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for Education

Children's Services Omnibus

Wave 3 Research Report

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Social Science in Government

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List of abbreviations

CiN – Children in Need

CYP – Children and Young People

DCS – Director of Children's Services

DfE – Department for Education

EHCP – Education, Health and Care Plan

FSM – Free School Meals

LA – Local Authority

SEND – Special Educational Needs and Disability

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Executive Summary

This report presents the findings from the third wave of the DfE Children's Services Omnibus Survey. The survey explored senior local authority (LA) leaders' perceptions on, and activities relating to, a range of policy areas. These included children's social care; early years and childcare provision in authorities; and services for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. The questionnaire comprised a mix of open response questions and fixed category response questions.

The online survey was sent to all 152 upper tier LAs in England. In total, 78 LAs took part, representing an overall survey response rate of 51%. This compares to an overall response rate of 66% to Wave 1 and 50% to Wave 2.

However, as indicated throughout the report, not all 78 LAs answered all of the survey questions. A total of 68 LAs answered questions on Children's Social Care (47% response rate, compared to 60% in Wave 1 and 45% in Wave 2); 52 answered questions on Early Years and Childcare (39% response rate, compared to 56% in Wave 1 and 38% in Wave 2); and 54 answered questions on Special Educational Needs and Disability (36% response rate, compared to 54% in Wave 1 and 34% in Wave 2).

The profile of LAs which completed the survey is largely in-line with the overall profile, based on the type of authority, region, proportion of pupils eligible for and receiving free school meals, and rates of children in need.

The sample is also representative based on the latest Ofsted ratings. Thirty-four per cent of responding authorities were rated as 'good' while 42% were rated as 'requiring improvement'. Further 18% were found to be 'inadequate'. In addition, 7% did not have Ofsted data available. Full details of the response profile can be found in Appendix 1.

The research was carried out between 4 October and 17 November 2017. The key findings are outlined below. Throughout this report, figures are based on all LAs responding to each question. Please note that the base sizes for some questions are relatively low and therefore the findings should be treated with some caution.

Children's social care

A total of 68 LAs answered questions on children's social care.

LA improvement

- Development plans with identified priorities for improvement were the most common source of support or approach used to improve children's social care, mentioned by 85% of all responding LAs.
- Virtually all responding LAs were confident in their authority's understanding of how to improve children's social care services.

- Local political and senior local authority leadership were seen as the key enablers to the improvement of children's social care services, mentioned by 46% and 34% of responding authorities respectively.
- Financing improvement plans were the main barrier for improvement, mentioned by 27% of the authorities.

Social worker workforce

- Seventy per cent of responding authorities said that they intended to offer the social worker apprenticeship standard in child and family social work, if it was approved by the Institute for Apprenticeships.
- While 14% did not envisage any barriers to running a social worker apprenticeship programme, over half (54%) of the authorities identified set-up costs as a barrier.
- A majority of the LAs (60%) agreed that social work apprenticeships will increase the availability of child and family social workers within their authority while a third (33%) did not.
- Half of the LAs (51%) say that they use the Knowledge and Skills statements for performance management, while 39% say they do not.
- The vast majority of responding LAs (94%) said that social workers in their authority are aware of the Knowledge and Skills statements. Further, 96% of all authorities said they are aware that a system of assessment and accreditation will be introduced.
- While a majority (75% of all responding authorities) said the social workers in their authority understood why a system of assessment and accreditation is being introduced, a considerable proportion (25%) thought social workers did not understand it or said they did not know.
- Views on the process of assessment and accreditation were mixed. Over a third (37%) of the authorities thought that their social workers were supportive of this, while 29% thought they were not. Further 34% did not know social workers' views on this. The vast majority of LAs (95%) were confident that practitioners in their authority have the right knowledge and skills for effective practice, measured against the relevant Knowledge and Skills Statement.
- Further, 95% were confident that senior practitioners or practice managers have the right knowledge and skills to support social workers with their cases, measured against the relevant Knowledge and Skills Statement.
- While on the whole the LAs were confident that they will have sufficient permanent, well-qualified child and family social workers to meet their needs over the next 12 months (76% were confident), a substantial minority of LAs (25%) were not confident about this.

Sufficiency of care/adoption placements

- There was variation in responding LAs' ability to offer care placements within different age groups over the last 12 months and against predicted needs.
- Overall, in the last 12 months the LAs said they had most commonly had access to sufficient care placements for children aged under 5 and those aged 5-13 with 84% and 61% of LAs respectively saying they were able to meet the demand in those age groups.
- Over the next 12 months the majority of authorities thought it was likely that they would have access to sufficient care placements to meet the projected needs of children and young people aged under 5 and 5-13 (88% and 71% respectively saw this as likely). In comparison, 32% of LAs saw this as likely for those aged 14-15 and 41% for those aged 16-17.
- Across all age groups, there has been an increase in the proportion of LAs who see themselves as likely to have access to sufficient care placements from wave 1 of this research (carried out in autumn 2016).
- The adoption needs of those under 5 years were likely to be seen as sufficient with 93% of LAs believing they were likely to be able to meet the projected needs in the age group. However, only one in five LAs think they will have access to sufficient adoption placements to meet the projected need of those aged 14-15 (18%) and those aged 16-17 (20%).
- Just four per cent of responding authorities said that children and young people looked after by the authority are able to access the mental health support and services they need 'all the time' while 26% said this happened 'very often.'
- When asked about previously looked after children's and young people's ability to access the mental health support and services they need, just over half of the LAs (54%) said they had access 'sometimes' and nearly a third (30%) had access 'very often' or 'all the time'.

Understanding demand for children's social care services

- Between 2016 and 2017 there was a significant increase in the proportion of responding LAs with a function or team that is able to analyse the demand for children's social care. In wave 1 84% said they had one and this rose to 99% of the authorities in Wave 3.
- According to the local authorities, top priorities for improving children's social care services over the next three years included:
 - Recruiting and retaining a high quality social care workforce
 - Improving the quality of practice and outcomes for children and young people
 - Managing demand for social care services
 - Utilising evidence-based assessments of interventions.

LA structures/commissioning arrangements

- One in five responding LAs operated statutory children's social care services jointly with another LA or group of authorities (19%). A further nine per cent had plans to operate joint services in development, and 22% planned to in the future. Half of LAs did not operate joint services and had no plans to do so in the future.
- The proportion of responding LAs outsourcing delivery of children's services to alternative providers remained largely unchanged since wave 1 of the survey. For instance, 12% of the LAs outsourced delivery of children's services to a mutual, compared to seven per cent in wave 1 (conducted in September to October 2016). Around one in five outsourced delivery to a not-for-profit (21% compared to 23% in 2016) and half outsourced services to a voluntary sector partner (52% compared to 57% in 2016).

Multi-agency arrangements

- Two-thirds of responding LAs had already considered what the new legislation on new arrangements for multi-agency working will mean for their multi-agency arrangements (66%), while the remaining LAs had not done so but planned to in the future.
- Among those that had considered the impact, there was some concern over the requirement to move from existing partnerships to a new arrangement. Some LAs said that the current arrangements worked well and that they were looking to minimise the impact of the new Act, or that they had no plans to change current arrangements.
- Others felt that the main challenge of the Act will be to establish new partnerships, or to change the nature of existing partnerships to allow more flexibility. Some also mentioned that they were concerned about reduced resources meaning that some partners will be less engaged.

Impact of UK's withdrawal from the EU

- Few responding LAs had conducted a formal assessment of the potential implications of the UK's withdrawal from the European Union for children's social care. No responding LAs had already completed an assessment, and just 12% had one in development. Half of LAs (51%) said they had no plans to conduct an assessment and just over a third (35%) had not conducted an assessment but planned to do so in the future.

Early years and childcare

A total of 52 LAs answered questions on early years and childcare.

- Two in five responding LAs (40%) funded or provided Every Child a Talker (ECAT) and one in five (20%) funded or provided Parents Early Education Partnership (PEEP). Other responses (37%) included bespoke programmes to particular LAs. However around one in five (22%) of responding LAs did not fund/provide any HLE programmes or services.
- In terms of funding or providing parenting programmes or services to support parents with children aged 0-5, around half of responding authorities (51%) funded or provided Incredible Years (preschool) and nearly one third (32%) Incredible Years (toddler). Eight per cent of authorities did not fund or provide any parenting programmes.
- LAs were asked about early years providers' recruitment of staff. Over two-thirds (69%) of responding LA's reported that at least some of their providers found it difficult to recruit staff at Level 2. This compares to over three-quarters (77%) who found difficulty recruiting at level 3 and 58% for recruiting early years teachers.

Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND)

- A total of 54 LAs answered questions on SEND. Responding LAs were asked how their SEND team would rate the quality of engagement of colleagues during the development of Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans for children and young people with SEND. Most LAs found the quality of engagement with colleagues to be fairly or very good overall. Responses about the quality of engagement of colleagues in schools were particularly positive, with 92% of responding LAs rating engagement with these colleagues 'very good' or 'fairly good'.
- A majority of LAs were also positive about the quality of engagement with Early Years Provider colleagues (83%), health colleagues (70%), social care colleagues (68%) and providers (66%).

Short breaks

- The most effective forms of short breaks for disabled children and their families varied by responding LA. It was frequently mentioned that giving the family flexibility and choice of short breaks tailored to the needs and interests of the child and family was most effective.
- A quarter of LAs expected that spend on short breaks for children and young people would increase over the next three years (24%) while a fifth (20%) felt it would decrease.
- Almost all responding LAs (99%) publish a statement of the short breaks available for disabled children and their families.

Introduction

Background

The Department for Education (DfE) is currently implementing a range of policies designed to strengthen and reform children's services. In particular, the commitments set out in the Children and Families Act 2014 signify an ambitious response to the challenges faced by local authorities trying to meet the needs of children and families.

Wide-ranging reforms to services include the expansion of funded early years' provision, workforce development for Early Years' professionals and social workers, testing new approaches through the Innovation Programme, greater integration between services, and the introduction of children's services trusts. Local authorities (LAs) play a pivotal role in these landmark reforms, assessing need, innovating, restructuring and delivering reformed services.

In 2016 the Department commissioned a bi-annual Children's Services Omnibus Survey to provide a clear and up-to-date understanding of the key issues facing children's services, and of local authorities' implementation of policy related to children's services.

The Omnibus is a survey of all 152 upper tier LAs in England. It has three aims:

- To gather information from senior leaders and managers in LAs on policy-related activity and explore their perceptions of these activities;
- To gain a greater understanding of the key issues affecting children's services and local authorities' delivery of them; and;
- To consolidate ad-hoc LA surveys into biannual omnibus surveys.

The first wave was undertaken in September and October 2016. The second wave took place in June and July 2016. The reports on findings from the first and second waves can be accessed here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/childrens-services-omnibus>.

This report presents findings from wave 3 of the Children's Services Omnibus series, which took place in October and November 2017.

Survey methodology

The first phase of the survey, prior to wave 1, involved a nomination stage in July 2016. During this stage the Director of Children's Services (DCS) for each LA was invited to nominate a single point of contact in their authority to be responsible for the survey. This approach was successful in obtaining contact details for a nominated point of contact for every higher tier Local Authority in England. In many cases DCSs opted to remain responsible for the survey in their LA, either nominating themselves or their PA to be the point of first contact. In some LAs DCSs nominated other points of contact such as Group Managers, Service Directors and Data and Performance Officers. This sample was used for wave 1 and updated via telephone and email reminders for waves 2 and 3.

For waves 1 and 2, small-scale pilots were conducted prior to the mainstage fieldwork. As well as the substantive survey questions intended to be included in the mainstage survey, the pilot survey included a number of detailed probing questions that explored how respondents interpreted and went about answering specific questions, and how easy or difficult they found it to complete the survey overall.

For wave 3, an expert panel review was carried out to refine the survey questions. Once the draft questionnaire was finalised, a panel consisting of advisory group members, NatCen's questionnaire development team and policy experts as well as the research team reviewed it in August 2017. Following this review, refinements were made to the questionnaire.

All 152 local authorities were then sent an invitation email. This email included further information about the survey, a link to the web survey and a unique access code for the LA. An Excel spreadsheet copy of the survey questions was also provided to give respondents the opportunity to prepare answers in advance of accessing the online survey. In particular, this enabled the single point of contact for the LA to share the spreadsheet with colleagues within different teams who might help with collating data about the three policy areas.

During the mainstage fieldwork, all non-responding LAs were sent three reminder emails and received reminder calls from NatCen telephone interviewers. Invitation emails were also re-sent to existing and new points of contact upon request. The fieldwork ran from 4 October to 17 November 2017. In total, NatCen received responses from 78 LAs. This amounts to an overall response rate of 51 per cent. A total of 47 LAs fully completed the survey, and 31 partially completed the survey.

The response to each section varied, as demonstrated in Table 1. The profile of LAs which completed the survey is largely in-line with the overall profile, based on the type of authority, region, proportion of pupils eligible for and receiving free school meals, Ofsted rating and rates of children in need.

A full breakdown of responses can be found in Appendix 1.

Table 1: Wave 3 response rate by questionnaire section

Section	Complete responses (N)	Partial responses (N)	Response rate
Children's Social Care	68	3	47%
Early Years and Child Care	52	7	39%
SEND	54	1	36%

Presentation and interpretation of data

It should be remembered at all times that a sample, and not the entire population, of upper tier LAs in England, responded to the survey. Further, the total number of LAs is small (n=152), which means that care is required when interpreting the results. In consequence, all results were subject to sampling tolerances, which means that not all differences were statistically significant.

All differences discussed in the report are statistically significant unless stated otherwise. Where differences were not statistically significant, these differences could be caused by chance. Where non-significant findings are commented on, this is based on the identification of large or potentially notable differences which were tested but found not to be significant, and are clearly detailed as such.

In order to maximise analysis opportunities, all responses to each question were reported, meaning that base sizes differ slightly throughout the report. When interpreting the report it is advised to review the base size for each question.

Children's Social Care

This chapter presents key findings from a series of questions about children's social care. It begins by looking at the most commonly used sources of support to improve children's social care services and how helpful each of them are. It then examines social worker workforce in LAs. Following this, the chapter turns to commissioning arrangements and different functions within the authority. Next, the chapter looks at multi-agency working arrangements. Finally, the chapter looks at whether authorities have conducted any assessments of the potential implications of the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union.

A total of 68 LAs fully completed the section on children's social care.

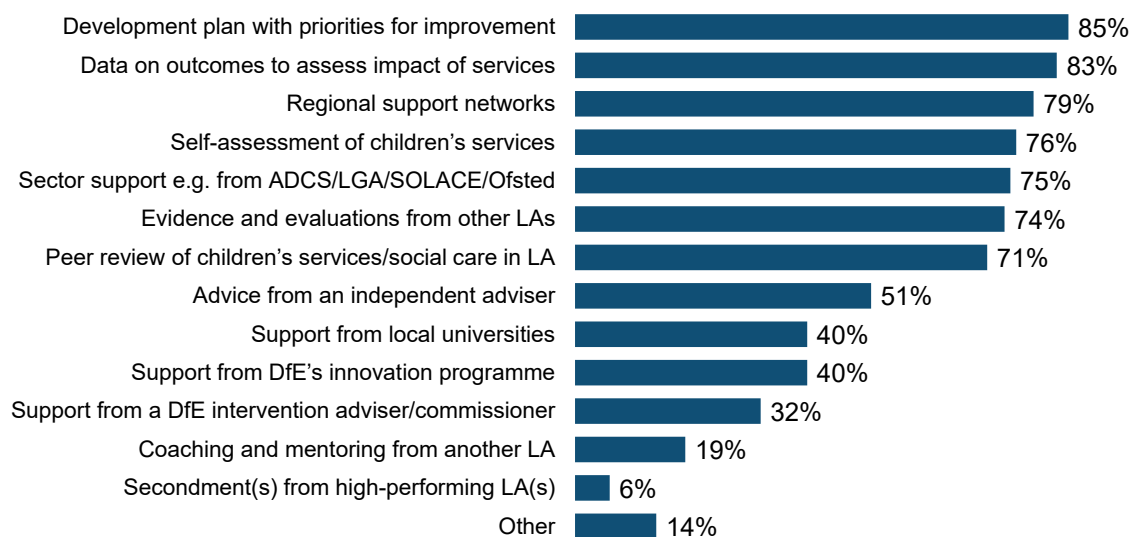
LA improvement

Sources of support

LAs were presented with a list of sources of support or approaches to improve children's social care and asked which of them the authority had used. As Figure 1 shows, development plans with identified priorities for improvement was the most common approach used, mentioned by 85% of all responding LAs.

