

Trends in childhood vulnerability

Vulnerability technical report 1

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Key findings

- > This report examines the latest scale of, and trends over time in, rates of childhood vulnerability.
- > Data on how the prevalence of childhood vulnerability is changing over time is limited. It is not possible to explore this question reliably for many vulnerable groups, such as children in need of protection, with health issues, educated outside mainstream schools, or facing housing difficulties.
- > Subject to this caveat, we can see that some vulnerabilities have become more common:
 - > The proportion of children aged 5-15 with any mental health issue has increased slightly, from just under 10% in 1999 to just over 11% in 2017. Rising prevalence of emotional disorders has been mostly, but not entirely, offset by falling prevalence of behavioural disorders.
 - > There has been a faster increase in the prevalence of mental health issues among girls aged 11-15: from 9% in 1999 to 13% in 2017. This includes an increase of more than 50% in the rate of emotional disorders (such as anxiety and depression).
 - > The number of children living in temporary accommodation has increased by 76% between the quarter of 2012 and the first quarter of 2018.
 - > The rate of permanent exclusions from school has increased by over 50% between 2012/13 and 2016/17, while the rate of children experiencing a fixed term exclusion has increased by 20% over the same period.
 - > The number of 'Child in Need' referrals where the child was assessed not to be in need increased by 66% between 2012/13 and 2017/18.
 - > The proportion of children living in material deprivation and severe poverty has recently increased slightly (from 4% in 2016/17 to 5% in 2017/18).
- > Some other vulnerabilities have become less common:
 - > The proportion of children aged 10-15 who are victims of crime has fallen from 15% in 2010 to 10% in 2018. The proportion who are victims of violent crime has also fallen over the same period, from 7.4% to 4.4%.
 - > The number of children cautioned or convicted of a criminal offence has fallen by 75% from 2008 to 2018.
 - > The proportion of children aged 16-17 who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) has fallen over time, from 9% in 2005 to 4% in 2018. However, the fact that it is not zero, despite the school leaving age now being 18, is a cause for concern.
- > Better data exists on the numbers of vulnerable children receiving statutory help or interventions. Across children's social care, special educational needs (SEN) support and the criminal justice system, the more intensive help and interventions provided by the state are becoming increasingly concentrated on smaller groups of children with the most complex needs. Specific findings are that:
 - > The rates of children referred to children's social care (per 10,000 children) have increased from 448 in 2012/13, to 490 in 2017/18. Those who do become a Child in Need are now more likely be on a child protection plan than previously.
 - > Children with a SEN statement or Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan now make up a larger share of the children receiving any sort of SEN support. While the total proportion of children receiving any SEN support has fallen (from 20% in 2009/10 to 15% in 2017/18), the proportion

who have a SEN statement or EHC plan has remained flat over this period, at around 3% of children.

- > While the size of the youth custody population has fallen significantly, it now has more complex needs than before. The proportion of children in custody who had committed a violent offence has risen from 21% in 2012 to 40% in 2018.
- > There remain significant gaps in data on the support provided to children who do not meet statutory thresholds – for example children who do not qualify for child protection plans, SEN statements or EHC plans.
- > As with last year, we have estimated the total number of children in England currently receiving statutory support or intervention (those who are ‘in the system’). Based on the latest available data, we believe this to be 723,000 children – slightly higher than last year’s figure of 710,000.
- > We estimate that 2.3 million children are living with risk because of a vulnerable family background. Within this group, we estimate that:
 - > More than a third – 829,000 children – are ‘invisible’ (in the sense of not being known to services) and therefore not getting any support.
 - > Another 761,000 children – around a third – are known to services, but their level of support is unclear. These children may be receiving early help or other light-touch support, but they could also be getting no actual support.
 - > Adding these two groups together, means that there are 1.6 million children from a vulnerable family background for whom the support is either patchy or nonexistent. Just over half of these children are ‘invisible’ to services.
 - > The remaining 669,000 children – around 3 in 10 of the 2.3 million – are currently being helped through a formal, national programme of support. Some of this is through the Troubled Families programme, while the rest is through various forms of children’s social care. Around 128,000 children from a vulnerable family background are receiving the most intensive forms of statutory support, such as being in care or on a child protection plan.
- > In sum, we see that:
 - > Childhood vulnerabilities around mental health, homelessness and exclusion from school have become more common, while vulnerabilities around experiencing or committing crime have actually become less common. But there are many other important vulnerabilities where reliable data over time is not available.
 - > 723,000 children are ‘in the system’ in the sense of receiving a statutory support or intervention from the state – this is slightly higher than our figure from last year, but still around 6% of the child population.
 - > As with last year, we find that there are 1.6 million children from a vulnerable family background whose level of support is either patchy or nonexistent. This year we have broken this figure down to show that just over half of these children – 829,000 – are ‘invisible’ to services. The rest are known to services but their level of support is patchy.

Introduction

The Children's Commissioner's [Vulnerability Report](#), first launched in 2017, compiles the evidence and data on the numbers, experiences and outcomes of vulnerable children in England. It provides a comprehensive way of defining and classifying what it means to be a vulnerable child, along with what is currently known about how many children have a particular vulnerability.

This report sets out the key national findings from the 2019 report on the scale of childhood vulnerability in England. It contains two analyses:

- > Part 1: A look at trends and how rates of vulnerability have changed
- > Part 2: This year's assessment of how many children may be vulnerable, and how many are or are not getting support

As with last year, [a summary table is available](#) which sets out each group in the framework along with our preferred measure for the scale of that group.

There are two other technical reports available as part of this year's Vulnerability Report. [Technical Report 2](#) sets out how we have created new and novel data on the prevalence of what policy audiences sometimes call the 'toxic trio' of family issues – domestic violence and abuse, parental mental health issues and parental drug and alcohol misuse – within each local authority and parliamentary constituency in England. A [third report](#) set out new findings on how much local areas are spending on services and support for different groups of vulnerable children.

Defining vulnerability

Clearly what should be included as a 'vulnerability' is open to debate. This analysis takes our [Vulnerability Framework](#) as a starting point. Our framework was first set out in a [2017 report](#), which reviewed existing literature and policy documents to identify 42 groups of vulnerability spanning the following themes:

- > Formal categories of children in care or otherwise accommodated by the state
- > Formal categories of need that may reflect family circumstances
- > Categories of need that reflect features of child development or behaviour
- > Children who are in receipt of services following assessment even if they do not have a formal diagnosis
- > Informal types of vulnerability that may be important to local agencies, such as for example when a child does not reach the threshold required to access services but where unmet need may still exist
- > Definitions relating to national policy such as 'troubled families' or 'just about managing' families
- > Factors identified in scientific and academic literature on risk and resilience, including factors related to adverse childhood experiences (ACEs).

A revised framework of 70 groups was set out in the [2018 report](#), across the following themes:

- > Children receiving statutory care or support
- > Children known to have experienced specific personal harm
- > Children with a disability, ill-health or developmental difficulties
- > Children in households or families with characteristics that indicate higher potential likelihood of current and future harm
- > Children who are vulnerable by virtue of their identity or nationality
- > Children at risk in relation to activity or institutions outside the home
- > Children caring for others

A number of caveats are essential:

The analysis concerns aggregate levels of risk and vulnerability, that is, analysis about large groups of children which are, on average, likely to be associated with lower child wellbeing or worse outcomes in later life. It does not enable any assessment of the specific problems faced by specific individuals. We do not say that each child or young person in each of these groups is vulnerable to immediate harm or would appreciate being described as such. The needs of an individual child will depend on the combination of circumstances they face and the assets and resources available to them. There will be children included in these groups that experience little disadvantage compared to their peers and may go on to have good outcomes in later life. Likewise, many other children not included in our framework can experience disadvantages and problems in life.

Our evidence is that young people do not appreciate the language of vulnerability when applied to individuals. However, the young people we have spoken with did express a wish that policymakers and service providers would have a better overview of all the problems they might face, without branding any specific child or family necessarily as 'a problem.'

There are substantial weaknesses in the data. We have done what we can to draw from all available national statistics and survey data but there are substantial gaps and inconsistencies as explained in the various technical reports. This is a challenge for government in itself, and one of the reasons we undertake this work.

Our analysis of vulnerable groups starts by assessing how many children and young people are in each group treated separately, but many children are in multiple groups, and will move between groups. Data on multiple group membership is weaker than the data on membership of each group separately. This makes it hard to assess total levels of need and vulnerability since accounting for overlaps between different groups is difficult. Moreover, children's lives and circumstances are subject to change, often quite rapid, and the static analysis we have undertaken cannot address this.

We have done what we can to identify the latest data for all groups in the most consistent way possible, ensuring we clarify ages and geographic areas covered. Despite these caveats, we think it is important to have a high level overview of types and levels of childhood vulnerability at national level. This enables the country as a whole to have a grip on trends in risk and to ensure that systems are in place to assess and respond to children's needs.

We locked down our data collation for this paper on 1 June 2019. Since that point, more recent data for some groups may have been published.

Part 1: Trends over time in rates of vulnerability

Aims

This analysis draws together the publicly available data on recent trends in childhood vulnerability. In doing this, it aims to answer three primary questions:

- > What do we know about how the prevalence of childhood vulnerability is changing over time?
- > What do we know about how the rates of children accessing support for these vulnerabilities have changed over time?
- > What are key gaps in the available data on trends in childhood vulnerabilities?

Methods and limitations

The source for this analysis is the CCO's vulnerability database, which contains 33,000 lines of non-identifiable, aggregate data across 200 different indicators of the size of these 70 groups, with breakdowns by age, gender and different geographies where these are available. Importantly it also provides time series information where that exists.

No single data source in England provides trend data on all the vulnerable groups of interest. This analysis therefore combines data from multiple sources to provide an overview of trends in vulnerabilities that is as complete as possible.

Most of the challenges for this analysis stem from combining together different data sources. Key challenges to note are:

- > Where possible, this analysis shows trends in the number or rate of children with a vulnerability in England at the 31st March of each year. However, given this is secondary analysis, this is not possible for all indicators of these vulnerable groups due to the limitations of available data. Details are provided where trends correspond to different time periods or where estimates are based on wider geographies than just England.
- > Similarly, where possible this analysis examines trends amongst children aged 0-17. However this is not possible for all vulnerabilities, given limitations of available data and statutory definitions (for example the age of criminal responsibility is 10 and above in England). Where trends do not correspond to children aged 0-17, the figures are caveated appropriately.
- > Some indicators for rarer vulnerabilities are based on quite low counts. For example, the number of children kept in a secure children's home on welfare grounds was 87 in 2017/18. Trends in these indicators are therefore particularly susceptible to fluctuations simply due to random variation over time. This analysis therefore limits itself to larger groups (covering at least 100 children), where changes over time are more likely to reflect a genuine trend.
- > Indicators have been collected over varying numbers of years and so it is easier to see sustained trends in some indicators than others. To avoid commenting on changes that may simply be single year spikes, only indicators repeated at a minimum of three different time points are included in the analysis below.
- > Where possible, trends in population rates are the focus of our analysis. This is to avoid (particularly upward) trends simply resulting from the increases in the size of the child population. Counts of children (where published) are available in interactive charts.

Rather than commenting on trends for each individual group separately, the analysis we have carried out for this report examines any similarities across indicators related to specific policy areas. After analysing the available trend data in the database, we use the following groupings to structure the findings:

- > **Children in need of protection from immediate harm**
This refers to children experiencing abuse, neglect, or other forms of victimisation (crime).
- > **Children with health-related needs**
This includes children who have a health issue or disability, including both physical and mental health.
- > **Children in contact with the criminal justice system**
These are children receiving a conviction or caution for an offence or those already detained in youth custody
- > **Marginalised children**
These are children in poverty or excluded from basic services and entitlements, such as housing and education

Clearly these groupings are not mutually exclusive: the same children can be counted in more than one group. Therefore, to avoid issues of double-counting, this analysis only aims to provide an overview of trends in indicators for each constituent group– rather than trends in aggregate totals of children.

Children in need of protection from immediate harm

Trends in prevalence

Key point: Very little is known about the trends in the prevalence of children who are in need of protection in England

Currently there is no up to date information on trends in the prevalence of abuse or neglect experienced by children in England. The most recent nationally representative estimates that provide any sort of trend information come from Radford et al (2011). This is based on fieldwork conducted in 2009, covering children across the UK. These estimates are therefore largely out of date. Radford et al reported information on changes in physical abuse and neglect in childhood between 1998 and 2009, retrospectively reported by young adults (aged 18-24). This showed a slight decline in experience of physical violence experienced and little change in indicators of neglect. However, it is unclear how levels have changed since 2009.

