

NSPCC

How safe are our children?

THE MOST COMPREHENSIVE
OVERVIEW OF CHILD
PROTECTION IN THE UK

2017



EVERY CHILDHOOD IS WORTH FIGHTING FOR

Authors Holly Bentley, Orla O'Hagan, Alison Brown, Nikki Vasco, Charlotte Lynch, Jessica Peppiate, Mieka Webber, Ruth Ball, Pam Miller, Anne Byrne, Maria Hafizi and Fiona Letendrie.

Acknowledgements This report would not have been possible without the input of many individuals. There are too many to thank everyone individually, but included in this list are government statisticians, experts in child protection and numerous NSPCC staff. We would particularly like to extend our thanks to: Helen Fisher, Ashton Brown and Anna Vignoles for their invaluable feedback. Many thanks to NSPCC colleagues in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales for their time: Colin Reid, Joanna Barrett, Joanne Smith, Viv Laing and Sarah Witcombe-Hayes, who have helped ensure that the report reflects a UK wide perspective. Special thanks also go to Kate Stanley, Georgina Woolfrey, Anna Brown and Judith Fisher for their contributions.

Foreword



Our fifth annual report *How safe are our children?* is the UK's definitive record of the current state of child protection, and pulls together the latest and most robust information across our four nations.

Understanding what these numbers tell us is vital in helping us have a conversation about what's working – and more importantly – what needs to be done to better protect our children. While at the NSPCC we do have some important insights, we don't pretend to

have all the answers. So it is crucial that, together, we challenge the status quo; otherwise we won't make decisive progress. Because preventing child abuse is everyone's responsibility.

How safe are our children? 2017 tells us that child abuse is being increasingly reported and police, social services and organisations like ours are doing more than ever to take action. However, the increased readiness by adults to report abuse is yet to be translated into justice for child victims. The process of bringing perpetrators to court and securing a prosecution is woeful. An urgent reform is needed so that children can get the right support and give evidence away from court.

It also isn't enough to simply know the numbers of reported cases of children being abused or neglected – we need to understand the full scale of child maltreatment. If we don't know the true extent of abuse and neglect, we don't know how many more children we need to reach. That's why there's an urgent need for the UK Government to commission a new nationwide study that looks at the prevalence of all forms of abuse and neglect.

The last study of this kind was conducted by the NSPCC in 2009 – when the world was quite different and far less online abuse was reported. Since the last study, there has been a 298 per cent increase in the number of police-recorded indecent image offences in the UK. And in our latest research with children, four out of five told us they feel social media sites are failing to protect them from pornographic content, self-harm, bullying and hatred.

There have been some moves from Government to tackle child abuse online, such as earlier this year when it was finally made illegal for an adult to send a sexual message to a child in England and Wales, following our Flaw in the Law campaign backed by 50,000 people. Educating children and families in staying safe online is important, but industry and Government have a responsibility too, and there is a lot more to be done. We want social media companies to come under robust scrutiny from an independent regulator in order for greater transparency; and to face fines when they fail to keep children safe.

But we also need the UK Government to step in now, before another eight years go by, and commission a study that gives us the clearest possible picture of the extent of child abuse and neglect in the UK – including online abuse. This study will arm us with the right knowledge to help everyone play their part in keeping children safe: because every childhood is worth fighting for.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'Peter Wanless'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Peter Wanless
NSPCC Chief Executive

Contents

1. Overview	6
2. Measuring the extent of abuse and neglect in the UK	12
INDICATOR 1: Child homicides recorded by police includes the offences of murder, manslaughter and infanticide	18
INDICATOR 2: Child mortality deaths by assault, neglect and undetermined intent	20
INDICATOR 3: Child suicides	24
INDICATOR 4: Number of recorded sexual offences against children	28
INDICATOR 5: Number of recorded cruelty and neglect offences	32
INDICATOR 6: Self-reported prevalence of abuse and neglect	34
INDICATOR 7: Counselling sessions with Childline	36
INDICATOR 8: Contacts with the NSPCC helpline	38
INDICATOR 9: Online harm	40
INDICATOR 10: Violent incidents experienced by 10 to 15 year olds Crime survey for England and Wales	44
Crime survey for England and Wales: Experiences of abuse in childhood	46

INDICATOR 11: Referrals to social services	48
INDICATOR 12: Children in need	50
INDICATOR 13: Children in the child protection system	52
INDICATOR 14: Composition of child protection plans and child protection registers	56
INDICATOR 15: Re-registration onto child protection registers or returning to a child protection plan	60
INDICATOR 16: How long are children subject to child protection plans or on child protection registers	64
INDICATOR 17: Looked after children	66
INDICATOR 18: Proportion of looked after children who have three or more placements during the year	68
INDICATOR 19: Child trafficking	70
INDICATOR 20: Public attitudes to child abuse and neglect	74

3. Glossary

Overview

This year's *How safe are our children?* report puts into sharp focus the fight for every childhood. There's no doubt we are seeing more work being done to keep children safe from harm than ever before. But is it enough?

Social workers are working with more and more children on child protection plans and registers to help keep them safe; police officers are investigating more suspected cases of child abuse than ever before; and more members of the public are calling our helpline for advice or to report a concern about a child.

But we're often fighting with our eyes blinkered because we don't know how many children have been abused, so it's impossible to know if we're doing enough. While this report sets out the best and latest of the evidence available, it cannot answer these crucial questions.

That is why we are calling on the UK Government to launch a new study to assess the extent of child abuse and neglect.

In the UK we understand more about abuse and we're taking more action to stop it

The data reported here demonstrates that police, social services and the public are all doing more to try to keep children safe.

Increased understanding of abuse

Awareness of the different types of abuse and how to spot abuse is the first step in ensuring that effective action can be taken to make children safe. We have identified some encouraging trends which indicate a greater understanding of abuse among both the public and people who work with children.

As a society we often talk about physical and sexual abuse, but evidence shows that the impact of emotional abuse or neglect can have at least as significant an impact on children.¹ And in recent years there has been an increase in emotional abuse as a reason for a child being on a child protection plan or register in England (up from 23 per cent of all plans in 2006 to 35 per cent in 2016) and Wales (up from 19 per cent of all children on a register in 2006 to 34 per cent in 2016).²

The increase in the number of children on child protection plans and registers for emotional abuse in England and Wales could reflect increased awareness of the importance of stepping in in these cases. And it's not just professionals who work with children who understand this. The number of times members of the public contacted the NSPCC helpline about emotional abuse increased from 5,878 contacts in 2011/12 to 10,009 in 2016/17. This is a 70 per cent increase

in the last five years, the largest increase of any abuse type.

There are indications that the public also has a better understanding of some of the ways we can *prevent* abuse. Our opinion survey has found an increase in the number of people who believe that doing more to improve health services (up from 24 per cent in 2013 to 27 per cent in 2016) and providing better support for parents in abusive relationships (up from 20 per cent in 2013 to 25 per cent in 2016) would help tackle abuse and neglect.

The survey also found that the public are more likely to believe that child abuse and neglect can be prevented (increased from 47 per cent in 2013 to 56 per cent in 2016). Belief that abuse can be prevented is a crucial first step to taking action.³ And this is borne out by an increase in contacts to the NSPCC helpline. This year we responded to our highest ever number of contacts – over 66,000. The public do seem to be more willing to report concerns about abuse. This is critical, as it lets professionals know where to find children who may need help.

1 Harvard University Center on the Developing Child (2012) *The science of neglect: the persistent absence of responsive care disrupts the developing brain*. Cambridge, Mass.: Center on the Developing Child. (Working paper, 12); Taillieu, T.L. et al. (2016) Childhood emotional maltreatment and mental disorders: results from a nationally representative adult sample from the United States. *Child abuse and neglect*, 59: 1-12.

2 See indicator 14.

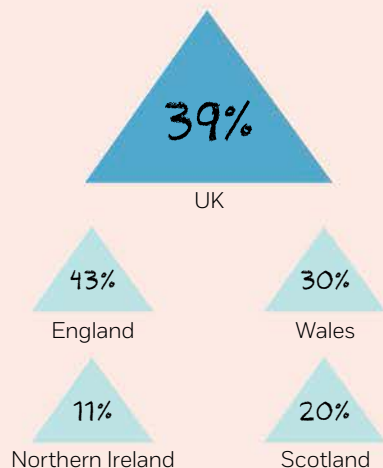
3 See indicator 20.

Uncovering and responding to abuse

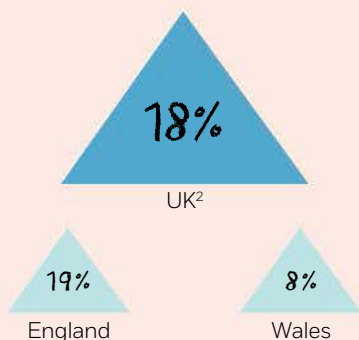
WHAT'S CHANGED SINCE THE LAST UK CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT PREVALENCE SURVEY IN 2009?¹

Child protection system

Number of children becoming subject to a child protection plan/being added to a child protection register (indicator 13)

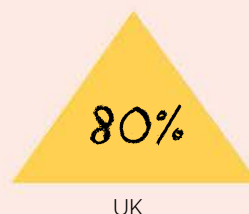


Number of children becoming looked after due to abuse or neglect (indicator 17)



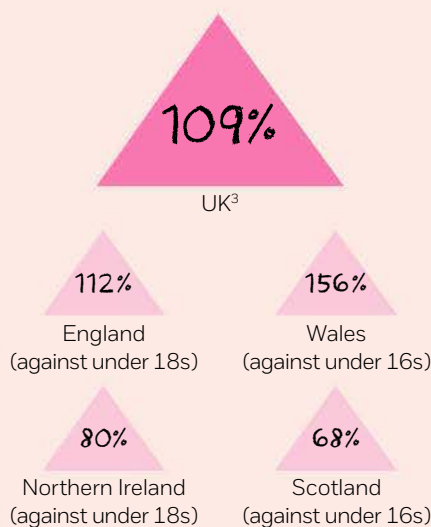
Helpline

Number of helpline contacts (indicator 8)

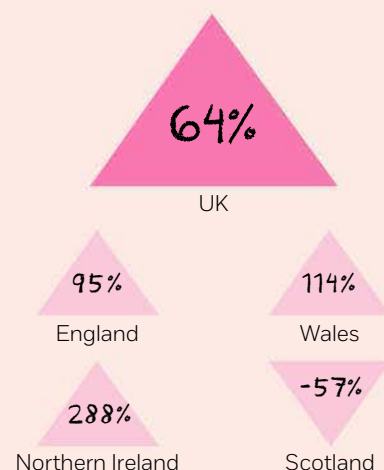


Police-recorded offences

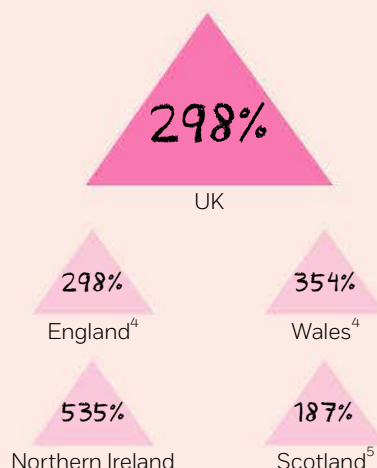
Police-recorded sexual offences (indicator 4)



Police-recorded cruelty and neglect offences (indicator 5)



Police-recorded indecent image offences (indicator 9)



¹ Comparing data from 2015/16 with data from 2009/10. The NSPCC's prevalence survey took place between March and September 2009, making data from 2009/10 the best source of comparison data.

² Data available for England and Wales only.

³ (Using U18 data for England and Northern Ireland and U16 data for Wales and Scotland)

⁴ Due to the way data is collected for England and Wales some of these offences may be against adults.

⁵ In 2010/11, incidents of taking, possessing and distributing indecent photos of children were transferred from Group 6 Miscellaneous offences to Group 2 Sexual crimes. This resulted in a small discontinuity with data from 2009/10. Because of this we have used data from 2010/11 as the baseline for Scotland.

Action by people working with children

The data in this report show an increase in professional activity to keep children safe. For example, increased reporting from the public is helping police take action to protect children. The number of recorded sexual offences has been increasing significantly in all four UK nations.⁴ In England offences against under-18s have increased by 115 per cent in the last five years. Recorded offences for child cruelty and neglect are also increasing everywhere except in Scotland.⁵ This is likely to be due to increased public reporting which allows the police to identify and deal with this type of crime, as well as improvements to how police record these crimes.

There has been an increase in the number of police recorded offences relating to indecent images. For the last five years (2010/11 – 2015/16) the offences in England increased by 284 per cent; in Wales by 326 per cent; in Northern Ireland they increased by 591 per cent and in Scotland by 187 per cent (due to the way the data is collected for England and Wales some of these offences may be against adults). It is likely that this is at least in part due to an increase in law enforcement activity in this area.

Social care has also been working harder. The last decade has seen increases in the number of children on child protection plans and registers and the number of children who are looked after across all the UK nations.⁶ While we cannot say anything about the quality of the service children receive from this data, or anything about the long term outcomes that are achieved for children, there are some promising trends. For example, the proportion of children in care who have three or more placements has stayed broadly the same or decreased across all four nations, and we know achieving stable placements is often beneficial for children's wellbeing.⁷

People working in key roles with children increasingly report trafficking cases to the National Referral Mechanism, a framework for identifying victims of human trafficking and ensuring they receive appropriate care. Reports have more than trebled since 2012 to 1,278 cases in 2016.⁸ Rather than an increase in the crime itself, this is likely to be due to increased awareness of this type of crime since the debates around the Modern Slavery Act and similar legislation in other parts of the UK, and changes to the scope of what the National Referral Mechanism records as a result of the new legislation.

We're all working harder, but how much harder still do we need to work?

There's no official UK-wide survey of the current extent of child abuse and neglect in the UK.

The NSPCC estimated that in 2011 for every child on a child protection plan or register, another eight were experiencing maltreatment but not getting the support they need.⁹ But the lack of recent data means that the true extent of child abuse and neglect today is unknown. We do not know if levels are increasing or decreasing. This seems extraordinary given the fundamental importance of the welfare of our children and widespread public concern. To prevent child abuse we need robust knowledge of what is happening in children's lives.

The last survey of the prevalence of child abuse and neglect was conducted in 2009¹⁰ by the NSPCC. Since then we've seen significant changes for children's lives, not least the increase in reporting of abuse that happens online,¹¹ and big increases in reporting of child sexual abuse.¹² These changes are placing increasing strain on families and professionals.

4 See indicator 4.

5 Increases as follows for the last decade (2005/6 – 2015/16): England: Up 154%; Wales: Up 148%; NI: Up 933%; Scotland: Down 45%. See indicator 5.

6 See indicators 13 and 17.

7 Sebba, J. et al. (2015) *The educational progress of looked after children in England: linking care and educational data*. Oxford: Rees Centre/University of Bristol.

8 See indicator 19.

9 Harker et al (2013) *How safe are our children?* London: NSPCC.

10 Radford et al (2011) *Child abuse and neglect in the UK today*. London: NSPCC.

11 See Indicator 9 for detail.

12 See Indicator 4 for detail.

In England we've also seen significant cuts to the funds available to provide early help to children. For example, the value of the early intervention allocation to English local authorities fell by 55 per cent in five years, from around £3.2 billion per year in 2010-11, down to just £1.4 billion per year by 2015-16 – a cut of £1.8 billion.¹³

But we know that this funding is crucial. By intervening as early as possible to stop abuse and ensuring children receive the right support at the right time we can help get children back on track. And of course, putting in support and safeguards which prevent abuse from happening in the first place ensures the best outcomes for children and society.

Fighting for every childhood

The evidence in this report indicates that – together – we are doing even more as members of the public, and as people working with children, to fight for every childhood. And it is making a difference.

While Childline and research give us important insights into what's happening in children's lives, we need the big picture too. Without it, it's difficult to demonstrate the scale of the task and the resources needed to support the child protection system. And it makes it hard to target the scarce resources that we do have where they are needed most. The potential impact of abuse on a child's life – and on the health of wider society – is too significant to leave to guesswork based on old data.

That's why there's an urgent need for the UK Government to commission a new UK-wide study that looks at the prevalence of all forms of abuse and neglect. We need a clear picture to inform how we all can do our part to keep children safe.

The Office for National Statistics is well placed as the independent expert to produce this data of national significance and importance for the UK.

We are calling on the UK Government to now step up and make that happen.

We need to count every child who has been abused – they are all counting on us.

13 National Children's Bureau and The Children's Society (2015) *Cuts that cost: trends in funding for early intervention services*. [London]: National Children's Bureau (NCB).

Some key moments in child protection

2011

- * **The Safeguarding Board Act (Northern Ireland) 2011** sets out the law for the creation of a new regional Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland and the establishment of five Safeguarding Panels.
- * **Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011** makes fundamental structural changes to the previous hearings system.
- * **Professor Eileen Munro's review of child protection in England** calls for 'a child-centred system'.

2013

- * **In Wales, child practice reviews replace serious case reviews** with the aim to improve the culture of learning from child protection cases.
- * **Independent review into child sexual exploitation in Rochdale** examines the council's response to issues around child sexual exploitation.
- * **Serious case review** into death of Hamzah Kahn published.
- * **Serious case review** into the death of Daniel Pelka published.

2009

* **NSPCC carries out a UK-wide survey into child abuse and neglect**

- * **Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009** provides definitions of sexual offences and consent. Creates a new offence for adults knowingly sending a sexual communication to a child.
- * **The protection of children in England: a progress report**, ordered following the Peter Connelly (Baby P) case, makes 58 recommendations for child protection reforms.

2010

- * Tim Loughton MP announces that **Local Safeguarding Boards in England should publish the overview report and executive summary of all case reviews** initiated on or after 10 June 2010.
- * **Two overview reports of serious case reviews** are published concerning the death of Peter Connelly (Baby P).
- * **Serious case review** into death of Kyra Ishaq published.

2012

- * **Operation Yewtree** set up to investigate sexual abuse allegations against Jimmy Savile and others.
- * **Operation Pallial** launches to investigate allegations of past abuse in the care system in North Wales.
- * Phase one of the **Troubled families programme** launches to 'turn around the lives of 120,000 troubled families' following riots in some parts of England.

2014

- * **The Children and Families Act 2014** gives greater protection to vulnerable children and makes changes to the adoption system in England and Wales.
- * **Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014** provides Wales with its own framework for social services.
- * **Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014** aims to make children's rights central to planning and services.
- * **Operation Hydrant** coordinates national response to non-recent child abuse investigations concerning persons of public prominence or in relation to offences which took place historically within institutional settings.
- * **Independent inquiry into child sexual exploitation in Rotherham** identifies that at least 1,400 children were sexually exploited in Rotherham between 1997 and 2013.

2016

- * **Football Association (FA) internal review into child abuse** launches following allegations of child abuse. The Scottish FA announces an independent inquiry.
- * **Alan Wood's review of Local Safeguarding Children Boards** makes recommendations for improving their effectiveness.
- * **Child practice review** into the death of Dylan Seabridge published.
- * **National Independent Safeguarding Board for adults and children** established to strengthen and improve the work of safeguarding boards across Wales.
- * **Independent Review of the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI)** calls for a refocus of the board's work to improve the protection of children in Northern Ireland.

2015

- * **Serious Crime Act 2015** extends the definition of child cruelty and introduces the legal duty for regulated health and social care professionals and teachers to report FGM in England and Wales.
- * **Modern Slavery Act 2015** brings together legislation on the prevention and prosecution of modern slavery and the protection of victims for the first time.
- * **Children's Services Co-operation Act (Northern Ireland) 2015** requires co-operation among public authorities to contribute to the well-being of children and young people.
- * **The independent inquiry into child sexual abuse in England and Wales** officially launches to consider the growing evidence of institutional failures to protect children from child sexual abuse, and aims to make recommendations to ensure the best possible protection for children in the future.

2017

- * **Child protection improvement programme** report published with recommendations to strengthen the child protection system in Scotland.
- * **Section 67 of the Serious Crime Act 2015** commences, making sexual communications from an adult to a child an offence in England and Wales.
- * **Children and Social Work Act 2017** aims to improve mental health provision for looked after children and introduces compulsory relationships and sex education for all secondary schools in England.
- * **Digital Economy Act 2017** extends protection from online pornography by allowing sites which display pornography to children to be blocked in the UK.
- * **Historical institutional abuse inquiry in Northern Ireland** publishes findings on child abuse in residential homes and institutions from 1922 to 1995.

2

Measuring the extent of abuse and neglect in the UK

We have defined abuse and neglect according to definitions set out in the table. Definitions are from English statutory guidance for professionals,¹ with the exception of online abuse for which an NSPCC definition has been provided in the absence of an official equivalent. Child protection is a devolved matter and each of the four nations of the UK has its own guidance and definitions. However, definitions for England are not substantially different from those used in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.²

The indicators we have used

We have compiled 20 different indicators in an effort to understand the extent of abuse and neglect in the UK today. The indicators relate both to deaths due to child maltreatment and the incidence of abuse and neglect. In each case there are multiple ways to measure the extent of child maltreatment.

Many of the indicators are based on agencies' responses to child abuse and neglect. For example, we use data from the police on recorded offences against children and from children's services on the children whom they work with. Other indicators use "self-report" data, from surveys with children and adults about their personal experiences of, and attitudes towards, abuse and neglect.

Since there is a wide range of relevant information, we have had to be selective in the measures presented. Our aim has been to provide the most robust and comprehensive picture possible, so we have chosen indicators that:

- provide different insights on the extent of child abuse and neglect;
- use robust data, where possible based on a large sample and on standardised measures – where there are weaknesses in the data we state these; and
- wherever possible, use data that can be tracked over time and broken down by each of the four nations.

Data sources

For each indicator we have provided references for the most recent data releases. Historical data is available from the data provider either in published reports or on request.

Population data used in this report

In this report we draw on mid-year UK population estimates published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). The most recent population data draws on the 2015 mid-year population estimates.

¹ HM Government (2015) *Working together to safeguard children: a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children*. [London]: Department for Education (DfE).

² Key guidance for each nation is as follows: **Wales:** Welsh Government (2007) *Safeguarding Children: Working together under the Children Act 2004*. Cardiff: Welsh Government and Social Services Improvement Agency (2008) *All Wales child protection procedures*. [Cardiff]: All Wales Unit. **Scotland:** Scottish Government and Campbell, A. (2014) *National guidance for child protection in Scotland 2014*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government. **Northern Ireland:** Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety. Northern Ireland (2016) *Co-operating to safeguard children and young people in Northern Ireland*. Belfast: Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety. Northern Ireland.

ABUSE

A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (eg via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity, (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants; and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

NEGLECT

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

ONLINE ABUSE

Online abuse is abuse that is facilitated using technology. It may take place through social media, online games, or other channels of digital communication. Children can also be re-victimised if evidence of their abuse is recorded or uploaded online. Technology can facilitate a number of illegal abusive behaviours including, but not limited to: harassment; stalking; threatening behaviour; sharing indecent images of children under 18; inciting a child to sexual activity; sexual exploitation; grooming; sexual communication with a child; and, causing a child to view images or watch videos of a sexual act. Using technology to facilitate any of the above activities is online abuse. Alongside those illegal activities that are perpetrated online, children may also be exposed to inappropriate behaviours or content online. For instance, children may be bullied online by their peers or they might, either accidentally or intentionally, view content which is intended for adults, such as pornography. Both online abuse and exposure to unsuitable content or behaviour can have a long-lasting impact on the wellbeing of children and young people.

What we have not been able to include

We have not been able to include data on all forms of child abuse in this report, largely due to a lack of data. Sometimes the data that is available is not detailed enough to allow data relating specifically to children to be extracted.

We have not been able to provide a complete picture for all forms of child abuse in this report. This is largely due to data not being recorded or made available in a way that can be used in this report.

Examples of gaps in the data include the following.

- A lack of published time series data for Accident and Emergency (A&E) attendances for assault and self-harm broken down by age.
- Data on assaults recorded by the police is published across the UK nations, but only in Northern Ireland is this data broken down by the age of the victims. The police do record this information but it is not currently collected and/or published centrally.
- Insufficient data on children's own views about how safe they feel from abuse and neglect.
- The only large-scale data set that looks at the UK prevalence of abuse and neglect is the NSPCC study conducted in 2009. There is a need for a new prevalence study that looks at all forms of child abuse and neglect.

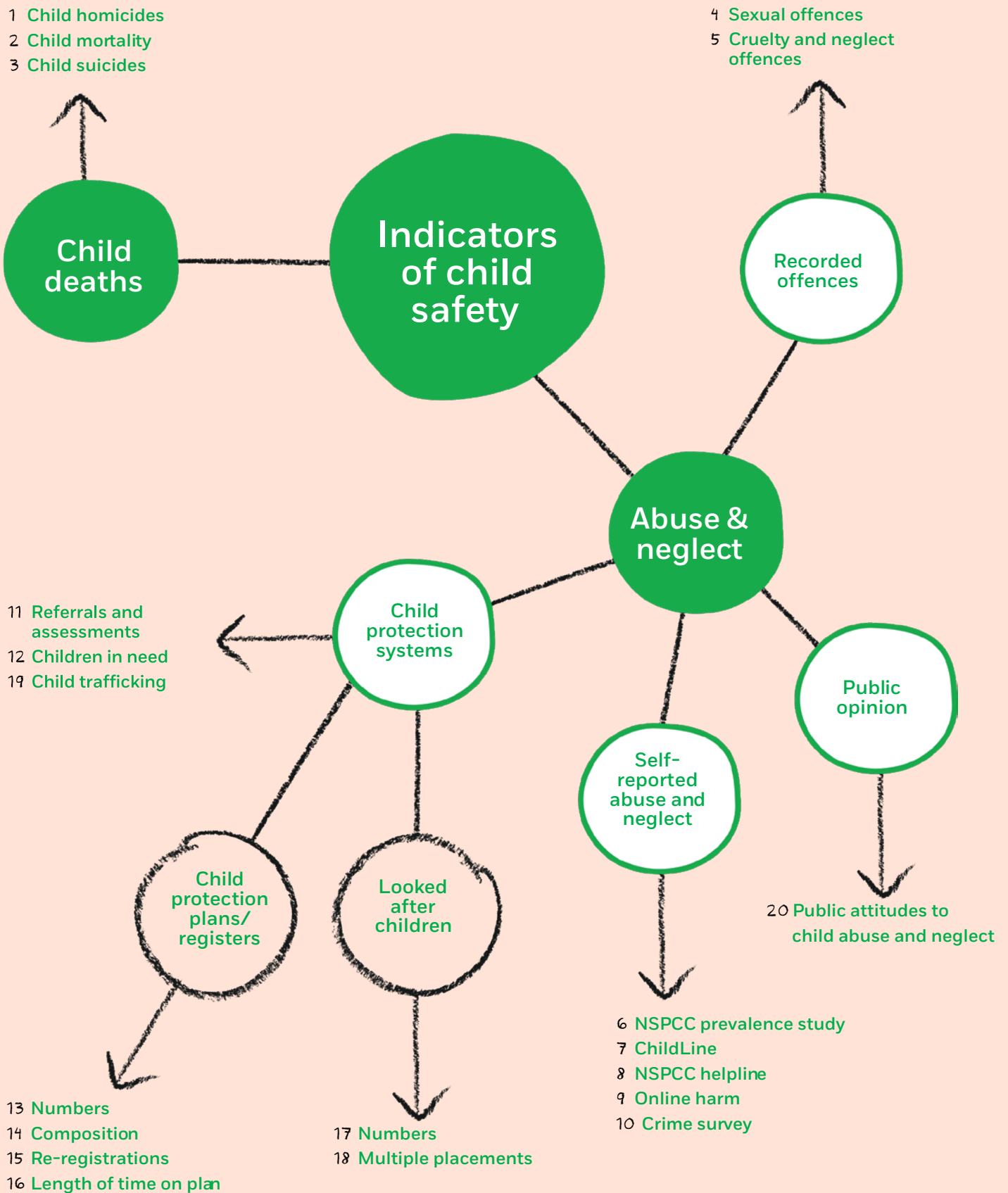
Comparability of data between nations

Services to safeguard and protect children in the UK are underpinned by legislation, guidance and policies. As power is devolved within the UK, differences between the four nations' child protection systems have become increasingly pronounced.

When considering information about child abuse for each of the four nations, it is important to understand the different contexts in which the statistics have been compiled. Different nations have different approaches to measuring child abuse and neglect. Throughout the report we have noted where data is not comparable between nations. By including trends for each of the UK nations separately, we hope to provide a clearer picture of each distinct child protection landscape. A brief summary of the child protection systems in each of the four nations is included in the glossary of this report.





More detailed information on the limitations and comparability of the data used in *How safe are our children?* is included with each individual indicator.

Child protection is a devolved matter and each of the four nations of the UK has its own guidance.



The diagram above summarises the different indicators and how they can be grouped. The table on the next page lists the 20 indicators, and sets out a brief description and the data availability.

Key

-  Data is available in all four nations. Trend data may be for different time periods and there may be some differences in classifications, for example in offence categories.
-  Data is available, but it was not possible to drill down to the same level of detail in all countries. For example, for children in need data or looked after children data we are interested in those children who are in need or looked after due to abuse or neglect as opposed to other reasons. Also used where data is only available for the latest year.
-  No published data available.
-  Survey data or UK-wide data.

