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SFR 24/2018

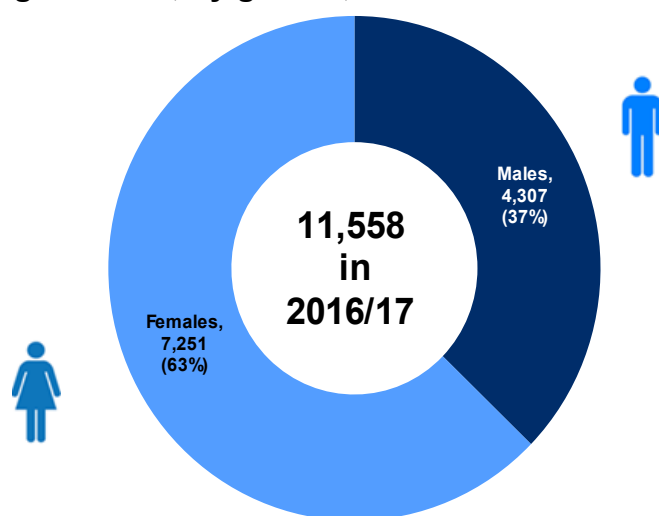
Counselling for Children and Young People, 2016/17

Local authorities in Wales are required to make reasonable provision of independent counselling services for children and young people aged between 11 and 18 on the site of each secondary school that it maintains and for pupils in Year 6 of primary school. A local authority may in addition offer counselling services at other locations, e.g. at independent schools, further education colleges or at other community facilities.

Local authorities are required to provide anonymised information about their counselling services to the Welsh Government. This data informs the development of counselling services for children and young people in Wales.

Since 2014 there has been considerable work on guidance and definitions to ensure consistency between authorities, to clarify some known issues, and reflect current policy. For this reason comparisons with data prior to 2015/16 should be treated with considerable caution.

Chart 1: Number of children and young people who received counselling in Wales, by gender, 2016/17



- Nearly three quarters of all children and young people who received counselling were between the Year 8 and Year 11 age groups in 2016/17.
- The most common form of referral was by school-based and other education staff, accounting for around half of all referrals.
- Family issues were the most common form of presenting issue and predominant issue.

About this release

This release covers the counselling services provided by local authorities for children and young people.

Data are shown for Wales and at local authority level.

The known quality issues are highlighted in the Key Quality Information section at the end of the release.

Previously published information on YP Core scores has been removed as the data was not comparable between authorities for 2016/17.

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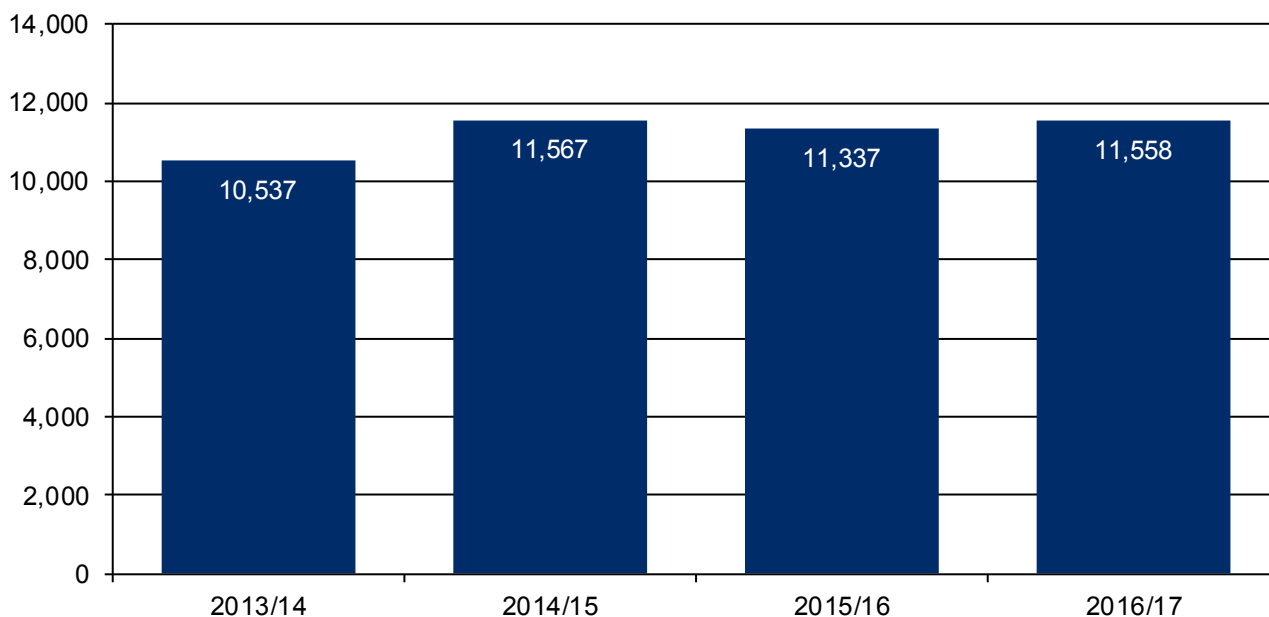
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Counselling in this context gives children and young people the opportunity to talk face to face with a counsellor about their worries and concerns, to work through difficult feelings so that they can learn to manage them. Where appropriate counselling may lead to a referral to another service (e.g. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), child protection services).

All charts and tables below relate to face to face counselling only.

