



Department
for Education

Agency child and family social workers

**Draft data and price caps operational
guidance**

May 2024

Contents

About the guidance	3
Data protection and data sharing	3
Legal duties under the UK General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018: privacy notices	3
Legal duties under the UK General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018: data security	4
Review dates	4
Deadlines	5
Who is this guidance for?	6
Local authorities	6
Suppliers	6
Main points	7
Why we are collecting the data	7
How the data is going to be used	8
Governance and reporting structures	8
Job mapping	9
Data templates	14
Assignments data template	14
General data template	19
Data returns	23
Validation checks	23
Price caps	24
Appendix A: Local authority codes	25
Appendix B: Rationale	28
Appendix C: Glossary	31
Appendix D: Local authorities by region	35

About the guidance

This is operational guidance providing further details on two of the national rules around local authority engagement of agency child and family social workers, namely data and price caps. It will sit alongside the statutory guidance on the national agency rules and should, where relevant, be read alongside that document when published.

Please note that the data collection set out in this guidance is collected under section 83 of the Children Act 1989 and is a legal requirement for local authorities in England.

Data protection and data sharing

The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018) mandate certain safeguards regarding the use of personal data by organisations, including DfE and local authorities. Both give rights to those (known as data subjects) about whom data is processed, such as children, parents and staff. These rights include (amongst other information that DfE is obliged to provide) the right to know:

- the types of data being held
- why it is being held
- to whom it may be communicated

As data processors and controllers in their own right, it is important that local authorities process all data (not just that collected for the purposes of the agency data collection) in accordance with the full requirements of the UK GDPR. Further information on the UK GDPR can be found in the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) overview of the [UK General Data Protection Regulation \(UK GDPR\)](#).

Legal duties under the UK General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018: privacy notices

Being transparent and providing accessible information to individuals about how local authorities will process their personal data is a key element of UK GDPR and the DPA 2018. The most common way to provide such information is through a privacy notice. See the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) website for [further guidance on privacy notices](#).

DfE provides suggested wording for [privacy notices](#) that local authorities may wish to use. However, where the suggested wording is used, you must review and amend the wording to reflect local business needs and circumstances. This is especially important, as local authorities will process data that is not solely for use within data collections.

It is recommended that the privacy notice:

- is included as part of an induction pack for staff
- features on the staff notice board or intranet.

Privacy notices do not need to be issued on an annual basis, where:

- new staff are made aware of the notices
- the notices have not been amended
- they are readily available in electronic or paper format.

However, it is important that any changes made to the way the local authority processes personal data are highlighted to data subjects.

Legal duties under the UK General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018: data security

Local authorities have a legal duty under the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 to ensure that any personal data they process is handled and stored securely. Further information on data security is available from the [Information Commissioner's Office](#).

Where personal data is not properly safeguarded, it could compromise the safety of individuals and damage a local authority's reputation. Your responsibility as a data controller extends to those who have access to your data beyond your organisation where they are working on your behalf – for example, where external IT suppliers can remotely access your information.

It is vital that all staff with access to personal data understand the importance of:

- protecting personal data
- being familiar with your security policy
- putting security procedures into practice

As such, local authorities should provide appropriate initial and refresher training for their staff.

Review dates

This guidance will be reviewed and updated in summer 2024 along with the publication of the statutory guidance. Another update will follow in autumn 2024 when more information

about the data collection mechanism will be available. Any further updates, will be clearly marked at the beginning of this document.

The data return templates will be kept under review to ensure optimal usability. Any updates will be published three months before each data return is due, so please ensure you are always using the latest templates. Links to the templates will be added when the guidance is updated.

Deadlines

Dates and deadlines will be published in this section of the guidance by autumn 2024. Any references to timeframes in this version of the guidance are only indicative.

Data return window	Corresponding reporting period
2 January 2025 – 28 February 2025	1 October 2024 – 31 December 2024
1 April 2025 – 30 May 2025	1 January 2025 – 31 March 2025
1 July 2025 – 29 August 2025	1 April 2025 – 30 June 2025
1 October 2025 – 28 November 2025	1 July 2025 – 30 September 2025

The completed job mapping template should be submitted to agency-sw.dataservice@education.gov.uk by Friday 13 September 2024.