Indicator

1	Child homicides recorded by the police
2	Child mortality
3	Child suicides
4	Number of recorded sexual offences against children
5	Number of recorded cruelty and neglect offences against children
6	Self reported prevalence of abuse and neglect
7	Contacts with Childline
8	Contacts with the NSPCC helpline
9	Survey data on online harm
10	Violent incidents experienced by 10 to 15 year olds (crime survey)
11	Referrals to social services
12	Children in need due to abuse or neglect
13	Children subject to protection plans or on the child protection register
14	Composition of child protection plans/child protection register
15	Re-registration onto the child protection register (returning to a child protection plan)
16	How long children are on child protection plans or the child protection register
17	Children looked after due to abuse or neglect
18	Proportion of looked after children who have three or more placements during the year
19	Child trafficking
20	Public opinion

Description	England	Wales	Scotland	N. Ireland
Murder, manslaughter and infanticide offences recorded by police.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Deaths by assault and undetermined intent based on death certificates provided by local registrars and information from coroners and procurators fiscal.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Deaths of 15 to 19 year olds recorded as intentional self-harm or event of undetermined intent, and deaths of 10 to 14 year olds recorded as intentional self-harm.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sexual offences recorded by the police including rape, sexual assault, child grooming and offences related to indecent images of children.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Offences recorded by police where a parent or carer wilfully assaults, ill-treats, neglects, abandons or exposes a child under 16 in a manner likely to cause them unnecessary suffering or injury to health.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Abuse or neglect reported by children when asked in a UK-wide survey.	Survey data – not collected statistics.			
Counselling sessions held by Childline with children and young people via phone call, email and online chat.	Data covers the whole of the UK and is not broken down by country.			
Calls, emails, texts and online reporting to NSPCC's UK 24/7 helpline for those concerned about a child.	Data covers the whole of the UK and is not broken down by country.			
Information about children's experience of the internet via surveys.	Survey data – not collected statistics.			
Violent offences against children reported in an annual crime survey for England and Wales.	✓	✓	✗	✗
Number of referrals made to social services due to concerns about the safety or welfare of a child.	✓	✓	✗	▲
Number of children deemed to be "in need" because they are unlikely to have a reasonable standard of health and development without support provided by a public authority, due to abuse or neglect.	✓	✓	✗	▲
Children subject to a child protection plan or on a register because they are deemed to be at risk of ongoing harm.	✓	✓	✓	✓
The reason why children are on a child protection plan or on the child protection register.	✓	✓	✓	✓
The number of children who come back onto child protection plans or registers.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Percentage of children who are on a child protection plan or the register for more than two years.	✓	✗	✓	✓
Number of children where the state is acting as a corporate parent.	✓	✓	▲	▲
Proportion of looked after children who have had three or more placements during one year.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Number of children being recruited and moved for the purpose of exploitation.	Available data covers the whole of the UK and is not broken down by country.			
Survey data on public attitudes to child abuse and neglect.	Survey data – not collected statistics.			

INDICATOR 1

Child homicides recorded by police includes the offences of murder, manslaughter and infanticide

KEY MESSAGES

- There were **61 child homicides across the UK in 2015/16** – of which **56 were in England and five were in Scotland.**
- **The five-year average rate of homicides has declined in the UK over the past decade.**
- **There were no homicides in Wales and Northern Ireland in 2015/16.**

Why is this measure important?

The child homicide rate is an important measure of child safety. It shows the number of children killed by another person. The statistics give an indication of how many children are dying directly as a result of violence or abuse. Historical data is available and consistent recording methods allow robust comparison over time.

What are the limitations of the data?

Police-recorded homicide statistics should accurately reflect the number of child homicides reported each year. However, they will only record cases where there is sufficient evidence to suspect that a homicide has taken place. Studies have indicated that the number of child deaths where abuse or neglect is suspected as a factor is higher than shown in the

police-recorded homicide figures.* Homicide data can give an indication of the scale of the problem, but cannot help us understand the preventable factors behind child deaths.

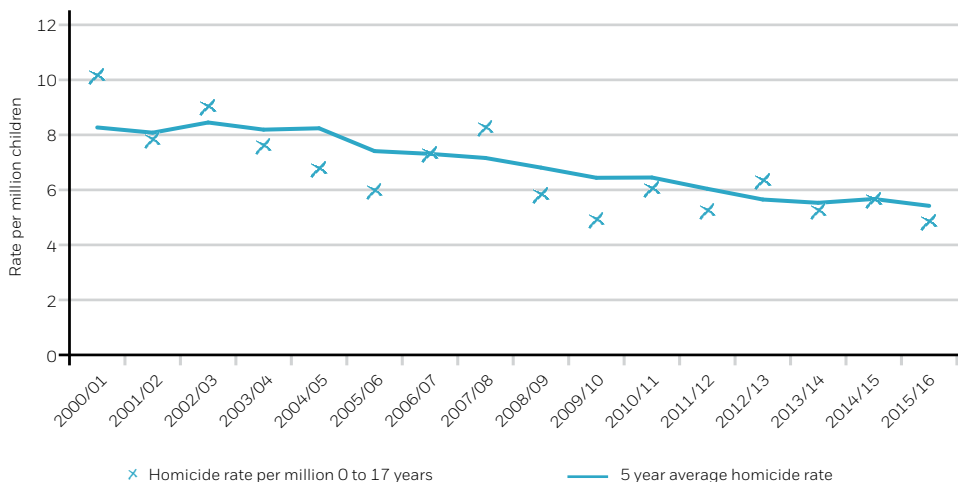
The number of child homicides recorded each year is small. This means a slight change in the number of deaths has a significant impact on homicide rates. We have tried to compensate for this by looking at five-year averages.

Data availability and comparability

Recorded homicide offence data is available for all four nations: from 1996/97 for England and Wales, from 1998/99 for Northern Ireland and from 1981/82 for Scotland. Data is shown here for all nations from 2000/01.

England

Homicide rate per million children aged 0 to 17 years



Latest figure: 56 homicides of under 18 year olds were recorded in England in 2015/16, a rate of 4.8 homicides per million children aged under 18.

Trend: The five-year average rate of child homicides is 5.4 per million. This has decreased by 27 per cent in England over the last decade. It decreased from a five-year average of 7.4 per million children in 2005/06 to 5.4 per million in 2015/16.

Wales

Homicide rate per million children aged 0 to 17 years

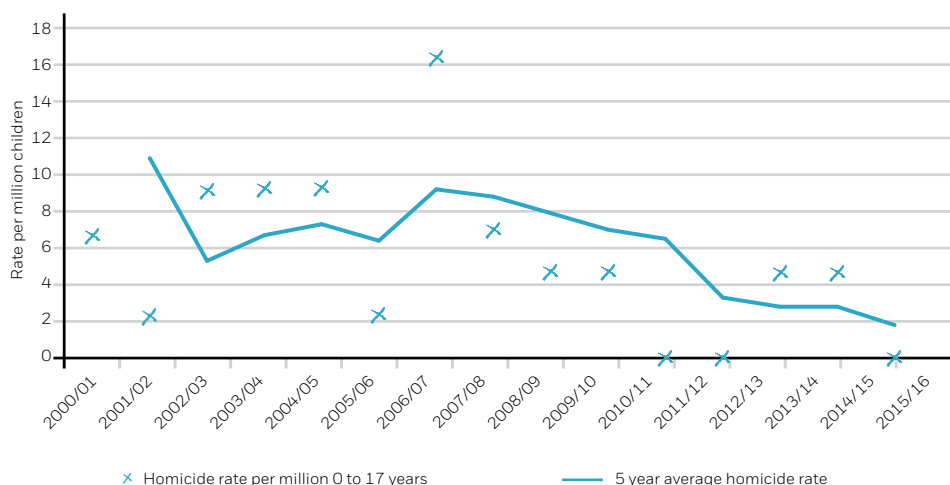


Latest figure: There were no homicides of children under 18 years recorded in Wales in 2015/16.

Trend: The five-year average rate of child homicides is 4.4 per million. This has decreased by 38 per cent over the last five years. It decreased from a five-year average rate of 7.2 per million children in 2010/11 to 4.4 per million children in 2015/16.

Northern Ireland

Homicide rate per million children aged 0 to 17 years

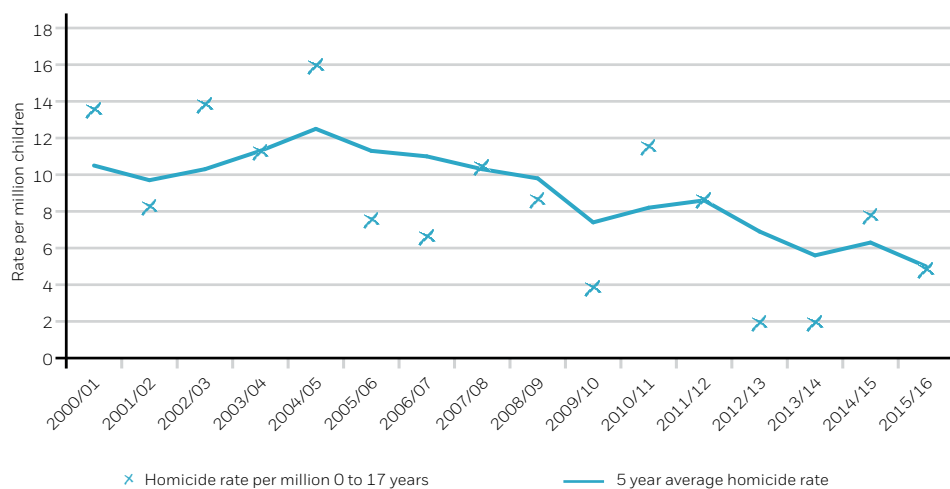


Latest figure: There were no homicides of children under 18 years recorded in Northern Ireland in 2015/16.

Trend: The five-year average rate of child homicides has decreased by 75 per cent in Northern Ireland over the last decade. It decreased from a five-year average rate of 7.3 per million children in 2005/06 to 1.8 per million in 2015/16.

Scotland

Homicide rate per million children aged 0 to 17 years



Latest figure: There were five homicides of children under 18 recorded in Scotland in 2015/16, a rate of 4.8 homicides per million children aged under 18.

Trend: The five-year average rate of child homicides has decreased by 56 per cent in Scotland over the past decade. It decreased from a five-year average rate of 11.3 per million children under 18 years in 2005/06 to 5.0 per million in 2015/16.

UK comparison

The five-year average child homicide rate in 2015/16 was 5.4 per million under 18s in England, 4.4 per million in Wales, 1.8 per million in Northern Ireland and 5.0 per million in Scotland.

Data sources

England and Wales: Home Office recorded crimes statistics (Data provided to NSPCC). **Scotland:** Scottish Government recorded crime statistics (Data provided to NSPCC). **Northern Ireland:** Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) (2016) *Trends in Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland: 1998/99 to 2015/16*. Belfast: Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI).

INDICATOR 2

Child mortality deaths by assault, neglect and undetermined intent

KEY MESSAGES

- There has been a downward trend in five-year average death rates for assault, neglect and undetermined intent in England, Northern Ireland and Scotland since 1981.
- Five-year average death rates for assault, neglect and undetermined intent in Wales have remained at a similar level to that of 1985. The five-year average death rate in 2015 was 8.5 per million.

Why is this measure important?

Mortality statistics report the number of children who have died in any given year based on death certificates provided by local registrars and information from coroners and procurators fiscal. Data shown here is specifically from the deaths recorded under the codes of “assault and neglect” and “undetermined intent” and therefore show a subset of the preventable deaths of children. Deaths recorded as “undetermined intent” are generally seen as probable suicides for adolescents and adults, whereas for children it is more likely that a question remains over whether someone else was responsible, though this cannot be proven. While the statistics may not fully reflect the number of child deaths where abuse or neglect may have been a factor, they do give an understanding of how many children are dying directly as a result of violence, abuse or in suspicious circumstances. This data may overlap with the homicides data in Indicator 1, but is a fundamentally different way of recording deaths since it is based on the cause of death rather than on whether a homicide was committed.

What are the limitations of the data?

Mortality statistics reflect the number of child deaths where another person was responsible or where responsibility is not determined. Their accuracy depends on consistent recording practices. Studies have indicated that the number of child deaths where abuse or neglect is suspected is higher than shown in the mortality figures.** Data is normally only published for children in “five year” age groups (e.g. 10 to 14 years), so the figures that are readily available only cover children up to the age of 14. The numbers of child deaths by assault, neglect and undetermined intent are also relatively small; meaning that a small change in the number of deaths has a significant impact on rates. We have tried to compensate for this by looking at five-year averages.

Data availability and comparability

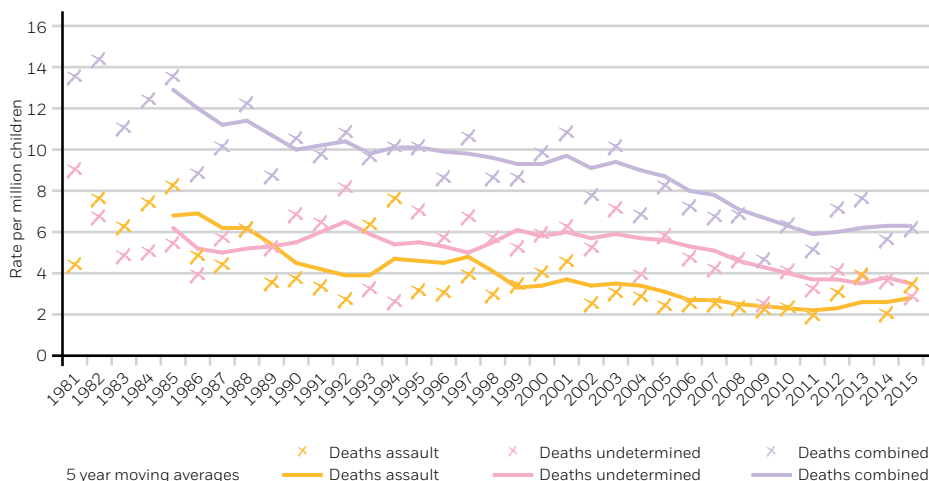
Mortality data coded under the International Classification of Diseases (ICD) is available for all UK nations. Differences in the death registration systems used in each nation may have an impact on the comparability of the data. In previous years we have used the same set of ICD codes to measure deaths by assault, neglect and undetermined intent in all four nations. To better reflect variations in coding practice this year we have changed the codes we use to measure deaths in England and Wales.* Data has been split out for England and Wales based on postcodes. Because of this, data does not include deaths of non-resident children. This means that totals may be slightly smaller when data for England and Wales is separated than when combined.

*Data for England and Wales drawn from deaths recorded from 2001–06 using ICD-10 under the codes of assault and neglect (X85–Y09) and undetermined intent (Y10–Y34); from 2007 onwards the count also includes deaths under the undetermined intent code of U50.9. Pre-2001 data for England and Wales is drawn from deaths recorded using ICD-9 under the codes E904, E960–E969 and E980–E989. Data for Scotland and Northern Ireland drawn from the deaths recorded from 2001 using ICD-10 under the codes of assault and neglect (X85–Y09, Y87.1) and undetermined intent (Y10–Y34, Y87.2); and pre-2001 using ICD-9 under the codes E904, E960–E969 and E980–E989.

**Brandon, M. et al. (2012) *New learning from serious case reviews: a two year report for 2009-11*. London: Department for Education (DfE); Ofsted (2008) *The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education*. London: The Stationery Office (TSO).

England

Mortality rates among children aged 1 month to 14 years by assault, neglect and undetermined intent

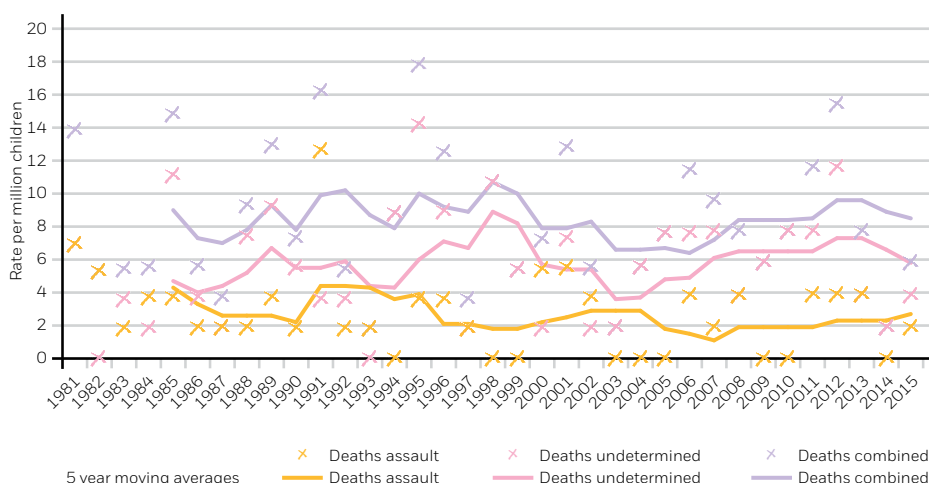


Latest figure: There were 60 deaths by assault, neglect or undetermined intent of children aged 28 days to 14 years in 2015, a five-year average rate of 6.3 per million.

Trend: There has been a downward trend in deaths by assault, neglect or undetermined intent. Overall there has been a 51 per cent decrease in the five-year average rate of child deaths due to assault, neglect and undetermined intent, from 12.9 per million in 1985 to 6.3 per million in 2015.

Wales

Mortality rates among children aged 0 to 14 years by assault, neglect and undetermined intent

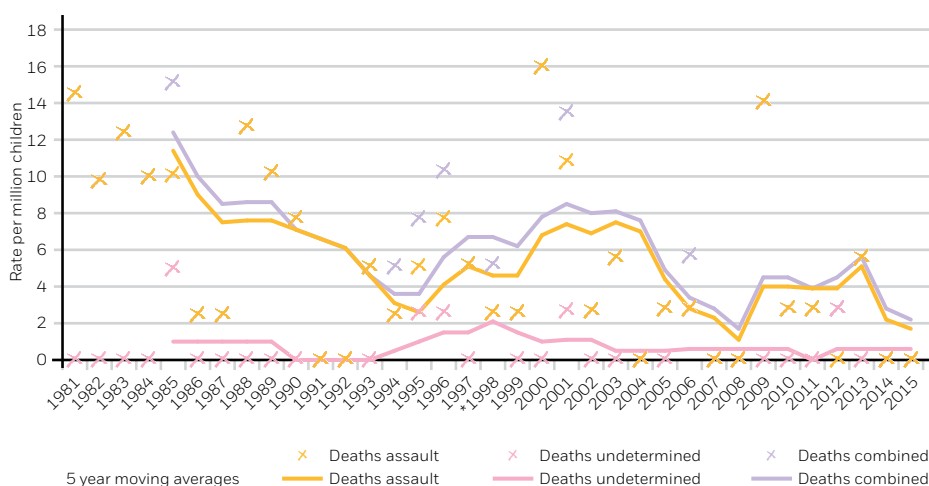


Latest figure: There were three deaths by assault, neglect or undetermined intent of children aged 28 days to 14 years recorded in 2015. The five-year average rate was 8.5 per million.

Trend: Deaths due to assault, neglect or undetermined intent have remained fairly constant in Wales, between a low of 6.4 per million in 2006 and a high of 10.7 per million in 1998.

Northern Ireland

Mortality rates among children aged 0 to 14 years by assault, neglect and undetermined intent



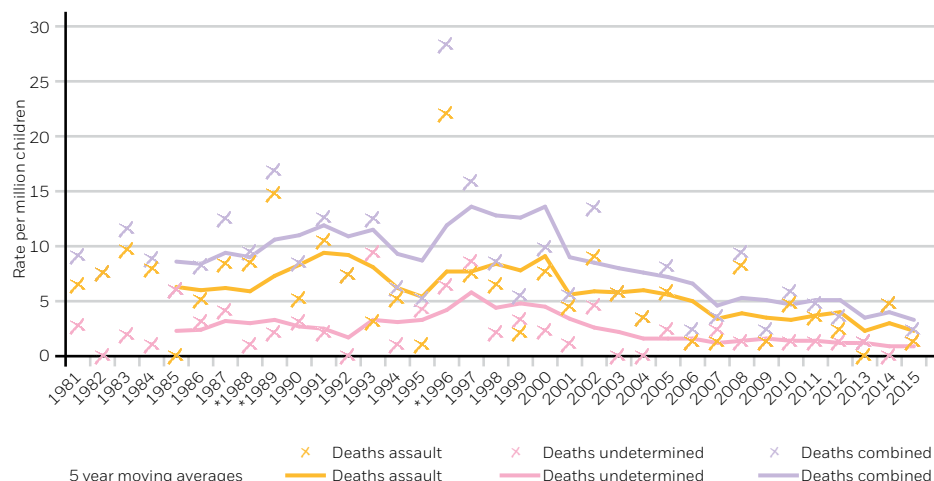
Latest figure: There were no deaths by assault or undetermined intent of children under 14 years recorded in 2015. There was a five-year combined average of 2.2 per million.

Trend: The five-year average rate of child deaths due to assault and undetermined intent has decreased by 82 per cent since 1985, from 12.4 per million to 2.2 per million. The average rate increased in the years following the Omagh bombing in 1998.

* The Omagh bombing occurred on 15 August 1998.

Scotland

Mortality rates among children aged 0 to 14 years by assault, neglect and undetermined intent

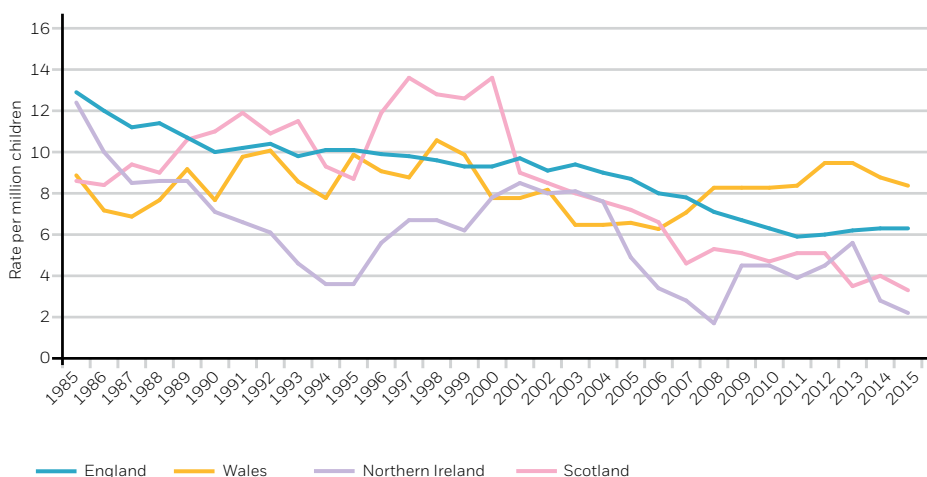


Latest figure: Two deaths by assault or undetermined intent were recorded in 2015, a five-year average of 3.3 per million.

Trend: The five-year average rate of deaths due to assault and undetermined intent has decreased by 62 per cent since 1985, from 8.6 per million to 3.3 per million in 2015. The rate peaked in the late 1990s after the Dunblane massacre in 1996.

UK comparison

Five year mortality rates due to assault, neglect and undetermined intent among children aged 0 to 14 years



In 2015, the five-year average rate of deaths due to assault, neglect and undetermined intent was highest in Wales at 8.5 per million, followed by England at 6.3 per million. Scotland had a five-year average rate of 3.3 per million. Northern Ireland had a rate of 2.2 per million. There has been a downward trend in death rates due to assault, neglect or undetermined intent in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland, while rates in Wales have remained fairly constant. A change in the mortality coding system from 2001 may exaggerate the later declines in some nations.

The numbers of child deaths by assault, neglect and undetermined intent are relatively small; this means that a small change in the number of deaths has a significant impact on rates.

* 1988/89 and 1996 include deaths resulting from the Lockerbie bombing and the Dunblane massacre respectively.

Data sources England and Wales: Office for National Statistics (ONS) (2016) *Mortality statistics: underlying cause, sex and age*. Newport: Office for National Statistics (ONS).

Scotland: National Records of Scotland (2015) *Vital events reference tables 2015*. Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland.

Northern Ireland: Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (2016) *Registrar General Northern Ireland: annual report 2015*. Belfast: Department of Finance, Central Print Unit.

**Child homicide is in
long-term decline.**

INDICATOR 3

Child suicides

KEY MESSAGES

- **The five-year average suicide rates among 15 to 19 year olds in England and Wales were in decline, but have started to rise in recent years.**
- **There has been an upward trend in the five-year average suicide rate among 15 to 19 year olds in Northern Ireland, although rates have gone down since a peak in 2012.**
- **In Scotland, there has been a downward trend in the five-year average suicide rate among 15 to 19 year olds since 2002.**
- **There were ten suicides of 10 to 14 year olds in the UK in 2015.**

Why is this measure important?

Information on the number of suicides is an important measure of the safety of children and young people. Suicide may often be the result of a combination of other factors, such as abuse, neglect, family problems or mental health issues.

Tracking the numbers of children and young people who take their own lives shows the number of children who feel that there is no way out of their problems and for whom the right help is not there. It therefore shows a subset of the preventable deaths of children. The definition of suicide includes deaths given an underlying cause of intentional self-harm (labelled on the graphs below as suicides) or an injury or poisoning of undetermined intent. For young people aged 15 and over, deaths of undetermined intent are seen as cases where the harm was self-inflicted, but there was insufficient evidence to prove that the deceased deliberately intended to kill themselves. However, this cannot be applied to younger children due to the possibility that these deaths were caused by unverifiable accidents, neglect or abuse. Therefore the suicide data for 10 to 14 year olds only uses deaths coded under intentional self-harm.

What are the limitations of the data?

Data on suicides from mortality statistics is affected by difficulties in recording the cause of death where intent is unclear. There may be difficulties in recording a death either as a suicide or as an accident. Data on attempted suicides is not reflected in these statistics. The number of child suicides each year is relatively small. This means a small change in the number of deaths has a significant impact on rates. We have tried to compensate for this by looking at five-year averages. Data is published in age bands, so data for all under 18s is not readily available.

Data availability and comparability

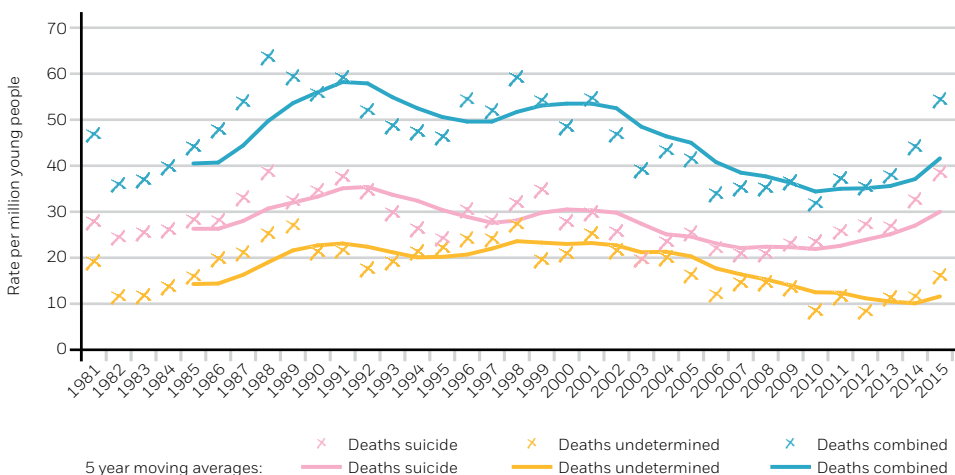
Statistics on child suicides come from mortality data. Mortality data coded under the International Classification of Diseases (ICD) is available for all UK nations. However, differences in the death registration systems used in each nation may have an impact on the comparability of the data between nations. The Office for National Statistics uses a smaller set of codes to measure suicide in England and Wales than for the rest of the UK.* This year, we have made the decision to adopt this narrower definition for England and Wales to align our data more closely to that included in official publications.** We have separated out figures for England and Wales. Because this split is based on postcodes, this data does not include suicides of non-resident young people. This means that totals are slightly smaller when separated than for England and Wales combined.

* Office for National Statistics (ONS) (2014) *Suicides in the United Kingdom: 2012 registrations*. Newport: Office for National Statistics (ONS), p.32

** For 15 to 19 year olds, data drawn from deaths are recorded under the codes of "intentional self-harm" (from 2001: X60-X84 and Y87.0. Pre-2001: E950-E959) and "event of undetermined intent" (from 2001: Y10-Y34 and Y87.2. Pre-2001: E980-E989). For 10 to 14 year olds, data drawn from deaths are recorded under the codes of "intentional self-harm" only. For England and Wales the code Y33.9 is excluded 2001-06, the codes Y87.0 and Y87.2 are excluded for 2001 onwards and the code E988.8 is excluded pre-2001.

England

Suicide rates per million 15 to 19 year olds

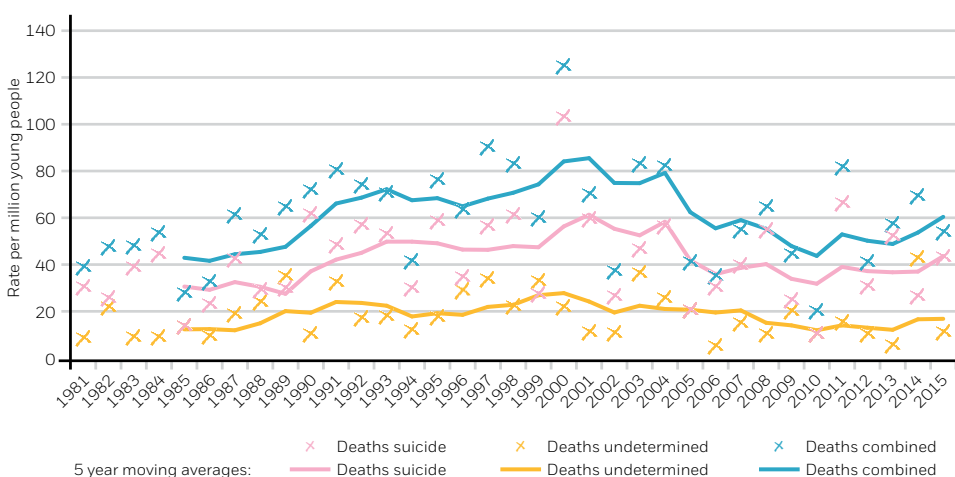


Latest figure: There were 123 suicides where death was recorded as by intentional self-harm, and a further 51 deaths by undetermined intent of 15 to 19 year olds in 2015, a five-year average combined rate of 41.6 per million 15 to 19 year olds.

