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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

**REFERRALS, ASSESSMENTS AND CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
ON CHILD PROTECTION REGISTERS, ENGLAND - YEAR ENDING 31
MARCH 2006 (Final)****INTRODUCTION**

This Statistical First Release (SFR) provides the latest figures on referrals, assessments and young people on child protection registers in England, for the year ending 31 March 2006. Figures for earlier years are provided for comparison.

Some of the figures are used to produce the national level Performance Assessment Framework (PAF) performance indicators shown in the tables and quoted below.

KEY POINTS**Referrals**

There were 569,300 referrals to social services departments in the year ending 31 March 2006, compared to the previous year's figure of 552,000 (in other recent years the figures have been around 570,000). Of the 2006 referrals, 23% were repeat referrals within 12 months of a previous referral, compared to 22% in the previous year.

Initial assessments

Of the 300,200 initial assessments completed in the year, 194,900 (65%) were completed within 7 working days of referral. This compares with 179,200 (62%) out of a total of 290,300 for the previous year.

Core assessments

Of the 84,800 core assessments undertaken in the year, 63,000 (74%) were completed within 35 days (PAF C64). This compares with 49,700 (67%) out of a total of 74,100 for the previous year.

Registrations and de-registrations

There were 31,500 additions to the registers (registrations) in 2006. Around 14% of children registered during 2006 had previously been registered (PAF A3) – one percentage point more than in 2005. During the year ending 31 March 2006, 31,000 children were de-registered.

Children on Child Protection Registers

There were 26,400 children on child protection registers at 31 March 2006, compared with 25,900 for 2005.

The 2006 figure represents 24 children per 10,000 of the population aged under 18, this compares with 23 in 2005.

Looked after children

Of the children on the register at 31 March 2006, 2,600 (10%) were also looked after by local authorities. This compares with 3,000 (12%) for 2005.

80% of looked after children who were on registers were in foster placements and 12% were placed with their own parents. Five years ago 75% of looked after children were in foster placements and 16% were placed with their own parents.

Category of abuse

Neglect is the most common category of abuse under which children are registered, 43% and the same percentage as in 2005. The percentage of children registered due to emotional abuse increased from 19% in 2005 to 21 percent in 2006. Registrations due to physical abuse decreased between 2005 and 2006, from 18% to 16% respectively.

Length of time on register

Six per cent of children removed from the register had been on it for over 2 years (PAF C21) – the same figure as last year, following a downward trend over a number of years.

NOTES TO EDITORS

Background

1. The figures for the year ending 31 March 2006 are for referrals, assessments and children and young people on child protection registers and are the latest in a regular series. Data are collected on the CPR3 statistical return, which provides the Department of Education and Skills with aggregate data on children accommodated in all 150 local authorities in England. The information on referrals, assessments, registrations and de-registrations is at 31 March of each year shown. The number of children on the register is at 31 March of each year.
2. All numbers have been rounded to the nearest 100.
 - Small number suppressed to preserve confidentiality. Normally this will be a number between 1 and 5 inclusive, or a percentage where either the numerator is 5 or less, or the denominator is 10 or less.
 - . Not applicable
3. Information on Children Looked After and Private Fostering Arrangements has been released in separate SFRs today.

Further release of information

4. In previous years, more detailed information, including LA level tables, has been published in a statistical volume in the January following the SFR. This year, a more streamlined approach is being used. The additional information will be added alongside the SFR on the DfES Research and Statistics Gateway. Tables will be added in early December, the summary and commentary will follow later.

Definitions

5. Definitions of the key aspects of the referral, assessment and registration process as recorded via the Child Protection Register collection are shown below. These are based on the guidance in place at the time of the CPR collection ("Working Together"). A revised version has since been published.

a. Referral

A referral is defined for the purposes of the CPR collection as 'a request for services to be provided by the social services department.' This is in respect of a case where the child is not previously known to the council, or where the case was previously open but is now closed. A referral can be made by a professional from one of many different agencies (typically in the health and education sectors) but the term as used here is a broad one which encompasses referrals from any source, including self-referrals.

