

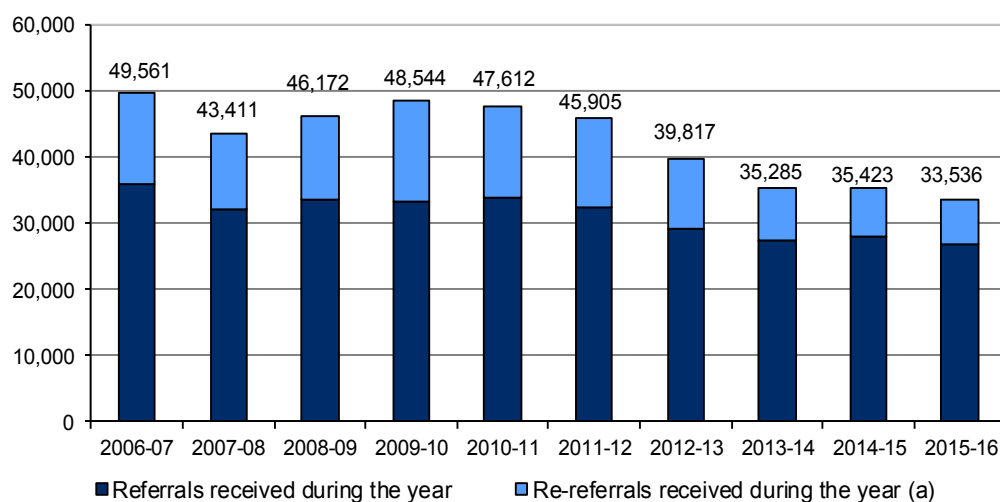


Referrals, assessments and social services for children in Wales, 2015-16

7 September 2016
SFR 114/2016

This release summarises the latest information on referrals, assessments and social services provided to children by Welsh local authorities. Compared to previous editions, some information is not available for 2015-16, which is a transitional year prior to the coming into force of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 (for further information see the [key quality section](#)).

Chart 1: Number of referrals received between 1 April and 31 March



Source: PM1

(a) Re-referrals within 12 months of the previous referral.

Key results for the period 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016

- Local authorities received over 33,500 referrals during the year a decrease of 5.3 per cent compared with 2014-15. There were just over 6,700 re-referrals within 12 months in 2015-16 ([Chart 1](#))
- Nearly 26,400 initial assessments were completed, a decrease of 2.9 per cent compared to 2014-15. ([Chart 2](#))
- 3,059 children were registered on local authority Child Protection Registers (CPRs) at 31 March 2016. 34 per cent of children had been on CPRs for less than 3 months, while 14 per cent of children had been on registers for more than 12 months. ([Chart 4](#))
- Just over 6,600 health assessments were due for looked after children. Of these, nearly 5,200 (78 per cent) of health assessments were undertaken as required. ([Table 4](#))

About this release

The release presents key results at the Wales level and is based on the year 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016, or the position at 31 March 2016, unless otherwise stated. All statistics in this release can be regarded as final figures, not subject to further revision or update.

Further information and full details for individual local authorities are published on [Stats Wales](#).

Information on children receiving social services and their educational attainment is published in the [children in need census](#) (provisional publication date March 2017).

In this release

Referrals	p3
Initial assessments	p4
Young carers	p5
Child Protection	
Registers	p5
Health checks	p7
Glossary	p8

List of tables and charts

Chart 1: Number of referrals received between 1 April and 31 March	1
Table 1: Number of referrals received between 1 April and 31 March	3
Chart 2: Number of initial assessments carried out between 1 April and 31 March	4
Table 2: Number of initial assessments between 1 April and 31 March	4
Table 3: Number and percentage of young carers, between 1 April and 31 March.....	5
Chart 3: Number of children on Child Protection Registers, by length of time on register, at 31 March.....	5
Chart 4: Number of children on Child Protection Registers by length of time on register, at 31 March.....	6
Table 4: Number of reviews, between 1 April and 31 March	6
Table 5: Number of health assessments and GP registrations for looked after children, between 1 April and 31 March	7
Table 6: Number of dental checks for looked after children, between 1 April and 31 March	7
Annex 1: Referrals and re-referrals within 12 months of the previous referral	14
Annex 2: List of tables and data items provided in StatsWales.....	15

Referrals

A referral is defined as a request for services to be provided by a social services department where the case is not already open. A re-referral is where a case has been closed or a decision not to proceed to initial assessment has been made and a subsequent referral for the same child occurs to the same local authority.