Trend: The five-year combined average rate among 15 to 19 year olds had been steadily declining for more than a decade, and has decreased by 15 per cent since the early 1990s (from a high of 58.2 in 1991 to 41.6 in 2015). However, the five-year average suicide rates have begun to rise in recent years, up 21 per cent since 2010.

Wales

Suicide rate per million 15 to 19 year olds



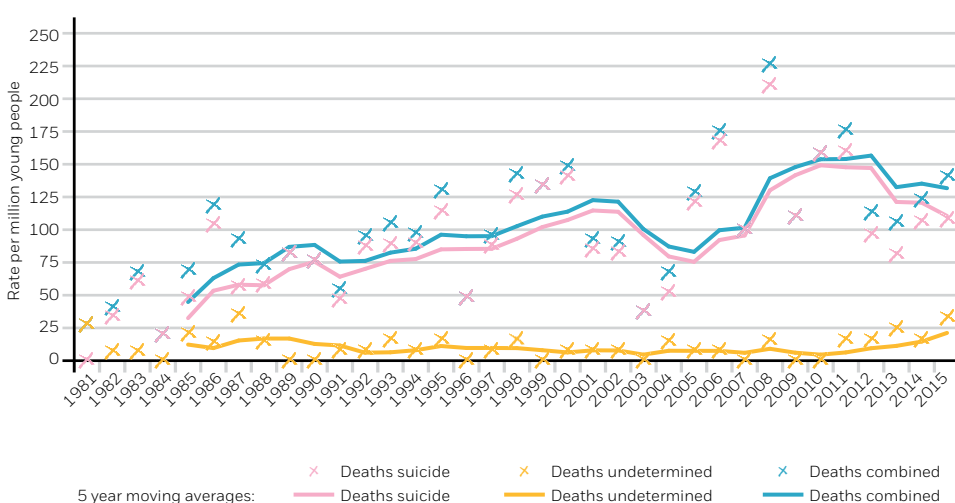
Latest figure: There were eight suicides where death was recorded as by intentional self-harm, and a further two deaths by undetermined intent of 15 to 19 year olds in 2015, a five-year average combined rate of 60.4 per million 15 to 19 year olds.

Trend: The five-year combined average rate among 15 to 19 year olds peaked in 2001 at 85.5 per million, and since then has been on a downward trend, reaching a low of 43.7 suicides per million in 2010. However since then there has been an increase, up 38 per cent to 60.4 per million 15 to 19 year olds.

It should be noted that the numbers involved for Wales are small, meaning that a small change in the number of deaths has a significant impact.

Northern Ireland

Suicide rate per million 15 to 19 year olds



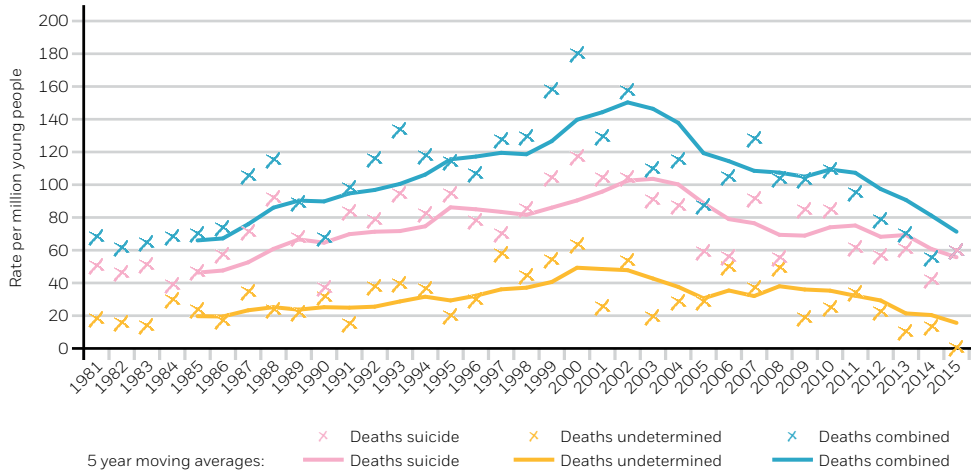
Latest figure: There were 13 suicides where death was recorded as by intentional self-harm and a further four by undetermined intent of 15 to 19 year olds in 2015, a five-year average combined rate of 131.7 per million 15 to 19 year olds.

Trend: The five-year combined average rate among 15 to 19 year olds has increased by 194 per cent since 1985 (from 44.8 per million to 131.7). Northern Ireland saw a sharp increase in the suicide rate between 2004 and 2006. In April 2006, following a review of the Coroner's Service, Northern Ireland's coroner districts were centralised into one Coroner's Service. It is likely that the increase was the result of the under-recording of suicides under the old system. Since peaking in 2012, the five-year combined average rate has started to decline.

It should be noted that, as the numbers involved for Northern Ireland are small, a slight change in the number of deaths has a significant impact on rates.

Scotland

Suicide rates per million 15 to 19 year olds

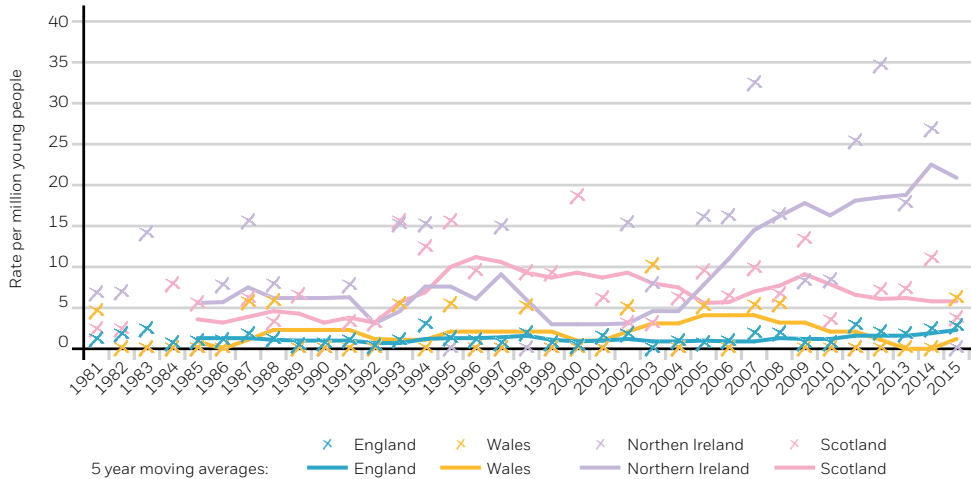


Latest figure: There were 18 suicides where death was recorded as by intentional self-harm, and no deaths by undetermined intent of 15 to 19 year olds in 2015, a five-year average combined rate of 71.3 per million 15 to 19 year olds.

Trend: The five-year combined average rate among 15 to 19 year olds has increased by eight per cent since 1985 (from 61.6 per million to 71.3). However, average rates have declined since 2002. The start of this decline coincides with the Scottish Government's "Choose Life" suicide prevention strategy and plan* launched in 2002. Again, it should be noted that the numbers involved for Scotland are small, meaning that a slight change in the number of deaths has a significant impact on rates.

United Kingdom

Suicide rates per million 10 to 14 year olds



Latest figure: There were ten deaths of 10 to 14 year olds where death was recorded as by intentional self-harm in the UK in 2015. The five-year average rate was 20.9 per million 10 to 14 year olds in Northern Ireland, 5.8 per million in Scotland, 2.3 per million in England and 1.2 per million in Wales.

Trend: Since 1985 the five-year average rate per million 10 to 14 year olds for suicides recorded as deaths by intentional self-harm has remained relatively stable in England and Wales. The average rate peaked in Scotland in the 1990s and is now in decline. It has increased significantly (by 276 per cent since 1985) in Northern Ireland. However, it should be noted that the numbers involved for all nations are very low compared to other age groups, and a small increase in actual numbers can lead to a large percentage increase.

*Scottish Government (2002) *Choose life: a national strategy and action plan to prevent suicide in Scotland*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government **Data sources**
England and Wales: Office for National Statistics (ONS) (2016) *Mortality statistics: underlying cause, sex and age*. Newport: Office for National Statistics (ONS). **Scotland:** National Records of Scotland (2015) *Vital events reference tables 2015*. Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland. **Northern Ireland:** Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (2016) *Registrar General Northern Ireland: annual report 2015*. Belfast: Department of Finance, Central Print Unit.

**After years in decline,
suicide rates for
15 to 19 year olds
have started to rise
in England and Wales.**

INDICATOR 4

Number of recorded sexual offences against children

KEY MESSAGES

- All UK nations saw an increase in the number of recorded sexual offences against children in 2015/16.
- It is likely that improved recording of sexual offences by the police and an increased willingness of victims to come forward have contributed to this rise.
- The rate of recorded sexual offences across the UK has doubled since 2005/06, with 2015/16 seeing the highest number of offences in the past decade.

Why is this measure important?

This measure shows the number of sexual offences committed against children that were reported to and recorded by the police. The data covers a range of sexual offences, including rape, sexual assault, sexual activity with a minor and child grooming. The data does not reflect the total number of sexual offences committed against children, but it does provide an important picture of sexual abuse committed against children.

What are the limitations of the data?

Police-recorded crime statistics suffer from under-reporting and therefore do not reflect the actual number of offences committed. Trends in the data may reflect increased public awareness and changes in policing rather than an increase in incidence. Data reflects the year in which an offence was reported, not the year it was committed, so a proportion of offences will be historic.

In January 2014, due to concerns about the reliability of the data, the UK Statistics Authority assessed that recorded crime data in England and Wales no longer met the standards set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics and removed the data's National Statistics designation.*

Data availability and comparability

Recorded offence data is available for all four nations: from 2004/05 for England and Wales (against under 16 year olds), from 2002/03 for Northern Ireland (under 18s) and from 2000/01 for Scotland (under 16s). Data is shown for all nations from 2004/05. In order to provide a more comprehensive picture of sexual offences against children, the NSPCC obtained statistics on recorded sexual offences against under 18 year olds from police forces in England through a Freedom of Information request. This data is available from 2007/08 and noted where referred to. Legislation, offence categories and recording methods are not identical across the UK and so direct comparisons need to be treated with caution. In particular, crimes are counted differently in Scotland than in the other nations.

Recorded crimes regarding indecent images of children are reviewed in Indicator 9 and no longer contained within the sexual offences data presented here.

England

Recorded sexual offences against children under 16 and under 18



Latest figure: There were 37,778 recorded sexual offences against under 16 year olds in 2015/16. This is a rate of 36.3 sexual offences per 10,000 children aged under 16 a 23 per cent increase on the previous year.

Police forces in England provided information on the number of sexual offences against children under 18 in response to an FOI request. There were 47,045 offences, a rate of 40.3 sexual offences per 10,000 children under 18.

Trend: From 2004/05 to 2012/13 the trend in recorded sexual offences against under 16 year olds was relatively static. Year on year increases since 2012/13 show a notable rise. The rate of offences per 10,000 under 16 year olds has more than doubled over the past decade from 16.5 in 2005/06 to 36.3 offences in 2015/16.

The trend in sexual offences against under 18 year olds mirrors that of under 16 year olds.

England

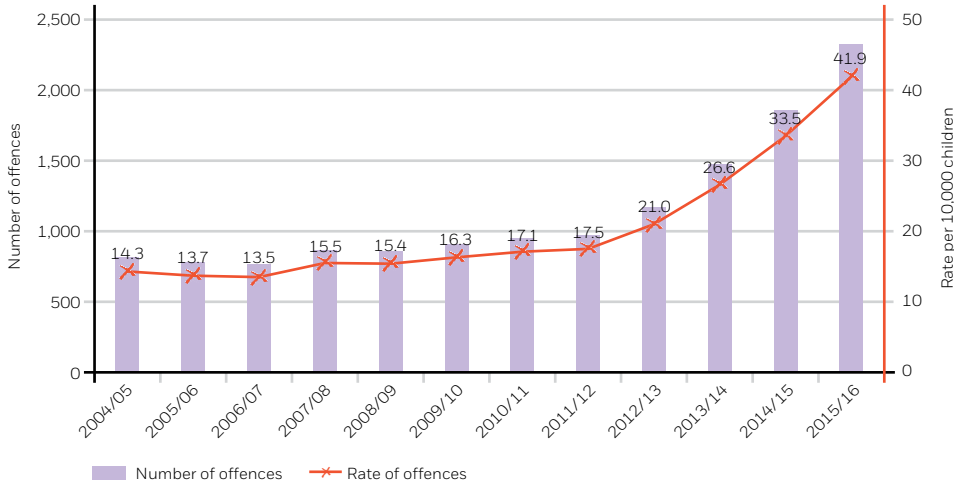
Offence category	2014/15	2015/16
Rape of a child under 13	4,542	5,608
Rape of a child under 16	4,847	5,622
Sexual assault on a child under 13	8,145	9,361
Sexual activity involving a child under 13	4,461	5,555
Sexual activity involving a child under 16	8,051	10,661
Sexual grooming	652	971
Abuse of position of trust of a sexual nature (includes u18s)	206	226
Abuse of children through sexual exploitation (includes u18s)	347	541

Published offence data shows an increase in all sexual offence categories compared to 2014/15. The most notable year on year changes are:

- there is a 30 per cent increase in rape of a male under 13 (from 1,268 to 1,648);
- sexual activity involving a child under 16 has increased by 32 per cent (from 8,051 to 10,661);
- there is a 49 per cent increase in sexual grooming (from 652 to 971);
- abuse of children under 18 years old through sexual exploitation has increased by 56 per cent (from 347 to 541).

Wales

Recorded sexual offences against children under 16



Latest figure: There were 2,329 recorded sexual offences against under 16 year olds in 2015/16. This is a rate of 41.9 sexual offences per 10,000 children aged under 16 a 25 per cent increase on the previous year.

Trend: Similar to the trend seen in other nations, sexual offences against under 16 year olds in Wales have increased significantly over the past five years. The rate of recorded offences per 10,000 under 16 year olds has tripled over the past decade from 13.7 in 2005/06 to 41.9 offences in 2015/16.

Wales

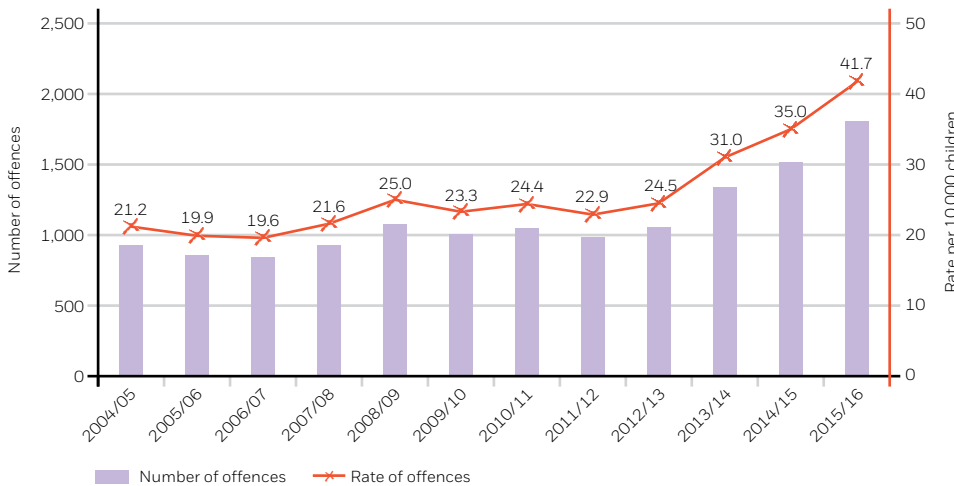
Offence category	2014/15	2015/16
Rape of a child under 13	300	365
Rape of a child under 16	256	299
Sexual assault on a child under 13	505	622
Sexual activity involving a child under 13	234	328
Sexual activity involving a child under 16	523	671
Sexual grooming	39	44
Abuse of position of trust of a sexual nature (includes u18s)	5	12
Abuse of children through sexual exploitation (includes u18s)	12	22

There has been an increase in the majority of sexual offence categories compared to 2014/15. The most notable year on year changes are:

- there was a 52 per cent increase in rape of a male under 13 (from 95 to 144);
- rape of a female under 16 increased 31 per cent (from 199 to 260);
- there was a 40 per cent increase in sexual activity involving a child under 13 (from 234 to 328);
- only one category, rape of a male under 16, saw a decrease from 57 to 39 offences.

Northern Ireland

Recorded sexual offences against children under 18



Latest figure: There were 1,809 recorded sexual offences against children aged under 18 in 2015/16, an increase of 19 per cent on the previous year. This is a rate of 41.7 sexual offences per 10,000 children under 18.

Trend: There has been an increasing trend in sexual offences since 2011/12, similar to the other nations. The rate of offences per 10,000 under 18 year olds has more than doubled over the past decade from 19.9 in 2005/06 to 41.7 offences in 2015/16.

Northern Ireland

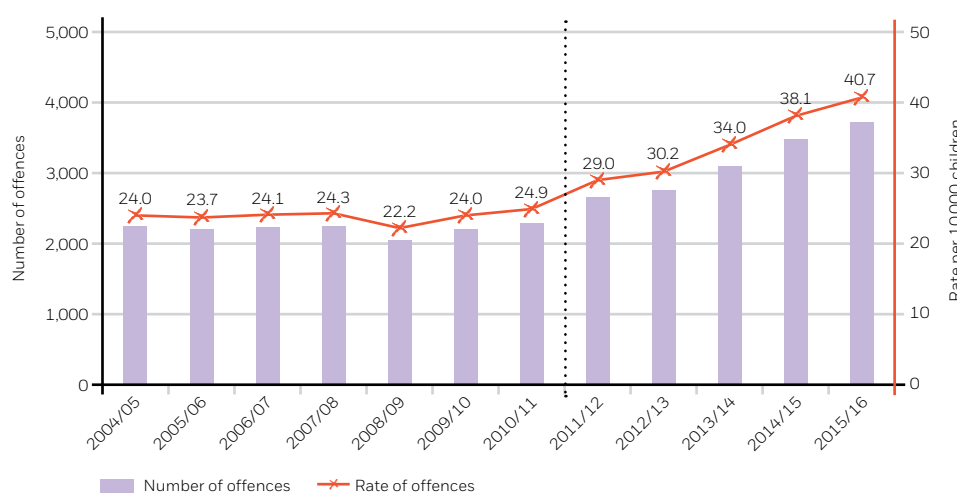
Offence category	2014/15	2015/16
Rape (including attempted rape)	300	334
Sexual assaults on a child under 13	456	513
Sexual assaults on a child aged 13 and over	214	270
Sexual activity involving a child under 13	193	219
Sexual activity involving a child aged 13 and over	293	364
Sexual grooming	4	46
Other sexual offences	56	63

There has been an increase in all sexual offence categories compared to 2014/15. The most notable year on year changes are:

- there was a 26 per cent increase in offences of sexual assaults involving a child aged 13 and over (from 214 to 270);
- sexual activity involving a child aged 13 and over increased 24 per cent (from 293 to 364);
- there were 46 offences of sexual grooming this year compared to four in the previous year.

Scotland

Recorded sexual offences against children under 16



Latest figure: There were 3,715 recorded sexual offences against children under 16 in 2015/16, a seven per cent increase on the previous year. This is a rate of 40.7 sexual offences per 10,000 children under 16.

Trend: There has been an increasing trend in sexual offences against under 16 year olds since 2008/09. Sexual offences have increased 68 per cent over the past decade. The rate of sexual offences against under 16 year olds has increased from 23.7 to 40.7 during this time. Trends in Scotland must be treated with caution (see below).

The Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009 came into force on 1 December 2010 and resulted in a change to the way some sexual offences were categorised. Comparisons over time of the breakdown of sexual crimes should therefore be treated with caution. However, no new crimes were introduced as a result of the legislation and this is not considered to be a break in the time series.

Scotland

Offence category	2014/15	2015/16
Rape or attempted rape of a child aged 13 to 15	216	225
Rape or attempted rape of a child aged under 13	160	129
Sexual assault of a child aged 13 to 15	457	462
Sexual assault of a child aged under 13	394	419
Sexual activity involving a child aged 13 to 15	492	594
Sexual activity involving a child aged under 13	192	244
Grooming of children for purposes of sexual offences	23	50
Sexual abuse of trust (includes u18s)	3	8
Other sexual offences (includes u18s)	1,542	1,592

There has been an increase in the majority of sexual offence categories compared to 2014/15. The most notable year on year changes are:

- there was a 27 per cent increase in offences of sexual activity involving a child under 13 (from 192 to 244);
- sexual activity involving a child aged 13 to 15 increased by 21 per cent (from 492 to 594);
- there were 50 offences of sexual grooming this year compared to 23 in the previous year;
- there was a 19 per cent decrease in the number of rapes of a child under 13 from 160 to 129 offences.

Data sources

England and Wales: Home Office (2017) *Police recorded crime and outcomes open data tables*. London: Home Office; NSPCC (2016) FOI requests sent to all police forces in England. **Scotland:** Scottish Government recorded crime statistics (Data provided to NSPCC). **Northern Ireland:** Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) (2016) *Trends in Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland: 1998/99 to 2015/16*. Belfast: Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI).

INDICATOR 5

Number of recorded cruelty and neglect offences

KEY MESSAGES

- The last five years has seen an increasing trend in recorded offences of cruelty and neglect of children under 16 by a parent or carer in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. This is believed to be associated with increased reporting and changes in recording practices.
- Scotland's trend is the opposite to the rest of the UK, with a continued decrease in 2015/16 to the lowest volume and rate of recorded cruelty and neglect offences in Scotland for more than a decade.

Why is this measure important?

This measure shows the number of offences recorded by the police where a parent or carer "wilfully assaults, ill-treats, neglects, abandons or exposes a child under 16 in a manner likely to cause them 'unnecessary suffering or injury to health'". The data does not reflect the total number of children actually suffering from cruelty or neglect, but it does provide an important picture of cruelty and neglect against children.

What are the limitations of the data?

As many crimes go unreported and unrecorded, police statistics do not represent the total number of offences committed. In some cases, it is agreed that the best interests of the child are served by a social care-led intervention rather than through police involvement.

Trends in the data may also reflect increased public awareness and changes in policing practice rather than an increased incidence.

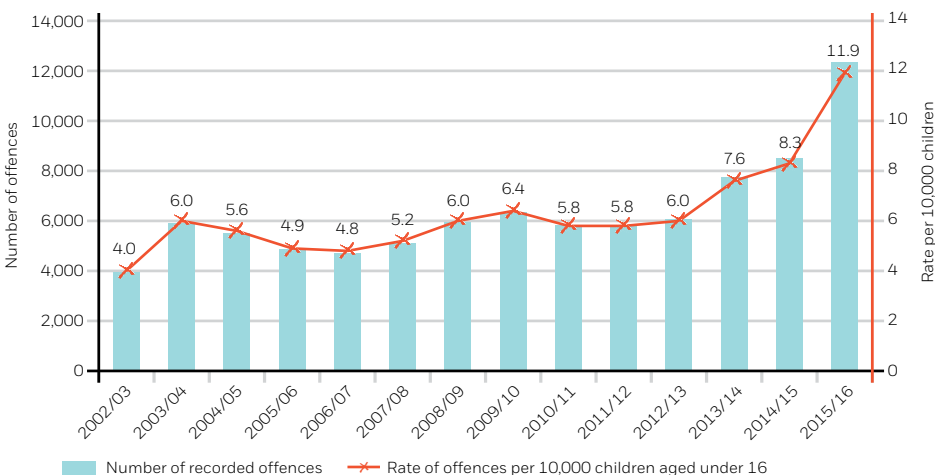
In January 2014, due to concerns about the reliability of the data, the UK Statistics Authority assessed that recorded crime data in England and Wales no longer met the standards set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics and removed the data's National Statistics designation.*

Data availability and comparability

Recorded offence data is available for all four nations: from 2002/03 for England and Wales, from 1998/99 for Northern Ireland and from 2001/02 for Scotland. Data is shown here for all nations from 2002/03. Legislation, offence categories and recording methods are not identical across the UK and so direct comparisons need to be treated with caution. In particular, crimes are counted differently in Scotland where the reporting categories used are broader than those in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

England

Recorded cruelty and neglect against children under 16



Latest figure: There were 12,352 recorded offences in 2015/16, a rate of 11.9 offences per 10,000 children aged under 16. Figures include offences of abandonment of a child, as this offence was merged with that of cruelty to and neglect of children in 2013.

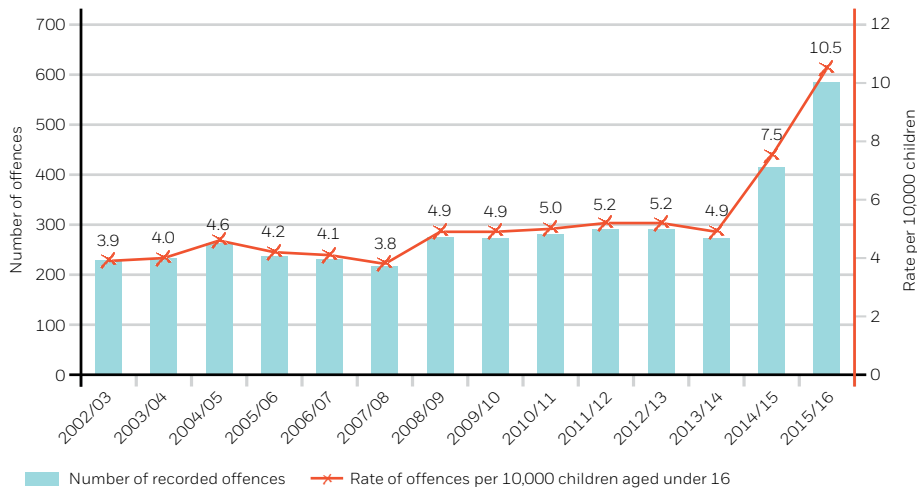
Trend: The number of offences has risen sharply over the past five years and the rate of offences per 10,000 children has doubled from 5.8 in 2010/11 to 11.9 in 2015/16.

The increase over the last four years is believed to be attributable to increased reporting of offences and changes in recording practices.

*UK Statistics Authority (2014) *Assessment of compliance with the code of practice for official statistics: statistics on crime in England and Wales*. London: UK Statistics Authority.

Wales

Recorded cruelty and neglect against children under 16

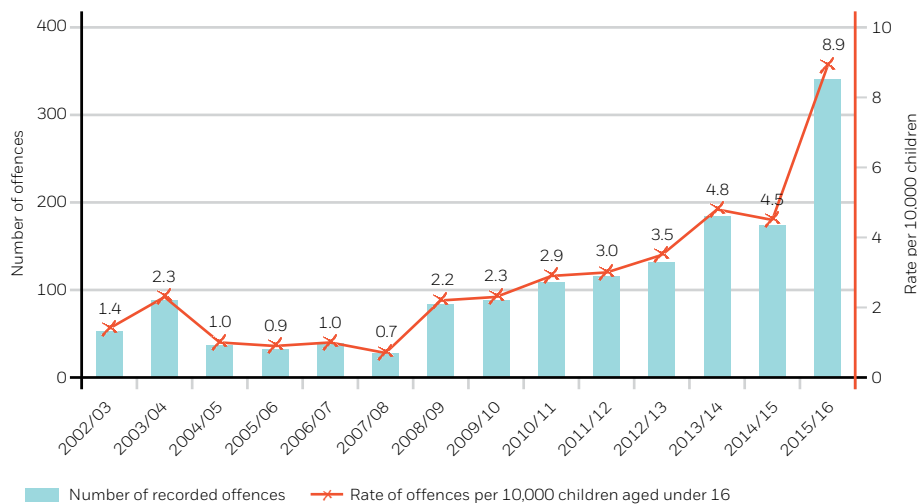


Latest figure: There were 585 recorded offences in 2015/16, a rate of 10.5 offences per 10,000 children aged under 16. Figures include offences of abandonment of a child, as this offence was merged with that of cruelty to and neglect of children in 2013.

Trend: The total number and rate of offences increased significantly in the last two years. The rate of recorded cruelty and neglect offences in 2015/16 is 109 per cent more than in 2010/11. This notable increase is believed to be a reflection of reporting and recording practices.

Northern Ireland

Recorded cruelty and neglect against children under 16

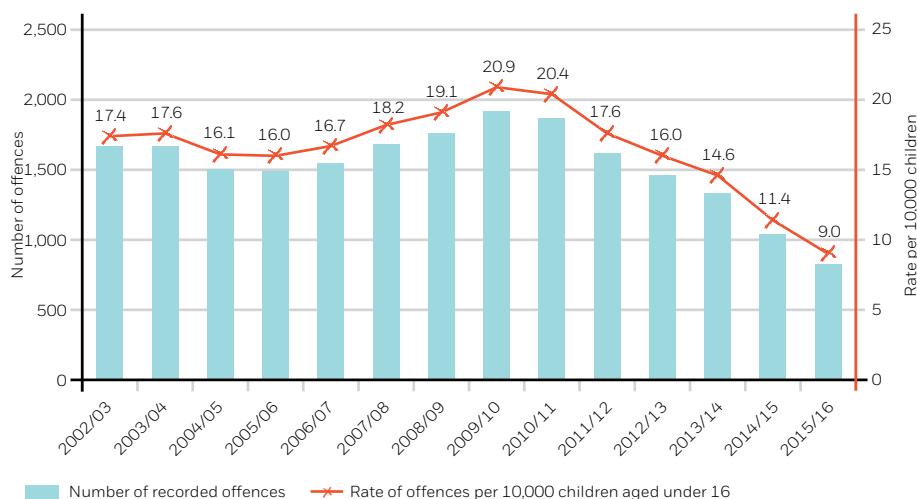


Latest figure: There were 341 recorded offences in 2015/16, a rate of 8.9 offences per 10,000 children aged under 16. Figures include offences of cruelty to and neglect of children and abandoning a child.

