholders.
Main uses of document	Data from this publication is used to monitor the delivery of social care services to children, to help assess Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust performance, corporate monitoring, to inform and monitor related policy, and to respond to parliamentary/assembly questions. The bulletin is also used by academics/ researchers, the voluntary sector and those with an interest in child protection.
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Price	FREE

Please note that these statistics are now in table format only



Statistics and research for the **Department of Health** is provided by the Information and Analysis Directorate (IAD). IAD is responsible for compiling, processing, analysing, interpreting and disseminating a wide range of statistics covering health and social care.



<http://www.nisra.gov.uk/>

The statisticians within IAD are out posted from the Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency (NISRA) and the statistics are produced in accordance with the principles and protocols set out in the [Code of Practice for Official Statistics](#).

IAD comprises four statistical sections: Hospital Information, Community Information, Public Health Information & Research and Project Support Analysis.

This publication is produced by Community Information Branch.

Our Vision and Values

- *Provide up-to-date, quality information on children and adult social services and community health;*
- *to disseminate findings widely with a view to stimulating debate, promoting effective decision-making and improvement in service provision; and*
- *be an expert voice on social care information.*

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/dhssps-statistics-and-research-social-services/social-care-statistics>

About Community Information Branch

The purpose of Community Information Branch (CIB) is to promote effective decision making in children and adult social services by providing quality information and analysis.

We collect, analyse, and publish a wide range of community information that is used to help monitor the delivery of personal social services policy. Information collected by CIB is used to assess HSC Trust performance, for corporate monitoring, policy evaluation, and to respond to parliamentary/assembly questions.

Information is widely disseminated through a number of regular key statistical publications and ad hoc reports, details of which are available online.

Contents

Key Findings	5
Introduction	6
Background	6
Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995	6
Child Protection Register	7
Table 1: Children on the Child Protection Register by Age at 30 September 2016.....	7
Table 2: Children on the Child Protection Register by Trust, quarter ending 30 September 2015 – 30 September 2016.....	8
Table 3: Children on the Child Protection Register by Category of Abuse at 30 September 2016 .	9
Table 4: Children on the Child Protection Register by Duration at 30 September 2016	10
Table 5: Children on the Child Protection Register by Legal Status at 30 September 2016	11
Child Protection Referrals	12
Table 6: Child Protection Referrals Received by Source during quarter ending 30 September 2016.....	12
Table 7: Child Protection Referrals received by Trust, quarter ending 30 September 2015 – 30 September 2016.....	13
Appendix A – Technical Notes	14
Appendix B – Data Definitions	16

Key Findings

Child Protection Register

- At 30 September 2016, 2,262 children were listed on the Child Protection Register, representing a 2% increase on the previous quarter and of 5% on the previous year;
- Taking account of local demographics, register counts per 10,000 children's population (under 18), ranged from 45.8 in the Western HSC Trust to 58.7 in the Southern HSC Trust; overall there were 52.1 children per 10,000 on the register;
- Four out of five (80%) children were on the register due to physical abuse, neglect or a combination of physical abuse and neglect;
- Some 70% of children on the Child Protection Register at 30 September 2016 had been on the register for less than one year with 2% of children on the register for three years or longer;

Child Protection Referrals

- HSC Trusts received 928 child protection referrals during the quarter ending 30 September 2016. This was 14% lower than the previous quarter, and 9% below the number of referrals for the same quarter in 2015;
- The largest proportion of referrals, 52%, originated from within Social Services, followed by the police with 18%.

Introduction

Background

The “Quarterly Child Protection Statistics for Northern Ireland” are based on the quarterly Children Order Returns CPR2, CPR3, CPR4 and CPR5 for Northern Ireland. Figures in this bulletin cover the Child Protection Register by legal status, category of abuse, duration on the register and age. Child Protection Referrals are presented by source of referral. A wider set of Children Order Returns are used to produce the [Children's Social Care Statistics for Northern Ireland](#) publication, which presents childrens social care data for year ending 31 March.

Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995

The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 (the Children Order) is the principal statute governing the care, upbringing and protection of children in Northern Ireland. It affects all those who work and care for children, whether parents, paid carers or volunteers. The Children Order emphasises the unique advantages to a child of being brought up within their own family. In practice this means that the Children Order sees families as a major way of supporting and helping children. Health and Social Care Trusts have the power and in some circumstances the duty, under the Children Order, to help children by providing services to their families.

Children can be referred to Social Services for a variety of reasons. If there are concerns that a child may be suffering or at risk of suffering ‘significant harm’, Social Services will conduct an investigation under Article 66 of the Children Order and respond appropriately. A Child Protection Case Conference may be convened and the child’s name included on the Child Protection Register and a Child Protection Plan drawn up to safeguard the child.

For every child subject to a Child Protection Plan or on a Child Protection Register in the United Kingdom it is estimated that there are likely to be around eight other children who have suffered maltreatment¹. This and new ways of harming and abusing children (e.g. through the internet or trafficking) provide serious challenges to protecting children.

¹ Source: “How safe are our children” (NSPCC, 2013)

Child Protection Register

Table 1: Children on the Child Protection Register by Age at 30 September 2016

HSC Trust	Age (years)					Total	Per 10,000 Population Under 18 ¹
	Under 1	1 - 4	5 - 11	12 - 15	16 +		
Belfast	50	112	133	50	8	353	46.4
Northern	58	140	226	91	35	550	50.6
South Eastern	52	129	176	82	25	464	57.4
Southern	55	144	229	105	25	558	58.7
Western	43	90	132	57	15	337	45.8
Northern Ireland	258	615	896	385	108	2,262	52.1

Source: Children Order Return CPR4

¹ Population figures NISRA Mid-Year Estimates (2016)

Table 2: Children on the Child Protection Register by Trust, quarter ending 30 September 2015 – 30 September 2016

HSC Trust	QE 30 Sept 2015		QE 31 Dec 2015		QE 31 Mar 2016		QE 30 Jun 2016		QE 30 Sept 2016	
	Children on Child Protection Register	Per 10,000 population under 18 ¹	Children on Child Protection Register	Per 10,000 population under 18 ¹	Children on Child Protection Register	Per 10,000 population under 18 ¹	Children on Child Protection Register	Per 10,000 population under 18 ¹	Children on Child Protection Register	Per 10,000 population under 18 ¹
Belfast	374	49.1	376	49.4	383	50.3	377	49.5	353	46.4
Northern	580	53.4	544	50.1	521	48.0	512	47.1	550	50.6
South Eastern	427	52.8	415	51.4	431	53.3	442	54.7	464	57.4
Southern	501	52.7	490	51.6	521	54.8	547	57.6	558	58.7
Western	268	36.5	273	37.1	290	39.5	329	44.8	337	45.8
Northern Ireland	2,150	49.5	2,098	48.3	2,146	49.4	2,207	50.8	2,262	52.1

Source: Children Order Return CPR4

¹ Population figures NISRA Mid-Year Estimates (2016)

Table 3: Children on the Child Protection Register by Category of Abuse at 30 September 2016

HSC Trust	Category of Abuse								Total
	Neglect, Physical Abuse and Sexual Abuse	Neglect and Physical Abuse	Neglect and Sexual Abuse	Physical and Sexual Abuse	Neglect Only	Physical Abuse Only	Sexual Abuse Only	Emotional Abuse Only	
Belfast	-	87	-	9	120	91	16	19	353
Northern	5	93	12	14	169	166	46	45	550
South Eastern	-	93	-	-	167	119	24	44	464
Southern	5	90	7	8	104	245	47	52	558
Western	8	68	-	-	104	94	21	35	337
Northern Ireland	29	431	38	36	664	715	154	195	2,262

Source: Children Order Return CPR2

⌄ cell counts have been suppressed to avoid personal disclosure

Table 4: Children on the Child Protection Register by Duration at 30 September 2016

HSC Trust	Duration					Total
	< 3 Months	3 Months < 6 Months	6 Months < 1 Year	1 Year < 2 Years	2 + Years	
Belfast	58	57	95	99	44	353
Northern	120	130	135	119	46	550
South Eastern	111	104	115	90	44	464
Southern	118	124	176	113	27	558
Western	72	78	93	54	40	337
Northern Ireland	479	493	614	475	201	2,262

