

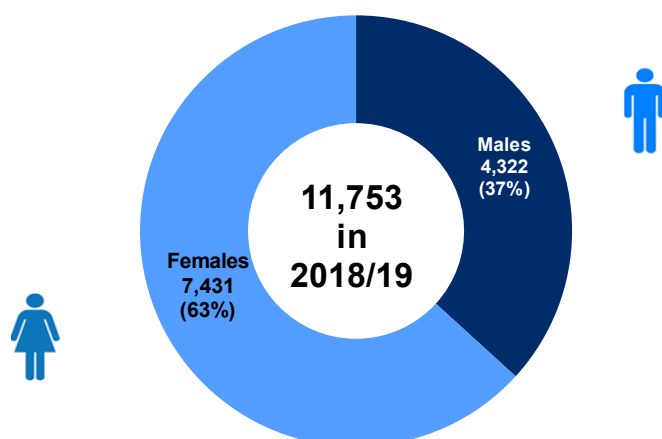
26 March 2020
SFR 21/2020

Counselling for Children and Young People, 2018/19

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.

Chart 1: Number of children and young people who received counselling in Wales, by gender, 2018/19



- 87 per cent of all children and young people who received counselling were between the Year 7 and Year 11 age groups in 2018/19.
- The most common form of referral was by school-based and other education staff, accounting for nearly 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.

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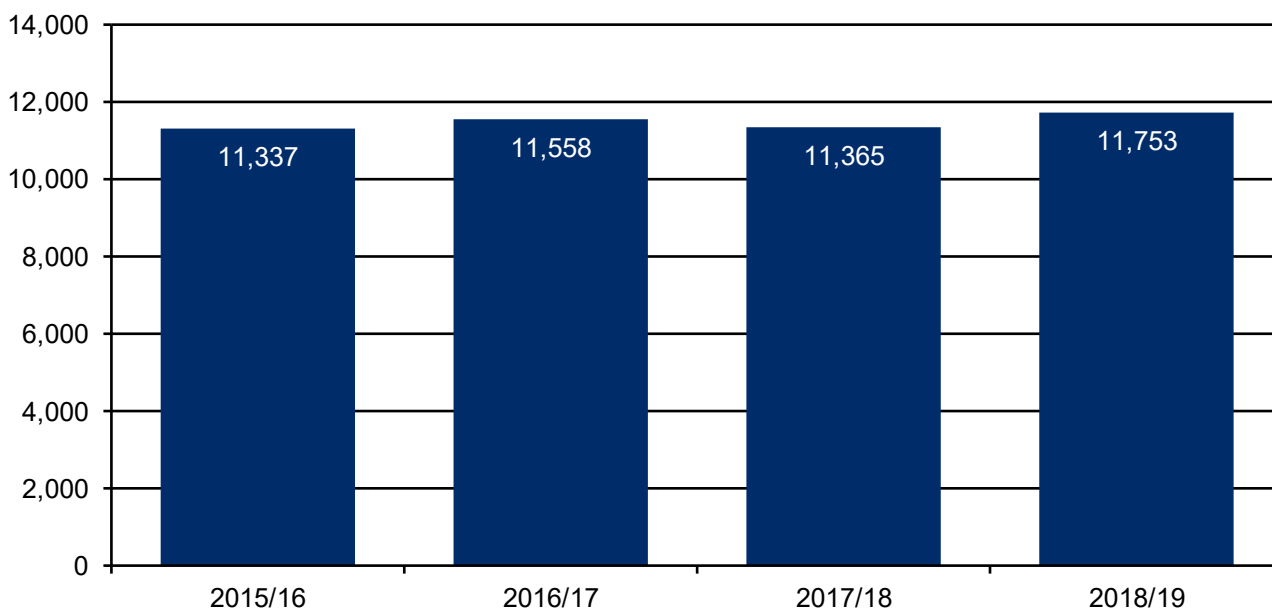
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Counselling in this context gives children and young people the opportunity to talk face to face with a counsellor about their worries and concerns, to work through difficult feelings so that they can learn to manage them. Where appropriate counselling 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

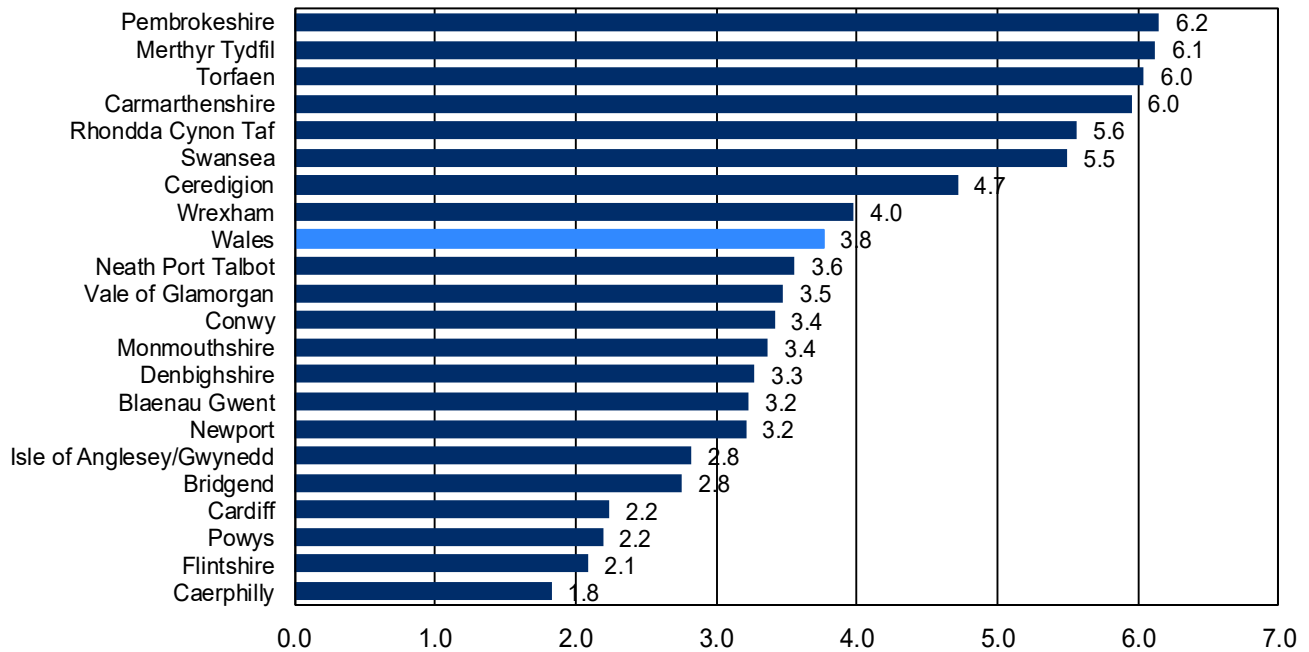
Chart 2: Number of children and young people who received counselling in Wales