A decision on a referral is the decision about what response should be made with regards to the referral, for example:

- To allocate the case for assessment,
- To refer elsewhere,
- To take no further action,
- To obtain further information.

Table 1: Number of referrals received between 1 April and 31 March

Referrals	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Total referrals received during the year	35,285	35,423	33,536
Number of re-referrals within 12 months	7,839	7,459	6,727

Source: PM1

In 2015-16, local authorities received over 33,500 referrals, an decrease of 5.3 per cent compared with 2014-15. A contributing factor to the fall in the number of referrals from 2012-13 onwards, was the exclusion of contacts which did not result in a subsequent referral; some local authorities had incorrectly included these in previous years.

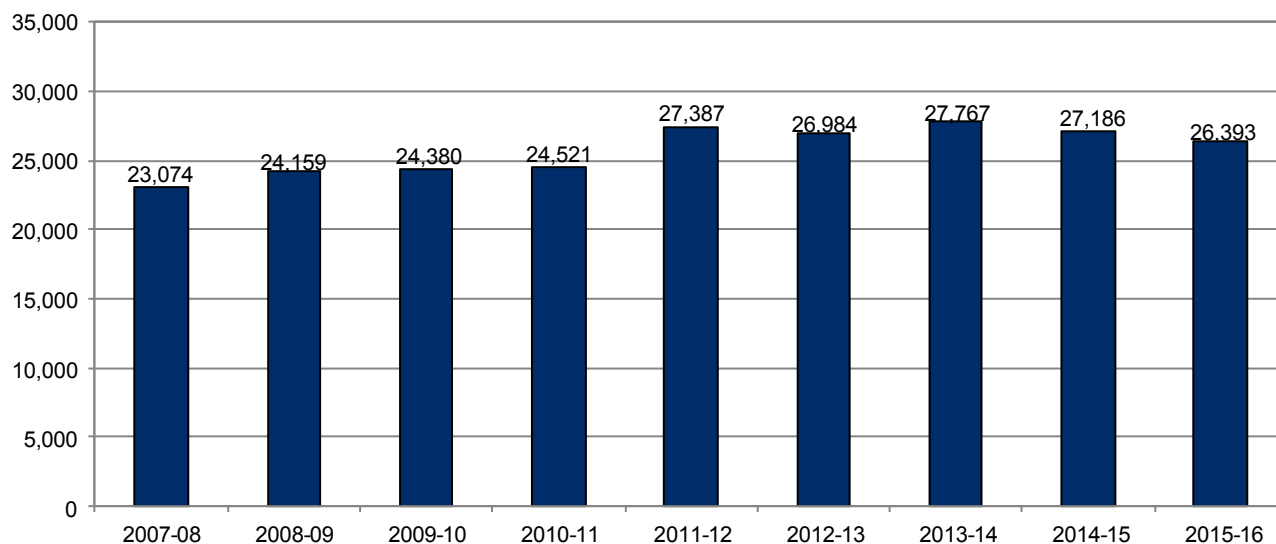
There were just over 6,700 re-referrals within 12 months in 2015-16.

[Annex 1](#) shows the number of referrals and re-referrals by local authority.

Initial assessments

An initial assessment is defined as a brief assessment of a child referred to social services with a request for services to be provided. The assessment should address the dimensions of the [Assessment Framework](#), determining whether the child is in need, the nature of any services required, from where and within what timescales, and whether a further, more detailed core assessment should be undertaken.