b. Initial assessment

An initial assessment is defined as a brief assessment of any child who has been referred to social services with a request that services be provided. An initial assessment is deemed to have started either at the point of referral to a social services department, or when new information on an open case indicates that an initial assessment should be repeated. Initial assessments may lead to three types of outcome:

no further action;

the immediate provision of services;

a more detailed type of assessment (known as a 'core assessment') being carried out. This may be carried out even where there is immediate provision of services.

c. Core assessment

A core assessment is defined as an in-depth assessment which addresses the central or most important aspects of the child's needs. There are several junctures at which a core assessment may start, depending on the child's circumstances, and the existence of child protection concerns ('risk of significant harm') is not a pre-requisite. The expected timescale for the completion of a core assessment is a maximum of 35 working days, recognising that where specialist assessments are required they may not take place within this timescale.

d. Section 47 enquiries

Where there is any suspicion that a child may be suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, social services departments are required by section 47 of the Children Act 1989 to make enquiries to establish whether there is a need for further action to safeguard the child's welfare.

While the exact order of stages of the process may depend on circumstances, an early action consists of convening a strategy discussion involving relevant professionals. Amongst other things this discussion should decide if enquiries under s.47 should be initiated, or should be continued if they have already begun. If a core assessment has not already started, it should be initiated with the s.47 enquires as this is the means by which a s.47 enquiry is carried out.

e. Initial Child Protection conferences and registration.

Where concerns about a child's welfare are substantiated and the agencies most involved judge that a child may continue to suffer, or be at risk of suffering significant harm, the social services department should convene an initial child protection conference. The purpose of the conference is to draw together the information that has been obtained and to make judgements on whether the child is at continuing risk of significant harm and whether he or she, therefore requires a child protection plan to be put in place. It is set out in the inter-agency guidance "Working Together to Safeguard Children" that an initial child protection conference should take place within 15 working days of the strategy discussion which decided whether s.47 enquiries should be initiated or continued if they have already begun. The conference will result in a decision to register or not.

f. De-registration

A child's name may be removed from the register if:

it is judged that the child is no longer at continuing risk of significant harm requiring safeguarding by means of a child protection plan (e.g. the risk of harm has been reduced by action taken through the child protection plan; the child and family's circumstances have changed; or re-assessment of the child and family indicates that a child protection plan is not necessary). Under these circumstances, only a child protection review conference can decide that registration is no longer necessary;

the child and family have moved permanently to another local authority area. In such cases, the receiving local authority should convene a child protection conference within 15 working days of being notified of the move, only after which event may de-registration take place in respect of the original local authority's child protection register;

the child has reached 18 years of age, has died or has permanently left the UK.

Revisions

6. A revision has been made since the SFR was originally published (November). In table A the total number of core assessments in 2006 has reduced from 85,500 to 84,800.

TABLES

Table A: Referrals of children, and young people to social services departments, and assessments completed, during years ending 31 March 2004 to 2006 (numbers and percentages)

Table B: Time series: Registrations to and de-registrations from child protection registers during the years ending 31 March 1996 to 2006, and children on child protection registers at 31 March each year, by gender (numbers, rates and percentages)

Table C: Time series: Children and young people on child protection registers at 31 March 2002 to 2006 who were also looked after, by legal status and placement on that date (numbers and percentages)

Table D: Time series: Numbers of registrations during the years ending 31 March 1996 to 2006, by whether first time registration or re-registration; and re-registrations within 12 months of the last de-registration (numbers and percentages)

Table E: Time series: Registrations to child protection registers during the years ending 31 March 2002 to 2006, by category of abuse (numbers and percentages)

Table F: Time series: De-registrations of children and young people from child protection registers during the years ending 31 March 1996 to 2006, by length of time on the register. (percentages)

Table A Referrals of children and young people to social services departments, and assessments completed, during the years ending 31 March 2004 to 2006

England	numbers and percentages					
	numbers			percentages		
	2004	2005	2006	2004	2005	2006
Referrals of children to social services departments¹						
All referrals during year	572,700	552,000	569,300	100	100	100
<i>of which:</i>						
Referrals within 12 months of a previous referral ²	127,400	121,800	132,500	22	22	23
Initial assessments completed in the year¹						
All initial assessments completed in the year	290,800	290,300	300,200	100	100	100
<i>of which:</i>						
Initial assessments completed within 7 working days of referral	169,100	179,200	194,900	58	62	65
Initial assessments completed in year as a percentage of all referrals in year	.	.	.	51	53	53
Core assessments completed in the year¹						
Total number of core assessments completed in the year	63,600	74,100	84,800	100	100	100
<i>of which:</i>						
Core assessments completed within 35 working days of initial assessments ³	39,400	49,700	63,100	62	67	74

