

INFORMATION  
ANALYSIS  
DIRECTORATE



# *Quarterly Child Protection Statistics for Northern Ireland (January – March 2016)*



## Reader Information

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Publication Date	19 May 2016
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# Key Findings

## Child Protection Register

- At 31 March 2016, 2,146 children were listed on the Child Protection Register in Northern Ireland. This represented a 2% increase on the previous quarter;
- Taking account of local demographics, register counts per 10,000 children's population (under 18), ranged from 39.4 in the Western HSC Trust to 55.2 in the Southern HSC Trust; overall there were 49.5 children per 10,000 on the register;
- Four out of five (82%) children were on the register due to physical abuse, neglect or a combination of physical abuse and neglect;
- Some 67% of children on the Child Protection Register at 31 March 2016 had been on the register for less than one year with 2% of children on the register for three years or longer;

## Child Protection Referrals

- HSC Trusts received 1,121 child protection referrals for the quarter ending 31 March 2016. This was 13% higher than the previous quarter, and 10% above the number of referrals for the same quarter in 2015;
- The largest proportion of referrals, 45%, originated from within Social Services, followed by the PSNI with 21%.

# Introduction

## Background

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

## Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995

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

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

For every child subject to a Child Protection Plan or on a Child Protection Register in the United Kingdom it is estimated that there are likely to be around eight other children who have suffered maltreatment<sup>1</sup>. This and new ways of harming and abusing children (e.g. through the internet or trafficking) provide serious challenges to protecting children.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: “How safe are our children” (NSPCC, 2013)

# Child Protection Register

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

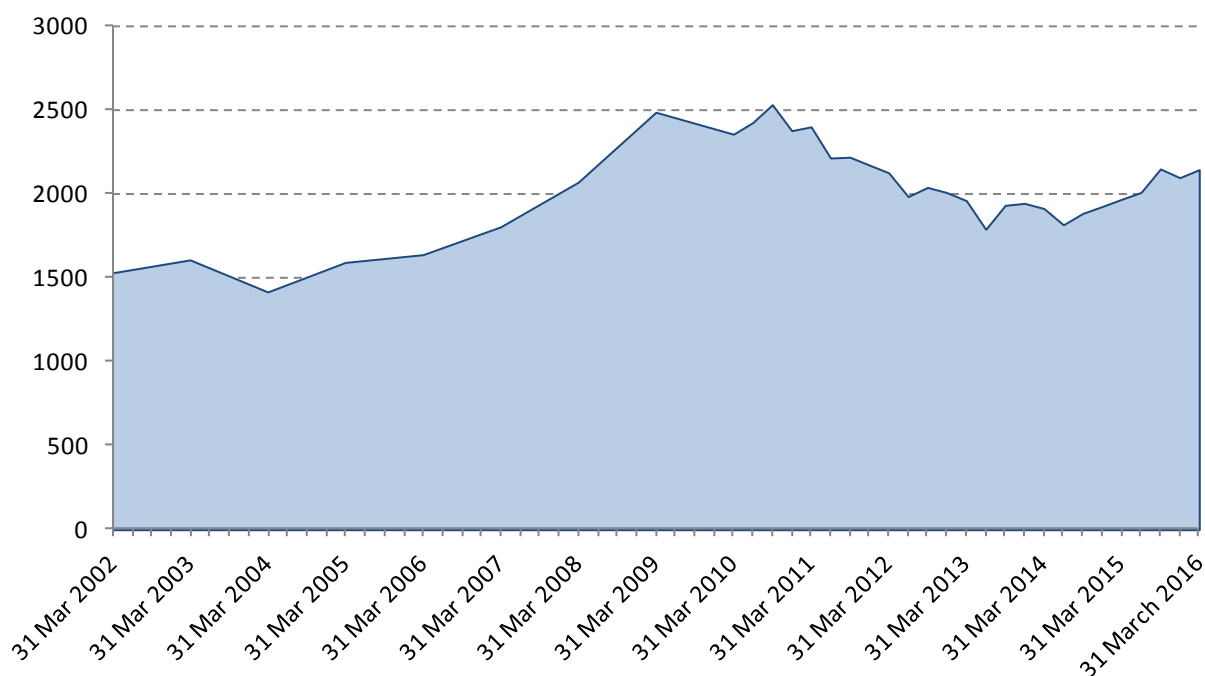
At 31 March 2016, 2,146 children were on the Child Protection Register in Northern Ireland, equivalent to 49.5 children per 10,000 of the under 18 population.

## Children on the Register

From 2008 to 2011 there was a rapid growth in the number of children on the Child Protection Register, thought to be attributed to a number of high profile media stories relating to child protection. Since then there has been a general decline in the number of children on the register; however throughout 2015/16 there has again been a steady rise in the numbers of children registered.

The count of 2,146 children on the Child Protection Register at 31 March 2016 represented a small increase (2%) on the previous quarter (2,098). Compared with the same time last year (March 2015), the number of children registered increased by 9%.