Section 1: Children and young people receiving counselling by gender, local authority, form of referral, age group and ethnicity

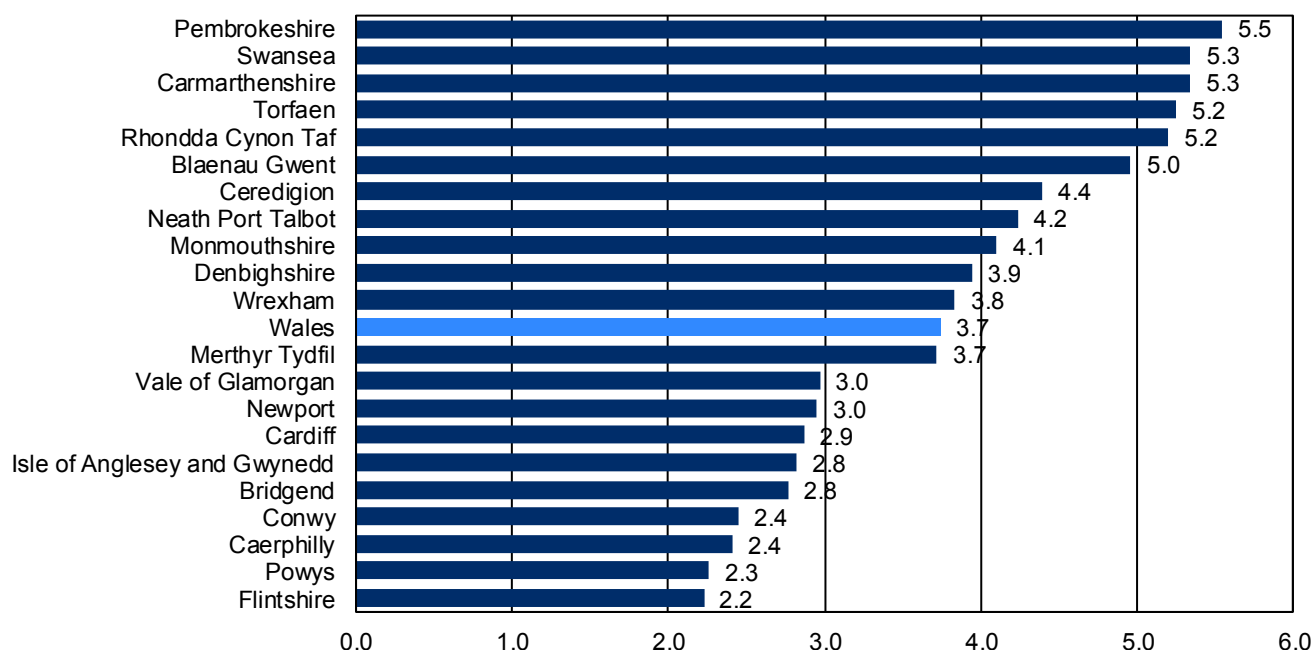
Chart 2: Number of children and young people who received counselling in Wales



Source: Counselling for children and young people, Welsh Government

- 11,558 children or young people received counselling services in 2016/17 (please note comparisons with data prior to 2015/2016 should be treated with considerable caution).
- Females accounted for 63 per cent or 7,251 of the 11,558 children and young people who received counselling in 2016/17, compared to 37 per cent or 4,307 of males ([Chart 1](#)).
- The gender split of 63 per cent female, 37 per cent male is similar to the previous three years.

Chart 3: Number of children and young people (per 100 of resident 10-18 year olds) who received counselling in Wales by local authority, 2016/17 (a)



Source: Counselling for children and young people, Welsh Government

(a) Population estimates obtained from 2016 Mid-year population estimates produced by the Office for National Statistics.

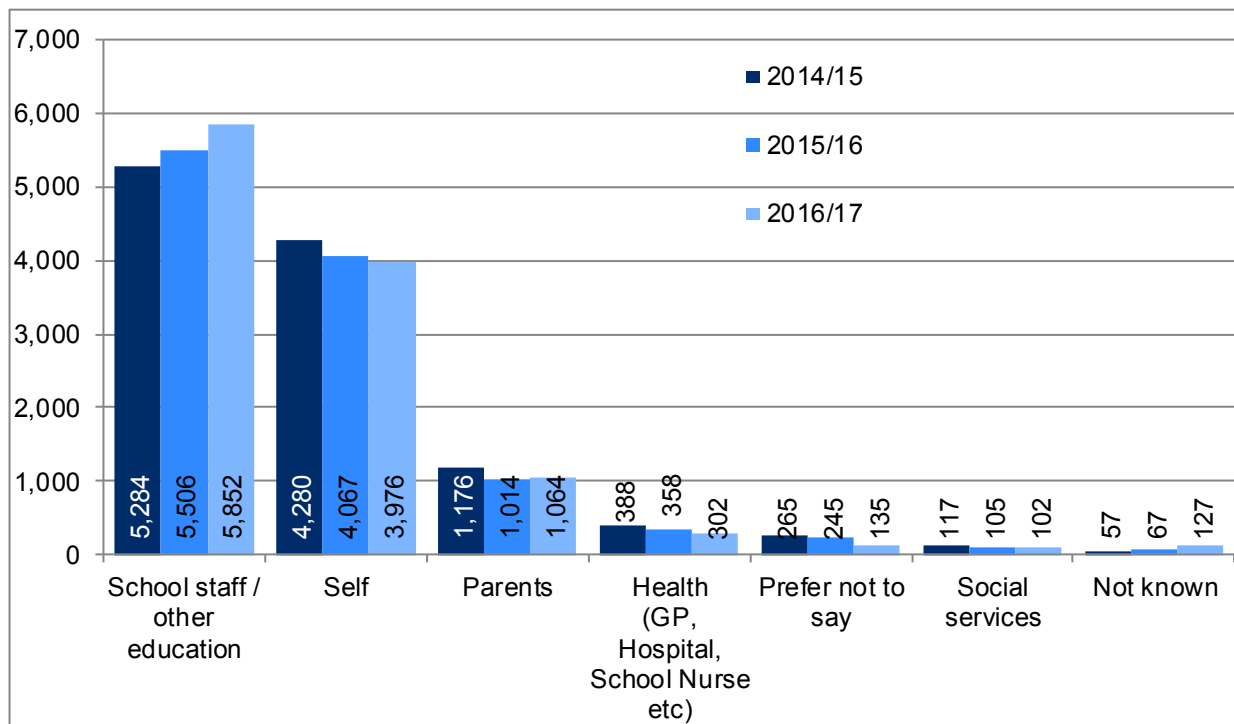
- 3.7 children and young people per 100 of resident 10-18 year olds received counselling in Wales in 2016/17.
- Pembrokeshire had the highest rate of children and young people per 100 of resident 10-18 year olds who received counselling (5.5) children and young people per 100 of resident 10-18 year olds in 2016/17, Chart 3).
- Swansea had the most children and young people who received counselling (1,268 in 2016/17, [Table 1](#)).
- Flintshire had the lowest rate of children and young people per 100 of resident 10-18 year olds who received counselling (2.2 children and young people per 100 of resident 10-18 year olds in 2016/17, Chart 3).
- Merthyr Tydfil had the fewest children and young people who received counselling (220 in 2016/17, [Table 1](#)).

