



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

STATISTICS, DOCUMENT

Children Receiving Care and Support Census: on 31 March 2022 (official statistics in development)

An annual statistical release presenting figures about children receiving care and support from Welsh local authorities.

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Introduction

The number of children receiving care and support includes only those children (aged under 18) who had a care and support plan in place for three months or more at the census date of 31 March, i.e. the care and support plan was in place on or before 1 January 2022 and remained in place on 31 March 2022.

This includes children with a care and support plan who are:

- supported in their families or independently
- looked after and in the care of or accommodated by a local authority
- on the child protection register (CPR) and are subjects of an inter-agency protection plan

These children may also have a support plan if they are providing care to someone else and may be in the secure estate (i.e. youth detention accommodation, prison or bail accommodation).

Children who were looked after and on the child protection register are counted as children looked after for the purposes of this release.

New data is based on the position on 31 March 2022.

Data included in this release and [further information for individual local authorities is published on StatsWales](#).

Main points

- 17,189 children were receiving care and support on 31 March 2022, an increase of 179 (1%) compared with the previous year. Which is equivalent to 278.9 children per 10,000 children aged under 18 years.

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- The overall number and rate of children receiving care and support included in the Children Receiving Care and Support (CRCS) Census has increased steadily each year since data began being collected on 31 March 2017.
- 6,972 children were looked after by a local authority and 2,339 children were on the child protection register (CPR). There were 139 children who were looked after and on the child protection register (included in the children looked after total). The remaining 7,878 children were not looked after and not on the CPR.
- Risk of, or actual, abuse or neglect was the most common reason why children had started receiving care and support and was the main reason for 51% of children receiving care and support.
- Parental mental ill health was the most commonly recorded parenting capacity factor and was present for 43% of children receiving care and support.
- For children receiving care and support matching to the National Pupil Database aged 5-15 years old, 55% were entitled to free school meals and 54% had additional learning needs or special educational needs. These proportions were higher than for all pupils of statutory school age (23% and 18% respectively).
- 42% of children receiving care and support, matching to the National Pupil Database aged 13 or 14 years old, achieved the Core Subject Indicator at Key Stage 3 compared to 78% of all pupils in Wales.

Number of children receiving care and support

In order to have a care and support plan, children will have had an assessment of their care and support needs. The assessment will have concluded that the child's needs can only be met through a care and support plan.

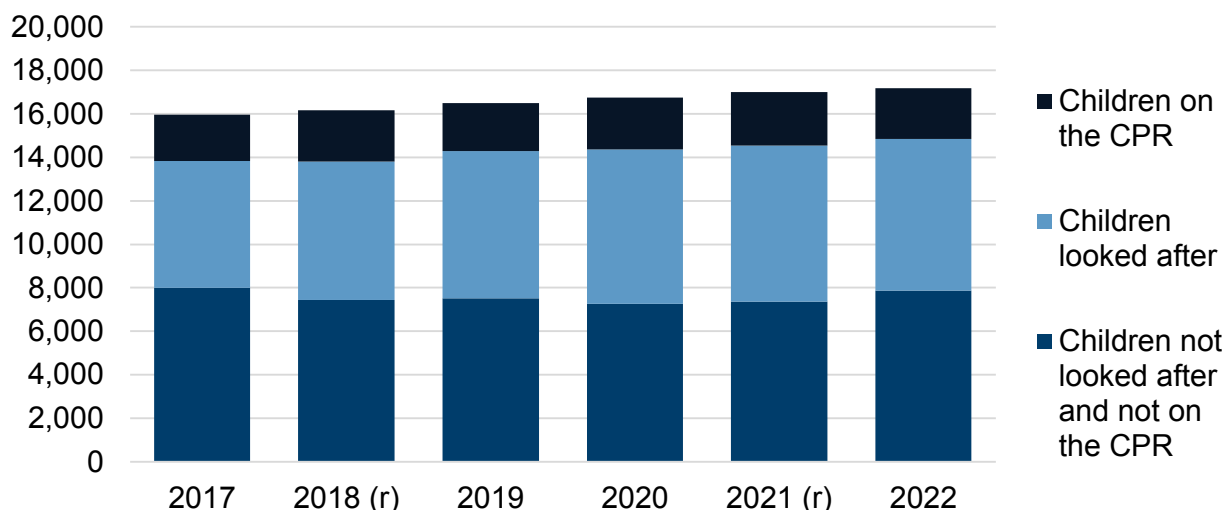
Figure 1: Children receiving care and support on 31

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March, 2017 to 2022



Description of Figure 1: Stacked bar chart showing that the number of children receiving care and support has increased steadily since 2017 when data began being collected.