The best available data source on the prevalence of children experiencing victimisation (crime) is the 10-15 year old component of the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) (Office for National Statistics, 2018). This is conducted quarterly and publishes information on children in England and Wales' experiences of all crime, violence, robbery, theft and criminal damage over the previous 12 months, with a time series available back to 2010.

Data from CSEW has demonstrated an overall fall in the prevalence of 10-15 year olds experiencing victimisation from 14.6% in 2010 to 10.1% in 2018. This has also included a fall in the prevalence of children experiencing violent crime during this time period from 7.4% in 2010 to 4.4% in 2018.

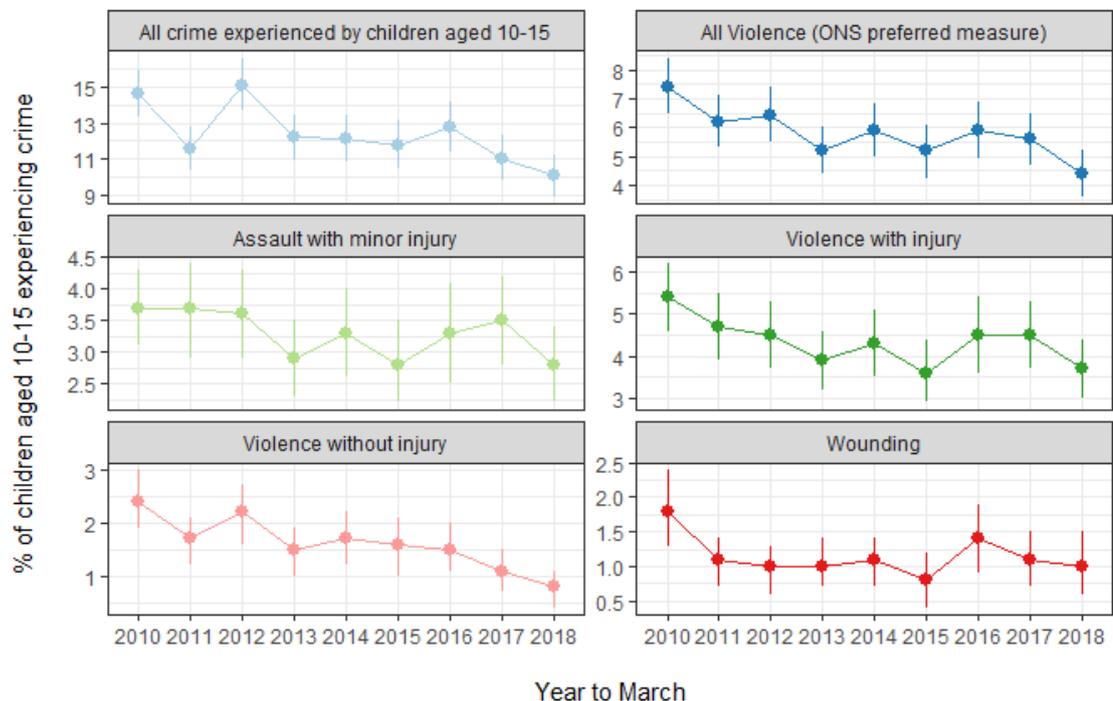
This fall can also be seen within most types of violence measured by the survey. Trends between 2010 and 2018 suggest that all forms of violence covered by the CSEW have seen a gradual decline since 2010 (Figure 1). The exception is wounding, where the rate has been flat at around 1% of 10-15 year olds since 2011.

Note: These percentages are based on ONS preferred measure of violence, which covers offences where:

- > The offender was not known to the victim
- > The offender was known but was aged 16+ and not a family member
- > There was visible injury or theft of a valuable item
- > Or a weapon was involved

This is done to exclude lower level violence that may represent a violent crime in law, but is deemed to be a normal part of growing (up as per the [CSEW user guide](#)).

Figure 1: Trends in prevalence of all victimisation and violent crime experienced by children aged 10-15 2010-2018



Overall, the only estimates currently available in relation to abuse and neglect are largely out of date. Regarding experiences of crime, the data available indicates a broadly downward trend since 2010 – both for all crime and all violent crime, with a broadly flat trend in the prevalence of children who have been victims of wounding.

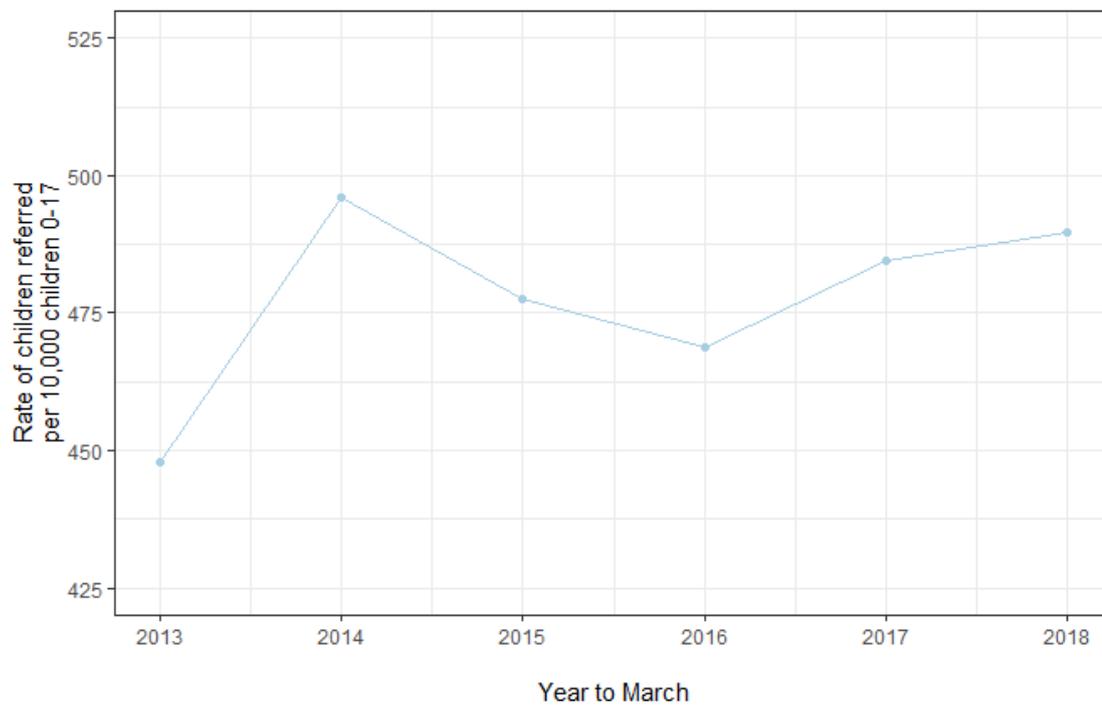
Trends in children accessing support

Key point: There is increasing pressure on children’s social care, and the children being supported by it are more likely to be on child protection plans

Note: unless otherwise specified, figures are calculated using DfE’s [2017/18 Children in Need Underlying data tables](#) and [Looked after children statistics](#)

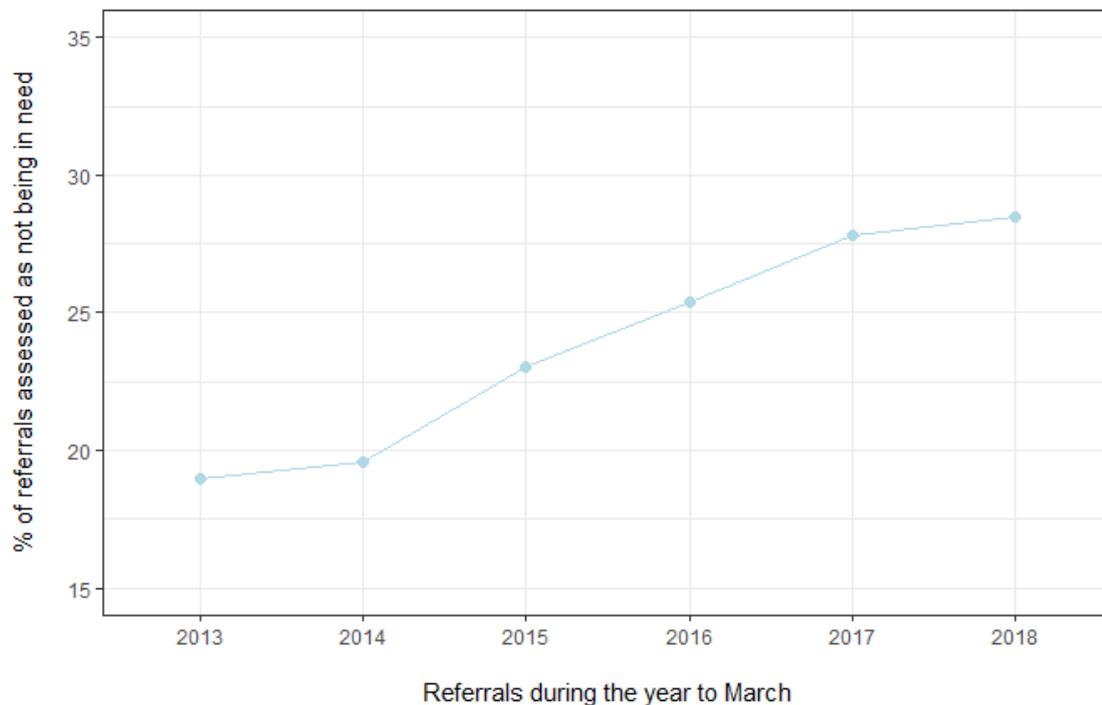
While little is known about trends in underlying prevalence of children *in need* of protection, much more is known about the profile of children being supported by children’s social care, and how it has changed over time. Figure 2 shows that the rates of children referred to children’s social care have increased from 447.8 children referred per 10,000 under 18s in 2013, to 489.8 in 2018. However, the increase has not been constant, and the rate fell between 2014 and 2016, largely due to a spike in referrals between 2013 and 2014.

Figure 2: Rates of children referred to children’s social care per 10,000 children aged 0-17



A key trend during this period of increasing referrals has been a notable rise in the proportion being assessed as not in need. Figure 3 demonstrates that this has risen from 19% in the year to March 2013 to 28.5% in the year to March 2018. Since the rate of referrals has also been increasing, this means that referrals which are assessed as not in need are becoming more significantly common. In fact, these have increased by 66% between 2012/13 and 2017/18 (from 112,590 to 186,560).

Figure 3: Percentage of referrals to children’s social care assessed as not being in need



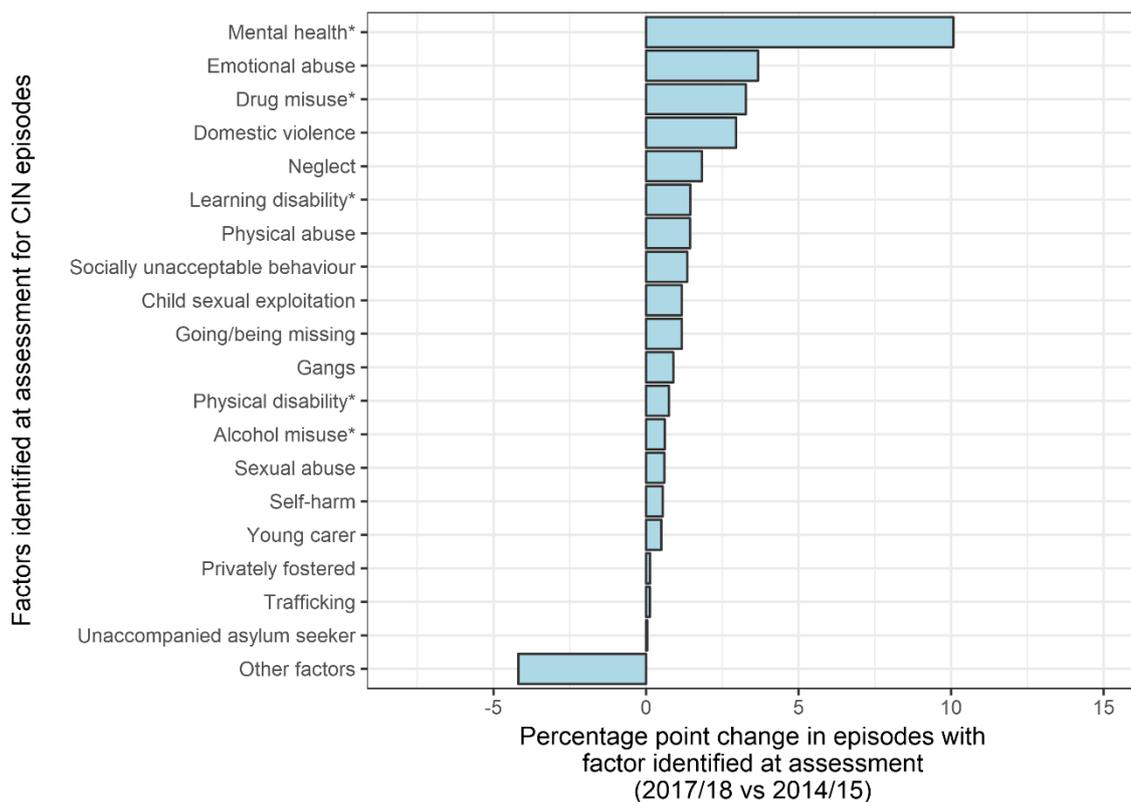
This same period has seen a slight decrease in the % of referrals occurring within 12 months of a previous referral (21.9% in the year to March 2018 compared to 24.7% in 2013).

