

Northern Ireland Children's Social Services Data (provisional)

The figures presented here are provisional monthly management information derived from HSC Trust systems in regards to children's social care services.

Please note that these figures are provisional and subject to change.

Note August 2024: The information used to populate the monthly children's social services data is taken from the HSC Trusts' individual management systems. A review of the data has identified that the child referral data from South Eastern HSC Trust excluded some categories of referrals that are included in the other HSC Trust figures. To ensure consistency across all HSC Trusts, referral data from the time period April 2021 onwards has therefore been revised, which has caused an increase in the Northern Ireland figure for the whole relevant time series. This only affects the overall child referral figure and not the child protection referral figures.



Page 2: Number of Children on the Child Protection Register by HSC Trust (provisional)

Page 3: Number of Children in Care by HSC Trust (provisional)

Page 4: Number of Children referred to Social Services (provisional)

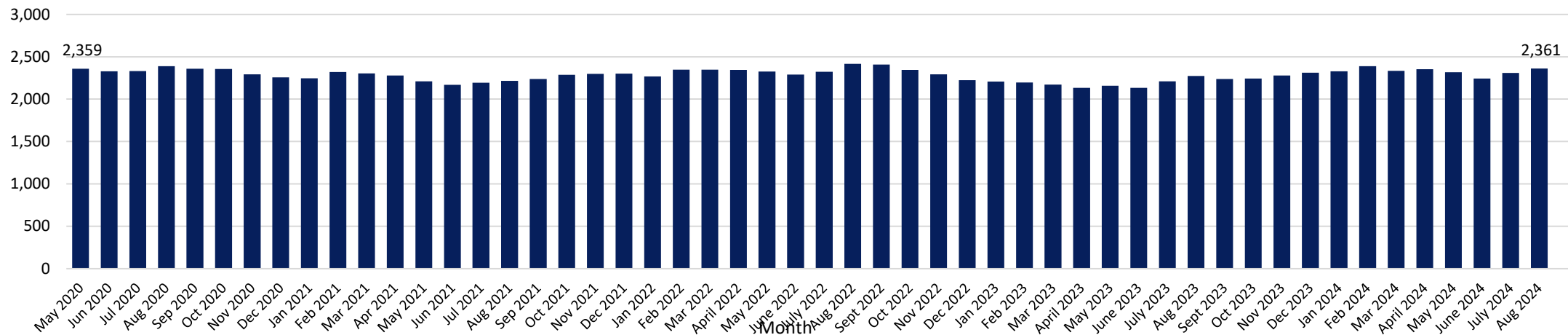
Page 5: Number of Child Protection referrals (provisional)

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Child Protection Register

Number of Children on the Child Protection Register (provisional)

Number of children



HSC Trust,	August 2023	September 2023	October 2023	November 2023	December 2023	January 2024	February 2024	March 2024	April 2024	May 2024	June 2024	July 2024	August 2024
Belfast	392	402	392	398	415	429	425	408	397	373	352	361	373
Northern	492	488	476	466	464	481	501	502	523	533	526	560	573
South Eastern	345	325	328	345	356	366	379	371	365	346	361	364	380
Southern	555	534	536	545	540	523	549	509	511	521	492	513	523
Western	489	489	512	524	536	529	536	543	558	545	512	510	512
Northern Ireland	2,273	2,238	2,244	2,278	2,311	2,328	2,390	2,333	2,354	2,318	2,243	2,308	2,361

Figures are provisional and may have been revised from previous months.

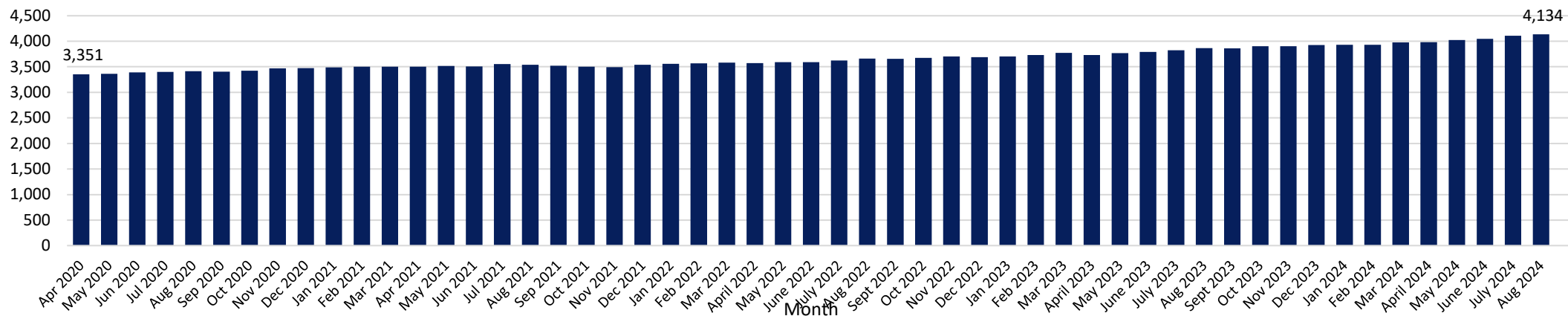
Months prior to October 2021 are based on the week ending figures and not last day of the month.