Figure 1: Most commonly used sources of support or approaches to improve children's social care services

Q. Which of the following sources of support or approaches to improve children's social care services, if any, has your authority used? Please select up to three.



Base: All responding authorities (n=72)

Data on outcomes to assess impact of services and regional support networks were also frequently mentioned (83% and 79% of all LAs respectively mentioned these sources of support). Other approaches such as regional support networks, self-assessment of

children’s services outside of the inspection cycle and sector support from ADCS/LGA/SOLACE/Ofsted or similar organisations were also often used.

Other sources of support mentioned beyond the preassigned list of answer options included DCS mentoring programme and other support approaches targeted at the leadership level, Practice Improvement programmes and peer reviews.

Those LAs which had used a source of support were asked which of the approaches had been the most helpful in improving children’s social care services. There was no clear consensus on the most helpful source of support which suggests that there is no single fix-all approach.

Perhaps reflecting the most commonly used sources of support, development plans with priorities were seen as most helpful by a quarter (25%) of those who had used these approaches.

Figure 2: Most helpful sources of support in improving children’s social care services

Q. In your opinion, which of the following sources of support was most helpful in improving children’s social care services in your local authority? Please select only one.



Base: All responding authorities who had used sources of support (n=71)

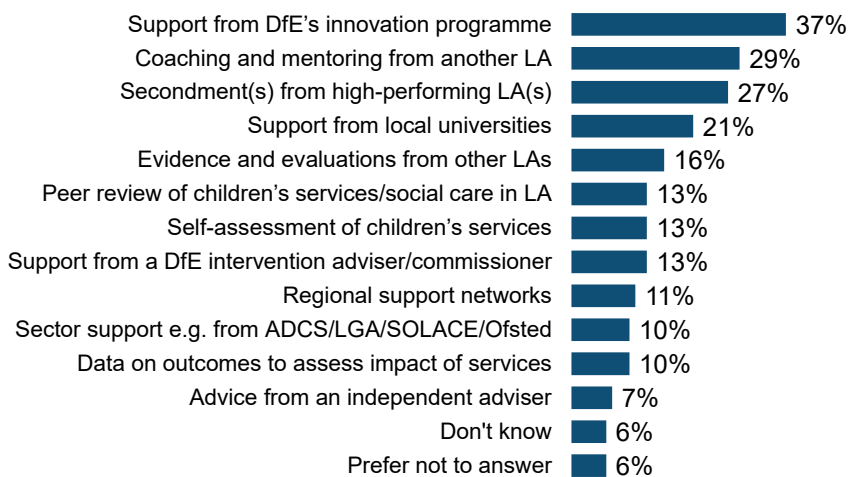
In addition, self-assessment of children’s services outside the inspection cycle was seen as a helpful source of support in improving children’s social care services by 15% of LAs. One in ten (10%) also mentioned peer review of children’s services or children’s social care in LA as helpful. Other approaches were less frequently mentioned.

LAs were asked about their appetite for having access to the sources of support they currently do not use. Support from DfE’s innovation programme and coaching and mentoring from another LA were commonly mentioned as sources of support LAs would like to access in the future. They were mentioned by 37% and 29% respectively.

There was also clear appetite among LAs for secondments from high-performing LAs (27%) and support from local universities (21%).

Figure 3: Sources of support LAs would like to access in the future to improve children’s social care services

Q. Would you like to access any of the following sources of support in the future to improve children’s social care services in your local authority?
Please select all that apply.

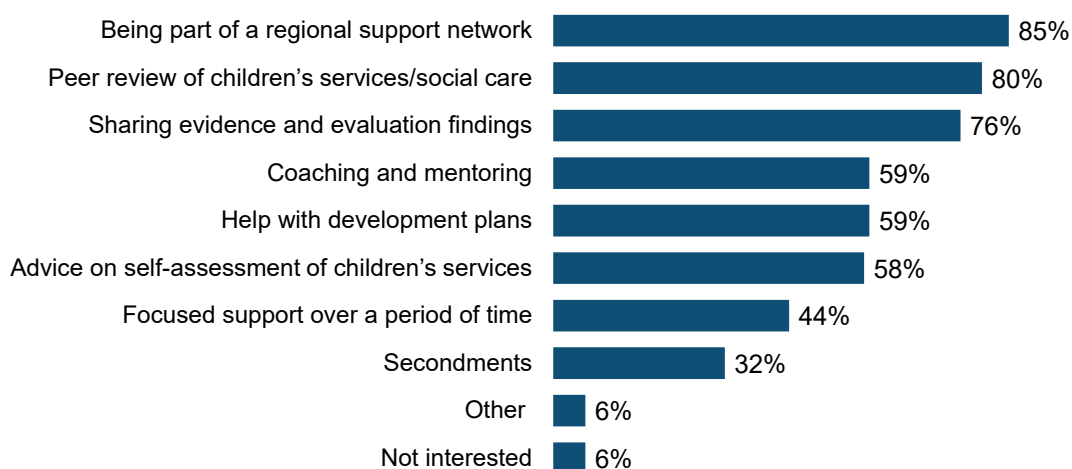


Base: All responding authorities (n=70)

LAs were also asked which sources of support they would be interested in offering to other LAs in the future. There was widespread interest in being part of a regional support network with 85% expressing interest in offering this to other LAs. Peer review of children’s services or children’s social care (mentioned by 80%) and sharing evidence and evaluation findings (76%) were also mentioned as sources of support LAs would be interested in offering to other local authorities in the future.

Figure 4: Sources of support local authorities would be interested in offering to other local authorities in the future

Q. Would your local authority be interested in offering any of these sources of support to other local authorities in the future?
Please select all that apply.



Base: All responding authorities (n=71)

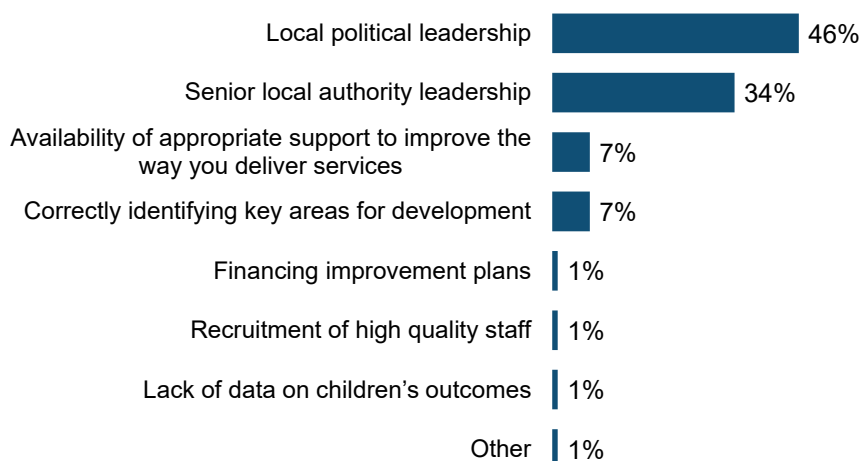
Other responses which did not appear in the predefined answer list were also given by six per cent of responding authorities. These included Partners in Practice and Early Help programmes. An authority also mentioned resource pressures which may cause issues with offering support.

Enablers and barriers to the improvement of children’s social care services

All responding authorities were asked whether certain factors have enabled improvement of children’s social care services or acted as barriers. Local political and senior local authority leadership were seen as the key enablers, mentioned by 46% and 34% of authorities respectively.

Figure 5: Enablers to the improvement of children’s social care services

Q. Which, if any, of the following have been **enablers** to the improvement of children’s social care services in your authority?
Please select up to three options.

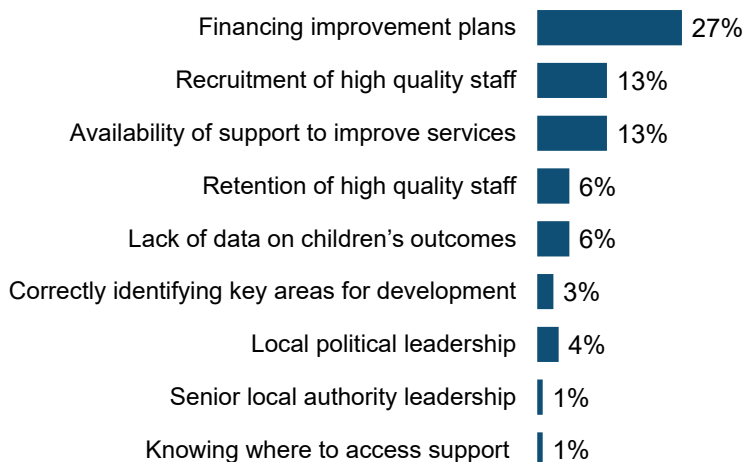


Base: All responding authorities (n=70)

As Figure 6 shows, financing improvement plans was the most frequently mentioned barrier to improvement, mentioned by 27% of authorities. Recruitment of high quality staff and availability of support to improve services were also both mentioned by 13%.

Figure 6: Barriers to the improvement of children’s social care services

Q. Which, if any, of the following factors have been **barriers** to the improvement of children’s social care services in your authority?
Please select up to three options.

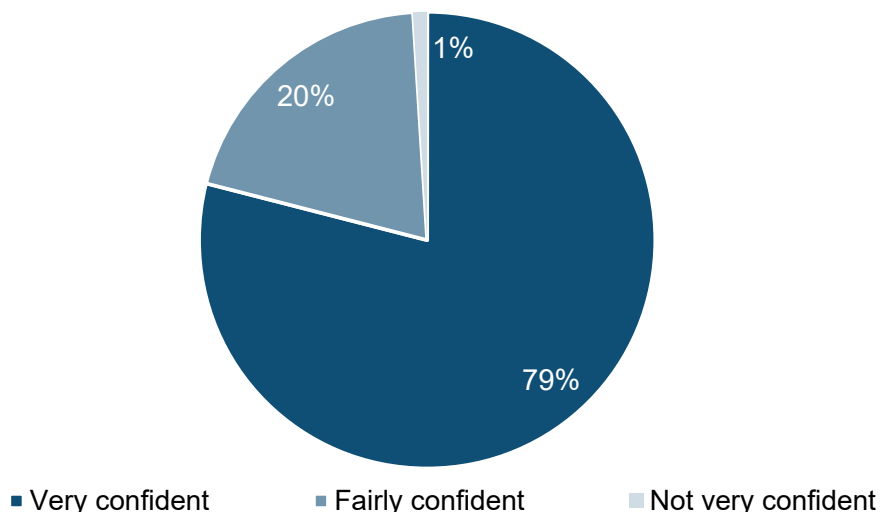


Base: All responding authorities (n=70)

LAs were asked to rate their level of confidence in their own authority’s understanding of how to improve children’s social care services. The vast majority (99%) felt either very or fairly confident about this with just one per cent saying that they did not feel very confident.

Figure 7: Level of confidence in local authority’s understanding of how to improve children’s social care services

Q. How confident, if at all, are you in your local authority’s understanding of how to improve your authority’s children’s social care services?



Base: All responding authorities (n=70)

Social worker workforce

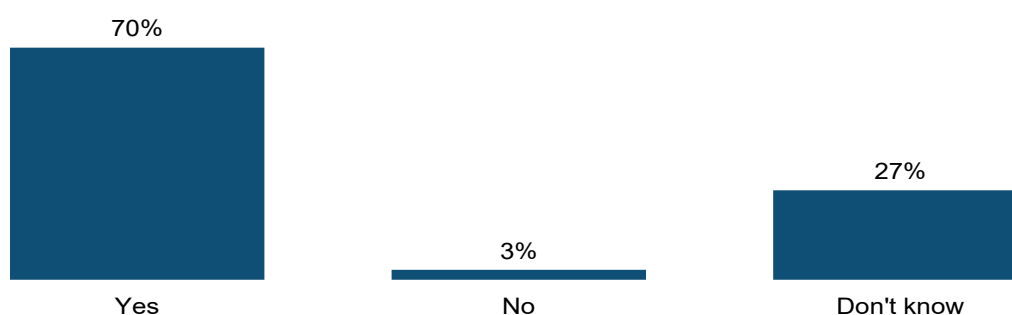
Social worker apprenticeships

Due to a major government reform of apprenticeships, the current system of 'frameworks' is being replaced by 'standards.' Apprenticeship standards show what an apprentice will be doing and the skills required of them, by job role. Standards are developed by employer groups known as 'trailblazers.'¹ The standards for social worker apprenticeship were being developed at the time of the survey.

Seventy per cent of responding authorities said that they intended to offer the social work apprenticeship in child and family social work if it was approved by the Institute for Apprenticeships from September 2018.² A substantial minority (27%) did not know whether their authority is planning on offering the apprenticeship.

Figure 8: Whether authority intends to offer social worker apprenticeship from September 2018

Q. If the social worker apprenticeship standard is approved by the Institute for Apprenticeships, does your authority intend to offer this apprenticeship in child and family social work from September 2018?



Base: All responding authorities (n=70)

All responding authorities were also asked about the barriers to running a social worker apprenticeship programme. While 14% did not envisage any barriers, over half (54%) of authorities identified set-up costs as a barrier. Lack of information, advice or guidance for local authorities to draw on was also seen as a barrier by 19%. Related to this, a smaller proportion (six per cent) also mentioned lack of local authority capacity to support apprenticeships as a possible barrier. Other aspects were less frequently mentioned.

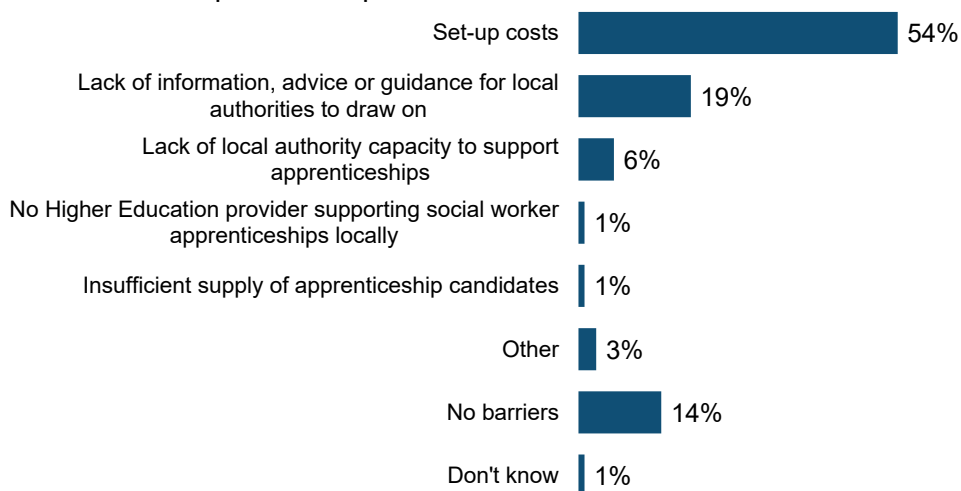
¹ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/search-for-apprenticeship-standards>, accessed 19 December 2017

² Note (May 2018): The Institute for Apprenticeships has approved the apprenticeship standard and it is envisaged that the apprenticeship will be ready for first apprentices to start training in 2019 (not September 2018 as was asked in the survey)

Figure 9: Biggest barriers to running a social worker apprenticeship programme

Q. What do you think are the biggest barriers in your local authority to running a social worker apprenticeship programme?