Source: Children receiving care and support census, Welsh Government

Children receiving care and support by local authority and looked after status on StatsWales

[r] Data has been revised since previously published.

The number of children receiving care and support has been on an upward trend and increased year-on-year since 2017. The rate per 10,000 children aged under 18 receiving care and support has also increased each year and was 278.9 on 31 March 2022. See [quality and methodology information](#) for data quality statement for population data.

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Nearly half (46%) of children receiving care and support were neither looked after nor on the child protection register in 2022. This proportion initially decreased from 2017 but increased from 43% in 2021. Whilst the proportion of children receiving care and support who were looked after increased each year between 2017 and 2020 but decreased in 2022.

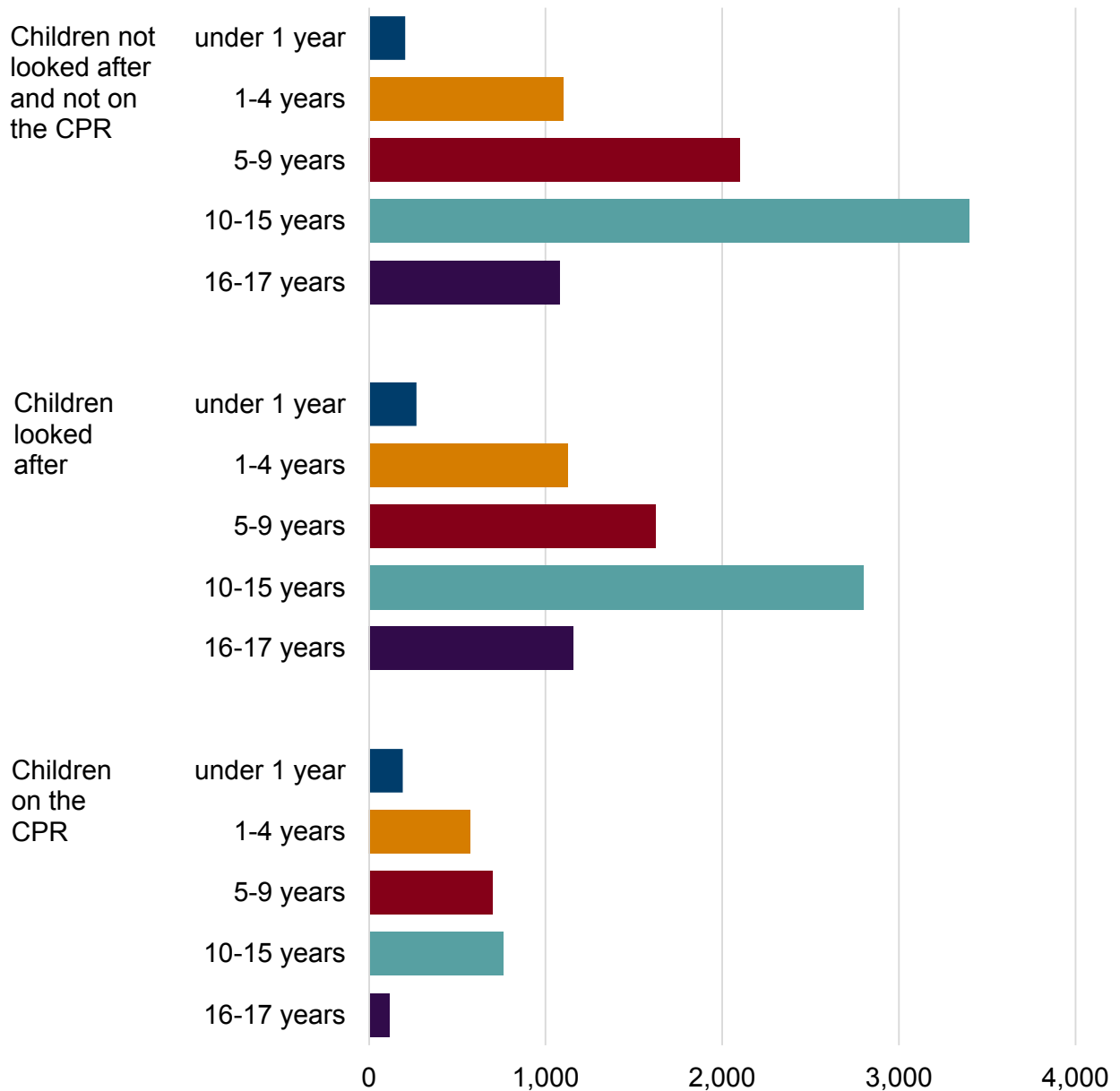
The proportion of children on the child protection register has remained at about 14% since 2017. For those children on the child protection register on 31 March 2022, the majority had been added to the register under the emotional abuse category.

