



To: Information Contacts in England

Changes to children's social care returns for 2014-15

Dear colleague,

This letter relates to children's social care returns which are the responsibility of the Department for Education. It provides six months advance notice of changes to existing data collections that local authorities will need to action from April 2014.

Changes to current children's social care data collections have been discussed and agreed by the Star Chamber Scrutiny Board.

This letter provides the following information:

1. Overview of changes and additions to data collections for 2014-15
2. Reminder of agreed changes to the 2013-14 data collections
3. Sharing of data with local authorities
4. Other useful information

Annex 1 provides a quick summary guide of all changes for 2013-14 and 2014-15.

1. Overview of changes and additions to data collections for 2014-15

1.1 Children Looked After (SSDA903)

There will be changes to the information collected in the following areas:

- **Children missing from care** – to introduce a new module to collect data on children who are missing from care, regardless of duration, and the start/end date of the missing incident. The current 'missing' codes (M1, M2 and M3) will be removed from the placement type codeset and if a child goes missing, he/she should continue to be recorded as being at the placement he/she was at immediately prior to the missing incident. Precise definitions of 'missing' will follow in revised statutory guidance on Children who runaway or go missing from home or care to be published in October 2013.
- **Reason episode ceased** – The codeset for 'reason episode ceased' is being extended from 2014-15. Currently around a fifth of episodes of care end due to 'other' reasons (code E8). Some of these episodes cease because a child reaches the age of 18, but we do not know why episodes end for younger children. Additionally, the current E4

category (returned home to live with parents, relatives or other person with parental responsibility) will be split: from 2014-15 there will be 2 separate categories, according to whether the move was agreed as part of the care planning process or not. A full code set for these data items will be issued in October 2013.

- **Extension of placement type codeset to capture whether fostering arrangements are Fostering for Adoption or long-term fostering** - Within the placement type codeset, current codes Q1 and Q2 codes will be split so that information is available on whether the fostering arrangements are Fostering for Adoption (including concurrent planning and any other local scheme that places children, on a fostering basis, with foster carers who are also approved adopters and could adopt the child if the child's plan becomes adoption and the court agrees to make a placement order) or long-term fostering:

Q1 → U1 Foster placement with relative or friend- long term fostering

U2 Foster placement with relative or friend who is also an approved adopter- FFA

U3 Foster placement with relative or friend- not long term or FFA

Q2 → U4 Placement with other foster carer- long term fostering

U5 Placement with other foster carer who is also an approved adopter- FFA

U6 Placement with other foster carer - not long term or FFA

- **Legal status of adopters** – the codeset for the data item 'Legal Status of Adopters' will be extended following the Royal Assent to the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act in July 2013, allowing same-sex marriages to be performed from summer 2014.

In addition to these changes, we may want to include a new data item for 'Reason for Placement Move'. This information would supplement the data we already hold on number of placement moves, and enable a more detailed understanding of why placements break down and whether placement moves are planned or unplanned. However, full agreement has not yet been reached on whether this change should be introduced in 2014-15. Local authorities will be informed by end October 2013 at the latest as to whether the change is going ahead, and if so the details of the change.

1.2 Children in Need

The 2014-15 CIN census will be developed with only one assessment module. The 2014-15 LA guide and specification will be published in early October on the CIN census [data collection website](#). These will include further details of how LAs should record their assessment data in this new structure.

1.3 Private Fostering

There are no planned changes for the 2014-15 Private Fostering return. An updated version of the LA guide will be published in October on the Private Fostering [data collection website](#).

1.4 Quarterly adoptions survey

There are no changes for 2014-15

1.5 Children's Social Care Work collection

There are no changes for 2014-15 as yet. We are asking for LAs to provide feedback on the data items collected for 2012-13 and, as such, changes may be required.