Trend: While consistently exhibiting lower rates of recorded cruelty and neglect than the other nations, Northern Ireland has seen the most notable increase over the last five years.

Scotland

Recorded cruelty and neglect against children under 16



Latest figure: There were 822 recorded offences in 2015/16, a rate of 9.0 offences per 10,000 children aged under 16. This is a 21 per cent decrease compared with 2014/15 and the lowest figure recorded within the data set. Figures include offences of cruelty to and unnatural treatment of children, being drunk in charge of a child, and children and young person offences (not elsewhere classified).

Trend: The trend in Scotland is the opposite of the other nations with a notable decreasing trend between 2009/10 and 2015/16. Scotland has seen a 56 per cent decrease over the last five years.

Data sources

England and Wales: Home Office (2017) Police recorded crime and outcomes open data tables. London: Home Office. **Scotland:** Scottish Government recorded crime statistics (Data provided to NSPCC). **Northern Ireland:** Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) (2016) Trends in Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland: 1998/99 to 2015/16. Belfast: Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI).

INDICATOR 6

Self-reported prevalence of abuse and neglect

KEY MESSAGES

- 18.6 per cent of 11 to 17 year olds have experienced some type of severe maltreatment.
- Self-report survey data of young people indicates that prevalence of child maltreatment is higher than that reported in other indicators in this report.
- 61.4 per cent of 11 to 17 year olds have been exposed to some form of community violence.

Why is this measure important?

This measure draws on the findings of the NSPCC research report *Child abuse and neglect in the UK today*, published in September 2011. In that report, 2,160 parents of 0 to 10 year olds, 2,275 young people aged 11 to 17 years with their parents or guardians, and 1,761 young people aged 18 to 24 years in the UK were interviewed in 2009 about experiences of child abuse and neglect. The findings provide the only UK-wide research-based indication of the prevalence and impact of child abuse and neglect. Definitions of terms used in this indicator can be found in the glossary.

What are the limitations of the data?

This is a self-report household survey for 11 to 24 year olds and a caregiver survey for the under 11s. As survey data, it may be subject to error associated with sampling and respondents recalling past events. The households were selected at random from the Postcode Address file. The data has been weighted for the UK as a whole. For under 18s, parental consent was needed, which may have resulted in some sample bias.

Data availability and comparability

This survey was completed in 2009 and no new data is available. Although the data is available for all four nations, small sample sizes in Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland mean that it is problematic to report these separately. There is no time series data for this indicator.

Lifetime rates for exposure to domestic and family violence

	11–17 years			18–24 years		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Domestic violence	16.4%	18.7%	17.5%	19.5%	28.0%	23.7%
Family violence	18.6%	21.1%	19.8%	24.7%	31.1%	27.8%

Four questions were asked about exposure to domestic violence – specifically physical violence and threatening behaviour from an adult partner/ex-partner towards the parent, and two questions about other forms of physical violence against family members.

By the time they reach 18, almost one quarter of children will have been exposed to domestic violence.

Lifetime exposure to severe maltreatment

Maltreatment type	11–17 years			18–24 years		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Severe physical abuse	6.7%	7.1%	6.9%	10.2%	12.9%	11.5%
Contact sexual abuse	2.6%	7.0%	4.8%	5.1%	17.8%	11.3%
Severe neglect by a parent or guardian	9.9%	9.8%	9.8%	7.0%	11.0%	9.0%
Severe maltreatment by a parent or guardian	13.5%	13.3%	13.4%	11.6%	17.5%	14.5%
All severe maltreatment	18.2%	19.0%	18.6%	20.3%	30.6%	25.3%

11.3 per cent of 18 to 24 year olds reported that they had experienced contact sexual abuse while under the age of 18.

9 per cent of 18 to 24 year olds reported that they had experienced severe neglect while under the age of 18.

Overall maltreatment and victimisation by perpetrator type

Maltreatment and victimisation by perpetrator type	11–17 years		18–24 years
	Past year	Lifetime	Lifetime
Maltreatment by parent/guardian	6.0%	21.9%	24.5%
Maltreatment by adult outside home	3.1%	7.8%	12.8%
Sibling victimisation	16.0%	31.8%	25.2%
Intimate partner abuse	5.0%	7.9%	13.4%
Peer victimisation	35.3%	59.5%	63.2%
Exposure to community violence	31.2%	61.4%	66.5%

Children are exposed to abuse in their home, in school and in the community. That abuse might be perpetrated by their parents, their siblings, adults they know, peers or strangers. This table can be used to conceptualise the amount and types of violence and abuse that young people are exposed to.

Almost 60 per cent of young people who are aged 11 to 17 will have been victimised by a peer – which includes anything from bullying to assault.

A quarter of 18 to 24 year olds said that they had been a victim of abuse by a sibling during their childhood. More than 30 per cent of 11 to 17 year olds described higher rates of sibling victimisation.

Data source

Radford, L. et al. (2011) *Child abuse and neglect in the UK today*. London: NSPCC.

INDICATOR 7

Counselling sessions with Childline

KEY MESSAGES

- Childline delivered 295,202 counselling sessions* in 2016/17; this is a 55 per cent increase since 2009/10.
- Mental/emotional health was the most common main concern in Childline counselling sessions in 2016/17.
- In 2016/17, 8 per cent of counselling sessions were about suicide compared with 3 per cent in 2009/10.
- Childline made 4,328 referrals to external agencies in 2016/17 on behalf of 3,850 children. This is an 8 per cent increase in the number of referrals since 2015/16.

Why is this measure important?

Childline is the UK's free, 24-hour helpline for children and young people. Information about Childline counselling sessions provides a unique indication of the nature and levels of concerns among children. It allows us to identify emerging trends in the issues that children are facing. Childline information also allows us to track concerns about specific forms of abuse and neglect that may not be covered in official crime or child protection statistics.

What are the limitations of the data?

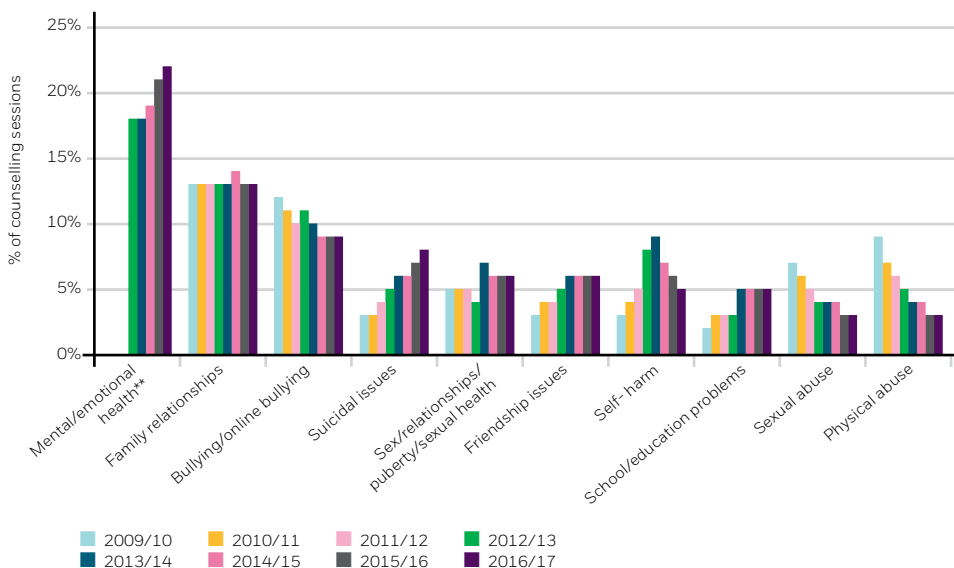
This data only captures where children have been counselled by Childline and is therefore only a snapshot of the concerns

they may have. In general it is not possible to identify the number of individual children who are speaking to Childline, as the same child may make multiple contacts. The number of and reasons for counselling sessions can also be affected by news coverage, NSPCC marketing, changes to how Childline data is coded and the introduction of new ways to contact Childline, such as the Childline app.

Data availability and comparability

Childline data covers the UK as a whole. Due to the confidentiality of the service, very few young people tell a counsellor where they live, and therefore a UK nation breakdown of data is not possible.

Percentage of counselling sessions for the top ten primary concerns of 2016/17***



Mental/emotional health and family relationships remain the most talked-about issues in Childline counselling sessions with children and young people in 2016/17.

Bullying and suicidal issues were also among the top five main concerns counselled.

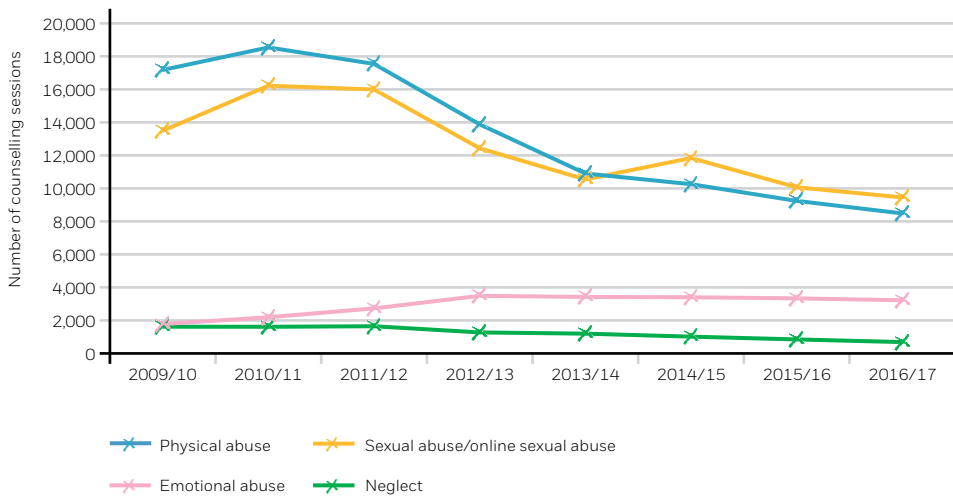
The trend of steady increases in the number of counselling sessions about mental/emotional health continued in 2016/17, as it has over the past five years. For the seventh year running, there was an increase in the number of counselling sessions about suicidal issues.

*Counselling sessions refer to calls, online chats and emails.

**A new code of mental/emotional health was introduced in 2016/17. This incorporates the previous codes of low mood/unhappiness, mental health issues and loss/bereavement; these codes have been combined for the previous years for comparison.

***Concern data relates to counselling sessions where children were talking about their own concerns. It excludes data from sessions where children contacted Childline with concerns about another person.

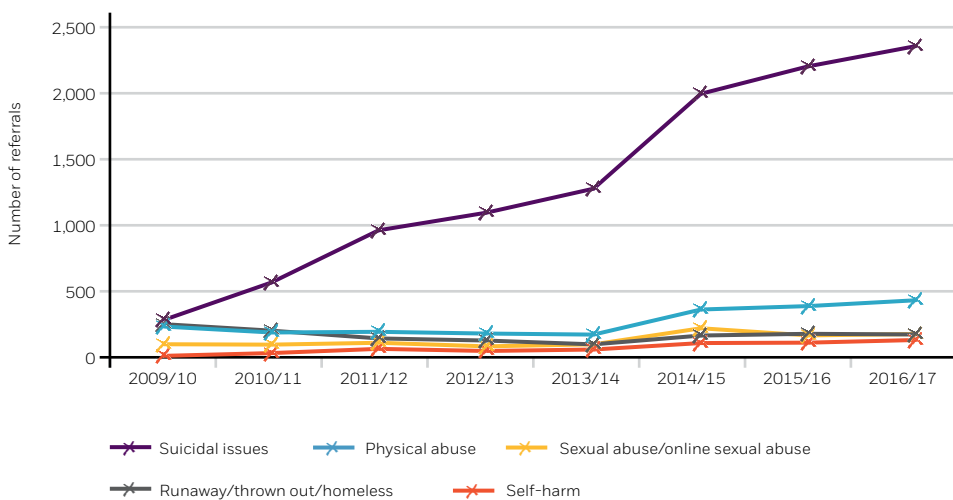
Counselling sessions with abuse as the primary concern



In 2016/17, more counselling sessions were carried out about sexual abuse/online sexual abuse than for other abuse-related main concerns. Over the past year Childline delivered 9,452 counselling sessions to children whose main concern was sexual abuse/online sexual abuse. This accounted for 43 per cent of all abuse-related main concerns.

The numbers of counselling sessions about sexual abuse/online sexual abuse and physical abuse continue to follow a decreasing trend.

Referrals by the five most common primary concerns



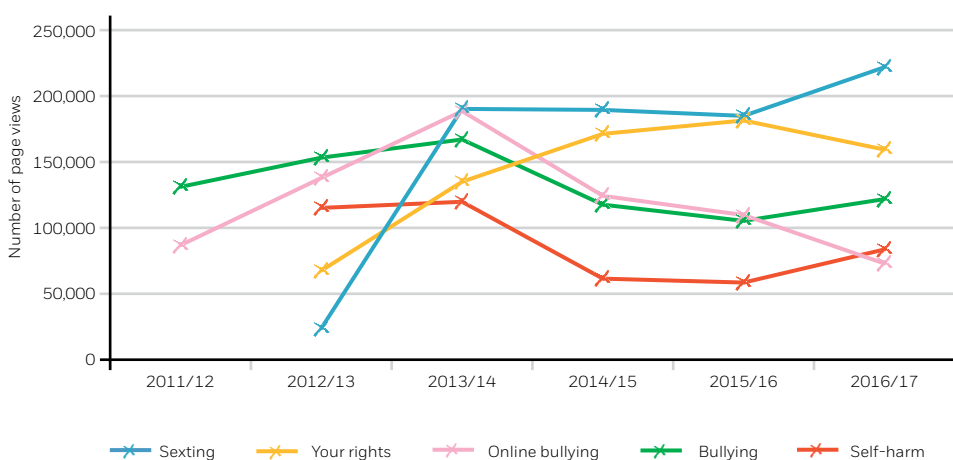
Childline makes referrals to external agencies in cases where a child is in a life-threatening situation, facing significant harm, or where the child has requested direct help.

In 2016/17, Childline made 4,328 referrals on behalf of 3,850 children to external agencies. This is an 8 per cent increase in the number of referrals since 2015/16; the number of referrals made by Childline has increased by 137 per cent over the past five years, this is relative to the overall increase in number of Childline counselling sessions.

The most common reason for a referral to be made is suicide, accounting for 61 per cent of the number of referrals made in 2016/17. The number of referrals about suicide has increased by 733 per cent since 2009/10.

Physical abuse accounted for 11 per cent of referrals made in 2016/17, sexual abuse accounted for 5 per cent, neglect for 1 per cent, and emotional abuse for 1 per cent.

Childline website data*



In addition to offering counselling sessions by phone or online, the Childline website is a resource for children and young people. In 2016/17, the Childline website received a total of 3,262,245 visits.

The graph shows the top five most commonly viewed Childline explore page topics. In 2016/17, there were 221,840 page views to Childline explore pages about sexting. This was a 20 per cent increase from 2015/16, making this the most viewed topic for the fourth consecutive year.

The Childline Message Boards received a total of 1,972,965 page views.** There were 46,353 posts submitted and published by children and young people.

* The website data relates specifically to the Childline explore pages.
 ** Number of times that page was viewed, not the number of individuals who viewed that page.
 Data source: Childline data on file with the NSPCC.

INDICATOR 8

Contacts with the NSPCC helpline

KEY MESSAGES

- There were 66,218 contacts made to the NSPCC helpline in 2016/17. This is a 21 per cent increase since 2015/16.
- Contacts about abuse have risen by 56 per cent over the past five years. Of these contacts, we have seen the largest increase in concerns about neglect and emotional abuse.
- In 2016/17, 72 per cent of all contacts to the helpline led to a referral.
- 87 per cent of all contacts relating to neglect, 80 per cent relating to physical abuse and 75 per cent relating to emotional abuse led to a referral.

Why is this measure important?

The NSPCC helpline offers an advice and support service for anyone worried about the safety or welfare of a child. Information from the helpline gives us an indication of the levels of concern among the public and professionals about children’s welfare, the nature of these concerns and whether they are serious enough to warrant a referral to police or children’s services. This is also a useful indicator to assist in future service planning for local authorities.

What are the limitations of the data?

Contacts to the helpline are based on people’s own perceptions of abuse and neglect, and therefore, the data only captures instances of abuse and neglect that callers have identified. News coverage and NSPCC marketing can also affect the number and reasons for contact.

Data availability and comparability

Overall data is available and comparable back to 2007/08. Comparable data broken down by nation is available from 2010/11. Referral data captures the local authority or agency to which the referral was made. For advice contacts, geographical location of the caller is captured where the caller gives us this information.

Trends in helpline advice contacts and referrals



There were 66,218 contacts made to the NSPCC helpline in 2016/17. The number of contacts increased this year after a decrease in 2015/16; prior to this the helpline saw a five-year increase in the number of contacts.

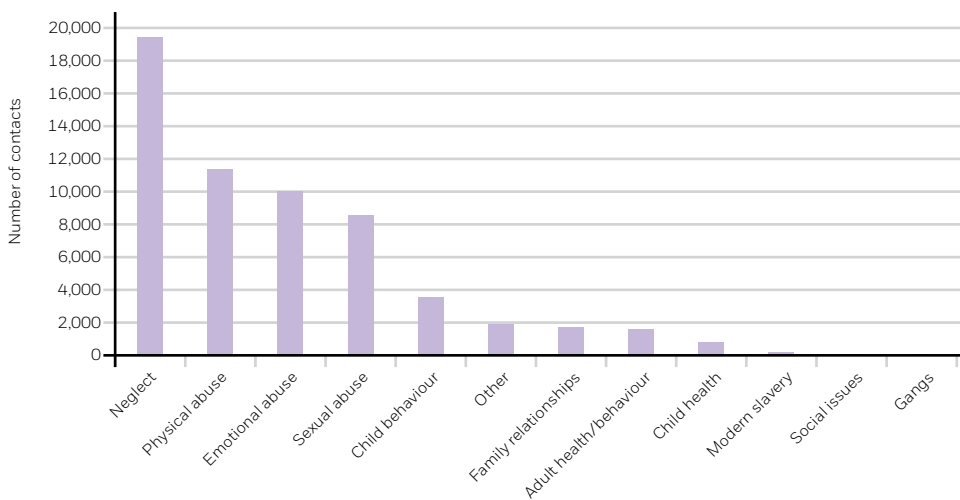
The increased demand reflects media attention this year, particularly around allegations of abuse in football.

Contacts to the helpline can result in the caller receiving advice or a referral being made to an external agency such as a local authority or the police.

The proportion of contacts that lead to a referral has increased steadily since 2007/08. In 2016/17, 72 per cent of all contacts led to a referral.*

*Includes referral updates, these are contacts in which the helpline received additional information about an existing referral.

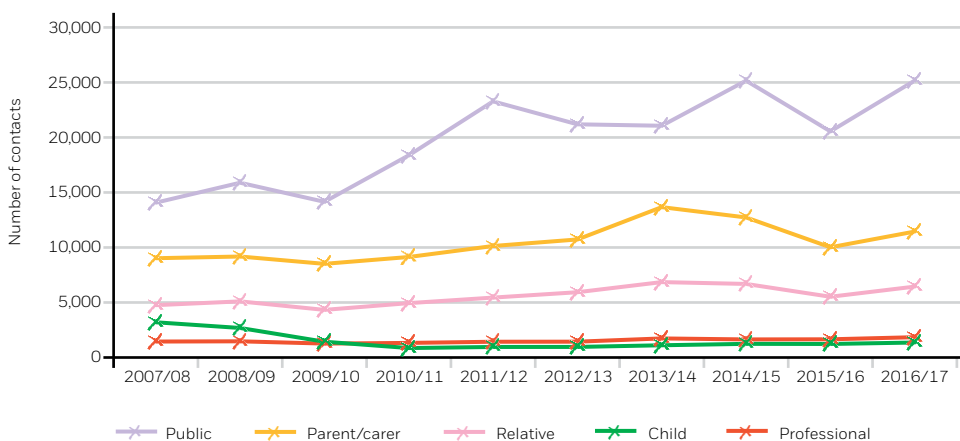
Reasons for contacting the helpline in 2016/17



More than three quarters (83 per cent) of contacts to the helpline related to abuse in 2016/17; this includes sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse and neglect.

Neglect was the most common child welfare concern in 2016/17, with 19,448 contacts about this issue. This was a 61 per cent increase from five years ago, when there were 12,110 contacts about this issue in 2011/12.

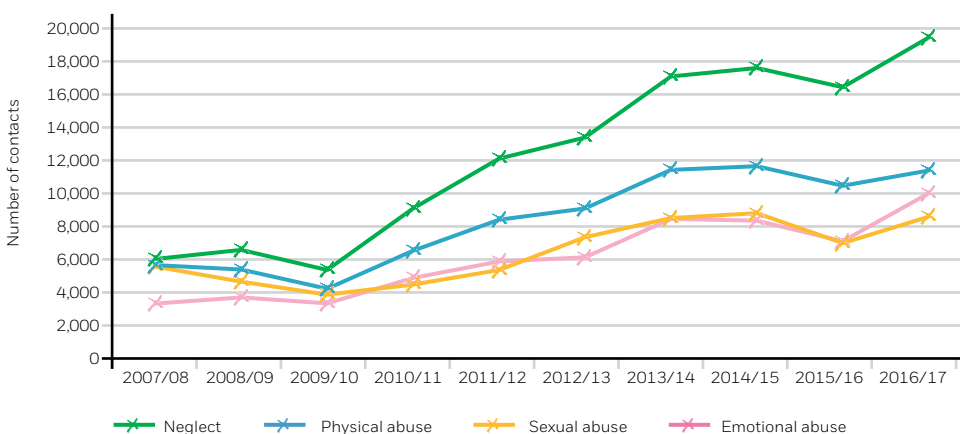
Who contacts the helpline?



This year, where the information was recorded, 59 per cent of contacts made to the helpline were from the public. Of these contacts, 81 per cent were serious enough to warrant a referral to an external agency.

There has been a steady increase in members of the public contacting the helpline to seek advice or report a concern about the welfare of a child. Contacts from members of the public have increased by 79 per cent since 2007/08.

Trends in contacts about abuse



There has been an increase in contacts to the helpline about abuse over the past nine years. The most significant increases in abuse contacts in 2016/17 were in sexual abuse, which increased by 23 per cent since 2015/16, and emotional abuse, which increased by 41 per cent.

In 2016/17, 87 per cent of contacts about neglect, 80 per cent of contacts about physical abuse, 75 per cent of contacts about emotional abuse, and 54 per cent of contacts about sexual abuse led to a referral.

*Professionals category includes social care/children's services professionals, health professionals, education professionals, police, probation, other officials.
Data source NSPCC helpline data on file with the NSPCC.

INDICATOR 9

Online harm

KEY MESSAGES

- In 2016/17 there were **12,248 Childline counselling sessions about online safety and abuse, which is a 9 per cent increase on the previous year.**
- **Thirty per cent of reviews by young people of the most popular social networking sites, apps and games, reported seeing violence and hatred.**
- In 2015/16 the number of police-recorded offences relating to indecent images increased by **64 per cent in England, 50 per cent in Wales, 71 per cent in Northern Ireland, and 7 per cent in Scotland.**

Why is this measure important?

The internet can be extremely beneficial for children; they can use it to learn, communicate, develop, create and explore the world around them. However, young people can also face risks online which need to be addressed. This indicator explores young people's online experiences.

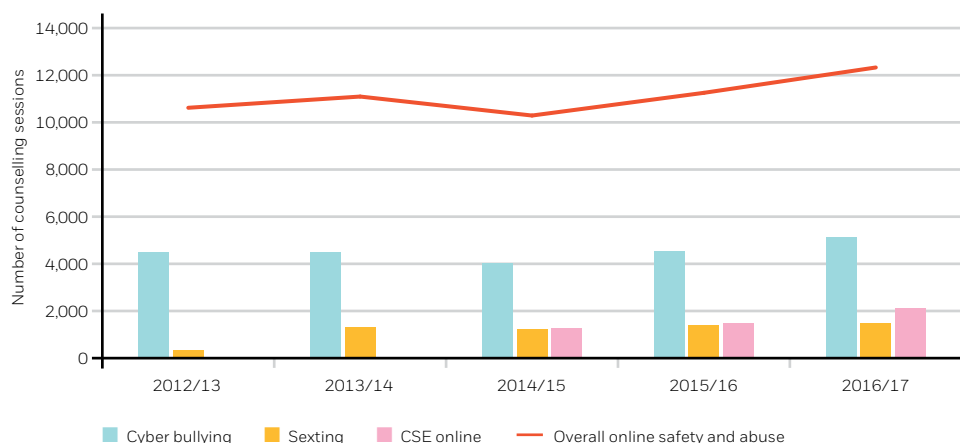
What are the limitations of the data?

This is a relatively new and emerging area where robust and consistent measures are being developed. The evidence presented here are snapshots of information because longer-term trend data is limited. Evidence tends to concentrate on children aged around eight or nine and above. We know little about the risks and harm experienced by younger children online.

Data availability and comparability

Here we present available data on Childline counselling sessions on online safety and abuse, Ofcom data on harmful content, NSPCC research on social networks, and crime data. Online offences are a global concern and due to the hyper-connected nature of the internet, it is difficult to break down offences by geographical location.

Childline counselling sessions about online safety and abuse*



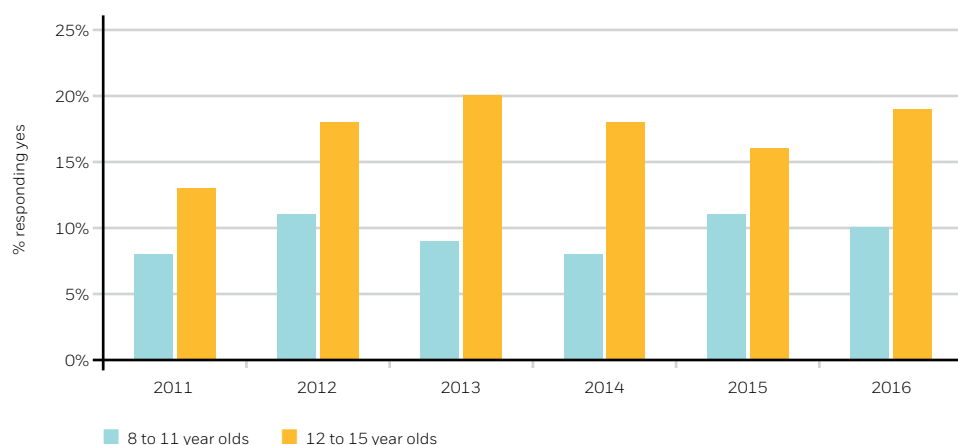
In 2016/17, Childline delivered 12,248 counselling sessions about online safety and abuse. This is a 9 per cent increase from 2015/16.

Of the 12,248 counselling sessions about online safety and abuse, 5,103 mentioned cyberbullying. This is a 12 per cent increase on the previous year.

In 2016/17, Childline delivered 2,132 counselling sessions about child sexual exploitation (CSE) online, which includes online grooming, online sexual harassment and engaging in sexually explicit activity online. This is a 44 per cent increase on the previous year. Data for CSE online is only available from 2014/15 when this code was first introduced.

This is not a comprehensive list of all online safety and abuse concerns that children spoke about. Childline also delivered counselling sessions on online pornography and issues occurring on social media.

Ofcom survey: in the last year, have you seen anything online that you found worrying or nasty?



Ofcom ask children and young people who use the internet at home or elsewhere, if they have seen anything online that they found worrying or nasty in some way that they didn't like. Prior to 2016 they asked if they had seen anything worrying, nasty or offensive.

Despite this change in the wording of the question, results for this year are broadly similar to the previous year. Ten per cent of 8 to 11 year olds and 19 per cent of 12 to 15 year olds said that they have seen something worrying or nasty.

Inappropriate content on social networking sites, apps, and games

The NSPCC asked around 1,700 children aged 11 to 18 to review the top social networking sites, apps and games that young people are using. The top sites are compiled from a range of sources: research with young people, counselling sessions with Childline that mention social networks, and the top apps listed on Google Play and iTunes. Due to changes in popularity, different sites are reviewed each year, meaning that the results are not directly comparable between years. However, they highlight the type of content that children are seeing online.

Each young person reviews up to five social networks and are asked to say whether they have come across inappropriate content on each network. Only sites that receive at least ten reviews from young people are included in the results. The table shows the percentage of reviews where young people said that they had seen each category of inappropriate content across any of the social networks.

Type of content	% of young people's reviews that reported seeing inappropriate content	
	2015/16	2016/17
Violence and hatred	26	30
Sexual content	22	21
Bullying	30	19
Adult or illegal	24	17
Suicide and self-harm	12	12

In 2015/16 the most common content reported in young people's reviews was bullying. In 2016/17 violence and hatred was most likely to be reported to have been seen in young people's reviews, with 30 per cent of reviews reporting this. 21 per cent of young people's reviews reported seeing sexual content and 17 per cent reported seeing adult or illegal material, including content that related to gambling, drugs or alcohol.