Source: Counselling for children and young people, Welsh Government

- 11,753 children or young people received counselling services in 2018/19, an increase of 3 per cent compared with 2017/18.
- Females accounted for 63 per cent or 7,431 of the 11,753 children and young people who received counselling in 2018/19, compared to 37 per cent or 4,322 males (Chart 1).
- The gender split of 63 per cent female, 37 per cent male is the same as 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, 2018/19 (a)



Source: Counselling for children and young people, Welsh Government

(a) Population estimates obtained from 2018 Mid-year population estimates produced by the Office for National Statistics.

- 3.8 children and young people per 100 of resident 10-18 year olds received counselling in Wales in 2018/19.
- Pembrokeshire had the highest rate of children and young people per 100 of resident 10-18 year olds who received counselling (6.2 in 2018/19, Chart 3).
- Rhondda Cynon Taf had the most children and young people who received counselling (1,347 in 2018/19, Table 1).
- Caerphilly had the lowest rate of children and young people per 100 of resident 10-18 year olds who received counselling (1.8 in 2018/19, Chart 3).
- Blaenau Gwent had the fewest children and young people who received counselling (216 in 2018/19, Table 1).

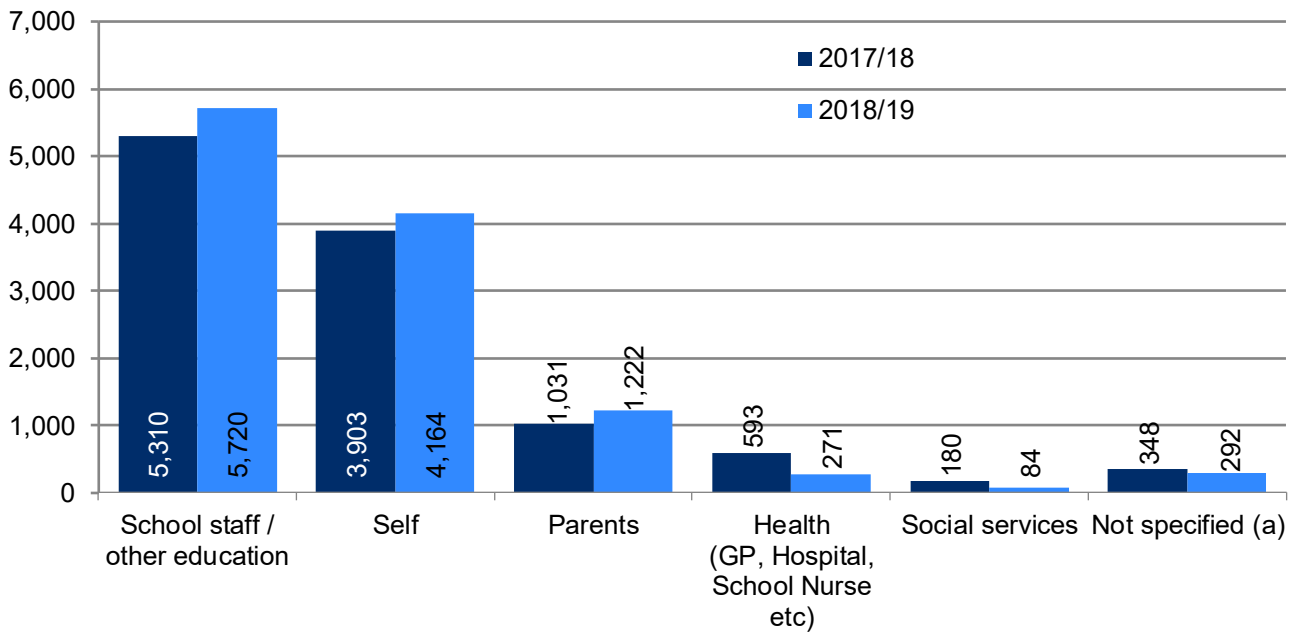
Table 1: Number of children and young people who received counselling (excluding online counselling) in Wales, by local authority, 2018/19

Local authority	Male	Female	Total
Isle of Anglesey/Gwynedd	181	341	522
Conwy	173	200	373
Denbighshire	110	207	317
Flintshire	103	235	338
Wrexham	211	351	562
Powys	87	191	278
Ceredigion	124	183	307
Pembrokeshire	278	483	761
Carmarthenshire	416	713	1,129
Swansea	491	821	1,312
Neath Port Talbot	178	324	502
Bridgend	165	234	399
Vale of Glamorgan	170	310	480
Cardiff	254	532	786
Rhondda Cynon Taf	542	805	1,347
Merthyr Tydfil	148	223	371
Caerphilly	146	200	346
Blaenau Gwent	80	136	216
Torfaen	181	384	565
Monmouthshire	115	204	319
Newport	169	354	523
Wales	4,322	7,431	11,753

Source: Counselling for children and young people, Welsh Government

Note: Online counselling was also provided by Powys to 221 children and young people and by Cardiff to 241 children and young people between the ages of 11 and 18.

