

Annual Review on the Adequacy of Child Care and Family Support Services Available - 2024

Referrals to Child Protection & Welfare Services

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- 96,666 referrals in 2024, 5% (4,742) more than 2023¹. Increasing trend
- 8 referrals for every 100 children living in Ireland
- 61% (58,695) welfare concerns, 39% (37,427) child protection concerns, <1% (544) concern not recorded
- 1 in 3 referrals from gardaí – most common source of referrals

Cases Open to Social Work

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- 22,839 cases open at year end²
- <2% of the child population being assessed or in receipt of a social work service
- 75% (17,049) of cases allocated to a case worker
- 5,790 (25%) cases awaiting allocation, 459 (9%) more than 2023
- <1 in 10 (523) cases awaiting allocation high priority
- 32% (1,842) of cases awaiting allocation were 'active on duty'³

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Children 'active' on the CPNS

- 1,037 children 'active' on the CPNS – Child Protection Notification System at year end; 75 (8%) more than 2023
- 83% (864) of children 'active' were 'active' for no longer than 12 months



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Total admissions to care⁴

- 916 admissions to care in 2024; 24 (3%) more than 2022 (892)⁵
- 15% (138) of admissions were 15-17 years
- 55% (505) of admissions were under a court order; 45% (411) were voluntary (agreement with parents/guardians)
- 79% (723) of admissions were to foster care, 4% (38) to residential care, 17% (155) to 'other' care placements⁶

First time admissions to care⁴

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- 604 children came into care for the first-time in 2024, 30 (5%) fewer than 2023
- Equivalent to about 5/10,000 children living in Ireland

Discharges from care⁴

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- 837 discharges from care in 2024, 47 (5%) fewer than 2023⁷
- 52% (439) of discharges were young people turning 18 years
- 66% (289) of young people turning 18 years remained with their foster family, about one in seven (66; 15%) moved to independent/supported living

Children in care⁴

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- 5,705 children in care at year end, 90 (2%) more than 2023
- Equivalent to about 5/1,000 children living in Ireland
- 89% (5,057) of children were in foster care, 8% (457) in residential care and 3% (191) in 'other' care placements⁶
- 85% (4,848) were under a court order, 15% (857) were voluntary (agreement with parents/guardians)
- 17% (943) of children in care were with private providers, 115 (14%) more than 2023. Increasing trend.
- 96% of children 6-15 years and 93% of 16-17 year olds were in full-time education (in accordance with their care plan)

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Foster carers

- 3,809 foster carers on the panel of approved foster carers at year end, 47 (1%) fewer than 2023
- 211 general and relative foster carers approved in 2024, 38 (22%) more than 2023
- 94% (2,957) of general and relative foster carers had a link (social) worker at year end

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Aftercare

- 2,935 young people in receipt of aftercare services at year end, 31 (1%) more than 2023
- 78% (1,721/2,196) of 18-22 year olds in receipt of aftercare services were in education/accredited training
- 96% (2,106) of 18-22 year olds in receipt of aftercare services had an aftercare plan
- 88% (1,998) of those assessed as needing an aftercare worker had one

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Family Support Services



- At least 48,443 children referred to family support services in 2024⁸; 19,413 children in receipt of family support service at year end⁹
- Equivalent to about 4% of children living in Ireland referred
- 68% (32,989) of children referred in 2024, received a service
- 2,687 Meitheal processes requested in 2024, 195 (8%) than 2023
- 114 Child and Family Support Networks (CFSN) in place at year end¹⁰

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Adoption Services

- 182 applications for assessment as adoptive parents in 2024, 48 (21%) fewer than 2023
- 197 new children referred for adoption in 2024, 33 (14%), fewer than 2023
- 169 adoption assessments presented to local adoption committees in 2024, 7 (4%) fewer than 2023. Local adoption committees make a recommendation to the Adoption Authority of Ireland.

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Service for Separated Children Seeking International Protection (SCSIP)

- 619 referrals to Service for SCSIP in 2024, 89 (17%) more than 2023
- 570 children admitted to care /accommodated in 2024, 138 (32%) more than 2023
- 451 children in care /being accommodated at year end, 121 (37%) more than 2023

¹ More than one referral can be received for a child.

² Open cases include all children going through the preliminary enquiry/assessment process, children requiring social work support including children in care.

³ 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.

⁴ Separated Children Seeking International Protection not included in figures.

⁵ Data is a count of admissions and not individual children; a child can have more than one admission in a reporting period.

⁶ 'Other' includes supported lodgings, disability unit, drugs and alcohol rehabilitation centre, special emergency arrangements, detention centre etc.

⁷ Data is a count of discharges and not individual children; a child can have more than one discharge in a reporting period.

⁸ Based on a response rate of 89%.

⁹ Based on a response rate of 93%.

¹⁰ CFSN are collaborative networks of community, voluntary and statutory providers intended to improve access to support services for children and their families.