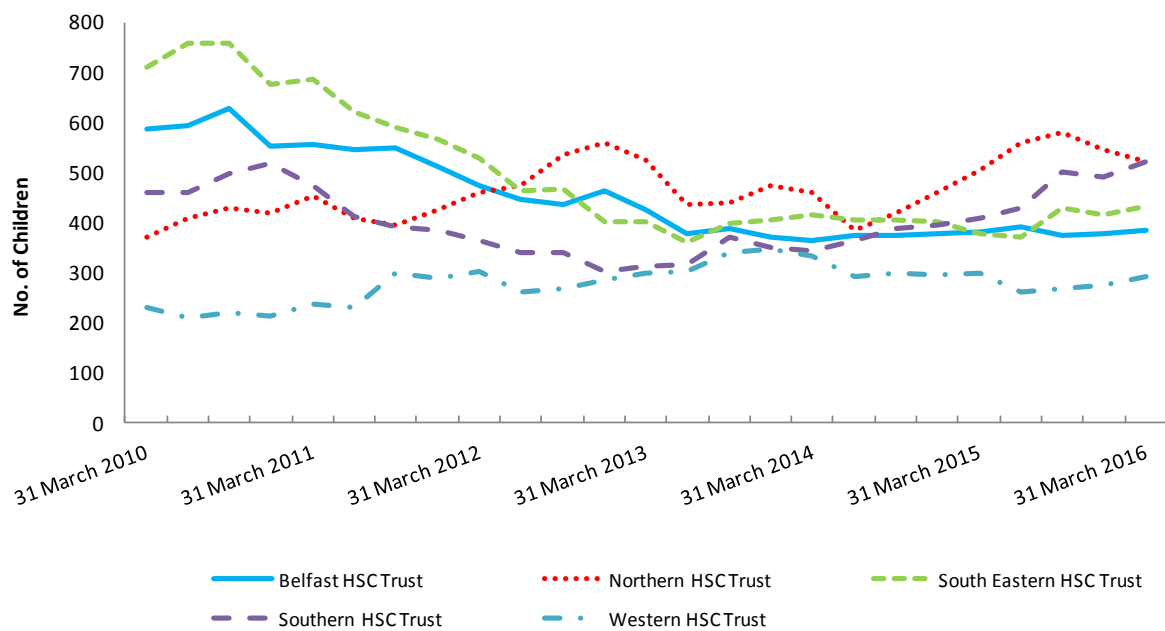
**Figure 1: Children on the Child Protection Register 31 March 2002 – 31 March 2016**



Source: Children Order Return CPR4

Note: Quarterly figures have been collated from 31 March 2010. Prior to this only annual figures were recorded

**Figure 2: Number of Children on the Child Protection Register by HSC Trust (31 March 2010 – 31 March 2016)**



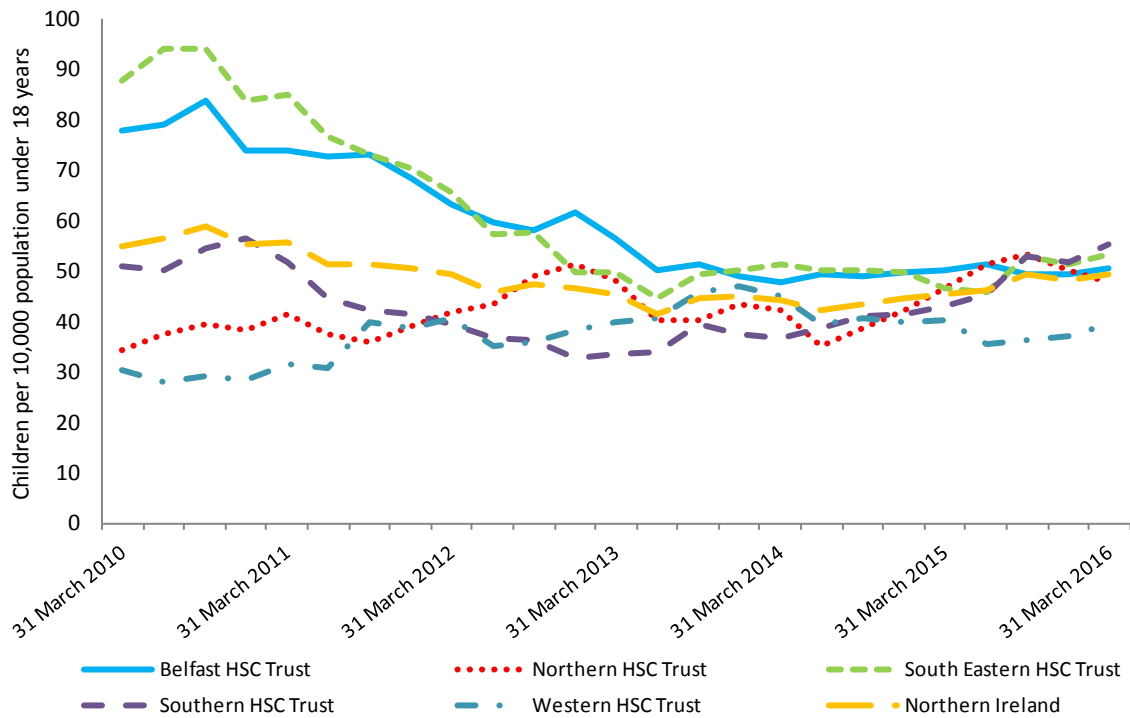
Source: Children Order Return CPR4

The number of children on the Child Protection Register by Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust is set out in Table 2. The small increase in the number of children on the register, compared to the previous quarter, is mainly due to an increase of children in the Southern and Western HSC Trusts. At 31 March 2016, just under a quarter, 24%, of children on the register were in the Northern and Southern HSC Trusts respectively, with 20% in the South Eastern HSC Trust, 18% in the Belfast HSC Trust and 14% in the Western HSC Trust.

Figure 2 illustrates that between June 2012 and March 2016, except for one quarter, the Northern HSC Trust has had the largest number of children on the register. This might be expected as the Northern HSC Trust has the largest overall childrens population. However there is no overall correlation between childrens population size and the number of children in each HSC Trust area on the register, which would suggest that the number of children on the HSC Trusts register is related to a number of complex interconnecting socio-economic factors including poverty, deprivation and family stress.



