



Department of
Health

An Roinn Sláinte

Mánnystrie O Poustie

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Background Quality Report: 'Children Adopted from Care in Northern Ireland'

Dimension	Assessment by author
Introduction	<p><i>Context for the quality report</i></p> <p>Principle 4 of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics states that statistical methods should be consistent with scientific principles and internationally recognised best practices, and be fully documented. Quality should be monitored and assured taking account of internationally agreed practices. The full text of the Code is available at:</p> <p>https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/monitoring-and-assessment/code-of-practice/</p> <p>Each Official and National Statistics output produced by Community Information Branch (CIB) within the Department of Health (DoH) contains key quality information in respect of the specific content of the statistical output. This information is provided in the definitions, notes to tables or notes to editors.</p>
Relevance	<p><i>The degree to which the statistical product meets user needs in both coverage and content</i></p> <p>Information presented in the 'Children Adopted from Care in Northern Ireland' statistical bulletin derives from the annual AD1 statistical survey, provided by each of the five Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts in Northern Ireland to the HSC Board and CIB in the DoH.</p> <p>The AD1 survey is longitudinal with one record for each young person fitting the parameters of the collection. The AD1 survey collects a range of information on children adopted from care including gender, age and the duration between the different stages of the adoption process.</p> <p>Information from 'Children Adopted from Care in Northern Ireland' is used by a wide variety of users for a range of purposes. The Northern Ireland Assembly devolved administration and the DoH (statutory users) use the information to support the formulation and evaluation of social care policy, to benchmark performances within and between HSC Trusts in Northern Ireland, for Ministerial Briefing and to respond to Private Office enquires and Parliamentary/Assembly questions.</p> <p>Private companies may use these publications to monitor and target social care services for children (for example day care facilities), academics for research and other government Departments and Agencies to inform cross-cutting policy and strategy development.</p> <p>CIB ensures that 'Children Adopted from Care in Northern Ireland' remains relevant to users in a number of ways; a Regional Information Group exists to ensure that the requirements of statutory users are met; feedback received from readers help to shape the information collected and the content of these publications. In this way the needs of user communities are continuously monitored, and if appropriate and practical acted upon.</p>
Accuracy and Reliability	<p><i>The proximity between an estimate and the unknown true value</i></p> <p>The AD1 statistical survey used in the production of this publication is a census of the cohort involved, and as such, coverage is inclusive of all children/young people</p>

	<p>involved.</p> <p>As a census rather than a survey, no estimates are produced, and issues of sampling error and confidence interval are not relevant.</p> <p>HSC Trusts are required to submit the AD1 statistical survey return via an Electronic Data Collection System (EDCS) on the DoH Extranet site. Each HSC Trust has nominated Data Entry Users and Data Managers who have access to the AD1 Return on this system. The toolbar of EDCS contains options which should be consulted by Data Entry Users and Data Managers to aid with the completion of the return;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) A 'Guide' section contains separate guidance manuals for Data Entry Users and Data Managers on how to use the system and how to validate the information entered. (ii) A 'Notes' section provides guidance on the information to be included in the return. <p>The EDCS has validation checks pre-programmed which on completion of tables in the return may provide Data Entry Users with a list of queries to resolve before they can save the return on the system. These errors must be cleared or an explanation provided for them. Following this the Data Manager has the responsibility for quality assuring the data and authorising its submission to CIB.</p> <p>Statisticians within CIB perform further checks, using historical data to monitor annual variations and emerging trends. A set of validation checks are provided by CIB to help improve the accuracy and reliability of the return.</p> <p>Previous data are revised if necessary and appropriate. All revisions are conducted in line with the 'Statement on Revisions and Errors' found in the DoH Statistics Charter.</p> <p>https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/doh-statistics-charter</p>
<p>Timeliness and Punctuality</p>	<p><i>Timeliness refers to the time gap between publication and the reference period. Punctuality refers to the gap between planned and actual publication dates</i></p> <p>The AD1 survey used to produce this publication is submitted twice a year for the periods 1st April – 30th September and 1st October – 31 March by HSC Trusts. Delayed submissions by HSC Trusts are normally due to a lack of resources or validation issues.</p> <p>'Children Adopted from Care in Northern Ireland' is always published within a year of the reference period. In relation to the 2015/16 report the time lag between publication and the reference period to which the data refers was eight months.</p> <p>The 'DoH Statistical Releases Calendar' which provides twelve months advance notice of releases, is available at:</p> <p>https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/statistical-releases-calendar</p> <p>In the majority of cases, the target publication deadlines are met. However, in the event of a change to a pre-announced release date, the new date is announced, explained and updated regularly.</p>
<p>Accessibility and Clarity</p>	<p><i>Accessibility is the ease with which users are able to access the data, also reflecting the format in which the data are available and the availability of supporting information. Clarity refers to the quality and sufficiency of the metadata, illustrations and accompanying advice</i></p> <p>Guidance documents detailing the coverage, definitions, completion instructions and validations to enable HSC Trusts to complete the AD1 statistical information return that feeds into this publication is available at the following link:</p>