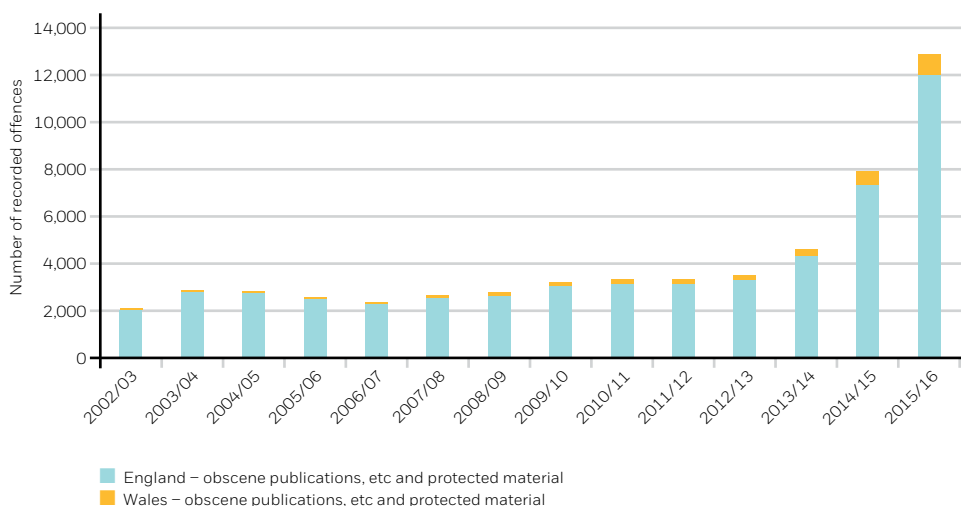
* The increase in the number of counselling sessions about online safety and abuse does not necessarily directly correlate with an increase in numbers of children and young people experiencing these issues. See Indicator 7 for more detail on limitations of Childline data.

Child sexual abuse images

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland it is a crime to create, possess or distribute indecent photographs or pseudo-photographs of children.** These crimes are recorded in the Home Office Counting Rules under the miscellaneous category of "Obscene Publications", a category which includes a variety of offences relating to obscene material and which is not focused exclusively on children. In Scotland it is a crime to create, possess and distribute indecent photos of children under section 52 and 52A of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982.

In England and Wales the age of the victims is unavailable. This means that some of the offences will relate to adults, but we do not know how many. Across all four nations, we do not know the age of the offender; and cases of producing and sharing self-generated sexual imagery (sexting) by under 18s may also be included within these figures.

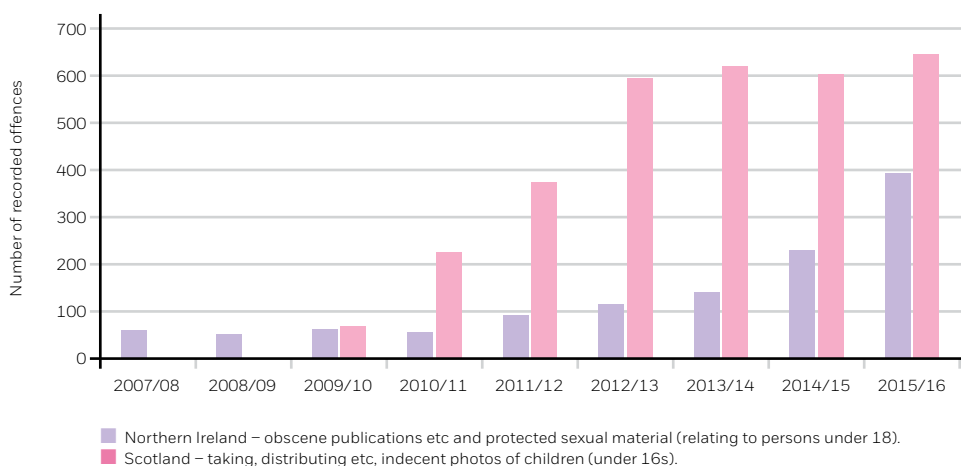
The number of police-recorded offences of indecent images: England and Wales



Data for England and Wales is combined when published, but by looking at the number of offences for individual forces we have been able to separate by country. In 2015/16 the number of police-recorded offences for "Obscene Publications" in England increased by 64 per cent to 11,992. In Wales the number of recorded offences also rose by 50 per cent in 2015/16 to 881. This is likely to be attributable to targeted and coordinated activity by the National Crime Agency and the police against online sexual exploitation and abuse.

The number of police-recorded offences of indecent images against children: Northern Ireland and Scotland

In Northern Ireland obscene publication offences are recorded as state-based offences, meaning that the age of the victim is unknown. However, legislation for these offences can determine if the victim is under 18. In 2015/16 Northern Ireland began to identify how many "Obscene Publications" offences have been committed against a person under 18 and provided retrospective data for previous years. In 2015/16, every single "Obscene Publication" offence recorded in Northern Ireland was committed against a child. Scottish legislation also identifies the age of the victim and all image offences recorded have been committed against a child under 16.



In Northern Ireland there has been a year-on-year increase of police-recorded offences of "Obscene Publications" where the victim is under 18. In 2015/16 recorded offences in this category rose by 71 per cent compared to the previous year. This increase is the largest increase seen between any two years in the data series. The Police Service of Northern Ireland has stated that "sexting" may have contributed to this increase.

In Scotland in 2015/16 the number of recorded offences in this category was 645, which is a 7 per cent increase on the previous year.

** The legislation for child sexual abuse offences differs between the four nations (for more details see Indicator 4).

Data sources Childline data on file with the NSPCC; Ofcom (2016) *Children and parents: media use and attitudes report*. London: Ofcom; NSPCC research on file with the NSPCC. **England and Wales:** Home Office (2017) *Police recorded crime and outcomes open data tables*. London: Home Office. **Northern Ireland:** Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) (2016) *Trends in Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland: 1998/99 to 2015/16*. Belfast: Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI). **Scotland:** Scottish Government recorded crime statistics (Data provided to NSPCC).

**Offences relating
to indecent images
are increasing in
every UK nation.**

INDICATOR 10

Violent incidents experienced by 10 to 15 year olds

Crime survey for England and Wales

KEY MESSAGES

- In 2015/16, almost 6 per cent of 10 to 15 year olds in England and Wales were the victim of a violent crime.
- Of these offences, 76 per cent resulted in an injury to the victim.
- An estimated 418,000 violent offences were experienced by children aged 10 to 15 in 2015/16.

Why is this measure important?

The Crime survey for England and Wales (previously the British crime survey) is a face-to-face survey in which people in households in England and Wales are asked about their experiences of crime in the previous 12 months. The 2015/16 survey was based on face-to-face interviews with a nationally representative sample of around 3,000 children aged 10 to 15*. Crime survey estimates are higher than the number of crimes recorded by the police because the survey captures offences that have not been reported to the police. The survey is therefore an important way of filling the gap left by police-recorded crime statistics.

What are the limitations of the data?

As survey data, it may be subject to error associated with sampling and respondents recalling past events. Respondents may accidentally fail to recall incidents or they may be unwilling to disclose that an incident has occurred. The survey only provides data for children aged 10 to 15 years old and only covers certain offence categories (violence and theft offences). Methodological differences between the adults' and children's surveys mean that direct comparison is not possible. It also excludes children living in communal establishments, boarding schools, youth detention centres and children's homes as all respondents were selected from households already taking part in the adult survey.

Data availability and comparability

The Scotland and Northern Ireland crime surveys do not include data for under 16s.

Data is only available for England and Wales for the past six years. However, comparison across the six years is not possible due to changes in the way the statistics are collected. The small sample size means that estimates fluctuate over time making trends difficult to interpret.

Due to the difficulty in classifying some crimes against children, the survey uses two different measures of crime: the preferred measure and the broad measure. The broad measure is the widest possible count of offences and incorporates minor offences between children and family members that would not usually be classed as crimes. The preferred measure is a narrower approach that takes into account factors identified as important in determining the severity of an incident – for example, the relationship to the offender and the level of injury.

England and Wales

Estimated percentage of 10 to 15 year olds who were the victim of a violent crime in the past 12 months

Preferred measure table

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Wounding	1.8	1.1	1.0	1.0	1.1	0.8	1.4
Assault with minor injury	3.7	3.7	3.6	2.9	3.3	2.8	3.2
Robbery	1.3	0.9	1.3	1.0	0.7	0.7	0.7
Violence with injury	5.3	4.7	4.5	3.9	4.3	3.6	4.4
Violence without injury	2.4	1.7	2.2	1.5	1.7	1.6	1.5
Any violent incidents	7.4	6.2	6.4	5.2	5.9	5.2	5.8

According to the preferred measure, which captures more severe incidents, in 2015/16, almost 6 per cent of 10 to 15 year olds in England and Wales were the victim of a violent crime in the past 12 months. Approximately three quarters of these sustained an injury.

As an indication, this is three times the proportion of adults who were victims of violent crime in 2015/2016 (2 per cent), though direct comparisons are problematic due to methodological differences.

Broad measure table

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Wounding	1.9	1.1	1.0	1.0	1.1	0.8	1.4
Assault with minor injury	5.0	4.4	4.4	3.7	4.2	4.0	4.0
Robbery	1.6	1.0	1.3	1.1	0.8	0.8	0.8
Violence with injury	6.6	5.5	5.3	4.6	5.2	4.7	5.2
Violence without injury	11.4	7.0	7.2	6.5	5.1	6.1	5.9
Any violent incidents	17.0	11.5	11.8	10.8	9.8	10.1	10.7

When minor incidents are included using the broad measure, the results show that almost 11 per cent of 10 to 15 year olds had been a victim of a violent crime.

It is not possible to compare data across the six years due to changes in the way the statistics are collected.

General findings

The crime survey estimates that a total of 844,000 crimes were experienced by children aged 10 to 15 in 2015/2016 based on the preferred measure of more severe incidents. Of this total, 50 per cent were violent crimes (418,000) while most of the remaining crimes were thefts of personal property (274,000). Of the 418,000 violent offences, the majority (76 per cent) resulted in injury to the victim. In comparison, about 45 per cent of violent incidents among adults (aged 16 or above) resulted in injury to the victim. In 2015/2016, 4 per cent of 10 to 15 year olds were the victims of violence and sustained an injury on the preferred measure, equal to 318,000 individual incidents.

Data source

Office for National Statistics (ONS) (2016) *Crime in England and Wales year ending September 2016*. Newport: Office for National Statistics (ONS).

Crime survey for England and Wales

Experiences of abuse in childhood

In 2015/16 the Office for National Statistics' Crime survey for England and Wales (CSEW) included questions about experiences of childhood abuse for the first time.*

The self-completion module asked a representative sample of 20,582 people aged 16 to 59 in England or Wales if, before the age of 16, they had:

- been psychologically abused by an adult
- been physically abused by an adult
- been sexually assaulted by an adult, or
- witnessed domestic abuse.

Survey data and child abuse prevalence

Much of the data in *How safe are our children?* comes from agencies involved in protecting children from abuse.

This can only ever provide part of the picture, as abuse often goes unreported, unrecognised and unrecorded. By offering people who have experienced abuse a confidential and anonymous means of disclosure, surveys can give a more robust estimate of the prevalence of abuse.**

The inclusion of questions in the Crime survey for England and Wales about childhood abuse is an encouraging development. It provides the first official estimates of experiences of abuse in childhood. By surveying people aged 16 to 59 years, the results of the crime survey covers childhood experiences from 1956 (when the oldest respondents were born) up to 2015 (when the youngest respondents were 15). Because of this, the results cannot be considered a reliable reflection of the current levels of abuse experienced by children.

The best way to get a clear idea of what is happening now is to survey children about their own experiences of abuse, as the NSPCC did in the 2009 prevalence study (see indicator 6). As these findings become increasingly dated there is real need for the UK Government to commission a new UK-wide prevalence study of all forms of abuse and neglect.

Childhood experiences of abuse of 16 to 24 year olds

Information from the crime survey is available broken down by age group. Data from the 2,417 survey respondents aged 16 to 24 offers the closest indication of children's current lifetime experiences of abuse, covering childhood experience from 1991 to 2015. Information from respondents in this age group is set out below.

* Office for National Statistics (2016) *Abuse during childhood: findings from the crime survey for England and Wales, year ending March 2016*. Newport: Office for National Statistics.

** Meinck, F. et al. (2016) *Measuring and monitoring national prevalence of child maltreatment: a practical handbook*. Copenhagen: World Health Organisation (WHO).

Experiences of abuse

Among the 16 to 24 year olds surveyed, 13.8 per cent reported experiencing abuse during childhood.

The most common form of childhood abuse experienced was psychological abuse, reported by 8.2 per cent of 16 to 24 year olds. Among this age group, 5.3 per cent reported witnessing domestic violence/abuse, 3.8 per cent reported experiencing physical abuse and 3 per cent reported experiencing sexual assault.

Abuse type	16-24 years (%)
Any abuse	13.8
Psychological abuse	8.2
Witnessed domestic violence or abuse	5.3
Physical abuse	3.8
Any sexual assault	3.0

More than a third of the 16 to 24 year olds who reported experiencing childhood abuse had experienced more than one type of abuse by the time they turned 16.

Relationship to perpetrator

The majority of 16 to 24 year olds who experienced abuse knew their perpetrator. For psychological and physical abuse the perpetrator was most often a family member or partner. In comparison sexual assault was more likely to be perpetrated by a non-family member, such as a stranger, friend or acquaintance.

	Psychological abuse	Physical abuse	Any sexual assault
Mother (%)	30	27	0
Father (%)	29	32	4
Step-father (%)	14	13	2
Step-mother (%)	6	4	0
Other family member (%)	16	6	10
Partner or previous partner (%)	13	12	14
Friend or acquaintance (%)	16	4	21
Person in a position of trust (%)	4	0	3
Stranger (%)	6	8	48
Someone else (%)	4	0	5
Don't know/can't remember (%)	3	4	1
Don't wish to answer (%)	16	14	3

How the crime survey differs from the NSPCC's 2009 prevalence report

This research differs in a number of significant ways from the 2009 prevalence report (indicator 6), preventing comparison between the two datasets.

Key differences between the two surveys include:

- The crime survey looked at abusive experiences before the age of 16, whereas the 2009 prevalence report covered abuse experienced up to the age of 18.
- The crime survey included information on abuse perpetrated by adults only. The prevalence report included both abuse by adults and peer-to-peer abuse.
- The crime survey focused on psychological abuse, physical abuse, sexual assault and witnessing of domestic violence. The prevalence survey covered a wider range of maltreatment including neglect.
- The crime survey related to England and Wales, whilst the prevalence report covered the whole of the UK
- The crime survey collected information on 16 to 59 year olds' experiences of abuse in childhood, whilst the prevalence report collected information from young adults, teenagers, children and parents of younger children.
- The crime survey asked 16 to 59 year olds if they had experienced abuse at any point in their childhood. The prevalence report collected data on abuse experienced in the last year, as well as children's lifetime experiences of abuse.

These differences, and the contrasting time periods covered, may explain the variations in the surveys' findings. 13.8 per cent of 16 to 24 year olds reported experiencing abuse during childhood in the crime survey, while 25.3 per cent of 18 to 24 year olds reported experiencing severe maltreatment in childhood in the 2009 prevalence survey.

INDICATOR 11

Referrals to social services

KEY MESSAGES

- Referrals in England remain higher than those seen prior to 2013/14, despite a slight decline in the past two years.
- There has been a downward trend in the number of referrals in Wales since 2009/10.
- In Northern Ireland the number of children referred in 2015/16 has decreased by 11 per cent in the past year.
- There has been a decreasing trend in the proportion of re-referrals in Wales, while re-referrals in England have remained fairly consistent.

Why is this measure important?

A referral is the first stage of the child protection process in all four nations. A referral will be made about a child where some aspect of their life is giving cause for concern. A referral is a request for services to be provided by children's services where the child is not previously known to them, or where the case was previously open but is now closed. Anyone who has concerns about the safety or welfare of a child can make a referral to statutory services.

What are the limitations of the data?

An increase in referrals is not good or bad in terms of the safety of children – an increase in referrals could indicate an increase in awareness of concerns about the safety of a child; alternately it could indicate an increase in the levels of concern about the safety of children or changes in legislation, policy and practice, such as an adjustment to thresholds.

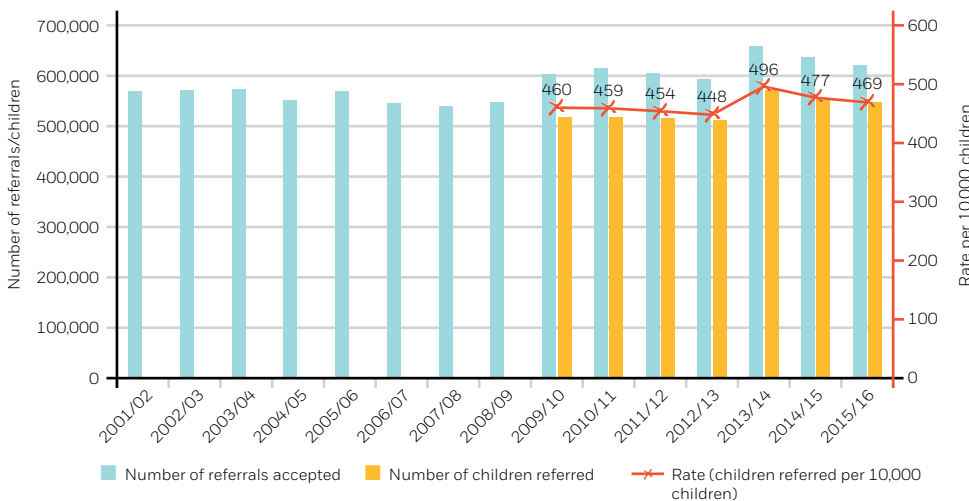
Data availability and comparability

Data for the number of referrals is published for England and Wales. In 2014/15 Northern Ireland changed how it sources some child protection data. This means that data published in 2014/15 is not the same and cannot be compared with earlier data. Children referred data is available for England and Northern Ireland. Scotland discontinued publication in 2010 due to concerns about the inconsistency of definitions used to record data with local authorities.

In previous editions we have included data on the proportion of referrals that resulted in an assessment. Due to changes in how the nations record and publish this information, there is no longer sufficient comparable data available, and so we are no longer including this information in the report.

England

Number of referrals accepted

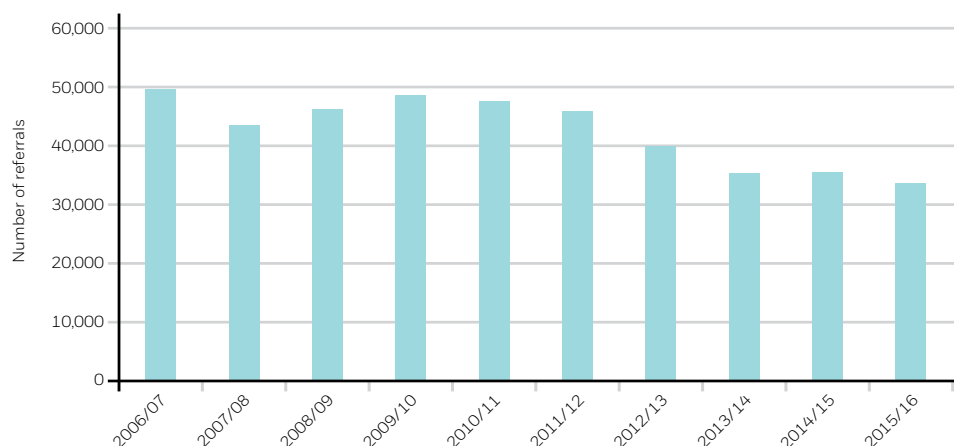


Latest figure: There were 621,470 referrals relating to 547,300 children for the year ending 31 March 2016.

Trend: There was a slight decrease in the number of referrals and children referred for the second year in 2015/16. However, following the increase in 2009/10, the number of referrals in England remains higher than those seen in the previous eight years.

Wales

Number of referrals accepted

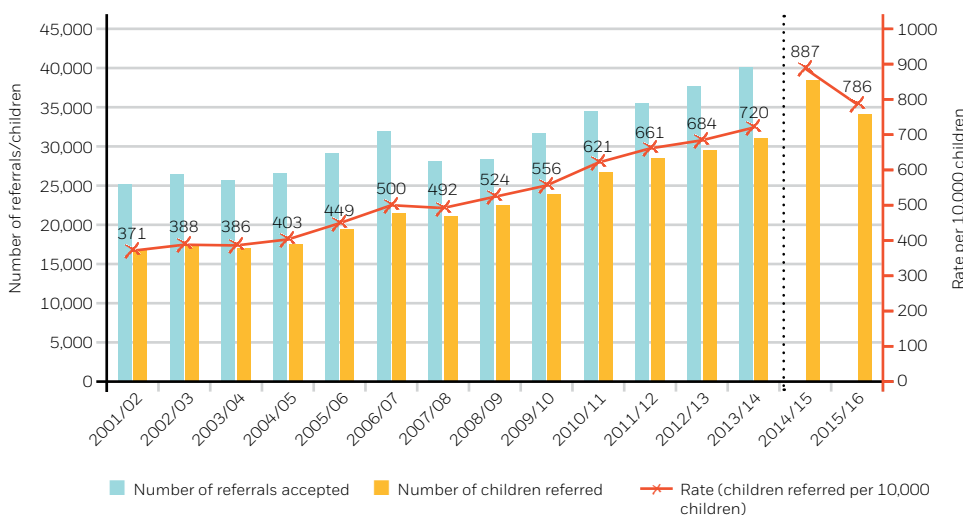


Latest figure: There were 33,536 referrals for the year ending 31 March 2016.

Trend: Since 2009/10, there has been a downward trend in the number of referrals in Wales.

Northern Ireland

Number of referrals accepted



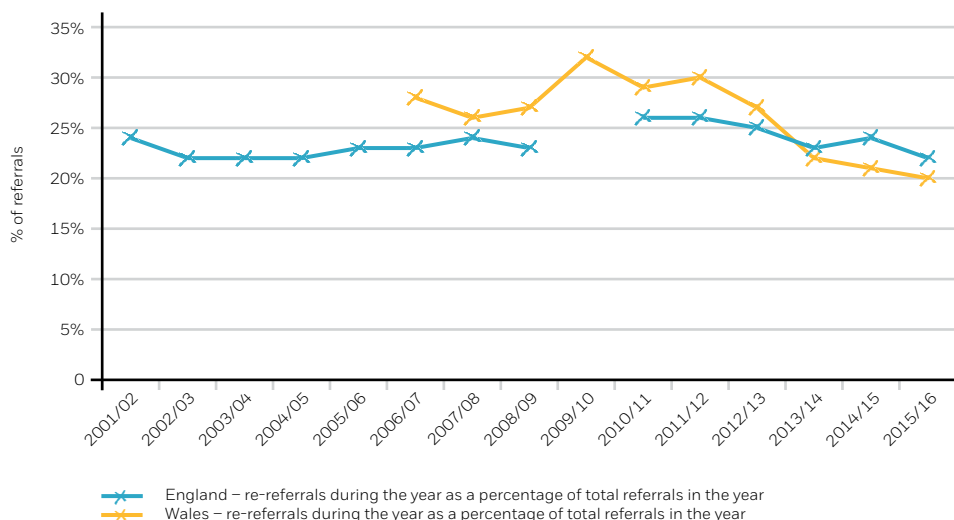
Latest figure: There were 34,124 children referred to social services for the year ending 31 March 2016. This was an 11 per cent decrease on the previous year.

Trend: Due to changes in data collection methods in 2014/15, data is not comparable with previous years. More data is needed for a trend to be established.

Re-referrals

England and Wales publish data on the number of re-referrals that local authorities receive. This data is unavailable for Northern Ireland or Scotland. Data on the total number of re-referrals in England is not available for 2009/10 as the decision was made in that year to publish data on the number of children re-referred instead.

Re-referrals as a percentage of total referrals: England and Wales



Latest figure: In England 22 per cent of referrals were re-referred within one year of a previous referral. In Wales, 20 per cent of referrals during the year were re-referred.

Trend: For Wales, there has been a declining trend in the proportion of re-referrals, from 28 per cent in 2006/07. The proportion of re-referrals in England has remained fairly stable over time, fluctuating between 22 and 26 per cent.

Data sources

England: Department for Education (DfE) (2016) Characteristics of children in need: 2015 to 2016. London: Department for Education. (Additional data provided to NSPCC).
Wales: Welsh Government (2017) Wales children in need census, 2016. Cardiff: Welsh Government.

Northern Ireland: Department of Health (2016) Children's social care statistics for Northern Ireland 2015/16. Belfast: Department of Health.

INDICATOR 12

Children in need

KEY MESSAGES

- In England the number and rate of children in need due to abuse and neglect has increased every year since 2011/12.
- In Wales, there has been a general upward trend in the number and rate of children in need due to abuse and neglect since 2009/10.

Why is this measure important?

A child is in need if they are unlikely to achieve or maintain, or have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining, a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision of services by a public authority; or if a child's development or health is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired without the provision of such services. There are many different reasons why a child would be in need including for instance, being disabled. Here we have focused on the data regarding children who are in need due to abuse or neglect.

What are the limitations of the data?

An increase or decrease in this number does not mean that children are becoming more or less safe. A fluctuation may mean that more or fewer children are coming to the attention of social services, rather than a change in actual numbers of children in need (CIN).

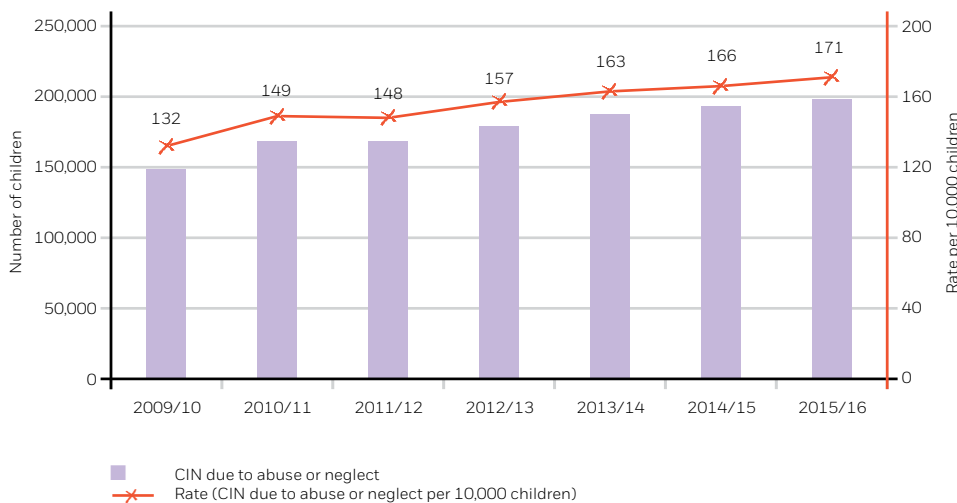
Data availability and comparability

Data showing the breakdown of children in need due to abuse or neglect is only available for England and Wales. Children in need data is collected and published in Northern Ireland, however it does not show children in need specifically due to abuse or neglect. Contrary to previous years where it has been possible to include data where further action is taken following a children in need referral, Northern Ireland is in the process of changing the way it collects its children in need information, and it no longer collects that particular data.

Children in need data is not collected or published in Scotland.

England

Children in need due to abuse or neglect

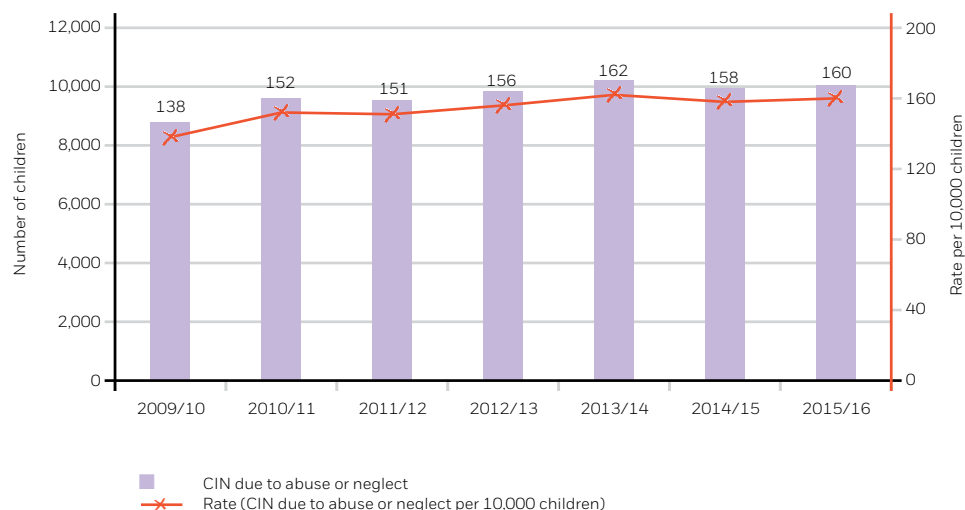


Latest figure: There were 199,720 children in need due to abuse or neglect at 31 March 2016. This comprises 51 per cent of the total children in need. The rate per 10,000 children was 171.

Trend: The total number and rate of children in need due to abuse or neglect has continued to increase every year since 2011/12.

