

The Mental Health Commission collects and reports on data in relation to the admission of children¹ to approved centres. This report presents child admission activity data for 2012 which we compare with data returned in 2011 and earlier years. Data are presented for overall admissions, unit type, involuntary admissions, age and gender, length of stay and service provider.

Admission of Children in 2012

In 2012, the Commission was notified of 428 admissions of 357 children to approved centres². The total number of admissions of children has been consistent over the last three years with 430³ such admissions in 2011 and 430 admissions in 2010.

Unit Type

In December 2011, Section 2.4.1 c) of the *Addendum to the Code of Practice Relating to Admission of Children under the Mental Health Act 2001* came into effect. It states that apart from exceptional circumstances:

2.4.1 c) No child under 18 years is to be admitted to an adult unit in an approved centre from 1st December 2011.”

In 2012, there were six child units compared to three such units in 2008. This increased provision has contributed to a decline in the number of admissions of children to adult units. Admissions of children to adult units, nevertheless, continued in 2012. There were 106 such admissions in 2012 which corresponds to one quarter (24.8%) of all child admissions. It is encouraging that there continues to be a year-on-year decline in the proportion of child admissions that are to adult units. In 2011, 30.7% (132/430) of all child admissions were to adult units and the corresponding percentage in 2008 was 63.0%. Progress on this issue must continue and all necessary age appropriate mental health services developed.

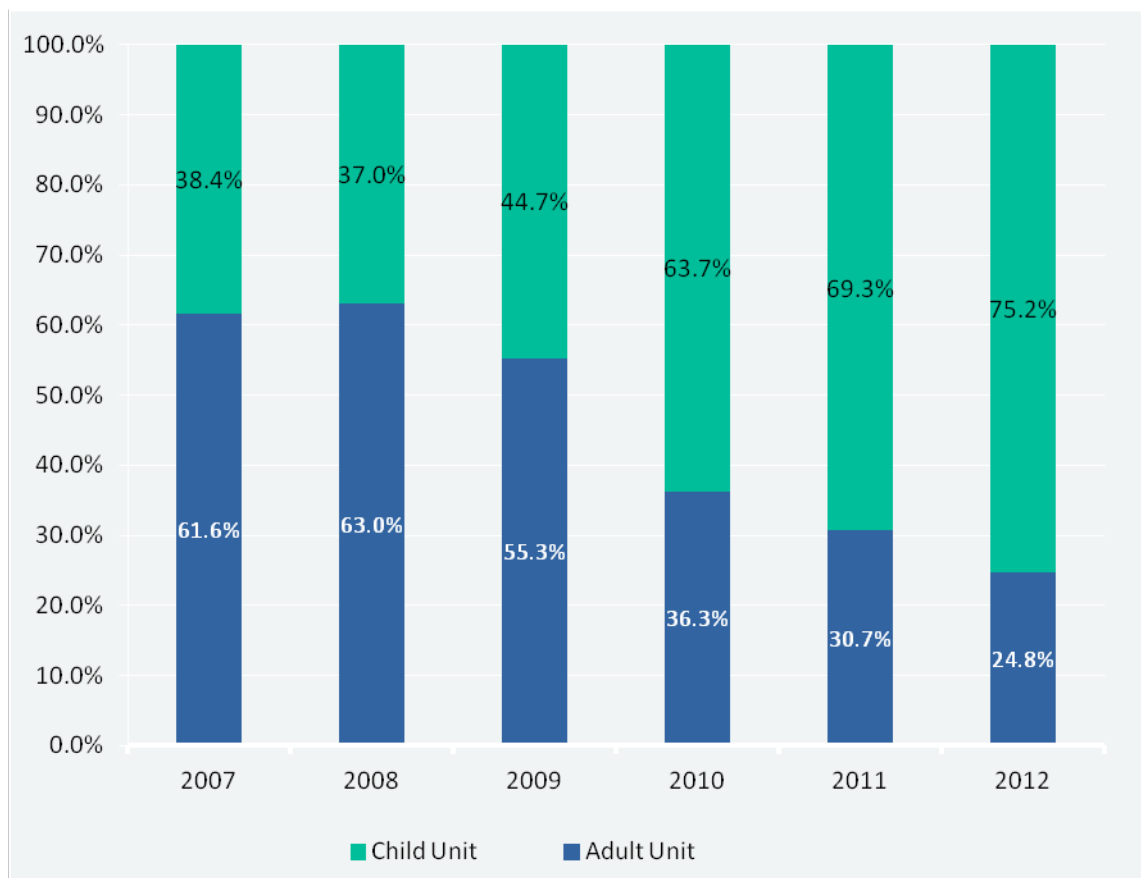
Figure 1 shows that between 2007 and 2009 the majority of child admissions were to adult units, however, from 2010 onwards there has been a steady decline in admissions to adult units and a corresponding increase in admissions to child units. The proportion of admissions to adult units in 2012 (24.8%) was less than half of what it was in 2008 (63%).

¹ The Mental Health Act 2001 Section 2(1) defines a “child” as a person under the age of 18 years other than a person who is or has been married.

