How safe are our children?

THE MOST COMPREHENSIVE OVERVIEW OF CHILD PROTECTION IN THE UK

2016

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EVERY CHILDHOOD IS WORTH FIGHTING FOR
Acknowledgements This report would not have been possible without the input of many individuals. There are too many to thank everyone individually, but included in this list are government statisticians, experts in child protection and numerous NSPCC staff. We would particularly like to extend our thanks to NSPCC colleagues in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales for their time: Colin Reid, Joanna Barrett, Viv Laing and Sarah Witcombe-Hayes, who have helped ensure that the report reflects a UK wide perspective. Special thanks also go to Kate Stanley, Susannah Sconce, Lisa McCrindle, Sonja Jütte, Charlotte Lynch, Pam Miller, Anne Byrne, Laura Pearson, Emily Holdsworth, Anna Brown and Judith Fisher for their contributions.
Foreword

Our fourth annual state of the nation report How Safe are our Children? takes an overview of the child protection landscape and compiles the most robust and up-to-date child protection data that exists across each of the four nations in the UK.

How Safe are our Children 2016 comes at a time when we are reflecting on ChildLine's 30th year – an opportunity to consider the changes that have taken place over the decades from both the child’s and the service’s perspective. Thirty years ago most of our contacts came via traditional red telephone boxes on the sides of roads. Now the majority of our counselling sessions take place online.

The all-pervasive nature of the internet means that young lives online and offline cannot be separated out. Child safety online needs to be a fundamental consideration in our services – and everyone else’s. Understanding and responding to risk online is essential. Educating children and families in staying safe online is a crucial part of the answer but industry and government have responsibilities too. In 2015, the number of URLs containing children sexual abuse images identified by the Internet Watch Foundation was up 118 per cent on a year ago. This will need global prioritisation to be tackled effectively.

This year has also seen the highest number of sexual offences against children reported to the police in the past decade. You might imagine these children receive the support they need to recover, the sad truth is that they don’t. The NSPCC has been leading calls through our It's Time campaign to ensure that support is available to all children who suffer abuse. But it’s not enough to address what happens after a child experiences abuse – we’re also delivering new early intervention services to support children in families facing adversities like alcohol and substance misuse and domestic violence to prevent child abuse from happening in the first place.

How Safe are our Children not only enables us to understand the extent to which children within the UK are being abused and neglected but it enables us to track progress and see how the child protection landscape is changing. This year it is striking that, following more than a decade in decline, suicide rates for young people have started to rise in England. We’ve also seen a rise in the number of Childline counselling sessions about both low mood and suicidal feelings. Understanding better the pressures that are prompting children to express such misery, understanding how we should act to help counter whatever triggers low levels of self-worth and increased levels of suicidal feelings – these are all crucial issues on which we must work together to address with young people themselves.

Every year the NSPCC helps hundreds of thousands of children, whether through our schools service, our therapeutic programmes, our helplines, our government influencing work or our campaigning. We know that an awareness of child abuse has never been higher. But the biggest question of all must become how we together prevent that abuse and neglect from taking place in the first place. That is the primary focus for the NSPCC as we embark on our new five-year strategy. We know that the challenges of keeping children safe are complex and that there are no silver bullets. However, we also know that abuse can be prevented and that damaged lives can be turned around. Though child abuse is the darkest of subjects, the work we are all engaged in represents pure sunshine: preventing abuse, helping children who have been abused turn their lives around, and influencing attitudes, behaviours and laws so that together many more of us can protect children at risk. Every childhood is worth fighting for.

Peter Wanless
NSPCC Chief Executive
## Contents

1. Overview 6

2. Measuring the extent of abuse and neglect in the UK 10

### Indicator 1: Child homicides recorded by police includes the offences of murder, manslaughter and infanticide 16

### Indicator 2: Child mortality deaths by assault and undetermined intent 18

### Indicator 3: Child suicides 22

### Indicator 4: Number of recorded sexual offences against children 26

### Indicator 5: Number of recorded cruelty and neglect offences 30

### Indicator 6: Self-reported prevalence of abuse and neglect 32

### Indicator 7: Contacts with ChildLine 34

### Indicator 8: Contacts with the NSPCC helpline 36

### Indicator 9: Online harm 40

### Indicator 10: Violent incidents experienced by 10 to 15 year olds Crime Survey for England and Wales 44
INDICATOR 11: Referrals to social services 46
INDICATOR 12: Children in need 50
INDICATOR 13: Children in the child protection system 52
INDICATOR 14: Composition of child protection plans and child protection registers 56
INDICATOR 15: Re-registration onto child protection registers returning to a child protection plan 60
INDICATOR 16: How long children are subject to child protection plans or the child protection register 64
INDICATOR 17: Looked after children 66
INDICATOR 18: Proportion of looked after children who have three or more placements during the year 70
INDICATOR 19: Child trafficking 74
INDICATOR 20: Public attitudes to child abuse and neglect 78

3. Glossary 82

4. Endnotes 86
How Safe Are Our Children?

Ask people what childhood should be like, and they’ll say it’s about playing with friends and exploring new worlds. We want our children to have a childhood full of fun and learning and love.

Contrast this with the fact that, in the last year, there were more than 23,000 ChildLine counselling sessions with children about their experiences of abuse and neglect, and a rise in the number of counselling sessions with young people about suicidal feelings. This is not what we want childhood to be like. It’s time to fight for the childhoods we want our children to have.

That fight starts with adults knowing how to spot the signs of abuse and being prepared to take action to keep children safe. The good news is that more and more adults appear to be ready to take on this responsibility. Over the past five years we’ve seen increasing numbers of reports of abuse and neglect to social services, the police and the NSPCC. For example, there was a 29 per cent rise in the number of contacts to the NSPCC helpline about abuse and neglect between 2011/12 and 2015/16.

While increased reports of abuse can be seen as a worrying trend, in the end it is people’s preparedness to speak out for children and to report abuse that will drive down the prevalence of abuse.

But adults who want to keep children safe will have to run harder to catch up with the opportunities and threats created by new technology and the online world. Reports of online abuse – like the creation, sharing and viewing of images of child abuse – are rising steeply. It’s time to equip professionals with the resources they need to take this fight to the next level – the police, for example, have the technology they need but not every force has access to it.

Childhood abuse and mental health

We know that the childhood experience of abuse is a major predictor of mental health issues. In one third of ChildLine counselling sessions with children about abuse and neglect, the child also told us about issues with their mental health – issues varying from feelings of low mood, to self-harm and suicidal feelings. One research study in the US found that nine out of ten children who experienced abuse or neglect in their early years went on to have at least one psychiatric diagnosis before they reached adulthood.

Abuse can derail a child’s development and can have a significant impact on their health, wellbeing and on how their life turns out. But receiving the right support at the right time can help children get back on track. This can include counselling, play therapy or family therapy. Yet children who have experienced abuse are not always getting this help. Many aren’t identified as needing it but even those who are referred for mental health support can’t be sure of getting it. Indeed an NSPCC freedom of information request in 2015 found that, in England, one in five children referred for mental health support didn’t receive help.

There is no automatic entitlement to an assessment or ongoing support for a child who has experienced abuse. Too often they do not reach the rising clinical thresholds for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services and many are at crisis point before they receive help. In a 2015 NSPCC survey of professionals from across the UK, 98 per cent said that there were not enough therapeutic services for abused children in their area.

The commissioning of appropriate services is held back by a shortage of data on the mental health needs of abused children. Although the right help can turn lives around, commissioners lack confidence about which interventions work best for whom. Children’s mental health provision has been described as a “fog” because of the lack of clear, consistent information. This “fog” is even thicker for children who have been abused.

Research suggests that looked after children may be particularly in need of therapeutic support. Looked after children are four times more likely to have a mental health issue than their peers. Sixty-one per cent of looked after children in England and 66 per cent in Wales (the two nations for which this data is currently available) were looked after due to abuse or neglect in 2014/15. However, published data, available for England only, suggests that not all of these children are having their emotional wellbeing appropriately assessed. In fact only 72 per cent of children have a questionnaire about their mental health completed when they enter care.
Child abuse and mental health needs: what we do and don’t know

The long term effects of abuse can include: emotional difficulties, mental health problems, self-harm, suicidal thoughts, problems with drugs and alcohol, poor physical health, relationship difficulties, behavioural problems and learning difficulties. However the commissioning of appropriate services to help children who have been abused is held back by a shortage of data on their mental health needs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHILD ABUSE &amp; MENTAL ILL HEALTH</th>
<th>What we know</th>
<th>What we don’t</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There is extensive evidence of the impact of abuse and neglect on mental functioning and stress regulation.</td>
<td>The mental health needs of children who have been abused or neglected are not routinely assessed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Research in the US found that 90% of children who experienced maltreatment had a mental illness by the age of 18.</td>
<td>We do not have a clear understanding of the extent and nature of these children’s needs at a local or national level.</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<th>LOOKED-AFTER CHILDREN &amp; MENTAL ILL HEALTH</th>
<th>What we know</th>
<th>What we don’t</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Calculations based on ONS survey data suggest that looked-after children are four times more likely than their peers to have a mental health difficulty.</td>
<td>Because children entering care aren’t always assessed by qualified mental health professionals, their mental health difficulties are not routinely being identified or met.</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<th>FUNDING</th>
<th>What we know</th>
<th>What we don’t</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NHS England estimates that poor mental health costs the economy, NHS and society £105 billion a year in England.</td>
<td>A lack of data means it’s hard to establish how up to 67% of mental health funding in England is used at a local level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Only 6% of the total mental health budget is spent on services for children and young people, yet children and young people aged 19 and under constitute 23.9% of the total population.</td>
<td>£1.4 billion has been pledged to children’s mental health in England over the next five years. But we don’t know how much of that is reaching the front line.</td>
</tr>
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<th>SERVICES</th>
<th>What we know</th>
<th>What we don’t</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In a survey of 1,308 professionals in the UK, 98% of the professionals reported there was not enough therapeutic support for children who have been abused.</td>
<td>We do not know how much therapeutic support is available for children who have been abused at a local or national level or how many children who have experienced abuse are referred for therapeutic support.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research shows that immediate progress could be made by ensuring that, building on progress achieved in Wales, all children entering care have a specialist mental health assessment by a qualified mental health professional.

Information from these assessments should be used to inform local service provision so that we are able to meet the needs of some of our most vulnerable children.

**Adults speaking out about abuse and neglect**

The continued increase in recorded cases of abuse and neglect gives us some reason to be hopeful about the public’s and professionals’ willingness to speak out and keep children safe. Public opinion data shows that around one third of people believe that they can make a difference personally in helping to prevent or end child cruelty. It is this conviction that individuals can make a difference that will drive up reporting – and ultimately drive down abuse.

In particular, it is likely that an increased willingness of victims themselves to come forward will have contributed to this rise in recorded sexual offences. Between 2010/11 and 2014/15, the number of police-recorded sexual offences rose significantly across all four nations in the UK, ranging from an 80 per cent rise in England to a 48 per cent increase in Northern Ireland, up 48 per cent in Wales and up 46 per cent in England.

Data drawn from the UK’s child protection system paints a similar picture. In the past five years, the number of children added to the child protection register or subject to a child protection plan because they are considered to be at continuing risk of harm has increased in every nation but Northern Ireland – a 27 per cent increase in England, a 19 per cent increase in Wales and a 13 per cent increase in Scotland.

In the nations where the data is recorded, the number of children becoming looked after due to abuse and neglect also increased between 2010/11 and 2014/15 – by 11 per cent in Wales and 17 per cent in England.

We know that official measures of abuse and neglect reveal only part of the story. In 2013 we estimated that for every child on a child protection register, another eight children were suffering from abuse and neglect and were not getting the support they need. This year’s report suggests a gap remains.

**Online abuse**

Recorded offences against children online are also on the rise, as both professionals and the public become increasingly aware of the changing nature of child abuse in the digital age.

We have seen a sharp increase in recorded offences related to “obscene publications”, including the production, distribution and viewing of child abuse images. In the past five years, there has been a 134 per cent increase in recorded offences of this kind in England, a 184 per cent increase in Wales, a 292 per cent increase in Northern Ireland and a 168 per cent increase in Scotland.

Behind every indecent image is a child who has been abused in “real life”, and research has identified a link between the possession of child abuse images and contact sexual abuse of children offline.

Various strategies have been adopted to address the proliferation of child abuse material online, and although there is some evidence of progress – particularly with the technology industry making an effort to address the problem – it is clear that much more needs to be done. In particular, we must equip local police forces to deal with the nature and scale of these crimes. The exploitation of children online can be stopped if there is enough capacity; with dedicated, specially trained officers; and with access to the latest technologies to meet this challenge head on. And, of course, we must properly support the children who are identified as the victims of these online crimes.

**The fight for childhood**

We have seen sustained media and political attention on cases of child abuse, both current and historic, and the UK government has recognised the scale and impact of sexual abuse by calling for it to be treated as a “national threat”. But as a society our response to child abuse has focused largely on bringing perpetrators to justice. This is important. But along the way we have lost sight of the impact of abuse on the children involved. The right therapeutic support can help guide these children on to a happy, healthy path in life and away from mental ill health. There have been welcome efforts at all levels across the UK to improve children’s mental health services. It’s time that children who have experienced abuse were at the heart of these conversations.
Identified and reported child abuse and neglect is on the rise

Police recorded child sexual offences against under 18s up 76% in the UK

All four nations have seen an increase in 2010/11 – 2014/15:
- England: 80%
- Scotland: 62%
- Northern Ireland: 58%
- Wales: 48%

Police recorded cruelty and neglect offences up 26% in the UK

Although as a whole the number of recorded offences is up, not all nations have seen an increase in 2010/11 – 2014/15:
- England: -10%
- Scotland: 44%
- Northern Ireland: -10%
- Wales: 48%

Children becoming subject to a child protection plan/being added to the child protection register up 24% in the UK

Although as a whole the number of children becoming subject to a plan is up, not all nations have seen an increase in 2010/11 – 2014/15:
- England: 27%
- Scotland: 13%
- Northern Ireland: 27%
- Wales: 14%

Children starting to be looked after due to abuse or neglect up 16% in England and Wales

Data is only available for England and Wales for 2010/11 – 2014/15:
- England: 17%
- Wales: 11%

Number of contacts to the NSPCC helpline about abuse or neglect up 29% in the UK

Data is UK wide, and unlike other data sets looks at 2011/12 – 2015/16 data, as this is the most recent data available:
- England: 62%
- Scotland: 60%
- Northern Ireland: 24%
- Wales: 48%
Measuring the extent of abuse and neglect in the UK

What is abuse and neglect? We have defined abuse and neglect according to definitions set out in the table. Child protection is a devolved matter and each of the four nations of the UK has its own guidance and definitions. The definitions are taken from the English guidance for professionals¹ but these are not substantially different from those used in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.²

In the UK there is no single agreed definition of what constitutes online child sexual abuse. The NSPCC’s view is that it is important that the agencies working on preventing and tackling online child sexual abuse have a shared definition because this will ensure that all the agencies working in this field have an agreed focus.