Table 1: Number of children and young people who received counselling (excluding online counselling) in Wales, by local authority, 2016/17

Local Authority	Male	Female	Total
Isle of Anglesey and Gwynedd	195	319	514
Conwy	114	154	268
Denbighshire	145	233	378
Flintshire	119	232	351
Wrexham	206	326	532
Powys	93	202	295
Ceredigion	100	188	288
Pembrokeshire	254	434	688
Carmarthenshire	394	599	993
Swansea	453	815	1,268
Neath Port Talbot	210	381	591
Bridgend	168	234	402
Vale of Glamorgan	159	244	403
Cardiff	315	659	974
Rhondda Cynon Taf	455	796	1,251
Merthyr Tydfil	85	135	220
Caerphilly	199	253	452
Blaenau Gwent	134	203	337
Torfaen	163	328	491
Monmouthshire	166	221	387
Newport	180	295	475
Wales	4,307	7,251	11,558

Source: Counselling for children and young people, Welsh Government

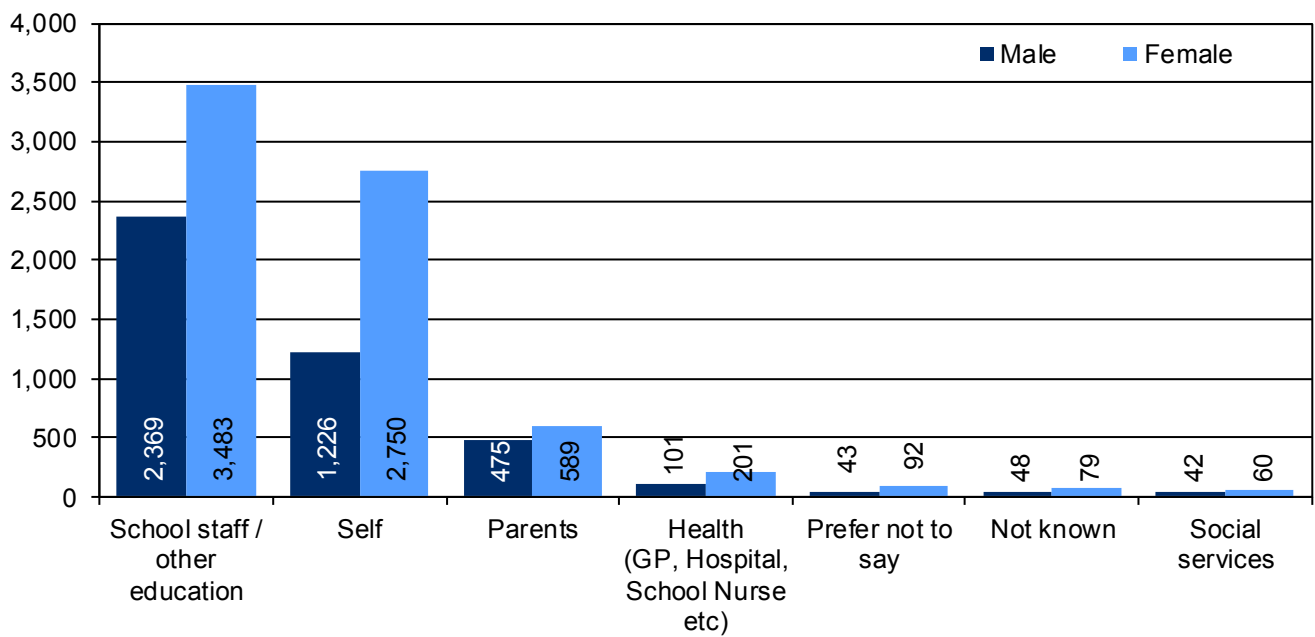
Chart 4: Number of children and young people who received counselling in Wales by form of referral



Source: Counselling for children and young people, Welsh Government

- The most common form of referral was by school-based and other education staff, which accounted for around half of all referrals (51 per cent) in 2016/17. Self referral was the second most common form of referral (34 per cent) in 2016/17, followed by parents (9 per cent).
- The trends for different types of referrals are similar to the previous two years, but there has been an increase in referrals by school-based and other education staff and a fall in self referrals.

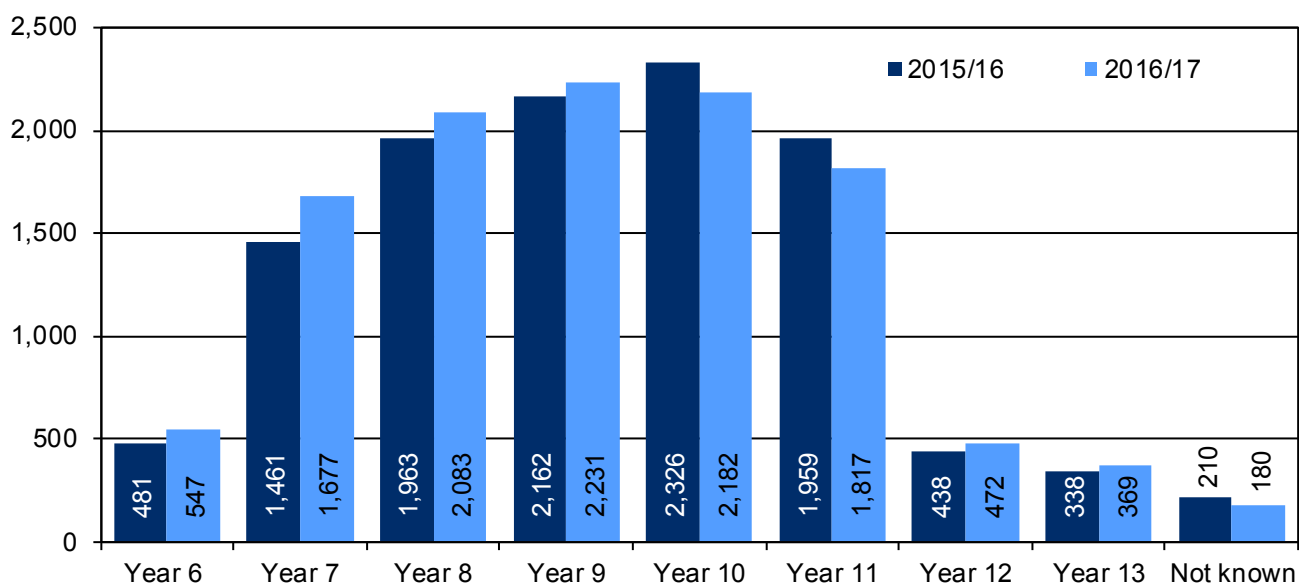
Chart 5: Form of referral of children and young people who received counselling by gender in 2016/17