**Figure 3: Children on the Child Protection Register per 10,000 Population Under 18 Years (31 March 2010 – 31 March 2016)**

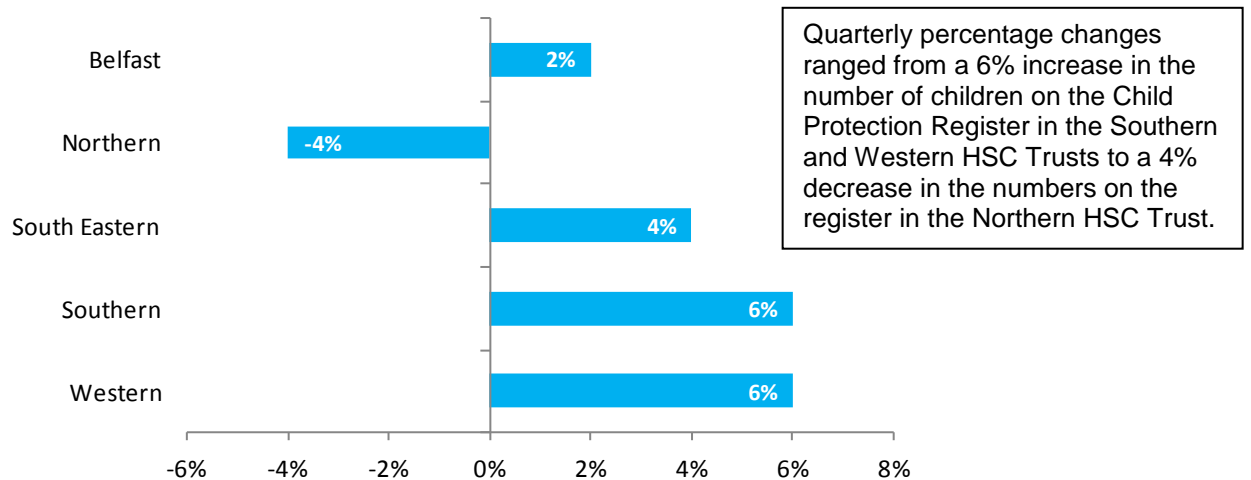


Source: Children Order Return CPR4

This becomes more apparent looking at Figure 3, which shows the changing trends in the number of children on the register as a proportion of the overall children’s population in each HSC Trust. It can be seen that, in general, there has been a convergence in the rates of children on the register, as rates in the Belfast and South Eastern Trusts have fallen. The exception to this is the Western HSC Trust which in the two previous quarters has had a markedly lower rate of children on the register.

Table 1, overleaf, details the number of children on the Child Protection Register per 10,000 of the population aged under 18 years. Regionally the proportion of children on the register has ranged from 58.9 children per 10,000 population under 18 at 30 September 2010 to 41.4 children per 10,000 under 18 at 30 June 2013.

**Figure 4: Quarterly Percentage Change in the Number of Children on the Child Protection Register by HSC Trust (31 December 2015 – 31 March 2016)**



Source: Children Order Return CPR4

**Table 1: Number of Children on the Child Protection Register per 10,000 Population Under 18 (31 March 2010 – 31 March 2016)**

HSC Trust	Quarter Ending							
	31st March 2010	30th June 2010	30th September 2010	31st December 2010	31st March 2011	30th June 2011	30th September 2011	31st December 2011
Belfast	77.9	79.1	84.0	73.9	74.2	72.9	73.4	68.3
Northern	34.2	37.6	39.5	38.4	41.5	37.4	36.1	38.9
South Eastern	88.1	94.0	94.2	84.1	85.2	76.9	73.2	70.4
Southern	50.8	50.4	54.5	56.7	51.8	44.8	42.4	41.6
Western	30.5	28.0	29.2	28.4	31.4	30.9	39.9	38.5
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>54.8</b>	<b>56.4</b>	<b>58.9</b>	<b>55.3</b>	<b>55.8</b>	<b>51.4</b>	<b>51.5</b>	<b>50.4</b>
	31st March 2012	30th June 2012	30th September 2012	31st December 2012	31st March 2013	30th June 2013	30th September 2013	31st December 2013
Belfast	63.4	59.7	58.2	61.7	56.6	50.2	51.4	49.0
Northern	42.1	43.6	49.1	51.5	48.3	40.1	40.3	43.6
South Eastern	65.6	57.2	57.7	49.6	49.8	44.5	49.5	50.1
Southern	39.4	36.7	36.3	32.6	33.7	33.8	39.4	37.4
Western	40.7	35.2	35.8	38.1	40.0	40.8	46.0	47.1
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>49.4</b>	<b>46.0</b>	<b>47.3</b>	<b>46.6</b>	<b>45.4</b>	<b>41.4</b>	<b>44.8</b>	<b>45.0</b>
	31st March 2014	30th June 2014	30th September 2014	31st December 2014	31st March 2015	30th June 2015	30th September 2015	31st December 2015
Belfast	48.0	49.3	49.2	49.9	50.4	51.6	49.3	49.6
Northern	42.4	35.2	38.6	42.2	46.5	51.3	53.4	50.1
South Eastern	51.5	50.2	50.3	49.8	46.7	45.9	52.9	51.5
Southern	36.6	38.7	41.1	41.6	43.2	45.4	53.1	51.9
Western	45.1	39.4	40.6	39.9	40.3	35.6	36.4	37.1
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>44.3</b>	<b>41.9</b>	<b>43.5</b>	<b>44.5</b>	<b>45.5</b>	<b>46.4</b>	<b>49.6</b>	<b>48.4</b>
	31st March 2016							
Belfast	50.5							
Northern	47.9							
South Eastern	53.4							
Southern	55.2							
Western	39.4							
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>49.5</b>							

Source: Children Order Return CPR4

Population figures based on latest available NISRA Mid-Year Estimates for 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013 & 2014

Some figures may differ from previous publications due to release of new NISRA Mid-Year Estimates

## Age

Similar to the proportions of previous quarters, 10% of children on the register were aged under one year, 29% were aged 1-4 years, 39% were 5-11 years, 18% were 12-15 years and 4% were aged 16 or over at 31 March 2016. The proportion of children on the register aged 0-11 years was 10 percentage points higher than the Northern Ireland population for that age group. This indicates that the Child Protection population was younger than would be expected when looking at the general population. A contributing factor for this may be to do with the focus on early intervention to help families address problems as they arise.