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

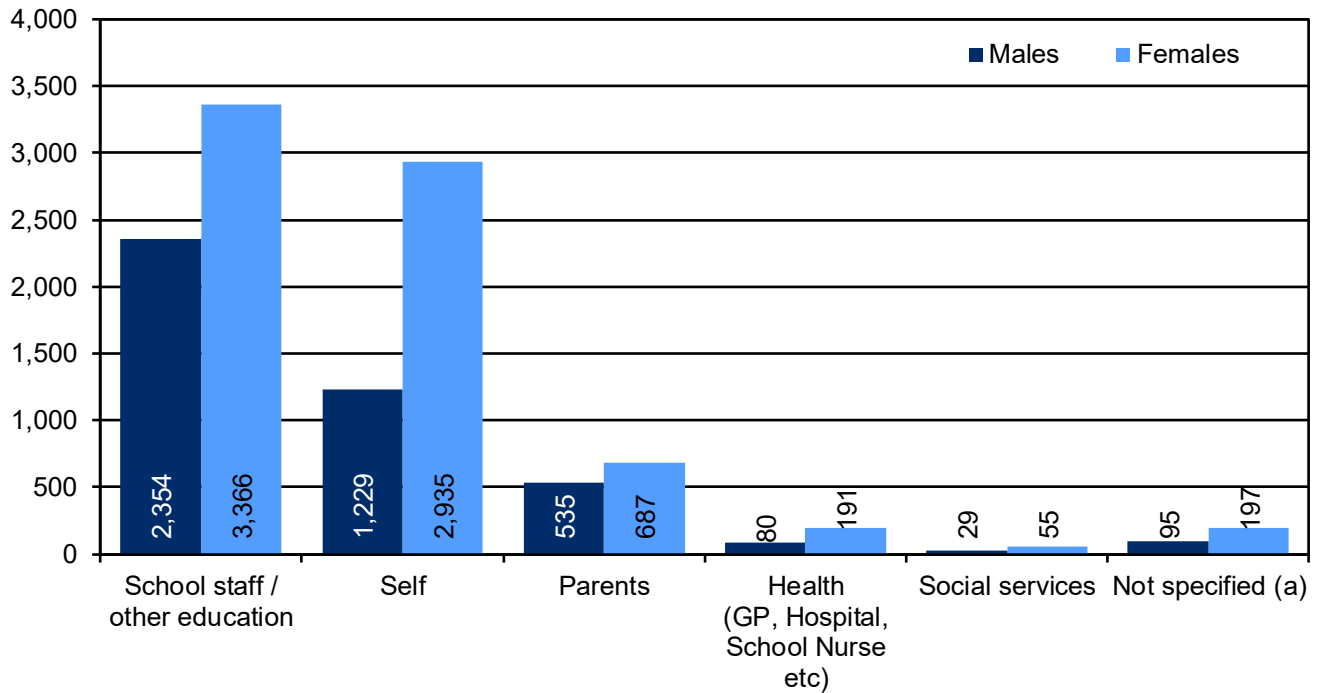


Source: Counselling for children and young people, Welsh Government

(a) Not specified includes the categories 'Prefer not to say', 'Not known' and 'Other'.

- The most common form of referral was by school-based and other education staff, which accounted for nearly half of all referrals (49 per cent) in 2018/19. Self referral was the second most common form of referral (35 per cent) in 2018/19, followed by parents (10 per cent).
- Referrals by school-based and other education staff increased the most compared with last year. Referrals by health services and those from social services decreased by over half compared with last year.

Chart 5: Form of referral of children and young people who received counselling by gender in 2018/19