Source: Counselling for children and young people, Welsh Government

- Males and females attending counselling displayed a similar trend in their form of referral, with referral by school-based staff the most common, followed by self referral for both males and females.
- However, males were more likely to be referred by school-based and other education staff (55 per cent of all male referrals) compared to their female counterparts (48 per cent of all female referrals).
- Conversely, females were more likely to refer themselves (38 per cent of all female referrals) compared to their male counterparts (28 per cent of all male referrals).

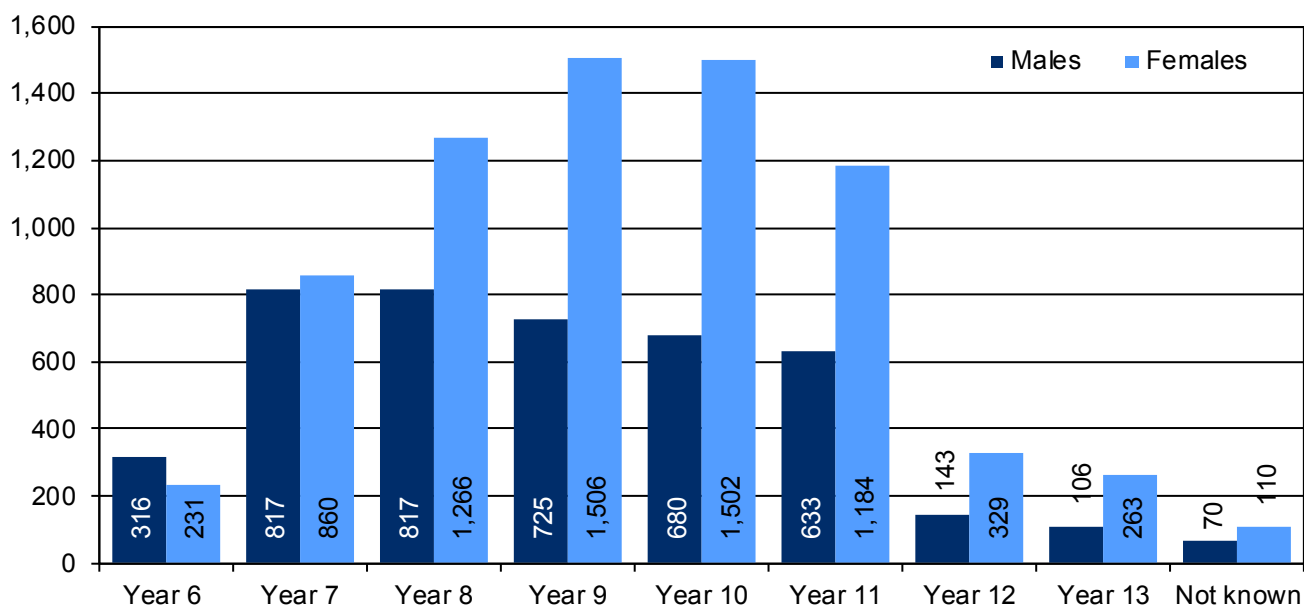
Chart 6: Number of children and young people who received counselling in Wales by school year age group



Source: Counselling for children and young people, Welsh Government

- The Year 9 age group (for the most part, these are children aged 13-14 who are assessed for Key Stage 3) had the highest number of children and young people who received counselling, followed by the Year 10 age group in 2016/17. The Year 13 age group (that is, those young people in sixth form or having left school) had the lowest number.
- The Year 9 age group accounted for 19 per cent of all children and young people who received counselling in 2016/17.
- Close to three quarters of all children and young people who received counselling were between the Year 8 and Year 11 age groups in 2016/17, although this is primarily driven by trends across age in counselling for females as illustrated in the following section.

Chart 7: Number of children and young people who received counselling in Wales by gender and school year age group in 2016/17



Source: Counselling for children and young people, Welsh Government

- There were more females than males who received counselling in all year groups, with the exception of the Year 6 age group.
- From Year 7 to Year 11 the number of males attending counselling remained relatively steady, between 600 and 850 in each year group. However the number of females increased considerably from year 7 to year 10 compared to their male counterparts, to a peak in Years 9 and 10 of around 1,500 females.

Table 2: Number and percentage of children and young people who received counselling in Wales, by ethnic background

Ethnic Background	2014/15		2015/16		2016/17	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
White	11,028	95.3	10,827	95.5	10,999	95.2
Mixed Race	198	1.7	217	1.9	222	1.9
Asian or Asian British	86	0.7	94	0.8	122	1.1
Black or Black British	43	0.4	47	0.4	44	0.4
Chinese or Chinese British	13	0.1	13	0.1	12	0.1
Any other ethnic background	74	0.6	71	0.6	68	0.6
Not known	125	1.1	68	0.6	91	0.8
Total	11,567	100.0	11,337	100.0	11,558	100.0