After the first round of data outputs has been shared, local authorities are expected to work within their region to agree and implement agency child and family social worker [price caps](#) against the five core job types. Each local authority should submit their price caps by Thursday 27 March 2025.

Failure to meet a quarterly submission deadline will result in your local authority's data being excluded from the national and regional benchmarking data for the relevant reporting period. This will impact on your authority's ability to engage in regional discussion about the social worker workforce.

Who is this guidance for?

This guidance is written for those who work in and with local authority children's social care. It contains information that may also be useful to local authorities' supply chains.

It accompanies the statutory guidance for local authorities on the use of agency child and family social workers.

Local authorities

Successful implementation of the statutory guidance will need strong corporate leadership and effective collaboration within children's services, across the local authority, and within and between regions.

Please note that different parts of this operational guidance will be more or less relevant to you depending on your role. The following individuals within local authorities should read this guidance and ensure they understand and apply the sections that are relevant to their role. The list is in alphabetical order and is not exhaustive:

- Analysts
- Chief Finance Officers (CFO) / Section 151 Officers, and monitoring officers
- Children's Trusts Chief Executives
- Directors of Children's Services
- Heads of HR/Commissioning/Commercial/Contracts/Procurement
- Heads of Service and Service Managers
- Local Authority Chief Executives
- Social workers and practice supervisors in children's social care

Suppliers

Those who support the recruitment, procurement, and supply of child and family social worker resource in local authority children's social care, especially managed service providers (MSPs), may also find it helpful to read this guidance.

Main points

Local authorities must return quarterly data on the use and pay of all agency child and family social workers. Each return should include data relating to all work undertaken by agency child and family social workers in the local authority's children's services during all or some of the reporting period. This includes agency workers that have been supplied via a project team or other packaged model. It is expected that the first data return window will be open between 2 January 2025 and 28 February 2025, during which local authorities must submit all relevant data for the reporting period covering 1 October 2024 to 31 December 2024.

Ahead of the first data return, local authorities – in collaboration with their supply chain – will have to complete a [job mapping](#) exercise to match all child and family social work roles on their systems that can be covered by agency workers up to and including team manager or equivalent to the five [core job types](#). The job mapping template should be completed and emailed to agencysw.dataservice@education.gov.uk by Friday 13 September 2024. Submissions will be cross-checked nationally for consistency and any outliers will be discussed with the relevant local authority.

In March 2025, after the first round of data outputs has been shared, local authorities are expected to work within their region to agree and implement agency child and family social worker [price caps](#) that all local authorities within the region should comply with. Further detail will be provided in the first update of this guidance in summer 2024. We expect that the first data returns to include price caps will be those for the reporting period covering 1 April 2025 to 30 June 2025.

Why we are collecting the data

The quarterly collection of data will provide a consistent evidence base of agency use and costs to support local authorities with workforce planning and bolster the development of regional and national workforce strategies. It will allow for greater transparency and collaborative working at a local, regional, and national level and will enable the development and/or adjustment of regionally determined price caps. It will also allow the Department for Education to monitor compliance with the rules to enable the development and implementation of support and/or enforcement measures.

For the rationale behind individual data items, see [Appendix B](#).

How the data is going to be used

All data will be processed in accordance with the [Data Protection Act 2018](#), which is the UK's implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Practising social workers' Social Work England registration number is already collected by DfE as part of the annual social worker workforce census. Including Social Work England registration number in this new collection means we will be able to match the data from the agency collection with data from the established yearly collection and other data sets. This will enable activities such as equality and diversity monitoring without having to further burden local authorities.

Data will be securely shared back with the relevant local authority using Role Based Access Control (RBAC). The data will also feed into aggregate level regional and national dashboards. Within the Department, individual level information will be treated according to the same principles as data collected for the annual social worker workforce census.

Governance and reporting structures

Data relating to agency child and family social workers may not be held in one single place within each local authority. Timely collection of the data will therefore rely on effective collaboration within children's services, between children's services and data analysts, and – for those that work with them – between local authorities and their managed service providers.