Characteristics of children receiving care and support

Information is collected that describes the characteristics of children receiving care and support.

Age

Figure 2: Children receiving care and support by age, 31 March 2022



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Description of Figure 2: Bar chart showing that most children receiving care and support on 31 March 2022 were aged between 10 and 15 years old.

Source: Children receiving care and support census, Welsh Government

Children receiving care and support by local authority and age group on StatsWales

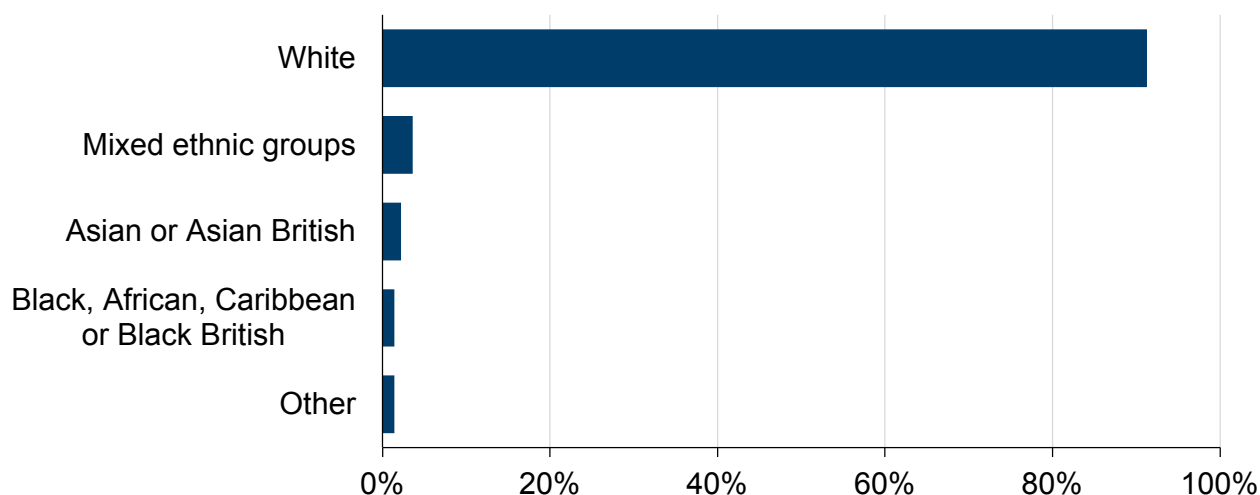
20% of all children receiving care and support were aged under 5 years old, 26% were aged 5 to 9 years old, 40% were aged 10 to 15 years and 14% of children receiving care and support were aged 16 years or older on 31 March 2022.

The proportion of children receiving care and support aged 1 to 4 years old has decreased since 2017 (from 19% to 16%). Whilst the proportion of children receiving care and support aged 11 to 15 years old has increased over the same time (from 36% to 40%). Proportions for other age groups have stayed about the same.

Children receiving care and support who were on the child protection register were generally younger than other children receiving care and support. Children looked after and children not looked after or on the child protection register were generally older.

Ethnicity

Figure 3: Children receiving care and support by ethnic group, 31 March 2022 [Note 1]



Description of Figure 3: Bar chart showing where ethnicity was recorded, 91% of children receiving care and support on 31 March 2022 were White.

Source: Children receiving care and support census, Welsh Government

Children receiving care and support by ethnicity and looked after status on StatsWales

[Note 1] Children with missing data or ethnic group not stated are not included. In 2022, there were 1,489 children (9%) with missing or unknown ethnic group data.

On 31 March 2022, where ethnicity was recorded, 91% of children receiving care and support were from a White ethnic group. 4% of children were from a mixed ethnic group, 2% were from an Asian or Asian British ethnic group, 1%

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were from a Black, African, Caribbean or Black British ethnic group and 1% were from other ethnic groups. The proportions for all ethnic groups were similar compared to the previous year.

Nearly half (49%) of children receiving care and support from mixed ethnic groups were looked after compared to two-fifths (39%) of children from other ethnic groups not stated above. A smaller proportion of children who were Black, African, Caribbean or Black British were on the child protection register and a higher proportion were not looked after and not on the child protection register compared to other ethnic groups.