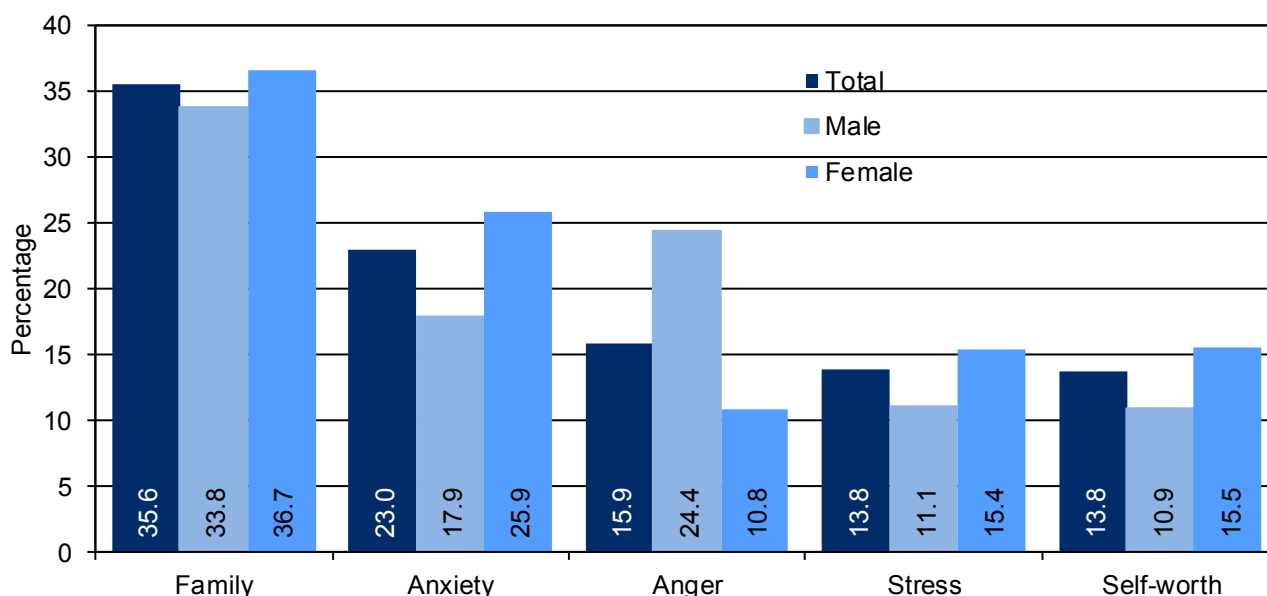
Source: Counselling for children and young people, Welsh Government

- The majority (95 per cent) of children and young people who received counselling classified themselves as white in 2016/17. The distribution seen in Table 2 is broadly representative of the distribution of young people in the wider school population.

Section 2: Presenting and predominant issues

A presenting issue is the reason that a client self-refers or is referred to a counsellor. Local authorities are asked to record up to three presenting issues per child or young person. The chart below shows the percentage of children and young people who received counselling with each of the five most common presenting issues.

Chart 8: Main presenting issues for children and young people who received counselling in Wales in 2016/17



Source: Counselling for children and young people, Welsh Government

- Presenting issues were recorded for each child and young person who received counselling services in Wales. The most common form of presenting issue on referral was family issues which was an issue for roughly one third (36 per cent) of all children and young people who received counselling services in 2016/17. Anxiety issues were the second most common form of presenting issue on referral (23 per cent in 2016/17).
- The most common form of presenting issue on referral for both males and females was family issues. However males were more likely to be referred due to anger issues and females were more likely to be referred due to anxiety issues than their male counterparts.
- The fourth highest presenting issue for males was behaviour related (16 per cent) in [Table 3](#).

Table 3: All presenting issues for children and young people who received counselling in Wales in 2016/17 (a)

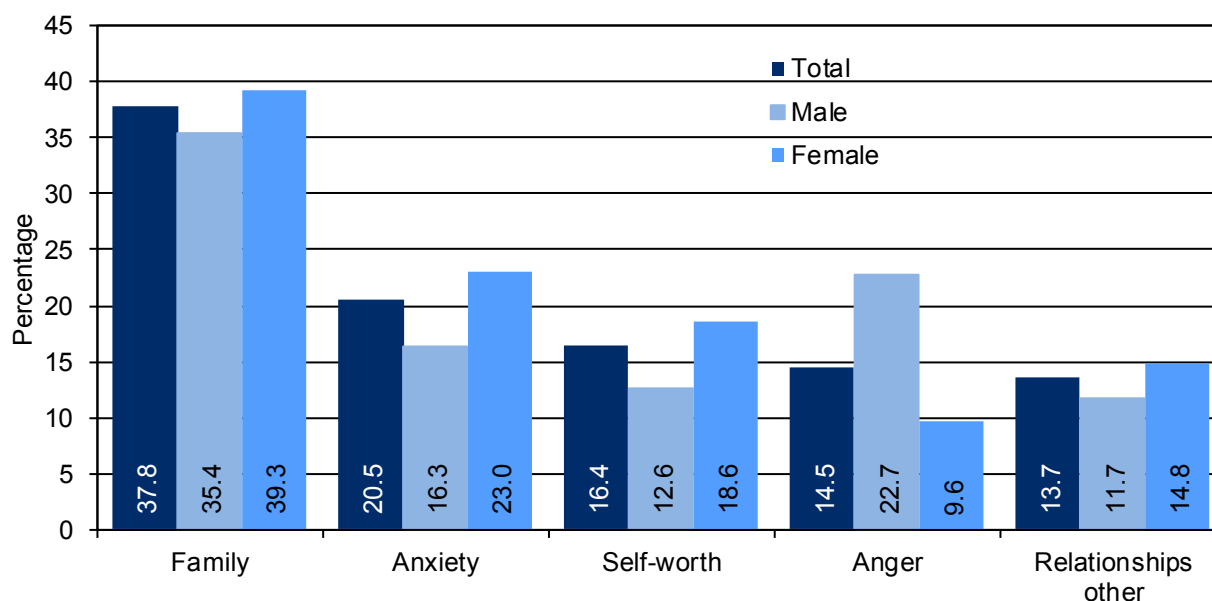
Presenting issues on referral	Male		Female		Total	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Family	1,456	33.8	2,658	36.7	4,114	35.6
Anxiety	773	17.9	1,880	25.9	2,653	23.0
Anger	1,053	24.4	784	10.8	1,837	15.9
Stress	480	11.1	1,119	15.4	1,599	13.8
Self-worth	468	10.9	1,125	15.5	1,593	13.8
Relationships other	410	9.5	858	11.8	1,268	11.0
Behaviour related	688	16.0	470	6.5	1,158	10.0
Bereavement	432	10.0	696	9.6	1,128	9.8
Depression	324	7.5	742	10.2	1,066	9.2
Bullying	328	7.6	572	7.9	900	7.8
Self-harm	133	3.1	677	9.3	810	7.0
Academic	196	4.6	274	3.8	470	4.1
Suicide	83	1.9	207	2.9	290	2.5
Relationship with boyfriend/girlfriend	87	2.0	192	2.6	279	2.4
Abuse (including sexual)	55	1.3	183	2.5	238	2.1
Sexual (including orientation)	61	1.4	107	1.5	168	1.5
Illness	67	1.6	99	1.4	166	1.4
Relationships with teachers	82	1.9	66	0.9	148	1.3
Eating disorders	23	0.5	115	1.6	138	1.2
Domestic abuse	48	1.1	89	1.2	137	1.2
Caring responsibility	34	0.8	81	1.1	115	1.0
Substance misuse	29	0.7	50	0.7	79	0.7
Transgender issues	22	0.5	32	0.4	54	0.5
Financial concerns/poverty	16	0.4	29	0.4	45	0.4
Cyber safety (including cyber-bullying and sexting)	14	0.3	30	0.4	44	0.4
Offending	9	0.2	10	0.1	19	0.2
Other	213	4.9	433	6.0	646	5.6
Not known	57	1.3	102	1.4	159	1.4