Chart 2: Number of initial assessments carried out between 1 April and 31 March



Source: PM1

There were nearly 26,400 initial assessments completed during 2015-16, a decrease of 2.9 per cent compared to 2014-15.

Table 2: Number of initial assessments between 1 April and 31 March

Initial assessments	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Initial assessments completed during the year	27,767	27,186	26,393
of these, the number where the child had been seen alone by the social worker ^(a)	11,902	12,175	13,053

Source: PM1

(a) 2013-14 data based on data provided by 21 local authorities; (See Notes)

As part of any initial assessment, the child should be seen. This includes observation and talking with the child in an age-appropriate manner. In 2015-16, 49 per cent of children were seen alone by the social workers, an increase from 45 per cent in 2014-15.

Young carers

A young carer is someone aged under 18 who takes responsibility for someone who is ill, disabled, elderly, experiencing mental distress or affected by substance misuse, or has substantial responsibility for caring for a sibling. A young carer may be from any family. They may be the person providing all of the care but may also help someone else to provide the care. An assessment of a young carer covers the young carer's ability to provide and to continue to provide care for the person cared for.

Table 3: Number and percentage of young carers, between 1 April and 31 March

Young Carers	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
The number of young carers known to social services ^(a)	810	791	782
The number of young carers known to social services who were assessed	696	720	728
Percentage of young carers known to social services who were assessed	86	91	93

Source: PM1

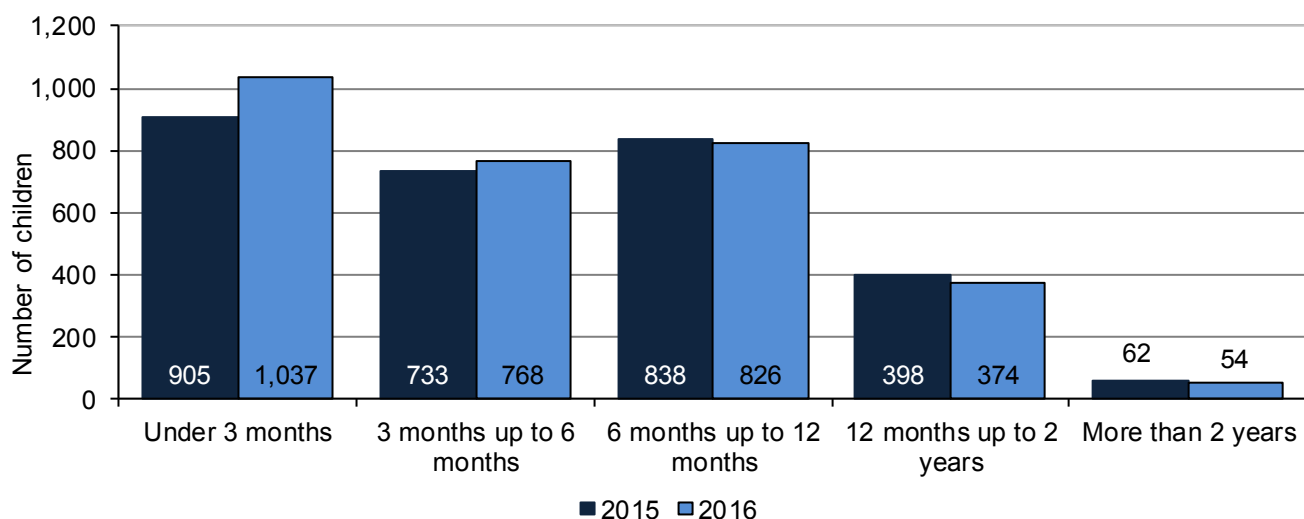
(a) 2014-15 and 2015-16 data provided by 21 authorities.

There were 782 young carers known to social services in 2015-16. 93 per cent of young carers were assessed in 2015-16.