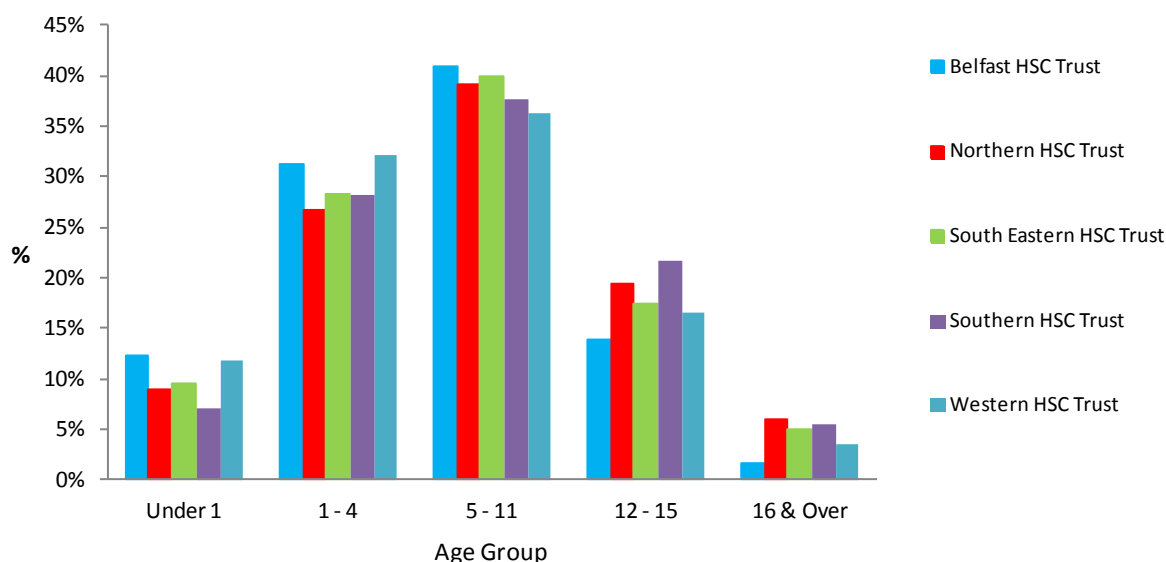
**Table 2: Number of Children on the Child Protection Register by Age at 31 March 2016<sup>1</sup>**

HSC Trust	Age (years)					Total	Per 10,000 Population Under 18
	Under 1	1 - 4	5 - 11	12 - 15	16 +		
Belfast	47	120	157	53	6	383	50.5
Northern	46	139	204	101	31	521	47.9
South Eastern	41	122	172	75	21	431	53.4
Southern	37	147	196	113	28	521	55.2
Western	34	93	105	48	10	290	39.4
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>621</b>	<b>834</b>	<b>390</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>2,146</b>	<b>49.5</b>

Population figures: Mid Year Population Estimates 2014 (NISRA, 2015)

In general the HSC Trusts have similar age distributions of children on the Child Protection Register, however some variation does occur quarter on quarter. For example at 31 March 2016 some 12% of the population on the register in the Belfast and Western HSC Trusts, respectively, were aged under 1 compared to 7% in the Southern HSC Trusts.

**Figure 5: The Age Profile of Children on the Child Protection Register at 31 March 2016**



Source: Children Order Return CPR4

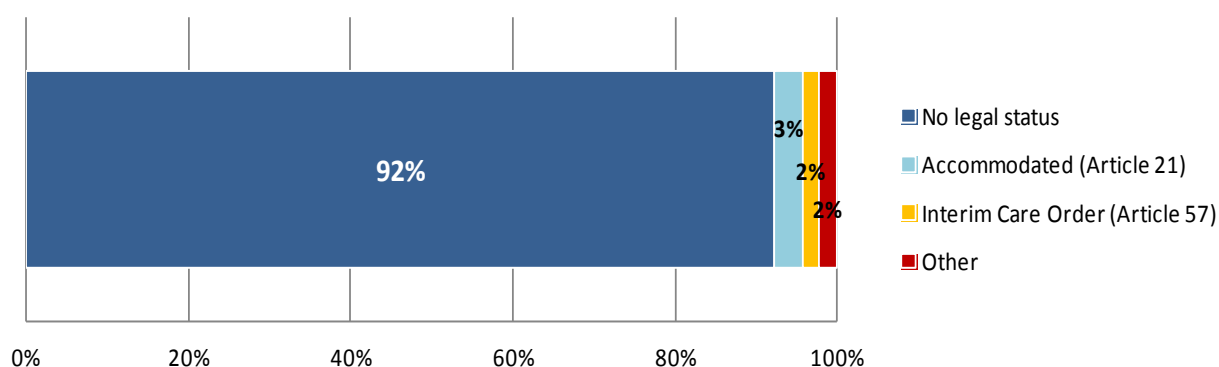
<sup>1</sup> Population figures are based on the latest available mid-year estimates from NISRA.