Source: Children Order Return CPR5

Table 5: Children on the Child Protection Register by Legal Status at 30 September 2016

HSC Trust	Legal Status							Total
	Accommodated (Article 21)	Interim Care Order (Article 57)	Care Order (Article 50 or 59)	Deemed Care Order (Paras 11 & 30 of Sch 8)	Interim Supervision Order (Article 57)	Other	None	
Belfast	16	12	-	0	-	16	305	353
Northern	20	13	-	0	-	6	509	550
South Eastern	16	13	-	0	-	-	434	464
Southern	19	6	-	0	5	-	524	558
Western	10	14	-	0	-	-	308	337
Northern Ireland	81	58	5	0	8	30	2,080	2,262

Source: Children Order Return CPR4

Other includes those children with an Emergency Protection Order (Article 63 & 64)

'-' cell counts have been suppressed to avoid personal disclosure

Child Protection Referrals

Table 6: Child Protection Referrals Received by Source during quarter ending 30 September 2016

HSC Trust	Source of Referral											Total	
	Police	School / EWO ²	Voluntary Org.	GP	Social Services	Comm. Nursing	Relative	Neighbour / Friend	Hospital	Self	Anon		Other
Belfast	34	18	-	0	85	0	6	-	-	-	-	27	176
Northern	26	7	0	-	139	0	-	-	-	-	0	35	218
South Eastern	59	-	-	-	76	-	7	-	10	-	12	19	193
Southern	34	9	-	-	115	-	-	-	11	-	6	37	228
Western	16	-	-	-	71	0	6	-	-	0	-	6	113
Northern Ireland	169	39	8	8	486	9	28	1	27	7	22	124	928

Source: Children Order Return CPR3

² cell counts have been suppressed to avoid personal disclosure

Table 7: Child Protection Referrals received by Trust, quarter ending 30 September 2015 – 30 September 2016

HSC Trust	QE 30 Sept 2015		QE 31 Dec 2015		QE 31 Mar 2016		QE 30 Jun 2016		QE 30 Sept 2016	
	Child	Per	Child	Per	Child	Per	Child	Per	Child	Per
	Protection Referrals Received	10,000 population under 18 ¹	Protection Referrals Received	10,000 population under 18 ¹	Protection Referrals Received	10,000 population under 18 ¹	Protection Referrals Received	10,000 population under 18 ¹	Protection Referrals Received	10,000 population under 18 ¹
Belfast	150	19.7	159	20.9	159	20.9	171	22.5	176	23.1
Northern	159	14.6	121	11.1	177	16.3	185	17.0	218	20.1
South Eastern	262	32.4	224	27.7	245	30.3	252	31.2	193	23.9
Southern	290	30.5	319	33.6	385	40.5	299	31.5	228	24.0
Western	154	21.0	169	23.0	155	21.1	172	23.4	113	15.4
Northern Ireland	1,015	23.4	992	22.9	1,121	25.8	1,079	24.9	928	21.4

Source: Children Order Return CPR3

Appendix A – Technical Notes

Data Collection

The figures in this bulletin detail numbers of children on the Child Protection Register at 30 September 2016 by legal status, age, category of abuse and duration and the numbers of Child Protection Referrals by source of referral for the quarter ending 30 September 2016.

The statistics presented in this bulletin derive from Children Order returns CPR2, CPR3, CPR4, CPR5, provided by each of the five Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts in Northern Ireland to the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) as well as Community Information Branch (CIB) within the Department of Health (DoH).

These returns are part of a wider set of annual Children Order returns which together provide statistics on activity relating to Child Protection, Children in Need, Looked After Children, and Children's Day Care. The wider set of returns are used to produce [Children's Social Care Statistics in Northern Ireland](#), which records childrens social care data at 31 March and for year ending 31 March, and compares childrens social care data over a five year period.

Data Changes

After consultation this publication, will be published as data tables only. In-depth analysis is provided in the annual publication 'Childrens Social Care Statistics for Northern Ireland'.

Data Quality

To facilitate the return of accurate counts HSC Trusts have agreed that ten working days from the end of the quarter is sufficient time to update the main administrative system with relevant information. Statistics published do not reflect system updates after the ten day window has passed. Following submission to CIB, further checks are carried out to verify that information is internally consistent. Trend analyses are used to monitor variations and emerging trends.