A higher proportion of children receiving care and support were from a White ethnic group compared to the general population aged under 18 years old according to the **Census 2021 (ONS)** (91% compared to 90%). Whilst the proportion of children receiving care and support from an Asian or Asian British ethnic group was lower compared to the general population (2% compared to 4%).

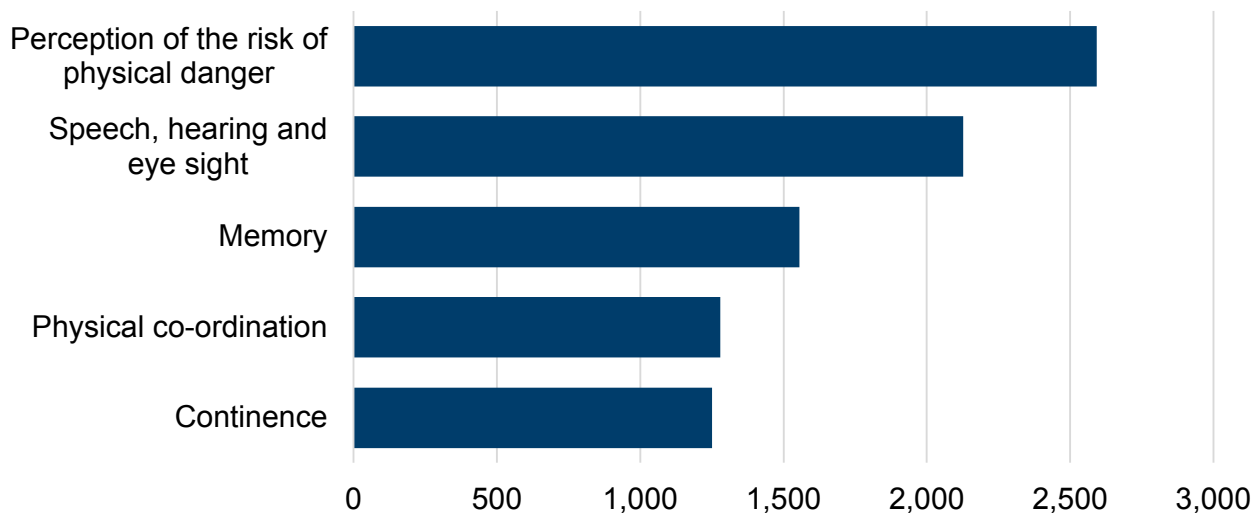
Disability

22% of children receiving care and support were disabled; where the child had a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities on 31 March 2022. This proportion has been broadly stable in recent years. Over a third (37%) of children not looked after and not on the child protection register had a disability, compared to 10% of children looked after and 5% of children on the child protection register.

The percentage of disabled children receiving care and support was much higher than that for children in the general population, where 3% of the general population aged under 18 years old stated they had a long-term health problem or disability that limits their day-to-day activities a lot (according to the **Census**

2021 (ONS)).

Figure 4: Top 5 impairment categories reported for children receiving care and support, 31 March 2022



Description of Figure 4: Bar chart showing that perception of the risk of physical danger was the most commonly reported category of impairment for children receiving care and support on 31 March 2022.

Source: Children receiving care and support census, Welsh Government

Disabilities of children receiving care and support by measure and year on StatsWales

Lack of perception of the risk of physical danger was recorded as a specific category of impairment for almost three-quarters (70%) of all disabled children. Whilst almost two-fifths (57%) of disabled children were recorded as having a speech, hearing or eyesight impairment. For those children who were reported as having specified categories of impairments, only one category was recorded for 28% of children whilst all eight categories were recorded for 8% of children.

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Gender

55% of children receiving care and support were male and 45% were female on 31 March 2022. These proportions have been stable since data was first collected in 2017. See [quality and methodology information](#) for data quality statement for gender data.

Asylum seeking children

Less than 1% of children receiving care and support were an asylum seeking child on 31 March 2022; most of whom were unaccompanied and not members of asylum seeking families and were looked after. More males than females were asylum seeking children as in previous years.

Language

Information on the child's preferred language was recorded for all but three children aged 3 and over on 31 March 2022. English was the preferred language for 93% of children, followed by Welsh (3%). This is a similar pattern to previous years.