## Legal Status

The Child Protection Register identifies children for whom there are serious concerns, and as such, the children on the register do not need to have a specific legal status. Those children on the register with a legal status are in many cases likely to be looked after children.

The majority, 92%, of children on the register had no recorded legal status at 31 March 2016. Some 3% of children were Accommodated (Article 21) and 2% were subject to an Interim Care Order. This regional pattern was repeated within each HSC Trust; however there was some variation with the proportion of those with no legal status ranging from 86% in the Belfast HSC Trust to 95% in the South Eastern and Southern HSC Trusts. The composition of the register by legal status has remained relatively stable between 31 March 2010 and 31 March 2016<sup>1</sup>.

**Figure 6: Legal Status of Children on the Child Protection Register at 31 March 2016**



Source: Children Order Return CPR4

<sup>1</sup> Description of the different legal status can be found in Appendix B

**Table 3: Legal Status of Children on the Child Protection Register at 31 March 2016**

HSC Trust	Legal Status							Total
	Accommodated (Article 21)	Interim Care Order (Article 57)	Care Order (Article 50 or 59)	Deemed Care Order (Paras 11 & 30 of Sch 8)	Interim Supervision Order (Article 57)	Other	None	
Belfast	15	16	-	0	-	15	329	<b>383</b>
Northern	21	-	-	0	-	-	487	<b>521</b>
South Eastern	14	6	-	0	-	-	409	<b>431</b>
Southern	15	-	0	0	-	7	493	<b>521</b>
Western	10	13	0	0	0	5	262	<b>290</b>
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>1,980</b>	<b>2,146</b>

Source: Children Order Return CPR4

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

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

## Category of Abuse

*Category of abuse is recorded on the Child Protection Register as neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse or a combination of these.*

**Table 4: Children on the Child Protection Register by Category of Abuse at 31 March 2016**

HSC Trust	Category of Abuse								Total
	Neglect, Physical Abuse and Sexual Abuse	Neglect and Physical Abuse	Neglect and Sexual Abuse	Physical and Sexual Abuse	Neglect Only	Physical Abuse Only	Sexual Abuse Only	Emotional Abuse Only	
Belfast	-	93	8	-	131	105	18	24	<b>383</b>
Northern	10	96	12	20	148	149	51	35	<b>521</b>
South Eastern	-	88	10	-	145	120	18	42	<b>431</b>
Southern	-	86	-	11	105	228	33	49	<b>521</b>
Western	-	56	-	-	94	89	15	20	<b>290</b>
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>419</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>623</b>	<b>691</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>2,146</b>

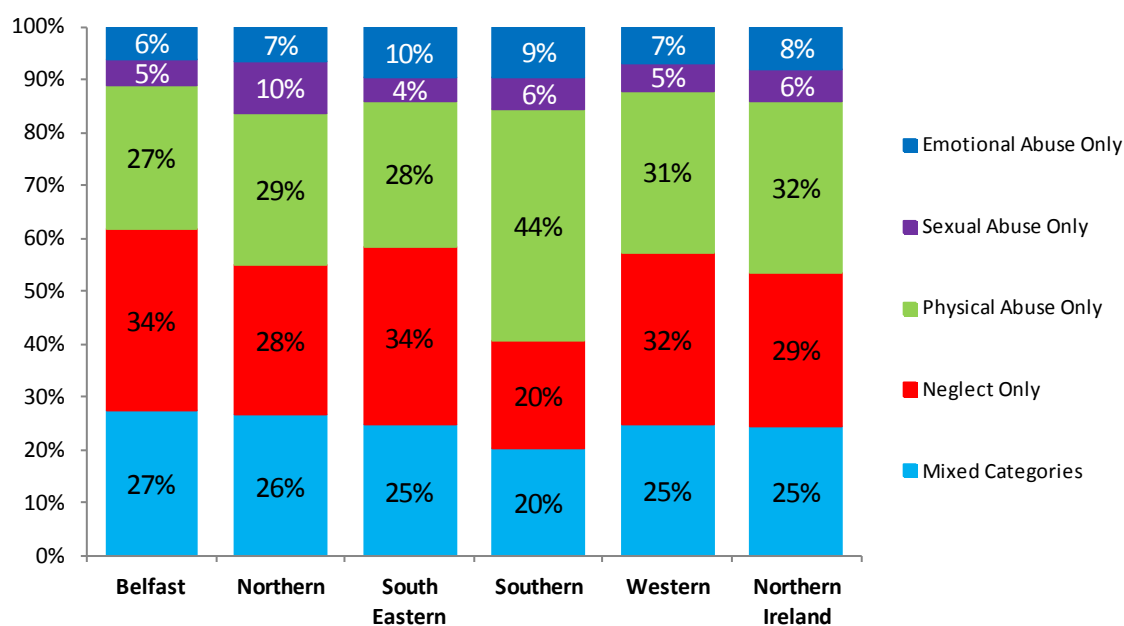
Source: Children Order Return CPR2

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

At 31 March 2016 the largest proportion of children was on the register due to Physical Abuse Only (32%) followed by Neglect Only (29%). A further fifth of children were on the register due to a combination of Neglect and Physical Abuse (20%).

There was some variation between the HSC Trusts in regards to the categories of abuse. The highest proportion of children on the Child Protection Register in the Southern (44%) and Northern (29%) HSC Trusts was due to physical abuse only. In the South Eastern (34%), Belfast (34%) and Western (32%) HSC Trusts the highest proportions of children registered were due to neglect only. 'Emotional Abuse Only' and 'Sexual Abuse Only' accounted for the smallest proportion of children on the register across all HSC Trusts, with regional proportions of 8% and 6% respectively.