Heads of Service and Service Managers within local authority children's services departments will have to work together to establish governance and reporting structures that will allow for:

- an overarching view of levels of compliance with the agency rules across all relevant services
- an understanding of the reasons behind cases of non-compliance
- an efficient way to supply in a timely fashion all relevant information from across the local authority, and – for those that work with them – from managed service providers to the team that will be submitting the data returns to DfE.

They will also need to ensure that processes on which accurate data entries are based are properly followed. This may include, for example, promptly closing a job on the system after the agency worker has left the role.

Job mapping

All job roles on your system that can be covered by an agency child and family social worker must be mapped onto one of the following child and family social work core job types:

- **Social Worker:** This is an experienced practitioner role. The postholder has at least three years' experience in direct employment in local authority children social care. They are expected to undertake cases independently and demonstrate an ability to adapt their approach from first principles to deal with more complex or unusual cases, assessing and managing risks appropriately.
- **Senior Social Worker:** This is an experienced practitioner role with specific responsibilities for dealing with more complex cases, including assessment and appropriate management of risks. The postholder may supervise students, trainees, less experienced professional team members, support staff or volunteers, and is expected to develop and share with others specialist knowledge in a particular area of practice and contribute to practice development.
- **Advanced Practitioner:** This role is that of technical authority with acknowledged depth of expertise, including the assessment and appropriate management of risk. The role focuses on driving practice improvement across the service through direct development of others and by actively participating in process mapping, procedure specification, and strategy development. The role may involve dealing with the most complex cases, partly to maintain credibility and experience in the field. Assistant Team Manager and Principal Social Worker roles should be aligned to the Advance Practitioner core job type.
- **Team Manager:** This role has accountability for managing the direction, delivery, and performance across a specialised field (e.g. fostering or family support) and/or geographical area. This is delivered in accordance with legislative requirements, relevant policies and procedures, and agreed performance targets including assessment and appropriate management of risk. The postholder is expected to lead a team of staff. Responsibilities include: recruitment, induction, training, supervision, and personal development; absence, capability, discipline, and grievance management; workforce planning, including succession planning and retention. They are also expected to lead on budget management and contribute to strategic planning.
- **Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) / Conference Chair:** The IRO role has responsibility for providing an independent review of practice, including the assessment and appropriate management of risk and feedback, to ensure that the

local authority provides a quality service that meets the individual needs of children and families. The Conference Chair role leads initial and review child protection conferences. Neither role has any operational or line management responsibilities for social workers, which means they are independent from any decisions made by the local authority's children's services.

Local authorities should complete the mapping exercise in collaboration with their supply chains and submit a completed version of the job mapping template to the DfE by Friday 13 September 2024.

Please note that the core job types are not a replacement for your current roles. They are a way to group your current roles for comparison and benchmarking purposes and for the development of consistent and comparable price caps.

Below is a sample list of job roles and how they align to the core job types.

Job Role	Core Job Type
CSW - EDT Social Worker	Social Worker
CSW - Family and Friends Social Worker	Social Worker
CSW - Fostering Social Worker	Social Worker
CSW - Fostering Supervising Social Worker	Social Worker
CSW - Intervention Social Worker	Social Worker
CSW - Learning Disability Social Worker	Social Worker
CSW - Looked After Children Social Worker	Social Worker
CSW - MASH Social Worker	Social Worker
CSW - Mental Health Practitioner - CLA/LC	Social Worker
CSW - Mental Health Social Worker	Social Worker
CSW - Project Social Worker - Court Team	Social Worker
CSW - QSW - Disabled Children - SEN	Social Worker
CSW - Qualified Social Worker	Social Worker
CSW - Resources Social Worker	Social Worker
CSW - Social Worker	Social Worker
CSW - Social Worker - Assessment	Social Worker
CSW - Social Worker - Assessments 1-4	Social Worker
CSW - Social Worker - CFCS	Social Worker
CSW - Social Worker - Children in Care	Social Worker
CSW - Social Worker - Children in Care & Placements	Social Worker
CSW - Social Worker - Children Looked After & Leaving Care	Social Worker
CSW - Social Worker - Children with Disabilities	Social Worker
CSW - Social Worker - Children's Assessment Team	Social Worker
CSW - Social Worker - Children's Locality Team	Social Worker
CSW - Social Worker - CIN	Social Worker
CSW - Social Worker - CIN of Support & Protection	Social Worker