Need for care and support

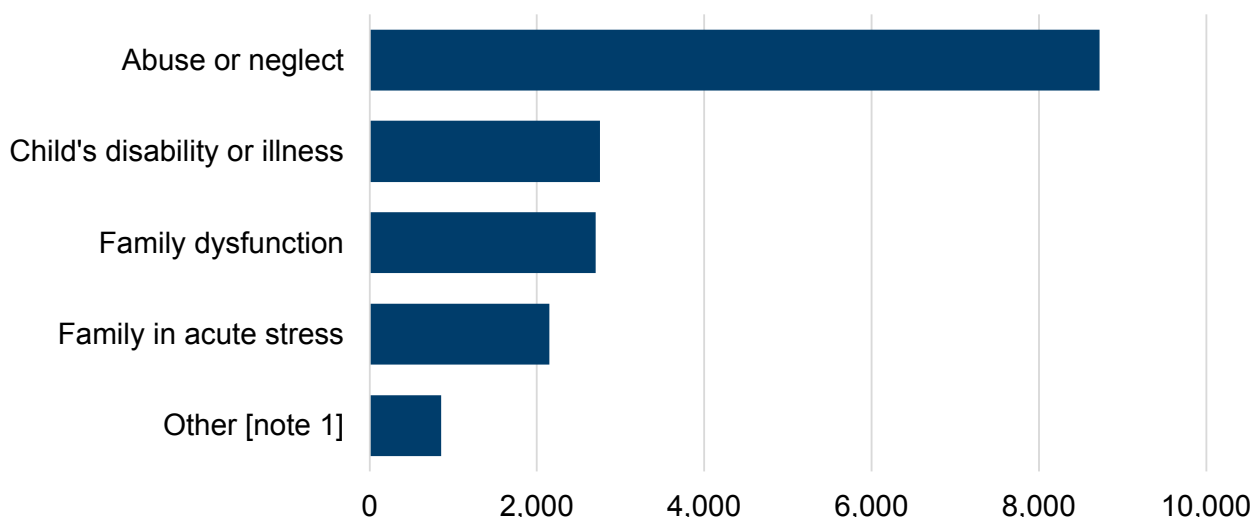
As part of a child's assessment, their needs for care and support are identified. If a child's assessment leads to the provision of a care and support plan, the main reason why a child started to receive care and support from local authority social services is recorded.

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Figure 5: Children receiving care and support by need for care and support, 31 March 2022 [Note 1]



Description of Figure 5: Bar chart showing that most children receiving care and support on 31 March 2022 had started to receive care and support because of the risk of, or actual, abuse or neglect.

Source: Children receiving care and support census, Welsh Government

Children receiving care and support by local authority and category of need on StatsWales

[Note 1] Other categories of need are socially unacceptable behaviour, parental disability or illness, absent parenting and adoption disruption. A full breakdown is available on StatsWales.

Just over half (51%) of all children receiving care and support on 31 March 2022 started to do so because of the risk of, or actual, abuse or neglect. This has been the most common category of need since data began being collected in 2017 but is a slightly lower proportion than in 2021 (52%). The proportion was

higher for children who were looked after or on the child protection register (65% and 59% respectively) compared to children who were not looked after and not on the child protection register (35%). This also varied by age with the highest proportion of children starting to receive care and support because of abuse or neglect in the under 1 year old age group; this decreased by age.

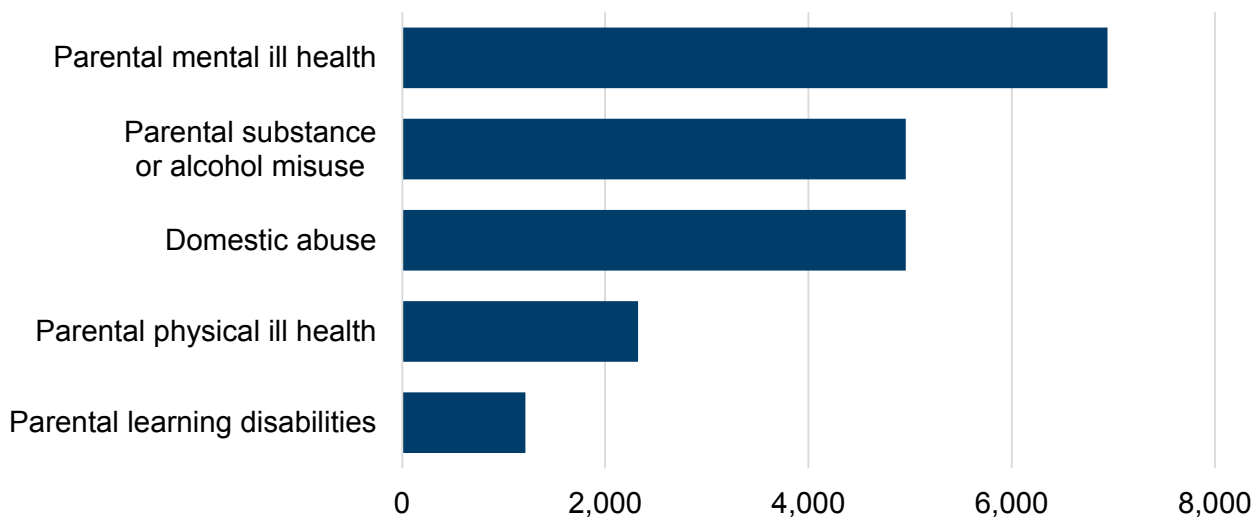
The child's disability or illness was the primary reason for starting to receive care and support for 16% of children receiving care and support. This varied by age with the lowest proportion of children starting to receive care and support because of disability or illness in the under 1 year old age group; this increased by age. Overall, 86% of children starting to receive care and support due to disability or illness were neither looked after nor on the child protection register; this has decreased from around 92% in previous years.