1 Figures for referrals, initial assessments and core assessments include unborn children.

2 Re-referrals relate to a previous referral to the same authority only.

3 Or within 35 working days of the trigger event where this was not an initial assessment. Indicator C64 of the Performance Assessment Framework: The proportion of Core Assessments that were completed within 35 days of their commencement.

Table B Registrations to and de-registrations from child protection registers during the years ending 31 March 1996 to 2006, and children on child protection registers at 31 March each year, by gender

England								
numbers, rates per 10,000 children aged under 18 years and percentages								
	Numbers ¹			Rates			Percentages ²	
	All children ³	Boys	Girls	All children ³	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
On the register at 31 March								
1996	32,400	16,200	16,000	29	29	29	50	50
1997	32,400	16,400	15,700	29	29	29	51	49
1998	31,600	16,000	15,500	28	28	28	51	49
1999	31,900	16,000	15,600	29	28	29	51	49
2000	30,300	15,400	14,600	27	27	27	51	49
2001	26,800	13,700	12,900	24	24	24	52	48
2002	25,700	13,300	12,200	23	23	22	52	48
2003	26,600	13,600	12,700	24	24	23	52	48
2004	26,300	13,500	12,500	24	24	23	52	48
2005	25,900	13,100	12,600	23	23	23	51	49
2006	26,400	13,200	12,800	24	23	24	51	49
Registrations⁴								
1996	28,300	13,900	13,900	25	24	25	50	50
1997	29,200	14,500	14,100	26	25	26	51	49
1998	30,000	14,800	14,600	27	26	27	50	50
1999	30,100	14,700	14,600	27	26	27	50	50
2000	29,300	14,500	13,900	26	25	26	51	49
2001	27,000	13,300	12,700	24	23	23	51	49
2002	27,800	14,000	12,800	25	25	24	52	48
2003	30,200	15,000	14,200	27	26	26	51	49
2004	31,000	15,400	14,600	28	27	27	51	49
2005	30,700	14,800	14,400	28	26	27	51	49
2006	31,500	15,100	14,800	28	27	27	50	50
De-registrations⁵								
1996	30,500	15,300	15,100	27	27	28	50	50
1997	28,900	14,400	14,500	26	25	26	50	50
1998	30,200	15,300	14,800	27	27	27	51	49
1999	29,400	14,800	14,600	26	26	27	51	49
2000	30,500	15,300	15,100	27	27	28	50	50
2001	30,200	15,400	14,700	27	27	27	51	49
2002	28,800	14,700	14,000	26	26	26	51	49
2003	29,200	15,100	14,000	26	27	26	51	49
2004	31,200	15,900	15,200	28	28	28	51	49
2005	31,100	15,900	15,100	28	28	28	51	49
2006	31,000	15,800	15,200	28	28	28	51	49

1 Figures may not add due to rounding.

2 Percentage calculations exclude unborn children.

3 The 'all children' figures include unborn children.

4 Where a child was registered more than once in the year within the same authority, each registration has been counted.

5 Where a child was de-registered more than once in the year within the same authority, each de-registration has been counted.

Table C Children and young people on child protection registers at 31 March 2002 to 2006 who were also looked after, by legal status¹ and placement on that date

England	numbers and percentages				
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Number of looked after children on child protection registers at 31 March ^{2,3}	4,600	4,200	3,400	3,000	2,600
Percentage of all children on child protection registers at 31 March who were also looked after on that date ^{2,3}	18	16	13	12	10
Legal statuses¹ of looked after children who were also on child protection registers at 31 March (percentages):					
All legal statuses ¹	100	100	100	100	100
Interim care order	50	51	44	43	45
Full care order	8	4	4	4	2
Remand, detained or other compulsory order ⁴	2	2	2	2	2
Accommodated under Section 20 - planned series of short term breaks	3	5	6	5	6
Accommodated under Section 20 - single occasion of accommodation	37	38	43	45	45
Freed for adoption	-	-	-	-	-
Placements of looked after children who were also on child protection registers at 31 March (percentages):					
All placements	100	100	100	100	100
Foster placement	75	76	79	79	80
Children's home ⁵ or secure unit	5	5	5	4	5
Placed with own parents	16	15	13	13	12
Other placement	4	4	3	3	3

1 Refers to the legal status under the provisions of the Children Act 1989 which underpins each child's looked-after status.