Monthly figures from April 2020 can be found in Excel format: www.health-ni.gov.uk/articles/monthly-provisional-childrens-services-data

Children in Care

Number of Children in Care (provisional)

Number of children



HSC Trust	August 2023	September 2023	October 2023	November 2023	December 2023	January 2024	February 2024	March 2024	April 2024	May 2024	June 2024	July 2024	August 2024
Belfast	1,065	1,062	1,075	1,087	1,092	1,095	1,096	1,098	1,099	1,116	1,115	1,141	1,155
Northern	766	767	786	783	780	774	783	803	797	809	831	850	851
South Eastern	659	653	651	651	658	661	668	674	666	675	684	709	726
Southern	653	659	665	659	671	679	671	678	693	694	684	673	669
Western	724	719	725	724	725	720	712	725	728	730	733	734	733
Northern Ireland	3,867	3,860	3,902	3,904	3,926	3,929	3,930	3,978	3,983	4,024	4,045	4,107	4,134

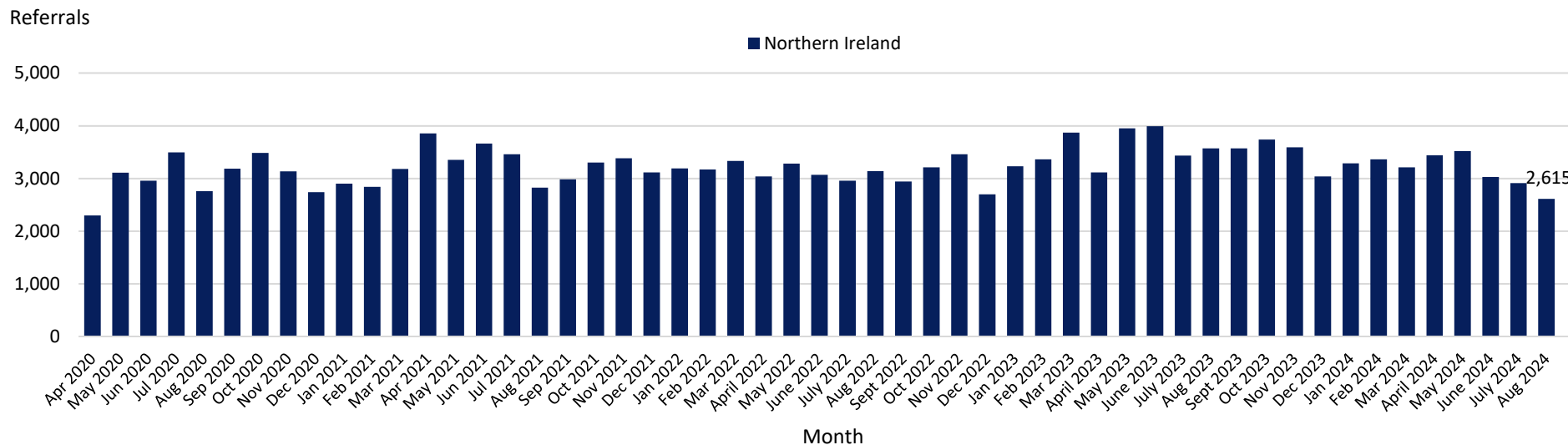
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Child referrals to Social Services

Number of Child Referrals to Social Services (provisional)



These figures show the number of child referrals to the five HSC Trusts' social services during the month.

HSC Trust	August 2023	September 2023	October 2023	November 2023	December 2023	January 2024	February 2024	March 2024	April 2024	May 2024	June 2024	July 2024	Aug 2024
Northern Ireland	3,574	3,571	3,741	3,593	3,041	3,290	3,363	3,210	3,439	3,522	3,030	2,913	2,615

Note 1: Due to the nature of this collection, some Trusts report number of referrals received (dated) during the time period and other Trusts report the referrals recorded on their administrative systems. With the reporting lag of two weeks, these should be almost identical.

Note 2: For the three HSC Trusts Belfast, Southern and Western, the monthly figures up to October 2021 are the sum of weekly returns and therefore a proxy of the total of the month.

Note 3: Figures are provisional and may have been revised from previous months.