Queries arising from validation are presented to HSC Trusts for clarification, and if required returns may be amended and/or re-submitted.

Statement of Administrative Sources

CPR2, CPR3, CPR4, CPR5 are derived from SOS CARE, which is the main administrative system used to support HSC Trusts in delivering social care services to children.

Rounding Conventions

Percentages have been rounded to whole numbers and as a consequence some percentages may not sum to 100. A figure of 0% may reflect rounding down of values under 0.5%

Disclosure Conventions

To prevent disclosure of the identity of individual children, it has been necessary to suppress the values of cells with low counts which may otherwise be derived by means of simple arithmetic. Our policy statement on [disclosure and confidentiality](#) is available on our website.

Revisions Policy

These data are revised by exception. If revisions are required, background circumstances are reported and revision dates are noted in subsequent publications of these series of statistics. The general [revisions policy](#) for community statistics is published on our website.

Main Uses of Data

Data from this publication is used to monitor the delivery of social care services to children, to help assess Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust performance, corporate monitoring, to inform and monitor related policy, and to respond to parliamentary/assembly questions. The bulletin is also used by academics/ researchers, the voluntary sector and those with an interest in child protection.

A detailed quality report for children's community statistics providing further information is available on our website.

Related Publications

Details of statistics on similar themes to those detailed within this bulletin and published by other countries in the United Kingdom and Ireland are outlined below.

England

[Characteristics of Children in Need in England 2014/15](#)

Wales

[Referrals, Assessments and Social Services for Children, 2015/16](#)

Scotland

[Children's Social Work Statistics 2014/15](#)

Republic of Ireland

[Quarterly Performance and Activity Data](#)

A National Statistics Publication

National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value.

All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the Authority's regulatory arm. The Authority considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate.

It is a producer's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected of National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the Authority promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

User Engagement

If you have any comments on this publication please contact:

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Next Release

The next release of these statistics, for the quarter ending 31 December 2016, is scheduled for February 2017. The publication release dates for Health and Social Care statistics in Northern Ireland are available from the DoH website at:

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/statistical-releases-calendar>

Appendix B – Data Definitions

Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995

The Children (Northern Ireland) Order was made on 15 March 1995. The Children Order deals with the care, upbringing and protection of children, including disabled children. It reforms, consolidates and harmonises most of the public and private law relating to children in a single coherent statutory framework along the lines of the Children Act 1989 in England and Wales.

Child

Under the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, a child is defined as a person under the age of 18.

Child Protection Register

A register must be maintained by each Trust listing every child in the Trust area who has been abused or who is considered to be at risk of abuse, and who is currently the subject of a child protection plan.

Registration

Placement of a child on to the Child Protection Register. Where a child has moved on or off the register several times during the year each registration is recorded.

Child Protection Deregistration

Deregistration is the removal of a child from the Child Protection Register. Where a child has moved on or off the register several times during the year each deregistration is recorded.

Child Protection Re-registration

Re-registration is the placement on to the Child Protection Register of a child who has already been on the register, irrespective of the date of their first registration on the register.

Child Protection Referrals

Child protection referrals are those referrals for which the initial assessment indicates that there may be child protection issues.

The threshold for action should be the allegation or suspicion of child abuse. However the balance needs to be struck between taking action designed to protect the child from abuse while at the same time avoiding unnecessary intervention. Except in emergency situations or urgent cases when immediate protective action is required, referrals will require preliminary discussion with other professionals from the child protection agencies and with the referrer. In some cases it will be necessary to seek specialist opinion.

In some cases action other than a formal investigation will be decided upon following the consultation process. This might include the provision of support for the family. Such a decision should be discussed and agreed with a social worker in consultation with the team leader or supervisor; and recorded and communicated to senior management.

The definition is not taken to mean all referrals, as some may require action such as advice or family support rather than child protection procedures.