The NSPCC’s working definition of online child sexual abuse is also included in the table.

The indicators we have used
We have compiled 20 different indicators in an effort to understand the extent of abuse and neglect in the UK today. The indicators relate both to deaths due to child maltreatment and the incidence of abuse and neglect. In each case there are multiple ways to measure the extent of child maltreatment.

Since there is a wide range of relevant information, we have had to be selective in the measures presented. Our aim has been to provide the most robust and comprehensive picture possible, so we have chosen indicators that:

• provide different insights on the extent of child abuse and neglect;
• use robust data, where possible based on a large sample and standardised measures – where there are weaknesses in the data we state these; and
• wherever possible, use data that can be tracked over time and broken down by each of the four nations.

Population data used in this report
In this report we draw on UK population data published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) for England and Wales. Data for Scotland is published by the General Register Office for Scotland. Data for Northern Ireland is published by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency. The most recent population data draws on the 2014 mid-year population estimates.
ABUSE

A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child’s emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or ‘making fun’ of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child’s developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

NEGLECT

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or responsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs.

ONLINE SEXUAL ABUSE

The use of technology to manipulate, exploit, coerce or intimidate a child to (but not limited to): engage in sexual activity; produce sexual material/content; force a child to look at or watch sexual activities; encourage a child to behave in sexually inappropriate ways; or groom a child in preparation for sexual abuse (either online or offline). It can also involve directing others to, or coordinating, the abuse of children online. As with other forms of sexual abuse, online abuse can be misunderstood by the child and others as being consensual, occurring without the child’s immediate recognition or understanding of abusive or exploitative conduct. In addition, fear of what might happen if they do not comply can also be a significant influencing factor. No child under the age of 18 can consent to being abused or exploited. Financial gain can be a feature of online child sexual abuse, it can involve serious organised crime and it can be carried out by either adults or peers.
What we have not been able to include

We have not been able to include data on all forms of child abuse in this report, largely due to the paucity of data available. Often data may be available, but not be broken down by age allowing children to be identified.

We have not been able to provide a complete picture of administrative data or self-report data related to all forms of abuse in this report. This is largely due to the paucity of data available or the incomplete nature of the recorded data.

Examples of data we have not been able to include:

- There is a lack of time series data published on Accident and Emergency (A&E) attendances for assault and self-harm broken down by age.
- Data on assaults is recorded by the police and published across the UK nations, but only in Northern Ireland is this data broken down by the age of the victims. The police do record this information but it is not currently collected and/or published centrally.
- There is insufficient data on children’s own views about how safe they feel from abuse and neglect.
- The only large-scale data set that looks at the prevalence of abuse and neglect is the NSPCC study conducted in 2009. There is a need for the government to commission the Office for National Statistics to produce a new prevalence study that looks at all forms of abuse and neglect.

Services to safeguard and protect children in the UK are underpinned by legislation, guidance and policies. As power is devolved within the UK, differences between the respective child protection systems have become increasingly pronounced. In comparing information about child abuse in each of the four nations, it is important to understand the different contexts in which the statistics have been compiled. Where data is not comparable we have highlighted this. Nonetheless we consider there to be value in setting out what is known and not known for each of the four nations.

A brief summary of the child protection systems in each of the four nations is included in the glossary of this report.
The diagram above summarises the different indicators and how they can be grouped. The table on the next page lists the 20 indicators, and sets out a brief description and the data availability.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Child homicides recorded by the police</td>
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<td>2. Child mortality</td>
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<td>3. Child suicides</td>
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<td>4. Number of recorded sexual offences against children</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Number of recorded cruelty and neglect offences against children</td>
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<td>6. Self reported prevalence of abuse and neglect</td>
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<td>7. Contacts with ChildLine</td>
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<td>8. Contacts with the NSPCC helpline</td>
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<td>9. Survey data on online harm</td>
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<td>10. Violent incidents experienced by 10 to 15 year olds (crime survey)</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Referrals to social services</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Children in need due to abuse or neglect</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Children subject to protection plans or on the child protection register</td>
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<td>14. Composition of child protection plans/child protection register</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. Re-registration onto the child protection register (returning to a child protection plan)</td>
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<tr>
<td>16. How long children are on child protection plans or the child protection register</td>
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<tr>
<td>17. Children looked after due to abuse or neglect</td>
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<tr>
<td>18. Proportion of looked-after children who have three or more placements during the year</td>
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<tr>
<td>19. Child trafficking</td>
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<tr>
<td>20. Public opinion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key**

- 🌟 Data is available in all four nations. Trend data may be for different time periods and there may be some differences in classifications, for example in offence categories.

- 🔄 Data is available, but it was not possible to drill down to the same level of detail in all countries. For example, for children in need data or looked-after children data we are interested in those children who are in need or looked after due to abuse or neglect as opposed to other reasons. Also used where data is only available for the latest year.

- ✗ No published data available.

- 📦 Survey data or UK wide data.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>England</th>
<th>Wales</th>
<th>Scotland</th>
<th>N. Ireland</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Murder, manslaughter and infanticide offences recorded by police.</td>
<td>★</td>
<td>★</td>
<td>★</td>
<td>★</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deaths by assault and undetermined intent based on death certificates provided by local registrars and information from coroners and procurators fiscal.</td>
<td>★</td>
<td>★</td>
<td>★</td>
<td>★</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deaths of 15 to 19 year olds recorded as intentional self-harm or event of undetermined intent, and deaths of 10 to 14 year olds recorded as intentional self-harm.</td>
<td>★</td>
<td>★</td>
<td>★</td>
<td>★</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual offences recorded by the police including rape, sexual assault, child grooming and offences related to indecent images of children.</td>
<td>★</td>
<td>★</td>
<td>★</td>
<td>★</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offences recorded by police where a parent or carer wilfully assaults, ill-treats, neglects, abandons or exposes a child under 16 in a manner likely to cause them unnecessary suffering or injury to health.</td>
<td>★</td>
<td>★</td>
<td>★</td>
<td>★</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abuse or neglect reported by children when asked in a UK-wide survey.</td>
<td>Survey data – not collected statistics.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Counselling sessions held by ChildLine with children and young people via phone call, email and online chat.</td>
<td>Data covers the whole of the UK and is not broken down by country.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Calls, emails, texts and online reporting to NSPCC’s UK 24/7 helpline for those concerned about a child.</td>
<td>Data covers the whole of the UK and is not broken down by country.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Information about children’s experience of the internet via surveys.</td>
<td>Survey data – not collected statistics.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Violent offences against children reported in an annual crime survey for England and Wales.</td>
<td>★</td>
<td>★</td>
<td></td>
<td>◇</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of referrals made to social services due to concerns about the safety or welfare of a child.</td>
<td>★</td>
<td>★</td>
<td>◇</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of children deemed to be ‘in need’ because they are unlikely to have a reasonable standard of health and development without support provided by a public authority, due to abuse or neglect.</td>
<td>★</td>
<td>★</td>
<td>◇</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children subject to a child protection plan or on a register because they are deemed to be at risk of ongoing harm.</td>
<td>★</td>
<td>★</td>
<td>★</td>
<td>★</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The reason why children are on a child protection plan or on the child protection register.</td>
<td>★</td>
<td>★</td>
<td>★</td>
<td>★</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The number of children who come back onto child protection plans or registers.</td>
<td>★</td>
<td>★</td>
<td>★</td>
<td>★</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of children who are on a child protection plan or the register for more than two years.</td>
<td>★</td>
<td></td>
<td>★</td>
<td>★</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of children where the state is acting as a corporate parent.</td>
<td>★</td>
<td>★</td>
<td>◇</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of looked-after children who have had three or more placements during one year.</td>
<td>★</td>
<td>★</td>
<td>★</td>
<td>★</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of children being recruited and moved for the purpose of exploitation.</td>
<td>Available data covers the whole of the UK and is not broken down by country.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey data on public attitudes to child abuse and neglect.</td>
<td>Survey data – not collected statistics.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How safe are our children? 2016

Why is this measure important?
The child homicide rate is an important measure of child safety. It shows the number of children killed by another person. The statistics give an indication of how many children are dying directly as a result of violence or abuse. Historical data is available and consistent recording methods allow robust comparison over time.

What are the limitations of the data?
Police-recorded homicide statistics should accurately reflect the number of child homicides reported each year. However, they will only record cases where there is sufficient evidence to suspect that a homicide has taken place. Studies have indicated that the number of child deaths where abuse or neglect is suspected as a factor is higher than shown in the police-recorded homicide figures.* Homicide data can give an indication of the scale of the problem, but cannot help us understand the preventable factors behind child deaths.

The number of child homicides recorded each year is small. This means a slight change in the number of deaths has a significant impact on homicide rates. We have tried to compensate for this by looking at five-year averages.

Data availability and comparability
Data is available for all four nations showing recorded homicide offences. For the second year running we have included data for under 18s for all four nations. This has reduced the amount of historical data available for England and Wales, as published data combines homicides for the two nations. However, it enables greater cross-nation comparison.

**KEY MESSAGES**
- There were 75 child homicides across the UK in 2014/15.
- The average child homicide rate in Wales for the five years to 2014/15 was seven per million under 18s. This compares to 6.3 per million under 18s in Scotland, 5.6 per million under 18s in England and 2.8 per million under 18s in Northern Ireland.
- The five-year average rate has declined in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland over the past decade. In Wales, the rate has increased by 52 per cent, from a five-year average of 4.6 per million under 18s in 2005/06 to 7 per million in 2014/15.

**England**

Homicide rate per million children aged 0 to 17 years

Latest figure: 62 homicides of under 18s were recorded in England in 2014/15, a five-year average rate of 5.6 per million children aged under 18.

Trend: The five-year average rate of child homicides has decreased by 24 per cent in England over the last decade. It decreased from a five-year average of 7.4 per million in 2005/06 to 5.6 per million in 2014/15.

The five-year average child homicide rate in 2014/15 was highest in Wales, at seven per million under 18s, compared with 6.3 per million in Scotland, 5.6 per million in England and 2.8 per million in Northern Ireland.

**Scotland**

Homicide rate per million children aged 0 to 17 years

Latest figure: Eight homicides of under 18s were recorded in 2014/15, a five-year average rate of 6.3 per million under 18 year olds.

Trend: The five-year average rate of child homicides has decreased by 64 per cent in Scotland over the last decade. It decreased from a five-year average of 11.3 per million in 2005/06 to 6.3 per million in 2014/15.

**Wales**

Homicide rate per million children aged 0 to 17 years

Latest figure: Police recorded three homicides of under 18 year olds in 2014/15. The five-year average rate was seven per million under 18 year olds.

Trend: The five-year average rate of child homicides has increased by 52 per cent in Wales over the past decade. It increased from a five-year average of 4.6 per million under 18s in 2005/06 to seven per million in 2014/15.

**Northern Ireland**

Homicide rate per million children aged 0 to 17 years

Latest figure: Two child homicides were recorded in 2014/15. The five-year average in 2014/15 was 2.8 per million under 18s.

Trend: The five-year average rate has ranged between a high of 10.9 per million in 2002/3 following the 1998 Omagh bombing, to a low of 2.8 per million in 2014/15. The child homicide rate decreased each year since 2007/8 and has maintained its rate over the two years from 2013/14. The fluctuation in homicide rates can be partially explained by the small number of offences involved.

**UK comparison**

The five-year average child homicide rate in 2014/15 was highest in Wales, at seven per million under 18s, compared with 6.3 per million in Scotland, 5.6 per million in England and 2.8 per million in Northern Ireland.
**INDICATOR 2**

**Child mortality** deaths by assault and undetermined intent*

**Why is this measure important?**

Mortality statistics report the number of children who have died in any given year based on death certificates provided by local registrars and information from coroners and procurators fiscal. Data shown here is specifically from the deaths recorded under the codes of “assault and neglect” and “undetermined intent” and therefore show a subset of the preventable deaths of children. Deaths recorded as “undetermined intent” are generally seen as probable suicides for adolescents and adults, whereas for children it is more likely that a question remains over whether someone else was responsible, though this cannot be proven. While the statistics may not fully reflect the number of child deaths where abuse or neglect may have been a factor, they do give an understanding of how many children are dying directly as a result of violence, abuse or in suspicious circumstances. This data may overlap with the homicides data in Indicator 1, but is a fundamentally different way of recording deaths since it is based on the cause of death rather than on whether a homicide was committed.

**What are the limitations of the data?**

Mortality statistics reflect the number of child deaths where another person was responsible or where responsibility is not determined, though their accuracy depends on consistent recording practices. Furthermore, they don’t necessarily reflect the full number of child deaths where abuse or neglect is suspected as a factor. Studies** have indicated that the number of child deaths where abuse or neglect is suspected as a factor is higher than shown in the mortality figures. Data is normally only published for children in ‘five year’ age groups (eg, 10 to 14 years), so the figures that are readily available only cover children up to the age of 14. The numbers of child deaths by assault and undetermined intent are also relatively small; meaning a small change in the number of deaths has a significant impact on rates. We have tried to compensate for this by looking at five-year averages.

**Data availability and comparability**

Mortality data coded consistently under the International Classification of Diseases (ICD) is available for all UK nations. Historical data is available for all UK nations and consistent recording methods across all nations allow comparison. However differences in the death registration systems used in each nation may have an impact on the comparability of the data between nations. For the first time we have been provided with data separating out figures for England and Wales. Because this split is based on postcodes, this data does not include deaths of non-resident children. This means that totals may be slightly smaller when separated than for England and Wales combined.

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**KEY MESSAGES**

- In 2014, 42 children aged under 15 died as a result of assault or undetermined intent across the UK.
- In 2014, the five-year average rate of deaths due to assault and undetermined intent was highest in England at 4.1 per million, then in Scotland at 4 per million. Wales had a rate of 3.1 per million and Northern Ireland had a rate of 2.8 per million.
- The five-year average rate has declined in all four of the UK nations since the mid 1980s.