	<p>https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/children-adopted-care-return-and-quality-report</p> <p>The statistical publication is available to download free of charge in PDF format at:</p> <p>https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/articles/children-adopted-care</p> <p>If requested CIB can provide hard copies or other suitable media.</p> <p>There are numerous footnotes, caveats and annexes provided in the publication covering a range of explanatory information. The publication contains contact details for further information. Additional ad-hoc analysis, where appropriate, is provided upon request.</p>
Coherence and Comparability	<p><i>Coherence is the degree to which data that are derived from different sources or methods, but refer to the same topic, are similar. Comparability is the degree to which data can be compared over time and domain</i></p>
	<p>There is currently no other official source of statistics about the adoption of looked after children in Northern Ireland. However, where appropriate, CIB compare their data to external sources to ensure HSC Trusts are providing reliable and robust data, for example the HSC Board DSF Report.</p> <p>CIB provide HSC Trusts with guidance documents on the completion of the AD1 survey. CIB also have regular meetings with HSC trust staff to discuss guidelines and data validation issues with the aim of ensuring consistent recording, coverage and timeframes of data between HSC Trust areas and with previous years/quarters figures.</p> <p>All data submitted by HSC Trusts are comparable. Comparisons can be made over time and publications are available from year ending 31 March 2004 onwards. Inter country comparisons are difficult as social care operates within different legislative frameworks across the devolved administrations.</p>
Trade-offs between Output Quality Components	<p><i>Trade-offs are the extent to which different aspects of quality are balanced against each other</i></p>
	<p>None.</p>
Assessment of User Needs and Perceptions	<p><i>The processes for finding out about users and uses, and their views on the statistical products</i></p>
	<p>Data presented in these publications help to meet the information needs of a wide range of internal and external users.</p> <p>Within DoH figures from 'Children Adopted from Care in Northern Ireland' are used by policy officials to monitor the delivery of social care services to children, to help assess Trust performance, for corporate monitoring, to inform and monitor related policy and to respond to parliamentary/assembly questions.</p> <p>Outside government, the information in this statistical publication is used by a number of charities and voluntary organisations, as they lobby government, organisations to use these figures include VOYPIC (Voice of Young People in Care). The statistics in these publications are also used by academic researchers interested in children's social care.</p> <p>We gain awareness of users of our data from ad hoc requests for information and from receipt of invitations to relevant meetings and conferences.</p> <p>User's needs are prioritised, taking account of all the resources available.</p>
Performance, Cost and	<p><i>The effectiveness, efficiency and economy of the statistical output</i></p>
	<p>The HSC Trust information systems do not hold the information required for this</p>

<p>Respondent Burden</p>	<p>survey electronically, therefore Information Officers working in HSC Trusts must provide CIB with the data requested through the AD1 survey form. The survey form is submitted electronically from the HSC Trusts to CIB.</p> <p>Meetings act as a forum to discuss any difficulties or burdens HSC Trust staff may be experiencing. HSC Trust staff who attend these meetings are required to liaise with Social Workers working in their HSC Trust areas.</p> <p>On receipt of the AD1 statistical information returns from Information Officers, the statistics require approximately 4 weeks of working time for statistical staff to produce, plus a small amount of time for senior staff oversight.</p>
<p>Confidentiality, Transparency and Security</p>	<p><i>The procedures and policy used to ensure sound confidentiality, security and transparent practices</i></p> <p>The AD1 survey return is a predefined template collecting information about individual young people fitting the parameters of the collection. All records are anonymised to protect the identity/confidentiality of the young people involved. The survey is hosted on the EDCS on the DoH extranet site. Data is submitted via this system, which provides a secure link between HSC Trusts and the DoH. The online survey is password protected with only nominated users from within the Trusts given access to the system. CIB maintain and manage the site, providing technical support and online help to nominated users of this system e.g. creating/deleting user accounts, resetting passwords.</p> <p>Statisticians in CIB extract the data from the EDCS. Following this, it is held on a network that is only accessible to the statisticians who need access.</p> <p>The DoH Statistical Charter contains a 'Statement on Confidentiality and Security'.</p> <p>https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/doh-statistics-charter</p>