Family dysfunction was also the reason for 16% of children starting to receive care and support, followed by family in acute stress for 12% of children. Socially unacceptable behaviour, parental disability or illness, absent parenting and adoption disruption were much less common reasons. These proportions have remained fairly stable since 2017.

Parenting factors

Information was recorded on five factors related to the child's parents that might affect their ability to parent. These factors may have been present at the referral stage or may have arisen since referral. One or more factors may have been recorded for each child and so children may be counted under more than one factor.

Figure 6: Children receiving care and support by parental factors recorded, 31 March 2022



Description of Figure 6: Bar chart showing that parental mental ill health was the most commonly recorded parenting capacity factor present for children receiving care and support for whom information was provided on 31 March 2022.

Source: Children receiving care and support census, Welsh Government

Parental factors of children receiving care and support by measure and year on StatsWales

60% of children receiving care and support for whom information was available had at least one parenting capacity factor recorded as being present on 31 March 2022. The percentages of children with parenting capacity factors recorded as present in 2022 were similar to 2021 and higher than for previous years.

Parental mental ill health was the most frequently recorded parenting capacity factor. It was reported for 43% of children for whom information was provided, a

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significant increase from 29% in 2017. This was followed by parental substance or alcohol misuse and domestic abuse which were both reported for 31% of children for whom information was provided in March 2022.

Parental physical ill health was recorded for 15% of children receiving care and support; just over half (51%) of these children were neither looked after nor on the child protection register. Parental learning disabilities was recorded for 8% of children receiving care and support. A higher proportion of children looked after reported parental learning disabilities as a factor present than those not looked after, as in previous years.

The proportion of children reporting parental factors present was lower for those not looked after and not on the child protection register for each factor except for parental physical ill health.

Health

Information was collected on mental health and substance misuse, and also on how up to date children in the relevant age groups were with health surveillance checks, dental checks and immunisations.

Mental health

Mental health data was collected for children aged 10 years old and over. For those children where information was available, 18% were recorded as having a mental health problem on 31 March 2022. This is up slightly from 17% in the previous year.

A higher proportion of 16 to 17 year olds (25%) were reported as having a mental health problem than those aged 10 to 15 years old (16%). A higher

proportion of children receiving care and support who were not looked after and not on the child protection register were reported as having a mental health problem (20%) than those either looked after or on the child protection register (17%).

49% of children receiving care and support with a mental health problem had parental mental ill health recorded as a present factor, compared to 38% for all children aged 10 and over in the CRCS Census.

Substance misuse

Substance misuse data was collected for children aged 10 years old and over. For those children where information was available, 7% were recorded as having a substance misuse problem on 31 March 2022. This is a similar proportion to the previous year.

A higher proportion of 16 to 17 year olds (15%) were reported as having a substance misuse problem than those aged 10 to 15 years old (5%). A higher proportion of children on the child protection register (9%) were reported as having a substance misuse problem than those looked after or not looked after and not on the child protection register (7%).

36% of children receiving care and support with a substance misuse problem had parental substance or alcohol misuse recorded as a present factor, compared to 25% for all children aged 10 and over in the CRCS Census. 43% of children receiving care and support with a substance misuse problem had parental mental ill health recorded as a present factor.

Health checks

Health checks data was collected for children aged 5 years old or younger. For

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those children where information was available, 92% were up to date with health surveillance checks on 31 March 2022; this proportion has increased from 80% in 2017. The proportion of children looked after who were up to date with health checks (95%) was higher than for other children on the child protection register or otherwise not looked after (86% and 92% respectively).