Children on Child Protection Registers (CPRs)

Each local authority maintains a Child Protection Register to provide a record of all children in the area for whom there are unresolved child protection issues and who are currently the subject of an inter-agency protection plan.

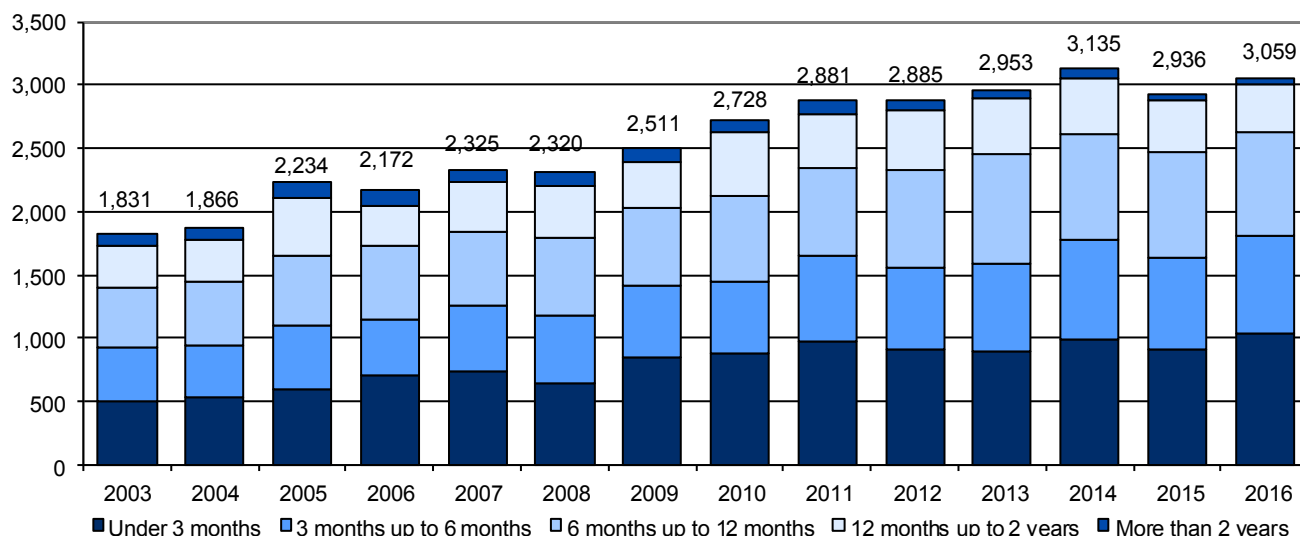
Chart 3: Number of children on Child Protection Registers, by length of time on register, at 31 March



Source: PM1 form

3,059 children were registered on local authority Child Protection Registers at 31 March 2016, a net increase of 123 (4.2 per cent) over the previous year. 34 per cent of children had been on CPRs for less than 3 months, while 14 per cent of children had been on registers for more than 12 months.

Chart 4: Number of children on Child Protection Registers by length of time on register, at 31 March



Source: PM1 form

In 2016 the number of children on the child protection register increased. This followed the first significant decrease since 2006 in the previous year.

In 2003, 27 per cent of children had spent under three months on the CPR whilst 6 per cent had spent more than 2 years on the CPR. However in 2016, 34 per cent of children spent under three months on the CPR, an increase of 7 percentage points since 2003, whilst only 2 per cent of children spent more than two years on the CPR.

Reviews carried out within statutory timetables

There are statutory timetables for the review of CPR plans set out in legislation or guidance for local authorities. Child protection plans should be reviewed within 3 months of registration and thereafter at intervals of not more than 6 months

Table 4: Number of reviews, between 1 April and 31 March

	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Children on Child Protection Registers			
Number of reviews due in the year	9,159	9,882	9,100
Number carried out within timetable	8,982	9,682	8,920

Source: PM1

During 2015-16, 98 per cent of reviews for children on CPRs were carried out within the statutory timetables, the same proportions as in the previous year.