² Includes approved centres for adults (adult units), approved centres for children and adolescents (child units) and a child and adolescent unit in an approved centre which also admits adults (child unit).

³ The number of admissions in 2011 has been updated since the publication of the Mental Health Commission’s 2011 Annual Report (April 2012). Updated child admission data were returned by two approved centres as a result of cross validation with the Health Research Board’s 2011 child admission data.

Figure 1: Admission of children to adult units and child units. 2007–2012. Percentages



Unit Type and Age

Table 1 summarises the total number of admissions by age and unit type from 2007 to 2012. It shows that in 2012, the number of admissions of children aged 15 years or under (6) to adult units was similar to 2011 (7). There was a slight decrease in the number of admissions of 16 year olds to adult units, which decreased from 35 such admissions in 2011 to 31 admissions in 2012. There was a more significant decrease in the number of 17 year olds admitted to adult units with 21 (23.3%) fewer admissions in 2012 than in 2011.

The number of admissions of 16 year olds, to child units, was less in 2012 (76) than in 2011 (82). There was an increase in the number of admissions of 15 year olds and of 17 year olds, to child units, in 2012 compared to 2011.

Table 1: Admission of children. Age and Unit Type. 2007–2012. Numbers.

Unit Type	Age	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Adult	≤15 years of age	14	24	12	13	7	6
	16 years of age	64	74	66	44	35	31
	17 years of age	139	149	127	99	90	69
	Total	217	247	205	156	132	106
Child	≤15 years of age	99	90	89	122	133	150
	16 years of age	20	30	41	93	82	76
	17 years of age	16	25	36	59	83	96
	Total	135	145	166	274	298	322

The 106 admissions to adult units in 2012 occurred in 24 approved centres. The remaining 322 child admissions were to the six child and adolescent units.

When a child is admitted to an adult unit, the approved centre is required to inform the Commission of the reason for the admission. In 2012, ‘no age appropriate bed available’ was indicated as the reason in 84% (89/106) of admissions to adult units.

In 2012, in 22.6% (24/106) of admissions, to adult units, the child was discharged from an adult unit and admitted to a child unit when a bed became available. In 2011, only 9.1% (12/132) of admissions to adult units resulted in a discharge from the adult unit and a subsequent admission to a child unit.

Involuntary Admissions

There are provisions under Section 25 of the Mental Health Act 2001 in relation to the involuntary admission of children that require the HSE to make an application to the District Court. Table 2 shows the number of involuntary admissions⁴ (under Section 25 Orders) by year and by unit type in the period from 2007 to 2012.

⁴ If a child was discharged from one approved centre and admitted to another approved centre under a single Section 25 Order this was only reported as one involuntary admission. There were two such admissions in 2012.

Table 2: Admission of children. Involuntary Admissions by Unit Type. 2007–2012. Numbers.

Year	Adult Units	Child Units	Total
2007	3	-	3
2008	6	2	8
2009	6	3	9
2010	2	11	13
2011	9	12	21
2012	4	14	18
Total	30	42	72

In 2012, there were 18 Section 25 Orders for the involuntary admission⁵ of 15 children to approved centres. This represents a slight decrease in the 21 Section 25 Orders that were notified to us in 2011. Four of these involuntary admissions were to adult units and 14 admissions were to child units.

Five of the 15 children who were the subject of a Section 25 Order were 15 years of age or under, three were 16 year olds and seven were 17 year olds.

In three of the 18 involuntary admissions, the child was initially admitted as a voluntary patient but their legal status changed to involuntary during their admission.

Demographics – Age and Gender

More than three-fifths (60.7%) of all admissions were female (260) and 39.3% (168) of admissions were of males. Table 3 shows that a slightly higher proportion of admissions to adult units were of males. Close to two-thirds (65.2%) of admission to child units were admissions of females and 34.8% of admissions were those of males.

In 2012, the mean age of children admitted to adult units was 16.6 and the median age was 17. In child units the mean age was 15.5 and the median age was 16.

Over half (65.1%) of admissions to adult units were of children who were 17 years of age, 29.2% were admissions of 16 year olds and 5.7% of admissions related to children who were 15 years of age or younger. In contrast, almost half (46.6%) of all admissions to child units were of children who were 15 years of age or younger, 23.6% related to 16 year olds and 29.8% to 17 year olds.

⁵ If a child was discharged from one approved centre and admitted to another approved centre under a single Section 25 Order this was only reported as one involuntary admission. There were two such admissions in 2012.

Table 3: Admission of children. Gender and Age by Unit Type. 2012. Numbers and Percentages.