Wales

Children in need due to abuse or neglect

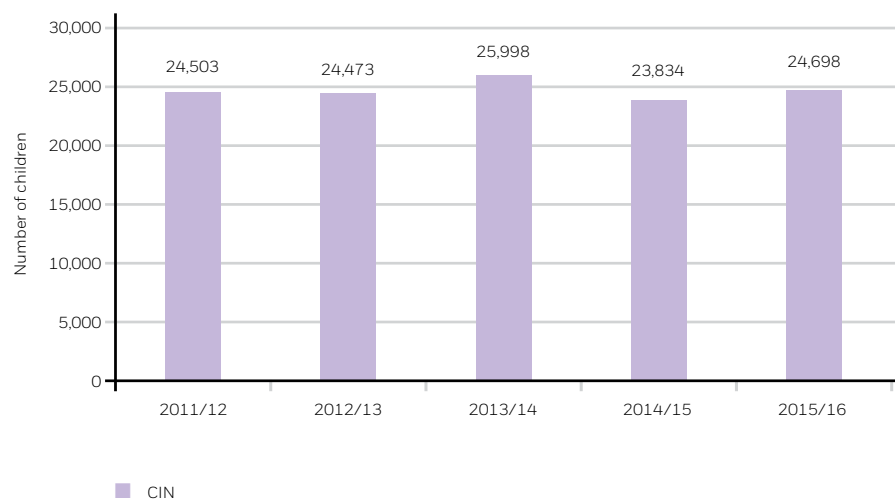


Latest figure: There were 10,060 children in need due to abuse or neglect at 31 March 2016. This comprises 53 per cent of the total children in need. The rate per 10,000 children was 160.

Trend: There has been an upwards trend in the number and rate of children in need due to abuse or neglect since 2009/10.

Northern Ireland

Children in need



Latest figure: There were 24,698 children in need in Northern Ireland at 31 March 2016.

Trend: Despite a slight increase in the number of children in need over the past year in Northern Ireland, overall the numbers have remained fairly stable since 2011/12.

Data sources

England: Department for Education (DfE) (2016) *Characteristics of children in need: 2015 to 2016*. London: Department for Education (DfE).

Wales: Welsh Government (2017) *Wales children in need census, 2016*. Cardiff: Welsh Government.

Northern Ireland: Department of Health (DOH) (2016) *Children's social care statistics for Northern Ireland 2015/16*. Belfast: Department of Health (DoH).

INDICATOR 13

Children in the child protection system

KEY MESSAGES

- Numbers and rates of children within the child protection system have increased in all four nations since 2002.
- There has also been an increase in the number and rate of children becoming subject to a child protection plan (CPP) or added to a child protection register (CPR) in all four nations since 2002.

Why is this measure important?

Children subject to child protection plans (CPP) or on child protection registers (CPR) are deemed to be at continuing risk of harm. Plans and registers record details regarding children where there are on-going concerns about their safety. Despite a difference in terminology, plans and registers are roughly the same.

We have included the stock (the number of children on CPPs or CPRs at one time) and the flow into the system (the number of children who become subject to a CPP or added to a CPR in a year). In England, Wales and Scotland the flow is consistently higher than the stock as some children will stay on plans/registers for less than a year, and some will be counted twice if they are re-registered in the same year. In these three countries the flow is increasing more quickly than the stock. This is likely to be due to the fact that more children are spending a shorter time on plans and registers, or that there are more re-registrations.

What are the limitations of the data?

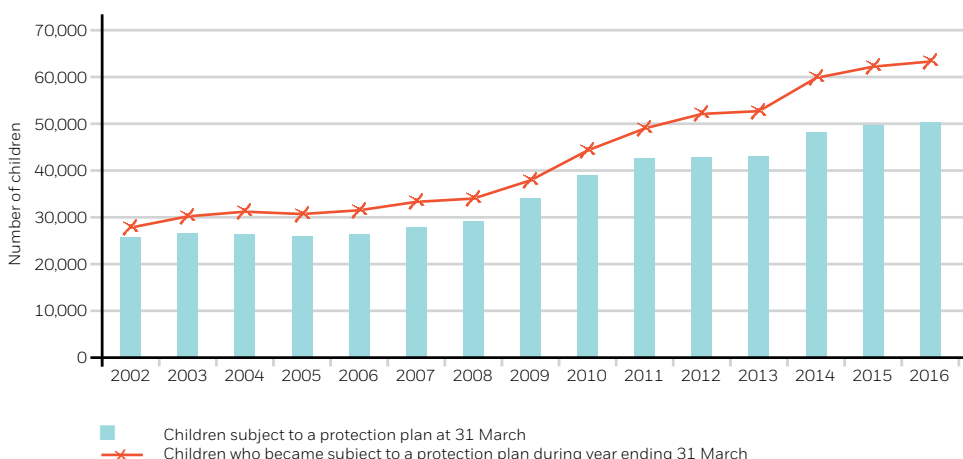
This data captures the number of children subject to a CPP or on CPRs. Data is only held on children who have been identified by the authorities as being in need of a child protection plan. Many children who have experienced or are likely to experience significant harm may not be identified. These figures should therefore not be interpreted as a record of all child abuse. An increase in the number of children subject to CPPs or on CPRs could suggest that more abuse is coming to the attention of social services or that it is more prevalent.

Data availability and comparability

All four nations publish data on the number of children subject to CPPs or on CPRs. Scotland began to collect this data for the year ending 31 July (rather than 31 March) from 2011.

England

Number of children on and becoming subject to a child protection plan

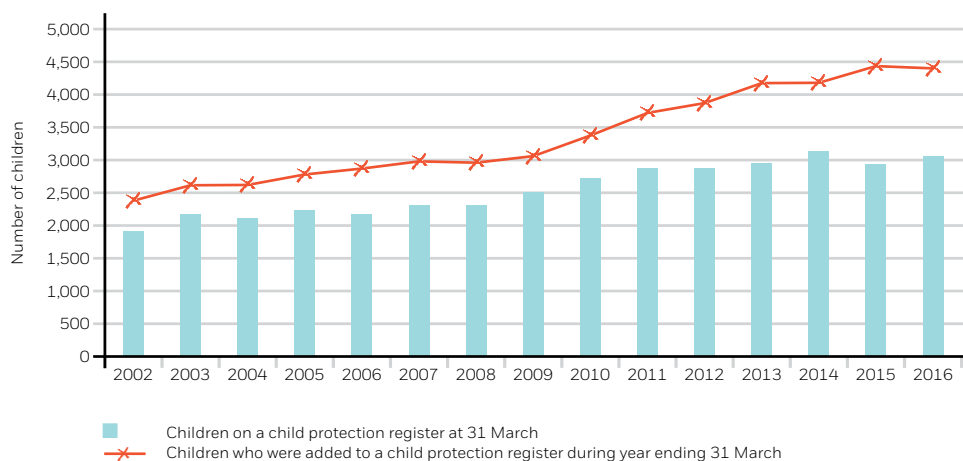


Latest figure: There were 50,310 children subject to child protection plans (CPPs) on 31 March 2016, and 63,310 children became subject to a CPP in the year 31 March 2015 to 31 March 2016. If a child is subject to more than one child protection plan during the year, each is counted.

Trend: The number of children subject to a child protection plan has been increasing since 2002. Between 2002 and 2016 the number of children subject to CPPs on 31 March increased by 96 per cent. The number of children becoming subject to a CPP each year increased by 128 per cent.

Wales

Number of children on and added to a child protection register

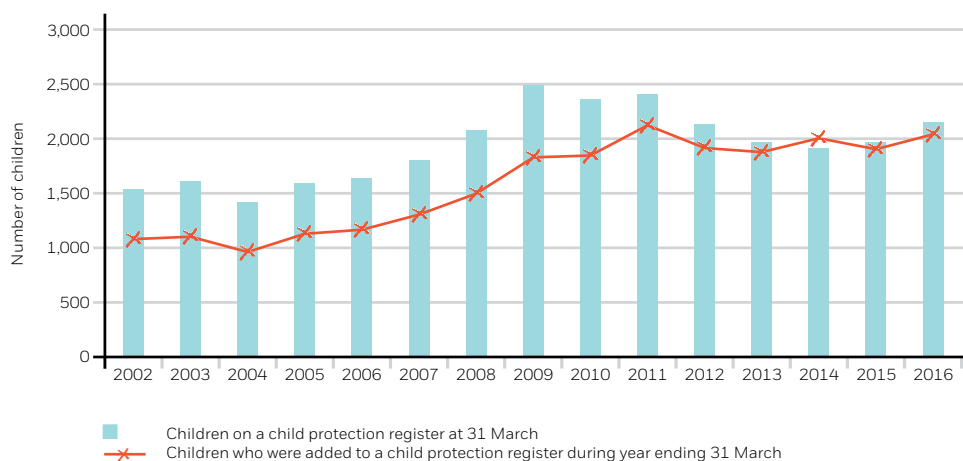


Latest figure: There were 3,059 children on a child protection register (CPR) on 31 March 2016, and 4,400 children were added to a CPR in the year 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016. Where a child has moved on to the register several times during the year, each registration is recorded.

Trend: Between 2002 and 2016 the number of children on a CPR on 31 March increased by 60 per cent and the number of children added to a CPR per year increased by 85 per cent.

Northern Ireland

Number of children on and added to a child protection register

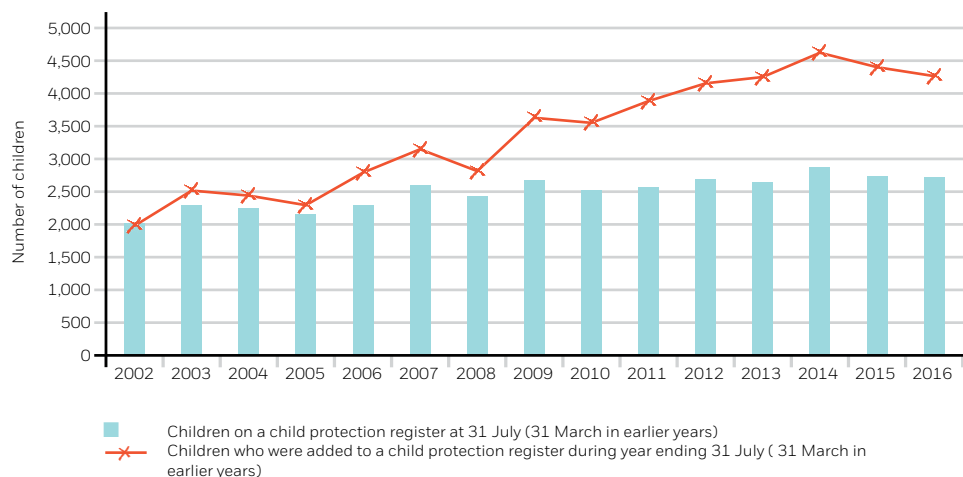


Latest figure: There were 2,146 children on a CPR on 31 March 2016, and 2,040 children were added to a CPR in the year 31 March 2015 to 31 March 2016. Where a child has moved on to the register several times during the year, each registration is recorded.

Trend: Between 2002 and 2016 the number of children on a CPR at 31 March increased by 40 per cent and the number of children added to a CPR each year increased by 89 per cent.

Scotland

Number of children on and added to a child protection register

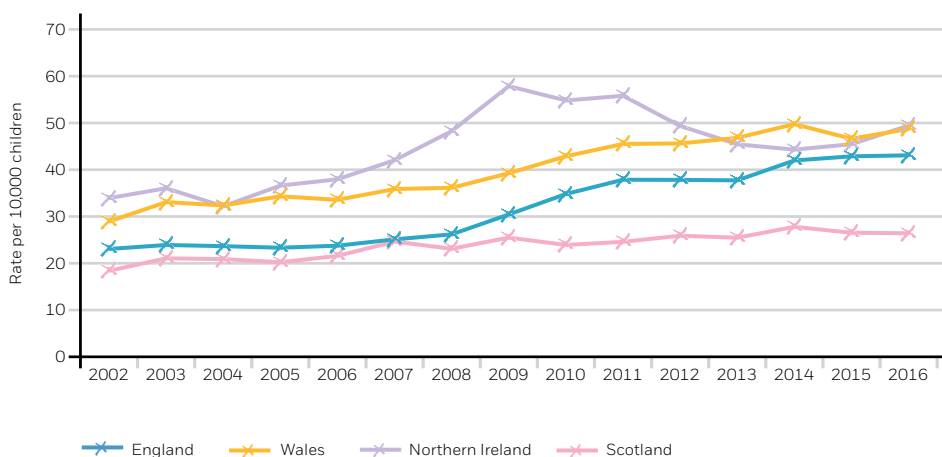


Latest figure: Scotland began to collect data for the year ending 31 July in 2011. There were 2,723 children on a CPR on 31 July 2016 and 4,265 children were added to a CPR in the year 1 August 2015 to 31 July 2016. Where a child has moved on to the register several times during the year, each registration is recorded.

Trend: Between 2002 and 2016 the number of children on a CPR at one time increased by 35 per cent and the number of children added to a CPR per year increased by 116 per cent.

UK

Children subject to child protection plans or on registers (rate per 10,000 children)



Latest figure: Northern Ireland had the highest rate of children on child protection registers, with 49 per 10,000 under 18s on the register in Northern Ireland.

Trend: Since 2002 the rate of children subject to CPPs and on CPRs has increased in all four nations.

Between 2002 and 2016 the largest rate increase was in England (87 per cent), followed by Wales (68 per cent), Northern Ireland (46 per cent) and Scotland (44 per cent). During this period the population of children increased in England and declined in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Data Sources

England: Department for Education (DfE) (2016) *Characteristics of children in need: 2015 to 2016*. London: Department for Education (DfE). **Wales:** Welsh Government (2016) *Children on child protection register by local authority and period of time*. Cardiff: Welsh Government. **Northern Ireland:** Department of Health (2016) *Children's social care statistics for Northern Ireland 2015/16*. Belfast: Department of Health (DoH). **Scotland:** Scottish Government (2017) *Children's social work statistics 2015-16*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government.

**The proportion of
UK children on a
child protection plan
or register is higher
than a decade ago.**

INDICATOR 14

Composition of child protection plans and child protection registers

KEY MESSAGES

- Neglect remains the most common reason for being subject to a child protection plan (CPP) or on a child protection register (CPR) in England and Wales. There has been an upward trend in the proportion due to emotional abuse, the second most common reason in both nations.
- The trend in Northern Ireland differs from the other nations where physical abuse remains the main reason for a child being on a CPR. There has been a downward trend in the proportion of children on a CPR due to emotional abuse since 2011/12.
- Parental substance misuse, domestic abuse, emotional abuse and neglect remain the main reasons identified at case conferences in Scotland. There is an upward trend in the proportion of concerns about domestic abuse.

Why is this measure important?

This data shows the reasons why a child who is deemed to be at continuing risk is subject to a child protection plan (CPP) or is on a child protection register (CPR).

What are the limitations of the data?

All four nations publish data on the reasons why children are subject to a CPP or are on a CPR, but there are differences between the nations in the criteria for recording and the classification of categories of abuse or concerns, as described below.

Data availability and comparability

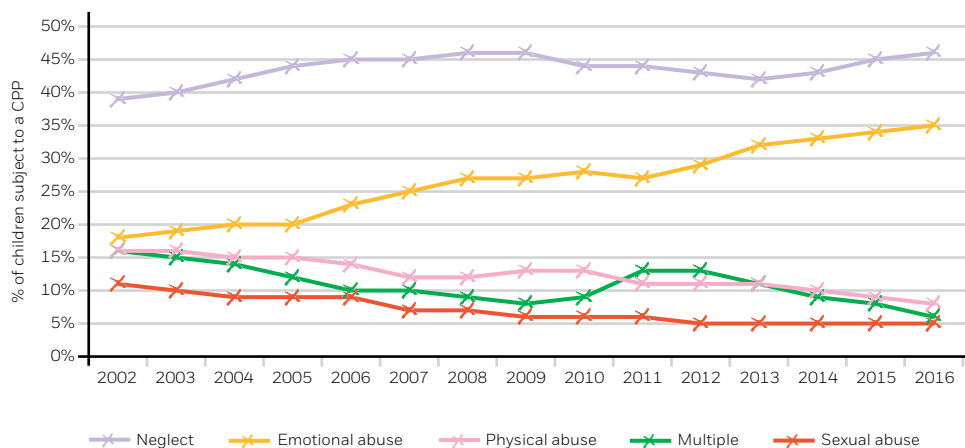
In England, Northern Ireland and Wales the data shows the reasons why a child is subject to a CPP or on a CPR by initial category of abuse (neglect, physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or multiple forms of abuse). This is the category as assessed when the CPP or CPR registration commenced.

The method of recording in Scotland changed in 2012 to enable multiple concerns to be recorded at each case conference rather than just the initial main category of abuse. Since this change, Scotland records additional categories, including domestic abuse, parental substance misuse and parental mental health. On average it records two or three concerns per child case conference.

Due either to changes in recording methods, or the availability of published data, different time series are available for the four nations. Here we have selected data from 2002 to 2016 for England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and 2012 to 2016 for Scotland. The change to the method of recording in Scotland means that figures on concerns identified in Scotland are not directly comparable to data on the category of abuse/risk prior to 2012.

England

Composition of child protection plans

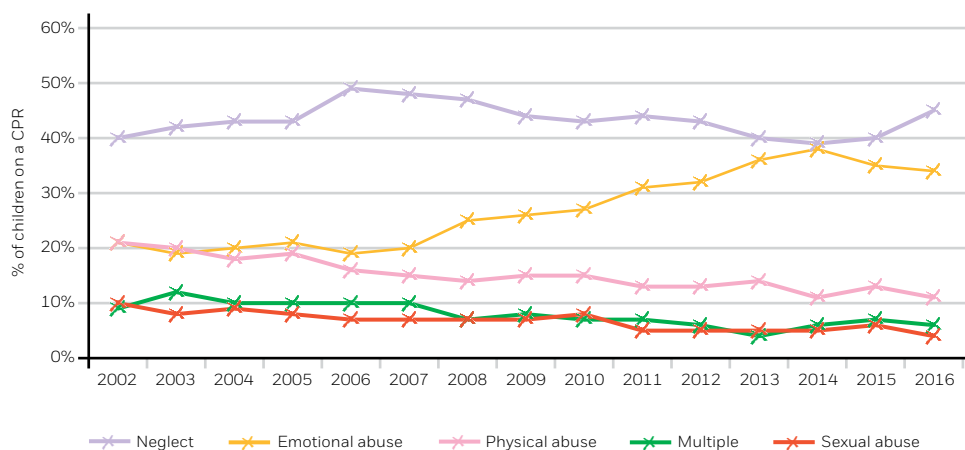


Latest figure: At 31 March 2016 the breakdown of reasons for being subject to a CPP was as follows: 46 per cent neglect; 35 per cent emotional abuse; 8 per cent physical abuse; 6 per cent multiple reasons; and 5 per cent sexual abuse.

Trend: The proportion of children subject to a CPP for neglect has been fairly constant in recent years. It remains the most common reason for a child to be subject to a plan. The proportion of children subject to a CPP due to emotional abuse is increasing, and has almost doubled since 2002, which could be attributed to increased awareness among public and professionals. There has been a general downward trend in the proportion of children subject to a CPP due to sexual abuse and physical abuse.

Wales

Composition of child protection registers

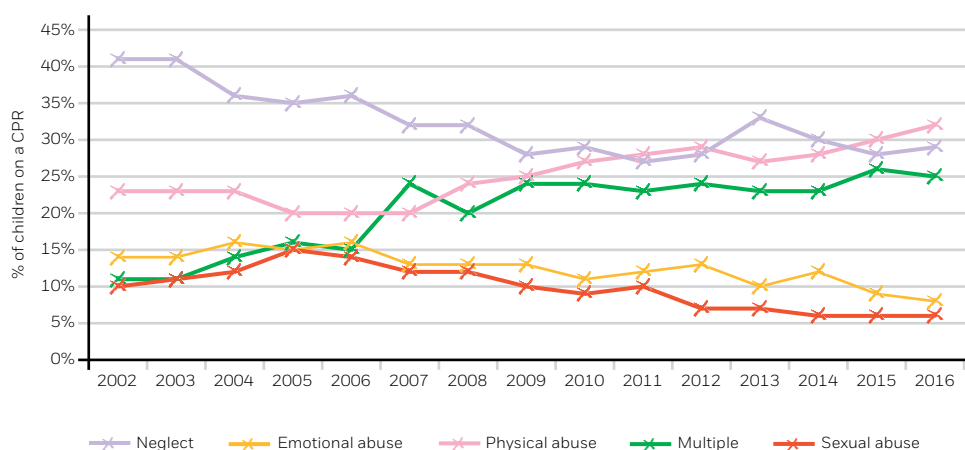


Latest figures: The breakdown of reasons for being on a CPR was as follows: 45 per cent neglect; 34 per cent emotional abuse; 11 per cent physical abuse; and 4 per cent sexual abuse. There were 195 children on a CPR for more than one type of abuse – of these 79 per cent related to neglect and physical abuse; 10 per cent neglect and sexual abuse; 8 per cent physical and sexual abuse and the remaining 3 per cent included neglect, physical abuse and sexual abuse.

Trend: The proportion of children on a register due to neglect has remained fairly constant and is consistently the most common reason for being on a CPR. There has been an upward trend in the proportion of children on a register for emotional abuse, although there has been a slight decline in the last two years. Emotional abuse remains the second most common reason for being on a CPR accounting for more than a third of all CPRs in Wales. There has been a general downward trend in the proportion of children on a CPR due to sexual abuse and physical abuse.

Northern Ireland

Composition of child protection registers

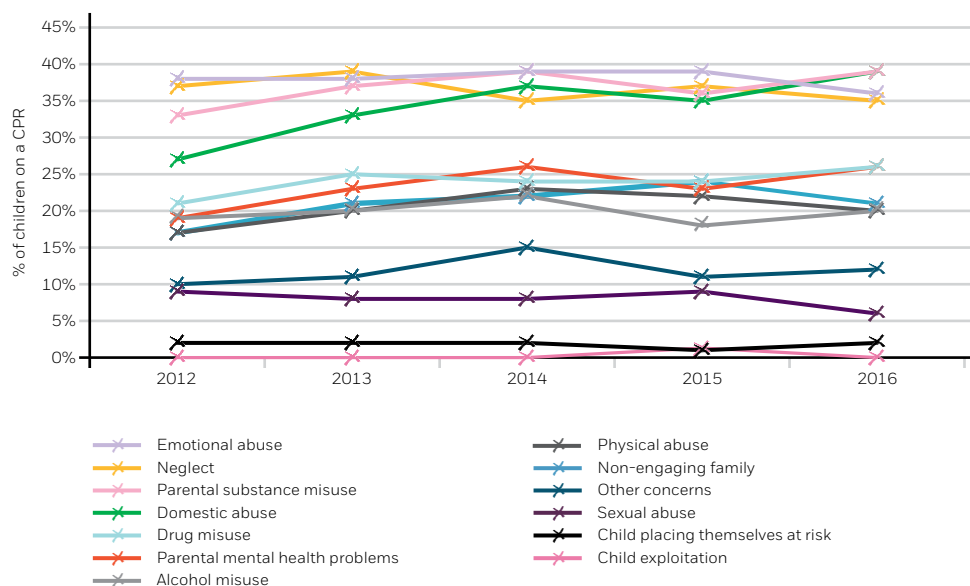


Latest figures: The breakdown of cause was as follows: 32 per cent physical abuse; 29 per cent neglect; 8 per cent emotional abuse; and 6 per cent sexual abuse. There were 527 children on a CPR for more than one type of abuse – of these 80 per cent related to neglect and physical abuse; 8 per cent neglect and sexual abuse; 8 per cent physical and sexual abuse; and the remaining 5 per cent included neglect, physical abuse and sexual abuse.

Trend: There has been an upward trend in the proportion of children on a register due to physical abuse. For the second year running physical abuse was the main reason for a child being on a CPR, accounting for almost a third of all CPRs. The proportion of children on a CPR for multiple reasons has also increased since 2002. There has been a continuing decline in the proportion of children on a CPR due to emotional abuse, neglect and sexual abuse.

Scotland

Concerns at case conference of children on the child protection register during the year ending 31 July



Latest figures: The percentage breakdown of causes were as follows: 39 per cent parental substance misuse; 39 per cent domestic abuse; 36 per cent emotional abuse; 35 per cent neglect; 26 per cent parental mental health problems; 26 per cent drug misuse; 21 per cent non-engaging family; 20 per cent alcohol misuse; 20 per cent physical abuse; 12 per cent other concerns; 6 per cent sexual abuse and 2 per cent child placing themselves at risk.

Trend: There has been an increasing trend in the proportion of concerns relating to domestic abuse at case conferences of children on a CPR. Other proportions have remained fairly constant over time. Parental substance misuse, domestic abuse, emotional abuse and neglect remain the main reasons identified at case conferences in Scotland.

Data sources

England: Department for Education (DfE) (2016) *Characteristics of children in need: 2015 to 2016*. London: Department for Education (DfE). **Wales:** Welsh Government (2016) *Local authority child protection registers in Wales, 2016*. Cardiff: Welsh Government. **Scotland:** Scottish Government (2017) *Children's social work statistics: 2015-2016*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government. **Northern Ireland:** Department of Health (DOH) (2016) *Children's social care statistics for Northern Ireland 2015/16*. Belfast: Department of Health (DoH).

Emotional abuse has increased as the reason for a child to be on a child protection plan or register in England and Wales in the past five years.

INDICATOR 15

Re-registration onto child protection registers or returning to a child protection plan

KEY MESSAGES

- In England the percentage of children who become subject to a child protection plan (CPP) for a second or subsequent time has increased slightly every year since 2010/11.
- In Wales the percentage of children who went back on a child protection register (CPR) for a second or subsequent time has remained fairly constant since 2008/9, at between 15 and 18 per cent.
- In Northern Ireland there has been an upward trend in the percentage of children becoming re-registered reaching a high of 22 per cent in 2015/16, up from a low of 15 per cent in 2010/11.
- In Scotland the percentage of children who went back on a CPR for a second or subsequent time has been broadly constant since 2009/10.

Why is this measure important?

Re-registration data shows the number of children subject to child protection plans (CPPs) or on child protection registers (CPRs) who come back onto the plans or registers. Re-registration rates could suggest that the decision to remove them initially from a CPP or CPR was premature and that they are not actually safer, or they could suggest that circumstances in the child's life have changed requiring re-registration.

What are the limitations of the data?

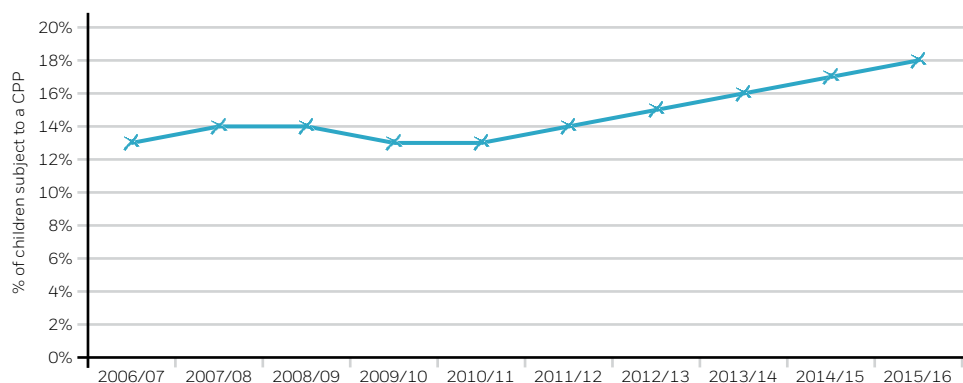
Data is only held on children who have been identified by the authorities as being in need of a child protection plan. Many children who have experienced or are likely to experience significant harm may not be identified. These figures should therefore not be interpreted as a record of all child abuse. It should be noted that there is no optimal amount of time to be subject to a CPP or to be on a CPR.

Data availability and comparability

All four nations publish data on the number of children who are being re-registered on CPRs or are returning to CPPs.

England

Percentage of children becoming subject to a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time

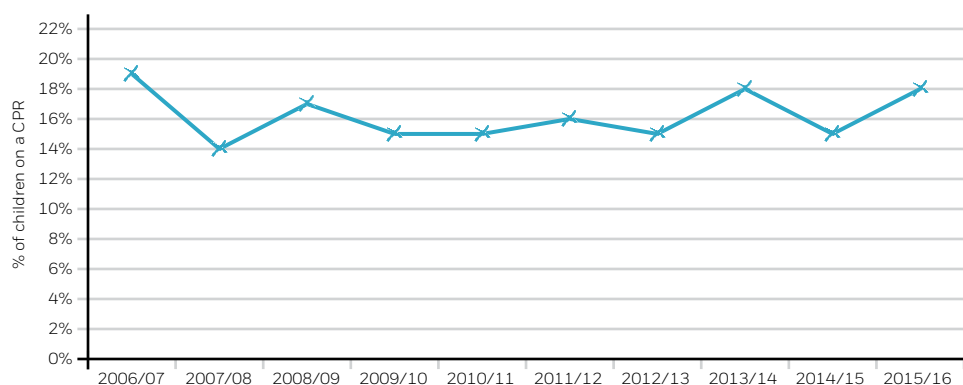


Latest figure: 18 per cent of children became subject to a child protection plan (CPP) for a second or subsequent time in the year to 31 March 2016.

Trend: The percentage of children who become subject to a CPP for a second or subsequent time has increased slightly every year since 2010/11.