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In 2014, 42 children aged under 15 died as a result of assault or undetermined intent across the UK. In 2014, the five-year average rate of deaths due to assault and undetermined intent was highest in England at 4.1 per million, then in Scotland at 4 per million. Wales had a rate of 3.1 per million and Northern Ireland had a rate of 2.8 per million. The five-year average rate has declined in all four of the UK nations since the mid 1980s.
**England**
Mortality rates among children aged 1 month to 14 years by assault and undetermined intent

**Latest figure:** There were 38 deaths by assault or undetermined intent of children aged 28 days to 14 years in 2014, a five-year average rate of 4.1 per million.

**Trend:** There has been a 66 per cent decrease in the five-year average rate of child deaths due to assault and undetermined intent, from around 9 per million in 1985 to 3.1 per million in 2014. A change in coding may explain the decline in deaths by undetermined intent from 2007 onwards.

**Wales**
Mortality rates among children aged 0 to 14 years by assault and undetermined intent

**Latest figure:** There were no deaths by assault or undetermined intent of children aged 28 days to 14 years in 2014. The five-year average rate was 3.1 per million.

**Trend:** There has been a 66 per cent decrease in the five-year average rate of child deaths due to assault and undetermined intent, from around 9 per million in 1985 to 3.1 per million in 2014. A change in coding may explain the decline in deaths by undetermined intent from 2007 onwards.

**Northern Ireland**
Mortality rates among children aged 0 to 14 years by assault and undetermined intent

**Latest figure:** There were no deaths by assault or undetermined intent recorded in 2014. There was a five-year combined average of 2.8 per million.

**Trend:** The five-year average rate of child deaths due to assault and undetermined intent has decreased by 77 per cent since 1985, from 12.4 per million to 2.8 per million. The average rate increased in the years following the Omagh bombing in 1998.

*The Omagh bombing occurred on 15 August 1998*
**Mortality**

Mortality rates among children aged 0 to 14 years by assault and undetermined intent

**Latest figure:** Four deaths by assault or undetermined intent were recorded in 2014, a five-year average of 4 per million.

**Trend:** The five-year average rate of deaths due to assault and undetermined intent has decreased by 54 per cent since 1985, from 8.6 per million to 4 per million in 2014. The rate peaked in the late 1990s after the Dunblane massacre in 1996.

**Scotland**

Mortality rates among children aged 0 to 14 years by assault and undetermined intent

**UK comparison**

5 year mortality rates among children aged 0 to 14 years

In 2014, the five-year average rate of deaths due to assault and undetermined intent was highest in England at 4.1 per million, followed by Scotland at 4 per million. Wales had a five-year average rate of 3.1 per million. Northern Ireland had a rate of 2.8 per million. The rate has declined in all four nations since 1985 – by 77 per cent in Northern Ireland, by 69 per cent in England, by 66 per cent in Wales, and by 54 per cent in Scotland. A change in the mortality coding system from 2001 may exaggerate the later decline, as might a change in coding in England and Wales from 2007.

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*1988/89 and 1996 include deaths resulting from the Lockerbie bombing and the Dunblane massacre respectively.

**Data sources**

- **England and Wales**: Office for National Statistics (ONS) Mortality statistics: deaths registered in England and Wales (Series DR). Additional data provided to NSPCC.
- **Scotland**: National Records of Scotland Vital events data. Historic data provided to NSPCC.
- **Northern Ireland**: Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency Register General annual reports.
The number of children dying due to homicide or assault is in long-term decline.
**INDICATOR 3**

**Child suicides**

**Why is this measure important?**
Information on the number of suicides is an important measure of the safety of children and young people. Suicide may often be the result of a combination of other factors, such as abuse, neglect, family problems or mental health issues.

Tracking the numbers of children and young people who take their own lives shows the number of children who feel that there is no way out of their problems and for whom the right help is not there. It therefore shows a subset of the preventable deaths of children. The National Statistics definition of suicide includes deaths given an underlying cause of intentional self-harm (labelled on the graphs below as suicides) or an injury/poisoning of undetermined intent. For the over 15s, deaths of undetermined intent are seen as cases where the harm was self-inflicted, but there was insufficient evidence to prove that the deceased deliberately intended to kill themselves. However, this cannot be applied to younger children due to the possibility that these deaths were caused by unverifiable accidents, neglect or abuse. Therefore the suicide data for 10 to 14 year olds only uses deaths coded under "intentional self-harm".

**What are the limitations of the data?**
Data on suicides from mortality statistics is affected by difficulties in recording the cause of death where intent is unclear. There may be difficulties in recording a death either as a suicide or as an accident. Data on attempted suicides is not reflected in these statistics. Figures are for deaths registered in a year, rather than deaths occurring in a year. Many suicides registered in one year will have actually occurred in earlier years. However the Office for National Statistics has found that suicide trends are broadly equivalent whether the data is analysed by year of occurrence or year of registration.* The number of child suicides each year is relatively small. This means a small change in the number of deaths has a significant impact on rates. We have tried to compensate for this by looking at five-year averages. Finally, data is published in age bands, so data for all under 18s is not readily available.

**Data availability and comparability**
Statistics on child suicides come from mortality data. Mortality data coded consistently under the International Classification of Diseases (ICD) is available for all UK nations. In official publications a smaller set of codes are used to measure suicide in England and Wales than in the rest of the UK.** To enable cross-national comparisons, we have chosen to use the broader UK definition for all four nations.*** Historical data is available for all UK nations and consistent recording methods allow comparison over time within each nation. However, differences in the death registration systems used in each nation may have an impact on the comparability of the data between nations. For the first time we have been provided with data separating out figures for England and Wales. Because this split is based on postcodes, this data does not include suicides of non-resident young people. This means that totals are slightly smaller when separated than for England and Wales combined.

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**KEY MESSAGES**

- There were 187 suicides of 15 to 19 year olds in the UK in 2014, of which 136 were recorded as deaths by intentional self-harm.
- Five-year average suicide rates of 15 to 19 year olds in England have decreased since the 1980s, but have started to rise again in the past two years. Rates in Wales have been in decline since 2001, but started to rise from 2010. In Northern Ireland suicide rates have increased, following a significant decline last year. In Scotland they have been decreasing since 2003.
- Northern Ireland has the highest suicide rate for 10 to 14 year olds, followed by Scotland, then England and then Wales.

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** ONS (2014) Suicides in the United Kingdom: 2012 registrations, p.32
*** For 15 to 19 year olds, data drawn from deaths recorded under the codes of “intentional self-harm” (from 2001: X60-X84 and Y87.0. Pre 2001: E950-E959) and “event of undetermined intent” (from 2001: Y10-Y34 and Y87.2. Pre 2001: E980-E989). For 10 to 14 year olds, data drawn from deaths recorded under the codes of “intentional self-harm” only.
England
Suicide rates per million 15 to 19 year olds

Latest figure: There were 105 suicides where death was recorded as by intentional self-harm, and a further 37 deaths by undetermined intent of 15 to 19 year olds in 2014, a five-year average combined rate of 37.3 per million 15 to 19 year olds.

Trend: The five-year average rate among 15 to 19 year olds has decreased by 24 per cent since 1985 (from 49 per million to 37.3 per million). However, the five-year average rates have started to rise in the last two years, after over a decade in decline.

Wales
Suicide rate per million 15 to 19 year olds

Latest figure: There were five suicides where death was recorded as by intentional self-harm, and a further eight deaths by undetermined intent of 15 to 19 year olds in 2014, a five-year average combined rate of 53.7 per million 15 to 19 year olds.

Trend: The five-year combined average rate among 15 to 19 year olds peaked in 2001 at 99.6 per million, and since then has been on a downward trend, reaching a low of 44.7 suicides per million in 2010. However since then there has been a slight increase, up to 53.7 per million 15 to 19 year olds.

It should be noted that the numbers involved for Wales are small, meaning a small change in the number of deaths has a significant impact.

Northern Ireland
Suicide rate per million 15 to 19 year olds

Latest figure: There were 13 suicides where death was recorded as by intentional self-harm, and a further two deaths by undetermined intent of 15 to 19 year olds in 2014, a five-year average combined rate of 135.2 per million 15 to 19 year olds.

Trend: The five-year combined average rate among 15 to 19 year olds has increased by 257 per cent since 1984 (from 37.9 per million to 135.2). Northern Ireland saw a sharp increase in the suicide rate between 2004 and 2006. In April 2006, following a review of the Coroner’s Service, Northern Ireland’s coroner districts were centralised into one Coroner’s Service. It is likely that the increase was the result of the under-recording of suicides under the old system.

It should be noted that, as the numbers involved for Northern Ireland are small, a slight change in the number of deaths has a significant impact on rates.
Scotland
Suicide rates per million 15 to 19 year olds

Trend: The five-year combined average rate among 15 to 19 year olds has increased by 32 per cent since 1984 (from 61.6 per million to 81.2). However, average rates have declined since 2002. The start of this decline coincides with the Scottish Government’s “Choose Life” suicide prevention strategy and plan,* launched in 2002. Again, it should be noted that the numbers involved for Scotland are small, meaning a slight change in the number of deaths has a significant impact on rates.


United Kingdom
Suicide rates per million 10 to 14 year olds

Latest figure: There were 13 suicides of 10 to 14 year olds where death was recorded as by intentional self-harm. The five-year average rate was 22.5 per million 10 to 14 year olds in Northern Ireland, 5.8 per million in Scotland, 1.9 per million in England and 0.0 per million in Wales.

Trend: Since 1985 the five-year average rate per million 10 to 14 year olds for suicides recorded as deaths by intentional self-harm has remained relatively stable in England, while it peaked in Scotland in the 1990s and is now in decline. It fluctuated in Wales between 0 and 4.1 per million and has increased significantly (by 306 per cent) in Northern Ireland. However, it should be noted that the numbers involved for all nations are very low compared to other age groups, and a small increase in actual numbers can lead to a large percentage increase.

UK comparison

Since 1985, the 5 year average suicide rate among 15 to 19 year olds has decreased in England whereas it has increased significantly (by 257 per cent) in Northern Ireland since 1984. In Scotland, the five-year average rate in 2014 was 32 per cent higher than 1984, but the rate has been on a downward trend since 2002. In Wales 5 year average rates peaked in 2001, and have since returned to similar levels to 1985. For 10 to 14 year olds the rate has remained relatively stable in England and Wales, has increased in Scotland (though there has been a downward trend in recent years) and has increased significantly (by 306 per cent) in Northern Ireland. In 2014, the five-year average combined rate for 15 to 19 year olds was 135.2 per million in Northern Ireland, 81.2 per million in Scotland, 53.7 per million in Wales and 37.3 per million in England. For 10 to 14 year olds, the five-year average rate in 2014 was 22.5 per million in Northern Ireland, 5.8 per million in Scotland, 1.9 per million in England and 0.0 per million in Wales.

As in the previous sections, it should be noted that the numbers involved for Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland are small, meaning a slight change in the number of deaths has a significant impact on rates.

Data sources:
Five-year average suicide rates for 15–19 year olds have started to rise in England, after over a decade in decline.
**INDICATOR 4**

**Number of recorded sexual offences against children**

**Why is this measure important?**
This measure shows the number of sexual offences committed against children recorded by the police. The data covers a range of sexual offences, including rape, sexual assault, sexual activity with a minor and child grooming. The data does not reflect the total number of sexual offences committed against children, but it does provide an important picture of the amount of sexual abuse committed against children that comes to the attention of the police and is then recorded as an offence.

**What are the limitations of the data?**
Police-recorded crime statistics suffer from under-reporting and therefore do not reflect the actual number of offences committed. Trends in the data may reflect increased public awareness and changes in policing rather than an increase in incidence.

The focus of police-recorded crime statistics is on offences, rather than on victims of crime. This can make it hard to establish the total number of sexual offences committed against children as offence types cover different age groups, with the majority relating to children aged under 16 only. The NSPCC has addressed this issue by making Freedom of Information (FOI) requests to all police forces in England and Wales asking for the number of recorded sexual offences against under 18s. For the first time we also issued an FOI request to police forces in Scotland. However, due to the lack of time series data this information has not been included. Figures for offences against under 18s are also available for Northern Ireland. Data reflects the year in which an offence was reported, not the year it was committed, so a proportion of offences will be historic. In January 2014 the UK Statistics Authority removed the National Statistics designation from recorded crime data in England and Wales following concerns about the data’s reliability.

**Data availability and comparability**
Data is available for all four nations showing recorded offences for the last decade. Legislation, offence categories and recording methods are not identical across the UK and so direct comparisons need to be treated with caution. In particular, crimes are counted differently in Scotland than in the other nations. Figures for offences committed against under 18s are available for England and Wales and Northern Ireland, but not for Scotland.

**England**

**Number and rate of sexual offences against children under 16**

*Based on FOI data obtained by the NSPCC for England and Wales and data provided by the Police Service of Northern Ireland and Scottish Government.*


**Latest figure:** There were 38,575 recorded sexual offences against children in 2014/15 (30,698 excluding offences that include victims over 16 – abuse of a position of trust of a sexual nature, abuse of children through sexual exploitation and obscene publications, etc. and protected sexual material). This is a rate of three sexual offences per 1,000 children aged under 16.

**Trend:** The total number of recorded sexual offences against under 16s has risen sharply by 38 per cent in the past year (from 22,294 in 2013/14 to 30,698 offences in 2014/15). It has increased by 85 per cent over a five-year period (from 16,627 in 2010/11 to 30,698 recorded sexual offences in 2014/15). The rate of offences per 1,000 has ranged from a low of 1.4 in 2007/08 and 2008/09 to a high of three per 1,000 children in 2014/15.
**Indicator 4: Abuse and neglect**

### Wales

**Number and rate of sexual offences against children under 16**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offence category</th>
<th>Number of offences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexual assault on a male child under 13</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape of a female child under 16</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape of a female child under 13</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape of a male child under 16</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape of a male child under 13</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual assault on a female child under 13</td>
<td>368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual activity involving a child under 13</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual activity involving a child under 16</td>
<td>523</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abuse of position of trust of a sexual nature</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abuse of children through sexual exploitation</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual grooming</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obscene publications, etc and protected sexual</td>
<td>587</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>material (includes over 16s)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,461</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**In 2014/15 there were:**

- 7,515 recorded offences of rape of girls aged under 16 (1,3274 offences of rape of a female child under 13 and 4,241 of rape of a female child under 16)
- 5,893 offences of sexual assault against girls aged under 13
- 2,252 recorded offences of sexual assault against boys aged under 13
- 1,874 recorded offences of rape of boys aged under 16 (1,268 offences of rape of a male child under 13 and 606 of rape of a male child under 16)
- 12,512 recorded offences of sexual activity involving a child under 16 (4,461 offences involving a child under 13 and 8,051 involving a child under 16)

**Latest figure:** There were 2,461 recorded offences against children in 2014/15 (1,857 excluding offences that include victims over 16 - abuse of a position of trust of a sexual nature, abuse of children through sexual exploitation and obscene publications, etc and protected sexual material). This is a rate of 3.3 sexual offences per 1,000 children aged under 16.