Please select up to three options.

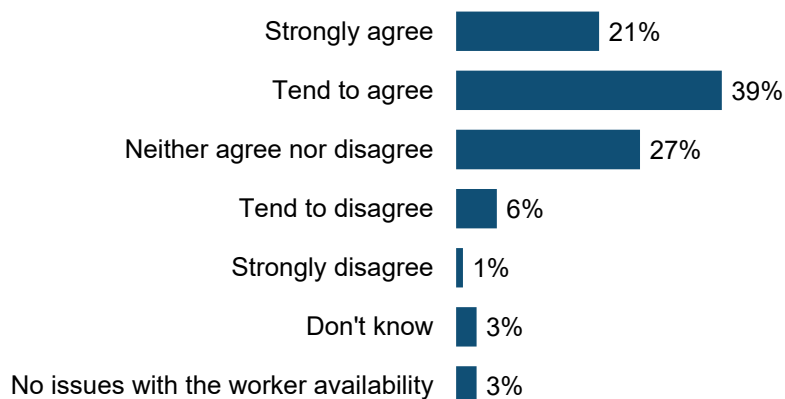


Base: All responding authorities (n=70)

Further, authorities were asked to rate the extent to which social work apprenticeships will help to increase the availability of child and family social workers within the authority. A majority of the LAs (60%) agreed that apprenticeships will increase availability while just seven per cent disagreed. A further 27% did not agree or disagree on this. The remaining seven per cent either did not know or experienced no issues with child and family social worker availability in their authority.

Figure 10: Extent to which social work apprenticeships will help to increase the availability of child and family social workers

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree that social work apprenticeships will help to increase the availability of child and family social workers in your authority?



Base: All responding authorities (n=70)

Supporting returning workers

Authorities were asked what, if anything, they do to support people returning to the social work profession.

The **Assessed and Supported Year in Employment programme** was used by many authorities.

“We run a successful Academy model for ASYE social workers. We have an intake of about 10 a year. This can include people returning to social work.”

“The LA supports people through the ASYE programme. If a SW has received their qualification but did not immediately enter into the profession.”

“Alumni scheme to encourage those who have left to return. We have a robust ASYE programme. We are considering a ‘Return to Practice’ scheme.”

Flexibility and training opportunities were mentioned as an important aspect of support for those returning to social work profession.

“Flexible working, family-friendly policies and excellent training opportunities.”

“Flexible working: working from home/other locations, supportive culture, progression opportunities, learning and development, current work to reduce caseloads/increase reflective supervision.”

A number of authorities said that they **do not currently do much but are actively considering ways returning individuals could be supported**.

“This is currently under review - at present this is not offered and we are reviewing what this would look like currently.”

“Currently not a great deal. We are interested in the return to work pilots and learning from them. We would be interested in the outcomes.”

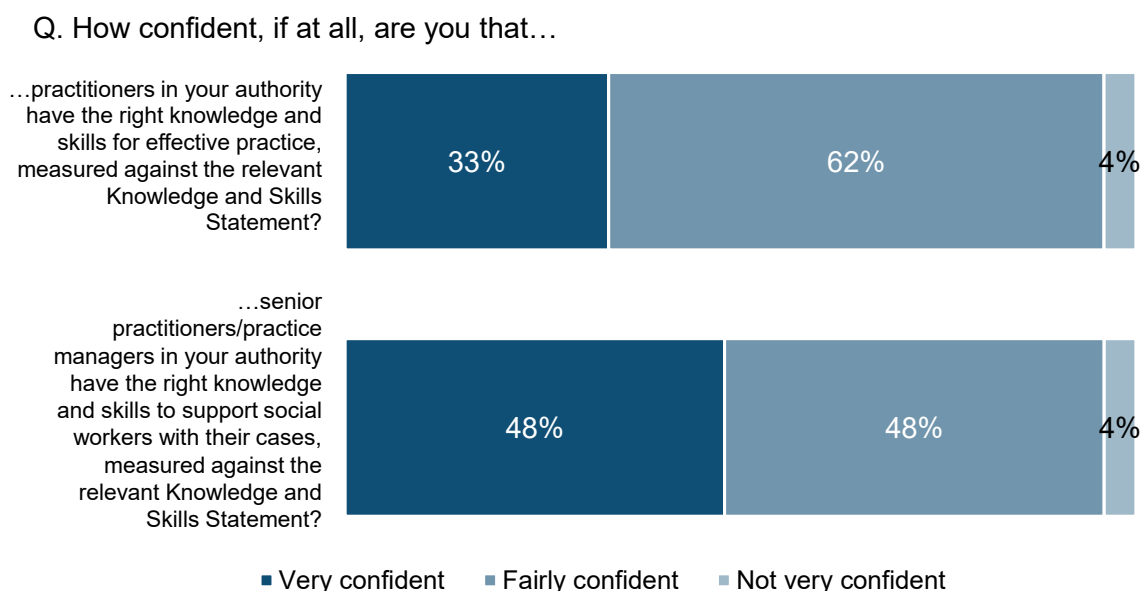
“Not much but keen to look at this further.”

Confidence in social work workforce

LAs were also asked a series of questions to rate their confidence in the workforce. The levels of confidence were generally high. The vast majority of responding LAs (95%) were either 'very' or 'fairly' confident that practitioners in their authority have the right knowledge and skills for effective practice measured against the relevant Knowledge and Skills Statement.

Further, the same proportion (95%) were confident that senior practitioners or practice managers have the right knowledge and skills to support social workers with their cases, measured against the relevant Knowledge and Skills Statement with nearly half (48%) saying they were 'very confident' about this.

Figure 11: Level of confidence in knowledge and skills of practitioners and practice managers



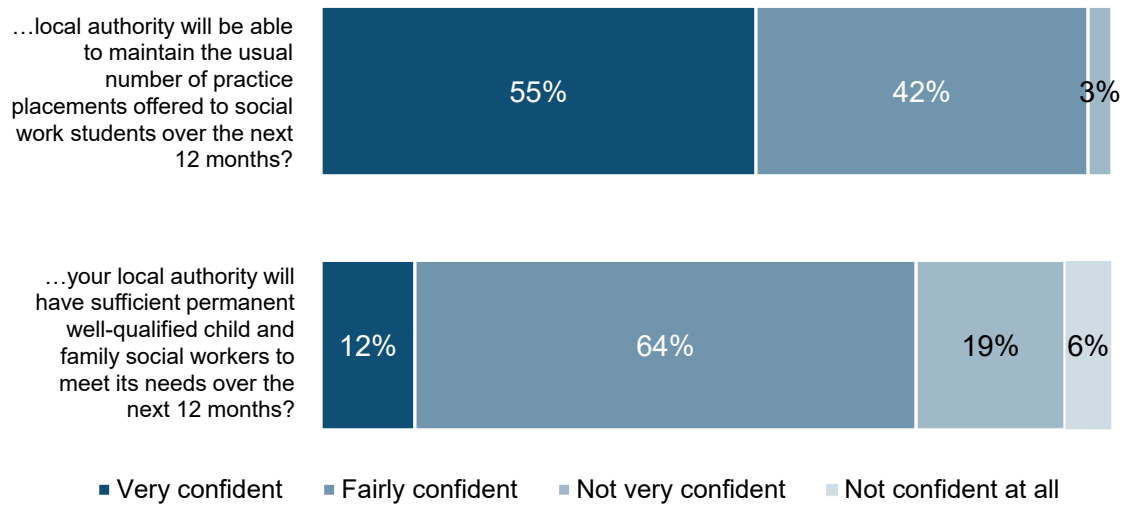
Base: All responding authorities (n=69)

As Figure 12 shows, high levels of confidence were also expressed towards LAs' ability to maintain the usual number of practice placements offered to social work students over the next 12 months (97% said they were either 'very' or 'fairly' confident about this). Compared with 2016, this presents a substantial increase in confidence levels. During wave 1, conducted in September and October 2016, 88% of LAs were either 'very' or 'fairly' confident that they would be able to maintain the usual number of practice placements for social work students over the next 12 months.

While on the whole LAs were confident that they will have sufficient permanent, well-qualified child and family social workers to meet their needs over the next 12 months (76% were either very or fairly confident), there was a substantial minority of LAs (25%) that were not 'not very confident' or 'not confident at all' about this.

Figure 12: Level of confidence in recruiting and retaining social care staff

Q. How confident, if at all, are you that...



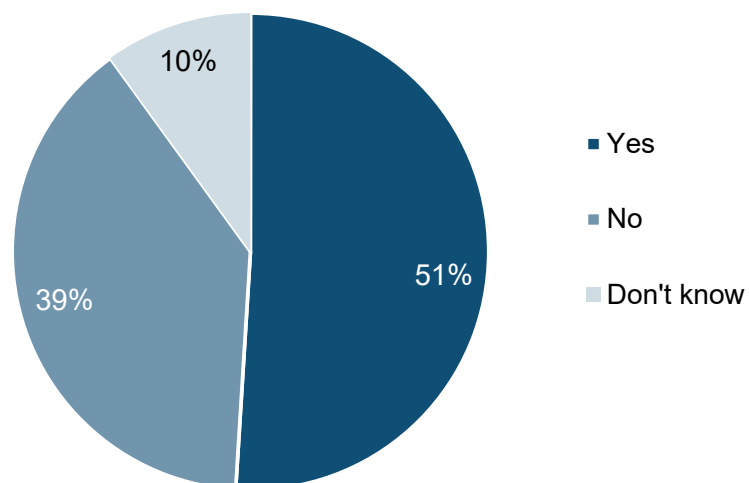
Base: All responding authorities (n=69)

Knowledge and Skills statements

Half of responding LAs (51%) said that they used the Knowledge and Skills statements for performance management, while 39% did not.

Figure 13: Whether LA uses the Knowledge and Skills statements for performance management

Q. Does your local authority use the Knowledge and Skills statements for performance management?

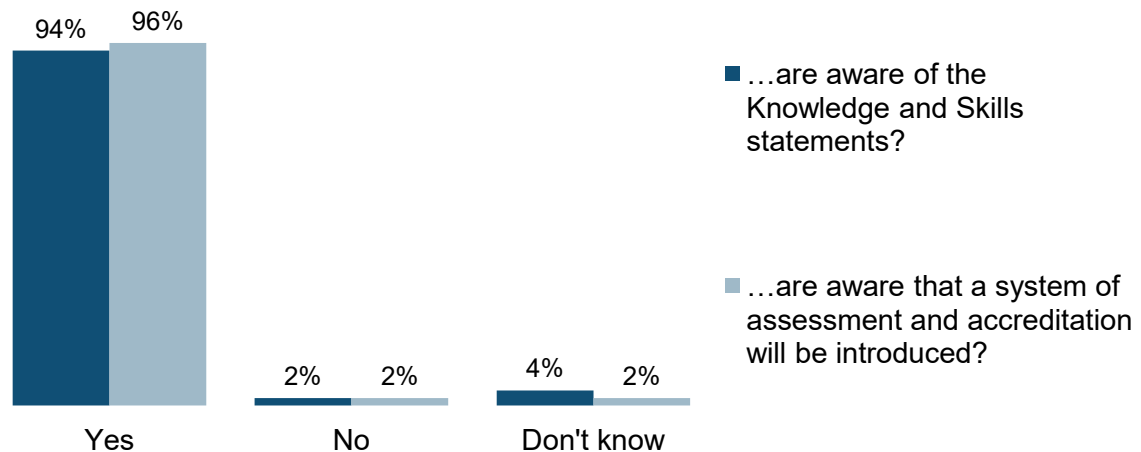


Base: All responding authorities (n=69)

Awareness of the Knowledge and Skills statements overall among social workers was seen as widespread. The vast majority of responding LAs (94%) said social workers in their authority were aware of the statements. Further, 96% of the authorities said that their social workers were aware that a system of assessment and accreditation will be introduced from 2018.

Figure 14: Whether social workers in the authority are aware of the Knowledge and Skills statements and that a system of assessment and accreditation will be introduced

Q. Do you think social workers in your local authority...



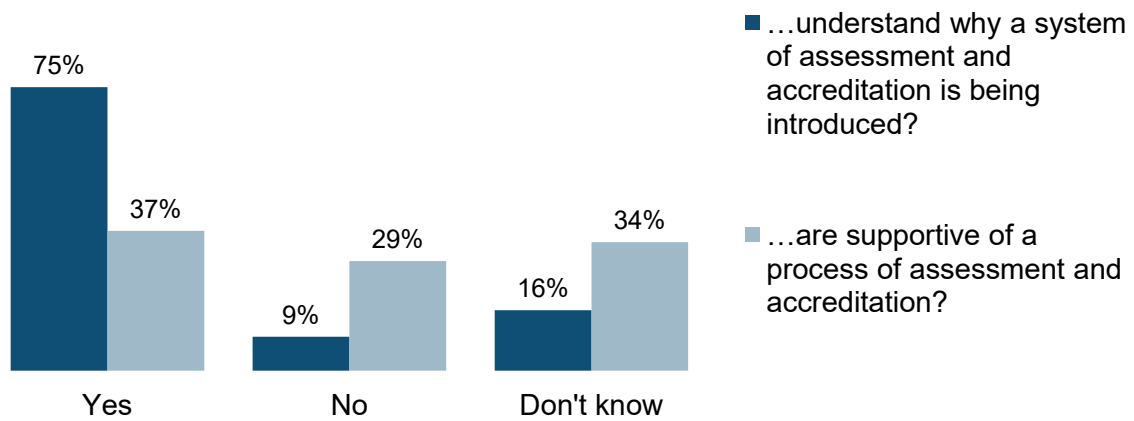
Base: All responding authorities (n=69)

While a majority of responding authorities (75%) said the social workers in their authority understood why a system of assessment and accreditation is being introduced, a considerable proportion (25%) either said that their social workers did not understand or did not know.

Views on support for the process of assessment and accreditation were mixed. Over a third (37%) of responding LAs thought their social workers were supportive of this, while 29% thought they were not. A further 34% did not know social workers' views on this.

Figure 15: Whether social workers in the LA understand why a system of assessment and accreditation is being introduced and are supportive of this process

Q. Do you think social workers in your local authority...

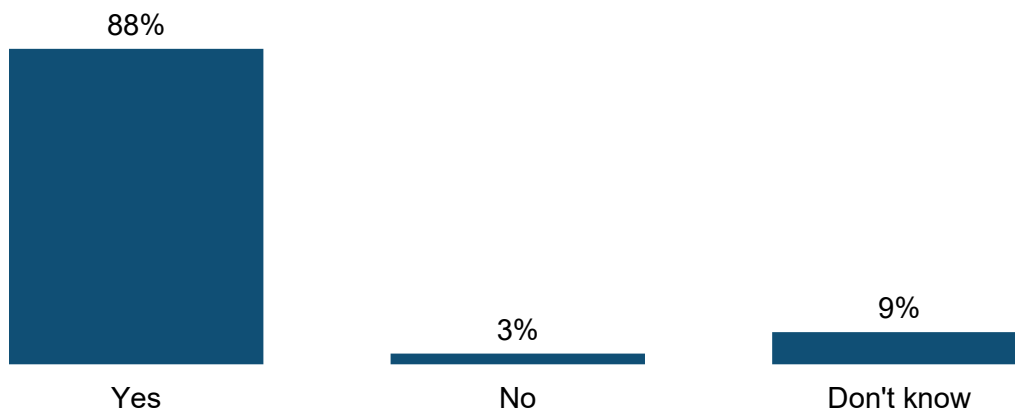


Base: All responding authorities (n=69)

Most responding authorities (88%) thought their social workers were aware that assessment will be against the Child and Family Knowledge and Skills statements. However, nine per cent were not sure about this.