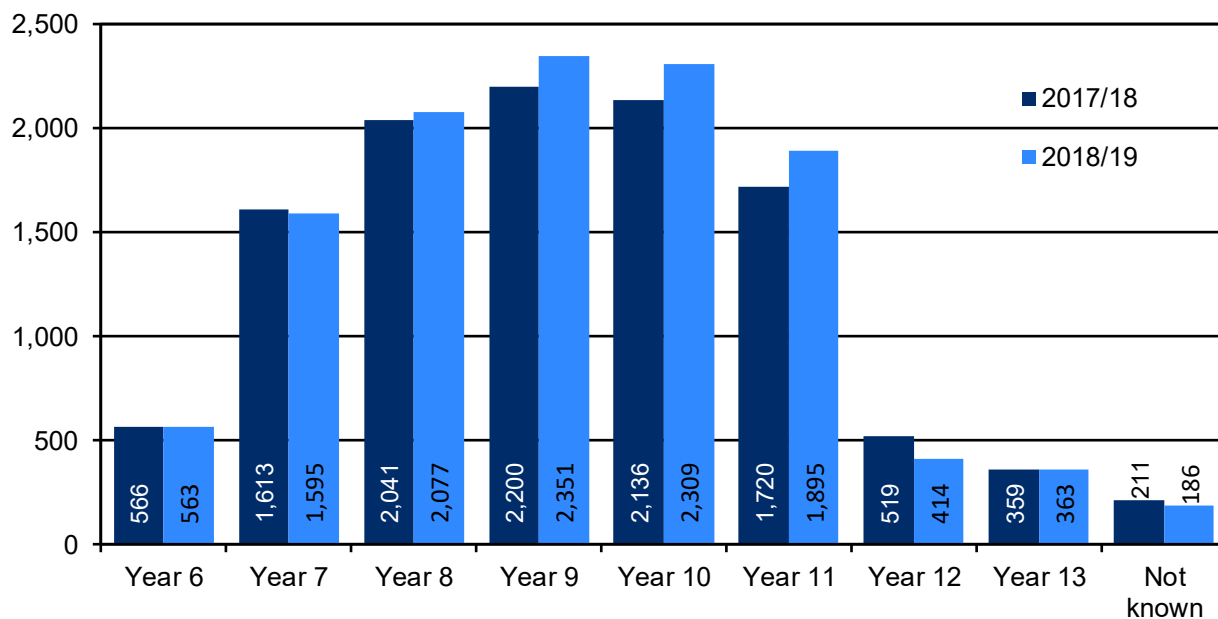


Source: Counselling for children and young people, Welsh Government

(a) Not specified includes the categories 'Prefer not to say', 'Not known' and 'Other'.

- Males and females attending counselling displayed a similar trend in their form of referral, with referral by school-based and other education staff the most common, followed by self referral for both males and females.
- However, males were more likely to have been referred by school-based and other education staff (54 per cent of all male referrals) compared to their female counterparts (45 per cent of all female referrals).
- Conversely, females were more likely to refer themselves (39 per cent of all female referrals) compared to their male counterparts (28 per cent of all male referrals).

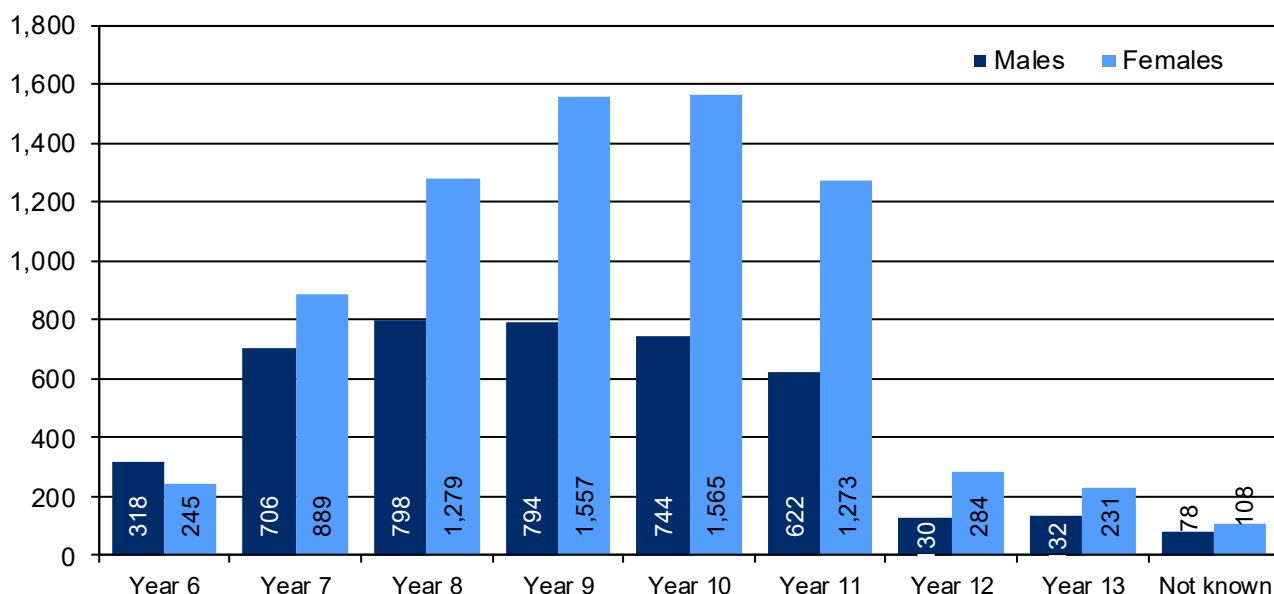
Chart 6: Number of children and young people who received counselling in Wales by school year age group



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 2018/19. 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 20 per cent of all children and young people who received counselling in 2018/19.
- 87 per cent of all children and young people who received counselling were between the Year 7 and Year 11 age groups in 2018/19, although this is primarily driven by trends across age in counselling for females as illustrated in the following section.
- The number of children and young people who received counselling increased compared with last year for Year 8 through to Year 11 and for Year 13. The number who received counselling decreased in all other year groups.

Chart 7: Number of children and young people who received counselling in Wales by gender and school year age group in 2018/19



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 who attended counselling remained relatively steady, between 600 and 800 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 Year 10 of 1,565 females.

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

Ethnic Background	2016/17		2017/18		2018/19	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
White	10,999	95.2	10,838	95.4	10,963	93.3
Mixed Race	222	1.9	231	2.0	257	2.2
Asian or Asian British	122	1.1	128	1.1	142	1.2
Black or Black British	44	0.4	45	0.4	51	0.4
Chinese or Chinese British	12	0.1	17	0.1	8	0.1
Any other ethnic background	68	0.6	60	0.5	115	1.0
Not known	91	0.8	46	0.4	217	1.8
Total	11,558	100.0	11,365	100.0	11,753	100.0