Taken together these trends suggest increasing referrals to children’s social care, along with an increase in referrals being diverted away (or not accepted). It is unclear where these referrals are being diverted to as this remains a significant data gap in official statistics.

Time series information on the characteristics of children being referred is limited due to data quality issues; a meaningful time series only exists back to 2014/15 for factors identified at assessment. Looking over this 4 year period suggests that the proportion of Child in Need (CIN) episodes where parental or child mental health issues were identified as a factor at assessment has risen by around 10 percentage points (pp) between 2014/15 and 2017/18 – see Figure 4 below.

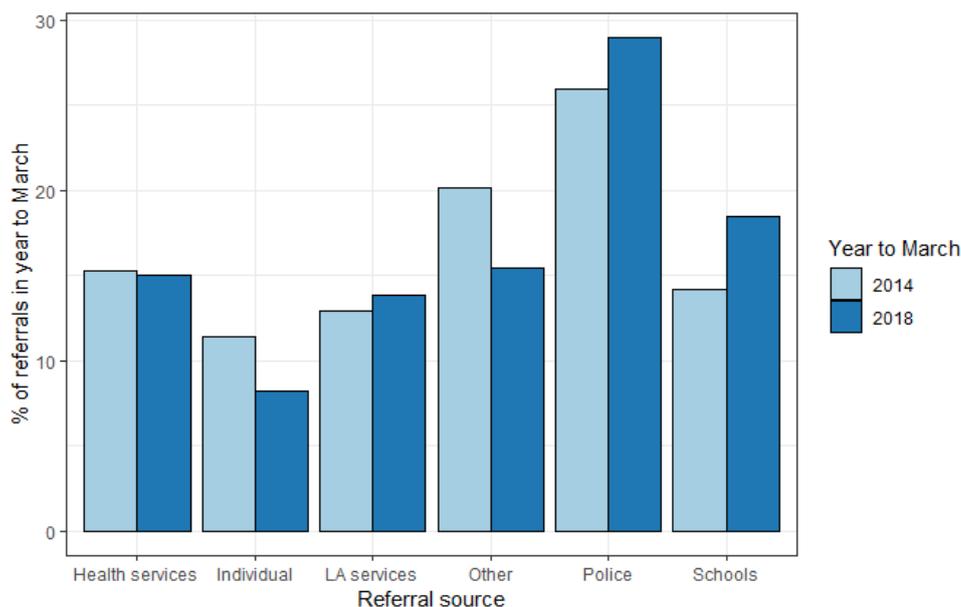
There have also been smaller rises in the proportions of episodes where emotional abuse, drug misuse (by a parent or carer or the child themselves) and domestic violence (both towards the child or towards and adult in the household) were recorded as a factor at assessment (Figure 4). It is possible that these changes may simply reflect changes in recording (see the decrease in ‘other factors’ category), or changes in identification of particular factors, particularly as there is some practitioner discretion involved and the categories do not indicate the severity of each factor.

Figure 4: Percentage point change in factors identified at assessment 2014/15 - 2017/18. Note: * indicates factors that can refer to an adult connected with the child or the child themselves



There has also been a slight change in the source of referrals to children’s social care. Since 2014 there has been an increase in the proportion of referrals from police and schools and a decrease from private individuals (Figure 5). The reasons for this change are unclear. It may reflect greater multi-agency working or pressures on other agencies, but it does suggest that a greater proportion of those referred to children’s social care are from other agencies involved in multi-agency safeguarding, rather than simply a greater propensity to refer to children’s services in general.

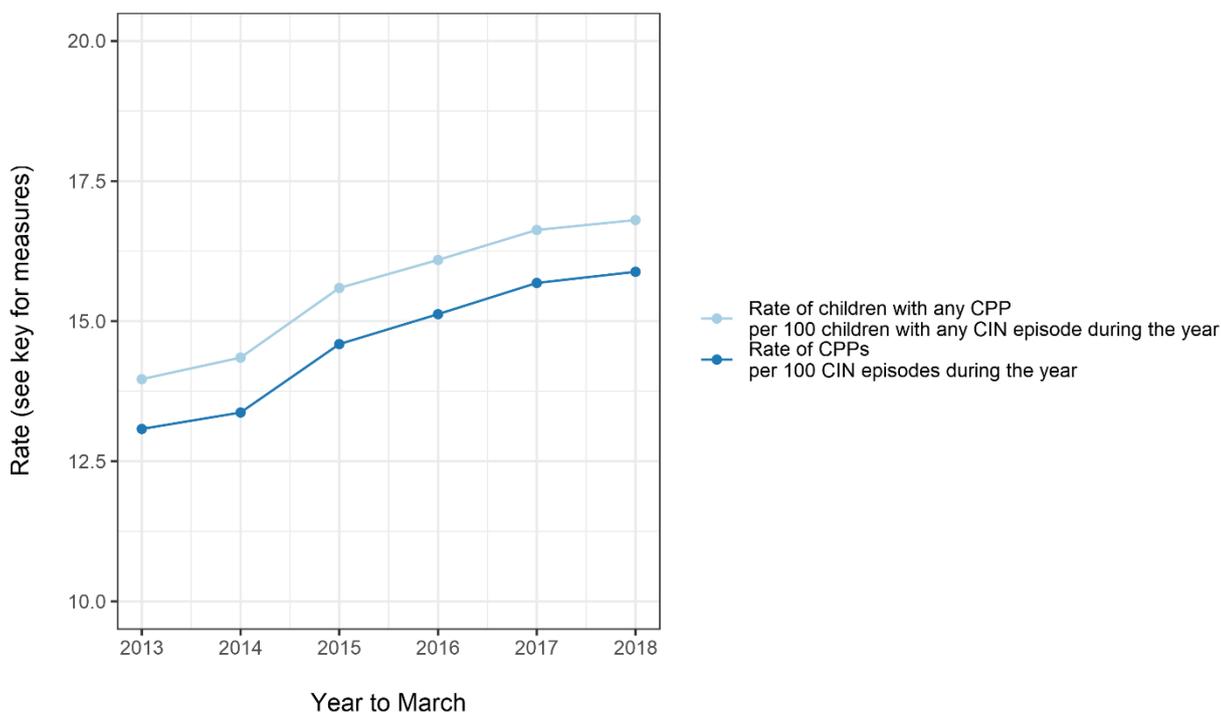
Figure 5: Percentage of children’s social care referrals by source 2014 and 2018



This increasing pressure on CIN referrals provides useful context when looking at the changes in profile of children who have an open CIN episode or child protection plan (CPP). The key trend here is that the ratio of CPPs to CIN episodes has been increasing since 2013 (Figure 6). There is also a similar rise in the ratio of children with a CPP during the year to those with a CIN episode during the year, suggesting this trend is not caused by a small number of children with a high number of CPPs during the year.

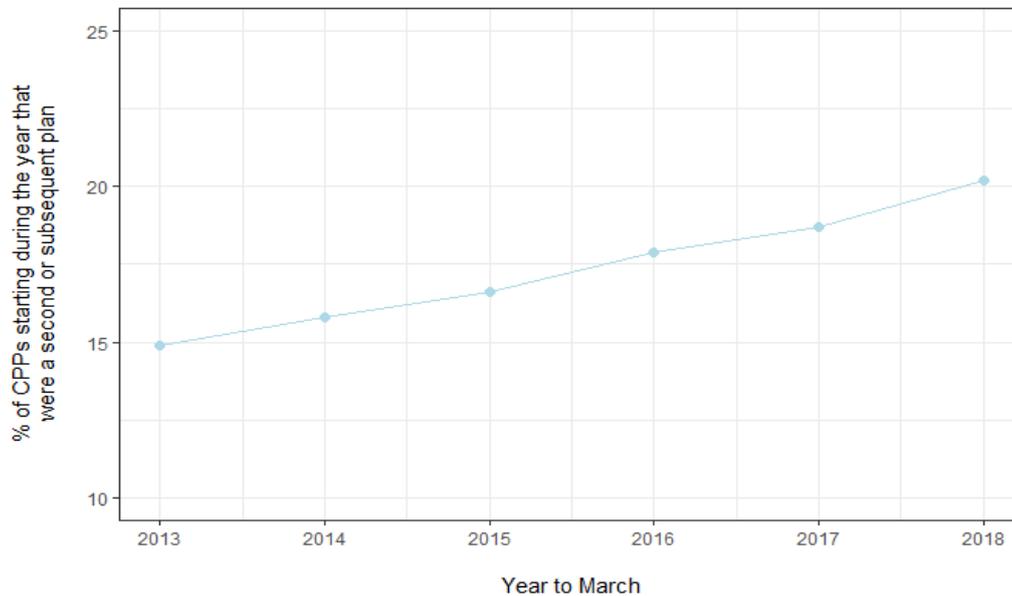
This suggests that the population of children with an open CIN episode is increasingly shifting towards those on child protection plans. However it is important to state that CPPs still account for a relatively small share of CIN episodes.

Figure 6: Ratio of Child Protection Plans during the year to CIN episodes 2013-2017



There has also been a rise in the proportion of CPPs where the child has already had a previous CPP. This has risen from 14.9% of CPPs starting in the year to March 2013, to 20.2% in the year to March 2018 (Figure 7). This is interesting as it suggests that those that have received this higher level of children's services involvement are increasingly likely to need it again at a subsequent point in time. There are potentially many explanations for why this is but suggests an increasing concentration of resources on children that have already been through this higher level of involvement with the child protection system.

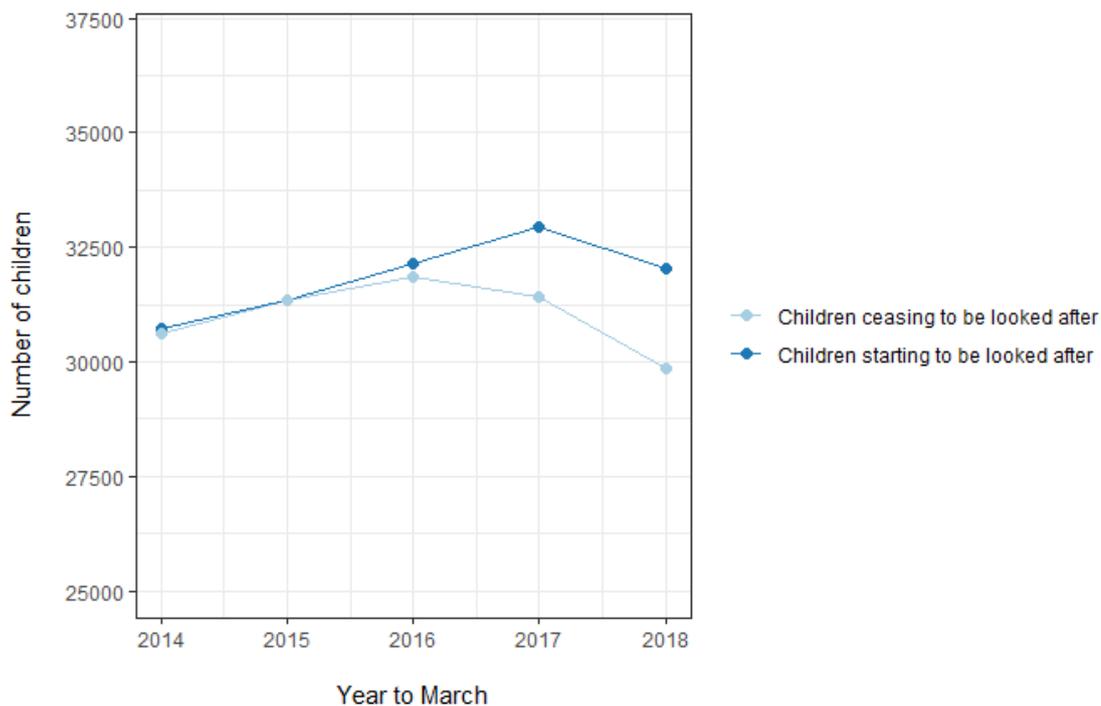
Figure 7: % of CPPs starting during the year that were a second or subsequent plan



There has also been a recent rise in the rate of children in care. Between 2014 and 2016 this rate was flat at 60 children in care per 10,000 children in the population aged 0-17, however this has gradually risen to 64 children per 10,000 children in 2018. The recent increase has been driven by an increasing number of children entering care along with a decline in the number of children leaving care (Figure 8).