Figure 16: Whether social workers in the LA are aware that assessment will be against the Child and Family Knowledge and Skills statements

Q. Do you think social workers in your local authority are aware that assessment will be against the Child and Family Knowledge and Skills statements?



Base: All responding authorities (n=69)

Sufficiency of care/adoption placements

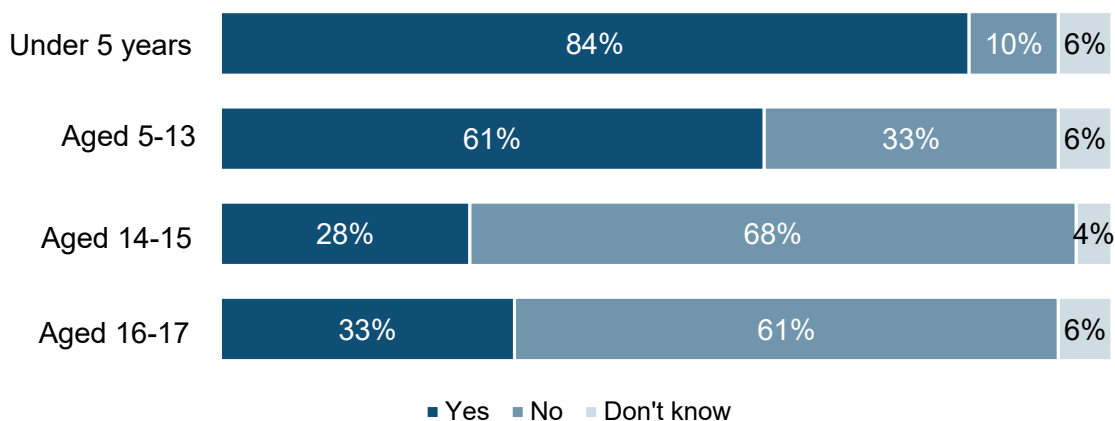
The LAs were asked whether they had access to sufficient care and adoption placements for children and young people.

There was variation in LAs' ability to offer care placements within different age groups over the last 12 months. Overall, responding LAs had most commonly had access to sufficient care placements for children aged under 5 and those aged 5-13 with 84% and 61% of LAs respectively saying they were able to meet the demand in those age groups.

In comparison, only 28% of LAs said they had sufficient placements to meet the needs of those aged 14-15. For young people aged 16-17 the figure was 33%.

Figure 17: Whether LA had access to sufficient care placements to children and young people in the last 12 months

Q. Did your local authority have access to sufficient care placements to meet the needs of looked after children over the last 12 months for children and young people:

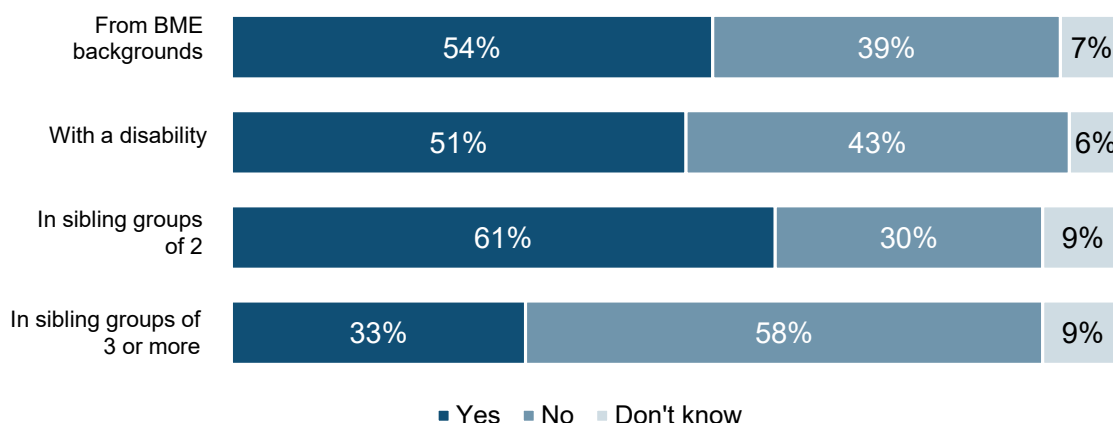


Base: All responding authorities, excluding 'Prefer not to say' (n=68)

As Figure 18 shows, just over half (54%) of LAs said they had had sufficient care placements for children and young people from BME backgrounds in the last 12 months. 51% of LAs had access to sufficient care placements for those with a disability.

Figure 18: Whether LA had access to sufficient care placements to children and young people from BME backgrounds or with disability in the last 12 months

Q. Did your local authority have access to sufficient care placements to meet the needs of looked after children over the last 12 months for children and young people:



Base: All responding authorities, excluding 'Prefer not to say' (n=68)

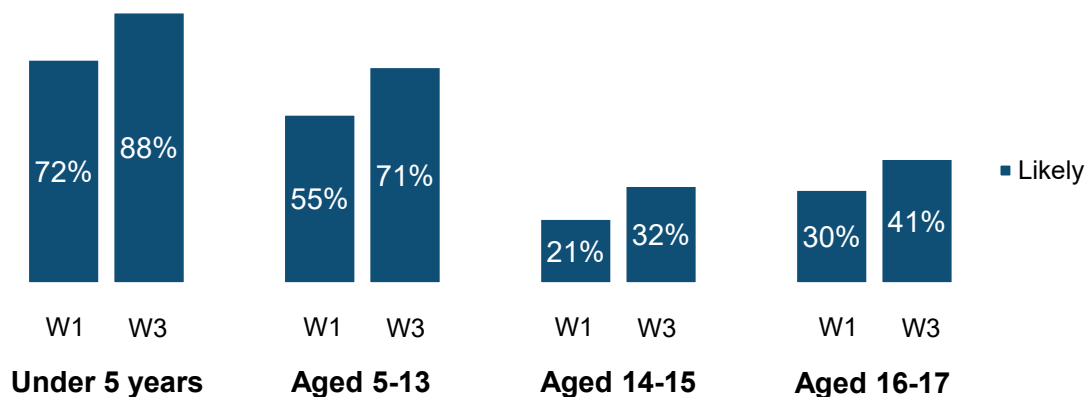
Sixty-one per cent of authorities said that they had had access to sufficient care placements for sibling groups of two in the last 12 months, while for sibling groups of three or more, 33% thought so.

Mirroring the access LAs have had to care placements over the last 12 months, the majority of authorities thought it was likely that they will have access to sufficient care placements to meet the projected needs of children and young people aged under 5 and 5-13 over the next 12 months (88% and 71% respectively saw this as likely). 32% of LAs saw this as likely for those aged 14-15 and 41% for those aged 16-17.

Across all age groups, there has been an increase in the proportion of LAs who see themselves as likely to have access to sufficient care placements between waves 1 and 3 of this research.

Figure 19: How likely LA will have access to sufficient care placements to meet the projected needs of children and young people in the next 12 months – findings from waves 1 and 3

Q. In your opinion, how likely, if at all, is it that your local authority will have access to sufficient care placements to meet the projected needs of its looked after children over the next 12 months for children and young people:



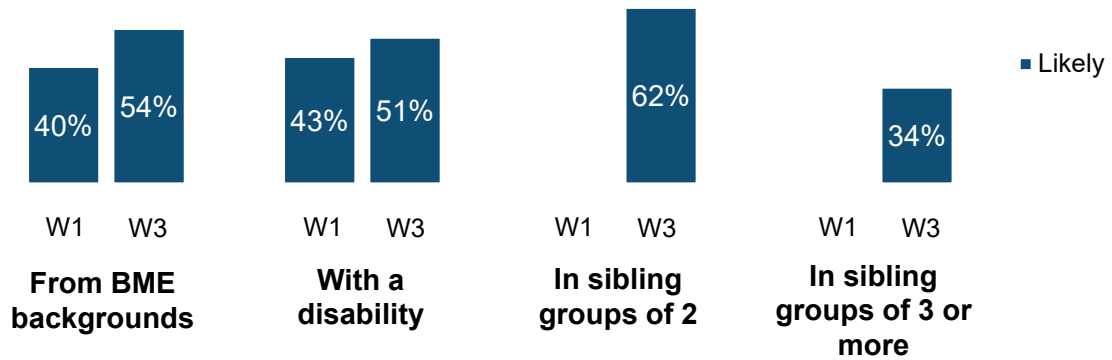
Base: All responding authorities, excluding 'Prefer not to say' (wave 1 n=86, wave 3 n=68)

Just over half of the LAs thought it was likely that they will be able to meet the care placement needs over the next 12 months for children and young people from BME backgrounds and those with a disability (54% and 51% respectively).

LAs were more likely to think that they will have access to care placements for sibling groups of two than sibling groups of three or more. While 62% of LAs thought that they will be able to meet the projected needs of looked after children for sibling groups of two, for sibling groups of three or more the same figure was just 34%.

Figure 20: How likely LA will have access to sufficient care placements to meet the projected needs of children and young people

Q. In your opinion, how likely, if at all, is it that your local authority will have access to sufficient care placements to meet the projected needs of its looked after children over the next 12 months for children and young people:

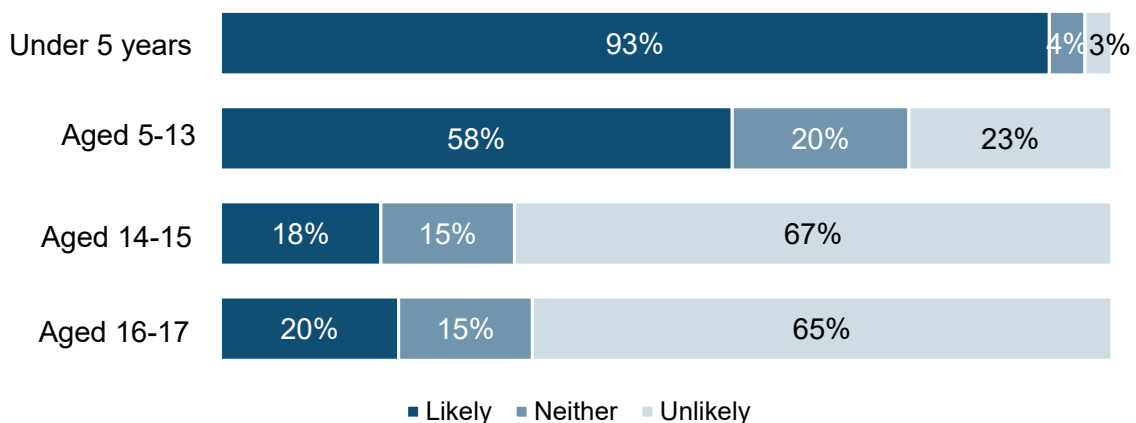


Base: All responding authorities, excluding 'Prefer not to say' (wave 1 n=86, wave 3 n=68)

The adoption needs of those under 5 years were generally seen as sufficient with 93% of LAs likely to be able to meet the projected needs in the age group. LAs were less likely to think they would be able to meet the projected needs of those in older age groups: just one in five LAs saw themselves as likely to have access to sufficient adoption placements for those aged 14-15 and 16-17 (18 and 20% respectively).

Figure 21: How likely LA will have access to sufficient adoption placements to meet the projected needs of children and young people aged under 5 to 17

Q. In your opinion, how likely, if at all, is it that your local authority will have access to sufficient adoption placements to meet projected need over the next 12 months for children and young people:



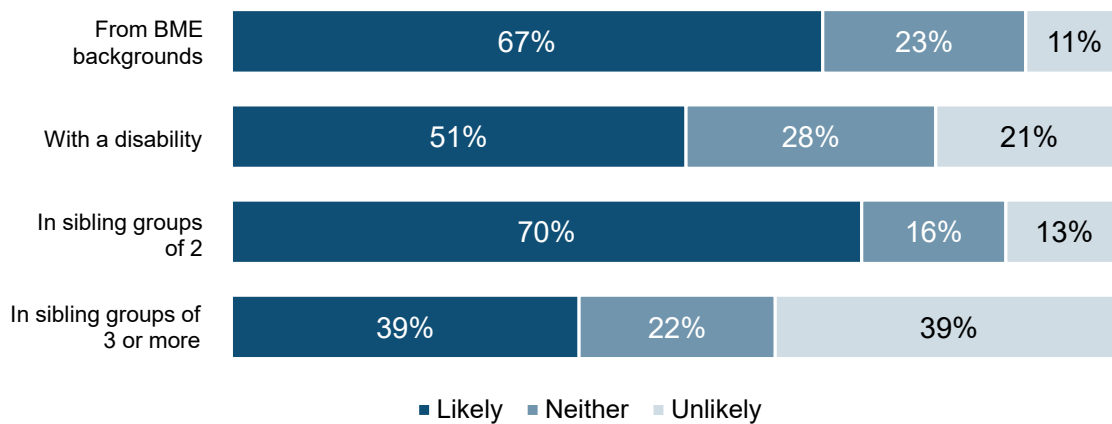
Base: All responding authorities, excluding 'Don't know' and 'Prefer not to say' (n=60-67)

Two in three LAs (67%) thought it likely that they'll be able to meet the projected needs of children from BME backgrounds. Among children and young people with disabilities, just over half of authorities (51%) saw it as likely.

As Figure 22 shows, the needs of smaller sibling groups of two were seen as more likely to be met than the needs of sibling groups of three or more. Seven in ten responding (70%) LAs thought it was likely they would have access to sufficient adoption placements for sibling groups of two, compared to 39% for groups of three or more.

Figure 22: How likely LA will have access to sufficient adoption placements to meet projected need over the next 12 months for children from BME backgrounds or with a disability

Q. In your opinion, how likely, if at all, is it that your local authority will have access to sufficient adoption placements to meet projected need over the next 12 months for children and young people:



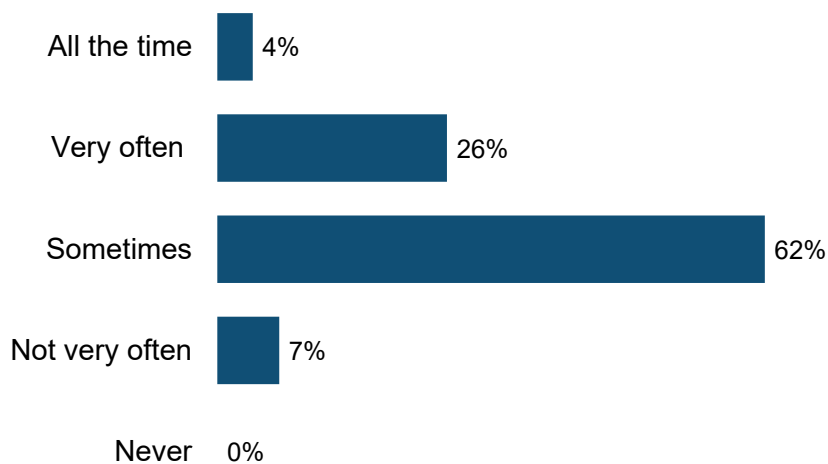
Base: All responding authorities, excluding 'Don't know' and 'Prefer not to say' (n=60-67)

Access to mental health support and services

LAs were also asked to assess how often children and young people looked after by the authority are able to access the mental health support and services they need. Just four per cent of responding authorities said that needs were met 'all the time' while 26% said this happened 'very often'. In the majority of cases LAs thought this happens 'sometimes' (62%). None of the authorities said looked after children and young people were 'never' able to access the services they need.

Figure 23: How often looked after children and young people are able to access the mental health support and services they need

Q. How often, if at all, would you say that children and young people looked after by your local authority are able to access the mental health support and services they need?