Dental checks

Dental checks data was collected for children aged 5 years old and over. For those children where information was available, 68% were up to date with dental checks on 31 March 2022; this proportion has decreased from a peak of 87% in 2019. The proportion of children looked after who were up to date with dental checks (71%) was higher than for other children on the child protection register or otherwise not looked after (55% and 67% respectively).

Immunisations

For all children where information was provided, 93% per cent were up to date with immunisations on 31 March 2022; this is a similar proportion to the previous two years and much higher than prior to 2020 (when it was about 83%). The proportion of children on the child protection register who were up to date with immunisations (87%) was lower than for children looked after or not looked after and not on the child protection register (94% and 93% respectively).

Autistic Spectrum Disorder

Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD) were reported for 12% of children receiving care and support on 31 March 2022, a similar proportion to previous years. Over three-quarters (77%) of the children recorded as having an ASD were boys.

Of those children aged 5 to 15 years receiving care and support on 31 March 2022, 14% were reported as having an ASD. This compares to 2% for all pupils aged 5 to 15 years in Wales (according to the February 2022 [Pupil Level Annual Schools Census](#) (StatsWales)).

Education

The Unique Pupil Number (UPN) is collected for children receiving care and support and allows for anonymous matching of children in the relevant age groups with the National Pupil Database (NPD) so that educational records can be summarised without having to collect this information from local authorities. Throughout this section of the release pupils' ages are quoted as at 31 August 2021. See [quality and methodology information](#) for data quality statement on education data.

Free school meals

Pupils are eligible for free school meals if their families are in receipt of certain benefits/support payments.

55% of children receiving care and support aged 5 to 15 years old who matched to the NPD were eligible for free school meals. This differed between children receiving care and support who were looked after (42%) and children who were not looked after (63%). A higher proportion of children not looked after but on the child protection register were eligible for free school meals compared to children not looked after and not on the child protection register. These proportions have increased in recent years.

This compares to 23% of pupils of statutory school age known to be eligible for free school meals at February 2022. Further information and [statistics on](#)

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[pupils in Wales entitled to free school meals can be found on StatsWales](#) and [Schools Census Results](#) statistical releases.

Additional learning needs and special educational needs

A child has special needs if they have difficulties which require special educational provision to be made for them. Pupils with special educational needs may have Statements issued by the local authority or may have their needs identified by the school (under either School Action or School Action Plus). From 1 September 2021 learners may have Individual Development Plans maintained by the school or the local authority.

54% of children receiving care and support aged 5 to 15 years old who matched to the NDP had additional learning needs or special educational needs. This differed between children receiving care and support who were looked after (46%) and children who were not looked after (59%). A higher proportion of children not looked after and not on the child protection register had additional learning needs or special educational needs compared to children not looked after but on the child protection register. These proportions have decreased in recent years. [Further breakdowns by type of provision can be found on StatsWales](#).

This compares to 18% of pupils of statutory school age known to have additional learning needs or special educational needs at February 2022. [Further information and statistics on pupils in Wales with additional learning needs or special educational needs can be found on StatsWales](#) and [Schools Census Results](#) statistical releases.

Attainment at Key Stage 3

The Core Subject Indicator (CSI) at Key Stage 3 represents the percentage of

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pupils achieving Level 5 or above, based on teacher assessments, in English or Welsh (first language), Mathematics and Science in combination at the end of Key Stage 3, aged 14.

42% of children receiving care and support aged 13 or 14 years old who matched to the NDP had achieved the CSI at Key Stage 3. This differed between children receiving care and support who were looked after (49%) and children who were not looked after (36%). A slightly higher proportion of children not looked after and not on the child protection register achieved CSI at Key Stage 3 compared to children not looked after but on the child protection register.

This compares to 78% of all pupils in Wales in 2022. A higher proportion of girls than boys achieved CSI at Key Stage 3 for both children receiving care and support and all pupils in Wales. [Further information and statistics on achievement pupils in Wales at Key Stage 3 can be found on StatsWales](#) and [Academic achievement of pupils](#) statistical releases.

Quality and methodology information

From 2016-17 individual level data in relation to children receiving care and support has been collected through the [Children receiving care and support census](#).

The collection captures children with a care and support plan as detailed in the [Social Services and Well-being \(Wales\) Act 2014 \(UK legislation\)](#). The [data collection guidance document](#) provides explanations of the data items and response categories captured within the data collection.

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Population estimates

The rate of children receiving care and support per 10,000 population aged under 18 has been calculated based on the rebased 2021 mid-year estimates provided by ONS. Children receiving care and support rates for 2017 to 2020 will be revised following publication of rebased mid-year estimates.