This is largely driven by the increasing proportion of children entering care via a court order (35% of those entering care in 2018 compared to 23% in 2016). These placements tend to be more long term in nature and so adding to the general rise in the rate of children in care.

Figure 8: Numbers of children starting and ceasing to be looked after 2014-2018



Taken together, these trends demonstrate three key points about how the profile of children accessing support has changed:

- > A greater proportion of referrals are being diverted away from children's social care.
- > Among the children who are supported by children's social care, an increased share get this support via a child protection plan (CPP) – although this remains small compared to all Child in Need episodes. Furthermore, an increasing share of CPPs are repeat CPPs.
- > Over the last two years, the rate of children in care has increased, driven by increases in the rate of children entering care via court orders and a reduction in the rate of children leaving.

These three points suggest that support of children's social care support is increasingly concentrating at the child protection plan/looked after child level. While for the most part the year on year increases in these rates are reasonably small, the fact that these increases have largely continued since 2013 suggests sustained increasing pressure on this aspect of support for children in need of protection.

Children with health-related needs

Trends in prevalence

Key point: Recent estimates are available for the prevalence of children with mental health issues, so the trend in this can be assessed to a degree. However, data on measures of other forms of health need are more limited.

Overall, there is limited information published on the overall prevalence of health needs among children in England. One source of information is the Health Survey for England (HSE) which produces annual estimates of the number of children who self-report that they have a longstanding illness or a limiting longstanding illness. The HSE defines these as follows:

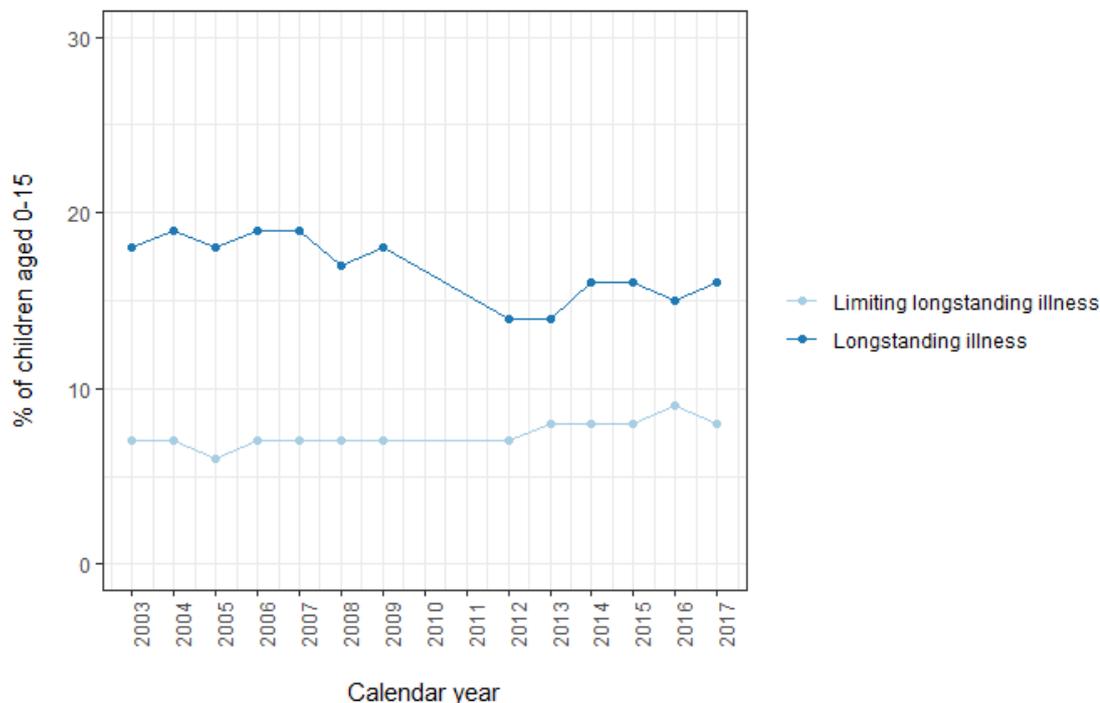
- > A longstanding illness covers any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more.
- > A limiting longstanding illness is any longstanding illness (as defined above) which the child feels reduces their ability to carry out day-to-day activities.

These measures can cover a wide variety of needs and have a subjective element rather than being based on clinical indicators. This caveat should be borne in mind when considering the figures below.

Note: figures below are based on calendar year and children aged 0-15

The latest available trend information suggests that rates of longstanding illness have decreased slightly, from 18% in 2003 to 16% in 2017, although since 2013 they have been rising slowly since 2013 (Figure 9). Rates of limiting longstanding illness have been broadly flat (7% in 2003, 8% in 2017) (Source: [NHS Digital 2018](#)).

Figure 9: Rates of longstanding and limiting longstanding illness amongst children aged 0-15

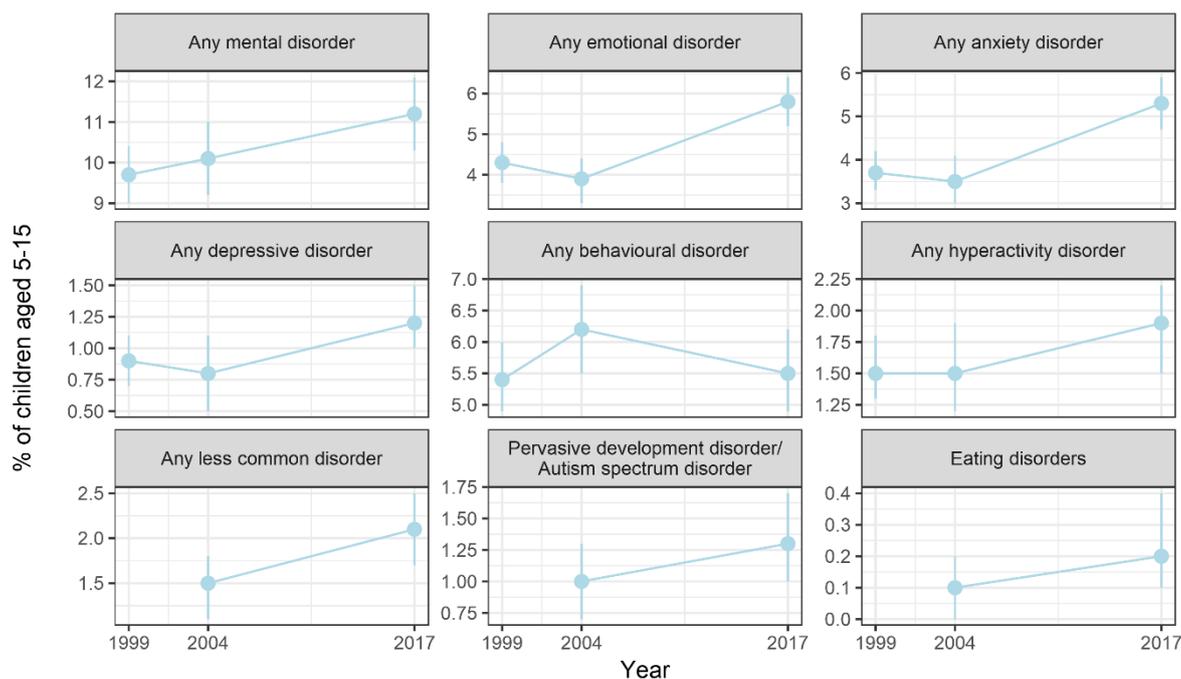


Estimates are available of the prevalence of mental health disorders amongst children aged 5-15; these have been published in [The Mental Health of Children and Young People in England 2017](#). This provides time series information on a range of mental health disorders, with measures comparable to surveys conducted in 1999 and 2004.

Note that the trend measures for 2017 are based on a slightly narrower set of mental disorders in order to be comparable with previous surveys, so they may not match the single year headline figures for 2017.

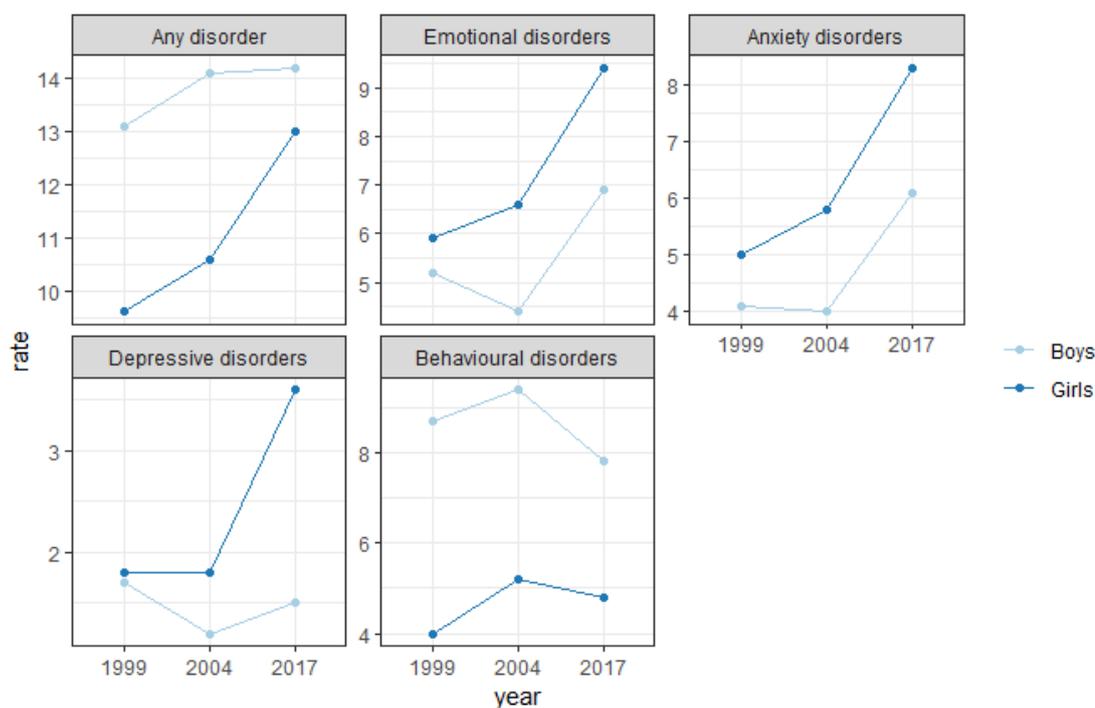
Overall this suggests that since 1999 there has been a small rise in the prevalence of mental health disorders amongst children aged 5-15. This has largely been driven by rises in emotional and anxiety disorders (Figure 10).

Figure 10 – Prevalence of mental health conditions amongst children aged 5-15 1999 – 2017



These overall trends mask important differences by age and gender. While trends over time are similar for boys and girls aged 5-10, there are marked differences in trends between boys and girls aged 11-15 (see Figure 11). The prevalence of *any* disorder remains highest amongst boys aged 11-15, and it has increased slightly since 1999. However, the prevalence among girls aged 11-15 has risen more quickly, and so the gap between boys and girls has narrowed (particularly since 2004). This rapid increase among girls aged 11-15 has been driven by large increases in the prevalence of depressive episodes, emotional disorders and anxiety disorders.