**Figure 7: Children on the Child Protection Register by Category of Abuse and HSC Trust at 31 March 2016**



Source: Children Order Return CPR2

### Duration on the Register

Two thirds (67%) of children had been on the register for less than one year at 31 March 2016, with a fifth on the register for less than 3 months (22%). Just under a tenth had been on the register for over two years with two percent registered for three years or longer.

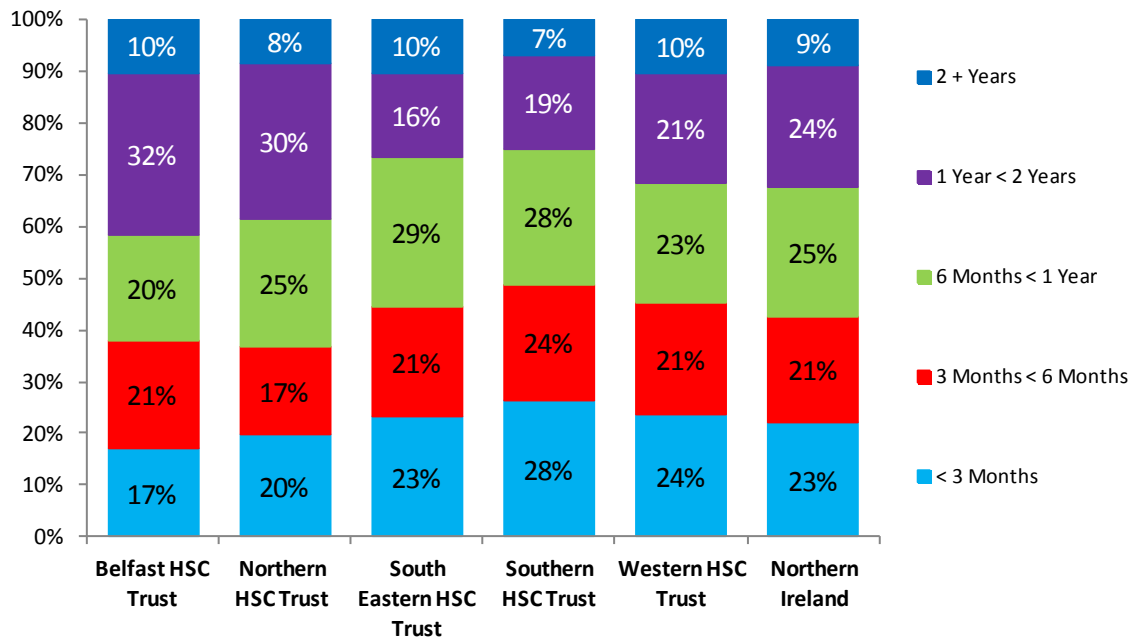
**Table 5: Children on the Child Protection Register by Duration at 31 March 2016**

HSC Trust	Duration						Total
	< 3 Months	3 Months < 6 Months	6 Months < 1 Year	1 Year < 2 Years	2 Years < 3 Years	3 + Years	
Belfast HSC Trust	66	80	77	121	36	3	383
Northern HSC Trust	104	87	129	157	33	11	521
South Eastern HSC Trust	100	92	124	71	25	19	431
Southern HSC Trust	138	116	137	94	33	3	521
Western HSC Trust	69	62	67	62	22	8	290
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>477</b>	<b>437</b>	<b>534</b>	<b>505</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>2,146</b>

Source: Children Order Return CPR5

The Southern HSC Trusts had the largest proportions of children on the register for less than one year at 75%, in comparison 58% of children in the Belfast HSC Trust had been on the register for this length of time. Some 7% of children in the Southern HSC Trust had been on the register for two years or longer compared to 10% of children in the Belfast, South Eastern and Western HSC Trusts.

**Figure 8: Children on the Child Protection Register by Duration and HSC Trust at 31 March 2016**



Source: Children Order Return CPR5



## Child Protection Referrals

During the quarter ending 31 March 2016, 1,121 Child Protection Referrals were received in Northern Ireland.