**Trend:** The number of recorded sexual offences against under 16s has increased by 26 per cent in the past year (from 1,478 in 2013/14). It has more than doubled in the past decade, from 779 in 2005/06 (1.4 offences per 1,000 children under 16) to 1,857 recorded sexual offences in 2014/15.

### England

**Number and rate of sexual offences against children under 16**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offence category</th>
<th>Number of offences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexual assault on a male child under 13</td>
<td>2,252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape of a female child under 16</td>
<td>4,241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape of a female child under 13</td>
<td>3,274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape of a male child under 16</td>
<td>606</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape of a male child under 13</td>
<td>1,268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual assault on a female child under 13</td>
<td>5,893</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual activity involving a child under 13</td>
<td>4,461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual activity involving a child under 16</td>
<td>8,051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abuse of position of trust of a sexual nature</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abuse of children through sexual exploitation</td>
<td>347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual grooming</td>
<td>652</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obscene publications, etc and protected sexual</td>
<td>7,324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>material (includes over 16s)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>38,575</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**In 2014/15 there were:**

- 7,515 recorded offences of rape of girls aged under 16 (1,3274 offences of rape of a female child under 13 and 4,241 of rape of a female child under 16)
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- 12,512 recorded offences of sexual activity involving a child under 16 (4,461 offences involving a child under 13 and 8,051 involving a child under 16)
Scotland

Number and rate of recorded sexual offences against children aged under 16

The Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009 came into force on 1 December 2010 and resulted in a change to the way some sexual offences were categorised. Comparisons over time of the breakdown of sexual crimes should therefore be treated with caution. However, no new crimes were introduced as a result of the legislation and this is not considered to be a break in the time series.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offence category</th>
<th>Number of offences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rape or attempted rape of a child aged 13 to 15</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape or attempted rape of a child aged 13</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual assault of a child aged 13 to 15</td>
<td>457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual assault of a child aged 13</td>
<td>394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual activity involving a child aged 13 to 15</td>
<td>492</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual activity involving a child aged 13</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking, distributing, possessing indecent photos of children (includes under 18s)</td>
<td>603</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grooming of children for purposes of sexual offences</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewd and libidinous practices*</td>
<td>1,014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual abuse of trust (includes under 18s)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other sexual offences (some include under 18s)</td>
<td>528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,082</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Latest figure: There were 4,082 recorded sexual offences against children in 2014/15 (3,475 excluding offences that include victims up to the age of 18 – abducting a girl under the age of 18, procurement of sexual services from a child under 18, procurement of child under 18 for pornography, sexual abuse of trust of a person under 18 and taking, distributing, possessing indecent photos of children). This is a rate of 3.8 sexual offences per 1,000 children aged under 16.

Trend: Since 2010/11, the number of offences against under 16s has risen by 52 per cent, from 2,284 recorded in 2010/11 to a high of 3,475 in 2014/15. In the same time period, rates have varied from 2.5 offences per 1,000 under 16s in 2010/11 to a high of 3.8 per 1,000 under 16s in 2014/15. Trends in Scotland must be treated with caution (see below).

In 2014/15 there were:
- 376 recorded offences of rape or attempted rape against children aged under 16 (216 rapes or attempted rapes of children aged 13 to 15 and 160 rapes or attempted rapes of children under 13)
- 851 recorded offences of sexual assault of a child aged under 16 (457 sexual assaults of a child aged 13 to 15 and 394 sexual assaults of children aged under 13)
- 684 offences for sexual activity involving a child under 16 (492 offences of sexual activity involving a child aged 13 to 15 and 192 offences of sexual activity involving a child aged under 13)

Northern Ireland

Number and rate of recorded sexual offences against children aged under 18

Latest figure: There were 1,747 recorded sexual offences against children aged under 18 in 2014/15, a rate of four sexual offences per 1,000 under 18.

Trend: The number of recorded sexual offences against victims under 18 has almost doubled in the past decade, from a low of 904 in 2005/06 to 1,747 offences recorded in 2014/15. Having remained fairly stable, ranging between 2.3 and 2.7 between 2007/08 and 2012/13, the rate of sexual offences increased to a high of four per 1,000 children aged under 18 in 2014/15.

*Offences in the category “lewd and libidinous practices” cover sexual offences against children committed prior to 1 December 2010 under previous legislation.
In 2014/15 there were:

- 1,747 sexual offences against children aged under 18 recorded by police (this figure includes 231 offences for obscene publications etc. and protected sexual material)
- Almost a fifth (300) were rapes or attempted rapes
- Two thirds (1,156) were sexual assaults or sexual activity with a child or young person.

**Northern Ireland**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offence category</th>
<th>Number of offences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rape (including attempts)</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual assaults/sexual activity</td>
<td>1,156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure and voyeurism</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obscene publications etc. and protected sexual material (includes some over 18s)</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other sexual offences</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,747</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NSPCC freedom of information (FOI) requests**

For the past seven years the NSPCC has sent out FOI requests to every police force in England and Wales in order to build a fuller picture of offences against children under 18. For the first time we extended this FOI to Scotland, however, due to the lack of time series data this information has not been included.

**England**

Number and rate of sexual offences against children under 18

- Latest figure: There were 39,388 recorded sexual offences against children aged under 18 in 2014/15, a rate of 3.4 sexual offences per 1,000 children aged under 18.
- Trend: There has been a significant increase in the number of recorded offences in the last two years. Since 2012/13, the total number of recorded sexual offences against children under 18 has risen by 84 per cent, from 21,372 to a high of 39,388 offences recorded in 2014/15. The rate of sexual offences has also increased significantly from 1.9 per 1,000 children under 18 in 2012/13 to 3.4 per 1,000 children aged under 18 in 2014/15.

**Wales**

Number and rate of sexual offences against children under 18

- Latest figure: There were 1,791 recorded sexual offences against children aged under 18 in 2014/15, a rate of 2.8 sexual offences per 1,000 children aged under 18.
- Trend: There has been an increase of 24 per cent in the number of recorded sexual offences against children aged 18 in the last year. Having climbed slowly from 1.5 to 2.3 per 1,000 children between 2008/09 and 2013/14, the rates of sexual offences also increased this year to 2.8 offences per 1,000 children under 18.
**INDICATOR 5**

**Number of recorded cruelty and neglect offences**

**Why is this measure important?**

This measure shows the number of offences recorded by the police where an adult who has responsibility for a child under 16 “wilfully assaults, ill-treats, neglects, abandons or exposes a child under 16 in a manner likely to cause them ‘unnecessary suffering or injury to health’”. The data does not reflect the total number of children actually suffering from cruelty or neglect, but it does provide an important picture of the cases of cruelty and neglect against children that come to the attention of the police and that are recorded as offences.

**What are the limitations of the data?**

Police-recorded crime statistics suffer from the problem of under-reporting and therefore do not reflect the actual number of offences committed. In some cases, it is agreed that the best interests of the child are served by a social care-led intervention rather than a full police investigation. Trends in the data may also reflect increased public awareness and changes in policing rather than an increase in incidence.

In January 2014 the UK Statistics Authority removed the National Statistics designation from recorded crime data in England and Wales following concerns about the data’s reliability.*

**Data availability and comparability**

Data is available for all four nations showing recorded offences for the last decade. Legislation, offence categories and recording methods are not identical across the UK and so direct comparisons need to be treated with caution. In particular, crimes are counted differently in Scotland than in the other nations, and reporting categories used are broader than those in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

**England**

**Recorded offences and offence rates for cruelty to children/young people**

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**KEY MESSAGES**

- Police recorded 10,136 cruelty and neglect offences against children aged under 16 in the UK in 2014/15.
- Numbers of recorded cruelty and neglect offences have increased in England and Wales and have decreased in Scotland and Northern Ireland.
- Numbers of recorded cruelty and neglect offences are at their highest in Wales and at their lowest in Scotland for a decade.

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**Wales**

Recorded offences and offence rates for cruelty to children/young people

*Latest figure:* There were 415 recorded offences in 2014/15, a rate of 7.5 offences per 10,000 children aged under 16. Figures include offences of abandonment of a child, as this offence was merged with that of cruelty to and neglect of children in 2013.

*Trend:* The total numbers of offences has increased by more than 50 per cent in the past year, from 272 in 2013/14 to 415 in 2014/15. Since 2007/08 the offence rate per 10,000 children aged under 16 has increased from 3.8 to 7.5.

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**Northern Ireland**

Recorded offences and offence rates for cruelty to children/young people

*Latest figure:* There were 174 recorded offences in 2014/15, a rate of 4.5 offences per 10,000 children aged under 16. Figures include offences of cruelty to and neglect of children and abandoning a child.

*Trend:* After falling to a low of 28 in 2007/08, numbers of offences recorded increased, reaching 184 in 2013/15, before falling back slightly to 174 in 2014/15. Rates have varied from a low of 0.7 offences per 10,000 under 16s in 2007/08 to a high of 4.8 offences per 10,000 under 16s in 2013/14.

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**Scotland**

Recorded offences and offence rates for cruelty to children/young people

*Latest figure:* There were 1,041 recorded offences in 2014/15, a rate of 11.4 offences per 10,000 children aged under 16. Figures include offences of cruelty to and unnatural treatment of children, being drunk in charge of a child, and children and young person offences (not elsewhere classified).

*Trend:* The numbers of offences have decreased year on year since the 2009/10 peak of 1,919 offences. The 2014/15 total is now the lowest figure recorded within the data set and has decreased by more than a fifth in the last year, from 1,336 in 2013/14 to 1,041 in 2014/15. The offence rate per 10,000 under 16s has fallen from a high of 20.9 in 2009/10 to 11.4 this year.
**INDICATOR 6**

Self-reported prevalence of abuse and neglect

Why is this measure important?
This measure draws on the findings of the NSPCC research report Child abuse and neglect in the UK today, published in September 2011. In this study, a sample of parents, young people and young adults in the UK were interviewed in 2009 about experiences of child abuse and neglect.* The findings provide the only UK-wide research-based indication of the prevalence and impact of child abuse and neglect. Definitions of terms used in this indicator can be found in the glossary.

What are the limitations of the data?
This is a self-report survey for 11 to 24 year olds and a caregiver survey for the under 11s. As survey data, it may be subject to error associated with sampling and respondents recalling past events. For under 18s, parental consent was needed, which may have resulted in some sample bias. The change in measures between surveys (only a subset of measures were repeated) limits trend analysis.

Data availability and comparability
This survey has not been repeated since 2009, so no new data is available. Although the data is available for all four nations, small sample sizes in the devolved nations mean that it is problematic to report these separately. The data has been weighted for the UK as a whole.

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**KEY MESSAGES**

- Over one in six 11 – 17 year olds have experienced some type of severe maltreatment.
- Self-report survey data of young people indicates that prevalence of child maltreatment is higher than that reported in other indicators in this report.
- Over half of 11 to 17 year olds have been exposed to some form of community violence.**

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* 2,275 young people between the ages of 11 and 17 and 1,761 young adults between the ages of 18 and 24.
** Exposure to community violence is determined by a series of questions which ask about a range of different violent or criminal acts the young person may have witnessed or been exposed to. Such as seeing another person being hit, having their home burgled or witnessing family or domestic violence.
Indicator 6: Abuse and neglect

33

Lifetime exposure to severe maltreatment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maltreatment type</th>
<th>11–17 years</th>
<th>18–24 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severe physical abuse</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact sexual abuse</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severe neglect by a parent or guardian</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severe maltreatment by a parent or guardian</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All severe</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall maltreatment and victimisation by perpetrator type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maltreatment and victimisation by perpetrator type</th>
<th>11–17 years</th>
<th>18–24 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Past year</td>
<td>Lifetime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maltreatment by parent/guardian</td>
<td>6.00%</td>
<td>21.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maltreatment by adult outside home</td>
<td>3.10%</td>
<td>7.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sibling victimisation</td>
<td>16.00%</td>
<td>31.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimate partner abuse</td>
<td>5.00%</td>
<td>7.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer victimisation</td>
<td>35.30%</td>
<td>59.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure to community violence</td>
<td>31.20%</td>
<td>61.40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11.3 per cent of 18 to 24 year olds reported that they had experienced contact sexual abuse while under the age of 18.

9 per cent of 18 to 24 year olds reported that they had experienced severe neglect while under the age of 18.

Almost three in every five children who are aged 11 to 17 will have been victimised by a peer – which includes anything from bullying to assault.

A quarter of 18 to 24 year olds said that they had been a victim of abuse by a sibling during their childhood. Current 11 to 17 year olds described higher rates of sibling victimisation at 30 per cent.

Children are exposed to abuse in their home, in school and in the community. That abuse might be perpetrated by their parents, their siblings, adults they know, peers or strangers. This table can be used to conceptualise the amount and types of violence and abuse that young people are exposed to.

By the time they reach 18, almost one quarter of children will have been exposed to domestic violence.

Four questions were asked about exposure to domestic violence – specifically physical violence and threatening behaviour from an adult partner/ex-partner towards the parent, and two questions about other forms of physical violence against family members.

Data source
Radford et al (2011) Child abuse and neglect in the UK today
**INDICATOR 7**

**Contacts with ChildLine**

**Why is this measure important?**
ChildLine is the UK’s free, 24-hour helpline for children and young people. Information about ChildLine counselling sessions provides a unique indication of the nature and levels of concerns among children. It allows us to identify emerging trends in the issues that children are facing. ChildLine information also allows us to track concerns about specific forms of abuse and neglect that may not be covered in official crime or child protection statistics.

**What are the limitations of the data?**
This data only captures where children have contacted ChildLine and is therefore only a snapshot of the concerns they may have. In general it is not possible to identify the number of individual children who are contacting ChildLine, as the same child may make multiple contacts. The number and reasons for contacts can also be affected by news coverage, NSPCC marketing, changes to how ChildLine data is coded and the introduction of new ways to contact ChildLine, such as online counselling.