Source: Counselling for children and young people, Welsh Government

(a) Local authorities can record up to three presenting issues per child or young person. This table shows the number and percentage of children and young people with each issue. Therefore the percentages do not add up to 100.

A predominant issue is the underlying issue(s) that is identified during the counselling process. For example, a young person's presenting issue may be anger, but through the counselling process, he/she may come to realise that the predominant issue is family relationships. Local authorities are asked to record up to three predominant issues per child or young person. The chart below shows the percentage of children and young people who received counselling with each of the five most common predominant issues.

Chart 9: Main predominant issues for children and young people who received counselling in Wales in 2016/17



Source: Counselling for children and young people, Welsh Government

- The most common form of predominant issue was family issues which was an issue for nearly four in ten (38 per cent) of all children and young people who received counselling services in 2016/17. Anxiety (21 per cent) and self-worth (16 per cent) issues were the next most common forms of predominant issue in 2016/17.
- Similarly to presenting issues, the most common form of predominant issue for both males and females was family issues and once again males were more likely to have anger issues, with females were more likely to have anxiety issues than their male counterparts.
- Stress was the fifth highest predominant issue for females (14 per cent) in [Table 4](#).

Table 4: All predominant issues of children and young people who received counselling in Wales in 2016/17(a)

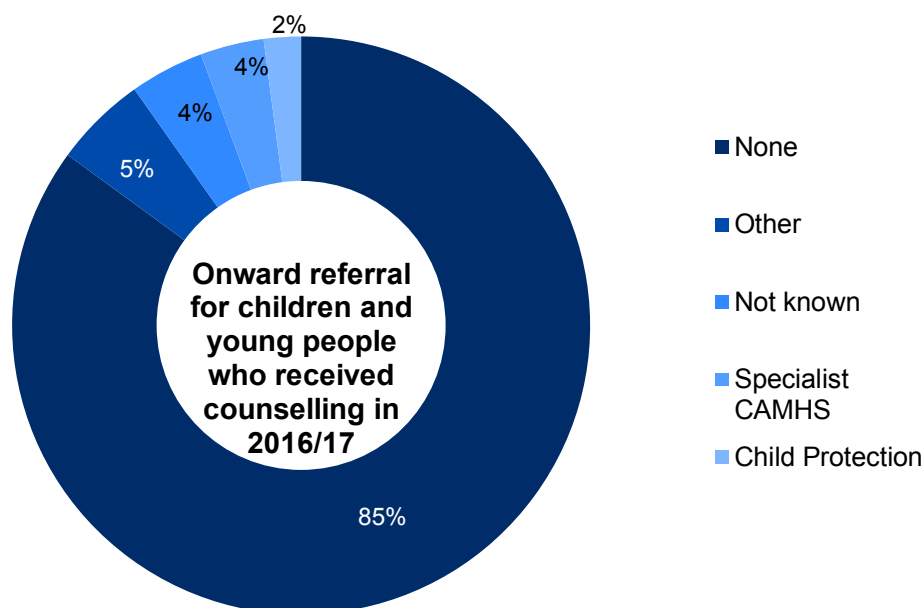
Predominant issues	Male		Female		Total	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Family	1,523	35.4	2,851	39.3	4,374	37.8
Anxiety	701	16.3	1,668	23.0	2,369	20.5
Self-worth	541	12.6	1,351	18.6	1,892	16.4
Anger	977	22.7	696	9.6	1,673	14.5
Relationships other	504	11.7	1,075	14.8	1,579	13.7
Stress	409	9.5	989	13.6	1,398	12.1
Bereavement	412	9.6	658	9.1	1,070	9.3
Behaviour related	557	12.9	371	5.1	928	8.0
Bullying	325	7.5	536	7.4	861	7.4
Depression	266	6.2	557	7.7	823	7.1
Self-harm	124	2.9	510	7.0	634	5.5
Academic	219	5.1	281	3.9	500	4.3
Relationship with boyfriend/girlfriend	145	3.4	294	4.1	439	3.8
Suicide	78	1.8	174	2.4	252	2.2
Abuse (including sexual)	45	1.0	178	2.5	223	1.9
Relationships with teachers	108	2.5	104	1.4	212	1.8
Domestic abuse	67	1.6	100	1.4	167	1.4
Illness	70	1.6	94	1.3	164	1.4
Sexual (including orientation)	58	1.3	95	1.3	153	1.3
Caring responsibility	39	0.9	78	1.1	117	1.0
Eating disorders	14	0.3	97	1.3	111	1.0
Financial concerns/poverty	27	0.6	39	0.5	66	0.6
Transgender issues	28	0.7	35	0.5	63	0.5
Substance misuse	31	0.7	24	0.3	55	0.5
Cyber safety (including cyber-bullying and sexting)	14	0.3	26	0.4	40	0.3
Offending	14	0.3	5	0.1	19	0.2
Other	207	4.8	351	4.8	558	4.8
Not Known	51	1.2	82	1.1	133	1.2

Source: Counselling for children and young people, Welsh Government

(a) Local authorities can record up to three predominant issues per child or young person. This table shows the number and percentage of children and young people with each issue. Therefore the percentages do not add up to 100.