Wales

Percentage of children returning to a child protection register for a second or subsequent time

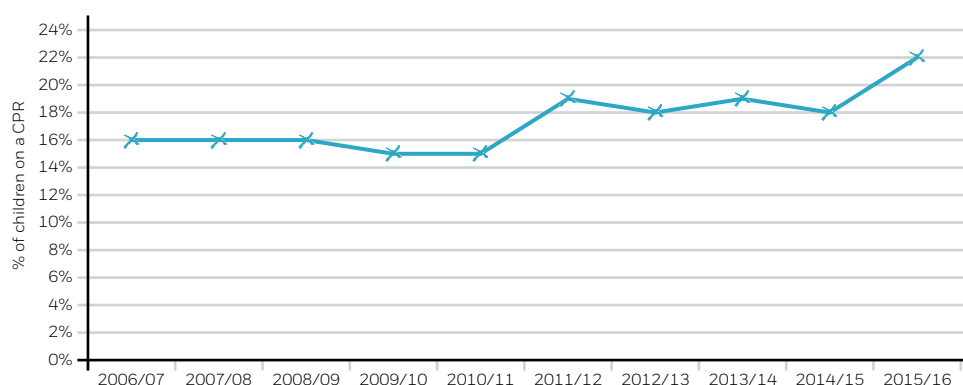


Latest figure: 18 per cent of children were re-registered on a child protection register (CPR) for a second or subsequent time in the year to 31 March 2016.

Trend: The percentage of children who went back on a CPR for a second or subsequent time increased from 15 per cent in the year to 31 March 2015 to 18 per cent in the year to 31 March 2016. The percentage has remained fairly constant since 2008/9, at between 15 and 18 per cent.

Northern Ireland

Percentage of children returning to a child protection register for a second or subsequent time

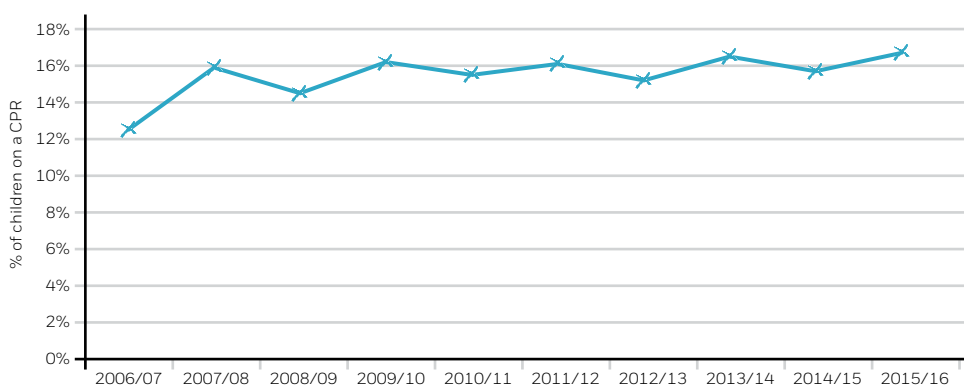


Latest figure: 22 per cent of children were re-registered on a CPR for a second or subsequent time in the year to 31 March 2016.

Trend: In Northern Ireland there has been an upward trend in the percentage of children re-registered. The proportion increased from 15 per cent in 2010/11 to a high of 22 per cent in 2015/16.

Scotland

Percentage of children returning to a child protection register for a second or subsequent time



Latest figure: 17 per cent of CPR registrations relate to children being registered for a second or subsequent time in the year to 31 July 2016.

Trend: The percentage of children going back on a CPR for a second or subsequent time has been broadly constant since 2009/10, at between 15 and 17 per cent.

Data sources

England: Department for Education (DfE) (2016) *Characteristics of children in need: 2015 to 2016*. London: Department for Education (DfE). **Wales:** Welsh Government (2016) *Local authority child protection registers in Wales, 2016*. Cardiff: Welsh Government. **Scotland:** Scottish Government (2017) *Children's social work statistics: 2015-2016*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government. **Northern Ireland:** Department of Health (DoH) (2016) *Children's social care statistics for Northern Ireland 2015/16*. Belfast: Department of Health (DoH).

Between 17 and 22 per cent of children put on a child protection plan or register in 2015/16 had been on one before.

INDICATOR 16

How long are children subject to child protection plans or on child protection registers

KEY MESSAGES

- There has been a downward trend in the proportion of children who are subject to child protection plans (CPPs) or on child protection registers (CPRs) for longer than two years in all the UK nations where data is available. This may indicate that the proportion of children whose cases are “drifting” is decreasing.
- The data shows that a larger proportion of children on CPRs in Northern Ireland are on registers for two years or longer compared with those in England or Scotland (10.3 per cent for Northern Ireland compared to 5.8 per cent on a CPR in Scotland and 3.8 per cent on a CPP in England).

Why is this measure important?

Child protection plans (CPPs) and child protection registers (CPRs) record details regarding children where there are concerns about their safety. When a child is de-registered, it would suggest that there were no longer concerns about that child’s safety and that he or she was indeed safe and no longer at a risk of harm.

The data presented here shows the percentage of children subject to a CPP or on a CPR who are there for longer than two years. Spending a long time on either plans or registers could suggest that cases are being allowed to “drift”.

What are the limitations of the data?

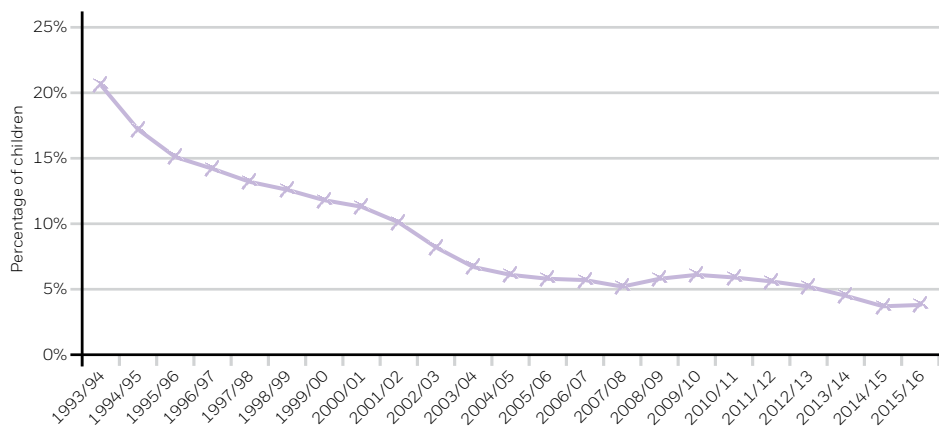
The length of time a child is subject to a CPP or on a CPR is an indication of how long the authorities are providing them with support, rather than the length of time that abuse is occurring. Many children who have experienced or are likely to experience significant harm may not be identified, and abuse may have been going on for a long time before it comes to the attention of the authorities. It should be noted that there is no optimal amount of time to be subject to a CPP or on a CPR.

Data availability and comparability

All nations, apart from Wales, publish data on how long in total children were subject to a CPP or were on a CPR before they were de-registered. Wales records how long children have been on a register at the year’s end, which is not a comparable figure.

England

Percentage of children who ceased to be subject to a CPP who had been on for two years or longer

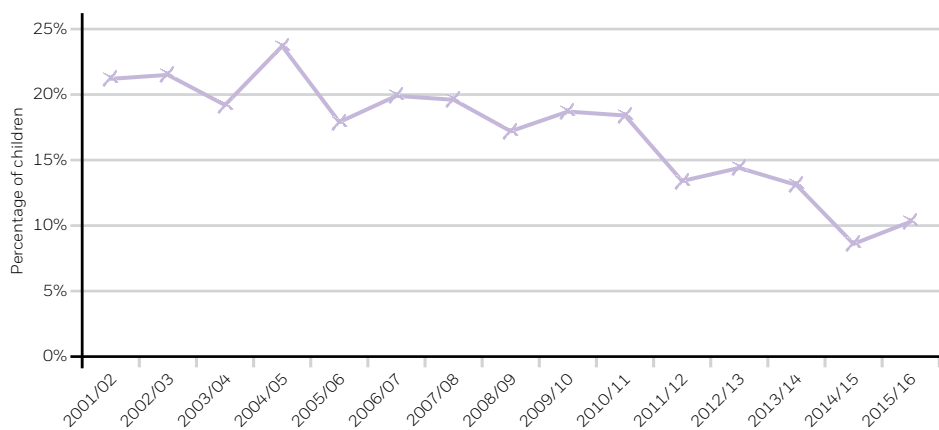


Latest figure: 3.8 per cent of children coming off a CPP in the year to 31 March 2016 had been subject to a plan for longer than two years.

Trend: Since 1993/94 there has been a long-term decline in the percentage of children who had been subject to a CPP for two years or longer. In 2014/15 it fell below 4 per cent for the first time and remained at similar levels in 2015/16.

Northern Ireland

Percentage of children ceasing to be on a CPR who had been on for longer than two years

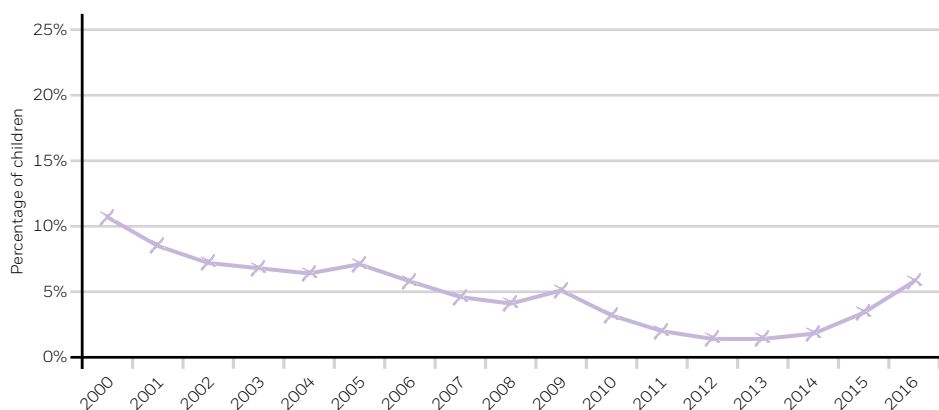


Latest figure: 10.3 per cent of children coming off a CPR in the year to 31 March 2016 had been on a register for longer than two years.

Trend: Since 2001/2 there has been a downward trend in the percentage of children who have been on a CPR for longer than two years. It has increased in the last year from 8.6 per cent to 10.3 per cent.

Scotland

Percentage of children ceasing to be on a CPR who had been on for two years or longer



Latest figure: 5.8 per cent of children coming off a CPR in the year to 31 July 2016 had been on a plan for two years or longer.

Trend: The percentage of children who had been on a CPR for two years or longer has been decreasing since 2000/1. In 2013/14 it reached a low of 1.4 per cent. Since then it has increased to 5.8 per cent in 2015/16.

Data sources

England: Department for Education (DfE) (2016) *Characteristics of children in need: 2015 to 2016*. London: Department for Education (DfE).

Northern Ireland: Department of Health (2016) *Children's social care statistics for Northern Ireland 2015/16*. Belfast: Department of Health (DoH).

Scotland: Scottish Government (2017) *Children's social work statistics 2015-16*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government.

INDICATOR 17

Looked after children

KEY MESSAGES

- The past five years have seen an overall increase in the number of children in care due to abuse or neglect in England and Wales.
- Sixty per cent of all looked after children in England in 2015/16 were looked after as a result of abuse or neglect. In Wales the figure is 68 per cent.
- This year the number of looked after children is the highest on record in Northern Ireland.

Why is this measure important?

The term "looked after children" refers to those children who are cared for by the state. The measure gives an indication of the number of instances in which the state acts as a corporate parent. There are many reasons why the state might be a corporate parent, including because a child has suffered abuse or neglect, was at risk, or is disabled. Additionally, a child may become looked after if a parent is ill or disabled, or because parents are absent. Looked after children can also include children who are cared for on a voluntary basis at the request of, or by agreement with, their parents and children who are looked after for short periods of time, for example in instances of respite care.

The total number of looked after children is frequently cited as an indication of the state of child welfare and the efficacy of social services. While this is important, we have again focused on the available statistics for children who are looked after due to abuse or neglect, and children who started to become looked after in England and Wales. This allows us to track changes in

a specific area of need (abuse or neglect) and thereby gain a deeper understanding of key influencing factors within that area.

What are the limitations of the data?

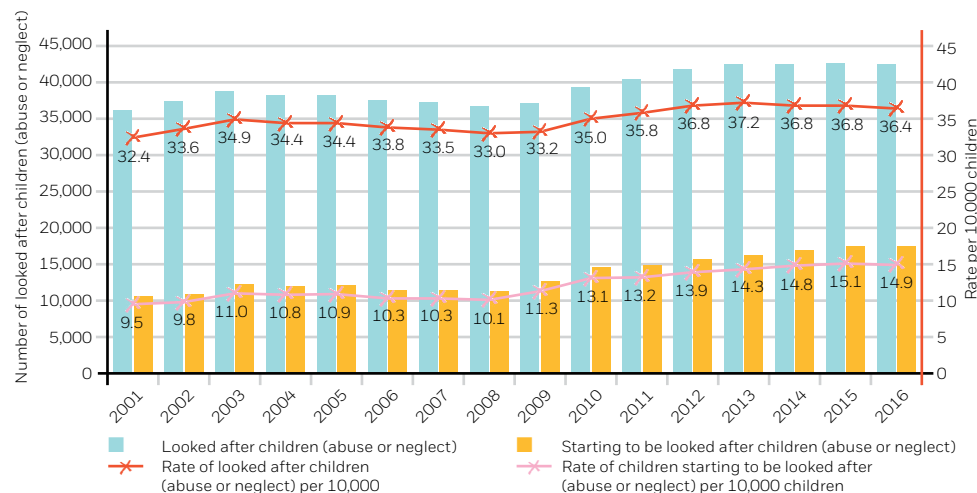
In England and Wales statistics on looked after children are available for different categories of need. The reason why a child first becomes looked after is registered under whichever category is most applicable at that time. This may not be the only category relevant to that child for the period during which he or she is looked after. In Northern Ireland the looked after children data excludes children who are in care for respite purposes only, this means that the totals may be smaller than the other three nations.

Data availability and comparability

Data is published for all four nations on looked after children. Only England and Wales publish data on the number of children who are looked after due to abuse or neglect. Northern Ireland and Scotland only publish numbers of looked after children, not the reasons why they become looked after.

England

Number and rate of children looked after due to abuse or neglect who started to be looked after



Latest figure: There were 42,470 children looked-after due to abuse or neglect at 31 March 2016. During the year, 17,440 children became looked after due to abuse or neglect. Sixty per cent of all looked after children in England in 2015/16 were looked after as a result of abuse or neglect. All of these figures are a slight reduction on the previous year.

Trend: The proportion of children in care due to abuse or neglect has remained between 60 and 62 per cent for the past decade. The overall number of children looked after due to abuse and neglect has remained relatively stable over the past five years and the number of children starting to be looked after has seen a general increase from 2008.

Wales

Number and rate of children looked after due to abuse or neglect and children who started to be looked after

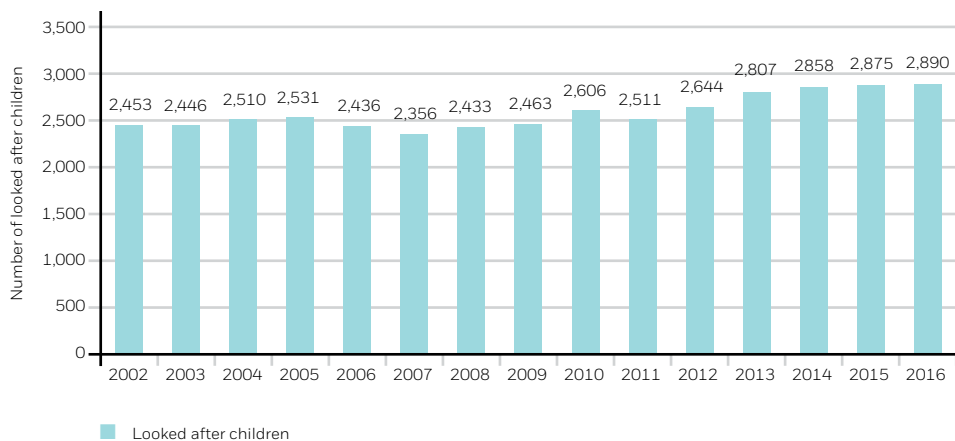


Latest figure: There were 3,720 children looked after due to abuse or neglect at 31 March 2016. During the year 1,305 children started to be looked after due to abuse or neglect. These figures are an increase on the previous year.

Trend: The proportion of children in care due to abuse or neglect has remained between 65 and 68 per cent for the past five years. The number of children looked after due to abuse and neglect has fluctuated over the past seven years. Following an increase from 2010 to 2013, there have been reduced numbers of children looked after due to abuse and neglect in the past three years. The number and rate of children starting to be looked after has fluctuated over the same time period.

Northern Ireland

Number of looked after children

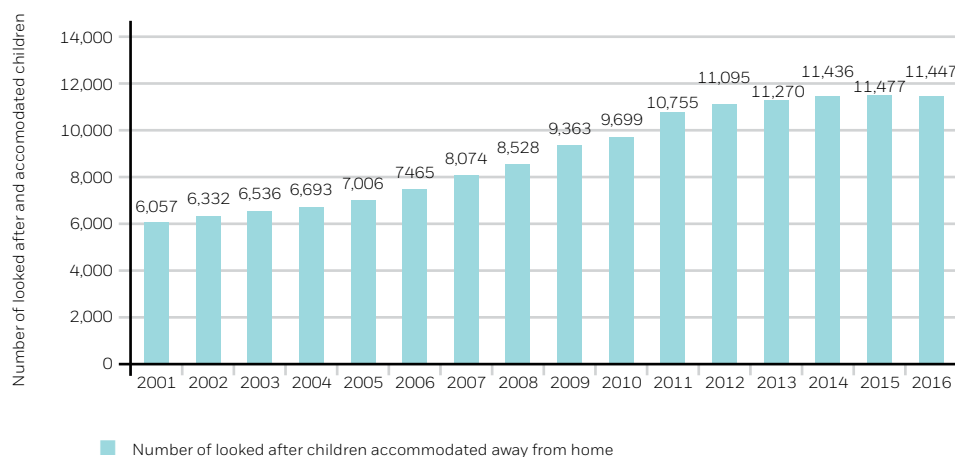


Latest figure: There were 2,890 looked after children in Northern Ireland at 31 March 2016.

Trend: The number of looked after children has increased each year since 2011 and is now the highest recorded in Northern Ireland. Rate calculations have not been included. They would not be comparable with England and Wales as Northern Ireland's data does not allow us to identify children looked after due to abuse or neglect.

Scotland

Number of looked after and accommodated children



Latest figure: There were 15,317 looked after children in Scotland at 31 July 2016. Of these 11,447 were looked after or accommodated away from home. This is the first year-on-year decrease seen in children looked after away from home since 1998.

Trend: There remains a long-term increasing trend in the number of looked after children who are accommodated away from home at 31 July (31 March up to 2010) in Scotland since 2001. Rate calculations have not been included. They would not be comparable with England and Wales as Scottish data does not allow us to identify children looked after due to abuse or neglect.

Data Sources

England: Department for Education (DfE) *Children looked after in England including adoption: 2015 to 2016*. London: Department for Education (DfE). **Wales:** Welsh Government (2017) *Wales children in need census, 2016*. Cardiff: Welsh Government. **Northern Ireland:** Department of Health (2016) *Children's social care statistics for Northern Ireland 2015/16*. Belfast: Department of Health. **Scotland:** Scottish Government (2017) *Children's social work statistics: 2015-2016*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government.

INDICATOR 18

Proportion of looked after children who have three or more placements during the year

KEY MESSAGES

- In England the number of looked after children with three or more placements a year has seen a decreasing trend since 2002.
- Following a downward trend between 2004 and 2014, the proportion of looked after children in Wales who had three or more placements has slightly increased over the past two years.

Why is this measure important?

This indicator shows the proportion of looked after children who have three or more placements in a year. (See Indicator 17 for information about children looked after generally and as a result of abuse or neglect.)

The evidence suggests that many children do well in care, particularly if they are able to settle into their placements long term.* However, research suggests a link between placement instability and poor mental health outcomes for children in care.** Here we present the available data on the proportion of looked after children who have three or more placements in a year. A low and/or falling proportion of children who have three or more placements would suggest that placement stability is improving.

What are the limitations of the data?

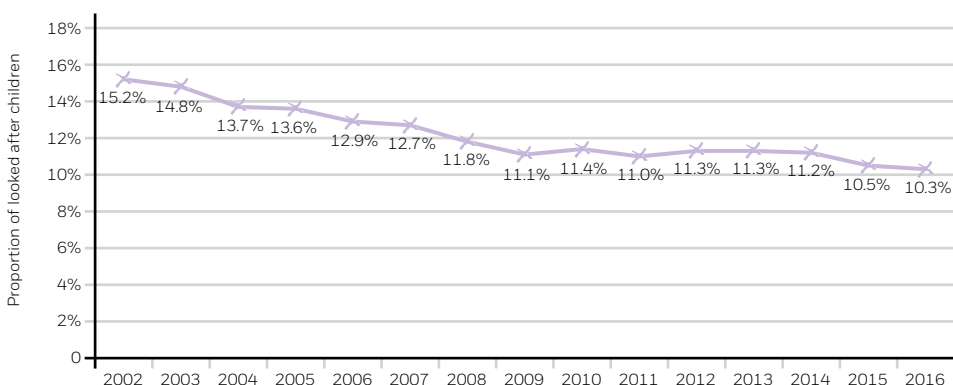
The data on number of placements relates to all children who are looked after, not just those children who are looked after due to abuse or neglect. Available data is not broken down to that level of detail.

Data availability and comparability

Data on the number of placements that looked after children have is available for all four nations, however in Northern Ireland the data is only collected over a six-month period. In 2014/15 Northern Ireland changed the collection of data which meant that placement moves for looked after children excluded those for respite purposes. The change to the recording practices in Northern Ireland means that the data is not directly comparable to data from the other nations. In Scotland there is a broader definition of a "looked after child" as it incorporates children who are looked after at home and accommodated away from home, therefore the proportion of placement moves is considerably lower.

England

Proportion of looked after children with three or more placements during the year



Latest figure: There were 7,250 looked after children who had three or more placements in the year ending 31 March 2016. This represented 10 per cent of all looked after children at 31 March 2016.

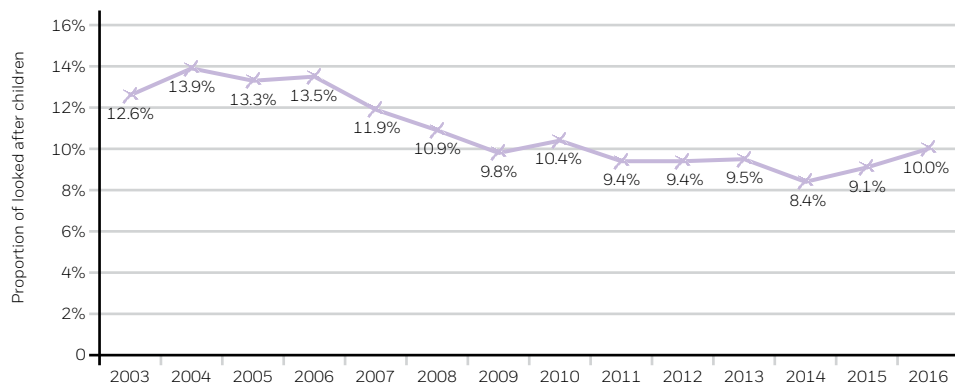
Trend: The number of looked after children with three or more placements a year has seen a decreasing trend since 2002. After declining steadily between 2002 and 2010, the proportion of looked after children with three or more placements has remained at between 10.3 and 11.3 per cent over the past five years.

*Sebba, J. et al. (2015) *The educational progress of looked after children in England: linking care and educational data*. Oxford: Rees Centre/University of Bristol.

**Villodas, M.T. et al. (2016) 'Long-Term Placement Trajectories of Children Who Were Maltreated and Entered the Child Welfare System at an Early Age: Consequences for Physical and Behavioral Well-Being'. *Journal of Pediatric Psychology*, 41(1): 46–54.

Wales

Proportion of looked after children with three or more placements during the year

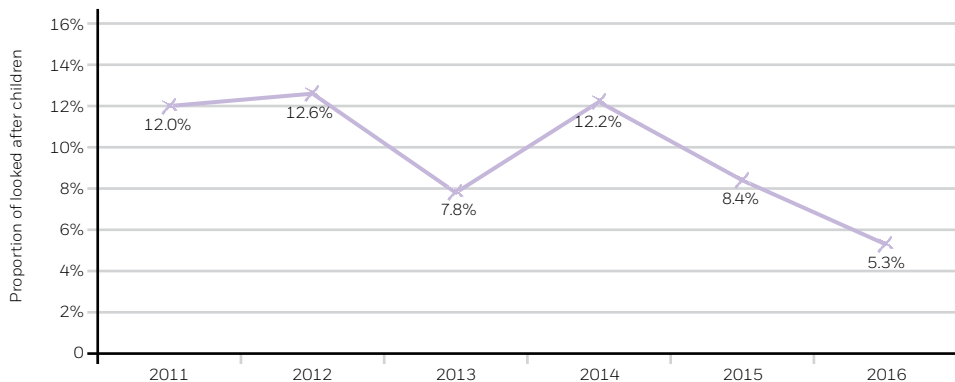


Latest figure: There were 560 looked after children who had three or more placements in the year ending 31 March 2016. This was 10 per cent of all looked after children at 31 March 2016.

Trend: The overall number of looked after children who had three or more placements during the year has remained relatively stable. Following a downward trend between 2004 and 2014, the proportion of looked after children who had three or more placements has slightly increased over the past two years.

Northern Ireland

Proportion of looked after children with three or more placements during the six months ending 31 March 2016

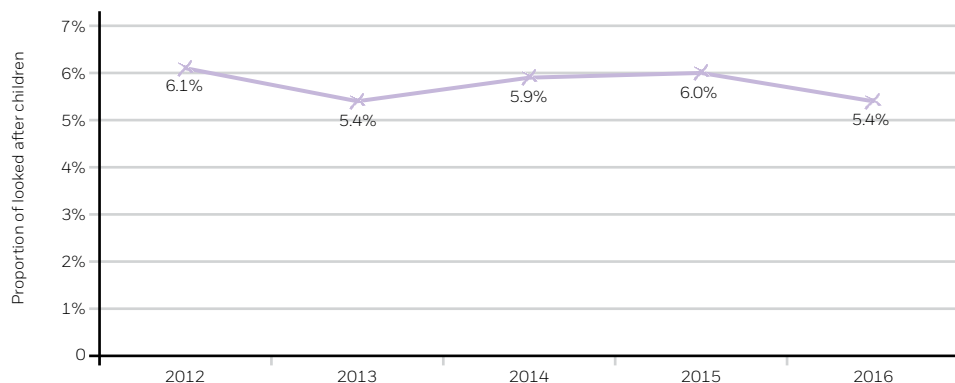


Latest figure: There were 154 looked after children who had three or more placements in the six months prior to 31 March 2016. This was 5.3 per cent of all looked after children at 31 March 2016.

Trend: The proportion of looked after children who had three or more placement moves in a given six month period is in decline. It should be noted that the decrease in the numbers of looked after children with three or more placement moves can be attributed to changes in recording practices in April 2015 which excluded placement moves for respite purposes.

Scotland

Proportion of looked after children with three or more placements during the year



Latest figure: There were 833 looked after children who had three or more placements in the year ending 31 July 2016. This was 5.4 per cent of all looked after children at 31 July 2016.

Trend: There has been a general downward trend in the number of looked after children who had three or more placements in the year. In Scotland there is a consistently lower proportion of placement moves of looked after children compared to the other nations because they include those accommodated at home.

INDICATOR 19

Child trafficking

KEY MESSAGES

- **1,278 potential victims of child trafficking were referred to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) in 2016, up 30 per cent from 982 in 2015.**
- **289 children were referred to the Child Trafficking Advice Centre (CTAC) in the year ending October 2016, a 29 per cent increase from 2014/15.**

Why is this measure important?

“Modern slavery” is the overarching term used by the UK Government to encompass slavery, servitude, forced and compulsory labour, and human trafficking. Child trafficking is the recruitment and movement of children for the purpose of exploitation and is a form of modern slavery. Child trafficking can happen across borders and internally. Children cannot give informed consent to being trafficked. It is a serious form of child abuse that causes significant harm to its victims. Victims are vulnerable to a very high level of physical, emotional and sexual abuse and neglect while being trafficked.

Modern slavery has been identified as an issue of significance by the UK Government: in March 2015 the Modern Slavery Bill received Royal Assent. The Act consolidates current offences relating to trafficking and slavery. This measure uses data from referrals received by the Child Trafficking Advice Centre (CTAC)* as well as data from the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), a framework for identifying victims of human trafficking and ensuring they receive appropriate care.**

What are the limitations of the data?

The hidden nature of child trafficking makes it difficult to identify its true extent. Both CTAC and NRM data depends on a referral being made by a professional with concerns about a child. However, not all cases of identified trafficking will be referred, and even if a referral has been made, the trafficking indicators may not always be clear. It is not mandatory for a professional to make a referral to the NRM. Some victims will not be identified in the first place. This means that these data sources don't necessarily reflect the full scale of child trafficking in the UK. Understanding trends in numbers of victims also poses problems as recording and reporting

procedures have changed in recent years. Increases in referrals may not indicate an increase in children being trafficked, but rather an increase in the numbers being identified.

The NRM provides figures relating to the number of potential victims of trafficking who have been referred in each year. The data set should be considered provisional as it contains data on cases which have not yet been concluded. The data from referrals to the NSPCC's CTAC only reflects referrals made to the service.