**Data availability and comparability**
ChildLine data covers the UK as a whole and comparable data is available for the previous three years. Due to the confidentiality of the service, very few young people tell a counsellor where they live, and therefore a UK nation breakdown of data is not possible.

**Key messages**
- Low mood/unhappiness and family relationships were the two most common issues that children and young people contacted ChildLine about in 2015/16.
- ChildLine made 4,005 referrals in 2015/16 on behalf of 3,609 children to external agencies. This is a 7 per cent increase in referrals since 2014/15.
- There was a 49 per cent increase in referrals about mental health since 2014/15.
- The ChildLine website received a total of 3,477,162 visits. This figure has increased by 8 per cent since 2014/15.

**Percentage of counselling sessions* broken down by primary concern (2015/16)**

*Counselling sessions take place in calls, online chats or emails.*

Low mood/unhappiness and family relationships were the issues that children and young people most talked about in counselling sessions with ChildLine in 2015/16.

Bullying, self-harm and suicidal issues were also among the top five main concerns counselled.

Sexual abuse accounted for 3 per cent of the main concerns counselled as did physical abuse.
More counselling sessions were carried out over concerns about sexual abuse/online sexual abuse in 2015/16 than for other abuse-related main concerns. Over the past year, 10,067 counselling sessions were carried out with children whose main concern was sexual abuse/online sexual abuse. This accounted for 43 per cent of all abuse-related main concerns.

Numbers of counselling sessions about physical abuse and neglect have both dipped since 2014/15. Emotional abuse has remained level for the fourth year running.

ChildLine will only make a referral to an external agency when the child is in a life-threatening situation, facing significant harm or when the child has requested direct help.

In 2015/16, ChildLine made 4,005 referrals on behalf of 3,609 children to external agencies. This is a 7 per cent increase in referrals since 2014/15. Suicide remains the most frequent reason for a referral to be made, accounting for 61 per cent of all referrals. Referrals about this issue have been significantly increasing since 2009 and rose by 10 per cent this year when compared with 2014/15.

Physical abuse accounted for 11 per cent of referrals made in 2015/16 and 5 per cent related to sexual abuse/online sexual abuse. There was a 7 per cent increase in referrals about physical abuse in 2015/16 compared with 2014/15.

In addition to offering counselling sessions by phone or online, the ChildLine website is a resource for children and young people. In 2015/16 the ChildLine website received a total of 3,477,162 visits. This figure has increased by 8 per cent since 2014/15.

The table shows that information about sexting was the most viewed ChildLine Explore page, closely followed by ‘Your rights’, which provides information on rights to help children stay safe and get fair treatment. The ChildLine Message Boards received a total of 2,838,634 page views (number of times that page was viewed, not the number of individuals who viewed that page). There were 67,513 posts submitted and published by children and young people.
Contacts with the NSPCC helpline

Why is this measure important?
The NSPCC helpline offers an advice and support service for anyone worried about the safety or welfare of a child. Information from the helpline gives us an indication of the levels of concern among the public and professionals about children’s welfare, the nature of these concerns and whether they are serious enough to warrant a referral to police or children’s services. This is also a useful indicator to assist in future service planning for local authorities.

What are the limitations of the data?
Contacts to the helpline are based on people’s own perceptions of abuse and neglect, and therefore, the data only captures instances of abuse and neglect that callers have identified. Also the number and reasons for contact can be affected by news coverage and NSPCC marketing.

Data availability and comparability
Overall data is available and comparable back to 2007/8. Comparable data broken down by nation is available from 2010/11. Referral data captures the local authority or agency to which the referral was made. For advice contacts, the geographical location of the caller is captured where the caller gives us this information.

Key messages
- There were 54,865 contacts made to the NSPCC helpline in 2015/16
- Three quarters of contacts relate to abuse or neglect.
- Contacts about abuse and neglect have risen by 29 per cent since 2011/12. Of the four abuse and neglect categories, neglect has been the highest concern for the past five years.
- Of all contacts to the helpline in 2015/16, 72 per cent led to a referral.
- More than three quarters of all contacts relating to neglect (86 per cent) and physical abuse (80 per cent) led to a referral.
Reasons for contacting the helpline in 2015/16

There were 54,865 contacts made to the NSPCC helpline in 2015/16. Contacts to the NSPCC helpline have significantly increased since 2009/10. Contacts about abuse and neglect have increased by more than 29 per cent since 2011/12. Other reasons for contacting the helpline include calls about child or adult behaviour, family relationships and child health. See the graph below for more information.

Who contacts the helpline (2007/8 – 2015/16)?

This year, where the information was recorded, the public accounted for 42 per cent of contacts made to the helpline that resulted in advice or a referral. Half of these contacts were serious enough to warrant a referral to the police or children’s services.

Since 2011/12 there has been a 16 per cent increase in professionals* contacting the helpline to seek advice or to report a concern about the welfare of a child.

*Professionals category includes social care/children’s services professionals, health professionals, education professionals, police, probation, other officials.
Contacts to the helpline can result in the caller receiving advice or a referral being made to an external agency such as a local authority or the police.

In 2015/16, 72 per cent of all contacts led to a referral. While the data shows that although the number of contacts responded to by the helpline has decreased since 2014/15, there has been an increase in the proportion of contacts that led to a referral compared to the previous year.

The rising proportion of referrals can partly be explained by the increasingly complex nature of the service our helpline offers – including specialist helplines for support for official inquiries and investigations into organised abuse and historic abuse; advice for anyone concerned about FGM and young people affected by gangs and advice on whistleblowing. This means that at peak times we have to prioritise calls so that the most high-risk concerns, i.e. the ones most likely to result in a referral, are responded to immediately.

In 2015/16, 86 per cent of all contacts relating to neglect resulted in a referral, as did 80 per cent of physical abuse contacts.
Three quarters of contacts to the NSPCC helpline relate to abuse or neglect.
In 2015/16 there were 1,392 counselling sessions on sexting, which is a 15 per cent increase on the previous year.

In 2015, the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) identified and worked with partners to remove 68,092 URLs confirmed as hosting child sexual abuse images worldwide – a 118 per cent increase from the previous year.

In 2014/15 the number of police-recorded offences for obscene publications rose by 62 per cent in Northern Ireland, 69 per cent in England, and 114 per cent in Wales.
### Indicator 9: Abuse and neglect

**Cyber bullying and sexting**
Number of ChildLine counselling sessions where sexting and cyber bullying were mentioned*

In 2015/16, there were 4,541 counselling sessions carried out where cyber bullying was mentioned, which is a 13 per cent increase since 2014/15.

In 2015/16, there were 1,392 counselling sessions where sexting was mentioned, which is a 15 per cent increase since 2014/15.

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**Viewing harmful content online**
In the last year, have you seen anything online that you found worrying, nasty or offensive?

Since 2011, Ofcom have asked children and young people, who use the internet at home or elsewhere, if they have seen anything online that they found worrying, nasty or offensive in some way.

Although there remains a gap between the percentage of older children (12 to 15 years) and the percentage of younger children (8 to 11 years) who have seen something nasty or offensive in some way, the gap has narrowed since 2014. This is because the proportion of older children viewing harmful content has decreased to 16 per cent while the proportion of younger children viewing such content has increased to 11 per cent.

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**Child sexual abuse images**
The number of URLs confirmed as hosting child sexual abuse images and videos globally

The Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) was granted powers to proactively search for criminal content in 2014; previously they were only permitted to work on reports made by the public.

In 2015, the IWF identified and worked with partners to remove 68,092 URLs hosting child sexual abuse imagery worldwide – a 118 per cent increase from the previous year. 2015 was the first full year where the IWF actively searched for illegal images, which could explain the increase in the number removed.

From the overall total of URLs confirmed as hosting child sexual abuse images, 69 per cent were assessed to be of children aged 10 and under. Of these URLs, 14,299 were commercial child sexual abuse images, meaning they were being sold for commercial gain.

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* The increase in the number of counselling sessions where cyber bullying and sexting were mentioned does not necessarily directly correlate with an increase of children and young people experiencing these issues. See Indicator 7 for more detail on limitations of ChildLine data.
† The IWF assesses images for the age of the child but as this cannot always be identified this figure may be higher.

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The number of police recorded offences of indecent images

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland it is a crime to create, possess or distribute indecent photographs or pseudo-photographs of children. These crimes are recorded in the Home Office Counting Rules under the miscellaneous category of ‘Obscene Publications’, a category which includes a variety of offences relating to obscene material and which is not focused exclusively on children. This means that the figures below are the maximum number of possible offences that have been recorded in relation to indecent images of children. Some of these offences will relate to adults, but we do not know how many.

In 2014/2015 the number of police-recorded offences for ‘Obscene Publications’ rose by 69 per cent in England and 114 per cent in Wales compared to the previous year. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) attributes this increase to a rise in offences relating to making and distributing indecent or pseudo-photographs, of children and adults, through the use of the internet and mobile phones. The police have also stated that they are giving more attention to child sexual exploitation cases which is likely to have led to an increase in the number of offences recorded under this category.

In Northern Ireland there has been a year-on-year increase of police-recorded offences of ‘Obscene Publications’. In 2014/15 recorded offences in this category rose by 62 per cent compared to the previous year.

In Scotland it is a crime to create, possess and distribute indecent photos of children under section 52 and 52A of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982. In 2014/15 the number of recorded offences in this category was 603, which is a 3 per cent decrease from the previous year.

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* The legislation for child sexual abuse offences differs between the four nations (for more details see Indicator 4).

Data sources: ChildLine data on file with the NSPCC; Ofcom (2015) Children and parents: media use and attitudes report; ONS (2016) Crime in England and Wales: Year ending September 2015; Police Service of Northern Ireland Statistics Branch (data provided to NSPCC); Scottish Government recorded crime statistics (data provided to NSPCC); IWF (2016) Annual report 2015
ChildLine counselling sessions about sexting have increased in number by 15% since last year.
**Indicator 10**

**Violent incidents experienced by 10 to 15 year olds**
Crime Survey for England and Wales

**Why is this measure important?**
The Crime Survey for England and Wales (previously the British Crime Survey) is a face-to-face survey in which people resident in households in England and Wales are asked about their experiences of crime in the previous 12 months. The 2014/15 survey was based on face-to-face interviews with around 3,000 children* aged 10 to 15. Crime survey estimates are higher than the number of crimes recorded by the police because the survey captures offences that have not been reported to the police. The survey is therefore an important way of filling the gap left by police-recorded crime statistics.

**What are the limitations of the data?**
As survey data, it may be subject to error associated with sampling and respondents recalling past events. The survey only provides data for children aged 10 to 15 years old and only covers certain offence categories (violence and theft offences). Additionally, the survey uses two different measures of crime due to difficulties in classifying some crimes against children. Methodological differences between the adults’ and children’s survey mean that direct comparison is not possible. It also excludes children living in communal establishments, boarding schools, youth detention centres and children’s homes.

**Data availability and comparability**
Data is only available for England and Wales for the past six years. However, comparison is only possible over the past four years due to changes in the way the statistics are collected. The Scotland and Northern Ireland Crime Surveys do not include data for under 16s.

**Key messages**
- In 2014/15, 5.7 per cent of 10 to 15 year olds in England and Wales were the victim of a violent crime.
- Of these offences, 67 per cent resulted in an injury to the victim.
- An estimated 373,000 violent offences were experienced by children aged 10 to 15 in 2014/15.
**England and Wales**

Estimated percentage of 10 to 15 year olds who were the victim of a violent crime in the past 12 months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator 10: Abuse and neglect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preferred measure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wounding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assault with minor injury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assault with no injury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence with injury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence without injury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any violent incidents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2014/15, 5.7 per cent of 10 to 15 year olds in England and Wales were the victim of a violent crime in the past 12 months on the preferred measure, and 10.8 per cent on the broad measure. On the preferred measure, 3.8 per cent were victims of violence and sustained an injury.

It is not possible to compare current data with surveys conducted prior to 2011/12 due to changes in the way the data is collected. However, between 2011/12 and 2014/15 both the preferred and broad measures show that the percentage of 10-15 year olds who were the victim of a violent crime has decreased.

**General findings**

In 2014/15, 5.7 per cent of 10 to 15 year olds were victims of violent crimes on the preferred measure, and 10.8 per cent on the broad measure. As an indication, this is more than three times the proportion of adults who were victims of violent crime in 2014/15 (1.8 per cent), though direct comparisons are problematic due to methodological differences.

The Crime Survey estimates that a total of 709,000 crimes were experienced by children aged 10 to 15 in 2014/15 based on the preferred method. Of this total more than half (53 per cent) were violent crimes (373,000) while most of the remaining crimes were thefts of personal property (278,000). Of the 373,000 violent offences, the majority (67 per cent) resulted in injury to the victim. In comparison, about 52 per cent of violent incidents among adults aged 16 or above resulted in injury to the victim. In 2014/15, 3.8 per cent of 10 to 15 year olds were the victims of violence and sustained an injury on the preferred measure, equal to 249,000 individual incidents.
INDICATOR 11

Referrals to social services

Why is this measure important?
A referral is the first stage of the child protection process in all four nations. A referral will be made about children because some aspect of their life is giving cause for concern. A referral is a request for services to be provided by children’s social care services where the child is not previously known to them, or where the case was previously open but is now closed. On receipt of a referral, children’s social care will decide what further work needs to be done. It may be that more investigation is needed, or it may be that a referral can be resolved by providing some information, or referring to another agency. In some cases no further action at all is needed.

Anyone who has concerns about the safety or welfare of a child can make a referral to statutory services. Referrals to social services can be made by all parts of society including a local authority social services department, the police, health services, family, friends and neighbours. Children and young people can also self-refer.

What are the limitations of the data?
An increase in referrals is not good or bad in terms of the safety of children — an increase in referrals could indicate an increase in awareness of concerns about the safety of a child, alternately it could indicate an increase in the levels of concern about the safety of children or changes in legislation, policy or practice.

Data availability and comparability
Data for the number of referrals is published for England and Wales. The number of children referred data is available for England and Northern Ireland. In 2014/15 Northern Ireland changed how it sources some child protection data with the aim of ensuring consistency in reporting and reducing the amount of data that health and social care trusts are required to provide. This means that data published in 2014/15 cannot be compared with earlier data. Scotland discontinued publication in 2010 due to concerns about the inconsistency of definitions used to record data with local authorities.