2. Changes to the 2013-14 data collections

2.1 Children Looked After (SSDA903)

Changes to the SSDA903 for 2013-14 were announced last year as follows:

- **Position at 16** - Data items on 'position at 16' which are collected for those looked after continuously for 12 months will be dropped (child eligible for GCSE examinations, activity at age 16 or over). This item was made voluntary in 2012-13 but will be removed from the collection completely in 2013-14.
- **Care leavers information** - The information currently collected about care leavers (OC3 data/19th birthday), will be extended to cover the cohort of children who local authorities are required to support under the new 'Duty of Personal Advisor' and that data will be collected at more points in time – 19th, 20th and 21st birthdays rather than just 19th birthdays. The type and format of data collected will remain as it currently is with some small changes to code sets.
- **Adoption breakdown** - Three new data items will be introduced to inform the policy area on adoptions which break down. For children entering care we shall collect whether the child has previously been adopted or left care for special guardianship or residence order and, if so, the date and local authority who made the arrangements.
- **Local authority of placement** - Information on the local authority of placement will be extended; currently it is collected for all children looked after at 31 March only, but it will be collected for all placements. This information will be collected as the postcode of placement which will be converted into the local authority of placement in the same way as is currently done for those looked after at 31 March. In doing this, we shall also drop the data item for placement location (inside/outside local authority boundary) which is currently collected for all placements.

Further information on each of these changes has already been issued to local authorities and the full LA return guide for the 2013-14 SSDA903 will be published by end October 2013. A further communication will be issued to local authorities as soon as it is available.

2.2 Children In Need (CIN)

As previously announced, 3 new data items have been added to the 2013-14 CIN census:

1. Source of referral
2. Factors identified at assessment
3. Seen by social worker

The revised statutory guidance, Working Together to Safeguard Children, was published in March 2013 and took effect from 15 April 2013. The guidance stated there was no longer the requirement to conduct separate initial and core assessments. The 2013-14 CIN census will be developed with 3 assessment modules to capture LAs different ways of working. Please refer to the LA guide and specification for more details. Both documents can be downloaded from the 2013-14 CIN census [data collection website](#).

2.3 Private Fostering

There are no planned changes for the 2013-14 Private Fostering return. The LA guide can be downloaded from the 2013-14 Private Fostering [data collection website](#).

2.4 Quarterly Adoptions Survey

We will again be asking LAs to complete the voluntary quarterly survey of adoption and adopters in 2013-14. As in 2012-13, we will collect returns at the end of each quarter, in July and October 2013 and in January and April 2014. The collection of adopter data from July 2013 will be revised to take into account the new two stage approval process for adopters. Contacts were emailed about this in early June following Star Chamber approval. We may review the collection date for quarter 4 of 2013-14 in light of feedback from recent CiN/CLA focus groups regarding lack of available resource during the return period for the SSDA 903.

For more information please see the [letter from Tim Loughton MP](#) about adoption data collection.

2.5 Children's Social Care Work collection

Following agreement by the Star Chamber we will be collecting data on Children's Social Care workforce on a statutory basis from autumn 2013. The information required is specified in the Children's Safeguarding Performance Information Framework and covers:

- Vacancy rate of social workers
- Turnover rate of social workers
- Sickness absence of social workers
- Percentage of agency workers

We will be collecting data for the year ending 30 September 2013 and returns should be submitted to DfE by 29 November 2013. A full code set for the data items can be found within annex 2.

The data form, along with additional guidance can be found [online](#).

As a reminder, the Local Authorities Children's Services voluntary, partial National Minimum Data Set for Social Care (NMDS-SC) return 2012 (covering the year ending September 2012) is now underway.

The window is now open for Children's Services to provide a voluntary, partial NMDS-SC return. Nearly a third of authorities are already well on the way to submitting their Adult Services data and confirming their worker totals.

Skills for Care offer a range of support to local authorities to complete their return including access to their [Support Service](#).

Further information about the return requirements and the support available can be found through the [NMDS website](#).

3. Sharing of data with local authorities

3.1 Adoption Scorecards

We will be emailing local authorities following the publication of the Looked After Children SFR with scorecards and performance tables in advance of publication for information. However if you have any urgent concerns about the figures in these scorecards please email the [Programme Office](#) by **close 18 October**. As these scorecards and performance tables have not yet been published they should not be shared outside your local authority.