Figure 11: Rates of mental health disorders amongst children aged 11-15 1999-2017



Trends in children getting SEN support

Key point: Special educational needs (SEN) support in schools is concentrating amongst those with statements or Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans

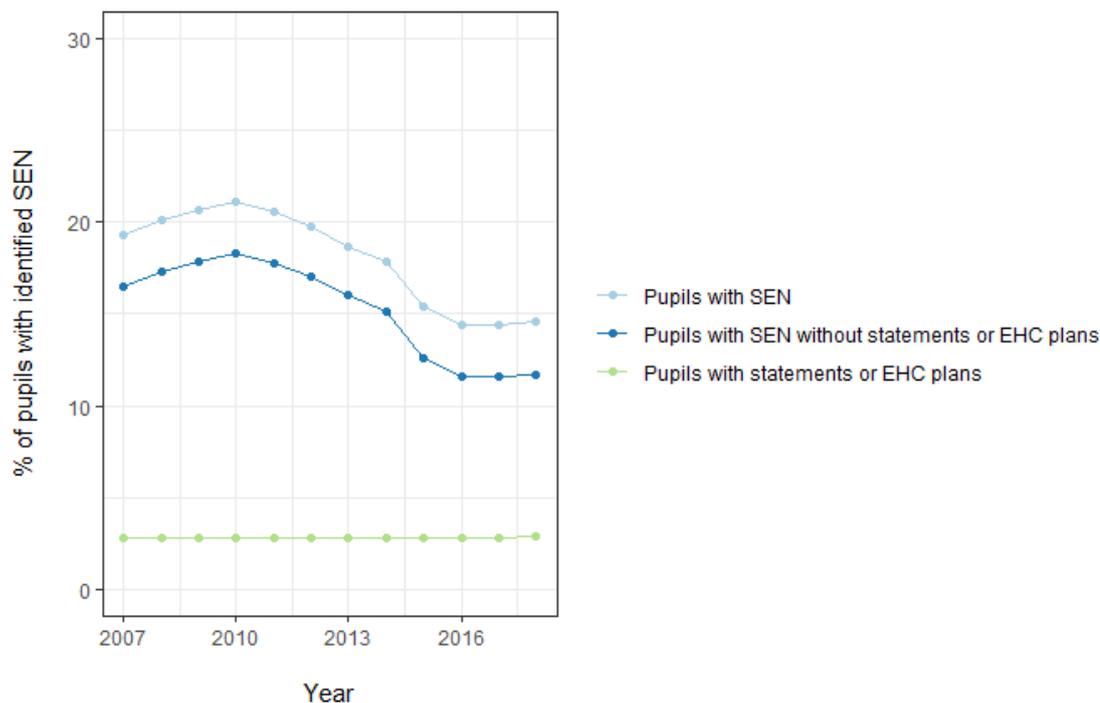
Note: this section focuses on the school age population with an identified need and so does not cover children accessing help through other routes - for example children accessing support through child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS). These are not included due to a lack of available trend information on what happens to children after a referral to CAMHS as highlighted in previous CCO research (see [Children’s Commissioner’s Mental Health briefing 2018](#)).

All figures are sourced from DfE’s [SEN statistics](#) except where mentioned.

Since 2012 there has been a decline in the proportion of the school population with an identified SEN. Partly this is in response to concerns about the over-identification of SEN in order to access additional support for children by schools expressed by Ofsted in 2010 and reflected in changes to SEN legislation in 2014 (Source: [Council for disabled children SEN data bulletin](#)). These changes to legislation put the first step of intervention as directed high quality teaching before a child with lower than expected progress could be identified as having SEN (Source: [SEN Code of Practice 2014](#)), aiming to reduce the perceived numbers being given an SEN classification in order to access additional resources.

Figure 12 demonstrates that during this decline, the proportion of children with a statement/EHC plan remained stable at just under 3%. Therefore, the reduction in the number of children supported has been amongst those who have SEN identified but do not meet the threshold for a statement or EHC plan. This has fallen from 18% of school-age children in 2010 to 12% in 2018). As a result, children with a SEN statement or EHC plan now account for 1 in 5 children with SEN (compared to 1 in 7 in 2010).

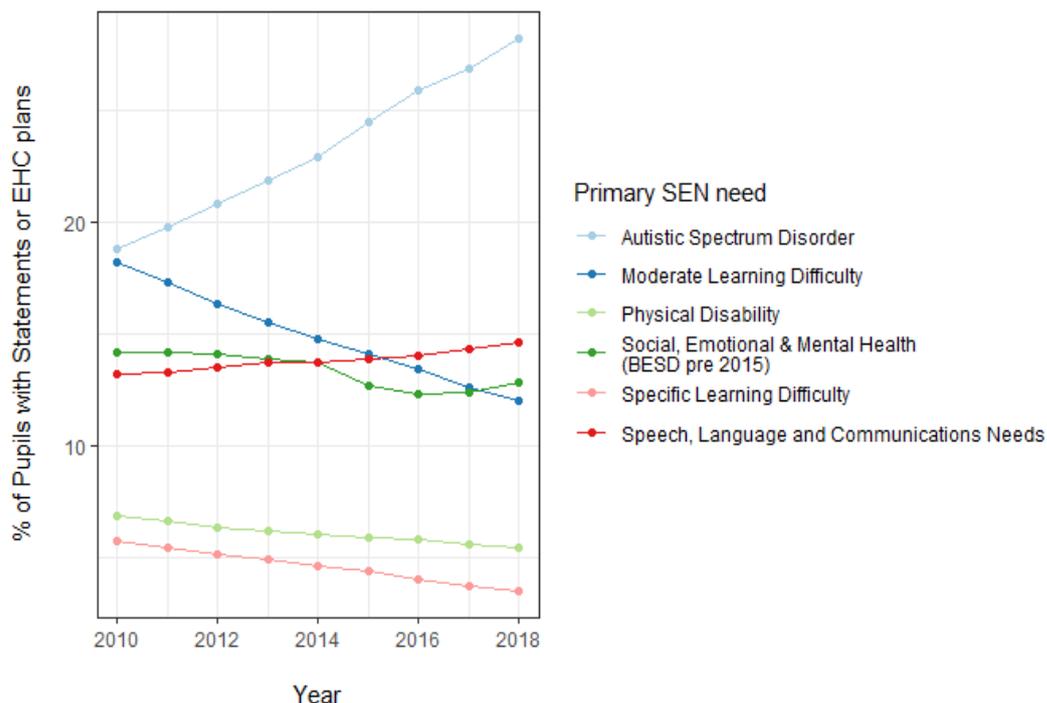
Figure 12: Pupils with identified SEN 2007-2018



Within the subgroup of children that does have a SEN statement or EHC plan, there has been a shift in the proportions with different recorded forms of SEN (Figure 13). The proportion whose primary need is recorded as Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) has risen, from 18.8% in 2010 to 28.2% in 2018. There has also been a decline in the proportion whose primary need is recorded as Moderate Learning Difficulties (18.2% in 2010 to 12% in 2018). Note that it is difficult to draw definitive conclusions about the trends in underlying needs, because the objective severity of these conditions is not recorded in available datasets, and because this shift towards autism may represent some reclassification of needs with similar traits as Autistic Spectrum Disorders. However, it does suggest a notable shift in the *identified* needs of the population receiving SEN statement/EHC plan support.

Figure 13: Proportions of pupils with Statements or EHC plans by primary SEN need 2010-2018

Note: only primary SEN needs with more than a 1pp change between 2010 and 2018 shown in chart



Taken together these trends suggest that the population of children receiving SEN support has increasingly concentrated amongst those on statements/EHC plans since 2010. Within this statement/EHC plan group, there has also been an increasing concentration of pupils with Autism Spectrum disorders as their identified primary need.

Children in contact with the criminal justice system

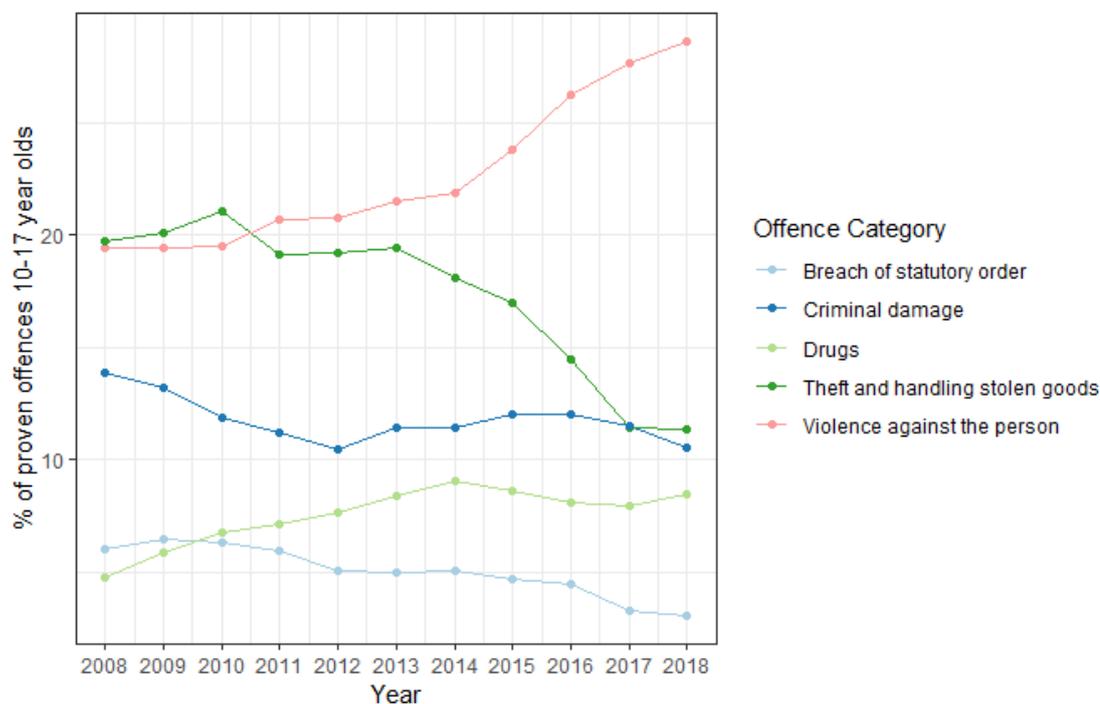
Currently there is no available trend data on the prevalence of children who engage in criminal activity. The closest available estimates are offences recorded by the police, however these will by their very nature only count offences which are reported. The 10-15 CSEW includes questions on children involved in gangs and those carrying knives, though no trend data has been published - likely due to small base sizes. As such this represents a notable gap in evidence that has emerged since the ending of the Offending Crime and Justice surveys in 2006.

Note: figures below are taken from the Youth Justice Board’s [Youth Justice Statistics](#). Proven offences refer to offences where a child has received a caution or court sentence for an offence

Since 2008 there has been a marked decrease in the total number of proven offences by children aged 10-17. These have fallen by 75%, from 277,986 in 2008 to 70,349 in 2018.

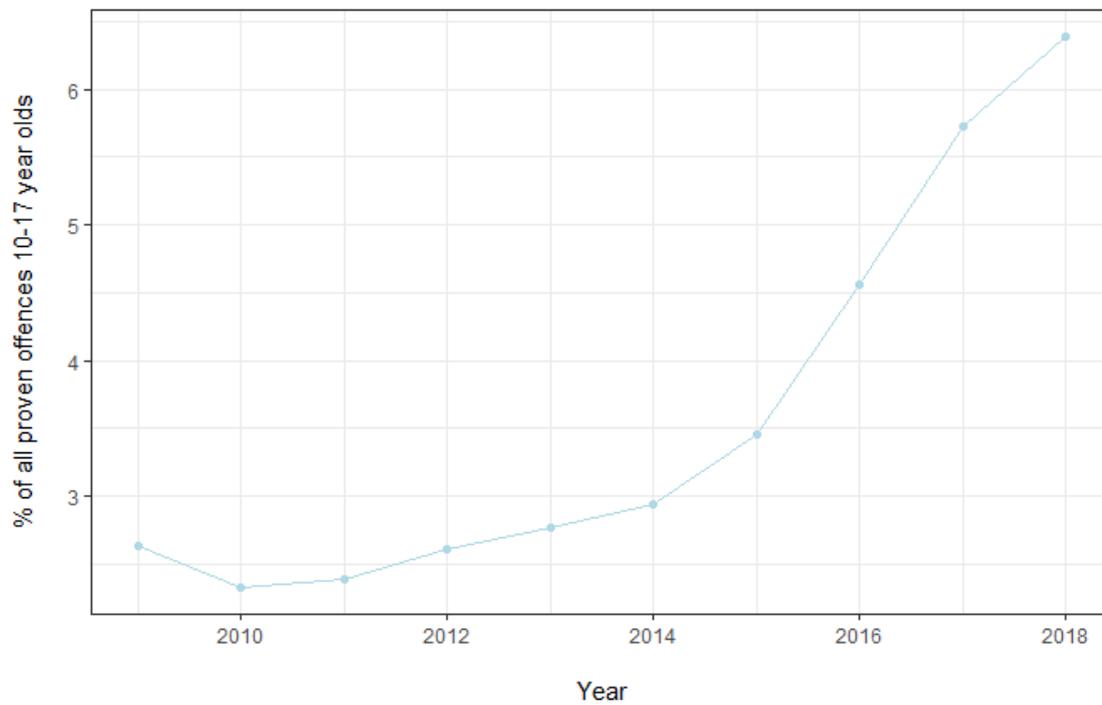
Within this there has been a marked shift in the proven offences being recorded (Figure 14). The proportion of offences recorded as theft has fallen by 8pp since 2008 while the proportions of violent and drug offences have risen by 9pp and 4pp respectively. Given that this measure only counts offences receiving a caution or court sentence, the shift may reflect a move towards diversion of offenders involved in theft offences away from the criminal justice system, rather than a genuine change in the profile of offences being committed by children.