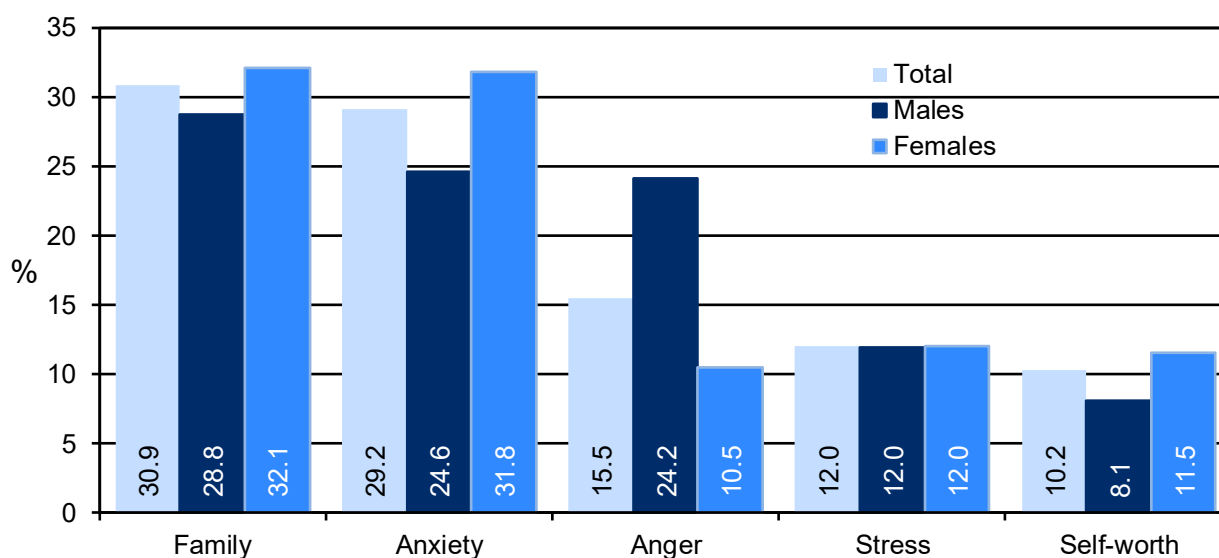
Source: Counselling for children and young people, Welsh Government

- The majority (93 per cent) of children and young people who received counselling classified themselves as white in 2018/19. 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 2018/19



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 forms of presenting issues on referral were family (31 per cent) and anxiety (29 per cent) in 2018/19. Anger issues were the third most common form of presenting issue on referral (15 per cent in 2018/19).
- The most common form of presenting issue on referral for both males and females was family issues.
- Of the other most common presenting issues recorded, males were more likely than females to be referred due to anger issues, whilst females were more likely than males to be referred for anxiety or issues relating to self-worth.
- The fourth highest presenting issue for males was behaviour related (15 per cent) and the fifth highest issue for females was relationships (11 per cent) in Table 3.

Table 3: All presenting issues for children and young people who received counselling in Wales in 2018/19 (a)

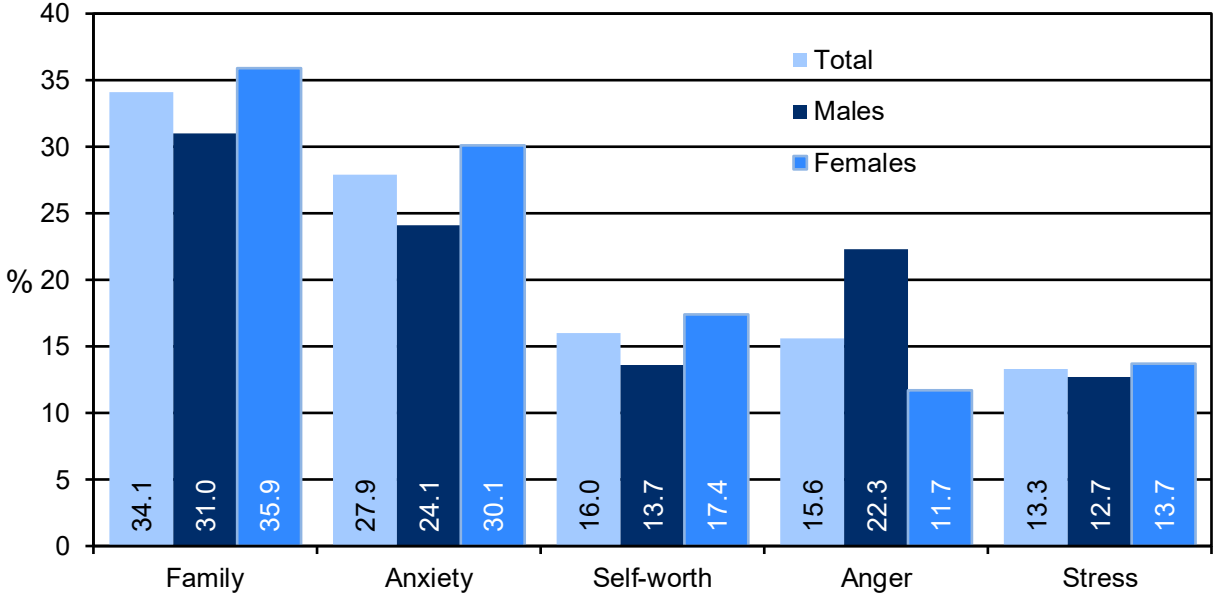
Presenting issues on referral	Male		Female		Total	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Family	1,244	28.8	2,387	32.1	3,631	30.9
Anxiety	1,065	24.6	2,365	31.8	3,430	29.2
Anger	1,044	24.2	777	10.5	1,821	15.5
Stress	517	12.0	895	12.0	1,412	12.0
Self-worth	348	8.1	856	11.5	1,204	10.2
Relationships other	325	7.5	789	10.6	1,114	9.5
Behaviour related	658	15.2	448	6.0	1,106	9.4
Depression	389	9.0	707	9.5	1,096	9.3
Bereavement	410	9.5	627	8.4	1,037	8.8
Self-harm	192	4.4	670	9.0	862	7.3
Bullying	242	5.6	454	6.1	696	5.9
Academic	229	5.3	319	4.3	548	4.7
Suicide	153	3.5	224	3.0	377	3.2
Other (a)	105	2.4	184	2.5	289	2.5
Sexual (including orientation)	96	2.2	189	2.5	285	2.4
Abuse (including sexual)	59	1.4	199	2.7	258	2.2
Relationship with boyfriend/girlfriend	69	1.6	149	2.0	218	1.9
Illness	84	1.9	131	1.8	215	1.8
Relationships with teachers	84	1.9	105	1.4	189	1.6
Domestic abuse	44	1.0	82	1.1	126	1.1
Eating disorders	22	0.5	101	1.4	123	1.0
Substance misuse	32	0.7	86	1.2	118	1.0
Caring responsibility	28	0.6	71	1.0	99	0.8
Not known	51	1.2	46	0.6	97	0.8
Transgender issues	34	0.8	43	0.6	77	0.7
Cyber safety (including cyber-bullying and sexting)	11	0.3	24	0.3	35	0.3
Financial concerns/poverty	9	0.2	17	0.2	26	0.2
Offending	5	0.1	4	0.1	9	0.1

