

CPR3 Return: Referrals, Assessments and Children and Young People who are the subjects of Child Protection Plans (on Child Protection Registers)

Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

Please email questions and comments to dsc.helpdesk@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk

The frequently asked questions (FAQs) and the guidance maintain changes to the terminology introduced in last year's exercise. This means that:

- rather than being described as being on a child protection register, children are said to be the subject of a child protection plan (CPP);
- de-registrations are described as discontinued CPPs (or cessations);
- new registrations are referred to as children becoming the subject of a CPP for the first time;
- re-registrations are referred to as children becoming the subject of a CPP for a second or subsequent time.

These changes are in anticipation of the transition to the new arrangements described in *Working Together* by 1 April 2008. The collection in essence remains unchanged and the guidance and FAQs would apply in just the same way as it did in the last 2 years.

PART A

1. Does Part A count events or children?

The general rule is that the items in Part A are a count of **children**.

But take care not be misled by the special cases described in the following scenarios; in case (B), where the same child was referred or assessed more than once, each referral or assessment would be counted separately.

So in case (B), Part A of CPR is not in fact a count of children, but of events.

(A) Sibling groups

Data items in Part A do not count family groups as a single assessment, referral, or s47 enquiry, even though in practice several children in a family may be assessed at the same time.

Two examples:

- *a group of four siblings are referred at the same time. That counts as four children on the CPR3, not one family. Accordingly this would count as four referrals in item 1.*
- *two children in a family group of six children require referral. That counts as two children for the purposes of the CPR3. (The other four children would not be counted, unless they too became the subjects of referral).*

(B) Same child referred or assessed more than once

If one child was the subject of more than one referral, assessment or s47 enquiry during the year, then each referral or assessment should be counted.

2. Are unborn children counted in Part A?

The figures recorded in Part A should include any unborn children who were the subject of referrals, assessments, s47 enquiries or initial child protection conferences. They are not, however, separately identified in Part A.

3. Which initial contacts go on to be counted as referrals and hence should be included in Part A, item 1?

In practice, children's individual circumstances vary, and it is not possible to provide examples to cover every eventuality. Please regard these examples as presenting the general principles upon which interpretation of this CPR3 item must be based.

Some examples

(1) There is one initial contact. It is a request for information (e.g. by phone or at an information counter), which is provided to the enquirer. No further action is required by the caller and there is no request for the provision of a service by children's social care. Although this activity would be logged, it is not a referral for the purposes of

CPR3.

(2) There is one initial contact (e.g. from the child themselves, or a parent, or a teacher or health professional). **It is a request for the provision of a service by childrens social care.** It is therefore a referral and should be counted on CPR3, even if a decision is taken that no further action is required and an initial assessment is not carried out.

(3) There are a number of initial contacts from third parties (e.g. school, health professionals, neighbours) expressing concern about a child whom they suspect is 'at risk' of harm. Any one of these cumulative contacts might trigger a referral, but just one referral should be counted for that child on CPR3. The key point is that once the decision is taken to open a case, there would still only be one referral however many initial contacts were made with childrens social care around this time about the child. Only once this case had been closed, could a further referral arise.

4. In Part A item 1 what happens if the referral determines that no further action is needed?

The response to a referral may be to determine that no further action is needed, but that in itself is a decision, and should be made promptly and recorded. Such a scenario would still be counted as a referral in CPR3 even though it did not lead to an initial assessment of need. Alternatively, a referral may lead to the direct provision of inter-agency services, and/or an initial assessment of needs. Whichever course of action is decided upon, it must be decided within one working day of the referral.

5. In Part A item 1 of CPR3 what do you mean by re-referrals in the year?

A re-referral is a case where a referral occurs within 12 months of a previous referral which is **now a closed case**. This data item only covers referrals and re-referrals to your local authority (and does not take into account previous referrals to another local authority, if the child has moved to your area). The 'year' in question is the 'statistical year' ending 31 March.

If a child is the subject of more than one referral/re-referral to your local authority during the statistical year, count both referrals separately.