Gender

For transgender children, their gender identity at the present time is recorded. Non-binary will be included as a category for the 2023-24 data collection.

Education

The Unique Pupil Number (UPN) allows for anonymous matching of children receiving care and support in the relevant age groups with the National Pupil Database (NPD). Records about free school meals eligibility, special educational needs and attainment can be summarised for children receiving care and support without having to collect this information from local authorities. Overall 82% of children receiving care and support with UPN recorded were matched to the NPD. The UPN was missing for 16% of children on 31 March 2022.

Analysis on education is based upon children of statutory school age, i.e. who were already five or over at the time of the CRCS Census but had not yet reached their 16th birthday at the end of the 2021/22 school year. This removes the effect of differing local provision for the under fives and sixth forms. Using this statutory school age there were 10,277 children receiving care and support whose UPN matched with the education databases (89% match rate).

Pupils' ages are quoted as at 31 August 2021. This refers to the start of the

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academic year and is a useful reference in that pupils normally transfer from maintained primary to secondary school, and move thereafter through the secondary school system, according to their age at 31 August.

Revisions

Minor revisions have been made as part of processing the 2022 data which have been agreed by local authorities. This affected data for 2021 and 2018. Revisions made to previous years' data are labelled with a "r".

Statistical designation

These statistics are published as official statistics in development. More information on the designation of these statistics can be found in the [correspondence between the Welsh Government and the Office for Statistical Regulation](#).

Data collection requirements for the Children receiving care and support census have recently been reviewed and refreshed data requirements have been issued for the 2023-24 reporting year. From 2023-24 the census will be a full-year collection. Section 1, Core Details, is completed for all children who have a care and support plan at any point in the financial year. Section 2, Care and Support Details, is only completed for those with an active care and support plan on 31 March 2024.

A Quality Report will be published in due course.

Quality statement

These figures reflect the position at 31 March 2022. Quality assurance was

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undertaken with local authorities. Not all local authorities provided complete returns.

Ethnicity information was missing for 9% of children.

Parental factors data was missing for almost all children in one local authority. Other local authorities were missing data for some children. Overall, parental capacity factors data was missing for 7% of children.

Mental health or substance misuse data was missing for almost all children aged 10 year and over in one local authority. Other local authorities were missing data for some children. Overall, mental health and substance misuse data was missing for 7% of children.

Health checks data was missing for over 90% of children aged 5 years or younger in two local authorities. Other local authorities were missing data for some children. Overall, health checks data was missing for 14% of children.

Dental checks data was missing for over 90% of children aged 5 years and over in three local authorities. Other local authorities were missing data for some children. Overall, dental checks data was missing for 15% of children.

Immunisations data was missing for over 90% of children in two local authorities. Other local authorities were missing data for some children. Overall, immunisations data was missing for 10% of children.

Percentages in this release have been calculated based on those children where known information was provided and are rounded to the nearest per cent. Where information is not available, this is clearly indicated on StatsWales.

Some information on education has not been updated. With the rollout of the new Curriculum for Wales from September 2022 onwards, end of Foundation Phase assessments and end of Key Stage 2 assessments were not required in 2022. Having been suspended in both 2020 and 2021 due to the coronavirus

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(COVID-19) pandemic, Key Stage 3 results were collected for 2022 however assessments in special school were not required. National Statistics on attendance are not available for the school years 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22.

Further information on quality can be found in the [statistical release for 31 March 2019](#).

Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG)

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales. The Act puts in place seven wellbeing goals for Wales. These are for a more equal, prosperous, resilient, healthier and globally responsible Wales, with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. Under section (10)(1) of the Act, the Welsh Ministers must (a) publish indicators (“national indicators”) that must be applied for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the wellbeing goals, and (b) lay a copy of the national indicators before Senedd Cymru. Under section 10(8) of the Well-being of Future Generations Act, where the Welsh Ministers revise the national indicators, they must as soon as reasonably practicable (a) publish the indicators as revised and (b) lay a copy of them before the Senedd. These national indicators were laid before the Senedd in 2021. The indicators laid on 14 December 2021 replace the set laid on 16 March 2016.

Information on the indicators, along with narratives for each of the wellbeing goals and associated technical information is available in the [Wellbeing of Wales report](#).

Further information on the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#).

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The statistics included in this release could also provide supporting narrative to the national indicators and be used by public services boards in relation to their local wellbeing assessments and local wellbeing plans.

Contact Details

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