

Annual Review on the Adequacy of Child Care and Family Support Services Available - 2025

Referrals to Child Protection & Welfare Services

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- **106,444** referrals in **2025**, **10% (9,778)** more than **2024**¹. Increasing trend.
- **5** referrals for every **100** children living in Ireland.
- **56% (59,098)** welfare concerns, **44%(46,365)** child protection concerns, **<1% (981)** concern not recorded
- **1** in **3** referrals from gardaí - most common source of referrals

Cases Open to Social Work

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- **23,612** cases open at year end²
- **1 in 50** children in Ireland being assessed or in receipt of a social work service
- **77% (18,214)** of cases allocated to a case worker
- **5,398 (23%)** cases awaiting allocation, **392 (7%)** fewer than **2024**
- **<1 in 10 (232)** cases awaiting allocation high priority
- **49% (2,665)** of cases awaiting allocation were 'active on duty'³

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Children 'active' on the CPNS

- **1,173** children 'active' on the CPNS - Child Protection Notification System at year end; **136 (13%)** more than **2024**
- **80% (938)** of children 'active' were 'active' for no longer than **12** months



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Total admissions to care⁴

- **901** admissions to care in **2025**; **15 (2%)** fewer than **2024 (916)**⁵
- **19% (170)** of admissions were **15-17** years
- **53% (482)** of admissions were under a court order; **47% (419)** were voluntary (agreement with parents/guardians)
- **74% (664)** of admissions were to foster care, **5% (45)** to residential care, **21% (192)** to 'other' care placements⁶

First time admissions to care⁴

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- **577** children came into care for the first-time in **2025**, **27 (4%)** fewer than **2024**
- Equivalent to about **5/10,000** children living in Ireland

Discharges from care⁴

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- **844** discharges from care in **2025**, **7 (<1%)** more than **2024**⁷
- **51% (432)** of discharges were young people turning **18** years
- **62% (267)** of young people turning **18** years remained with their foster family, about one in five (**87; 20%**) moved to independent/supported living

Children in care⁴

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- **5,729** children in care at year end, **24 (<1%)** more than **2024**
- Equivalent to about **5/1,000** children living in Ireland
- **88% (5,042)** of children were in foster care, **8% (484)** in residential care and **4% (203)** in 'other' care placements⁶
- **87% (4,983)** were under a court order, **13% (746)** were voluntary (agreement with parents/guardians)
- **18% (1,013)** of children in care were with private providers, **70 (7%)** more than **2024**. Increasing trend.
- **95%** 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

- **3,782** foster carers on the panel of approved foster carers at year end, **27 (<1%)** fewer than **2024**
- **223** general and relative foster carers approved in **2025**, **12 (6%)** more than **2024**
- **92% (2,862)** of general and relative foster carers had a link (social) worker at year end

Family Support Services

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- At least **50,571** children referred to family support services in **2025**⁸; **21,391** children in receipt of family support service at year end⁹
- Equivalent to about **4%** of children living in Ireland referred
- **69% (34,891)** of children referred in **2025**, received a service
- **2,667** Meitheal processes requested in **2025**, **20 (<1%)** fewer than **2024**
- **114** Child and Family Support Networks (CFSN) in place at year end¹⁰

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Aftercare

- **2,985** young people in receipt of aftercare services at year end, **50 (2%)** more than **2024**
- **81% (1,787/2,214)** of **18-22** year olds in receipt of aftercare services were in education/accredited training
- **95% (2,093)** of **18-22** year olds in receipt of aftercare services had an aftercare plan
- **90% (1,756)** of those assessed as needing an aftercare worker had one

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Adoption Services

- **314** applications for assessment as adoptive parents in **2025**, **132 (73%)** more than **2024**
- **291** new children referred for adoption in **2025**, **94 (48%)**, more than **2024**
- **181** adoption assessments presented to local adoption committees in **2025**, **12 (5%)** more than **2024**. Local adoption committees make a recommendation to the Adoption Authority of Ireland.

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Service for Separated Children Seeking International Protection (SCSIP)

- **768** referrals to Service for SCSIP in **2025**, **149 (24%)** more than **2024**
- **747** children admitted to care /accommodated in **2025**, **177 (31%)** more than **2024**
- **600** children in care /being accommodated at year end, **149 (33%)** more than **2024**

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 88%.

⁹ Based on a response rate of 90%.

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