The same principle applies to the other items in Part A – it is possible for a child to be counted more than once.

6. Is new information treated as a re-referral once a case is closed?

If the local authority resolves the case and it is closed but subsequently childrens social care receive new information about the child which justifies a further referral, then this would count as a re-referral for the purposes of CPR3.

By analogy with the treatment of referrals, only one re-referral would be counted on the receipt of new information, no matter how many contacts were made with Childrens social care at this time about the child.

7. What happens if siblings are referred together?

Count each child as a separate referral. However if only two children of a family group of six children required referral, that would count as two referrals, not six. The other four children would not be counted unless they too were the subject of a referral. The same principle applies to other items in Part A.

8. How do I treat a referral received outside of normal office hours, in terms of the time-scales set out in Part A of the CPR3 return?

We ask how many initial assessments are completed within 7 working days of referral. If the referral is received within normal office hours, then this day is classed as working 'day 0'. If the referral is received outside of normal office hours then the next working day would be classed as 'day 0'. Appendix 1 gives more details on calculating duration.

Obviously 'normal office hours' vary between local authorities, so we don't specify an actual time. The rationale is that if the referral is received outside of office hours, it is reasonable that the 'clock does not start ticking' until the next working day.

9. Regarding Part A Item 4; if, following s47 enquiries, it is decided at an initial child protection conference that a child should become the subject of a child protection plan, and at this conference it is also decided that a sibling (or unborn child if the mother is pregnant) should become the subject of a CPP, how do I treat this in terms of the 15 working day timescale?

For all children there should be a s47 enquiry prior to deciding to hold a child protection conference. Conferences should not be held, nor should a child be made the subject of a CPP without a s47 enquiry, even in the case of an unborn child. See paragraph 5.14 in *Working Together to Safeguard Children*. To make a child the subject of a CPP without having a s47 enquiry contravenes the Human Rights Act 1998. An initial child protection conference should be convened no more than 15 working days after the strategy discussion at which s47 enquiries are initiated.

10. Part A, Item 4 asks for the number of initial child protection conferences which were held within 15 working days of the initiation of the s47 enquiries which led to the conference. In terms of timeliness, how do I treat children moving in to the local authority area from another local authority where they are the subject of a CPP?

In such cases, the local authority should convene a child protection conference within 15 working days of being notified of the child's move to their area. (See *Working Together to Safeguard Children* para 5.133). So if a child moving into the local authority area has been subject to a conference within 15 working days of your being notified of the move, this child would be counted in the relevant box in Item 4. Appendix 1 explains in general terms how to calculate working days.

11. Because the referral and assessment process can cross the statistical year end at 31 March, our figures do not exactly balance.

All other factors being equal, there is a statistical probability that one twelfth of children who enter the referral and assessment process in the year will do so in March, and for some of these children the various stages of the process will continue into the next statistical year. Hence there may not be an exact reconciliation between numbers within the year.

The various 'warnings' triggered by the validation checks built into the internet versions of CPR3 do not necessarily mean the figures are wrong, they are simply to alert you to possible mistakes. It is only the 'error' messages which indicate that figures you have entered must be wrong.

It is important for the integrity of the statistics that you do not treat all children's referrals, assessments and s47 enquiries and conferences as taking place within the year, if this was not in fact the case.

12. In addition to the decision to carry out an in-depth assessment on the completion of an initial assessment, a core assessment can also be triggered by a strategy discussion decision to initiate s47 enquiries or if new information obtained on an open case indicates that a core assessment should be undertaken. How do I treat these alternative trigger events in responding to the question of how many core assessments are completed within 35 working days of initial assessment?

Where the question asks how many core assessments are completed within 35 working days of initial assessment and the trigger event is one of the two alternatives given above, count the assessment in this item if it was completed within 35 working days of the relevant trigger event to that child.

13. We had a larger number of conferences than s47 enquiries. This is because in some cases children are assessed over a period of time and there is no single incident which justifies a conference. This triggered a validation check 'warning' against Item 4 of Part A.