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 2018/19



Source: Counselling for children and young people, Welsh Government

- The most common form of predominant issue was family issues which was an issue for over a third (34 per cent) of all children and young people who received counselling services in 2018/19. Anxiety (28 per cent) and self-worth (16 per cent) issues were the next most common forms of predominant issue in 2018/19.
- Similarly to presenting issues, the most common form of predominant issue for both males and females was family issues.
- Of the other most common predominant issues recorded, males were more likely than females to be referred due to anger issues, whilst females were more likely than males to be referred for anxiety or issues relating to self-worth.
- The fourth highest predominant issue for males was behaviour related (14 per cent) and the fourth highest issue for females was relationships (14 per cent) in Table 4.
- Since 2015/16 there has been an increase in anxiety as a presenting and predominant issue.

Table 4: All predominant issues of children and young people who received counselling in Wales in 2018/19(a)

Predominant issues on referral	Male		Female		Total	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Family	1,339	31.0	2,670	35.9	4,009	34.1
Anxiety	1,042	24.1	2,237	30.1	3,279	27.9
Self-worth	590	13.7	1,294	17.4	1,884	16.0
Anger	964	22.3	866	11.7	1,830	15.6
Stress	547	12.7	1,020	13.7	1,567	13.3
Relationships other	466	10.8	1,029	13.8	1,495	12.7
Behaviour related	602	13.9	437	5.9	1,039	8.8
Bereavement	383	8.9	639	8.6	1,022	8.7
Depression	318	7.4	614	8.3	932	7.9
Self-harm	175	4.0	570	7.7	745	6.3
Bullying	270	6.2	452	6.1	722	6.1
Academic	225	5.2	350	4.7	575	4.9
Suicide	149	3.4	242	3.3	391	3.3
Relationship with boyfriend/girlfriend	84	1.9	230	3.1	314	2.7
Other	130	3.0	180	2.4	310	2.6
Relationships with teachers	129	3.0	166	2.2	295	2.5
Abuse (including sexual)	43	1.0	191	2.6	234	2.0
Illness	74	1.7	144	1.9	218	1.9
Domestic abuse	51	1.2	97	1.3	148	1.3
Eating disorders	17	0.4	111	1.5	128	1.1
Sexual (including orientation)	42	1.0	76	1.0	118	1.0
Caring responsibility	28	0.6	85	1.1	113	1.0
Not known	35	0.8	44	0.6	79	0.7
Transgender issues	31	0.7	39	0.5	70	0.6
Substance misuse	26	0.6	23	0.3	49	0.4
Cyber safety (including cyber-bullying and sexting)	11	0.3	36	0.5	47	0.4
Financial concerns/poverty	15	0.3	25	0.3	40	0.3
Offending	8	0.2	9	0.1	17	0.1

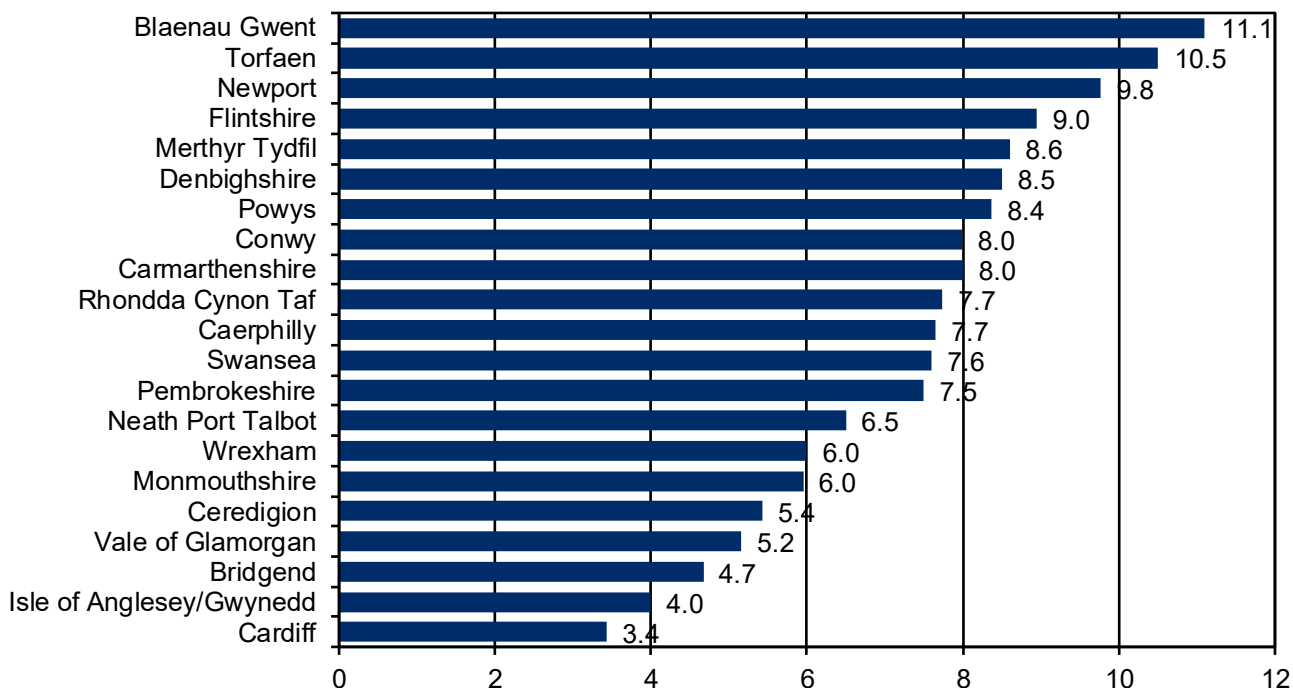
Source: Counselling for children and young people, Welsh Government