Health checks for looked after children

Regulations provide a statutory timetable for health assessments of looked after children.

Regulations since July 2007 state that all children should have a health assessment within 14 days of becoming looked after. Subsequently for children under the age of 5 assessments should take place at least every 6 months and for children aged 5 or over at least every 12 months.

Table 5: Number of health assessments and GP registrations for looked after children, between 1 April and 31 March

Health assessments	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
The number of health assessments due for looked after children ^(a)	6,958	6,907	6,644
where the health assessment is undertaken as required ^(a)	5,638	5,602	5,189
The number of placements of looked after children started ^(b)	4,306	4,269	4,417
where the child is registered with a provider of general medical services within 10 working days of the start of the placement ^(c)	3,581	3,519	3,717

Source: PM1

(a) Data for all years based on data provided by 21 local authorities.

(b) This comes from the SSDA903 returns and is based on all 22 local authorities.

(c) 2015-16 based on data provided by 21 local authorities. 2014-15 and 2013-14 based on data provided by 20 local authorities.

Just over 6,600 health assessments were due for looked after children. Of these, nearly 5,200 (78 per cent) of health assessments were undertaken as required; the proportion of health assessments undertaken as required decreased over the last year compared to the previous two years.

Approximately 84 per cent of children in 2015-16 were registered with a provider of general medical services within 10 working days of the start of their placement.

Table 6: Number of dental checks for looked after children, between 1 April and 31 March

Dental checks	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Children looked after continuously for at least 12 months at 31st March ^(a)	4,338	4,260	4,195
whose teeth were checked by a dentist in the year ^(b)	3,232	3,125	3,302

Source: PM1

(a) From the SSDA903 returns – these are individual returns for each child looked after by local authority

(b) 2015-16 based on data provided by 21 local authorities. 2014-15 and 2013-14 based on data provided by 20 local authorities. (See Notes 2.2).

For the authorities who provided data, the proportion of looked after children that had their teeth checked increased slightly from 84 per cent in 2014-15 to 85 per cent in 2015-16.

Glossary

Initial assessment: is defined as a brief assessment of each child referred to social services with a request for services to be provided. The assessment should address the dimensions of the Assessment Framework, determining whether the child is in need, the nature of any services required, from where and within what timescales, and whether a further, more detailed core assessment should be undertaken.

Looked after children: is the term used to describe any child who is in the care of the local authority or who is provided with accommodation by the local authority social services department for a continuous period of more than 24 hours. This covers children in respect of whom a compulsory care order or other court order has been made. It also refers to children accommodated voluntarily, including under an agreed series of short-term placements which may be called short breaks, family link placements or respite care.

Timetable for referral and assessments: The current timetables for dealing with referrals, initial assessments and core assessments are set out in the "[Framework for the assessment of children in need and their families](#)".

Key elements of the current Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need will be incorporated into an updated code of practice under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act, which will be implemented from April 2016

Notes

1. Context

1.1 Policy/operational context

The data were supplied to the Data Collection team within the Welsh Government by the 22 local authorities in Wales on form PM1 except when otherwise noted. The form applies an extensive series of validation checks to ensure that the information provided is accurate and consistent. Further information on quality and methods can be found in the [Quality report](#).

2. Key quality information

This section provides a summary of information on this output against five dimensions of quality: Relevance, Accuracy, Timeliness and Punctuality, Accessibility and Clarity, and Comparability.

2.1 Relevance

The statistics are used both within and outside the Welsh Government to monitor adult social services trends and as a baseline for further analysis of the underlying data. These statistics are used in a variety of ways. Some of the key users are:

- Ministers and the Members Research Service in the National Assembly for Wales;
- Local authorities;
- The third sector (e.g. charities);
- The Department for Health and Social Services in the Welsh Government;
- Other areas of the Welsh Government;
- The research community;
- Students, academics and universities;
- Individual citizens and private companies.