Data availability and comparability

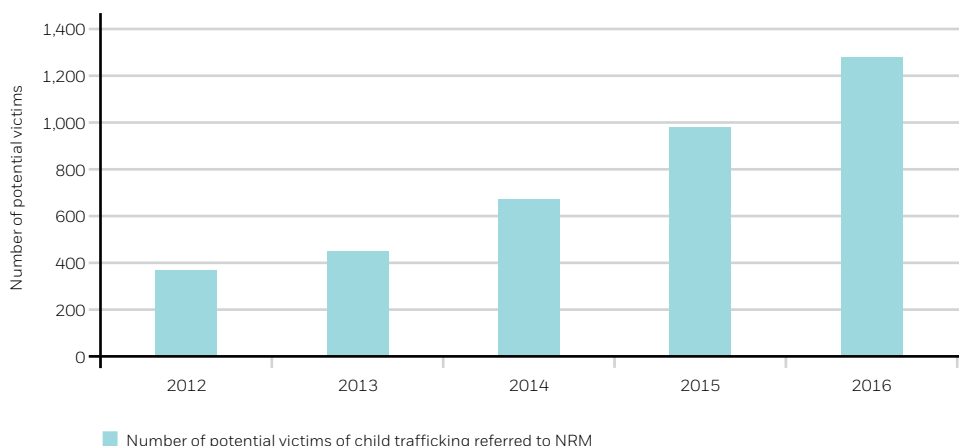
Available data is limited. Currently available child protection data does not include information on whether a child has been trafficked. In previous years for this indicator, we have used data collated by the UK Human Trafficking Centre (now named the Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Unit) from a range of sources including the NRM; however this data was not published for 2016. Therefore we have used the NRM data as the best available alternative.

NRM figures include data on children trafficked within the UK, whereas CTAC's data only includes children trafficked to the UK from overseas. This data is shared with the National Crime Agency and included in NRM figures on child trafficking and exploitation.

For the past two years the NRM figures have included a breakdown of referrals for England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, but this does not give us enough data to analyse trends.

* CTAC was launched in 2007. It is an NSPCC service offering free guidance and training to professionals concerned that a child or young person has been or is about to be trafficked into or out of the UK. CTAC also co-ordinates multi-agency responses; attends child protection meetings; produces child trafficking reports for courts; and is a first responder for child referrals into the National Referral Mechanism (NRM). ** The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is a victim identification and support process that is designed to make it easier for all the different agencies involved in a trafficking case (for example, the police, UK Visa and Immigration, local authorities and NGOs) to cooperate, share information about potential victims and facilitate their access to advice, accommodation and support.

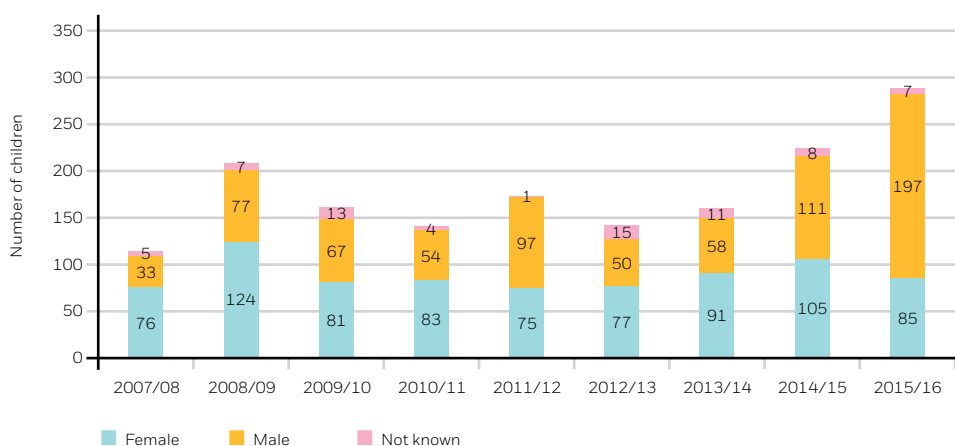
Number of potential victims of child trafficking



1,278 potential victims of child trafficking were referred to the NRM in 2016. This is a 30 per cent increase on 2015. Where the type of exploitation was known, labour exploitation was the most common, with 37 per cent of referrals. This includes the sub-category of criminal exploitation, such as cannabis cultivation.

The NRM received 1,204 referrals of potential victims of child trafficking where the first responder was based in England, 47 from Scotland, 21 from Wales and six from Northern Ireland.

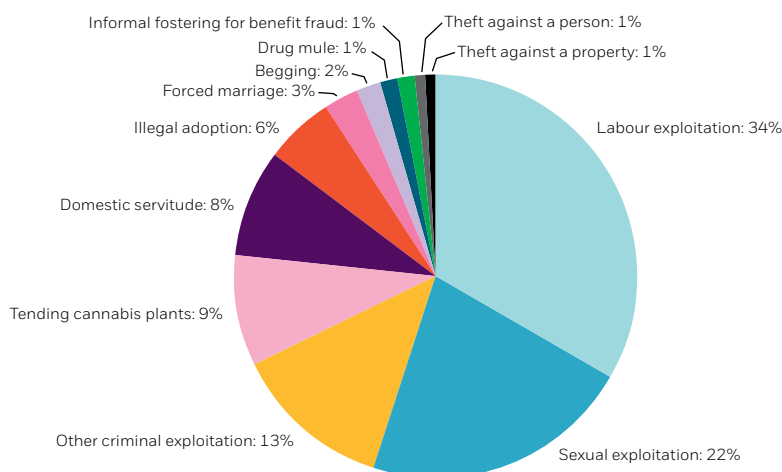
Number of children referred to CTAC



Latest figure: Between November 2015 and October 2016, 289 children were referred to CTAC, 85 of them female, 197 of them male and in seven cases the gender was not recorded.

Trend: The number of children referred to CTAC reached its highest number to date between November 2015 and October 2016. The total number of children has increased by 29 per cent since the period between November 2014 and October 2015 and by 154 per cent since 2007/08.

CTAC: trafficking concerns Nov 2015–Oct 2016

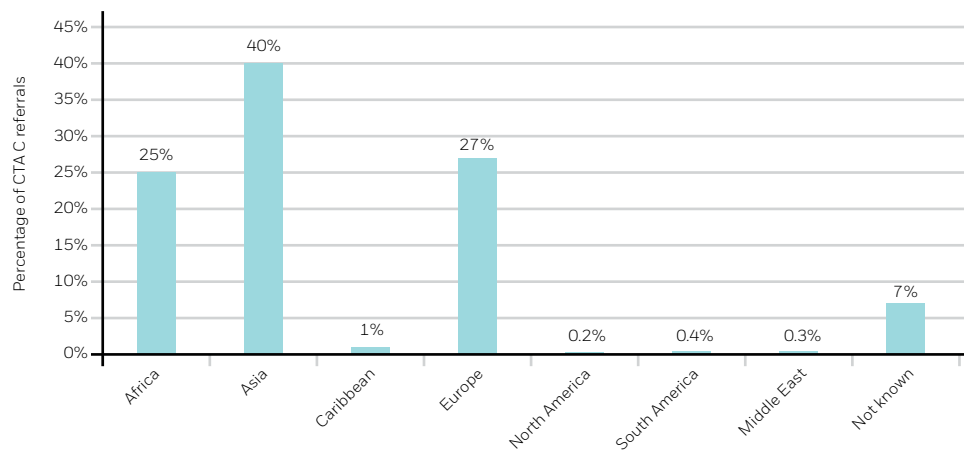


This chart shows the main trafficking concerns about children who were referred to CTAC for the year ending October 2016. In total, 342 trafficking concerns were recorded. These included 162 cases which were still under investigation and 37 where the concern was not known or not recorded. The chart shows a breakdown of the concerns, where the type of concern had been recorded.

Where the concern was known, labour exploitation was the most common with 34 per cent of referrals. Sexual exploitation is the second most common concern, with 22 per cent.

When CTAC receives referrals, two main concerns can be recorded for each case. This means the total number of concerns can be higher than the total number of CTAC cases.

Region of origin of CTAC referrals



Asia is the most common region of origin for children referred to CTAC, making up 40 per cent of all children referred. This is followed by Europe, which accounts for 27 per cent of referrals, and Africa which accounts for 25 per cent.

**There was a
30 per cent increase
in the number
of suspected
trafficked children
referred between
2015 and 2016.**

INDICATOR 20

Public attitudes to child abuse and neglect

KEY MESSAGES

- Public awareness of the prevalence of abuse and neglect has remained consistently fairly high since 2013, with minimal fluctuation. Sixty-one per cent of people describe abuse and neglect as being “common”.
- Since 2013 there has been a nine percentage point increase in the proportion of people who believe that child abuse and neglect can be prevented. However, the proportion of people who believe that they can help to prevent child abuse and neglect has remained stable at approximately 37 per cent.
- Earlier intervention to support families who are struggling has grown in popularity as a potential solution to tackling child abuse and neglect since 2013.

Why is this measure important?

Abuse and neglect affects large numbers of children every year, but we all have a responsibility to take action to keep children safe. Public attitudes about abuse and neglect matter because they guide behaviour. If people are aware of the prevalence of abuse and neglect, believe that it can be prevented and acknowledge that they can play a part, they are more likely to take action to keep children safe.

What are the limitations of the data?

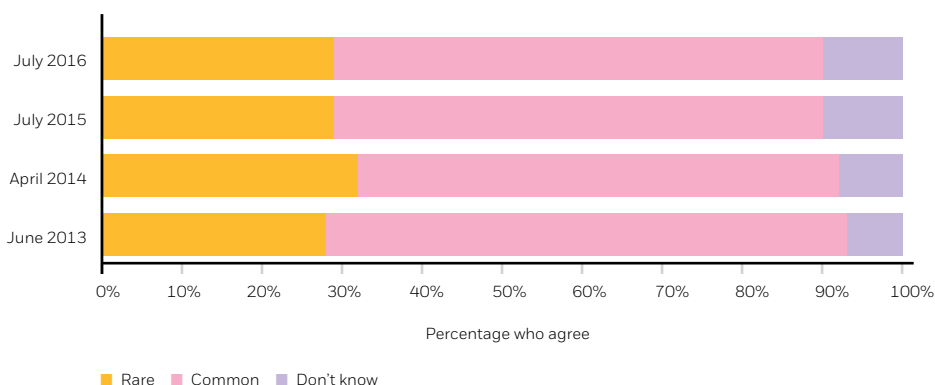
Our data is drawn from the quantitative, quarterly “tracker survey” commissioned by the NSPCC from YouGov. It uses YouGov’s panel online with a nationally representative sample of 2,001 UK adults. The data is weighted by age, gender, social grade and government office region.

Data availability and comparability

The YouGov survey is drawn from a representative UK sample and therefore a UK nation breakdown of data is not possible. The three measures reported here have varying sampling periods, therefore caution should be taken when attempting to draw comparisons.

Public awareness of the prevalence of child abuse and neglect in the UK

Which of these best describes how prevalent you think child abuse and neglect are in the UK?

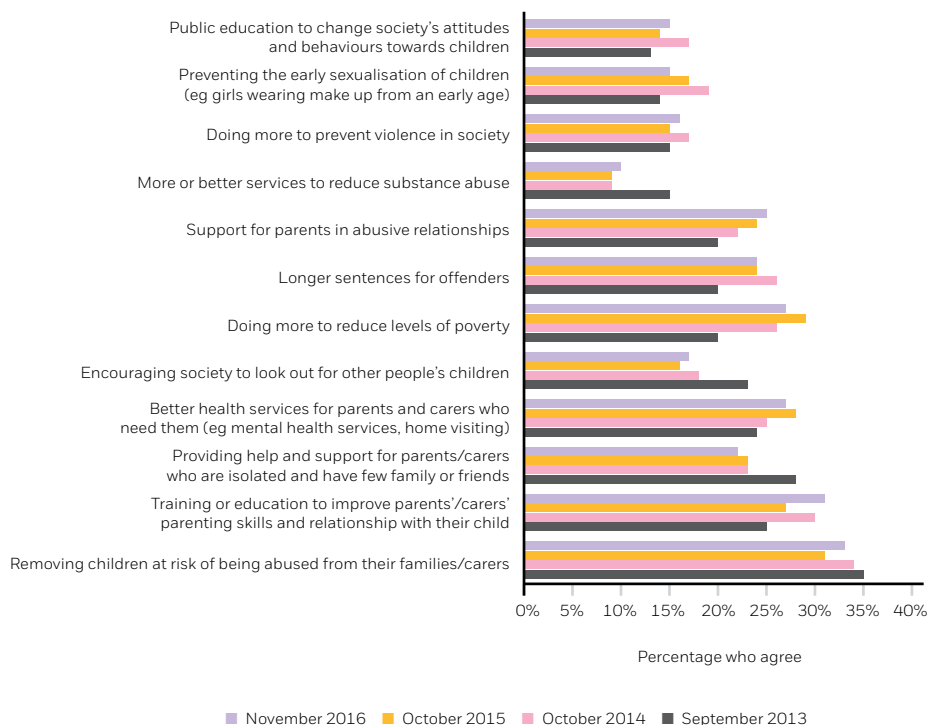


Public awareness of the prevalence of child abuse and neglect in the UK

Public awareness of abuse and neglect has remained fairly high. Our tracker survey showed that, in July 2016, 61 per cent of the public said that they thought that child abuse and neglect were common in the UK, and 29 per cent thought that child abuse and neglect were rare. The public’s awareness of the prevalence of child abuse and neglect has not changed significantly since June 2013, when 65 per cent thought abuse and neglect in the UK were common and 28 per cent thought abuse and neglect were rare.

Solutions to tackle child abuse and neglect

Tracker survey: Which, if any, of the following statements do you think are potential solutions to tackling child abuse and neglect (multiple choice, up to 3)



Solutions to tackle child abuse and neglect

Our tracker survey asks people about potential solutions to abuse and neglect. Since 2013, the solution most commonly identified as having the potential to tackle abuse and neglect has been "removing children at risk of being abused from their families/carers" (between 31 and 35 per cent).

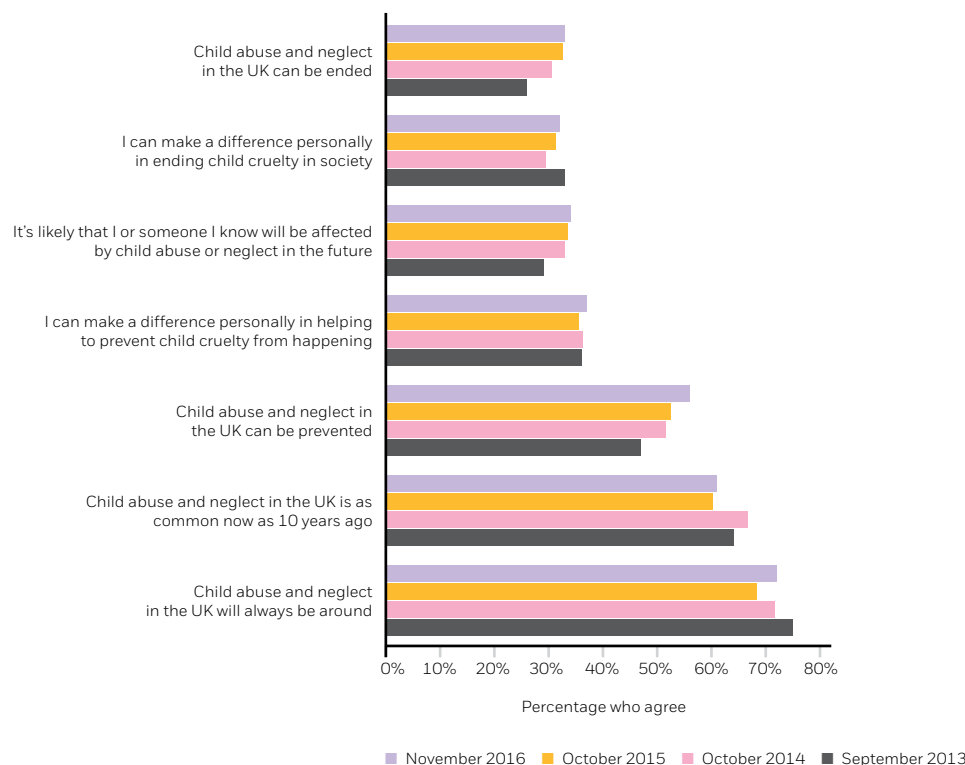
In November 2016 the second most commonly identified solution was "training or education to improve parents'/carers' parenting skills and relationship with their child", which has seen a gradual increase from 2013, from 25 to 31 per cent.

Other solutions that have grown in popularity since 2013 are earlier intervention methods, including "support for parents in abusive relationships" and "better health services for parents and carers who need them (eg, mental health services, home visiting)".

Currently, only 10 per cent of people believe that "more or better services to reduce substance abuse" are a solution to tackling child abuse and neglect. This has remained low since October 2014.

Having a personal impact on ending child abuse and neglect

Tracker survey: To what extent do you agree that ...



Having a personal impact on ending child abuse and neglect

Despite 72 per cent of respondents in November 2016 believing that "child abuse and neglect in the UK will always be around", 56 per cent of respondents agreed that "child abuse and neglect can be prevented in the UK". This was a nine percentage point increase increase from 47 per cent in September 2013.

More than one third (37 per cent) agreed that they "can make a difference personally to prevent cruelty to children from happening". Slightly fewer (32 per cent) believed that they could "make a difference personally in ending child cruelty in society". These proportions have remained consistent since September 2013.

Glossary

Child in need (CIN)

A child in need is a child who is unlikely to have, or have the opportunity to have, a reasonable standard of health and development without any support provided by a public authority.

Child protection plan / child protection register

Children subject to plans or on registers are deemed to be at on-going risk of harm. Plans and registers record details regarding children where there are concerns about their safety. Despite a difference in terminology, plans and registers are roughly the same. In England a child may be subject to a child protection plan (CPP) if they are deemed to be at risk of on-going harm.

Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland have retained the use of child protection registers (CPR).

Child protection systems in the UK

Services to safeguard and protect children in the UK are underpinned by legislation, guidance and policies. As power is devolved within the UK, differences between the respective child protection systems have become increasingly pronounced. In comparing information about child abuse in each of the four nations, it is important to understand the different contexts in which the statistics have been compiled.

Each nation's approach is founded on key pieces of child protection legislation about the welfare of children, covering support for children in need as well as children in need of protection. In England these are the Children Acts of 1989 and 2004; in Wales the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and the Children Acts of 1989 and 2004; in Northern Ireland, the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 and Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland Act 2011; and in Scotland, the Children (Scotland) Act 1995.

England

Child protection in England is the overall responsibility of the Department for Education (DfE), which issues guidance to local authorities. The most recent guidance is *Working together to safeguard children* 2015. England's 148 Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) use this guidance to produce their own procedures that should be followed by practitioners and professionals who come into contact with children and their families in their local authority area. LSCBs are responsible for ensuring that the key agencies involved in safeguarding children work effectively together in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children at the local level. Their core membership is set out in the Children Act 2004, and includes local authorities, health bodies, the police and others.

Northern Ireland

Child protection in Northern Ireland is fully devolved to the Northern Ireland Executive and Northern Ireland Government departments, in particular to the Department of Health (DoH).

The Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI) co-ordinates and ensures the effectiveness of work to protect and promote the welfare of children. The board includes representatives from health, social care, the police, the probation board, youth justice, education, district councils and the NSPCC. The SBNI is responsible for developing policies and procedures to improve how different agencies work together.

Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) guidance *Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland* (2016) provides the overarching policy framework for safeguarding children and young people in Northern Ireland. This will be supplemented by regional policies and procedures being developed by the SBNI. Other child protection provisions can be

found in the Sexual Offences (NI) Order 2008, Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007 and various departmental circulars and guidance documents. Public Protections Arrangements Northern Ireland (PPANI) oversee the risk assessment and management of certain classes of sexual and violent offenders.

Scotland

Child protection in Scotland is the responsibility of the Scottish Government. National interagency child protection guidance was published by the Scottish Government in 2014, providing a national framework for agencies and practitioners at a local level to work together to protect children. The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 places the Scottish Government's broader *Getting it Right for Every Child* approach on a statutory footing. The Act places a range of duties on public authorities to promote and safeguard children's wellbeing, including a Named Person for every child to act as a single point of contact for children and families, and a requirement to share relevant information about wellbeing concerns with the Named Person. The Scottish Government intends to bring this into force in 2018.

The child protection system in Scotland is unique within the UK in having a Children's Hearing System. This is based upon the principles that there is no meaningful distinction between children for whom there are child protection concerns and children who have committed offences and, further, that families should be involved in the processes for determining intervention and support for children. Introduced by the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968, and reformed recently by the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011, the system allows for decision-making to be made by a panel of lay persons, based upon the needs of the child.

In Scotland social work departments and the police have a statutory duty to investigate and take action to protect children, where there is reasonable cause to suggest that they are suffering, or likely to suffer significant harm. However offence and care and protection cases must be referred to the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration if compulsory measures of care are needed. Anyone, not just professionals, can make such a referral.

Scotland also has a national structure of local Child Protection Committees which are responsible for the strategic planning of local interagency child protection work. Although these have a similar remit to LSCBs in England, they do not have a statutory basis. They are the main network with whom the Scottish Government engages in developing child protection policy, with the Government convening national meetings of Chairs of Child Protection Committees. Joint inspection of child protection in Scotland was introduced by legislation in 2006 and covers education, social work, police, community social care and health services. It is carried out by a new unified independent body, Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (SCSWIS), known as the Care Inspectorate.

In February 2016, the Scottish Government announced a review of child protection policy practice, services and structures. A year on, the independent chair of the Child Protection Improvement Programme published two reports summarising its key areas of work.

Wales

Child protection in Wales is the responsibility of the Welsh Government. The Children Acts 1989 and 2004 and the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 provide the legislative framework for child protection and safeguarding in Wales.

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 strengthens collaboration by placing duties on local government, health boards and other public bodies to improve the wellbeing of people and to provide preventative services and advice and assistance in order to reduce the demand on social services. The Act repeals Parts 3 and 4 of the Children Act 1989; this includes Section 17 Children in Need which is replaced by a duty to assess the needs of a child for care and support, meet eligible needs and consider providing preventative services or information, advice and assistance. The Act also has established six Safeguarding Children Boards (to replace the 22 LSCBs) in Wales and a National Independent Safeguarding Board.

The key guidance in Wales is *Safeguarding children: working together under the Children Act 2004*, which was issued by the Welsh Government in 2007. The Welsh Government has consulted on various codes of practice, which once completed will form a suite of documents to replace the current Working Together guidance.

The *All Wales Child Protection Procedures* from 2008, owned by the Safeguarding Boards, are a fundamental part of the safeguarding activities and processes in Wales. They provide guidance and operational procedures that all professionals in Wales must follow and there are a series of All Wales Protocols that provide further guidance in certain areas such as child sexual exploitation. The Welsh Government has provided

Safeguarding Boards with funding to enable the Procedures to be updated and to take account of changes brought in by the Act; it is envisaged that the new procedures will be available in a digital format towards the end of 2018.

Contact sexual abuse

For the NSPCC Prevalence study¹ statutory contact sexual offences were restricted to: if under 18 and perpetrated by an individual in a position of trust; if under 16 and perpetrated by an adult relative; and under 13 and perpetrated by any other non-resident adult.

Cruelty and neglect

An offence of cruelty and neglect is recorded when a parent or carer wilfully assaults, ill-treats, neglects, abandons or exposes a child under 16 in a manner likely to cause them unnecessary suffering or injury to health.

Death by intentional self-harm

Death by purposely self-inflicted poisoning or injury.

Death by undetermined intent

Events where available information is insufficient to enable a medical or legal authority to make a distinction between accident, self-harm and assault. It includes self-inflicted injuries, but not poisoning, when not specified whether accidental or with intent to harm.

International classification of diseases

The International Classification of Diseases (ICD) is the standard tool used to classify causes of death. It provides World Health Organization (WHO) member states with a common language for reporting and monitoring causes of death between countries and over periods of time. All member states use the ICD, which has been translated into 43 languages.

Intimate partner abuse

Abuse that occurs within an intimate partner relationship. The duration of the relationship is varied, from one day to years. There is no age restriction for this type of abuse.

Looked after children

The term “looked after children and young people” is generally used to mean those looked after by the state. Each nation – England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales – has specific legislation that defines who is looked after. This includes those who are subject to a care order or temporarily classed as looked after on a planned basis for short breaks or respite care.

Looked after at home with parent(s)

In Scotland, where the child or young person is subject to a Supervision Requirement with the condition of residence at home with parent(s) or “relevant person(s)” as defined in Sec. 93(2)(b) of the Children’s (Scotland) Act 1995.

Online sexual abuse

The use of technology to manipulate, exploit, coerce or intimidate a child to (but not limited to): engage in sexual activity; produce sexual material/content; force a child to look at or watch sexual activities; encourage a child to behave in sexually inappropriate ways; or groom a child in preparation for sexual abuse (either online or offline). It can also involve directing others to, or coordinating, the sexual abuse of children online. As with other forms of sexual abuse, online sexual abuse can be misunderstood by the child and others as being consensual, occurring without the child’s immediate recognition or understanding of abusive or exploitative conduct. In addition, fear of what might happen if they do not comply can also be a significant influencing factor.

No child under the age of 18 can consent to being sexually abused or exploited. Financial gain can be a feature of online child sexual abuse, it can involve serious organised crime and it can be carried out by either adults or peers.

National Referral Mechanism (NRM)

The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is a framework for identifying victims of human trafficking or modern slavery and ensuring they receive appropriate support. Following the implementation of the Modern Slavery Act 2015, it was extended to all victims of modern slavery in England and Wales. This includes those who have experienced human trafficking, slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour.

Initial referrals of potential trafficking or modern slavery must be handled by an authorised agency. These “first responders” include: police forces; the National Crime Agency; UK Border Force; Home Office Immigration and Visas; local authorities; and the NSPCC (CTAC). They will complete a full referral form and pass this to the Modern Slavery Human Trafficking unit (MSHTU). Referrals to the NRM are not compulsory, and if the potential victim is an adult they must give their permission for the referral process to go ahead. If the potential victim is a child, they do not need to give consent.

Following referral, a Competent Authority (CA), must investigate the case. In the UK, these are the Modern Slavery Human Trafficking unit (MSHTU), which deals with referrals from the police, local authorities, and NGOs; and Home Office Visas and Immigration (UKVI), which deals with referrals identified as part of the immigration process. Trained members of staff in the CA will assess the details of each case and decide whether an individual is a victim of trafficking or modern slavery.²

¹ Radford, L. et al (2011) *Child abuse and neglect in the UK today*, London: NSPCC, p.7.

² National Crime Agency (2015) National referral mechanism. [Accessed 25/4/2017].

Overall maltreatment

Defined by the NSPCC Prevalence study³ as: all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.⁴

Potential victim of human trafficking or modern slavery

When a person's case is referred to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), they are known as a "potential victim". Following referral, a full investigation is carried out and trained staff will determine whether the individual is a victim of human trafficking or modern slavery. As this can take time, not all cases will be resolved within the same year that they were referred. On 6 January 2017, 55 per cent of the cases referred during the last year were pending a final outcome.⁵

The NRM data provides figures relating to the number of potential victims who have been referred into the NRM process during a given year. However it does not provide any analysis of the picture of modern slavery in the UK.

Recorded offences

Police record a crime if, on the balance of probabilities, the circumstances as reported amount to a crime defined by law and if there is no credible evidence to the contrary.

Referral

A referral is the first stage of the child protection process in all four nations. A referral will be made about children because some aspect of their life is giving cause for concern. Anyone who has concerns about the safety or welfare of a child can make a referral to statutory services. However it is worth noting that some referrals are for services (e.g. disabled children) so not every referral is the first stage of the child protection process.

Severe maltreatment

A combination of screener questions from the NSPCC Prevalence study that are analysed together.⁶ This is a combination of subjective and objective questions. Only acts of maltreatment by adults are included. These acts include severe physical abuse, severe neglect and contact sexual abuse.

Severe neglect

This term is used to describe a combination of screener questions from the NSPCC Prevalence study that are analysed together.⁷ Only acts of violence perpetrated by parents or guardians are included. Acts of severe neglect include acts of medical and supervisory neglect that occurred with high lifetime frequency (more than six times in the young person's lifetime), resulted in some type of physical harm and acts which the young person felt amounted to "child neglect" or were of "criminal" nature. All neglect screener questions are adjusted for age-appropriate responses.

Severe physical abuse

This term is used to describe a combination of screener questions from the NSPCC Prevalence study that are analysed together.⁸ Only acts of violence perpetrated by adults are included. Acts of violence included were where a weapon which could potentially cause harm was used, resulted in an injury, had a high frequency (more than six times in the young person's lifetime), more than two types of physical violence perpetrated or if the young person felt the acts perpetrated upon them were "child abuse" or "criminal".

Sexting

Sexting is the exchange of sexual messages or self-generated sexual images or videos through mobile phones or the internet.

Sexual activity

The offence of sexual activity is the intentional sexual touching of an under 16 year old by an adult.

Sexual assault

The offence of sexual assault is the intentional sexual touching of another person without their consent.

URL

URL is an acronym for Uniform Resource Locator and is the address of a website.

3 Radford et al. (2011) op. cit., p.7.

4 World Health Organization et al. (2006) *Preventing child maltreatment: a guide to taking action and generating evidence*. Geneva: World Health Organization (WHO).

5 National Crime Agency (2017) National Referral Mechanism statistics: end of year summary 2016. London: National Crime Agency.

6 Radford et al. (2011) op. cit.

7 Ibid., p.132.

8 Ibid.

Measuring the extent of abuse and neglect in the UK

This report compiles and analyses the most robust and up-to-date child protection data that exists across the four nations in the UK.

The report sets out 20 different indicators. Each indicator looks at the question of 'how safe are our children?' from a different perspective. They also include historic data, to help track progress over time.