This validation check tests the number of children reported in Item 4 of CPR3 who were the subject of an initial child protection conference held during the year, against the number reported in Item 4 who were the subject of section 47 enquiries initiated in the year. The check is specified in accordance with the guidance in Chapter 5 of '*Working Together to Safeguard Children*', that all children about whom there are child protection concerns should be the subject of individual s47 enquiries.

There will be a small number of cases where the s47 enquiries take place at the end of one statistical year, in late March, and the conference falls in the next statistical year, in early April. In these circumstances only, the CPR3 would legitimately show a slightly larger number of conferences than s47 enquiries.

PART B

Please read the note on terminology at the beginning of the document before proceeding.

14. In Part B, what happens if a child moves local authority?

If a child who is the subject of a CPP in one local authority moves to live in another local authority's area, and if that second local authority, following a child protection conference, decides that a child should be the subject of a CPP, then that local authority should count the child as becoming the subject of a CPP for the first time (new registration). At the same time the previous local authority will discontinue the CPP. If a child has moved local authority is being treated as a new registration in their new authority, they should have a 3 month review followed by the usual 6 monthly review ie the process will be the same as if they were a new registration.

15. We had a larger number of children who are the subject of CPPs than initial child protection conferences. This is because we do not hold conferences for children who move to our area from the area of another local authority and were already the subject of a plan in their CPR. This triggered a validation check 'warning' against table 5.

This validation check tests the total in Table 5, Part B, against Item 4 Part A of CPR3. It is specified in accordance with the guidance in *Working Together to Safeguard Children*, that every child who is the subject of a CPP should have been the subject of an initial child protection conference.

Where a child moves permanently from the area of another local authority, para 5.133 of *Working Together to Safeguard Children* requires that the receiving local authority convenes a conference within 15 working days of being notified of the move.

16. I have heard that legal status W1 has been withdrawn.

SSDA903 legal status W1 (Ward of High Court, placed in local authority care) was introduced experimentally at the request of a few local authorities when the SSDA 903 codes were revised. Although section 100 of the Children Act 1989 removed the power of the courts to make children wards of court in local authority care, there remains a residual power which may be used in international cases. In fact the use of code W1 on statistical returns has proved to be negligible and we are withdrawing it. It was removed from CPR3 for 2002/03. If any such case occurs they should in future be coded as care orders.

17. Should placement orders be recorded in Table 3.

Yes, the table follows the practice used for SSDA903, with placement orders replacing freeing orders. The SSDA903 guidance provides further details.

PAF INDICATORS (Table 9)

18. Does PAF A3 count children or the number of times a child becomes the subject of a CPP? The PAF publication refers to the 'percentage of children'.

The same child can be counted more than once in each of Tables 5, 6, and 7 of Part B of CPR3. The PAF indicator should therefore be a count of the number of times children become the subject of a CPP, not individual children.

19. PAF A3 counts the number of children becoming the subject of a CPP for a second or subsequent time (re-registrations). Our records go back many years, but those of a neighbouring local authority are only 3 years old as they recently replaced their database. Surely this undermines the concept of comparability between local authorities?

As presently defined, the indicator takes into account any previous occasion on which a child was the subject of a CPP (on your local authority's Child Protection Register), even if that was many years ago. It is our experience that child protection records are kept for a number of years up to and including the 18th birthday of the child, or until the 18th birthday of the youngest sibling in a family where a child has been the subject of a CPP. When updating or replacing databases it is necessary to consider how historic records can be retained in an accessible format.

20. With regard to the calculation of PAF indicator C20, is there a precise definition of three and six months?

In the case of PAF C20, 3 months is equivalent to 91 calendar days and six months

is equivalent to 183 calendar days. To be counted in the denominator, a child must now have been the subject of a CPP continuously since 1 January or earlier, not 1 October or earlier as was the case previously – this is due to the change in definition of PAF indicator C20.

