



Department of  
**Health**

An Roinn Sláinte

Mánnystrie O Poustie

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## Background Quality Report: 'Northern Ireland Care Leavers'

Dimension	Assessment by the author
<b>Introduction</b>	<b><i>Context for the quality report</i></b>
	<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><a href="https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/monitoring-and-assessment/code-of-practice/">https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/monitoring-and-assessment/code-of-practice/</a></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>
<b>Relevance</b>	<b><i>The degree to which the statistical product meets user needs in both coverage and content</i></b>
	<p>Information presented in the 'Northern Ireland Care Leavers' statistical bulletin derives from the annual OC1 and OC3 statistical surveys, provided by each of the five Health and Social Care Trusts to CIB in the DOH.</p> <p>These surveys are longitudinal with one record for each young person fitting the parameters of the collection. They collect a range of information on care leavers including educational achievement, economic activity, sex, age, religion, ethnicity, disability, length of time in care and placement prior to leaving care.</p> <p>Information from 'Northern Ireland Care Leavers' 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 children's social care policy, to develop and monitor Commissioning Plan Direction Targets and Indicators, to benchmark performances within and between Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts in Northern Ireland, for Ministerial Briefing and to respond to Private Office enquiries and parliamentary/assembly questions.</p> <p>Private companies may use these publications to monitor and target social care services for children, academics for research, and other government Departments and Agencies to inform cross-cutting policy and strategy development.</p>

	<p>CIB ensures that 'Northern Ireland Care Leavers' 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 through readership and online user satisfaction surveys help to shape the information collected and the content of these publications. In this way the needs of the user communities are continuously monitored, and if appropriate and practical, acted upon.</p>
<p><b>Accuracy and Reliability</b></p>	<p><b><i>The proximity between an estimate and the unknown true value</i></b></p> <p>The statistical surveys used in the production of this publication are a census of the cohort involved, and as such, coverage is inclusive of all children/young people involved.</p> <p>As censuses rather than surveys, no estimates are produced, and issues of sampling error and confidence intervals are not relevant.</p> <p>HSC Trusts are required to submit the statistical survey returns via an Electronic Data Collection System (EDCS) on the DOH Extranet site. Each HSC Trust has nominated Data Entry Users and Data Manager who have access to Returns 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; (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> <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 Community Information Branch.</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><a href="https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/doh-statistics-and-research/official-statistics-and-user-engagement">https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/doh-statistics-and-research/official-statistics-and-user-engagement</a></p>
<p><b>Timeliness and Punctuality</b></p>	<p><b><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></b></p> <p>The surveys used to produce this publication are submitted annually by HSC Trusts. Annual returns refer to year ending 31 March. Delayed submissions by HSC Trusts are normally due to a lack of resources or validation issues. 'Northern Ireland Care Leavers' is always published within a year of the reference period. In relation to the 2014/15 reports the time lag between publication and the reference period to which the data refer was 10 months.</p> <p>The 'CIB Schedule of Publications', which provides twelve months advance notice of releases, is available at: <a href="https://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/publications/statistical-releases-calendar">https://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/publications/statistical-releases-calendar</a></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,</p>

	explained and updated regularly.
<b>Accessibility and Clarity</b>	<b><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></b>
	<p>Guidance documents detailing coverage, definitions, completion instructions and validations to enable HSC Trusts to complete the statistical information returns that feed into this publication is available at the following link:</p> <p><a href="https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/care-leavers-returns-and-quality-reports">https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/care-leavers-returns-and-quality-reports</a></p> <p>Copies of the survey returns are included in an appendix of the publication.</p> <p>The statistical publication is available to download free of charge in variety of formats including PDF and MS Excel at:</p> <p><a href="https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/dhssps-statistics-and-research/childrens-services-statistics">https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/dhssps-statistics-and-research/childrens-services-statistics</a></p> <p>If requested, CIB 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.</p> <p>The publication contains contact details for further information. Additional ad-hoc analysis, where appropriate, is provided on request.</p>
<b>Coherence and Comparability</b>	<b><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></b>
	<p>There is currently no other official source of statistics about care leavers in Northern Ireland. However, where appropriate, CIB compare their data to external sources to ensure HSC Trusts are providing reliable and robust data e.g. Regional Child Protection Committee Information and Trust Corporate Parenting Returns.</p> <p>CIB provide HSC Trusts with guidance documents on the completion of the OC1 and OC3 surveys.</p> <p>CIB also have regular meetings with HSC Trust staff to discuss guidelines and data validation issues which aims to ensure 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 2002 onwards. Where possible comparisons have been made with the general population. Inter country comparisons are difficult as social care operates within different legislative frameworks across the devolved administrations.</p>
<b>Trade-offs between Output Quality Components</b>	<b><i>Trade-offs are the extent to which different aspects of quality are balanced against each other</i></b>
	None.

<p><b>Assessment of User Needs and Perceptions</b></p>	<p><b><i>The processes for finding out about users and uses, and their views on the statistical products</i></b></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 'Northern Ireland Care Leavers' 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 these statistical publications 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) and Kinship Care NI. The statistics in these publications are also used by academic researchers interested in children's social care for example Barnardos have used Children Order statistics to inform their policy and research papers.</p> <p>We gain awareness of users of our data from ad hoc requests for information and from the receipt of invitations to relevant meetings and conferences.</p> <p>User's needs are prioritised, taking account of the resources available.</p>
<p><b>Performance, Cost and Respondent Burden</b></p>	<p><b><i>The effectiveness, efficiency and economy of the statistical output</i></b></p> <p>HSC Trust information systems are mainly supported by Business Services Organisation (BSO). BSO ensure systems used have the capability of recording information required by the DOH and the HSC Board, and where possible, provides HSC Trusts with reporting tools which create the required reports.</p> <p>Currently CIB do not have access to HSC Trust information systems therefore Information Officers working in HSC Trusts must provide CIB with the data requested. All of the information is submitted electronically.</p> <p>Some of the information collected by Information Officers for this publication is collected specifically for CIB but some is also required for internal management information, and would be produced whether requested by CIB or not.</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 statistical information returns from Information Officers, the statistics require approximately 4 weeks of working time from statistical staff to produce, plus a small amount of senior staff oversight.</p>
<p><b>Confidentiality, Transparency and Security</b></p>	<p><b><i>The procedures and policy used to ensure sound confidentiality, security and transparent practices</i></b></p> <p>The survey returns are a pre defined templates 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 surveys are 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. The DOH Statistical Charter contains a 'Statement on Confidentiality and Security.'</p>
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<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/doh-statistics-and-research/official-statistics-and-user-engagement>