

# Headline facts and figures - 2022-23

## Serious incident notifications

# 456

Up 14 from 2021-22 but down 42 from 2018-19

## Serious incident notifications relating to child death

# 201

Up 10 from 2021-22 but down 26 from 2018-19

## Serious incident notifications relating to serious harm

# 244

Up 17 from 2021-22 and up 8 from 2018-19

All data in this release is based on single notifiable incidents. In some instances, a notification can relate to more than one child. The data shows the number of incidents reported in the period, rather than the number of incidents that occurred in the period.

## Number of serious incident notifications by nature of notification, 2018-19 to 2022-23.

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
<b>Total</b>	498	449	536	442	456
<b>Child death</b>	227	188	223	191	201
<b>Serious harm</b>	236	253	284	227	244
<b>Other</b>	35	8	29	24	11

## Footnotes

1. The majority of notifications in the other category relate to incidents with child perpetrators who were themselves known or suspected to have been abused or neglected.

Source: Child Safeguarding Incident Notification System

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## About these statistics

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The Children Act 2004 (as amended by the [Children and Social Work Act 2017](#)) states that where a local authority in England knows or suspects that a child has been abused or neglected, the local authority must notify the [Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel](#) (the Panel) and by extension the Department and Ofsted if:

- (a) the child dies or is seriously harmed in the local authority's area, or
- (b) while normally resident in the local authority's area, the child dies or is seriously harmed outside England.

The local authority must also notify the Secretary of State and Ofsted where a looked after child has died, whether or not abuse or neglect is known or suspected.

The statutory duty to notify the Panel came into effect from 29 June 2018. Prior to this, notifications were made to Ofsted.

Serious harm includes (but is not limited to) serious and/or long-term impairment of a child's mental health or intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development. It also covers impairment of physical health.

The data shows the number of incidents reported in the period, rather than the number of incidents that occurred in the period. The data is based on single notifiable incidents, which can relate to more than one child in some instances.

The local authority should notify the Panel within 5 working days of becoming aware that the incident has occurred. However, we know that in some cases, there is a delay in notifications being submitted. In addition, whilst reporting has improved in recent years, the Department is aware that, in some instances, not all incidents that meet the definition for a serious incident are notified, particularly those relating to serious harm.

These statistics have been published as official statistics for the first time within this release, whereas previously they were classified as experimental statistics. Further information on the different types of official statistic is available on the [website of the UK Statistics Authority](#). The rationale to publish these statistics as official statistics is as follows:

- The Department has now been responsible for the production and publication of the statistics for four years and data quality has improved since 29 June 2018 following the statutory duty coming into effect on local authorities to notify the Panel of serious incidents.
- The Department considers these statistics to be an accurate account of the number of serious incidents that local authorities have notified to the Panel. However, whilst reporting has improved in recent years, the Department is aware that, in some instances, not all incidents that meet the definition for a serious

incident are notified, particularly those relating to serious harm. See the 'Data Quality' section of the ['Methodology page'](#) for further considerations when using the data.

- There is no intention to stop this series (user engagement has shown continued need for the data).

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## Total number of notifications

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Figures on serious incident notifications between 2014-15 and 2017-18 are based on [Ofsted published data](#) and for 2018-19 onwards are based on Department for Education data.

In 2022-23, there were 456 notifications, up 14 from a year earlier, but down 42 from 2018-19. The latest figure represents approximately one notification per every 26,000 children (aged 0-17) in England, equivalent to 0.004% of the total child population.

It is not possible to ascertain from the figures whether the increase in 2020-21 was linked to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the Panel noted in their [2020 Annual report](#) (page 9) 'Evidence from our analysis of Serious Incident Notifications and rapid reviews is that the COVID-19 outbreak continues to present a situational risk for vulnerable children and families, with the potential to exacerbate pre-existing safeguarding risks and bring about new ones.'

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## Nature of notifications

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In 2022-23:

- child death notifications were up 10 from a year earlier but down 26 from 2018-19
- serious harm notifications were up 17 from a year earlier and up 8 from 2018-19
- serious harm remained the most common nature of incident

# Child characteristics

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All data in this release is based on single notifiable incidents. In some instances, a notification can relate to more than one child; when this happens, the characteristic information is based on one child only (either the first child listed on the notification or the child whom the harm relates to). Therefore, in some instances, the characteristics information doesn't always relate to all children involved in the serious incident and this should be considered when interpreting the figures. The characteristic information is identified as at the point of notification.

Comparisons between characteristics data over time and between different characteristics in any given year should be made with caution due to the small sizes of some breakdowns.

## Serious incident notifications by age

In 2022-23, under 1s have remained the most common age group, accounting for 35% of notifications. In comparison, at 6%, under 1s accounted for a much smaller proportion in the [latest children in need figures](#) (1).

(1) those assessed as needing help or protection from children's social care services given risks to their development or health.

## Serious incident notifications by gender

In 2022-23, males continued to be the most common gender, accounting for 55% of all notifications. Males are also over-represented (but to a lesser extent) in the [Children in Need population](#). There were 6 notifications relating to transgender children.

## Serious incident notifications by ethnicity

In 2022-23, based on notifications recorded with a known ethnicity, 3 in 10 related to children from ethnic minority groups (excluding white minorities), which is equal to the most recent [children in need](#) figure, and slightly higher than the figure among children (aged 0-17) from the [2021 census](#) (27%).

## Serious incident notifications by disability status

Based on notifications with a known disability status, approximately 1 in 5 involved a child with a disability in 2022-23.

## Placement at time of incident

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In 2022-23, the majority of notifications continued to relate to children living at home, accounting for 7 in 10 notifications.

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## Children on a child protection plan or known to any agency

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### Children on a child protection plan

In 2022-23, around 1 in 9 notifications related to those on a child protection plan, down from around 1 in 6 in 2018-19.

### Children known to any agency

Figures on children known to any agency need to be treated with caution because:

- whether a child was known to any agency is interpreted differently across local authorities. Some local authorities only include children known to children's social care but in other cases can include agencies such as the police, GP services, health visitors, early help, midwifery, etc.
- they can include children involved with agencies previously, and not just at the time of incident.
- information is recorded at the time of reporting. Local authorities may not yet know whether the child was known to any agency.

In 2022-23, 78% of notifications involved children who were known to any agency, the lowest proportion in the series. This fall is likely attributable, at least in part, to children known to GP services being (mostly) excluded from known to any agency from 2022-23 onwards.

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## Help and support

### Methodology

Find out how and why we collect, process and publish these statistics.