Figure 14: Proportion of proven offences by offence category 2008-2018



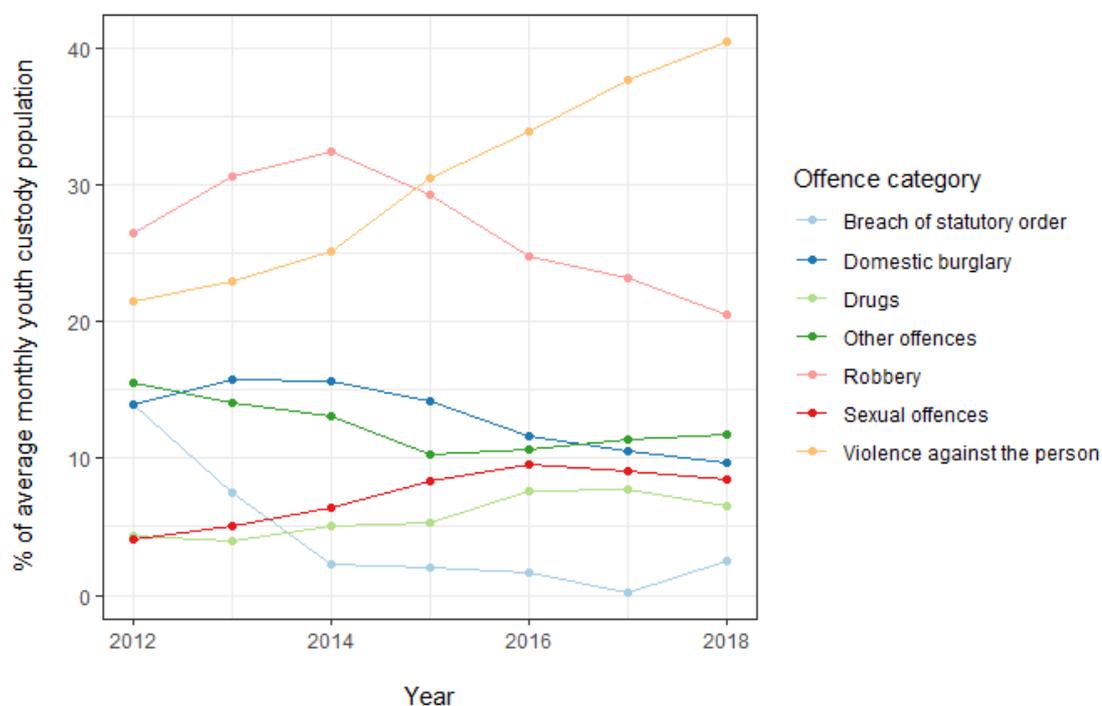
A key trend within this is the rising proportion of offences where a knife or offensive weapon is involved. This has been steadily rising since 2010. It accounted for 6.4% of proven offences in 2018, up from 2.3% in 2010 (Figure 15).

Figure 15: Knife and offensive weapons offences as a proportion of all proven offences 2009-2018



This analysis shows while that the cohort of young offenders being processed by the criminal justice system has diminished in size, its profile has become more violent in terms of the types of offences proven. This has resulted in similar changes in the size and composition of the youth custody population. Figure 16 demonstrates that the proportion of children in youth custody with violence against the person recorded as their primary offence has risen from 21% in 2012 (the earliest year in published time series), to 40% in 2018.

Figure 16: % of the average youth custody population per month with violence against the person recorded as primary offence 2008-2018



Perhaps as a consequence of this, rates of proven assaults within youth custody settings have more than doubled over this period: from 9.8 assaults per 100 children in 2012 to 24.7 assaults per 100 children in 2018.

Whilst slightly different in nature, these trends indicate a similar pattern of service use as seen with children's social care and SEN. Again, we can see that services and resources are increasingly being concentrated on a smaller group of children whose needs are more complex or severe.

Marginalised children

Key point: across poverty, housing and education indicators there is evidence of an increasing marginalisation of children – in the sense of higher numbers of children not receiving a basic standard of resources or provision.

Note: The term marginalised here refers to children that find it difficult to access mainstream education or lack basic entitlements such as income or housing

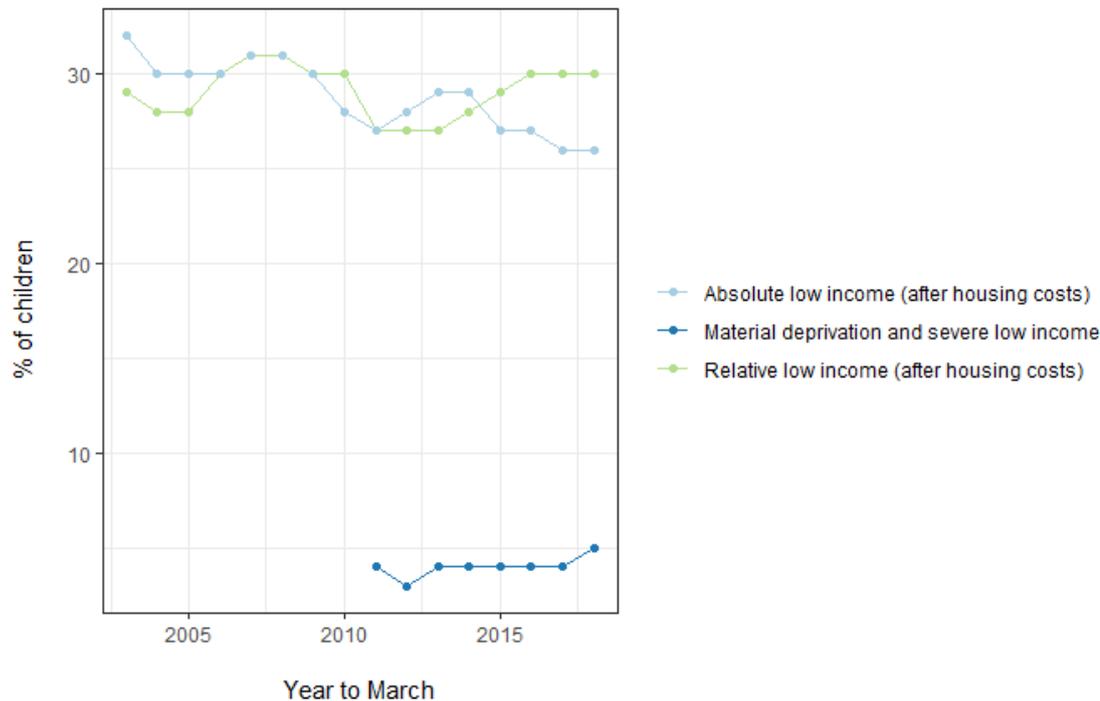
Children in poverty

Estimates of the number of children in poverty are regularly published through the [Family Resources Survey](#) and the related DWP statistics [Households Below Average Income](#) publication.

These statistics indicate that the rate of children in relative poverty, defined as those whose household income is less than 60% of current median income, has increased slightly. However the rate of children in absolute poverty, defined as having a household income below 60% of the 2010/11 median income, has fallen. Since 2003, the rate of absolute child poverty has fallen from 32% in 2002/03 to 26% in 2017/18 (Figure 17). Relative child poverty stood at 30% in 2017/18, increasing from 27% in 2010/11. This suggests the income gap between children in affluent and low income households is widening slightly.

Figure 17 also shows the rate of children in material deprivation and severe poverty, defined as households below 50% of median income and unable to afford everyday items. This has been broadly flat at around 4% since 2010/11 (when the measure was introduced), but has increased to 5% in the most recent year available (2017/18).

Figure 17: Rates of children in absolute and relative poverty and material deprivation and severe low income 2003-20018



Children facing housing difficulties

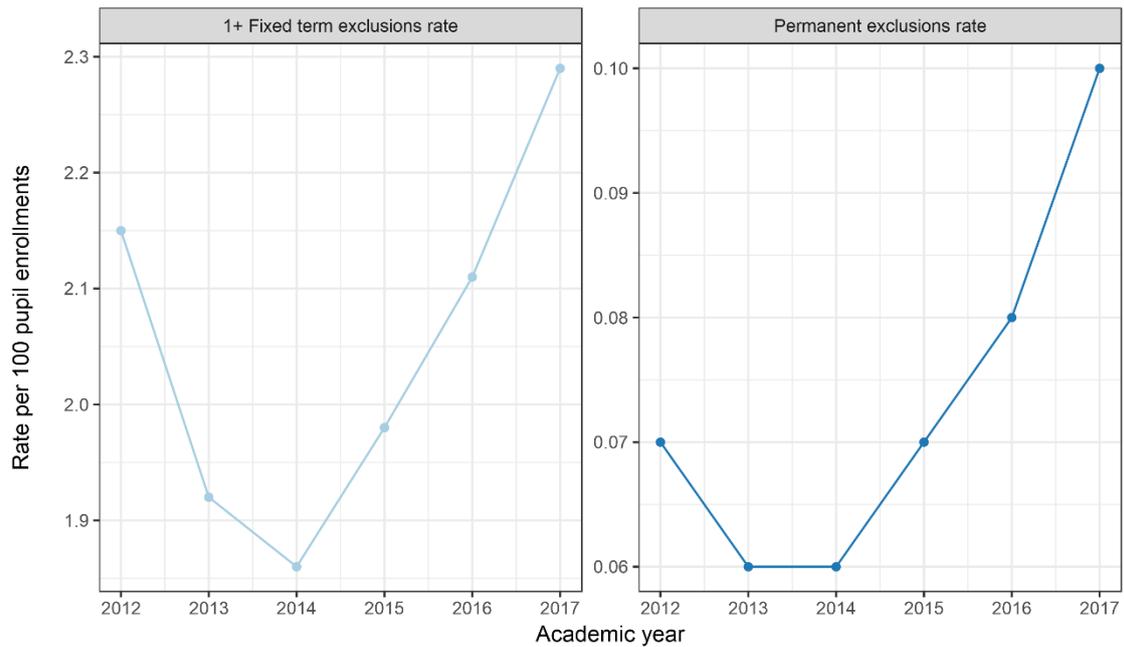
Published trends on children in poor quality housing or those in families facing housing difficulties are currently limited in England. One data source is provided by [MHCLG](#) and outlines the number of children in temporary accommodation during the year. These statistics demonstrate that the number has increased markedly since 2012 - there were 123,520 children in temporary accommodation in the first quarter of 2018, up 76% on the first quarter of 2012. Based on mid-year population estimates for children aged 0-17 this represents an increase in rate from 0.6% of children in 2012 to 1% of children in 2018.

However, this is a limited measure of children in households experiencing housing difficulties as it only captures those that have already been made homeless and are directly supported by the state. Currently there is no published estimate of the number of children in households experiencing housing difficulties, (or the trend in that number). Both the Wealth and Assets Survey and the English Housing Survey do collect information on this, but it is not published.

Children missing from mainstream education

Since 2013 there has also been a marked rise in the rate of children being excluded from mainstream education (Figure 18 – source: [DfE Exclusions statistics](#)) – both for fixed term and for permanent exclusions. The national rate of permanent exclusions has risen from 0.06 exclusions per 100 school enrollments in 2012/13 to 0.1 in the 2016/17 academic year. The rate of children experiencing 1 or more fixed term exclusions during the year has risen from 1.92 children per 100 enrollments in 2012/13 to 2.29 in the 2016/17 academic year.