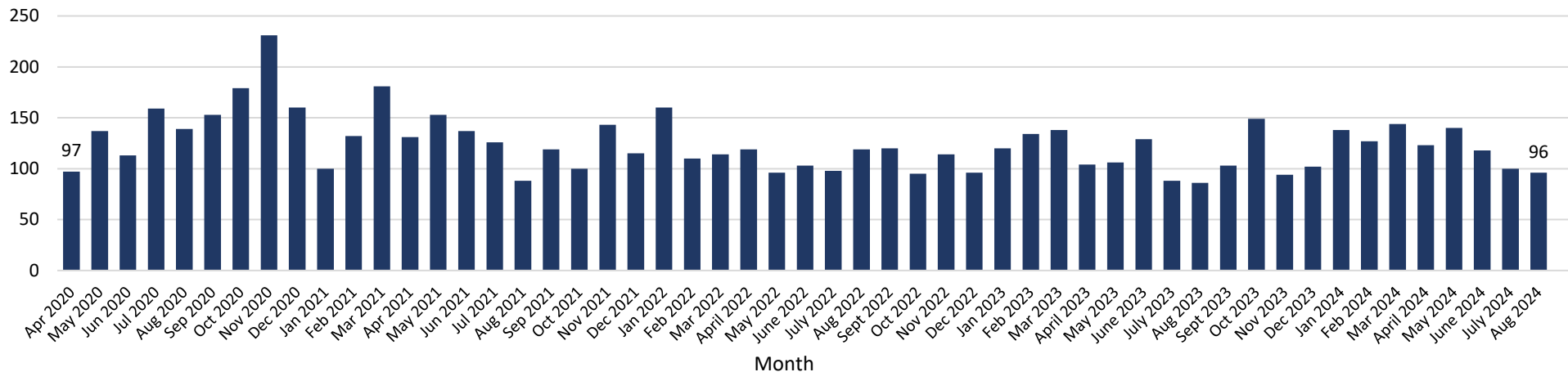
Note 4: Please note that figures from March 2021 to July 2024 have been amended following a revision of figures from South Eastern HSC Trust.

Monthly figures from April 2020 can be found in Excel format: www.health-ni.gov.uk/articles/monthly-provisional-childrens-services-data

Child Protection Referrals

Number of Child Protection referrals (provisional)

Number of children



These figures refer to the number of child protection referrals to the five HSC Trusts' social services during the month.

HSC Trust	Pre Covid19*	August 2023	September 2023	October 2023	November 2023	December 2023	January 2024	February 2024	March 2024	April 2024	May 2024	June 2024	July 2024	August 2024
Northern Ireland	167.7	86	103	149	94	102	138	127	144	123	140	118	100	96

Note 1: Due to the nature of this collection, some Trusts report number of referrals received (dated) during the time period and other Trusts report the referrals recorded on their administrative systems. With the reporting lag of two weeks, these should be almost identical.

Note 2: For the three HSC Trusts Belfast, Southern and Western, the monthly figures up to October 2021 are the sum of weekly returns and therefore a proxy of the total of the month.

Note 3: Figures previously published have include some referrals classified as "significant event". These have now been removed for the whole time series.

Figures are provisional and may have been revised from previous months.

Monthly figures from April 2020 can be found in Excel format: www.health-ni.gov.uk/articles/monthly-provisional-childrens-services-data

TECHNICAL NOTES

Data Collection

This data collection of management information was originally put in place on a weekly basis from April 2020 as a temporary measure to aid the safeguarding of children during the unprecedented time of school closures, social distancing and lock-down due to the coronavirus outbreak. The reports used to extract the contained management figures have been agreed between HSC Trust, the HSC Board (now SPPG) and DoH.

The historic data originally published with a pre-covid comparison can be found here: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/articles/temporary-information-releases-during-covid-19>

From December 2023, the data collection changed name to “Northern Ireland Children’s Social Services Data (provisional)” and will be published as provisional figures alongside Official Statistics on children’s social care.

Data returns are extracted from the administrative system and/or data warehouse for each of the five Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts in Northern Ireland. The data in this output is provisional and separate to any Official Statistics data series published by Department of Health (DoH) on children’s social care.

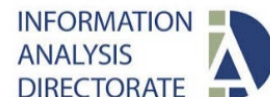
In October 2021 the data collection changed from weekly to monthly returns. Historic weekly figures prior to the monthly collection started has been grouped as proxy monthly figures.

Southern HSC Trust information has been rolled forward from April 2024 as May 2024 data was not supplied in time for publication. May figures will be updated in next month’s publication.

The data is extracted with a two week reporting lag to allow for input error corrections and delays. Although the data has been deemed to be robust, it has not undergone the same rigorous quality assurance checks that are carried out prior to the publication of Official Statistics. Therefore, these figures are deemed provisional and may be subject to change.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Community Information Branch
Information Analysis Directorate,
Department of Health Northern Ireland
CIB@health-ni.gov.uk



DEFINITIONS

Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995

The Children (Northern Ireland) Order was made on 15 March 1995. The 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.

Referral to Children’s Social Care

A referral is defined as a request for services to be provided by children’s social care and is in respect of a child who is currently not assessed to be in need. A referral may result in an episode of care which may be an initial assessment of the child’s needs, the provision of information or advice, referral to another agency or alternatively no further action. A **Child Protection Referral** is one for which the initial assessment indicates that there may be Child Protection issues.

Child Protection Register

A register must be maintained by each HSC 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.

Looked After Child / Child in Care

A child is looked after by an Authority if he or she is in their care or if he or she is provided with accommodation for a continuous period of more than 24 hours by the authority in the exercise of its Social Services function. Figures presented excludes any children who were looked after by virtue of short break arrangements only.