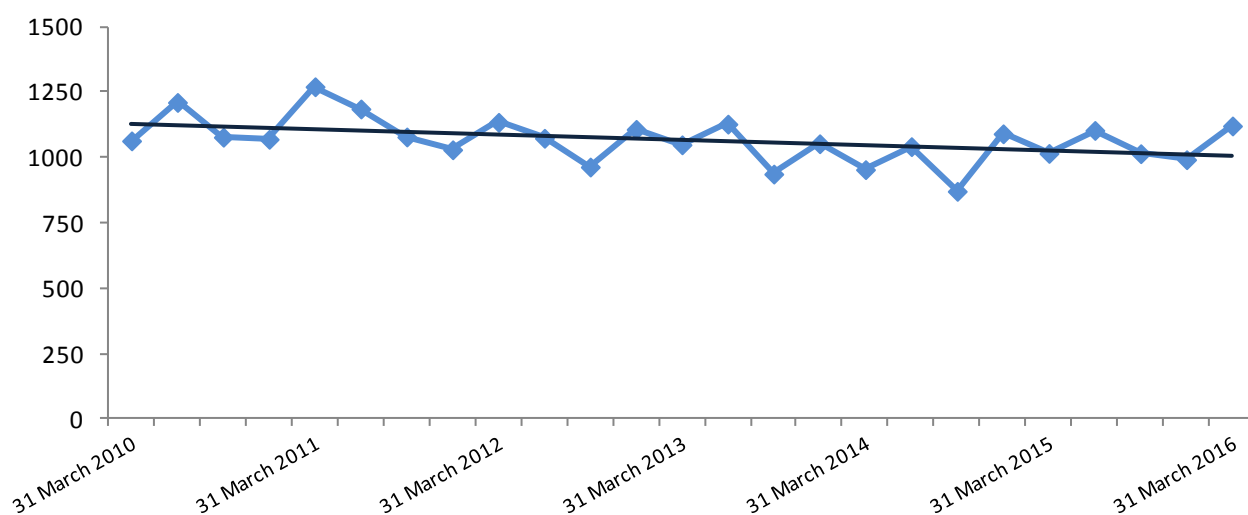
### Referral Trends

In Northern Ireland, there were 25.9 child protection referrals per 10,000 of the population under 18 years during the quarter ending 31 March 2016, compared to 22.9 during quarter ending 31 December 2015. As a proportion of the children's population the Southern HSC Trust received the largest number of child protection referrals (40.8 referrals per 10,000 of the population under 18 years) and the Northern HSC Trust the lowest (16.3 referrals per 10,000 of the child population).

Of the total number of referrals received in Northern Ireland during the quarter, 34% originated in the Southern HSC Trust, 22% were in the South Eastern HSC Trust, 16% were in the Northern HSC Trust and 14% were in the Belfast and Western HSC Trusts respectively.

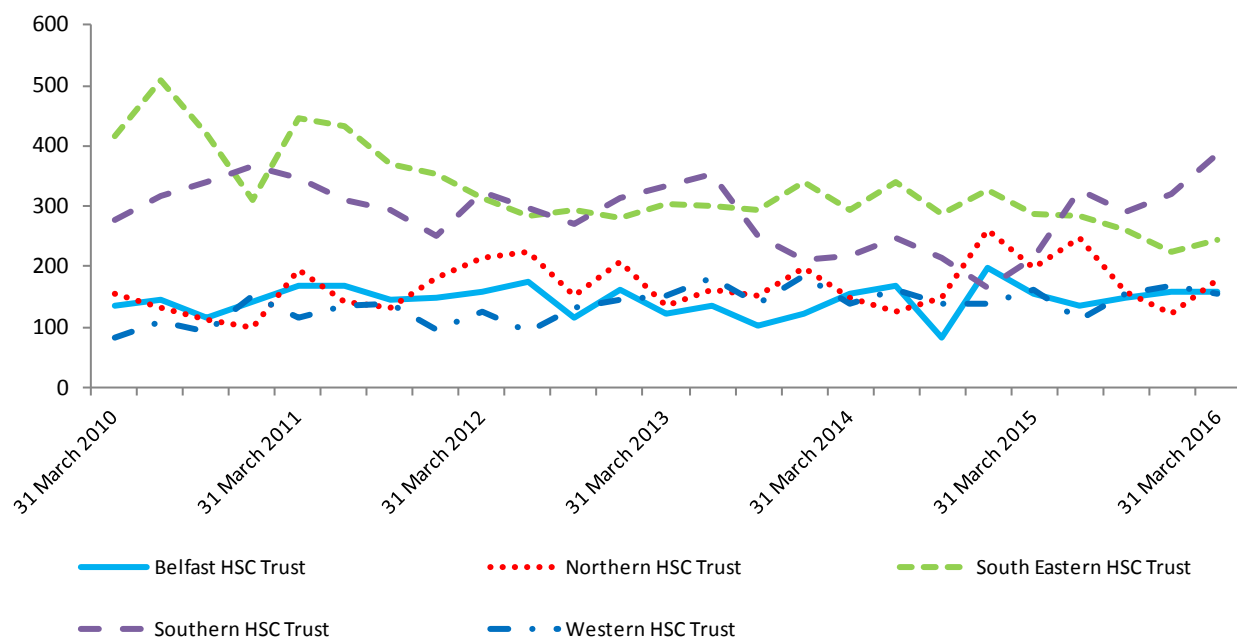
The 1,121 child protection referrals received was 13% higher than the previous quarter (992), and 10% above the referrals count for the same quarter in 2015 (1,016). In recent years the highest number of referrals was recorded in quarter ending 31 March 2011, when 1,271 referrals were received.

**Figure 9: Child Protection Referrals 31 March 2010 – 31 March 2016**



Source: Children Order Return CPR3

**Figure 10: Number of Child Protection Referrals by HSC Trust (31 March 2010 – 31 March 2016)**



Source: Children Order Return CPR3

There were increases of 46% in the Northern HSC Trusts, 21% in the Southern HSC Trust and 9% in the South Eastern HSC Trust between quarter ending 31 December 2015 and 31 March 2016. Over the same period there was a decrease of 8% in the Western HSC Trust and there was no percentage change in referrals received in the Belfast HSC Trust. In general we should be careful in drawing conclusions from these findings as the relatively small numbers involved can lead to what seem to be large quarter on quarter percentage changes.

With this in mind, Figure 10, above, illustrates that the Belfast, Northern and Western HSC Trusts have received a reasonably steady flow of referrals since quarter ending 31 March 2010. The South Eastern and Southern HSC Trusts have in general received larger numbers of child protection referrals over the same period.