The Department plans to publish the updated scorecards and performance tables in November. When a final date has been agreed we will inform all local authorities. Further information on Adoptions scorecards is available on our [website](#).

3.2 Matched data

The Children Looked After and the Children in Need data are matched to the National Pupil Database (NPD) each year.

In December 2011 and 2012 a range of information on the outcomes of looked after children were shared with local authorities from our matched CLA-NPD data source via the Key to Success system. We intend to continue with this process for 2013 data. This matched data will contain attainment information as well as absence, exclusions and characteristics information from the School Census matched to data on looked after children collected via the SSSDA903.

In spring 2013 we released information direct to local authorities resulting from the matching of the 2011-12 CIN census with the NPD. This included some information on outcomes of CIN (for example Key Stage 2 (KS2) and Key Stage 4 (KS4) attainment, progression between KS2 and KS4) and also information on the characteristics of CIN (for example, special educational needs status, free school meal prevalence, absence and exclusions). Similar information from the 2012-13 CIN census will again be provided to local authorities in spring 2014.

4. Other important information

4.1 Guidance notes and Technical Specification

Guidance notes and specifications for all these returns can be found on our Children's statistical returns home page.

4.2 Published data

All published data is now made available on the new GOV.UK website. Users can search by key words, topic, department or month of publication.

Yours faithfully

Graham Knox and Louise Feebrey

Data collection Managers

Children and Early Years Data Unit

Annex 1: Summary of Children's Social Care Data Returns

Collection name	Time period covered	Period collected	Summary of changes for 2013-14	Summary of changes for 2014-15
Children Looked After (SSDA903)	April – march	April – June	<p>Extension of data collected for care leavers.</p> <p>Addition of data items for children returning to care following adoption breakdown.</p> <p>LA of placement field to be extended to cover all placements rather than those at 31 March only.</p> <p>Position at 16 data items no longer collected.</p>	<p>New module for children missing from care and removal of existing placement type codes M1-M3.</p> <p>Extension of codeset for 'reason episode ceased'.</p> <p>Change to placement type codeset to enable recording of fostering for adoption and long-term foster care arrangements.</p> <p>Change to legal status of adopters codeset.</p> <p>Possible new data item to collect reason for placement ceasing – still to be agreed.</p>
Children in Need (CIN)	April – March	April – July	<p>Collection of reason for referral for new referrals.</p> <p>Flag to identify if a child on a child protection plan has been seen.</p> <p>Collection of information on factors affecting the child, identified at the assessment</p>	One Assessment Module
Private Fostering	April – March	April - May		

Quarterly adoption survey	Quarters (April – June July – Sept Oct – Dec Jan - Mar	July, Oct. Jan, April	New data items on adopters following the implementation of the new two stage approval process	
Children's Social Care Work	Oct – Sept	Oct-Nov		

Annex 2: Further detail of Children's Social Care Work collection

Data are collected as at 30 September 2013 or for the year ending 30 September 2013.

Vacancy rate of social workers

To be calculated from:

- Total number of social workers (FTE and headcount) at 30 September 2013
- Number of vacancies (FTE and headcount)) at 30 September 2013

Turnover rate of social workers

To be calculated from:

- Total number of leavers (FTE and headcount)) in the year ending 30 September 2013
- Total number of social workers (FTE and headcount) at 30 September 2013

Sickness absence of social workers

To be calculated from:

- Number of days of work missed due to sickness absence in the year ending 30 September 2013
- Total number of social workers (FTE and headcount)) at 30 September 2013 (as above)

Percentage of agency workers

To be calculated from:

- Total number of agency workers (FTE and headcount)) at 30 September 2013
- Total number of social workers (FTE and headcount)) at 30 September 2013 (as above)
- Number of vacancies (FTE and headcount)) at 30 September 2013 (as above)