If a child has been the subject of a CPP since before 1 July then they should have had at least 2 revisions in the year - a 3 monthly review, if the child became the subject of a CPP before 30 September and following this a standard 6 monthly review before 1 April. If there is a gap of more than this the child should not be included in the numerator.

Likewise if a child has been the subject of a CPP (on the register) for at least a year, they should have had a minimum of 2 reviews in the year. Thus if the first review in the statistical year was on 1 October or later, there would have been a gap of over 183 calendar days from the beginning of the year and that child would not be counted in the numerator.

21. Please include the definition for PAF C20 which was revised from 2003-04.

The title of the indicator has stayed the same although the definitions of the numerator and denominator have been revised as follows:

Definition from 2003-04 onwards

The percentage of child protection cases which should have been reviewed during the year that were reviewed.

The **numerator** from 2003-04 onwards

Of the children in the denominator, the number whose cases had been reviewed so that:

- i. the first review of the year was held within 6 months of the last review in the previous year (or within 3 months of the child becoming the subject of a CPP, if there was no review in the previous year);
- ii. the maximum gap between reviews during the year was 6 months; and
- iii. a review was held within 6 months of the end of the year (ie on or after 1 October)

(Note that the only account taken of reviews in previous years is set out at (i))

A review should be recorded in writing and should consider the child's safety, health and development against the intended outcomes set out in the child protection plan.

Source: CPR3 Table 9

The **denominator** from 2003/04:

The number of children who are the subject of a CPP at 31 March who at that date had been so continuously for at least the previous 3 months.

Source: CPR3 Table 9.

22. Does the indicator include a three month review requirement for all children becoming the subject of a CPP (registered) in the year, or does the three month rule just apply to children becoming the subject of a CPP in last three months of the preceding year?

The definition of PAF C20 now covers initial reviews as well as the regular 6 monthly reviews. The indicator includes all children who had been continuously the subject of a CPP for at least three months during the year as long as they were still the subject of a CPP at 31 March.

Point (i) of the definition says that a child should have been reviewed "within 3 months of the child becoming the subject of a CPP if there was no review in the previous year". From 2003-04 onwards, this captures children who, for example, became the subject of a CPP prior to 31 March 2007 but who didn't have time for their first review in the 2007-08 statistical year. It also captures children who, for example, became the subject of a CPP in June 2007.

A child becoming the subject of a CPP in June will be captured as long as they are still the subject of a CPP at the following 31 March. For the purpose of part (i) of the definition, there would have been no review in the previous year, so for this child to be included in the numerator their first review must be within 3 months of registration (i.e. Sep) and for the purpose of part (ii) of the definition the maximum gap between reviews must be 6 months so for this child there must be another review completed by March.

APPENDIX 1

Summary of relevant dates for inclusion in CPR3, and an explanation of how to calculate durations

The following table lists the relevant dates to determine whether the child / event should be included in the statistical return for the year ending 31 March 2008. If the relevant date falls within the year 2007/08 then the child / event should be included in the statistical return.

Event	Question on CPR3	'Relevant date' – if it falls within the statistical year, include in the CPR3 return
Referral	Total number of children who have been the subject of referral in the year	A referral must be treated as a single date. It cannot last more than one day. If several agencies refer the same child around the same time, normally select the first referral date as the date of referral for CPR3 purposes.
Initial Assessment	Total number: 1) completed within 7 working days of referral; 2) other.	An assessment is a process which can last more than one day. As we are counting completions, consider the date of completion.
Core assessment	Total number: 1) completed within 35 working days of completion of initial assessment; 2) other.	An assessment is a process, which can last more than one day. As we are counting completions, consider the date of completion.
s47 enquiries	Number of children who were the subject of s47 enquiries initiated in the year	Consider the date that s47 enquiries were started.
ICP Conferences	Number of children who were the subject of initial child protection conferences held; 1) during the year; 2) within 15 working days of initiation of s47enquiries.	A conference is an event rather than a process and will normally have a single date. If, unusually, a conference is adjourned and lasts more than one day, consider the date the conference started.
Becoming the subject of a CPP	1) Number of children becoming the subject of a CPP in the year; 2) of those children who became the subject of a CPP for a second or subsequent time (re-registered), number who	Consider the date that child became the subject of a CPP. If a child was the subject of a CPP on 31 March, count them in the figure of children becoming the subject of a CPP (registrations) in the year, and in the figure of those