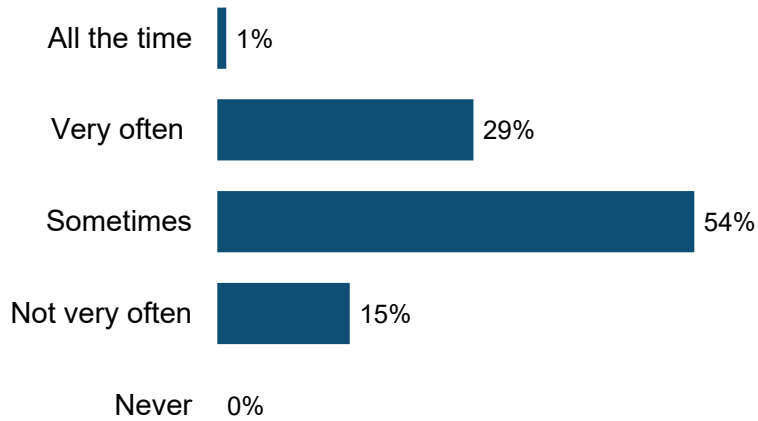


Base: All responding authorities (n=68)

When asked about previously looked after children's and young people's ability to access the mental health support and services they need, the majority of LAs (54%) saw them having access 'sometimes.' Nearly a third (30%) estimated them to be able to access mental health support and services either very often or all the time.

Figure 24: How often previously looked after children and young people are able to access mental health support and services they need

Q. How often, if at all, would you say that children and young people previously looked after by your local authority (those aged under 18 that have left care through adoption or special guardianship) are able to access the mental health support and services they need?



Base: All responding authorities (n=68)

Understanding demand for children’s social care services

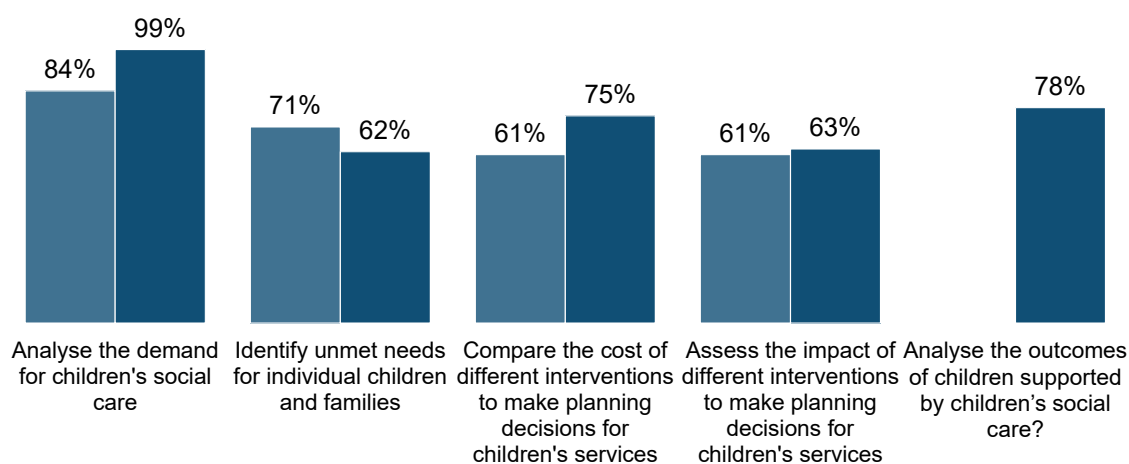
Analysing demand

Between 2016 and 2017 there was a statistically significant increase in the proportion of LAs with a function or team that is able to analyse the demand for children’s social care. In Wave 1 84% of responding LAs said they had one and this rose to 99% in Wave 3.

Figure 25: Functions to analyse demand, needs, cost, impact and outcomes

Q. Does your local authority have a function or team that is able to...

% Yes



Base: All responding authorities (Wave 1 n=87; Wave 3 n=68)

A majority of responding LAs had functions or teams to analyse the outcomes of children supported by children’s social care (78%), compare the cost of different interventions (75%), assess the impact of different interventions (63%) and identify unmet needs for individual children and families (62%). The changes in the prevalence of these functions within LAs between Wave 1 and Wave 3 were not statistically significant.

However, Wave 3 findings suggested that these sorts of functions and teams were likely to increase in the future. For example, 10% of LAs were currently considering whether to introduce a function or team to compare the cost of different interventions to make planning decisions for children’s services, while 16% were considering whether to introduce the capability to assess the impact of different interventions and 15% were considering whether to introduce a function or team to identify unmet needs for individual children and families.

Priorities for improving children's social care services

LAs were asked to list their top priorities for improving children's social care services over the next three years. From this, four key themes emerged.

Firstly, a number of LAs said that **recruiting and retaining a high quality social care workforce** was a priority.

"Sustaining a high quality workforce."

"Recruit and retain skilled staff at all levels"

"Recruitment and retention [and] re-structuring the workforce to ensure right social work capacity and increase management oversight."

Another common theme was **improving the quality of practice and outcomes for children and young people**. Related to this, some authorities highlighted a focus on early intervention, particularly in light of financial restraints.

"Improving outcomes for children and young people, delivering early intervention, delivering services within financial constraints."

"It is more about improving outcomes for children and their families with a focus on early intervention."

"Improve quality of service to children."

"Quality of practice, quality of workforce and establishing mature partnerships."

LAs also mentioned the need to **manage demand** for social care services. Some suggested that demand is rising, while others said that people need to be diverted from high cost interventions.

"Reducing demand and improving resilience."

"Address the rise in demand for Children's services."

"Reducing demand for high cost/poor outcome interventions."

Related to the desire to reduce demand and improve the quality of outcomes for children and young people, some LAs said that they were prioritising **evidence-based assessments** of interventions.

"Evidence-based, quality assessments."

"Evidence based social work interventions."

LA structures and commissioning arrangements

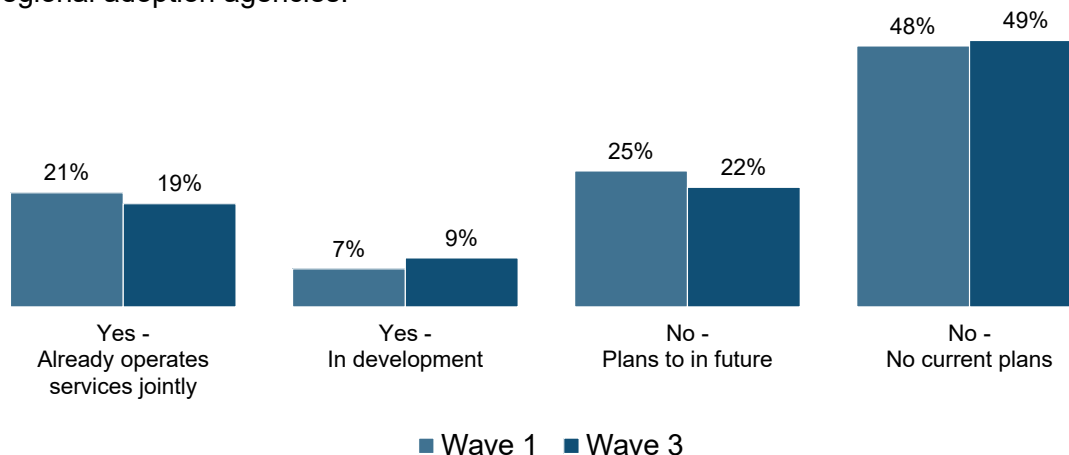
Joint commissioning

One in five responding LAs operated statutory children’s social care services jointly with another LA or group of authorities (19%). A further nine per cent had plans to operate joint services in development, and 22% planned to in the future. Half of LAs did not operate joint services and had no plans to do so in the future.

As Figure 26 shows, the proportion of LAs operating joint children’s social care services has not changed significantly since Wave 1 of this research (conducted in September – October 2016).

Figure 26: Proportion of authorities operating joint children’s social care services

Q. Does your local authority currently operate any statutory children’s social care services jointly with another local authority/group of authorities? Please do not include regional adoption agencies.



Base: All responding authorities (Wave 1 n=88; Wave 3 n=68)

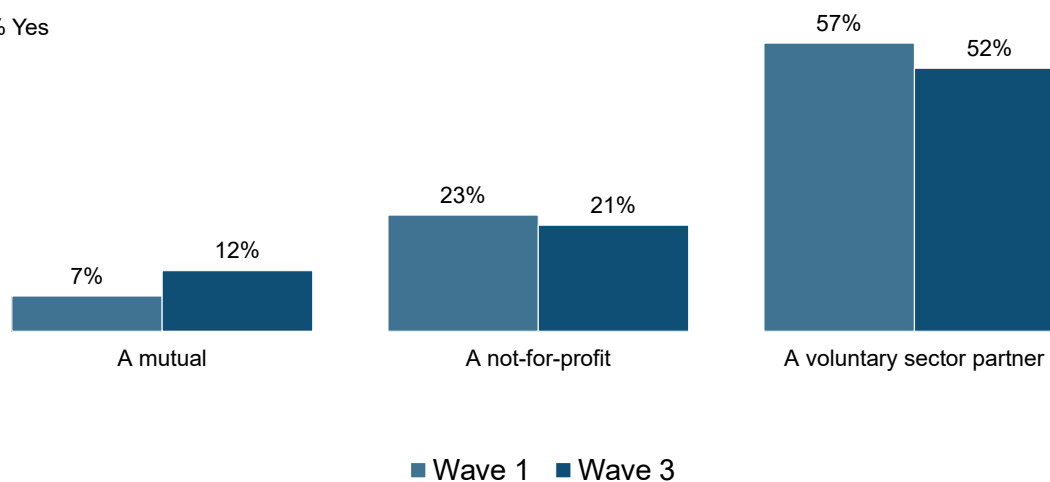
Commissioning of alternative providers

The proportion of responding LAs outsourcing delivery of children’s services to alternative providers remained largely unchanged. For instance, 12% of LAs outsourced delivery of children’s services to a mutual, compared to seven per cent in wave 1 (conducted in September to October 2016). Around one in five outsourced delivery to a not-for-profit (21% compared to 23% in 2016) and half outsourced services to a voluntary sector partner (52% compared to 57% in 2016). Given the relatively small base sizes, the differences observed between 2016 and 2017 are not statistically significant.

Figure 27: Outsourcing children’s services

Q. Does your local authority currently commission any of the following types of organisations to deliver any aspect of its children’s services?

% Yes



Base: All responding authorities (Wave 1 n=88; Wave 3 n=68)

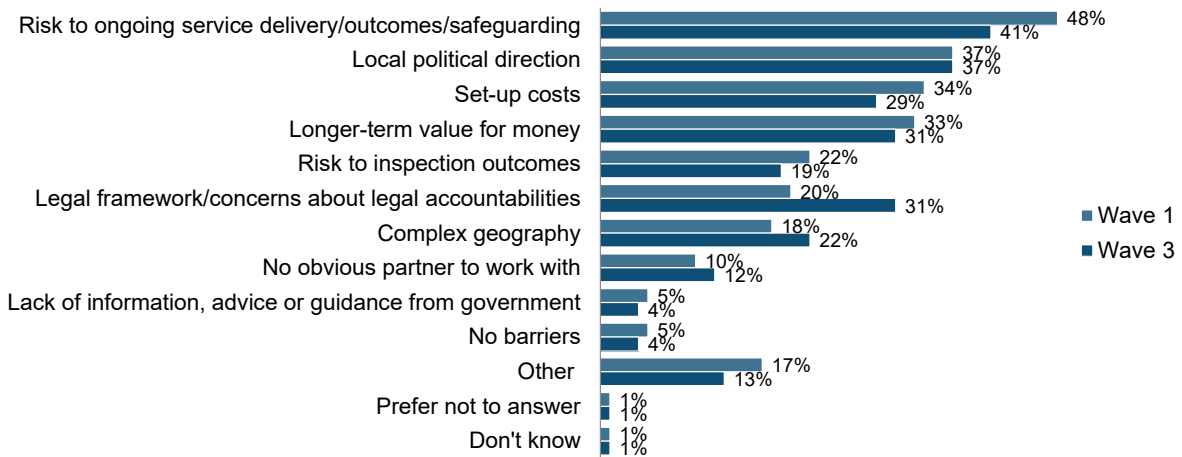
Barriers to adopting new models of service delivery

The most frequently mentioned barriers to LAs adopting a new model of service delivery for any of its children’s social care services were the same in 2017 as in 2016. The most common barrier remained the risk to on-going delivery (41% of LAs highlighted this risk, compared to 48% in 2016). The local political direction was another key barrier to adopting new models of service delivery (37% of LAs selected that as a barrier).

Financial issues also remained barriers. For instance, 29% of LAs said that set-up costs were a barrier and 31% said that longer-term value for money was a barrier. Figure 28 summarises the barriers selected by LAs.

Figure 28: Barriers to adopting new model of service delivery

Q. What do you think are the biggest barriers to your local authority adopting a new model of service delivery for any of its children’s social care services?
Please select up to three options.



Base: All responding authorities (Wave 1 n=87; Wave 3 n=68)

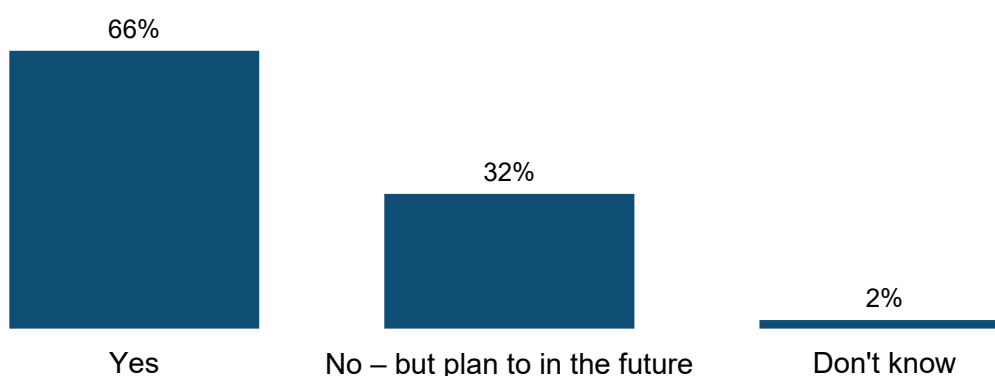
Impact of new legislation

Multi-agency arrangements

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 will set out new arrangements for multi-agency working. Two-thirds of responding LAs have already considered what the new legislation will mean for their multi-agency arrangements (66%), while the remaining LAs have not done so but plan to in the future.

Figure 29: Impact of Children and Social Work Act 2017 on multi-agency arrangements

Q. As you may be aware, the Children and Social Work Act 2017, when brought into force, will set out new arrangements for multi-agency working. Has your local area considered what the new legislation will mean for your multi-agency arrangements?



Base: All responding authorities (n=68)

Among those that had considered the impact, there was some concern over the requirement to move from existing partnerships to a new arrangement. Some LAs said that the current arrangements worked well and that they were looking to minimise the impact of the new Act, or that they had no plans to change current arrangements.

“[There are] risks to moving from existing very strong, inclusive and effective multi-agency partnerships to a new arrangement”

“The current arrangements work well. The legislation has been looked at together with partner agencies.”

“We do not believe our existing arrangements are broken so looking to minimise impact and unnecessary turbulence.”

Others felt that the main challenge of the Act will be establishing new partnerships, or changing the nature of existing partnerships to allow more flexibility. Some also mentioned that they were concerned about reduced resources meaning that some partners will be less engaged.

“That we maintain the good working relations we already have in place whilst amending some processes to allow more flexibility in our joint working.”

“The establishment of the new partnership arrangements - focus and funding.”

“Integration of children's services with those adult services that work with their parents, around substance misuse, mental health and domestic abuse.”

“Reduced engagement of partners due to shrinking resources.”