KEY MESSAGES
- The number of referrals decreased slightly in England in 2014/15, following a sharp increase in 2013/14.
- Referrals have increased slightly in Wales in 2014/15. This follows four years of declining referral numbers.
- In Northern Ireland 38,418 children were referred to social services in 2014/15. Due to a change in data collection methods it is not possible to compare this year’s data with previous years.
- In England and Wales between a quarter and a fifth of referrals are re-referrals from within a 12-month period.
**England**

Number of referrals accepted in the year ending 31 March

[Chart showing trends in referrals accepted in England from 2006/07 to 2014/15.]

**Latest figure:** There were 635,600 referrals relating to 553,500 children for the year ending 31 March 2015.

**Trend:** Referrals declined in England in 2014/15, following a sharp increase in 2013/14. Numbers of referrals and children referred remain higher than those seen in the 12 years prior to 2013/14.

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**Wales**

Total number of referrals accepted for the year ending 31 March

[Chart showing trends in referrals accepted in Wales from 2006/07 to 2014/15.]

**Latest figure:** There were 35,423 referrals for the year ending 31 March 2015.

**Trend:** Referrals increased slightly in 2014/15 after being in decline since 2009/10.

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**Northern Ireland**

Number of referrals accepted in the year ending 31 March

[Chart showing trends in referrals accepted in Northern Ireland from 2006/07 to 2014/15.]

**Latest figure:** There were 38,418 children referred to social services for the year ending 31 March 2015.

**Trend:** The number of children referred and the rate of children referred increased every year from 2007/8 to 2013/14. Due to changes in the way data is sourced, 2014/15 data is not comparable to previous years.
What happens after a referral has been accepted by children’s social services?

A referral may result in a number of different actions. There may be no further action following a referral. There could be a referral to another service for family support if the child is not at risk of significant harm, but is considered to be in need. There could also be further investigation.

There is some available data on assessments which gives an indication of what happens once a referral has been accepted by social services. In Wales, when children enter the child protection system, they currently receive an initial assessment to determine what, if any, support they may receive from children’s services.

Until recently this information was also recorded in England. However, as local authorities in England have now moved to carrying out continuous assessments, they are no longer making a distinction between an initial and a core assessment. As a result, data on initial assessments completed as a percentage of referrals is no longer available for England. As of 2015 a full set of data is available for the number of continuous assessments. As not all local authorities had moved from initial to continuous assessments in 2014, data from 2014 is not available.

In Northern Ireland no distinction is made between initial and core assessments undertaken using the “Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland” (UNOCINI) assessment model. No data is available for Scotland.

The graph below shows the available data on assessments and allocation for further action.

**Re-referrals**

Trend: England and Wales publish data on the re-referrals that local authorities receive. In both England and Wales, between a quarter and a fifth of referrals (24 and 21 per cent respectively) are re-referrals from within a 12-month period. These percentages have remained fairly stable over time, although percentages in Wales have decreased year on year since 2011/12.

The gap in the England data can be explained by the move from an aggregate-level return to a child-level return in 2009/10, as the new child-level data could not be matched back to a previous year.
Indicator 11: Abuse and neglect

England, Wales and Northern Ireland publish data on the source of referrals. All three nations collect data at different points in the referral process and present this data in different ways.

- England records the source of all referrals received by children’s social care. This is when a request is made for services to be provided by children’s social care regarding a child who is not currently in need. In England the most frequent source of referrals is the police, followed by schools.

- Wales records information about the source of the referrals that result in a child becoming a "child in need". Children in need are those who receive social services from their local authorities (see Indicator 12 for more information). Data is also available broken down for source of referral for looked after children and children on the child protection register. In Wales the most frequent source of children in need referrals is other local authority departments, closely followed by their local authority’s own social services department.

- Northern Ireland records information about the source of referral for all child protection referrals. A child protection referral is a referral in which the initial assessment indicates that there may be child protection issues. In 2015 data was also published, for the first time, on sources of children in need referrals. This data is not included here due to a lack of time series data. In Northern Ireland the most frequent source of child protection referrals is social services.

*In the top 5 sources of referral graphs, LA stands for local authority and EWO stands for Educational welfare officer.

Data sources:
- England: Department for Education (DfE) Children in Need statistics. Additional data provided by the DfE in correspondence with the NSPCC.
- Wales: StatsWales Children’s Services Statistics.
**Indicator 12**

**Children in need**

**Why is this measure important?**
A child in need is a child who is unlikely to have, or have the opportunity to have, a reasonable standard of health and development without any support provided by a public authority. There are many different reasons why a child would be in need including, for instance, being disabled. Here we have, as far as possible, focused on the data on children who are in need due to abuse or neglect.

**What are the limitations of the data?**
An increase or decrease in this number does not mean that children are becoming more or less safe. A fluctuation may mean that more or fewer children are coming to the attention of social services, rather than a change in actual numbers of children in need.

**Data availability and comparability**
Children in need data showing children in need due to abuse or neglect is available for England and Wales.

Northern Ireland data shows where further action is taken following a referral — this data will not necessarily be as focused on abuse or neglect as the England and Wales data. In 2014/15 Northern Ireland changed how it sources children in need data with the aim of ensuring consistency in reporting and reducing the amount of data that health and social care trusts are required to provide. This means that we now have more robust data on children in need for Northern Ireland. Because of a lack of time series data we have continued to use the number of children allocated for further action data in this indicator.

Data is not collected or published in Scotland.

**Key Messages**
- The data shows an increase in the number and rate of children in need due to abuse and neglect in England.
- In Wales there was a slight decrease in the rate and number of children in need due to abuse and neglect between 2013/14 and 2014/15.
- In Northern Ireland the number of children allocated for further action has more than doubled in the last ten years. Numbers have started to level off in recent years (2010/11 to 2014/15).
England

Children in need (CIN) due to abuse or neglect at 31 March

Latest figure: There were 192,940 children in need due to abuse or neglect at 31 March 2015. This comprises 49 per cent of the total children in need. The rate per 10,000 children was 166.

Trend: Overall, the number and rate of children in need due to abuse or neglect has increased between 2009/10 and 2014/15.

Wales

Children in need (CIN) due to abuse or neglect at 31 March

Latest figure: There were 9,960 children in need due to abuse or neglect at 31 March 2015. This comprises 51 per cent of the total children in need. The rate per 10,000 children was 158.

Trend: Overall, the number and rate of children in need due to abuse or neglect increased between 2009/10 and 2013/14, but there was a slight decrease in the number and rate in 2014/15.

Northern Ireland

Number of children allocated for further action at year ending 31 March

Latest figure: There were 20,805 children allocated for further action in the year ending 31 March 2015.

Trend: The number of children allocated for further action has almost doubled in the last ten years. Numbers have started to level off in recent years (2010/11 to 2014/15).

There were 23,834 children in need in Northern Ireland at 31 March 2015.

Data sources

England: Department for Education Children in need census. Wales: StatsWales Children in need data.
Why is this measure important?
Children subject to plans or on registers are deemed to be at continuing risk of harm. Plans and registers record details regarding children where there are on-going concerns about their safety. Despite a difference in terminology, plans and registers are roughly the same.

We have included the number of children subject to a child protection plan (CPP) or on a child protection register (CPR) and the number of children who become subject to a CPP or are added to a CPR in a year.

What are the limitations of the data?
This data captures the number of children subject to a CPP or on CPRs. Data is only held on children who have been identified by the authorities as being in need of a child protection plan. Many children who have experienced or are likely to experience significant harm may not be identified. These figures should therefore not be interpreted as a record of all child abuse. An increase in the number of children subject to CPPs or on CPRs could suggest that more abuse is coming to the attention of social services or that it is more prevalent.

Data availability and comparability
All four nations publish data on the number of children subject to CPPs or on CPRs. Scotland began to collect this data for the year ending 31 July (rather than 31 March) from 2011.

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**Key messages**

- Numbers of children within the child protection system have increased in all four nations since 2002.
- In the past year the absolute number of children subject to child protection plans (CPPs) or on child protection registers (CPRs) continued to increase in England, but decreased slightly in Wales and Scotland. In Northern Ireland the figure increased to above the 2013 figure after a decrease in 2014.
- The number of children becoming subject to CPPs or CPRs continued to increase in England and Wales, but decreased slightly in Northern Ireland and Scotland.
England

Number of children on and becoming subject to a child protection plan

**Latest figure:** There were 49,690 children subject to child protection plans (CPPs) on 31 March 2015, and 62,210 children became subject to a CPP in the year 31 March 2014 to 31 March 2015. If a child is subject to more than one child protection plan during the year, each is counted.

**Trend:** Between 2002 and 2015 the number of children subject to CPPs increased by 93 per cent. The number of children becoming subject to a CPP each year increased by 124 per cent.

Wales

Number of children on and added to a child protection register

**Latest figure:** There were 2,936 children on a child protection register (CPR) on 31 March 2015, and 4,435 children were added to a CPR in the year 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015. Where a child has been registered, de-registered and then subsequently re-registered, each period of registration is recorded.

**Trend:** Between 2002 and 2015 the number of children on a CPR increased by 37 per cent and the number of children added to a CPR per year increased by 122 per cent.

Scotland

Number of children on and added to a child protection register

**Latest figure:** Scotland began to collect data for the year ending 31 July in 2011. There were 2,772 children on a CPR on 31 July 2015 and 4,393 children were added to a CPR in the year 1 August 2014 to 31 July 2015. Where a child has been registered, de-registered and then subsequently re-registered, each period of registration is recorded.

**Trend:** Between 2002 and 2015 the number of children on a CPR increased by 37 per cent and the number of children added to a CPR per year increased by 122 per cent.
**Northern Ireland**

Number of children on and added to a child protection register

- **Latest figure:** There were 1,969 children on a CPR on 31 March 2015, and 1,904 registrations were added to a CPR in the year 31 March 2014 to 31 March 2015. Where a child has been registered, de-registered and then subsequently re-registered, each period of registration is recorded.

- **Trend:** Between 2002 and 2015 the number of children on a CPR increased by 29 per cent and the number of children added to a CPR each year increased by 76 per cent.

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**UK**

Children subject to child protection plans or on registers (rate per 10,000 children)

- **Latest figure:** For the third year Wales had the highest rate of children on child protection registers, with 47 per 10,000 under 18s on the register in Wales.

- **Trend:** Since 2002 the rate of children subject to CPPs and on CPRs has increased in all four nations. The rate of children on the Northern Ireland register has increased slightly in 2015 following a relative decline after a sharp rise in 2009.

Between 2002 and 2015 the largest rate increase was in England (86 per cent), followed by Wales (61 per cent), Scotland (46 per cent) and Northern Ireland (34 per cent). During this period the population of children increased in England and declined in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.
There has been a 24% increase in the number of children in the child protection system in the UK in the last five years.
How safe are our children? 2016

Key messages

- Neglect is the most common cause for being subject to a child protection plan (CPP) or on a child protection register (CPR) in England and Wales.
- In Northern Ireland, physical abuse has overtaken neglect as the most common cause for being on a CPR.
- By recording multiple concerns at case conference in Scotland, it has been possible to identify parental substance misuse and domestic abuse as concerns for more than a third of children on child protection registers.

Composition of child protection plans and child protection registers

Why is this measure important?
This data shows the reasons why a child who is deemed to be at continuing risk is subject to a child protection plan (CPP) or is on a child protection register (CPR).

What are the limitations of the data?
All four nations publish data on the reasons why children are subject to a CPP or are on a CPR, but there are differences in the criteria for recording and the classification of categories of abuse or concerns between the nations, as described below.

Data availability and comparability
In England, Northern Ireland and Wales the data shows the reasons why a child is subject to a CPP or on a CPR by initial, main category of abuse (neglect, physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or multiple forms of abuse). This is the category as assessed when the CPP or CPR registration commenced. The method of recording in Scotland changed in 2012 to enable multiple concerns to be recorded at each case conference rather than just the initial main category of abuse. Since this change Scotland records additional categories, including domestic abuse, parental substance misuse and parental mental health. On average it records two or three concerns per child case conference.

Due either to changes in recording methods, or the availability of published data, different time series are available for the four nations. Here we have selected data from 2002 to 20115 for England and Wales, from 1999 to 2015 for Northern Ireland, and 2012 to 2015 for Scotland. The change to the method of recording in Scotland means that figures on concerns identified in Scotland are not directly comparable to data on the category of abuse/risk prior to 2012.
**England**  
Composition of child protection plans at 31 March

Latest figure: At 31 March 2015 the breakdown of reasons for being subject to a CPP was as follows: 45 per cent neglect; 34 per cent emotional abuse; 9 per cent physical abuse; 8 per cent multiple reasons; and 5 per cent sexual abuse.

Trend: Neglect is consistently the most common reason for being subject to a CPP followed by emotional abuse which has gradually increased in the last few years. Physical and sexual abuse have been gradually decreasing.

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**Wales**  
Composition of child protection registers at 31 March

Latest figures: The breakdown of reasons for being on a CPR was as follows: 40 per cent neglect; 35 per cent emotional abuse; 13 per cent physical abuse; 7 per cent multiple reasons; and 6 per cent sexual abuse.

Trend: Although declining since a peak in 2006, neglect is consistently the most common reason for being on a CPR in Wales, followed by emotional abuse which has increased significantly since 2007.

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**Northern Ireland**  
Composition of child protection registers at 31 March

Latest figures: The breakdown of causes was as follows: 28 per cent neglect; 30 per cent physical abuse; 26 per cent multiple reasons; 9 per cent emotional abuse; and 6 per cent sexual abuse.

Trend: This year physical abuse has overtaken neglect as the most common reason for being on a CPR. Physical abuse and neglect remain the two most common reasons. The proportion of children on a CPR due to sexual abuse has declined significantly since 1999.
**Scotland**

Concerns at case conference of children on the child protection register during the year ending 31 July

Latest figures: The percentage of case conferences where the following concerns were identified were: 39 per cent for emotional abuse; 36 per cent parental substance misuse; 35 per cent domestic abuse; 37 per cent neglect; 22 per cent parental mental health problems; 22 per cent physical abuse; 24 per cent non-engaging family; 11 per cent other concerns and 9 per cent sexual abuse. Other categories of concern (child exploitation and child placing themselves at risk) were identified for fewer than 3 per cent of children.

Trend: Emotional abuse, parental substance misuse, domestic abuse and neglect have consistently been the four most frequently identified concerns at case conference since 2012.