Section 3: Onward referrals

Chart 10: Onward referrals of children and young people who received counselling in Wales in 2016/17



Source: Counselling for children and young people, Welsh Government

- Onward referral information was collected for children and young people who received counselling. The majority of children and young people who received counselling did not require any form of onward referral once counselling sessions had been completed (85 per cent in 2016/17). (Chart 10)
- Of those children and young people who were referred onwards, referrals to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) accounted for 3.6 per cent in 2016/17.
- The majority of both males and females did not require any form of onward referral once counselling sessions had been completed. However females were more likely to be referred onwards (12 per cent in 2016/17) following the completion of counselling than their male counterparts (9 per cent in 2016/17).
- 4.0 per cent of females were referred onwards to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service compared to 2.8 per cent of males in 2016/17.

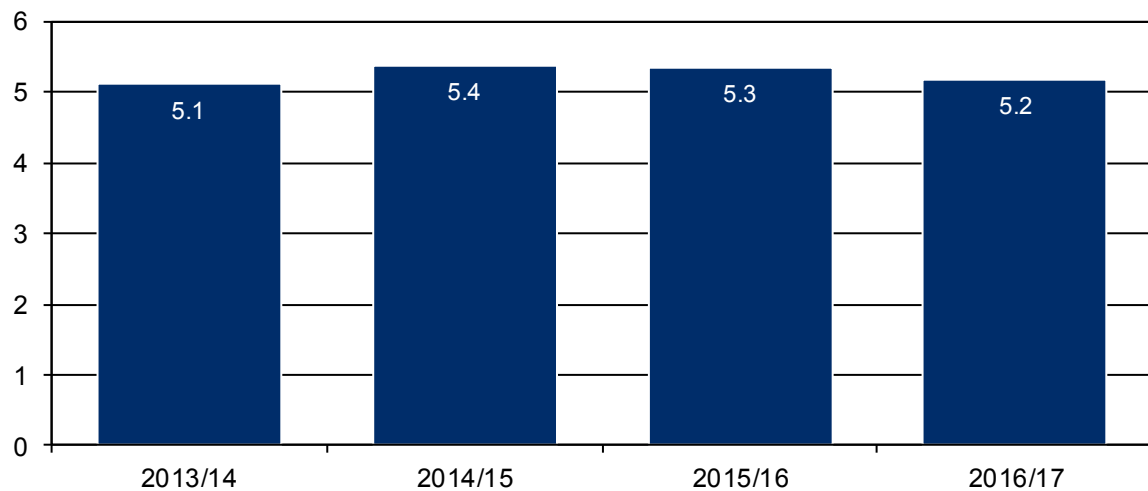
Table 5: Onward referrals of children and young people who received counselling in Wales in 2016/17

Onward Referral	Male		Female		Total	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Specialist CAMHS	120	2.8	291	4.0	411	3.6
Child Protection	69	1.6	171	2.4	240	2.1
Other	194	4.5	404	5.6	598	5.2
None	3,758	86.6	6,071	84.1	9,829	85.0
Not known	197	4.5	283	3.9	480	4.2
Total	4,338	100.0	7,220	100.0	11,558	100.0

Counselling for children and young people, Welsh Government

Section 4: Counselling sessions attended

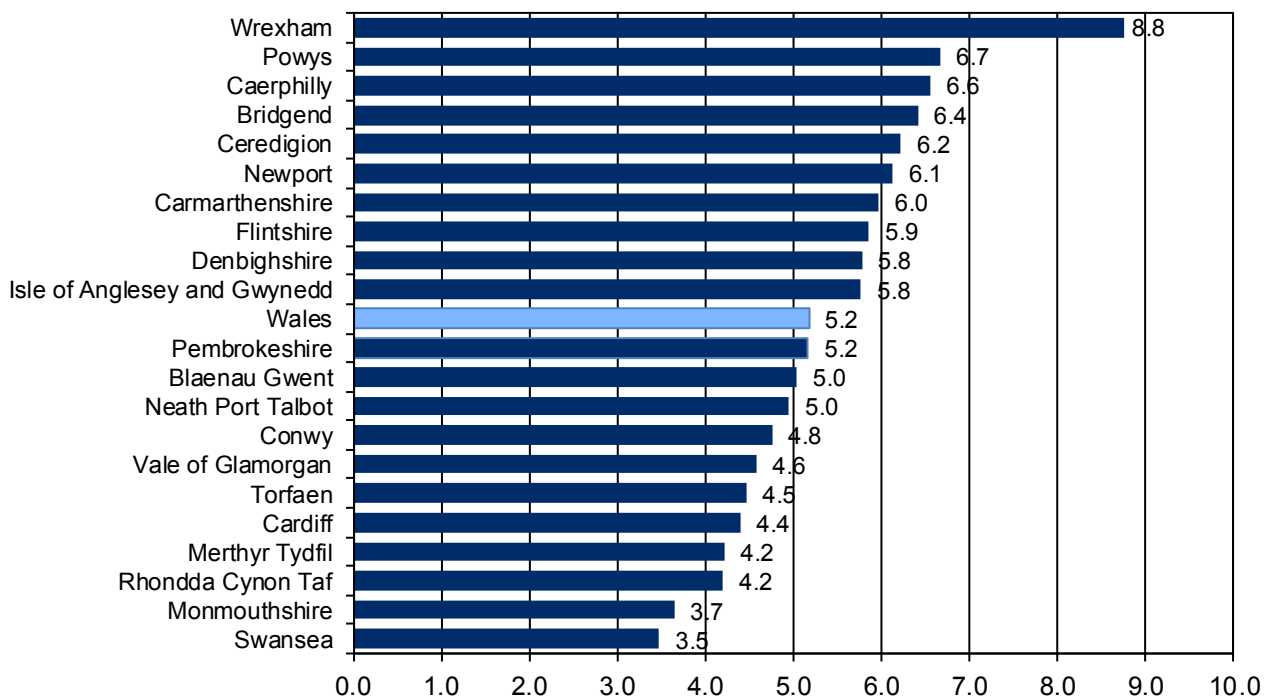
Chart 11: Average number of counselling sessions attended by children and young people in Wales who received counselling



Source: Counselling for children and young people, Welsh Government

- The average number of counselling sessions attended by children and young people who received counselling in Wales was 5.2 in 2016/17. A slight decrease on the average of 5.3 sessions in 2015/16.