2 Figures for all years include children receiving an agreed series of short-term breaks.

3 Figures include any children looked after at 31 March who were unaccompanied asylum-seekers.

4 Under police protection or an emergency protection order, or in local authority accommodation on remand, or committed for trial or sentence, or detained under PACE 1984.

5 Refers to placements in community homes, voluntary homes and hostels, and private registered children's homes.

Table D Numbers of registrations¹ during the years ending 31 March 1996 to 2006, by whether first time registration or re-registration; and re-registrations within twelve months of last de-registration²

England		numbers and percentages						
		numbers				percentages		
Year ending 31 March	Number of registrations	First registrations	All re-registrations	Re-reg within 12 months of last de-reg	First registrations	All re-registrations ³	Re-registration within 12 months of last de-registration as a % of re-registrations	
1996	28,300	23,200	5,100	.	82	18	.	
1997	29,200	23,900	5,300	.	82	18	.	
1998	30,000	24,100	5,900	.	80	20	.	
1999	30,100	25,500	4,600	.	85	15	.	
2000	29,300	25,100	4,200	.	86	14	.	
2001	27,000	23,200	3,700	1,100	86	14	31	
2002	27,800	23,900	3,900	1,200	86	14	31	
2003	30,200	26,100	4,100	1,200	87	13	29	
2004	31,000	26,900	4,100	1,200	87	13	29	
2005	30,700	26,600	4,100	1,200	87	13	30	
2006	31,500	27,000	4,500	1,200	86	14	26	

1 Where a child was registered or re-registered by the same authority more than once during a year, each occasion has been counted. A child may therefore be counted more than once in these figures. Numbers and percentages in this table include unborn children.

2 Refers to re-registrations which occurred within twelve months of de-registration within the same authority. This data item is a subset of the 'All re-registrations figure' in the preceeding column, and was collected for the first time for year ending 31 March 2001.

3 Indicator A3 of the Performance Assessment Framework

Table E Registrations¹ to child protection registers during the years ending 31 March 2002 to 2006, by category of abuse

England		numbers and percentages									
Category of abuse	numbers					percentages					
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	
Neglect	10,800	11,700	12,600	13,200	13,700	39	39	41	43	43	
Physical abuse	5,300	5,700	5,700	5,500	5,100	19	19	19	18	16	
Sexual abuse	2,800	3,000	2,800	2,700	2,600	10	10	9	9	8	
Emotional abuse	4,700	5,400	5,600	5,700	6,700	17	18	18	19	21	
Mixed / not recommended by 'Working Together'	4,100	4,400	4,300	3,700	3,300	15	15	14	12	11	

1 Where a child was registered more than once in the year, each registration has been counted. Registrations include unborn children.

Table F De-registrations¹ of children and young people from child protection registers during the years ending 31 March 1996 to 2006, by length of time on the register

England		percentages				
		length of time on register				
Year to 31 March	All Children ²	Under 3 months	3 months to under 6 months	6 months to under 1 year	One year to under 2 years	2 years & over ³
1996	30,500	7	18	31	29	15
1997	28,900	7	20	31	28	14
1998	30,200	7	19	33	27	13
1999	29,400	7	19	33	28	13
2000	30,500	7	19	33	28	12
2001	30,200	8	20	33	28	11
2002	28,800	13	17	33	27	10
2003	29,200	16	15	35	26	8
2004	31,200	19	14	36	25	7
2005	31,100	21	12	35	26	6
2006	31,000	21	12	36	25	6

1 Where a child was de-registered more than once in the statistical year by the same authority each de-registration has been counted. A child may therefore appear more than once in this table.

2 Figures may not add due to rounding. The 'all children' figures and durations to under 1 year include unborn children.

3 Indicator C21 of the Performance Assessment Framework.