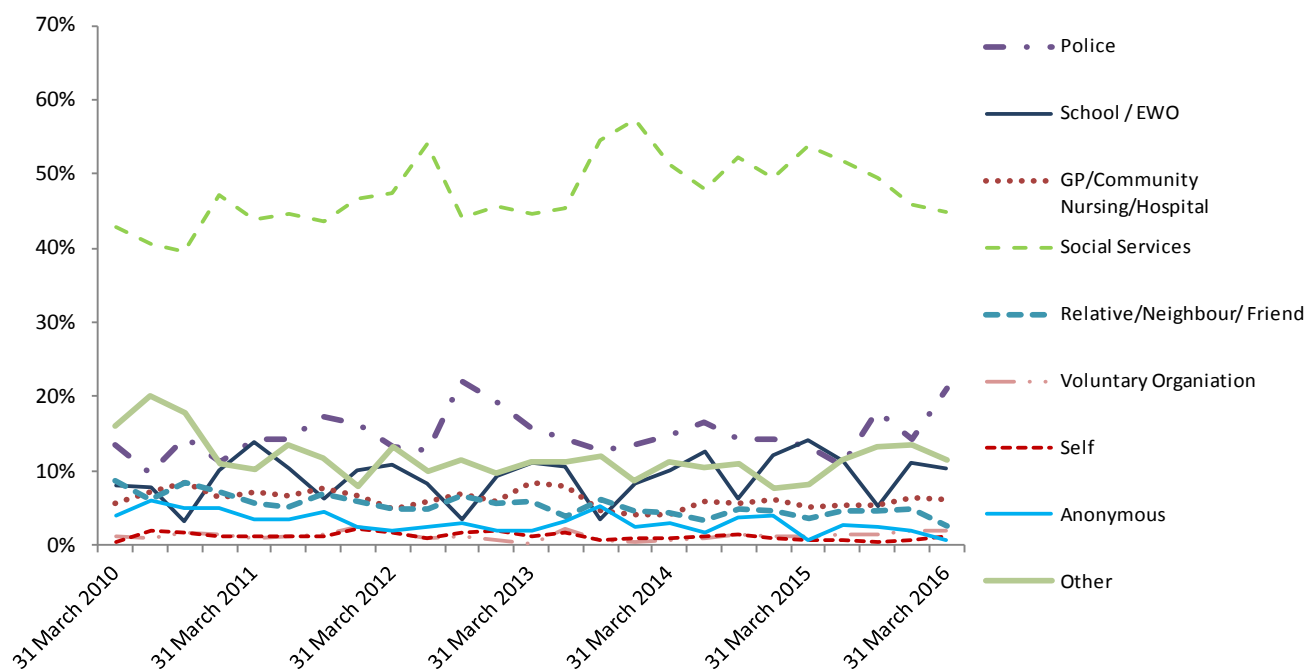
## Referrals by Source

Table 6 overleaf sets out the number of child protection referrals for the quarter ending 31 March 2016, by source of referral.

The largest proportion of referrals during quarter ending 31 March 2016 originated from within Social Services (45%), followed by the PSNI (21%). For four of the HSC Trusts the main source of referrals was within Social Services. However variation in these counts existed between the Trusts, with 68% of the referrals in the Northern HSC Trust originating from Social Services compared to 46% of the referrals in the South Eastern HSC Trust. In the Southern HSC Trust the police (33%) accounted for the largest proportion of referrals during the quarter.

Social Services followed by the Police have consistently been the main sources of child protection referrals. Self referrals and those from voluntary organisations have amounted to around 1% each of all referrals each quarter.

**Figure 11: Source of Child Protection Referrals in Northern Ireland (31 March 2011 – 31 March 2016)**



Source: Children Order Return CPR3

**Table 6: Child Protection Referrals by Source of Referral for Quarter ending 31 March 2016**

HSC Trust	Source of Referral												Total	Per 10,000 Population Under 18
	Police	School / EWO <sup>1</sup>	Voluntary Org.	GP	Social Services	Comm. Nursing	Relative	Neighbour / Friend	Hospital	Self	Anon	Other		
Belfast	20	19	-	-	83	-	6	0	7	0	0	12	159	21.0
Northern	9	14	6	0	120	-	0	0	5	-	-	19	177	16.3
South Eastern	50	25	8	0	112	-	-	6	12	8	0	13	245	30.4
Southern	126	37	0	-	111	-	-	0	20	0	5	76	385	40.8
Western	31	21	-	0	78	0	-	0	5	-	-	8	155	21.1
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>504</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>1,121</b>	<b>25.9</b>

<sup>1</sup> cell counts have been suppressed to avoid personal disclosure

<sup>1</sup> EWO – Educational Welfare Officer

Source: Children Order Return CPR3

Population figures: Mid Year Population Estimates 2014 (NISRA, 2015)

# Appendix A – Technical Notes

## Data Collection

The figures in this bulletin detail numbers of children on the Child Protection Register at 31 March 2016 by legal status, age, category of abuse and duration and the numbers of Child Protection Referrals by source of referral for the quarter ending 31 March 2016. Figures are presented regionally and by Health and Social Care Trusts.

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

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

## Data Quality

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

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

## Statement of Administrative Sources

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

## Rounding Conventions

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

## Disclosure Conventions

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

## Revisions Policy

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

## Main Uses of Data

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

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

## **Related Publications**

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

### ***England***

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

### ***Wales***

[Referrals, Assessments and Social Services for Children, 2014/15](#)

### ***Scotland***

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

## **A National Statistics Publication**

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

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

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

## **User Engagement**

If you have any comments on this publication please contact:

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## **Next Release**

The next release of these statistics, for the quarter ending 30 June 2016, is scheduled for August 2016. The publication release dates for Health and Social Care statistics in Northern Ireland are available from the DoH website at:

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

## Appendix B – Data Definitions

### Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995

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

### Child

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

### Child Protection Register

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

### Registration

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

### Child Protection Deregistration

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

### Child Protection Re-registration

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

### Child Protection Referrals

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

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

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

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

### Category of Abuse for Child Protection Registration

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Legal Status**

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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are available to download from the DoH internet at:

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