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**Data sources**

In England and Wales, neglect is the most common reason for being subject to a child protection plan or on a child protection register.
Re-registration onto child protection registers or returning to a child protection plan

Why is this measure important?
Re-registration data shows the number of children subject to child protection plans (CPPs) or on child protection registers (CPRs) who come back onto the plans or registers. Re-registration rates could suggest that the decision to remove them initially from a CPP or CPR was premature and that they are not actually safer, or they could suggest that circumstances in the child’s life have changed requiring re-registration.

What are the limitations of the data?
Data is only held on children who have been identified by the authorities as being in need of a child protection plan. Many children who have experienced or are likely to experience significant harm may not be identified. These figures should therefore not be interpreted as a record of all child abuse.

Data availability and comparability
All four nations publish data on the number of children who are being re-registered on to CPRs or are returning to CPPs.

KEY MESSAGES
• In England the percentage of children who become subject to a child protection plan (CPP) for a second or subsequent time has increased slightly every year since 2010/11.
• In Wales the percentage of children who went back on a child protection register (CPR) for a second or subsequent time has fluctuated between 14.5 per cent and 19.4 per cent since 2006/7.
• In Northern Ireland the proportion of all children becoming re-registered has been increasing in recent years. The proportion increased from 14.9 per cent in 2009/10 to a high of 19.3 per cent in 2013/14. It dropped down slightly, to 18.3 per cent in 2014/2015.
• In Scotland the proportion of children returning to CPRs has fluctuated between 15 per cent and 17 per cent since 2010.
England
Percentage of children returning to child protection plans for a second or subsequent time

Latest figure: 16.6 per cent of children became subject to a child protection plan (CPP) for a second or subsequent time in the year to 31 March 2015.

Trend: The percentage of children who became subject to a CPP for a second or subsequent time has increased slightly every year since 2010/11. Between 1999/00 and 2011/12 the percentage was broadly constant at between 13 to 14 per cent. The most recent figure (16.6 per cent) is the highest since 1997/98.

Wales
Percentage of children returning to a child protection register for a second or subsequent time

Latest figure: 15.5 per cent of children were re-registered on a child protection register (CPR) for a second or subsequent time in the year to 31 March 2015.

Trend: The available data shows that the percentage of children who went back on a CPR for a second or subsequent time decreased from 17.8 per cent to 15.5 per cent in the year to 31 March 2015. The percentage has been between 15 per cent and 16 per cent since 2009/10 apart from the increase last year.

Scotland
Percentage of children returning to a child protection register for a second or subsequent time

Latest figure: 15.7 per cent of CPR registrations relate to children being registered for a second or subsequent time in the year to 31 July 2015.

Trend: For the period between 2006/7 and 2013/14 the proportion of children returning to a CPR for a second or subsequent time had been gradually increasing from 12.5 per cent in 2006/7 to a high of 16.5 per cent in 2013/14. It dropped back down to 15.7 per cent in 2014/15.
Northern Ireland
Percentage of children returning to a child protection register for a second or subsequent time

Latest figure: 18.3 per cent of children were re-registered on a CPR for a second or subsequent time in the year to 31 March 2015.

Trend: In Northern Ireland the proportion of all children becoming re-registered has been increasing in recent years. The proportion increased from 14.9 per cent in 2009/10 to a high of 19.3 per cent 2013/14. It dropped down slightly, to 18.3 per cent in 2014/2015.
Between 15.5% and 18.3% of children who became subject to a child protection plan or were put on a child protection register in 2014/15 had been on one before.
How long are children subject to child protection plans or on child protection registers

Why is this measure important?
Plans and registers record details regarding children where there are concerns about their safety. When a child is de-registered, it would suggest that there were no longer concerns about that child’s safety and that he or she was indeed safe and no longer at a risk of harm.

The data presented here shows the percentage of children who are subject to a CPP or on a CPR for longer than two years. Children spending a long time on either plans or registers could suggest that cases are being allowed to “drift”.

What are the limitations of the data?
Data is only held on children who have been identified by the authorities as being in need of a child protection plan. Many children who have experienced or are likely to experience significant harm may not be identified. These figures should therefore not be interpreted as a record of all child abuse. It should be noted that there is no optimal amount of time to be subject to a CPP or on a CPR.

Data availability and comparability
All nations, apart from Wales, publish data on how long in total children were subject to a CPP or were on a CPR before they were de-registered. Wales records how long children have been on a register at the year’s end, which is not a comparable figure.

KEY MESSAGES
- The proportion of children who are subject to child protection plans (CPPs) or on child protection registers (CPRs) for longer than two years continues to decline in England and Northern Ireland. This suggests that the proportion of children whose cases are drifting is decreasing.
- Both the number and proportion of children who are subject to plans has almost halved in Northern Ireland since last year.
- The data shows that a larger proportion of children on CPRs in Northern Ireland are on for two years or longer compared with England or Scotland (8.6 per cent for Northern Ireland compared to 3.7 per cent and 3.4 per cent respectively for England and Scotland).
### England
Percentage of children who ceased to be subject to a CPP during the year to 31 March who had been on for two years or longer

- **Latest figure:** 8.6 per cent of children coming off a CPP in the year to 31 March 2015 have been subject to a plan for longer than two years.
- **Trend:** Since 2001/2 there has been a downward trend in the percentage of children who had been subject to a CPP for two years or longer. It has decreased significantly in the last year from 13.1 per cent to 8.6 per cent.

### Scotland
Percentage of children ceasing to be on a CPR during the year to 31 July who had been on for two years or longer

- **Latest figure:** 3.4 per cent of children coming off a CPR in the year to 31 July 2015 had been on a plan for two years or longer.
- **Trend:** The percentage of children who had been on a CPR for two years or longer has been in long-term decline since 2000/1. In 2012/13 it reached an all-time low of 1.4 per cent. It increased to 3.4 per cent in 2014/15.

### Northern Ireland
Percentage of children ceasing to be on a CPR during the year to 31 March who had been on for longer than two years

- **Latest figure:** 8.6 per cent of children coming off a CPR in the year to 31 March 2015 had been on a plan for longer than two years.
- **Trend:** Since 2001/2 there has been a downward trend in the percentage of children who have been on a CPR for two years. It has decreased significantly in the last year from 13.1 per cent to 8.6 per cent.

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**Data sources**
- **England:** Department for Education (DfE) Characteristics of children in need
- **Scotland:** Scottish Government Children’s social work statistics
- **Northern Ireland:** Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPSNI); Children’s Social Care Statistics for Northern Ireland
What is the measure looking at?

The term “looked after children” refers to those children who are cared for by the state. The measure gives an indication of the number of instances in which the state acts as a corporate parent. There are many reasons why the state might be a corporate parent, including because a child has suffered abuse or neglect, was at risk, or is disabled. Additionally, a child may become looked after if a parent is ill or disabled, or because parents are absent. Looked after children also include children who are cared for on a voluntary basis at the request of, or by agreement with, their parents, and children who are looked after for short periods of time, for example in instances of respite care.

The total number of looked after children is frequently cited as an indication of the state of child welfare and the efficacy of social services. While this is important, we have again focused on the available statistics for children who are looked after due to abuse or neglect and children who started to become looked after in England and Wales. This allows us to track changes in a specific area of need (abuse or neglect) and thereby gain a deeper understanding of key influencing factors within that area.

What are the limitations of the data?

In England and Wales statistics on looked after children are available for different categories of need. The reason why a child first becomes looked after is registered under whichever category is most applicable at that time. This may not be the only category relevant to that child for the period during which he or she is looked after.

Data availability and comparability

Data is published for all four nations on looked after children. Only England and Wales publish data on the number of children who are looked after due to abuse or neglect. Northern Ireland and Scotland only publish numbers of looked after children, not the reasons why they become looked after.
England

Number and rate of children looked after due to abuse or neglect at 31 March, and children who started to be looked after during year ending 31 March

Latest figure: There were 42,710 children looked after due to abuse or neglect at 31 March 2015. During the year, 17,380 children became looked after due to abuse or neglect.

Trend: After a slight dip in 2013/14, the numbers of children looked after due to abuse or neglect has risen. Both the number and rate of children who started to be looked after has risen since 2007/8. The proportion of children in care due to abuse or neglect has remained at between 61 and 62 per cent for the last decade.

Wales

Number and rate of children looked after due to abuse or neglect at 31 March, and children who started to be looked after during year ending 31 March

Latest figure: There were 3,655 children looked after due to abuse or neglect at 31 March 2015. During the year, 1,240 children started to be looked after due to abuse or neglect.

Trend: The number of looked after children at 31 March increased slightly in 2014/15. The total number of looked after children has been increasing year on year since 2009/10. The proportion of children in care due to abuse or neglect remains at around two thirds (66 per cent), as it has been for the past five years. The number of children becoming looked after due to abuse and neglect has continued to remain stable.

Northern Ireland

Number of looked after children at 31 March

Latest figure: There were 2,875 looked after children in Northern Ireland at 31 March 2015.

Trend: The number of looked after children at 31 March increased slightly in 2014/15. The total number of looked after children has been increasing year on year since 2010/11. Rate calculations have not been included. They would not be comparable with England and Wales as Northern Ireland’s data does not allow us to identify children looked after due to abuse or neglect.
Scotland

Number of looked after children accommodated away from home at 31 March (31 July from 2011)

Latest figure: There were 15,404 looked after children in Scotland at 31 July 2015. Of these 11,477 were looked after or accommodated away from home.

Trend: The number of looked after children who are accommodated away from home in Scotland has been increasing year on year since 2001. Rate calculations have not been included. They would not be comparable with England and Wales, as Scottish data does not allow us to identify the children who are looked after due to abuse or neglect.
More than 60% of children in care in England and Wales are looked after due to abuse or neglect.
**INDICATOR 18**

Proportion of looked after children who have three or more placements during the year

**Why is this measure important?**
This indicator shows the proportion of looked after children who have three or more placements in a year. (See Indicator 17 for information about children looked after generally and as a result of abuse or neglect.)

The evidence suggests that many children do well in care, particularly if they are able to settle into their placements long term.* However, research suggests a link between placement instability and poor mental health outcomes for children in care.** Here we present the available data on the proportion of looked after children who have three or more placements in a year. A low and/or falling proportion of children who have three or more placements would suggest that placement stability is improving.

**What are the limitations of the data?**
The data on number of placements relates to all children who are looked after, not just those children who are looked after due to abuse or neglect. Available data is not broken down to that level of detail.

**Data availability and comparability**
Data on the number of placements that looked after children have is available for all four nations.

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**KEY MESSAGES**

- In England the number of looked after children who have three or more placements during the year continued to fall.
- In Wales the proportion of looked after children who have three or more placements rose slightly from 8 to 9 per cent.
- In Northern Ireland the proportion of looked after children who had three or more placements fell from 12 per cent to 8 per cent.
- In Scotland the number and proportion of looked after children with three or more placements rose for the second year in a row, but remained below the 2012 figure.

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**Latest figure:** There were 2,040 looked after children who had three or more placements in the year ending 31 March 2015. This was 10 per cent of all looked after children at 31 March 2015.

**Trend:** The number of looked after children with three or more placements a year had been in decline since 2003. The proportion of all looked after children who have three or more placements in a year has dropped to 10 per cent after staying at around 11 per cent for the previous six years.

**Latest figure:** There were 510 looked after children who had three or more placements in the year ending 31 March 2015. This was 9 per cent of all looked after children at 31 March 2015.

**Trend:** The number of looked after children with three or more placements has been decreasing over the past ten years. After declining steadily between 2003 and 2009, the proportion of looked after children with three or more placements has remained at between 8 and 10 per cent for the past five years.

**Latest figure:** There were 7,040 looked after children who had three or more placements in the year ending 31 March 2015. This was 10 per cent of all looked after children at 31 March 2015.

**Trend:** The number of looked after children with three or more placements a year has been in decline since 2003. The proportion of all looked after children who have three or more placements in a year has dropped to 10 per cent after staying at around 11 per cent for the previous six years.
Scotland
Proportion of looked after children with three or more placements during the year

Latest figure: There were 927 looked after children who had three or more placements in the year ending 31 March 2015. This was 6 per cent of all looked after children at 31 March 2015.

Trend: The number of looked after children who had three or more placements in 2015 increased to 927 in 2015 from 915 in 2014 and 871 in 2013. This remains below the 2012 figure of 987. This variance is reflected in the proportion of looked after children with three or more placements which has increased in the past two years from 5 per cent in 2013 to 6 per cent in 2015, but remains just below the 6.1 per cent of 2012.
Between 6% and 10% of looked after children have three or more placements in a year.
**INDICATOR 19**

Child trafficking

**Why is this measure important?**
Child trafficking is the recruitment and movement of children for the purpose of exploitation and is a form of modern slavery. Child trafficking can happen across borders and internally. Children cannot give informed consent to being trafficked. It is a serious form of child abuse that causes significant harm to its victims. Victims are vulnerable to a very high level of physical, emotional and sexual abuse and neglect while being trafficked.

This measure uses data from referrals received by the NSPCC’s Child Trafficking Advice Centre (CTAC)* as well as data collated by the UK Human Trafficking Centre from a range of sources including the National Referral Mechanism (NRM)**

**What are the limitations of the data?**
The hidden nature of child trafficking makes it difficult to identify its true extent. Both CTAC and NRM data depends on a referral being made by a professional with concerns about a child. However, not all cases of identified trafficking will be referred, and even if a referral has been made, the trafficking indicators may not always be clear. Some victims will not be identified in the first place. This means that these data sources don’t necessarily reflect the full scale of child trafficking in the UK. Understanding trends in numbers of victims also poses problems. Increases in referrals may not indicate an increase in children being trafficked, but rather an increase in the numbers being identified.

**Data availability and comparability**
Available data is limited. Currently available child protection data does not include information on whether a child has been trafficked. Data from the National Crime Agency (NCA) is drawn from the NRM, a framework for identifying victims of human trafficking and ensuring they receive appropriate care. However the NRM is not mandatory. We also use data from referrals to the NSPCC’s CTAC. This data only reflects referrals made to the service.

Figures from the National Crime Agency include data on children trafficked within the UK, whereas CTAC’s data only includes children trafficked to the UK from overseas. CTAC’s data is available for the UK as a whole, for the past eight years. This data is shared with the National Crime Agency and added to its figures on child trafficking and exploitation. As in previous years, no new data breaking down trafficking figures by nation has been identified so a nation-level analysis has not been included.