(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: Average YP Core scores

YP Core is a measure of psychological distress reported by young people, both before and after counselling. For further information on the form completed by young people please refer to the following link: [Form](#)

Chart 10: Average improvement in YP Core score for children and young people who received counselling in Wales by local authority in 2018/19



Source: Counselling for children and young people, Welsh Government

- Blaenau Gwent had the largest average improvement in YP Core score amongst children and young people who received counselling in 2018/19 (an improvement in YP Core score of 11.1, Chart 10).
- Cardiff had the smallest average improvement in YP Core score amongst children and young people who received counselling in 2018/19 (an improvement in average YP Core score of 3.4, Chart 10).

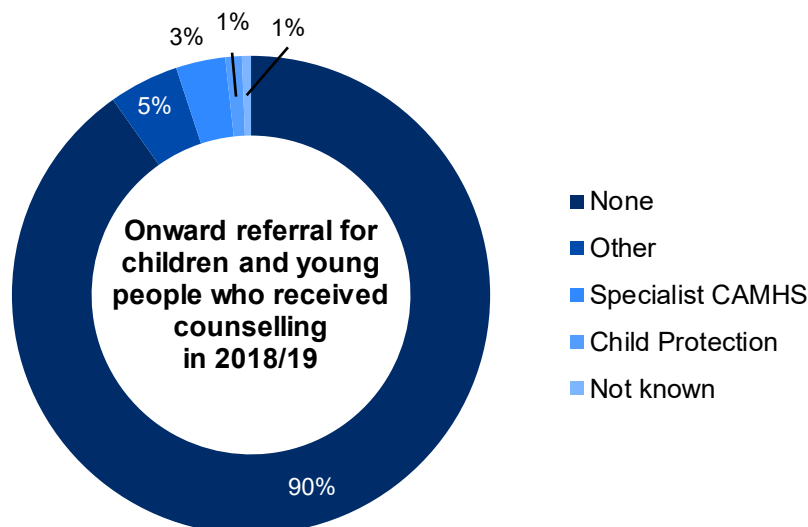
Table 5: Average YP Core score for children and young people who received counselling in Wales by local authority in 2018/19

Local authority	Average score at start	Average score at end	Average improvement in score
Isle of Anglesey/Gwynedd	17.0	13.0	4.0
Conwy	17.9	9.9	8.0
Denbighshire	19.0	10.5	8.5
Flintshire	18.1	9.1	9.0
Wrexham	20.0	14.0	6.0
Powys	19.2	10.8	8.4
Ceredigion	18.8	13.4	5.4
Pembrokeshire	19.5	12.0	7.5
Carmarthenshire	20.0	12.0	8.0
Swansea	20.1	12.5	7.6
Neath Port Talbot	21.0	14.5	6.5
Bridgend	17.9	13.3	4.7
Vale of Glamorgan	17.5	12.3	5.2
Cardiff	18.8	15.3	3.4
Rhondda Cynon Taf	19.6	11.9	7.7
Merthyr Tydfil	20.6	12.0	8.6
Caerphilly	17.9	10.3	7.7
Blaenau Gwent	19.6	8.5	11.1
Torfaen	25.0	14.5	10.5
Monmouthshire	20.6	14.7	6.0
Newport	23.0	13.2	9.8

Source: Counselling for children and young people, Welsh Government

Section 4: Onward referrals

Chart 11: Onward referrals of children and young people who received counselling in Wales in 2018/19



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 (90 per cent in 2018/19).(Chart 11)
- Females were more likely to be referred onwards (9.7 per cent in 2018/19) following the completion of counselling than their male counterparts (8.3 per cent in 2018/19).
- 3.3 per cent of children and young people who received counselling were referred onwards to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) in 2018/19.
- Similar proportion of males (3.3 per cent) and females (3.4 per cent) were referred onwards to the CAMHS in 2018/19.