Category of Abuse for Child Protection Registration

The category of abuse under which a child is registered will have been decided upon at the child protection conference, when agreement was reached that registration was necessary. If a child suffers multiple abuses, this should be recorded against the main category of abuse. The abuse may

be potential, suspected or confirmed, although the terms 'actual' or 'likely' occur. Potential and suspected equate with 'likely' and confirmed with 'actual'. The categories are:

1. Neglect, Physical Abuse and Sexual Abuse
2. Main category - neglect
3. Main category - physical abuse
4. Main category - sexual abuse
5. Neglect and Physical Abuse
6. Main category - neglect
7. Main category - physical abuse
8. Neglect and Sexual Abuse
9. Main category - neglect
10. Main category - sexual abuse
11. Physical and Sexual Abuse
12. Main category - physical abuse
13. Main category - sexual abuse
14. Neglect (only)
15. Physical Abuse (only)
16. Sexual Abuse (only)
17. Emotional Abuse (only)

Neglect: The actual or likely persistent or severe neglect of a child, or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold or starvation, or persistent failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in significant impairment of the child's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive.

Physical Abuse: Actual or likely deliberate physical injury to a child, or wilful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering to a child including deliberate poisoning, suffocation or Munchausen syndrome by proxy.

Sexual Abuse: Actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child or adolescent. The child may be dependent and/or developmentally immature.

Emotional Abuse: Actual or likely persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment or rejection resulting in severe adverse effects on the emotional, physical and/or behavioural development of a child. All abuse involves some emotional ill-treatment. This category should be used where it is the main or only form of abuse.

Legal Status

The legal framework for compulsory intervention in the care and upbringing of children. If more than one legal status is indicated or in force for the child at 31 March, the latest one only is recorded.

Emergency Protection Order (Article 63 & 64): An Emergency Protection Order (EPO) is intended for use in urgent cases to protect a child in the short-term. Almost anyone with a concern can apply for an EPO, although in most circumstances a Trust will seek one. Where the applicant is a Trust or the NSPCC they must show that in the course of fulfilling their duty to investigate they are being unreasonably frustrated in gaining access to the child. Anyone else applying for an EPO they must show that the child is likely to suffer significant harm unless removed to, or allowed to remain, in a safe place.

An EPO last for eight days but can be extended on one occasion for a further seven days. An application to discharge the order cannot be made within the first 72 hours giving a Trust sometime to decide what actions to take in respect of the child. The person to whom the order is addressed also gains parental responsibility for the child for the duration of the order.

Accommodated (Article 21): Children with this legal status have been accommodated by a HSC Trust if there is no one who has parental responsibility for them, they have been lost or abandoned or of the person who has been caring for them has been prevented, for whatever reason, from providing them with suitable accommodation or care. Children are often accommodated with the permission of their parents.

Care Order (Article 50 or 59): A Care Order accords the HSC Trust parental responsibility and allows for the child to be removed from the parental home. This does not extinguish the parental responsibility of the child's parents but means that they cannot exercise this responsibility while the Care Order is in place. In for a Court to make a Care Order it must be satisfied that the child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm and that the harm or likelihood of harm is attributable to,

the care given to the child, or likely to be given to the child, not being what it would be reasonable to expect a parent to give or the child being beyond parental control.

Interim Care Orders (Article 57): An Interim Care Order is put in place following an adjournment of proceedings for a Care Order or in any family proceedings in which a Court orders a Trust to investigate the circumstances of a child. An Interim Care Order can be in place for up to eight weeks initially and for a further four weeks upon renewal and subsequent occasions that Court deems an Interim Order necessary.

Supervision Order: This order requires the Trust to advise, assist and befriend the supervised child and can only be granted if the same threshold conditions that apply for Care Orders are met. This Order does not give the Trust parental responsibility. It does allow a social worker to issue directions about the child's upbringing including place of residence and involvement in certain programmes. Schedule 3 of the Children Order sets out the full range of matters that may be addressed in a Supervision Order.

Interim Supervision Orders (Article 57): An Interim Supervision can be put in place following an adjournment of proceedings for a Supervision Order or in any family proceedings in which a question arises with respect to the welfare of any child, it appears to the court that it may be appropriate for a supervision order to be made with respect to him, the court may direct the appropriate authority to undertake an investigation of the child's circumstance

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are available to download from the DoH internet at:

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/dhssps-statistics-and-research>