A minority of LAs expressed concern that the new Act will encourage a two-tiered system that places more accountability on some agencies than others, and will make it difficult to ensure an effective, equal partnership.

“[It] Will be a 2-tier system that encourages certain agencies to step up into multiagency working, but excludes other key agencies from same accountability.”

“Big challenge for top tier LAs in partnership with district authorities.”

Other, less commonly suggested, challenges include the need to share sensitive information with partner agencies, how to develop communication plans for the public, and the need to develop a new model of Local Safeguarding Children's Boards.

Impact of UK's withdrawal from the EU

Few responding LAs had begun formally assessing the potential implications of the UK's withdrawal from the European Union for children's social care. No responding LAs had already completed an assessment, and just 12% had one in development. Half of responding LAs said that they had no plans to conduct an assessment on the impact that leaving the EU will have on children's social care (51%). Just over a third (35%) had not conducted assessments but plan to do so in the future.

Early Years and Childcare

This chapter reports on key findings around Early Years and Childcare. It begins by exploring home learning environment (HLE) programmes or services to support parents with children aged 0-5. It then reports on providing parenting programmes or services to support parents with children aged 0-5. Finally, it looks at Early Years providers' recruitment of staff.

A total of 52 LAs answered all the questions on early years and childcare – slightly fewer than completed the sections on children's social care and SEND.

Home learning environment programmes/services

Local Authorities were asked about funding or provision of home learning environment (HLE) programmes or services to support parents with children aged 0-5.

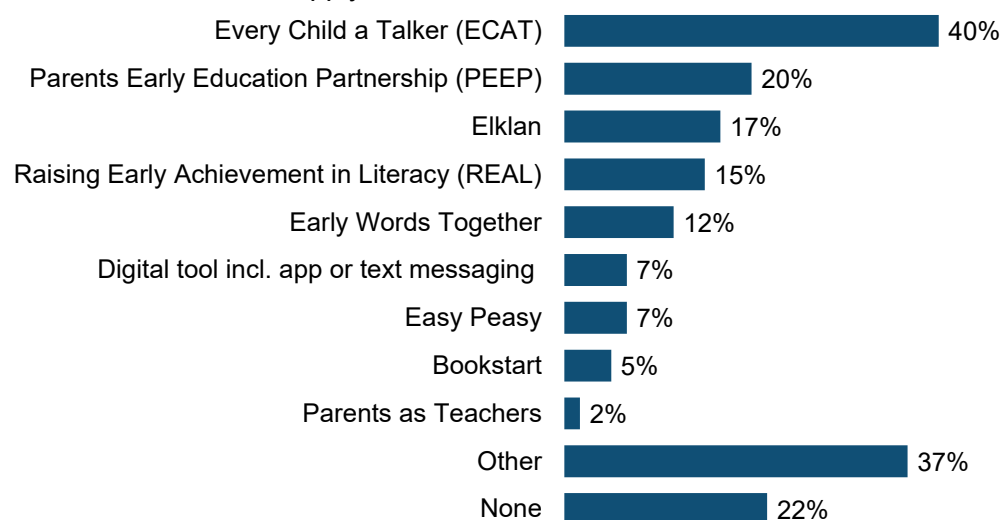
Two in five responding LAs (40%) funded or provided Every Child a Talker (ECAT) and one in five (20%) funded or provided Parents Early Education Partnership (PEEP). Other responses (37%) included bespoke programmes to particular LAs.

It was most common for the LAs to offer just one HLE programme. Around one in five LAs (22%) offered just one HLE programme or service. In addition, 12% offered two, ten per cent offered three and three per cent offered four different programmes.

However, around one in five (22%) responding LAs did not fund or provide any HLE programmes or services.

Figure 30: Whether LA fund or provide any of the listed home learning environment programmes and services to support parents with children aged 0-5

Q. Does your local authority fund or provide any of the following home learning environment (HLE) programmes or services to support parents with children aged 0-5? Please select all that apply.



Base: All responding authorities (n=60)

LAs were asked how much they had spent, or planned to spend, on HLE programmes in total in each financial year between April 2015 and March 2018. They were then asked how many children they reached or planned to reach with those programmes. For these questions between 21 and 23 LAs provided answers which means that the results need to be treated with caution. Analysis of those that did respond suggests that spend on HLE programmes varied substantially, ranging from nothing at all (13% in 2017-18) to £800,000. The mean spend on HLE programmes in 2017/18 was £98,243 (£40 per child reached), £93,422 (£57 per child reached) in 2016-17 and £84,185 (£46 per child reached) in 2015-16. The median spend in 2017/18 was £25,600, £37,250 in 2016/17 and £10,000 in 2015/16. However, as noted above these averages should be treated with caution due to the low base and high level of non-response at these questions.³

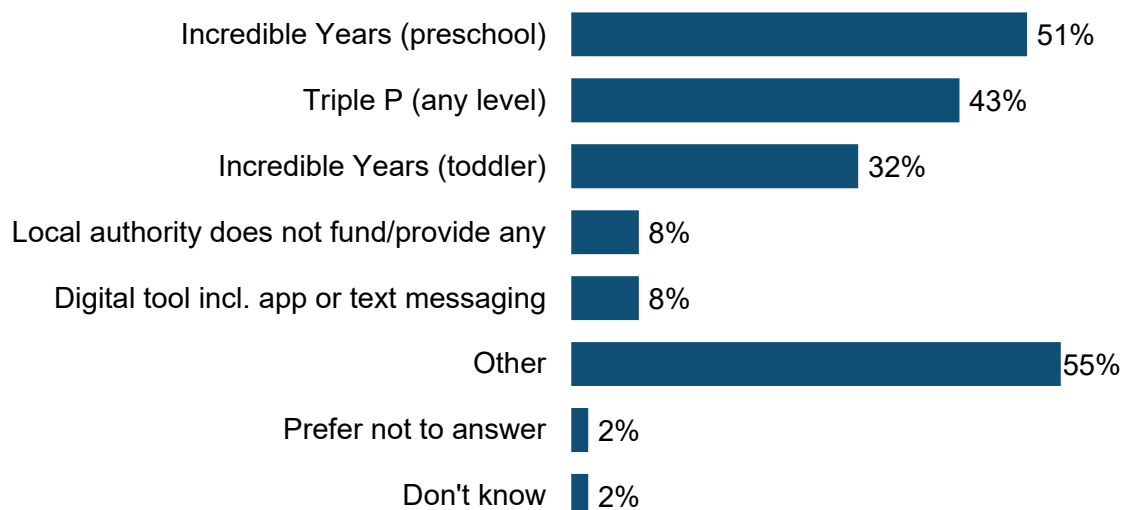
Parenting programmes

In terms of funding or providing parenting programmes or services to support parents with children aged 0-5, half of responding LAs (51%) funded or provided Incredible Years (preschool) and one third (32%) Incredible Years (toddler). In addition, 43% of LAs who responded funded or provided Triple P (any level). Other responses (55%) included Family Links Nurturing and Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities (SFSC). Most commonly, LAs provided just one parenting programme (27%) while 17% provided two and 14% three. Further, eight per cent provided four different parenting programmes.

However, eight per cent of authorities did not fund or provide any parenting programmes.

Figure 31: Parenting programmes or services to support parents with children aged 0-5

Q. Does your local authority fund or provide any of the following parenting programmes or services to support parents with children aged 0-5? Please select all that apply.



Base: All responding authorities (n=53)

³ Please note that the figures for are based on 21-23 responses, with one outlier removed to calculate the mean.

As with HLE programmes, LAs were asked how much they had spent, or planned to spend, on parenting programmes in total in each financial year between April 2015 and March 2018. They were also asked how many children they reached or planned to reach with these programmes. Only 29 LAs responded to these questions which means that the results need to be treated with caution.

Based on answers given, mean and median spend were calculated. As with HLE programmes, spending on parenting programmes varied significantly by LA, ranging from zero (13% in 2017/18) to £429,000. The mean spend on parenting programmes was £86,263 (£547 per child reached) in 2017-18, £72,421 (£323 per child reached) in 2016/17 and £76,741 (£262 per child reached) in 2015/16. The median spend in 2017/18 amounted to £30,400, £21,257 in 16/17 and 20,943 in 2015/16. However these averages should be treated with caution due to the low base and high level of non-response at these questions.⁴

⁴ Excludes one outlier and due to routing and non-response there were only 29 responses at this question for 2017-18 and less for previous years.

Recruitment

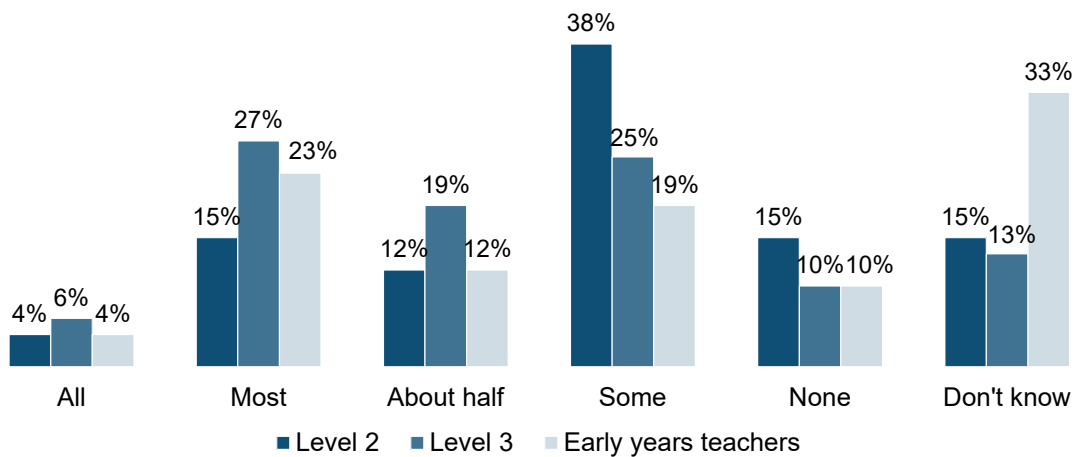
Local Authorities were asked about Early Years providers' recruitment of staff. Almost seven in ten (69%) responding LA's reported that at least some of their providers found it difficult to recruit staff at Level 2. This compares to over three-quarters (77%) at level 3 and 58% for recruiting early years teachers.

Indeed, one in five (19%) responding LAs reported that most or all providers in their area found it difficult to recruit at level 2, compared to a third (33%) at level 3. Over a quarter (27%) of LAs reported most or all of their providers had difficulty recruiting early years teachers.

A third (33%) of LAs were unable to estimate whether providers experienced difficulties in recruiting early years teachers. This compares to 15% for level 2 staff and 13% for level 3 staff.

Figure 32: Proportion of early years providers who find it difficult to recruit level 2 staff, level 3 staff and early years teachers

Q. In your experience, what proportion of early years providers in your local authority find it difficult to recruit staff at the following levels? Please give your best estimate.



Base: All responding authorities (n=52)

Special Educational Needs and Disability

This chapter reports on findings from the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) policy area. It begins by reporting on the quality of engagement of colleagues during the development of education, health and care (EHC) plans for children and young people with SEND. It also looks at the most effective forms, spend and cost-effectiveness of short breaks for disabled children and their families.

A total of 54 LAs answered questions on SEND.

Education, health and care plans

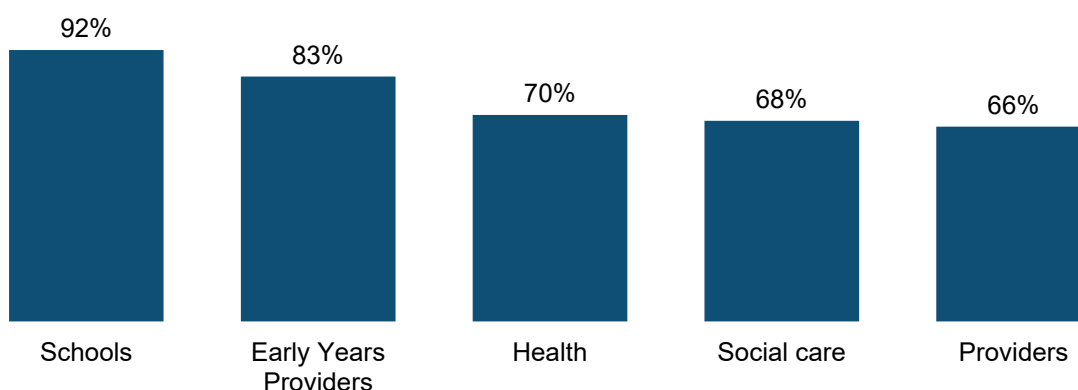
Responding LAs were asked how their SEND team would rate the quality of engagement of colleagues during the development of Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans for children and young people with SEND on a scale from very good to very poor.

Most LAs found the quality of engagement with colleagues during EHC plan development to be fairly or very good overall. Responses about the quality of engagement of colleagues in schools were particularly positive, with 92% of responding LAs rating the engagement with these colleagues 'very good' or 'fairly good'. Good engagement was also reported with Early Years Providers and health colleagues, with 83% and 70% of LAs respectively rating the quality of engagement as very or fairly good. Slightly fewer LAs rated the quality of engagement with social care colleagues (68%) or providers (66%) as very or fairly good.

Figure 33: The quality of engagement of colleagues

Q. How would your SEND team rate the quality of engagement of colleagues in the following areas during the development of education, health and care (EHC) plans for children and young people with SEND?

% Fairly/very good



Base: All responding authorities (n=54)

Short breaks

The most effective forms of short breaks for disabled children and their families varied by responding LA. It was frequently mentioned that giving the family flexibility and choice of short breaks – that is, tailored to the needs and interests of the children and families – was most effective. LAs said that this could be achieved by giving direct payments to eligible families, so that they can purchase their own short breaks.

Demand for after school and school holiday provision, overnight care and community based short breaks were also mentioned.

“Direct payments are most effective in providing families with choice, flexibility and control.”

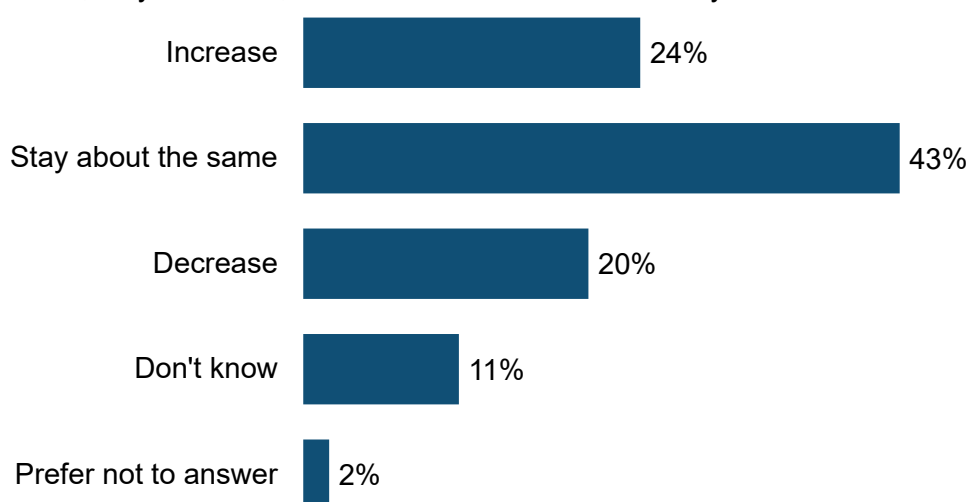
“Our experience would be that this varies depending on the families’ needs; provision that supports during school holidays is the area of high demand.”

“Families indicate that they benefit more from overnight short breaks and holiday provision which includes group based activities and befriending.”

In terms of their spend on short-breaks, nearly a quarter (24%) of responding LAs felt that it would increase in the next three years while one in five (20%) felt it would decrease. Forty three percent felt that it would stay about the same. Forty three percent felt that it would stay about the same.