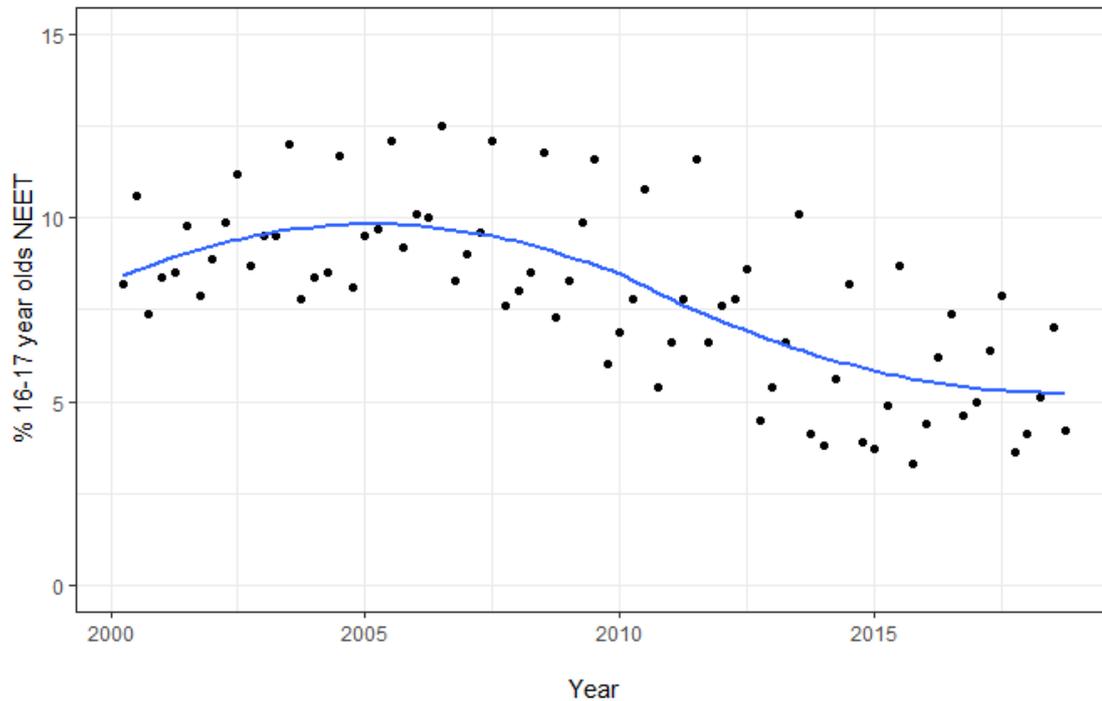
Figure 18: Rates of permanent and children with 1 or more fixed term exclusions 2011/12 - 2016/17.
Note: different scales between panels



Data on trends on the number of children educated outside mainstream education are limited in their scope. DfE publishes the numbers of children in pupil referral units or in other local authority provision: the rate of in these AP establishments has stayed broadly constant at 0.4% of children aged 5-17 since 2012. However, no trend information is currently available for children being home educated. As a result trend data for children not in mainstream education is incomplete.

Looking at post-16 education, there has been a gradual decline in those aged 16-17 and not in education, employment or training (NEET) since 2005 (Figure 19, source: [NEET and participation statistics](#)). In Q4 2018 4.2% of children aged 16-17 were NEET, compared to 9.2% in Q4 2005. This is interesting read against recent changes to legislation which made it compulsory for children to be in some form of education, training or employment until the age of 18. Therefore, while the 16-17 NEET rate has fallen, the fact that it is not zero, and that 49,681 16-17 year olds remain NEET, is perhaps surprising. It may also be increasingly important indicator of risk.

Figure 19: % of 16-17 year olds not in education employment or training 2000 to 2018. Note: line represents smoothed average across quarters



Conclusions

The trends presented above suggest these key conclusions:

1. Data on trends in the prevalence of underlying needs among the child population is limited. This is especially true for children with health related needs and those in need of protection, though there are also notable data gaps around children facing housing difficulties and children outside mainstream education.
2. Better data exists on the numbers and characteristics (but not the outcomes or experiences) of vulnerable children being supported by services. Across children's social care, SEN support and the criminal justice system, we see that the intensive services and interventions provided by the state are becoming increasingly concentrated on smaller groups of children with the most complex needs.
3. There remain significant data gaps around the support provided to children who do not meet the thresholds – for example children who do not qualify for child protection plans, SEN statements or EHC plans.
4. Subject to these caveats, our data does enable us to identify certain vulnerabilities that have increased in prevalence recently: children referred to children's social care and assessed as not in need; children with mental health issues (especially among girls aged 11-15); children living in temporary accommodation; and children excluded from school.
5. Similarly, we can say that the following vulnerabilities have decreased in prevalence: children who are victims of crime; children involved in the youth justice system; and children who are NEET (although the fact that the latter is not zero may be concerning).

Part 2: Aggregate vulnerability estimates

Previous releases of the Vulnerability Report have included estimates of certain aggregates – broader and more general sets of vulnerable groups. Last year’s report estimated that:

- > 710,000 children aged 0-17 were ‘in the system’: receiving statutory support and interventions from the state (for any vulnerability)
- > 2.1 million children aged 0-17 were living in households where there is a complex family need. We defined this as being in any of the following vulnerable groups:
 - > Children living in material deprivation and severe poverty
 - > Children who have a parent in prison
 - > Children in a household where there are parental mental health issues
 - > Children in a household where there is domestic violence or abuse
 - > Children in a household where there are parental alcohol or substance misuse issues
 - > Children who are young carers
- > Of this 2.1 million children, only 570,000 were estimated to be receiving formal support or services for those needs. For the remaining 1.6 million, there did not appear to be any national established, recognised form of support.

More information on these estimates and their calculation is contained in last year’s [Technical Report](#).

This year we have refined our methodology for estimating these aggregates. As the approaches are broadly similar to last year, this section only presents details of data sources used and any significant methodological changes. It should therefore be read alongside [last year’s technical report](#) for a full methodology.

Type 1: Children ‘in the system’ (receiving statutory support or intervention)

The methodology and sources for the figures underlying this aggregate have remained broadly the same as last year (Table 1). The only changes are:

1. This year, the number of children currently under a special guardianship order (SGO) has been directly calculated from the Children Looked After census, rather than estimated. This now counts children who are aged under 18 on the 31st March 2018, and whose last recorded episode of care in the CLA census ended due to an SGO.
2. DfE only publishes the number of CiN episodes where FGM has been identified as a factor at assessment; rather than the number of children. The latter was provided to us as bespoke analysis last year. To recalculate the number of children (rather than episodes) for 2017/18, we have scaled up the previous number of children using the relative change in the number of episodes from 2016/17 to 2017/18.

Table 1: Sources and indicators used in creating an aggregate measure of children receiving statutory support or intervention for any vulnerability

Group	Indicator	Source	Age	Estimate
Children in care	Number of children in care at 31st March 2018	Department for Education (DfE) - Children looked after (CLA) in England including adoption 2018	0-16+	75,420
Children in immigration detention	Number of children in immigration detention at 31st March 2018	Home Office - Immigration statistics 2018	0-17	0
Children in youth custody	Custody population for under 18 year olds	Ministry of Justice and Youth Justice Board for England and Wales - Youth Justice Board Statistics 2018	0-17	891
Children in MH secure Tier 4	Mental health detention episodes for children	Ministry of Justice and Youth Justice Board for England and Wales - Youth Justice Board Statistics 2018	0-17	1,177
Children in secure welfare accommodation	Children in secure children's homes at 31 March	DfE - Children accommodated in secure children's homes 2018	0-17	87
Children in Need (CIN)	Children in need at 31st March 2018 excluding unborn children	DfE - Characteristics of Children in need 2018	0-16+	397,430
Former Relevant Child and Qualifying Children	All children who had been looked after for at least 13 weeks which began after they reached the age of 14 and ended after they reached the age of 16	Department for Education (DfE) - Children looked after (CLA) in England including adoption 2018	17	620
Children who are subject to a Special Guardianship Order (SGO)	Children whose last episode of care ended due to a special guardianship order and are still aged under 18	CCO internal analysis of Children Looked After Census	0-17	25,438
Children who have been sexually exploited and referred to the National Referral Mechanism	Children who have been sexually exploited and referred to the National Referral Mechanism	National Crime Agency (NCA) - NRM statistics 2018	0-17	593

Children who have been trafficked and referred to the NRM	Children referred to the National Referral Mechanism	National Crime Agency (NCA) - NRM statistics 2018	0-17	2,345
Children with FGM recorded as a factor at CIN assessment	Children with FGM recorded as a factor at CIN assessment	DfE - Characteristics of Children in need 2018	0-16+	930
Children with SEN statements or EHC plans	Children with SEN statements or EHC plans at January school census date 2018	DfE - Special educational needs in England 2018	0-17	230,897
Children at risk of forced marriage - Children who have been given support of advice by the Forced Marriage Unit	Children who have been given support or advice by the Forced Marriage Unit	HO - Forced Marriage Unit Statistics 2018	0-17	574
Children believed to be radicalised and who received Channel Support	Children that received Channel Support	HO - Individuals referred to and supported through the Prevent Programme 2018	0-14	110
Pupils in LA Alternative Provision	Children in PRUs or other Local authority funded AP	DfE - Schools, pupils and their characteristics 2018	0-17	38,056
Children involved with the Criminal Justice system (cautioned or sentenced)	Youth cautions or court sentences given to children and young people, year ending 31 March	Ministry of Justice and Youth Justice Board for England and Wales - Youth Justice Board Statistics 2018	10-17	26,681
Young carers supported by LAs	Young carers supported by LAs	Children's Commissioner (2016) Young Carers - The support provided to Young Carers in England	5-15	33,506
Children and expected children living in households in temporary accommodation	Children and expected children living in households in temporary accommodation	DCLG - Statutory homelessness and prevention and relief 2018	0-17	123,520

The overlaps between groups have also been calculated in a similar manner to last year (see Table 2 below). Discounting these overlaps results in an estimated total of **723,000 children in England receiving statutory support or intervention for any vulnerability**. This represents an increase of 13,000 on last year's figure of 710,000. Whilst not directly comparable due to improvements in methodology, both figures represent around 6% of children aged 0-17 in their respective years.

Table 2: Matrix of overlaps between groups included in Type 1 aggregate: Children receiving statutory support

	Children in care	CYP in immigration detention	Children in youth custody	Children in MH secure Tier 4	Children in secure welfare accommodation	Children in Need (CIN)	Former Relevant Child and Qualifying Children	Children who are subject to a Special Guardianship Order (SGO)	Children who have been sexually exploited	Children who have been trafficked	Children with FGM recorded as factor at CIN assessment	Children with SEN statements or EHC plans	Children at risk of forced marriage	Children believed to be radicalised	Pupils in LA Alternative Provision	Children involved with the Criminal Justice system	Young carers supported by LAs	Children living in households in temporary accommodation
Children in care	7542																	
CYP in immigration detention		0																
Children in youth custody	330		891															
Children in MH secure Tier 4				1177														
Children in secure welfare accommodation	160				87													
Children in Need (CIN)	75420					39743												
Former Relevant Child and Qualifying Children	0						620											
Children who are subject to a Special Guardianship Order (SGO)	0							25438										
Children who have been sexually exploited									593									
Children who have been trafficked										2345								
Children with FGM recorded as factor at CIN assessment											930							
Children with SEN statements or EHC plans	16252					64180						230897						
Children at risk of forced marriage													574					
Children believed to be radicalised														110				
Pupils in LA Alternative Provision	5520					12989						17813			38056			
Children involved with the Criminal Justice system	1510															26681		
Young carers supported by LAs							15762										33506	
Children living in households in temporary accommodation							41173											123520

Note: Full information on the calculation of overlaps and indicators where methodology has remained the same available in last year's [Technical Report](#)

Type 2: Children from vulnerable family backgrounds

Estimating the total number of children with a complex family need

As with the measure of children receiving statutory support, we have some changes to the calculation of our measure of children living in households with a complex family need. As a result of these changes, this year's estimate is not comparable to last year's. These amendments are:

- > We have updated our estimate of the population prevalence of young carers using data from the Family Resources Survey (FRS) as previously this was based on estimates from the 2011 census. The FRS asks parents if their child is providing informal care for either someone in the household or someone else. However, the proportion answering yes is relatively small and so subject to fluctuation. To address this, we have used the (unweighted) average rate across the last 3 years of FRS data after matching to the Households Below Average Income (HBAI) dataset. This provides an estimate of 1.2% of children aged 5-15 providing some form of informal care, and allows us to estimate that 5% of those in material deprivation and severe low income via this matching to the HBAI data.
- > Recently, [Crest advisory](#) have used a simulation model to update estimates of children with a parent currently in prison. This model takes into account changes both in the prison and general populations and uses several survey estimates to provide a range of baseline estimates for these simulations. This is useful as previously estimates referred to the number of children with a parent in prison in 2006 and so were largely out of date. For consistency we have taken the point prevalence estimate based on the scenario using the same 2006 survey as its baseline. This provides a notably higher estimate of 113,000 children with a parent in prison at the 30th June 2018.
- > In order to better align this aggregate with other analysis carried out as part of the 2019 Vulnerability Report, namely analysis of local spending on different groups of children, this aggregate now includes Looked After Children (LAC), of which there were 75,420 as at 31 March 2018. As a result of this inclusion, the Type 2 aggregate has been renamed from "Children with complex family needs" to "Children from vulnerable family backgrounds". This is to reflect the fact that the family-level vulnerabilities experienced by LAC are more likely to relate to *past* circumstances – before entering care – rather than *current* circumstances while in care.

Other estimates used in the aggregate have been updated using the same rates and overlap assumptions as last year but applied to 2017 mid-year population estimates; see Table 3 below.