	became the subject of a CPP within 1 year of the last CPP being discontinued (de-registration)	who are the subject of a CPP at 31 March.
Discontinued plans (cessations)	Number of plans discontinued (de-registrations) during the year ending 31 March	Consider the date that the child's plan was discontinued (name removed from register). If a child's plan was discontinued on 31 March, count in the figure of discontinued plans (de-registrations) in the year. Do not include in the figure of those who are the subject of a CPP at 31 March.
Looked after at 31 March (tables 3 & 4)	The subject of a CPP and also looked after at 31 March, 1) by legal status, 2) by placement	Must be both looked after and the subject of a CPP at midnight on 31 March.

Important

This is based on a 'non-inclusive' method. These instructions will apply a consistent methodology to the calculation of durations for the CPR3, and are in line with the standard methodology for calculating durations which is used for other statistical purposes.

Formula to calculate durations

We specify taking the start date of an event away from the finishing date. This is the standard methodology which statisticians apply to calculating durations for all children's returns. This method will give you a number of calendar days, and is **not inclusive**, i.e. it does not count both the start date and the finish date, because it subtracts one from the other. Hence the start date of the event is day 0, the next day is day 1, etc

Using a spreadsheet to calculate durations

You can automate this procedure on a spreadsheet by taking the start date away from the finish date. The result will be the number of days using the non-inclusive method.

CAUTION – DON NOT USE THIS METHODOLOGY

Some spreadsheet packages have built-in functions to calculate durations. In Microsoft Excel the function is called 'NETWORKDAYS'. This uses **inclusive** counting. The function is programmed to automatically exclude weekends, and gives the user the option of manually inserting other non-working days (such as bank holidays). Using this function may therefore be attractive to Excel users because it makes it easy to exclude non-working days, but the result is not in line with our required methodology, as it will always calculate durations inclusively. Accordingly you will need to modify the operation to subtract 1 from the result.

Calculating durations of individual data items

All calculations in terms of durations on the CPR3 return are based on working

days, not calendar days. The only time that calendar days is used in connection with CPR3 statistics is in the calculation of PAF indicators.

2A - Initial assessments within 7 working days of referrals

The "clock starts ticking" on the date the referral takes place, up to 5pm or the normal office closing time if that is either earlier or later. Referrals received after that time should be regarded as taking place on the next working day. It is possible for a referral to take place the same day as the reception/initial contact which triggered it.

Then, following this rule, count the day when the referral took place as day 0, the next working day as day 1, and so on. An initial assessment must have been completed on or before day 7 to be included in this data item .

A 'working day' is defined as Monday – Friday. Exclude Saturday, Sundays, and public holidays. If referral takes place on a non-working day, 'day 0' will be the first working day after the referral takes place.

An initial assessment must have been completed on or before day 7'. This suggests that if the 7th working day after an initial assessment fell on a Friday, but the initial assessment was completed on the following day (Saturday), then the initial assessment would not have been completed within the 7 working day deadline. To ensure that such situations are correctly represented in the CPR3 return, where an initial assessment ends on a non-working day it should be counted as ending on the first working day after that point.

3A - core assessments within 35 working days of the completion of initial assessments

The "clock starts ticking" on the **day of completion** the initial assessment was completed; this will be day 0.

Count the **first working day after** the initial assessment was completed as day 1, the next working day as day 2, and so on.

A 'working day' is defined as Monday – Friday. Exclude Saturday, Sundays, and public holidays. A core assessment must have been held on or before day 35 in order to be counted in this item.