Figure 34: Projection on short breaks for disabled children spend

Q. Do you expect your spend on short breaks for disabled children and families to increase, stay the same, or decrease over the next three years?

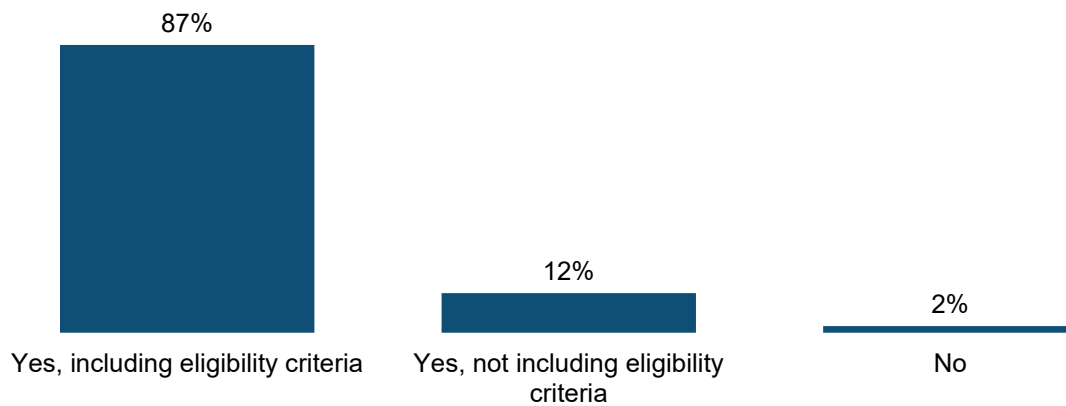


Base: All responding authorities (n=54)

Almost all (98%) of responding LAs publish a statement of the short breaks available for disabled children and their families. Of those who publish a statement, most (87%) included eligibility criteria.

Figure 35: Whether LA publishes statement of the short breaks available for disabled children and their families

Q. Do you publish a statement of the short breaks available for disabled children and their families in your authority, including eligibility criteria?



Base: All responding authorities (n=54)

Responding LAs were also asked how they take into account the views of disabled children and their families when taking decisions on short breaks provision. This was found to often involve consultation with families and disabled children, such as via forums and online surveys.

“Consultations with families, evaluations following short break interventions, satisfaction surveys, needs identified through EH assessments/ EHC Plans.”

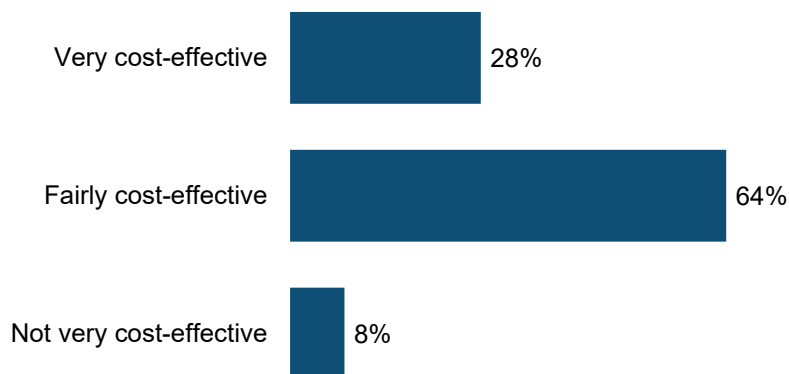
“Feedback on activities & sessional support, online surveys, family views, plans and reviews; short breaks officers, statutory annual review cycles.”

“Our short breaks statement is reviewed with our Parent/Carer forum. This year it will also be reviewed in partnership with our disabled children.”

LAs were asked how cost-effective they felt short breaks are, for example, in terms of reducing future residential care costs. Most (92%) responding LAs found them to be fairly or very cost-effective.

Figure 36: How cost-effective short breaks are for disabled children and their families

Q. In your experience, how cost-effective are short breaks for disabled children and their families, for example, in terms of reducing future residential care costs?

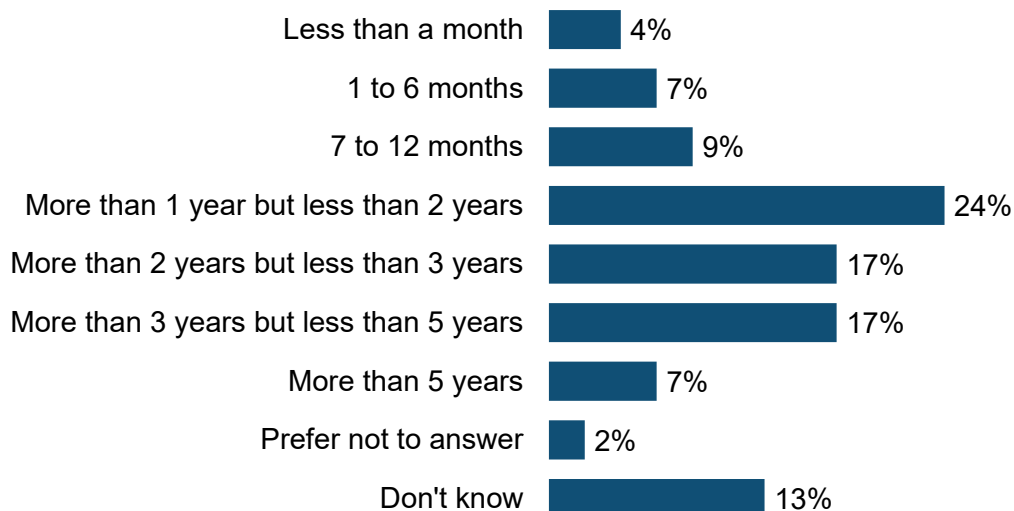


Base: All responding authorities (n=50)

Those LAs which thought that short breaks are cost-effective were subsequently asked for the time it takes for spending on short breaks to be recouped in savings. This varied by LA. Less than one in five (20%) found it to be a year or less while nearly a quarter (24%) felt it was more than 1 year but less than 2 years.

Figure 37: How long it takes for spending on short breaks to be recouped

Q. In your experience, how long does it take for spending on short breaks to be recouped in savings? Please give your best estimate.



Base: LAs who think that short breaks are cost-effective (n=46)

Appendix 1 – Response profile

This survey aimed for a census of upper-tier local authorities in England. As such, all 152 authorities were invited to take part. There were three sections to the survey, with the response rate for each outlined in Table 2.

Table 2: Wave 3 response rate by questionnaire section

Section	Number of complete responses	Number of partial responses	Response rate
Children’s Social Care	68	3	47%
Early Years and Child Care	52	7	39%
Special Educational Needs & Disability	54	1	36%

A total of 47 of LAs fully completed the survey, and 31 partially completed the survey meaning that 78 LAs took part. This amounts to an overall response rate of 51 per cent.

Following the close of the survey, NatCen analysed the sample profile based on four key variables: authority type, region, the percentage of pupils claiming free school meals (FSM), and the rate of children in need (CiN).

To avoid overly small base sizes, LAs were divided into three regional categories (see Table 4). The FSM rate reflects the percentage of pupils known to be eligible for claiming FSM, as per the January 2016 school census.⁵ The CiN rate refers to the number of children per 10,000 assessed as being in need of children’s social services, as per the November 2016 CiN census.⁶

As Table 3 shows, the profile of LAs which completed the survey is largely in-line with the overall profile.

⁵ Children known to be eligible for and claiming FSM, as per the January 2016 school census. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/schools-pupils-and-their-characteristics-january-2016> Table 3a.

⁶ Children assessed as being in need of children’s social services, as per the CiN census, November 2016. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/characteristics-of-children-in-need-2015-to-2016> Table B1.

Table 3: Response rate by authority type and region

Variable	Sub-variable	Full sample (N)	Full sample (%)	Took part (N)	Took part (%)	Response rate
Authority type	County	27	17.8%	14	18.2%	51.9%
	Unitary	125	82.2%	63	81.8%	50.4%
Region	North	50	32.9%	26	33.8%	52.0%
	East & Midlands	34	22.4%	19	24.7%	55.9%
	London & South	68	44.7%	32	41.6%	47.1%
% Pupils eligible for and receiving FSM	0-20	10	6.6%	4	5.7%	40.0%
	20-30	24	15.8%	10	14.3%	41.7%
	30-40	37	24.3%	16	22.9%	43.2%
	40-50	37	24.3%	19	27.1%	51.4%
	50-60	24	15.8%	14	20%	58.3%
	60+	9	5.9%	7	10%	77.8%
Numbers of CiN (Rate per 10,000)	100-300	49	32.2%	23	29.9%	46.9%
	300-400	53	34.9%	30	39.0%	56.6%
	400-500	34	22.4%	16	20.8%	47.1%
	500+	16	10.5%	8	10.4%	50.0%
Ofsted rating	Outstanding	2	1.3%	0	0.0%	0.0%
	Good	47	30.9%	26	33.8%	55.3%
	Requires improvement	66	43.4%	32	41.6%	48.5%
	Inadequate	29	19.1%	14	18.2%	48.3%
	No rating available	8	5.3%	5	6.5%	62.5%

Table 4: Regional distribution of Local Authorities

Region	Local Authorities
East & Midlands	Bedford Borough Council Birmingham City Council Cambridgeshire County Council Central Bedfordshire Council Coventry City Council Derby City Council Derbyshire County Council Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council Essex County Council Herefordshire Council Hertfordshire County Council Leicester City Council Leicestershire County Council Lincolnshire County Council Luton Borough Council Norfolk County Council Northamptonshire County Council Nottingham City Council Nottinghamshire County Council Peterborough City Council Rutland County Council Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council Shropshire Council Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council Southend-on-Sea Borough Council Staffordshire County Council Stoke-on-Trent City Council Suffolk County Council

Region	Local Authorities
East & Midlands (cont.)	<p>Telford & Wrekin Council</p> <p>Thurrock Council</p> <p>Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council</p> <p>Warwickshire County Council</p> <p>Wolverhampton City Council</p> <p>Worcestershire County Council</p>
London & South	<p>Barking and Dagenham London Borough Council</p> <p>Barnet London Borough Council</p> <p>Bath & North East Somerset Council</p> <p>Bexley London Borough Council</p> <p>Borough of Poole</p> <p>Bournemouth Borough Council</p> <p>Bracknell Forest Council</p> <p>Brent London Borough Council</p> <p>Brighton & Hove City Council</p> <p>Bristol City Council</p> <p>Bromley London Borough Council</p> <p>Buckinghamshire County Council</p> <p>Camden London Borough Council</p> <p>City of London Corporation</p> <p>Cornwall Council</p> <p>Council of the Isles of Scilly</p> <p>Croydon London Borough Council</p> <p>Devon County Council</p> <p>Dorset County Council</p> <p>Ealing London Borough Council</p> <p>East Sussex County Council</p> <p>Enfield London Borough Council</p> <p>Gloucestershire County Council</p> <p>Hackney London Borough Council</p>

Region	Local Authorities
London & South (cont.)	<p>Hammersmith & Fulham London Borough Council</p> <p>Hampshire County Council</p> <p>Haringey London Borough Council</p> <p>Harrow London Borough Council</p> <p>Havering London Borough Council</p> <p>Hillingdon London Borough Council</p> <p>Hounslow London Borough Council</p> <p>Isle of Wight Council</p> <p>Islington London Borough</p> <p>Kensington & Chelsea Royal Borough Council</p> <p>Kent County Council</p> <p>Kingston Upon Thames Royal Borough</p> <p>Lambeth London Borough Council</p> <p>Lewisham London Borough Council</p> <p>Medway Council</p> <p>Merton London Borough Council</p> <p>Milton Keynes Council</p> <p>Newham London Borough Council</p> <p>North Somerset Council</p> <p>Oxfordshire County Council</p> <p>Plymouth City Council</p> <p>Portsmouth City Council</p> <p>Reading Borough Council</p> <p>Redbridge London Borough Council</p> <p>Richmond Upon Thames London Borough</p> <p>Royal Borough of Greenwich Council</p> <p>Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead Council</p> <p>Slough Borough Council</p> <p>Somerset County Council</p> <p>South Gloucestershire Council</p>

Region	Local Authorities
London & South (cont.)	<p>Southampton City Council</p> <p>Southwark Council</p> <p>Surrey County Council</p> <p>Sutton London Borough Council</p> <p>Swindon Borough Council</p> <p>Torbay Council</p> <p>Tower Hamlets London Borough Council</p> <p>Waltham Forest London Borough</p> <p>Wandsworth Borough Council</p> <p>West Berkshire Council</p> <p>West Sussex County Council</p> <p>Westminster City Council</p> <p>Wiltshire County Council</p> <p>Wokingham Borough Council</p>
North	<p>Barnsley Council</p> <p>Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council</p> <p>Blackpool Council</p> <p>Bolton Council</p> <p>Bradford Metropolitan District Council</p> <p>Bury Metropolitan Borough Council</p> <p>Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council</p> <p>Cheshire East Council</p> <p>Cheshire West and Chester Council</p> <p>City of York Council</p> <p>Cumbria County Council</p> <p>Darlington Borough Council</p> <p>Doncaster Council</p> <p>Durham County Council</p> <p>East Riding of Yorkshire Council</p> <p>Gateshead Council</p>

Region	Local Authorities
North (cont.)	<p>Halton Borough Council</p> <p>Hartlepool Borough Council</p> <p>Hull City Council</p> <p>Kirklees Council</p> <p>Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council</p> <p>Lancashire County Council</p> <p>Leeds City Council</p> <p>Liverpool City Council</p> <p>Manchester City Council</p> <p>Middlesbrough Council</p> <p>Newcastle City Council</p> <p>North East Lincolnshire Council</p> <p>North Lincolnshire Council</p> <p>North Tyneside Council</p> <p>North Yorkshire County Council</p> <p>Northumberland County Council</p> <p>Oldham Council</p> <p>Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council</p> <p>Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council</p> <p>Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council</p> <p>Salford City Council</p> <p>Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council</p> <p>Sheffield City Council</p> <p>South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council</p> <p>St Helens Metropolitan Borough Council</p> <p>Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council</p> <p>Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council</p> <p>Sunderland City Council</p> <p>Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council</p> <p>Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council</p>

Region	Local Authorities
	Wakefield Metropolitan District Council Warrington Borough Council Wigan Council Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council

Appendix 2 – Questionnaire

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this important survey on behalf of the Department for Education (DfE).

This survey includes questions on your views and experiences of three main policy areas:

- Children’s Social Care;
- Early Years & Child Care; and
- Special Educational Needs & Disability.

Some of the questions are same as those asked in previous waves of the survey, and some are new for this wave.

You may feel that you can answer all of the questions yourself, or may wish to send this link to one or more of your colleagues for them to respond to questions on certain policy areas. At the start of the survey we will ask you to select the first policy area that you wish to answer about. After you have finished that section of the survey you will be asked whether you wish to complete any other sections.

The survey should take no more than 15 minutes in total to complete.

NatCen assure you that all the information we collect will be kept in the strictest confidence and we will not identify your LA’s responses to the DfE without your permission.

If you have any further questions, or any problems completing the survey, please contact the NatCen research team at childrens-services@natcen.ac.uk or on 0800 652 4569.

To talk to someone at DfE about this research please contact xx at xx or on xx.

QSelect

Please select the policy area you would like to answer questions on.

After completing each section of the survey, you will return to this page to select any other section that you would like to complete. Once you have answered all of the section(s) that you are able to, please simply exit the survey by clicking “stop” and closing your browser.

1. Children’s Social Care
2. Early Years & Childcare
3. Special Educational Needs & Disability

Section 2: Children's Social Care

The following set of questions is about Children's Social Care in your authority.

2.1 LA improvement

Ask all

SuppSou

Which of the following sources of support or approaches to improve children's social care services, if any, has your authority used?

Please select all that apply.