Chart 12: Average number of counselling sessions attended by children and young people in Wales who received counselling in Wales by local authority in 2016/17



Source: Counselling for children and young people, Welsh Government

- Considerable variation in the average number of counselling sessions from 3.5 sessions in Swansea to 8.8 in Wrexham.

Key Quality Information

Policy and operational context

School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013

The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 became law in Wales on 4 March 2013. The purpose of the Act sets out proposals to strengthen school standards, enhance local determination and reduce complexity. Under Section 92 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, local authorities are required to make reasonable provision of independent counselling services for children and young people aged between 11 and 18 and pupils in Year 6 of primary school. Under Section 93 local authorities are required to provide anonymised information about these counselling services to the Welsh Government, in compliance with a direction issued by the Welsh Ministers under Section 93 of the 2013 Act.

Where a local authority has arranged for a person to provide an independent counselling service on its behalf, the authority must give the person a copy of the Welsh Ministers' direction and that person must compile the information necessary for compliance with the direction and submit it to the local authority.

Further information on the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 is available by following the link below:

[School Standards and Organisation \(Wales\) Act 2013](#)

Counselling in this context gives children and young people the opportunity to talk face to face with a counsellor about their worries and concerns, to work through difficult feelings so that they can learn to manage them. Where appropriate counselling may lead to a referral to another service.(e.g. CAMHS, child protection).

The 2013 Act requires a Local Authority to provide an independent counselling service on the site of each secondary school that it maintains. A Local Authority may in addition offer counselling services at other locations, e.g. at independent schools or at a local community centre, youth centre or other community facility for young persons who are not in school and/or wish to access counselling outside of a formal education setting.

Data source and coverage

This is an annual collection that Local Authorities are required to provide to the Welsh Government.

The local authorities Isle of Anglesey and Gwynedd provide a joint data collection return, therefore the data for these local authorities cannot be shown separately.

Prior to the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, local authorities provided the Welsh Government with anonymised demographic and outcome data on children and young people accessing counselling under the terms and conditions of the school-based counselling grant.

Figures are based on the numbers of children and young people who have received face to face counselling and have finished their episode(s) of counselling during the period.

The age group of those children and young people who received counselling is based on their school year rather than actual age. Please note not all the children and young people who receive counselling are school pupils. Where this occurs these children and young people are included in the school year age group they would typically attend if they were in school.

Due to the sensitivity of the data it must be transferred to the Welsh Government via a secure medium and also held in a secure environment. The secure medium for transferring the data is the Data Exchange Wales Initiative (DEWi).

The local authority, or the person who provides the counselling service, must not provide information about an identified individual or provide information in such a way (either by itself or combined with other information) that it identifies an individual or enables an individual to be identified.

Further information on the data requirements is available in 'Statutory guidance to Welsh local authorities on the provision of independent counselling services', available via the link below: put in with data source

[Statutory guidance to Welsh local authorities on the provision of independent counselling services.](#)

Who are the key users of this data?

These statistics are used widely both within and outside the Welsh Government. Some of the key users are:

- Ministers and the Members Research Service in the National Assembly for Wales;
- Other government departments;
- Local authorities;
- Local Health Boards including Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- The Department for Education and Skills in the Welsh Government;
- Other areas of the Welsh Government;
- The research community;
- Students, academics and universities;
- Individual citizens and private companies.

What are the data used for?

These statistics are used in a variety of ways. Some examples of these are:

- Advice to Ministers;
- To inform the education policy decision-making process in Wales;
- To assist in research in counselling for children and young people.
- To monitor and evaluate counselling services in Wales, at a local level and at a national level. Local authorities can use the data they collect to monitor and evaluate the counselling services provided in their area, in order to drive service improvement.
- To identify key issues and concerns for children and young people which can impinge on their mental health.

Quality

Our statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political interference.

This Release is no longer labelled Experimental Statistics as there is a settled data collection, identical in approach for the past two years. This has enabled year on year comparisons and allowed any outliers in the data to be followed up. There has been engagement with the sector where data and data collection have been discussed. In addition guidance has been further developed with input from Local Authorities and those contracted to undertake the work.

Timeliness and punctuality

Local authorities, and their counselling providers where applicable, compile aggregated data on children and young people accessing counselling and submit that data to the Welsh Government. Information compiled for each academic school year is required to be provided by 26 October following the end of the academic school year. The returns are then validated by the Welsh Government and published in a statistical release in March.

Accessibility and clarity

This Statistical First Release is pre-announced and then published on the Statistics and Research section of the Welsh Government website. It is accompanied by more detailed tables on [StatsWales](#), a free to use service that allows visitors to view, manipulate, create and download data.

Comparability and coherence

Since 2014 there has been considerable work on guidance and definitions to ensure consistency between authorities, to clarify some known issues, and reflect current policy. For this reason comparisons with data prior to 2015/16 should be treated with considerable caution.

There are no official statistics published by other UK countries on counselling for children and young people.

Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG)

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The Act puts in place seven well-being 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 Well-being goals, and (b) lay a copy of the national indicators before the National Assembly. The 46 national indicators were laid in March 2016.

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

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

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 well-being assessments and local well-being plans.

Further details

The document is available at:

<http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/counselling-children-and-young-people>

Next update

March 2019 (provisional)

We want your feedback

This is the fourth edition of this release; we would therefore welcome comments from users of our publication on the content and presentation of this publication. If you have any comments or require further information, please contact us.

We welcome any feedback on any aspect of these statistics which can be provided by email to school.stats@gov.wales.

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