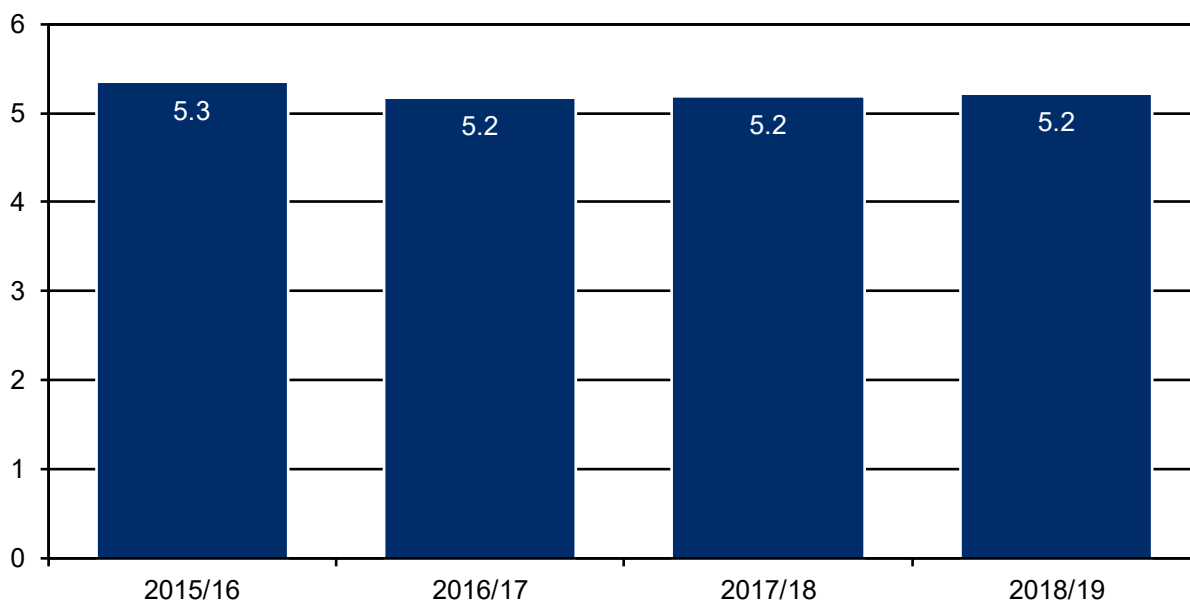
Table 6: Onward referrals of children and young people who received counselling in Wales in 2018/19

Onward referral	Male		Female		Total	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Specialist CAMHS	141	3.3	252	3.4	393	3.3
Child Protection	34	0.8	97	1.3	131	1.1
Other	183	4.2	373	5.0	556	4.7
None	3,921	90.7	6,680	89.9	10,601	90.2
Not known	43	1.0	29	0.4	72	0.6
Total	4,322	100.0	7,431	100.0	11,753	100.0

Source: Counselling for children and young people, Welsh Government

Section 5: Counselling sessions attended

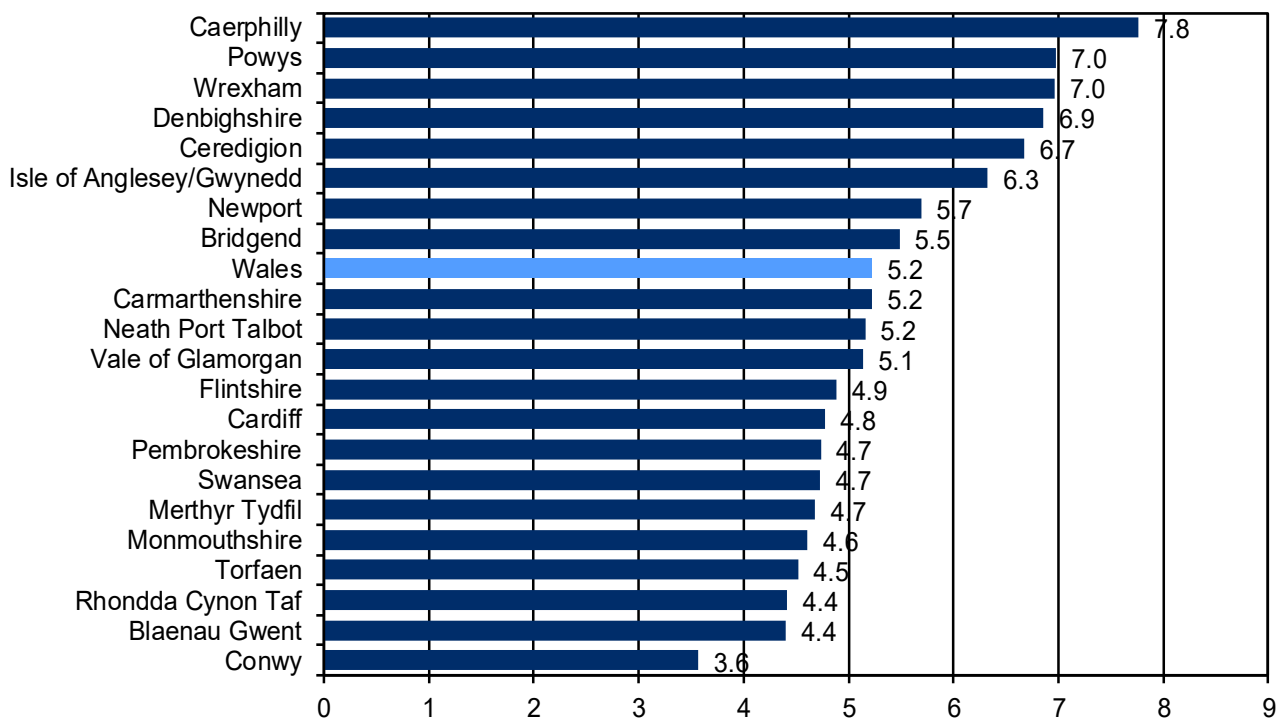
Chart 12: Average number of counselling sessions attended by children and young people in Wales who received counselling



Source: Counselling for children and young people, Welsh Government

- In 2018/19 the average number of counselling sessions attended by children and young people who received counselling in Wales was 5.2. The number of sessions has remained constant for the last three years.

Chart 13: Average number of counselling sessions attended by children and young people in Wales who received counselling in Wales by local authority in 2018/19



Source: Counselling for children and young people, Welsh Government

- There was considerable variation in the average number of counselling sessions per child or young person, from 3.6 sessions in Conwy to 7.8 in Caerphilly.

Key Quality Information

Policy and operational context

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 School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 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.

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](#)

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.

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 AFON.

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:

[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.

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 31 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:

<https://gov.wales/counselling-children-and-young-people>

Next update

March 2021 (provisional)

We want your feedback

This is the fifth 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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