

Annual Review on the Adequacy of Child Care and Family Support Services Available - 2022

Referrals to Child Protection & Welfare Services

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- 82,855 referrals in 2022, 13% (9,786) more than 2021. Increasing trend
- 7 referrals for every 100 children living in Ireland¹
- 56% (46,031) welfare concerns, 36% (29,596) child protection concerns, 9% (7,228) not recorded²
- 2 in 5 referrals from gardaí – most common source of referrals

Child protection & welfare cases open to social work

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- 22,033 open cases at year end³
- <2% of the child population being assessed or in receipt of a social work service
- 72% (15,920) of cases allocated to a named social worker
- 6,113 (28%) cases awaiting allocation, 1,306 (27%) more than 2021
- <1 in 10 (391) cases awaiting allocation high priority
- 58% (3,537) of cases awaiting allocation were “active on duty”⁴

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Children “active” on the CPNS

- 845 children “active” on the CPNS – Child Protection Notification System at year end; 138 (14%) fewer than 2021
- 85% (715) of children “active” were active for no longer than 12 months



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National Out of Hours Service

4,245 referrals to the National Out of Hours Service, 1,527 (56%) more than 2021. Increasing trend

First time admissions to care

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- 666 children came into care for the first-time in 2022, 28 (4%) fewer than 2021 (694)⁵
- Equivalent to about 6/10,000 children living in Ireland

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Total admissions to care⁹

- 813 admissions to care in 2022; 51 (6%) fewer than 2021 (864)⁵
- 22% (175) of admissions were 15-17 years
- 43% (346) of admissions were under a court order; 57% (467) were voluntary (agreement with parents/guardians)
- 82% (669) of admissions were to foster care, 6% (47) to residential care, 12% (97) to “Other” care placements⁶

Children in care

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- 5,755 children in care at year end, 108 (2%) fewer than 2021. Decreasing trend
- Equivalent to about 5/1,000 children living in Ireland
- 89% (5,109) of children were in foster care, 8% (439) in residential care and 4% (207) in “Other” care placements⁶
- 80% (4,480) were under a court order, 20% (1,146) were voluntary (agreement with parents/guardians)⁵
- 15% (873) of children in care were with private providers, 88 (11%) more than 2021. Increasing trend.
- 94% of children 6-15 years and 90% of 16-17 year olds were in full-time education (in accordance with their care plan)⁵

Discharges from care¹⁰

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- 873 discharges from care in 2022, 64 (7%) fewer than 2021⁵
- 49% (425) of discharges were young people turning 18 years
- 65% (277) of young people turning 18 years remained with their foster family, about one in six (67; 16%) moved to independent/supported living.

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Aftercare

- 2,949 young people in receipt of aftercare services at year end, 110 (4%) fewer than 2021
- 74% (1,676/2,254) of 18-22 year olds in receipt of aftercare services were in education/accredited training
- 96% (2,174) of 18-22 year olds in receipt of aftercare services had an aftercare plan
- 82% (1,933) of those assessed as needing an aftercare worker had one

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Foster carers

- 3,967 foster carers on the panel of approved foster carers at year end, 72 (2%) fewer than 2021
- 182 general and relative foster carers approved in 2022
- 87% (2,943) of general & relative foster carers had a link (social) worker at year end

Family Support Services

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Adoption Services

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- At least 184 applications for assessment as adoptive parents in 2022, 199 applications in 2021⁷
- At least 181 new children referred for adoption in 2022, 208 children referred in 2021⁷
- 154 adoption assessments presented to local adoption committees in 2022, 16 (9%) fewer than 2021 (170)⁷. Local adoption committees make a recommendation to the Adoption Authority of Ireland.

- At least 40,510 children referred to family support services in 2022; 18,768 children in receipt of family support service at year end⁸
- Equivalent to about 3% of children living in Ireland
- 66% (26,792) of children referred in 2022, received a service
- 2,320 Meitheal processes requested in 2022, 53 (2%) than 2021
- 79% (1,837) of Meitheal processes requested in 2022 proceeded to Stage 2 (discussion stage – the Meitheal is considered to be initiated at this point).

¹ More than one referral can be received for a child.
² Percentages not totalling 100% due to rounding. Fractions of 0.5 and above are rounded up while fractions below 0.5 are rounded down.
³ Open cases include all children going through the preliminary enquiry/assessment process, children requiring social work support including children in care.
⁴ Active on duty means cases being progressed by dedicated duty teams or rotating social workers on a duty roster e.g., children being visited, initial assessments being completed, child in care reviews taking place.
⁵ Children under the Service for Separated Children Seeking International Protection not included in figures.
⁶ “Other” includes children in supported lodgings, in a disability unit, drugs and alcohol rehabilitation centre, special emergency arrangements detention centre etc.
⁷ Data for 2022 partial – data from one service not available for Q4 2022.
⁸ Based on a response rate of 84%.
⁹ Data is a count of admissions and not individual children; a child can have more than one admission in a reporting period.
¹⁰ Data is a count of discharges and not individual children; a child can have more than one discharge in a reporting period.