Unit Type	Gender	Age							
		Numbers				Percentages			
		≤15 years of age	16 years of age	17 years of age	Total	≤15 years of age	16 years of age	17 years of age	Total
Adult	Female	5	15	30	50	10.0	30.0	60.0	47.2
	Male	1	16	39	56	1.8	28.6	69.6	52.8
	Total	6	31	69	106	5.7	29.2	65.1	100.0
Child	Female	92	52	66	210	43.8	24.8	31.4	65.2
	Male	58	24	30	112	51.8	21.4	26.8	34.8
	Total	150	76	96	322	46.6	23.6	29.8	100.0

Duration of admission

The mean duration of admission, for those who were admitted and discharged in 2012, was 40.8 days and the median length of stay was 25 days. The average length of stay was slightly longer in 2012 than in 2011 when the mean duration of admission was 34.7 days and the median was 21 days.

In 2012, the average length of stay was significantly longer in child units, at 52.8 days (median 25 days), than in adult units, at 7.4 days (median 5 days).

Service Provider

Table 4 provides a breakdown of admissions of children by service provider and unit type from 2007 to 2012. The table shows admissions data for child and adult units for each of the four HSE administrative regions, the National Forensic Service and for independent service providers. The number of admissions and the number of units that admitted children in this period are shown.

In 2012, Independent Service Providers accounted for a higher number of child admissions (153) than any of the four HSE administrative regions. Admissions of children to these units accounted for 35.7% of all admissions.

Child admissions decreased in all HSE areas except HSE West, where there was a 41.7% increase in admissions in comparison to 2011. Admissions to adult units in HSE West were up slightly from 46 in 2011 to 48 in 2012 and there was a large increase in the number of admissions to the child unit, the Child and Adolescent In-patient Unit, Merlin Park University Hospital, with 71 admissions in 2012 in comparison to 38 in 2011.

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Table 4: Admission of children. Service provider and unit type. Numbers. 2007–2012.

Unit Type	Numbers											
	Admissions						Units					
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
HSE Dublin Mid Leinster												
Adult Unit	32	53	50	27	26	18	7	7	7	6	6	6
Child Unit	46	42	44	37	39	24	1	1	1	1	1	1 ^a
Total	78	95	94	64	65	42	8	8	8	7	7	7
HSE Dublin North East												
Adult Unit	28	33	16	32	25	16	6	8	7	5	5	5
Child Unit	-	-	29	34	42	36	-	-	1	1	1	1
Total	28	33	45	66	67	52	6	8	8	6	6	6
HSE South												
Adult Unit	71	71 ^b	65 ^b	49	34	24	10	9	8	8	7	5
Child Unit	-	-	4	44	37	38	-	-	1 ^c	1 ^c	1 ^c	1
Total	71	71	69	93	71	62	10	9	9	9	8	6
HSE West												
Adult Unit	53	57	47	40	46 ^d	48	7	8	8	8	8	8
Child Unit	20	34	33	33	38 ^e	71	1	1	1	1	1	1
Total	73	91	80	73	84	119	8	9	9	9	9	9
Independent												
Adult Unit	33	33	27	7	-	-	2	1	1	1	-	-
Child Unit	69	69	56	126	142	153	1	1	1	3 ^f	2	2
Total	102	102	83	133	142	153	3	2	2	4	2	2
National Forensic Service												
	-	-	-	1 ^g	1 ^g	-	-	-	-	1	1	-
Total Adult Units	217	247	205	156	132	106	32	33	31	29	27	24
Total Child Units	135	145	166	274	298	322	3	3	5	7	6	6
Total Admissions	352	392	371	430	430	428	35	36	36	36	33	30

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- a The child unit in HSE Dublin Mid Leinster which was located in Warrenstown Child & Adolescent Inpatient Unit relocated to Linn Dara, Child and Adolescent In-patient Unit in May 2012.
- b Includes one admission where the child was the subject of a Care Order made under S18(1) of the Child Care Act 1991.
- c The child unit in HSE South was located in St Stephen's Hospital from 16 October 2009 until 11 March 2011 and then the service relocated to Eist Linn, Child and Adolescent Inpatient Unit, Bessborough.
- d Includes one admission where the child was the subject of an Interim Care Order S17(1) and one admission where the child was the subject of a Care Order S18(1) of the Child Care Act 1991.
- e Includes one admission where the child was the subject of a Care Order made under S18(1) of the Child Care Act 1991.
- f Includes The Haven Children's Residential Unit, which only admitted children in January 2010 and did not have any admissions for the remainder of the year, this approved centre closed in 2011.
- g Admissions to Central Mental Hospital – National Forensic Service were made under Section 15(2) of the Criminal Law Insanity Act 2006.

Notes regarding child admission data

Under the terms of our Memorandum of Understanding with the Health Research Board (HRB), we cross reference our child admission data annually. If any discrepancies arise, approved centres are contacted for clarification and validation.

The number of admissions of children reported here may differ from those reported by the HRB for the following reasons:

- The HRB reports on the legal status of children on admission, whereas the Commission captures change in legal status from voluntary to involuntary throughout the period of admission and reports on such admissions once as an involuntary admission.
- The Commission's data on admissions of children only includes the admissions of children as defined in the Mental Health Act 2001. Section 2(1) states that "*child*" means a person under the age of 18 years other than a person who is or has been married. The HRB report on admissions of persons under 18 years of age irrespective of their current or previous marital status.