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* CTAC was launched in 2007 and provides a UK-wide service offering advice to professionals with concerns about child trafficking. The service receives referrals from a range of professionals across the country. ** The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is a victim identification and support process that is designed to make it easier for all the different agencies involved in a trafficking case (for example, the police, UK Visa and Immigration, local authorities and NGOs) to cooperate, share information about potential victims and facilitate their access to advice, accommodation and support.

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**KEY MESSAGES**
- The National Crime Agency (NCA) estimates that there were 732 children trafficked in 2014, up 22 per cent from 602 in 2013.
- 224 children were referred to the NSPCC Child Trafficking Advice Centre (CTAC) between November 2014 and October 2015, an increase of 40 per cent from 2013/14.
- The most frequent exploitation type in CTAC referrals is sexual exploitation, followed by criminal exploitation.
- 38 per cent of children referred to CTAC originate from Asia. Europe accounts for 28 per cent and Africa for 27 per cent.
In 2014 the National Crime Agency estimated that there were 732 child victims of trafficking, up 22 per cent from 602 in 2013. Of the total, 449 (61 per cent) were female, 260 (36 per cent) were male, and in 23 (3 per cent) of the cases the gender was unknown.

The most prevalent exploitation types for trafficked children were sexual exploitation (237, 32 per cent) and criminal exploitation (142, 19 per cent).

Latest figure: Between November 2014 and October 2015, 224 children were referred to CTAC. 105 of them female, 111 of them male and in 8 cases the gender was not recorded.

Trend: The number of children referred to CTAC reached its highest number to date between November 2014 and October 2015. The total number of children has increased by 40 per cent since the period between October 2013 and November 2014 and by 96 per cent since 2007/08.
Region of origin of CTAC referrals

- Asia is the most common region of origin for children referred to CTAC, making up 38 per cent of all children referred. This is followed by Europe, which accounts for 28 per cent of referrals, and Africa for 27 per cent.
The National Crime Agency estimates that there were 732 children trafficked in 2014.
INDICATOR 20

Public attitudes to child abuse and neglect

Why is this indicator important?
Public attitudes matter because they guide behaviour and we all have a responsibility to take action to keep children safe. Importantly, evidence tells us that if people have a greater understanding of the drivers of abuse and neglect, they are more likely to support interventions and solutions, and to take action to keep children safe.

Limitations of the data
Our data is drawn from the quantitative, quarterly 'tracker survey' commissioned by the NSPCC from YouGov. It uses YouGov's panel online with a nationally representative sample of 2,001 UK adults. The data is weighted by age, gender, social grade and government office region.

Data availability and comparability
Due to the sample size, it is not possible to drill down to the national level. Not all of the questions were asked in each survey. Where possible we have used data drawn from the same survey waves.

KEY MESSAGES

- Awareness of the high level of abuse and neglect continues to be fairly strong with more than half of people describing them as 'common'.

- The actions that people most commonly agreed could be potential solutions to tackling child abuse and neglect were “removing children at risk of being abused from their families/carers” and “doing more to reduce poverty”.

- More than two thirds of the public agreed that “child abuse and neglect in the UK will always be around”. Around half of the public (52 per cent) agreed that “child abuse and neglect can be prevented in the UK”.

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Public awareness of the prevalence of child abuse and neglect in the UK

Tracker survey: Which of these best describes how prevalent you think child abuse and neglect is in the UK?

Public awareness of abuse and neglect is fairly strong. Our tracker survey showed that, in January 2016, 58 per cent of the public said that they thought that child abuse and neglect were common in the UK and 31 per cent thought that they were rare. The public’s awareness of the prevalence of child abuse and neglect has not significantly shifted since the September 2013 survey, when 64 per cent thought abuse and neglect in the UK were common and 29 per cent thought they were rare.

This question has been asked a total of six times, at irregular intervals, since the survey began in June 2013. All six sets of responses are shown here.

Solutions to tackle child abuse and neglect

Tracker survey: Which, if any, of the following statements do you think are potential solutions to tackling child abuse and neglect (multiple choice, up to 3)

Our tracker survey asks people about potential solutions to abuse and neglect. The solutions most often identified by people in the tracker survey were “removing children at risk of being abused from their families/carers” (31 per cent), followed by “doing more to reduce poverty” (29 per cent). Some solutions have been chosen more frequently over time. “Doing more to reduce poverty” has increased from 20 per cent to 29 per cent between September 2013 and October 2015. Other potential solutions are now less frequently chosen. In particular “More or better services to reduce substance abuse” was identified as a potential solution by 15 per cent of respondents in September 2013. This declined to 9 per cent by October 2015.

This question has been asked a total of five times since the survey began in June 2013. It was asked in the same survey as the question about having a personal impact on abuse and neglect (shown below) on three occasions. To increase comparability, it is responses on these three occasions that have been graphed here.
On the subject of child abuse and neglect prevention, in October 2015, around half of the public (52 per cent) agreed that ‘child abuse and neglect can be prevented in the UK’. Approximately one third (36 per cent) of the public agreed that they ‘can make a difference personally to prevent cruelty to children from happening’. Both of these proportions have remained fairly consistent since September 2013.

On ending child abuse and neglect entirely, slightly more than two thirds (68 per cent) of the public agreed that ‘child abuse and neglect in the UK will always be around’. Slightly fewer than one third (31 per cent) think that they ‘can make a difference personally in ending child cruelty in society’. Both of these proportions have remained fairly consistent since September 2013.

This question has been asked a total of five times since the survey began in June 2013. It was asked in the same survey as the question about potential solutions to tackle abuse and neglect (shown above) on three occasions. To increase comparability, it is responses on these three occasions that have been graphed here.
36% of the public agree that they “can make a difference personally in helping to prevent cruelty to children from happening”.
Glossary

Child in need (CIN)
A child in need is a child who is unlikely to have, or have the opportunity to have, a reasonable standard of health and development without any support provided by a public authority.

Child protection plan / Child protection register
Children subject to plans or on registers are deemed to be at risk of harm. Plans and registers record details regarding children where there are concerns about their safety. Despite a difference in terminology, plans and registers are roughly the same. In England a child may be subject to a child protection plan (CPP) if they are deemed to be at risk of on-going harm.

Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland have retained the use of child protection registers (CPR).

Child protection systems in the UK
Services to safeguard and protect children in the UK are underpinned by legislation, guidance and policies. As power is devolved within the UK, differences between the respective child protection systems have become increasingly pronounced. In comparing information about child abuse in each of the four nations, it is important to understand the different contexts in which the statistics have been compiled.

Each nation’s approach is founded on key pieces of child protection legislation about the welfare of children, covering support for children in need as well as children in need of protection. In England and Wales these are the Children Acts of 1989 and 2004; in Northern Ireland, the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 and Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland Act 2011; and in Scotland, the Children (Scotland) Act 1995.

England
Child protection in England is the overall responsibility of the Department for Education (DfE), which issues guidance to local authorities. The most recent guidance is Working together to safeguard children. England’s 148 Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) use this guidance to produce their own procedures that should be followed by practitioners and professionals who come into contact with children and their families in their local authority area. LSCBs are responsible for ensuring that the key agencies involved in safeguarding children work effectively together in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children at the local level. Their core membership is set out in the Children Act 2004, and includes local authorities, health bodies, the police and others.

Northern Ireland
Child protection in Northern Ireland is fully devolved to the Northern Ireland Executive and Northern Ireland Government departments, in particular to the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS).

The Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI) co-ordinates, and ensures the effectiveness of work to protect and promote the welfare of children. The board includes representatives from health, social care, the police, the probation board, youth justice, education, district councils and the NSPCC. The SBNI is responsible for developing policies and procedures to improve how different agencies work together.
DHSSPS guidance Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (2016) provides the overarching policy framework for safeguarding children and young people in Northern Ireland. This will be supplemented by regional policies and procedures being developed by the SBNI. Other child protection provisions can be found in the Sexual Offences (NI) Order 2008, Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007 and various departmental circulars and guidance documents.

Scotland

Child protection in Scotland is the responsibility of the Scottish Government. National interagency child protection guidance was published by the Scottish Government in 2014, providing a national framework for agencies and practitioners at a local level to work together to protect children. The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 places the Scottish Government’s broader Getting it Right for Every Child approach on a statutory footing. The Act places a range of duties on public authorities to promote and safeguard children’s wellbeing, including a Named Person for every child to act as a single point of contact for children and families, and a requirement to share relevant information about wellbeing concerns with the Named Person. These provisions are due to come into force in August 2016.

The child protection system in Scotland is unique within the UK in having a Children’s Hearing System. This is based upon the principles that there is no meaningful distinction between children for whom there are child protection concerns and children who have committed offences and, further, that families should be involved in the processes for determining intervention and support for children. Introduced by the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968, and reformed recently by the Children’s Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011, the system allows for decision-making to be made by a panel of lay persons, based upon the needs of the child.

In Scotland social work departments and the police have a statutory duty to investigate and take action to protect children, where there is reasonable cause to suggest they are suffering, or likely to suffer significant harm. However offence and care and protection cases must be referred to the Scottish Children’s Reporter Administration if compulsory measures of care are needed. Anyone, not just professionals, can make such a referral.

Scotland also has a national structure of local Child Protection Committees which are responsible for the strategic planning of local interagency child protection work. Although these have a similar remit to LSCBs in England, they do not have a statutory basis. They are the main network with whom the Scottish Government engages in developing child protection policy, with the Government convening national meetings of Chairs of Child Protection Committees. Joint inspection of child protection in Scotland was introduced by legislation in 2006 and covers education, social work, police, community social care and health services. It is carried out by a new unified independent body, Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (SCSWIS), known as the Care Inspectorate.

In February 2016, the Scottish Government announced a review of Child Protection, which will include consideration of Child Protection Committees; the Child Protection Register; leadership; inspection; and the 2011 Act reforms to the hearings system. This is due to report by the end of the year.

Wales

Child protection in Wales is the responsibility of the Welsh Government. The Children Acts 1989 and 2004 are the current legislative framework for child protection and safeguarding. The key guidance in Wales is Safeguarding children: working together under the Children Act 2004, which was issued by the Welsh Government in 2007.

The All Wales Child Protection Procedures provide processes that all professionals in Wales must follow and there are a series of All Wales Protocols that guide the work of all professionals in certain areas such as child sexual exploitation.

The National Assembly for Wales has primary law-making powers and social services were identified as a priority in the government’s legislative programme for 2011 to 2016. The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 has reformed social care legislation and repealed parts of the Children Acts since it was enacted in April 2016. The Act strengthens collaboration by placing duties on local government, health boards and other public bodies to improve the wellbeing of people and
place duties to provide preventative services and advice and assistance in order to reduce the demand on social services. The Act repeals Parts 3 and 4 of the Children Act 1989; this includes Section 17 Children in Need which is replaced by a duty to assess the needs of a child for care and support, meet eligible needs and consider providing preventative services or information, advice and assistance. The Act also is establishing six Safeguarding Children Boards (to replace the 22 LSCBs) in Wales and a National Independent Safeguarding Board. The Welsh Government has also consulted on regulations and codes of practice which supersede the current Working Together guidance. The guidance is currently being rewritten to take into account changes brought in by the Act.

**Community violence**

Exposure to community violence is determined by a series of questions which ask about a range of different violent or criminal acts the young person may have witnessed or been exposed to. Such as seeing another person being hit, having their home burgled or witnessing family or domestic violence.

**Contact sexual abuse**

For this definition, statutory contact sexual offences were restricted to: if under 18 and perpetrated in a position of trust; if under 16 and perpetrated by an adult relative; and under 13 and perpetrated by any other non-resident adult.

**International classification of diseases**

The International Classification of Diseases (ICD) is the standard tool used to classify causes of death. It provides World Health Organization (WHO) member states with a common language for reporting and monitoring causes of death between countries and over periods of time. All member states use the ICD, which has been translated into 43 languages.

**Intimate partner abuse**

Abuse that occurs within an intimate partner relationship. The duration of the relationship is varied, from one day to years. There is no age restriction for this type of abuse.

**Looked after children**

The term “looked after children and young people” is generally used to mean those looked after by the state. Each nation – England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales – has specific legislation that defines who is looked after. This includes those who are subject to a care order or temporarily classed as looked after on a planned basis for short breaks or respite care.

**Looked after at home with parent(s)**

In Scotland, where the child or young person is subject to a Supervision Requirement with the condition of residence at home with parent(s) or “relevant person(s)” as defined in Sec. 93(2)(b) of the Children’s (Scotland) Act 1995.

**Overall maltreatment**

Defined by the NSPCC Prevalence study as: all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power (Butchart et al. 2006: 9).

**Recorded offences**

Police record a crime if, on the balance of probabilities, the circumstances as reported amount to a crime defined by law and if there is no credible evidence to the contrary.

**Referral**

A referral is the first stage of the child protection process in all four nations. A referral will be made about children because some aspect of their life is giving cause for concern. Anyone who has concerns about the safety or welfare of a child can make a referral to statutory services. However it is worth noting that some referrals are for services (eg, disabled children) so not every referral is the first stage of the child protection process.

**Severe maltreatment**

A combination of screener questions from the NSPCC Prevalence study that are analysed together. This is a combination of subjective and objective questions. Only acts of maltreatment by adults are included. These acts include severe physical abuse, severe neglect and contact sexual abuse.

**Severe neglect**

This term is used to describe a combination of screener questions from the NSPCC Prevalence study that are analysed together. Only acts of violence perpetrated by parents or guardians are included. Acts of severe neglect include acts of medical and supervisory neglect that occurred with high lifetime frequency (more than six times in the young person's lifetime), resulted in some type of physical harm and acts which the young person felt amounted to “child neglect” or were of “criminal” nature. All neglect screener questions are adjusted for age-appropriate responses.

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2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., p.132
**Severe physical abuse**

This term is used to describe a combination of screener questions from the NSPCC Prevalence study that are analysed together. Only acts of violence perpetrated by adults are included. Acts of violence included were where a weapon which could potentially cause harm was used, resulted in an injury, had a high frequency (more than six times in the young person's lifetime), more than two types of physical violence perpetrated or if the young person felt the acts perpetrated upon them were "child abuse" or "criminal".

**Sexting**

Sexting is the exchange of sexual messages or self-generated sexual images or videos through mobile phones or the internet.

**URL**

URL is an acronym for Uniform Resource Locator and is the address of a website.
References for Section 1: Overview

3. Ibid
10. HC Deb 5 February 2016. 24716W
16. Press statement by Stephen Dalton, Chief Executive of the Mental Health Network (21/04/2016) in response to the National Audit Office report on improving access to mental health services

References for Section 2: Measuring section