1. Coaching and mentoring from another LA
2. Secondment(s) from high-performing LA(s)
3. Evidence and evaluations from other LAs
4. Peer review of children's services/children's social care in LA
5. Self-assessment of children's services, outside of the inspection cycle
6. Development plan with identified priorities for improvement
7. Regional support networks
8. Sector support e.g. from ADCS/LGA/SOLACE/Ofsted
9. Support from local universities
10. Support from DfE's innovation programme
11. Support from a DfE intervention adviser or commissioner
12. Data on children's outcomes to assess impact of services
13. Advice from an independent adviser
14. Other (please specify)
15. None of these

Ask of only those gave more than one answer in SuppSou (if SuppSou=>1)

HelpSupp

In your opinion, which of the following sources of support was most helpful in improving children's social care services in your local authority?

Please select only one.

<Feed through a list of options they said they used from SuppSou>

Ask all

SuppSouFut

Would you like to access any of the following sources of support in the future to improve children's social care services in your local authority?

Please select all that apply.

<Feed through a list of options they said they hadn't used from SuppSou>

Ask all

LA supp

Would your local authority be interested in offering any of these sources of support to other local authorities in the future?

Please select all that apply.

1. Focused support over a period of time, tailored to the LA's need
2. Coaching and mentoring
3. Secondments
4. Sharing evidence and evaluation findings

5. Peer review of children's services/children's social care
6. Advice on self-assessment of children's services, outside of the inspection cycle
7. Help with development plans
8. Being part of a regional support network
9. Other (please specify)
10. Not interested

Ask all

ImpEnab

Which, if any, of the following have been enablers to the improvement of children's social care services in your authority?

Please select up to three options.

1. Local political leadership
2. Senior local authority leadership
3. Knowing where to access appropriate support to improve the way you deliver services
4. Availability of appropriate support to improve the way you deliver services
5. Correctly identifying key areas for development
6. Financing improvement plans
7. Recruitment of high quality staff
8. Retention of high quality staff
9. Lack of data on children's outcomes
10. Other (Please specify)
11. None of these (SINGLE CODE ONLY)

Ask all

ImpBar

Which, if any, of the following factors have been barriers to the improvement of children's social care services in your authority?

Please select up to three options.

1. Local political leadership
2. Senior local authority leadership
3. Knowing where to access appropriate support to improve the way you deliver services
4. Availability of appropriate support to improve the way you deliver services
5. Correctly identifying key areas for development
6. Financing improvement plans
7. Recruitment of high quality staff
8. Retention of high quality staff
9. Lack of data on children's outcomes
10. Other (Please specify)
11. None of these (SINGLE CODE ONLY)

Ask all

ConfUnd

How confident, if at all, are you in your local authority's understanding of how to improve your authority's children's social care services?

1. Very confident
2. Fairly confident
3. Not very confident
4. Not at all confident

2.2 Social worker workforce

Ask all

SWoff

The next questions are about social worker workforce in your authority.

If the social worker apprenticeship standard is approved by the Institute for Apprenticeships, does your authority intend to offer this apprenticeship in child and family social work from September 2018?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know

Ask all

SWbarr

What do you think are the biggest barriers in your local authority to running a social worker apprenticeship programme?

Please select up to three options.

1. Set-up costs
2. Lack of information, advice or guidance for local authorities to draw on
3. Lack of local authority capacity to support apprenticeships
4. No Higher Education provider supporting social worker apprenticeships locally
5. Insufficient supply of apprenticeship candidates
6. No barriers [Exclusive code]
7. Other (please specify)

Ask all

SWavail

To what extent do you agree or disagree that social work apprenticeships will help to increase the availability of child and family social workers in your authority?

1. Strongly agree
2. Tend to agree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Tend to disagree
5. Strongly disagree
6. Don't know
7. No issues with the availability of child and family social workers in my authority.

Ask all

SWreturn

What, if anything, does your local authority do to support people returning to the social work profession?

Open <150 characters>

Ask all

SocWork

How confident, if at all, are you that...

	Very confident	Fairly confident	Not very confident	Not at all confident
(a) Practitioners in your authority have the right knowledge and skills for effective practice, measured against the relevant <u>Knowledge and Skills Statement</u> ?				
(b) Senior practitioners/practice managers in your authority have the right knowledge and skills to support social workers with their cases, measured against the relevant <u>Knowledge and Skills Statement</u> ?				
(c) Your local authority will be able to maintain the usual number of practice placements offered to social work students over the next 12 months?				
(d) Your local authority will have sufficient permanent well-qualified child and family social workers to meet its needs over the next 12 months?				

Ask all

SocWorkPM

Does your local authority use the Knowledge and Skills statements for performance management?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know

Ask all

Do you think social workers in your local authority...

	Yes	No	Don't know
(a) Are aware of the Knowledge and Skills statements?			
(b) Are aware that a system of assessment and accreditation will be introduced?			
(c) Understand why a system of assessment and accreditation is being introduced?			
(d) Are supportive of a process of assessment and accreditation?			
(e) Are aware that assessment will be against the Child and Family Knowledge and Skills statements?			

2.3 Sufficiency of care/adoption placements

Ask all

SufCareYr

The next questions are about care and adoption placements in your authority.

Did your local authority have access to sufficient care placements to meet the needs of looked after children over the last 12 months for children and young people:

	Yes	No	Don't know
(a) under 5 years?			
(b) aged 5-13 years?			
(c) aged 14-15 years?			
(d) aged 16-17 years?			
(e) from BME backgrounds?			
(f) with a disability?			
(g) in sibling groups of 2?			
(h) in sibling groups of 3 or more?			

Ask all

SufCare

In your opinion, how likely, if at all, is it that your local authority will have access to sufficient care placements to meet the projected needs of its looked after children over the next 12 months for children and young people:

	Very likely	Fairly likely	Neither likely nor unlikely	Fairly unlikely	Very unlikely
(a) under 5 years?					
(b) aged 5-13 years?					
(c) aged 14-15 years?					
(d) aged 16-17 years?					
(e) from BME backgrounds?					
(f) with a disability?					
(g) in sibling groups of 2?					
(h) in sibling groups of 3 or more?					

Ask all

SufAdo

In your opinion, how likely, if at all, is it that your local authority will have access to sufficient adoption placements to meet projected need over the next 12 months for children and young people:

	Very likely	Fairly likely	Neither likely nor unlikely	Fairly unlikely	Very unlikely
(a) under 5 years?					
(b) aged 5-13 years?					

	Very likely	Fairly likely	Neither likely nor unlikely	Fairly unlikely	Very unlikely
(c) aged 14-15 years?					
(d) aged 16-17 years?					
(e) from BME backgrounds?					
(f) with a disability?					
(g) in sibling groups of 2?					
(h) in sibling groups of 3 or more?					

Ask all

MHAcc

How often, if at all, would you say that children and young people looked after by your local authority are able to access the mental health support and services they need?

1. All the time
2. Very often
3. Sometimes
4. Not very often
5. Never

Ask all

MHAccPrev

How often, if at all, would you say that children and young people previously looked after by your local authority (those aged under 18 that have left care through adoption or special guardianship) are able to access the mental health support and services they need?

1. All the time
2. Very often
3. Sometimes
4. Not very often
5. Never

2.4 LA structures/commissioning arrangements

Ask all

SocJoint

Does your local authority currently operate any statutory children's social care services jointly with another local authority/group of authorities? Please do not include regional adoption agencies.

1. Yes – already in place
2. Yes – in development
3. No – but plan to in the future
4. No – no current plans

Ask all

ComOrg

Does your local authority currently commission any of the following types of organisations to deliver any aspect of its children’s services?

	Yes	No	Considering	Don't know
(a) A mutual (an organisation that is owned by, and run for, the benefit of its members)				
(b) A not-for-profit company or trust				
(c) A voluntary sector partner				

Ask all

SocData

Does your local authority have a function or team that is able to...

	Yes	No	Considering	Don't know
(a) Analyse the demand for children’s social care?				
(b) Compare the cost of different interventions to make planning decisions for children’s services?				
(c) Assess the impact of different interventions to make planning decisions for children’s services?				
(d) Identify unmet needs for individual children and families?				
(e) Analyse the outcomes of children supported by children’s social care?				

Ask all

BarDel

What are the biggest barriers to your local authority adopting a new model of service delivery (e.g. operating with another local authority or commissioning a voluntary or other organisation to deliver services) for any of its children’s social care services?

Please select up to three options.

1. Complex geography
2. Set-up costs
3. Longer-term value for money
4. Local political direction
5. Lack of information, advice or guidance from government or elsewhere
6. Legal framework/concerns about legal accountabilities
7. Risk to ongoing service delivery/outcomes/safeguarding
8. No obvious partner to work with

9. Risk to inspection outcomes
10. No barriers [exclusive code]
11. Other barrier(s) (please specify)

Ask all

SocImprov

In your opinion, what are your local authority's top priorities in improving children's social care services over the next 3 years?

Open <150 characters>

2.5 Multi-agency arrangements

Ask all

CSWAmult

As you may be aware, the Children and Social Work Act 2017, when brought into force, will set out new arrangements for multi-agency working.

Has your local area considered what the new legislation will mean for your multi-agency arrangements?

1. Yes
2. No – but plan to in the future
3. No – no current plans

If has considered what the legislation will mean (CSWAmult=1. Yes)

MultChal

What are the main challenges you have identified?

Open <150 characters>

2.6 Cross-cutting

Ask all

BrexImp

Has your local authority conducted an assessment of the potential implications of the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union on children's social care?

1. Yes – already completed
2. Yes – in development
3. No – but plan to in the future
4. No – no current plans

Section 3: Early Years and Child Care

If Qselect=2

These questions concern Early Years and Childcare provision in your authority.

Ask all

HLEprog

Does your local authority fund or provide any of the following home learning environment (HLE) programmes or services to support parents with children aged 0-5? Please select all that apply.

1. Raising Early Achievement in Literacy (REAL)
2. Early Words Together
3. Every Child a Talker (ECAT)
4. Parents Early Education Partnership (PEEP)
5. Parents as Teachers
6. Elklan
7. Easy Peasy
8. Digital tool incl. app or text messaging (please specify)
9. Other (please specify)
10. Local authority does not fund/provide any parenting or HLE programmes or services [exclusive code]

Ask all who mentioned a programme in HLEprog (HLEProg=<>10)

HLEspend

How much did you spend, or do you plan to spend, on HLE programmes in total in each financial year?

(a) April 2017 – March 2018	HLEspend1718 Numeric <range 0-10,000,000> £
(b) April 2016 – March 2017	HLEspend1617 Numeric <range 0-10,000,000> £
(c) April 2015 – March 2016	HLEspend1516 Numeric <range 0-10,000,000> £

Ask all who mentioned a programme in HLEprog (HLEProg=<>10)

HLEreach

How many children did you reach, or do you plan to reach, with all of these HLE programmes in each financial year?

(a) April 2017 – March 2018	HLEreach1718 Numeric <range 0-10,000>
(b) April 2016 – March 2017	HLEreach1617 Numeric <range 0-10,000>
(c) April 2015 – March 2016	HLEreach1516 Numeric <range 0-10,000>

Ask all

Parentprog

Does your local authority fund or provide any of the following parenting programmes or services to support parents with children aged 0-5?

Please select all that apply.

1. Triple P (any level)
2. Incredible Years (preschool)
3. Incredible Years (toddler)
4. Digital tool incl. app or text messaging (please specify)
5. Other (please specify)
6. Local authority does not fund/provide any parenting programmes or services [exclusive code]

Ask all who mentioned a programme in Parentprog (Parentprog=<>6)

PPspend

How much did you spend, or do you plan to spend, on parenting programmes in total in each financial year?

(a) April 2017 – March 2018	PPspend1718 Numeric <range 0-10,000,000> £
(b) April 2016 – March 2017	PPspend1617 Numeric <range 0-10,000,000> £
(c) April 2015 – March 2016	PPspend1516 Numeric <range 0-10,000,000> £

Ask all who mentioned a programme in Parentprog (Parentprog=<>6)

PPreach

How many children did you reach, or do you plan to reach, with all of these parenting programmes in each financial year?

(a) April 2017 – March 2018	PPreach1718 Numeric <range 0-10,000>
(b) April 2016 – March 2017	PPreach1617 Numeric <range 0-10,000>
(c) April 2015 – March 2016	PPreach1516 Numeric <range 0-10,000>

Ask all

RecDiff

In your experience, what proportion of early years providers in your local authority find it difficult to recruit staff at the following levels?

Please give your best estimate.

	All	Most (more than half but not all)	About half	Some (some but less than half)	None	Don't know
(a) Level 2						
(b) Level 3						
(c) Early years teachers						

Section 4: Special Educational Needs & Disability

If Qselect=3

These questions are about Special Educational Needs and Disability provision in your local authority.

Ask all

EHCplans

How would your SEND team rate the quality of engagement of colleagues in the following areas during the development of education, health and care (EHC) plans for children and young people with SEND?

	Very good	Fairly good	Neither good nor poor	Fairly poor	Very poor
(a) Health					
(b) Early years providers					
(c) Schools					
(d) FE providers					
(e) Social care					

4.1 Short breaks

Ask all

SBeff

In your experience, what are the most effective forms of short breaks for disabled children and their families that you provide?

Open <150 characters>

Ask all

SBinc

Do you expect your spend on short breaks for disabled children and families to increase, stay the same, or decrease over the next three years?

1. Increase
2. Stay about the same
3. Decrease
4. Don't know

Ask all

SBstat

Do you publish a statement of the short breaks available for disabled children and their families in your authority, including eligibility criteria?

1. Yes, including eligibility criteria
2. Yes, not including eligibility criteria
3. No

Ask all

SBdisab

How do you take into account the views of disabled children and their families when taking decisions on short breaks provision?

Open <150 characters>

Ask all

SBcosteff

In your experience, how cost-effective are short breaks for disabled children and their families, for example, in terms of reducing future residential care costs?

1. Very cost-effective
2. Fairly cost-effective
3. Not very cost-effective
4. Not at all cost-effective

Ask if thinks short breaks are cost-effective (SBcosteff=1. Very cost-effective or 2. Fairly cost-effective)

SBcosteff

In your experience, how long does it take for spending on short breaks to be recouped in savings?

Please give your best estimate.

1. Less than a month
2. 1 to 6 months
3. 7 to 12 months
4. More than 1 year but less than 2 years
5. More than 2 years but less than 3 years
6. More than 3 years but less than 5 years
7. More than 5 years

Section 5: Thank you

Ask all

DfErecon

The Department for Education would like to be able to link information gathered through this survey to individual local authorities. They might use this information to offer targeted information or support, or to invite authorities to take part in further qualitative research or the development of case studies to support sharing of good practice. **The Department will only be given local authority names: they will not know which individual colleagues completed the survey.**

Are you happy for the Department to be able to link answers from this wave of the survey back to your local authority?

1. Yes
2. No

Ask all

Recontact

NatCen is also leading a separate project for Nuffield Foundation that is exploring the best indicators to use to understand the outcomes of CYP supported by children's social care services. We would like to contact a range of local authorities to ask them about their data collections and the indicators they currently use to understand outcomes.

Please note that the two projects are completely separate and any future participation in this survey will be anonymous and completely voluntary. The DfE will not find out whether you agreed to be re-contacted.

Would you be happy for NatCen to re-contact you about this project?

1. Yes
2. No

Ask all

Bye

Thank you for taking the time to respond to this survey. Your answers are vital in helping DfE to understand the key issues facing children's services, and local authorities' experiences of implementing different policies in these areas.

This research will take place twice a year, so we will be back in touch in spring 2018 about the next wave of the survey, and to tell you about the results from this wave.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please visit www.natcen.ac.uk/childrens-services, email childrens-services@natcen.ac.uk or call 0800 652 4569.

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