The statistics may also be useful for other UK governments

- The Northern Ireland Executive's Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety
- The Scottish Government, Analytical Services Division
- The Department for Education in England.

These statistics are used in a variety of ways. Some examples of these are:

- advice to Ministers;
- local authority comparisons and benchmarks;
- to inform the social services policy decision-making process in Wales;
- to inform the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales;
- to model the financial consequences of changes in the population or the care system
- to assist in research on children receiving social services.

A number of indicators for local authority performance and the Welsh Government's Programme for Government are based on the data underlying this release – indicators are listed in Annex 5.

2.2 Accuracy

Every year the data are collected from the same source, PM1, and adhere to the national standard; they will also be coherent within and across organisations.

For 2015-16:

- Neath Port Talbot and Monmouthshire were unable to provide all the information on some of the health checks indicators.
- Denbighshire was unable to provide information on the number of young carers known to social services.

For 2014-15:

- Flintshire, Neath Port Talbot and Monmouthshire were unable to provide all the information on some of the health checks indicators.
- Denbighshire was unable to provide information on the number of young carers known to social services.

For 2013-14:

- Flintshire, Neath Port Talbot and Monmouthshire were unable to provide all the information on some of the health checks indicators.

2.3 Timeliness and punctuality

The Data Collection team within the Welsh Government collected Performance Management in Children's Services data for the financial year 2015-16 between March and May 2015. Data in this release refers to final 2015-16 data. This release was published in September 2016, meeting the planned date.

2.4 Accessibility and clarity

This statistical release is pre-announced and then published on the Statistics section of the Welsh Government website. It is accompanied by more detailed tables on [StatsWales](#), a free to use service that allows visitors to view, manipulate, create and download data.

2.5 Comparability and coherence

Statistics collected in each United Kingdom country may differ and the detailed guidance available from each country's website should be consulted before using these statistics as comparative measures. Further information on comparability is available at the web page [UK Comparability of Children's Social Services Statistics](#).

This statistical release mainly provides figures at the Wales level, with some information about individual local authorities. Much more information for local authorities is available on StatsWales. When comparing figures for different local authorities, relevant factors such as the size of the local

authority population should be taken into account. [Local authority population estimates by age](#) can be found on StatsWales.

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act sets out significant changes in policy, which in turn will have an effect on the current national social services data collections. In order to understand and develop requirements in relation to these changes, the Welsh Government set up the Social Services Technical Information Network in November 2014. The Network includes representation from the Welsh Local Government Association, Association of Directors of Social Services Cymru, Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales and Welsh Government.

The Network has reviewed all of the national social services data returns submitted by local authorities and requirements for data have been developed in line with the implementation of the Act. In relation to the main data sources for this release (PM1 data returns), the Network agreed reduced data requirements for 2015-16 so as to lessen the burden on local authorities for one year prior to the introduction of new performance information requirements from 2016-17 onwards (when local authorities will no longer report on PM1). From April 2016, local authorities are required to collect the performance measures detailed in the Code of Practice in relation to social services performance issued under the Act.

3. National Statistics status

The [United Kingdom Statistics Authority](#) has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the [Code of Practice for Official Statistics](#).

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

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

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

4. Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG)

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The Act puts in place seven well-being goals for Wales. These are for a more equal, prosperous, resilient, healthier and globally responsible Wales, with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. Under section (10)(1) of the Act, the Welsh Ministers must (a) publish indicators ("national indicators") that must be applied for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the Well-being

goals, and (b) lay a copy of the national indicators before the National Assembly. The 46 national indicators were laid in March 2016.

Information on indicators and associated technical information - [How do you measure a nation's progress? - National Indicators](#)

Further information on the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#).

The statistics included in this release could also provide supporting narrative to the national indicators and be used by public services boards in relation to their local well-being assessments and local well-being plans.

5. Revisions

Occasionally, revisions can occur due to errors in our statistical processes or when a data supplier notifies the Welsh Government that they have submitted incorrect information. In these cases, a judgement is made as to whether the change is significant enough to publish a revised statistical release. Where changes are not deemed to be significant, figures will be corrected if they appear in future releases. However minor amendments to the figures may be reflected in the StatsWales tables prior to the next release.