4C - Initial child protection conferences held within 15 working days of initiation of s47 enquiries

The "clock starts ticking" on the date the s47 enquiries are initiated.

If the s47 enquiries were initiated on a working day, that is day 0, the next working day is day 1, and so on.

If the s47 enquiries were initiated on a non-working day, count the first working day after that as day 0, etc.

A 'working day' is defined as Monday – Friday. Exclude Saturday, Sundays, and public holidays. An initial child protection conference must have been held on or

before day 15 in order to be counted in this item.

Table 7: Becoming the subject of a CPP for a second or subsequent time (re-registrations) within one year of last cessation (de-registration)

Take the date the CPP was discontinued (de-registration) away from the date of becoming the subject of a CPP for a second or subsequent time (re-registration). This can be done on a spreadsheet. If the resulting number is between 0 and 364, the re-registration is within one year. If the resulting number is 365 or over, the re-registration is not within one year and would not be counted. Use this method for both leap years and non-leap years.

Table 8: Number of discontinued CPPs (de-registrations) during the statistical year ending 31 March, by length of time spent as the subject of a plan (on the register).

Calculate length of time spent as the subject of a CPP by subtracting date of becoming the subject of a CPP from date the CPP was discontinued. Use the resulting number to assign to a duration band using the following table. Use this for both leap years and non-leap years.

No of calendar days, when date of becoming the subject of a CPP is subtracted from date the CPP was discontinued	Corresponding band on Table 8
0 – 90	Under 3 months
91 – 182	3 months but under 6 months
183 - 364	6 months but under 1 year
365 - 729	1 year but under 2 years
730 – 1,094	2 years but under 3 years
1,095+	3 years and over

APPENDIX 2

Stages in the child protection procedure

Activity¹ Stages in referral, assessment and child protection procedure	Process Model² Corresponding sub-processes in Core Information Requirements Process Model	CPR 3 Corresponding data items collected on CPR3 return
Reception / Initial contact	P 2.1.1 Reception and initial contact	Not collected on CPR 3
Referral	P 2.1.2 Referral and initial information	Part A, item 1: Referrals
Initial Assessment	P 2.1.3 Initial Assessment :	Part A, item 2: Initial Assessments
	P.2.1.3.1 Determining whether a 'child in need'	Part A, item 3: Core Assessments⁴
	P.2.1.3.2 Determining nature of services	
	P.2.1.3.4 Determining if core assessment required	
	P.2.1.3.5 Determining significant harm	

Strategy Discussion	P.2.1.4 Core Assessment	Part A, item 3: Core Assessments³
	P.2.2.3 Strategy Discussion	
Section 47 Enquiries	P.2.2.4 s47 enquiries and core assessment	Part A, item 4: s47 enquiries.
	P.2.2.5 Outcome of s47 enquiries	Part A, item 3: Core Assessments⁴
Initial child protection conference	P.2.2.6 Initial child protection conference	Part A, item 4: Initial child protection conferences
Child to become the subject of a CPP	P.2.2.7 Decision that child is at risk of continuing harm	Part B, item 7: CPP activity
	P.2.2.7.1 Child to go on register	
	P.2.2.7.2 Conference agrees child protection plan	
	P.2.2.7.3 Conference agrees date of first review	
Child protection review conference	P.2.2.8 Child protection review conference	Part B, table 9: PAF indicator C20: Reviews
	P.2.2.8.1 Child protection plan	

	P.2.2.8.2 Implementation of child protection plan	
Plan discontinued (cessation)	P.2.2.9 Removal from register	Part B, table 8: Discontinued plans

NOTES:

1. The 'activity' column presents a simplified version of the typical procedure described in Appendix 5 of 'Working together'. In practice, the sequence and timing of events may vary according to the individual child's circumstances.
2. Processes and sub-processes as described in the Children's Social services Core Information Requirements Process Model. The list here is not exhaustive. See: <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/resources-and-practice/IG00009/>
3. Core Assessments may start at a different stage in the assessment process depending on the individual child's circumstances. For this reason this item is shown several times in the table.