In this year's analysis there is a new group – LAC – which necessitates the estimation of additional overlaps. We were unable to find any quantitative evidence on the overlaps between LAC and the other groups in the Type 2 aggregate, so have had to make assumptions. We expect that such overlaps would be quite small for the reason above that the other groups all relate to current household circumstances – it would be safe to assume that the households which LAC are currently placed in should not have significant levels of these vulnerabilities. However, we also chose not to assume that such overlaps would be zero. On balance and as a compromise, we estimated overlaps on a pro rata basis – assuming that the percentage overlap with another vulnerable group matches the percentage prevalence of that group. For example, we estimate that 4% of children are in a family where an adult has a reported alcohol or drug dependency; we therefore assume this to be the case among 4% of LAC too. In other words, we assume that the other vulnerabilities are equally prevalent among LAC as among the wider child population.

After discounting overlaps, this results in an estimate of **2.26 million children from a vulnerable family background**.

Table 3: Matrix of overlaps between groups included in Type 1 aggregate: Children receiving statutory support

	Children in material deprivation and severe low income	Children of prisoners	Children in families where an adult has reported alcohol or drug dependency	Children exposed to Domestic Violence & Abuse	Children parental mental ill-health	Young carers	Children in care
Children in material deprivation and severe low income	593,000						
Children of prisoners	5,650	113,000					
Children in families where an adult has reported alcohol or drug dependency	36,000	4,497	472,000				
Children exposed to Domestic Violence & Abuse	65,000	7,910	113,000	831,000			
Children parental mental ill-health	142,000	8,565	126,000	252,000	900,000		
Young carers	5,600	969	4,048	7,128	29,580	102,000	
Children in care	3,769	718	3,000	5,281	5,720	648	75,420

Total excluding overlaps: 2,259,336

Note: Full information on the calculation of overlaps and indicators where methodology has remained the same available in last year's technical report

Quantifying the scale of unmet need among this group

This year we have significantly refined the methodology for quantifying unmet need, by estimating the numbers of children within this 2.26 million children who receive different levels of support or identification. We use the following range of levels of support:

- (a) Intensive statutory support
- (b) Statutory support
- (c) Formal support
- (d) Known to services

Note that these levels are hierarchical: (a) is a subset of (b), which in turn is subset of (c), which is a subset of (d). Among the 2.26 million children in this is aggregate, any child not contained in (d) is therefore deemed to be 'invisible to services'.

Below we set out our exact definitions and estimates for (a)–(d).

(a) Intensive statutory support

This consists of:

- LAC at the 31st March 2018. **Number = 75,420** (source: [DfE Characteristics of Children in Need 2017/18](#))
- Children on CPPs (excluding unborn children) at the 31st March 2018. **Number = 52,640** (source: [DfE Characteristics of Children in Need 2017/18](#))

Total Intensive statutory support: **128,060 children**.

(b) Children receiving statutory support

This consists of all Children in Need at the 31st March 2018 (excluding unborn children). **Number = 397,430** (source: [DfE Characteristics of Children in Need 2017/18](#))

(c) Children receiving formal support

This includes:

- All children in (b) receiving statutory support (397,430)
- Our estimate of all children in families currently being worked with by the Troubled Families Programme (TFP), and for which local authorities (LAs) are being funded (the so-called 'capped' number of families); as at March 2019.
 - To calculate this TFP estimate, we start with the *cumulative* number of families which LAs have been funded to work with up until March 2019. This is 380,426 (source: [Troubled Families Evaluation 2019](#)).
 - To get to a snapshot figure, we deduct the number of families for which TFP payments had been already made and successful outcomes delivered (as of March 2019). That is 199,631 according to figures provided privately by MHCLG. This leaves 180,795 families *currently* being worked with and funded through the TFP.

- We translate this into an estimated number of children by multiplying it by the average number of children in a TFP family (2.2, source: [Troubled Families Evaluation 2018](#)). This is 397,749 children.

We then deduct from this the estimated overlap between TFP children and CIN. It has previously been found that 31.8% of children in TFP families are CIN (source: [Troubled Families Evaluation 2018](#)). The sum of these two groups, after removing the overlap, is **668,695 children receiving formal support**.

(d) Children known to services

This is a wider group of children. Some of these will be receiving statutory or formal support, while others may receive early help or light-touch support. However other children in this group may simply be identified to local services without actually receiving any support.

This group includes:

- All children (excluding unborn children) with an open CIN episode during 2017/18, or a CIN referral and no further action. **Total = 848,960 children** (source: CCO internal analysis of the Children in Need Census).
 - Children in families that LAs are working with in a whole-family way, including those funded through TFP and other families not funded through it (the ‘uncapped’ number of TFP families).
 - To calculate this we start with the total number of families LAs that had reported working with as of March 2019 – funded or otherwise. This is 575,104 according to figures provided privately by MHCLG.
 - We convert this into an estimated snapshot by subtracting the number of families for which outcomes have been achieved (199,631, as above). We note that this could be an overestimate as it may include families who are no longer being engaged with, for whom outcomes have not been achieved (e.g. families who have relocated or stopped participating).
 - As above, we translate it into an estimated number of children by multiplying by 2.2. This leads to an estimate of **826,041 children**.
 - We further assume a similar overlap as above, i.e. that 31.8% of this group are CIN or had a CIN episode or referral. Net of the overlap, this is 563,360 children.
 - We also add to this our estimate of young carers being supported by LAs (33,506; source: [Children’s Commissioner’s Office, 2016](#)).
 - We also find that 15,687 children with an open CIN episode had “young carer” recorded as a factor at assessment (source: CCO internal analysis of the CIN census). We use this as our assessment of the overlap between this group and the CIN group.
- > Adding these totals, net of the overlaps, we find that **1.43 million children are known to services in some way**. Subtracting the number of those receiving formal support from this figure yields an additional 761,444 young people known to children’s services of whose level of support is unclear.

Children ‘invisible’ to services

- > We subtract those who are known to services – 1.43 million – from the estimated total of 2.26 million children from a vulnerable family background.
- > The remaining children are taken to be ‘invisible’ to services. This is **829,000 children**.

Table 4, on the following page, summarises all the estimates and calculations.

Table 4: Estimates underpinning calculation of unmet need among children from vulnerable family backgrounds

Level / Group	Estimate	Source
(a) Intensive statutory support		
LAC	75,420	DfE, Characteristics of Children in Need 2018
Children on CPPs (exc. unborn)	52,640	DfE, Characteristics of Children in Need 2018
Total (a)	128,060	
(b) Statutory support		
Children in Need (exc. unborn)	397,430	
Total (b)	397,430	DfE, Characteristics of Children in Need 2018
(c) Formal support		
Children in Need (exc. unborn)	397,430	DfE, Characteristics of Children in Need 2018
Children in 'capped' (i.e. funded) TFP families	397,749	See text
Total (c), minus overlaps	668,695	
(d) Known to services		
Children with CIN episode during the year, or CIN referral and no further action	848,960	CCO analysis of CIN Census
Children in 'uncapped' (funded or otherwise) TFP families	826,041	See text
Young carers supported by LAs	33,506	Children's Commissioner's Office, 2016
Total (d), minus overlaps	1,430,139	
Total children from a vulnerable family background (e)	2,259,336	
Of which, those who are 'invisible' to services (e)-(d)	829,197	

For the purposes of visualisation, we have also reframed this slightly to present categories of support that are mutually exclusive (rather than subsets) and collectively exhaustive. For this analysis we use the following mutually exclusive categories:

- (i) Intensive statutory support
- (ii) Other Children in Need

- (iii) Other children supported through the Troubled Families Programme
- (iv) Other children known to children’s services (level of support unclear)
- (v) Children ‘invisible’ to services

Note that the use of the word “Other” here indicates where a group focuses on the *additional* children contained in that group that are not contained in any of the previous groups. This strips out overlaps but also children receiving higher levels of support.

Table 5 indicates how we have calculated the sizes of these mutually exclusive categories. Since they are defined to be mutually exclusive, their numbers can be simply added up to get back to the overall figure of 2.26 million children from a vulnerable family background.

Table 5: All children from a vulnerable family background broken down by level of support.

Mutually exclusive level / group	Calculated as (with reference to Table 4):	Resulting number:
(i) Intensive statutory support	(a)	128,060
(ii) Other Children in Need	(b) – (a)	269,370
(iii) Other children supported through the Troubled Families Programme	(c) - (b)	271,265
(iv) Other children known to children’s services (level of support unclear)	(d) – (c)	761,444
(v) Children ‘invisible’ to services	(e) – (d)	829,197

Finally, Figure 20 on the following page illustrates these groups visually.

Figure 20: Visualisation of children from vulnerable family backgrounds broken down by (mutually exclusive) level of support

All children at risk due to family circumstances: 2.3 million

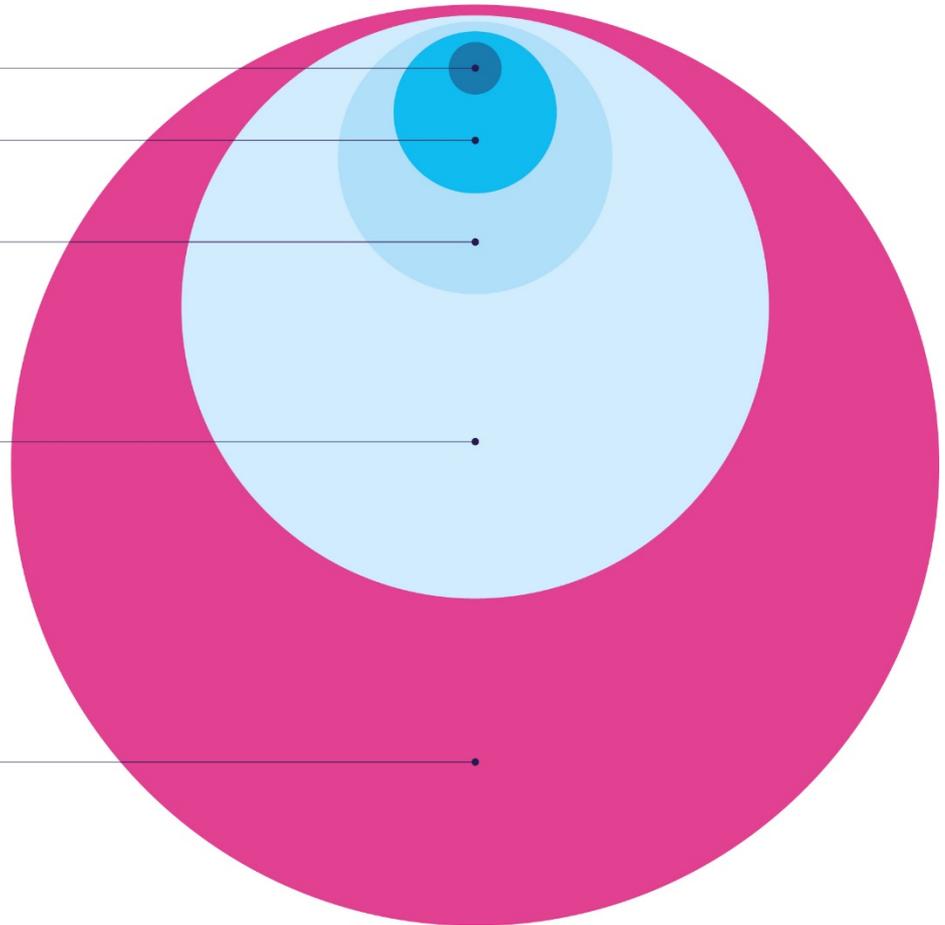
Intensive statutory support:
128,000

Other Children in Need:
269,000

Other children supported through Troubled Families:
271,000

Other children known to children's services (level of support unclear):
761,000

'Invisible' to children's services:
829,000



Conclusions

We sum up this section with the following key points:

- > Our analysis of aggregate vulnerability finds that 723,000 children are currently receiving statutory support or intervention for any vulnerability ('in the system'). This is slightly higher than last year's figure of 710,000.
- > This year we have refined our measure of the number of children with complex family needs. We estimate that 2.3 million children are from a vulnerable family background. Due to some changes in methodology and definition, this number is not comparable to our figure of 2.1 million from last year.
- > We have refined our assessment of the scale of unmet need among this group. We estimate that 829,000 of these children are 'invisible' to services (and therefore not getting any support). That is more than a third of children from vulnerable family backgrounds.
- > We estimate that another 761,000 children are known to services, but the level of support is unclear. These children may be receiving early help or other light-touch support, but they could also be getting no actual support. This works out to another 1 in 3 children from a vulnerable family background.
- > Adding these two figures together indicates that there are 1.6 million children from a vulnerable family background for whom the support is unclear or nonexistent. This is similar to what we found last year. This year, we are able to show that just over half of this group is 'invisible' to services, while just under half is known to services but receiving an unknown level of support.
- > The remaining 669,000 children are being helped through a formal, national programme of support. Some of this is through the Troubled Families programme, while the rest is through the various levels of children's social care. We estimate that 128,000 children are receiving the most intensive forms of statutory support, such as being in care or on a child protection plan.



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