6. Further information

Further information is available in other Personal Social Services statistical releases on the [Welsh Government website](#) at the social services theme page.

Information on the costs to local authorities of services provided for looked after children are produced by the Welsh Government from local authority financial returns. Detailed figures are available on [StatsWales](#).

7. Related publications

A similar statistical release for England can be accessed on the [Department for Education website](#).

Child protection statistics for Scotland can be accessed on the [Scottish Government website](#).

Children Looked After statistics for Scotland can be accessed on the [Scottish Government website](#).

Child protection statistics for Northern Ireland can be accessed on the [Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety website](#).

8. We want your feedback

We welcome any feedback on any aspect of these statistics which can be provided by email to stats.pss@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

Further details

The document is available at:

<http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/referrals-assessments-social-services-children/?lang=en>

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Annex 1: Referrals and re-referrals within 12 months of the previous referral

	2013-14		2014-15		2015-16	
	Total referrals received during the year	Of which, re-referrals received during the year	Total referrals received during the year	Of which, re-referrals received during the year	Total referrals received during the year	Of which, re-referrals received during the year
Isle of Anglesey	1,463	276	1,596	289	1,317	257
Gwynedd	1,476	392	1,435	369	1,471	365
Conwy	868	158	723	146	519	54
Denbighshire	773	133	670	101	625	79
Flintshire	1,220	158	1,825	479	2,492	466
Wrexham	3,272	700	3,567	851	1,866	378
Powys	1,282	292	1,488	324	1,248	291
Ceredigion	576	94	667	142	531	80
Pembrokeshire	997	263	1,405	231	1,262	186
Carmarthenshire	1,063	188	1,648	289	1,473	301
Swansea	1,598	313	1,804	301	1,499	213
Neath Port Talbot	1,652	365	1,306	201	1,412	231
Bridgend	1,107	141	999	204	1,288	213
Vale of Glamorgan	1,076	260	979	159	1,055	194
Cardiff	4,531	1,159	4,195	1,065	3,872	906
Rhondda Cynon Taf	3,441	775	3,102	622	3,765	908
Merthyr Tydfil	825	218	698	112	802	132
Caerphilly	2,237	544	1,907	400	2,006	417
Blaenau Gwent	1,194	154	1,071	141	1,103	148
Torfaen	2,284	597	1,985	530	1,447	323
Monmouthshire	415	55	482	65	465	83
Newport	1,935	604	1,871	438	2,018	502
Wales	35,285	7,839	35,423	7,459	33,536	6,727

Annex 2: List of tables and data items provided in StatsWales

1. [Referrals](#), by local authority and year (Table 1 of the release)
2. [Initial assessments](#), by local authority and year (Table 2 of the release)
3. [Young carers](#), by local authority and year (Table 3 of the release)
4. [Reviews of children on child protection register](#), by local authority and year (Table 4 of the release)
5. [Health assessments for children looked after](#), by local authority and year (Table 5 of the release)
6. [Statutory visits and health services](#), by local authority and year (Table 5 and 6 of the release)

Dataset only available on Statswales

1. [Educational attainment of children looked after](#), by local authority
2. [School attendance of children looked after](#), by local authority
3. [School exclusions of children looked after, by local](#) authority
4. [Other education measures of children looked after, by local](#) authority
5. [Children added to and removed from child protection register](#), by local authority and measure
6. [Children on the child protection register at 31 March per 10,000 population aged under 18](#), by local authority and year
7. [Children on child protection register at 31 March](#), by local authority, category of abuse and age group
8. [Children and young persons on the Child Protection register \(period of time\)](#), by local authority
9. [Supervision orders made under the Children Act 1989 at 31 March and during the year](#), by local authority
10. [Status at age 19, pathway plans and personal advisor](#), by local authority