Job Role	Core Job Type
CSW - Social Worker - Court Assessment & Intervention Team	Social Worker
CSW - Social Worker - Court Team	Social Worker
CSW - Social Worker - Court Team SWC	Social Worker
CSW - Social Worker - CYPLD Court Team	Social Worker
CSW - Social Worker - Disabilities	Social Worker
CSW - Social Worker - Disability Service	Social Worker
CSW - Social Worker - Early Intervention & Family Support	Social Worker
CSW - Social Worker - EDT	Social Worker
CSW - Social Worker - Fostering SWC	Social Worker
CSW - Social Worker - Intervention	Social Worker
CSW - Social Worker - Leaving Care	Social Worker
CSW - Social Worker - Leaving Care and Children Looked After	Social Worker
CSW - Social Worker - Localities	Social Worker
CSW - Social Worker - Looked After Children	Social Worker
CSW - Social Worker - MASH	Social Worker
CSW - Social Worker - NRPF	Social Worker
CSW - Social Worker - Referral & Assessment	Social Worker
CSW - Social Worker - Referral and Assessment	Social Worker
CSW - Social Worker - Safeguarding and Care Planning	Social Worker
CSW - Social Worker - Schools	Social Worker
CSW - Social Worker - SEND 0-18	Social Worker
CSW - Social Worker - Standard - CIN	Social Worker
CSW - Social Worker - Youth Justice Service	Social Worker
CSW - Senior Social worker - Disabilities	Senior Social Worker
CSW - Senior Social worker - MASH & BIT	Senior Social Worker
CSW - Care Planning and Safeguarding Senior Practitioner	Senior Social Worker
CSW - EDT Senior Social Worker	Senior Social Worker
CSW - Senior Practitioner	Senior Social Worker
CSW - Senior Practitioner - Assessment	Senior Social Worker
CSW - Senior Practitioner - Children in Need	Senior Social Worker
CSW - Senior Practitioner - Referral & Assessment	Senior Social Worker
CSW - Senior Practitioner - Safeguarding	Senior Social Worker
CSW - Senior Practitioner - Safeguarding and Care Planning	Senior Social Worker
CSW - Senior Practitioner Court Team	Senior Social Worker
CSW - Senior Practitioner Frontline	Senior Social Worker
CSW - Senior Practitioner MASH Team	Senior Social Worker
CSW - Senior Practitioner Specialist Social Worker - Children	Senior Social Worker
CSW - Senior Social Work Practitioner	Senior Social Worker
CSW - Senior Social Worker	Senior Social Worker

Job Role	Core Job Type
CSW - Senior Social Worker	Senior Social Worker
CSW - Senior Social Worker - Adoption	Senior Social Worker
CSW - Senior Social Worker - Assessments 1-4	Senior Social Worker
CSW - Senior Social Worker - Assessment & Intervention	Senior Social Worker
CSW - Senior Social worker - Children in Care	Senior Social Worker
CSW - Senior Social Worker - Children in Care & Placements	Senior Social Worker
CSW - Senior Social Worker - Children Looked After & Leaving Care	Senior Social Worker
CSW - Senior Social Worker - Children's Intervention	Senior Social Worker
CSW - Senior Social Worker - CIN	Senior Social Worker
CSW - Senior Social Worker - CIN Provider Services	Senior Social Worker
CSW - Senior Social Worker - Disability Service	Senior Social Worker
CSW - Senior Social Worker - Family Support & Protection	Senior Social Worker
CSW - Senior Social Worker - In Schools Team	Senior Social Worker
CSW - Senior Social Worker - Independent Futures	Senior Social Worker
CSW - Senior Social Worker - MASH	Senior Social Worker
CSW - Senior Social Worker - SEND	Senior Social Worker
CSW - Senior Social Worker - Youth Justice Service	Senior Social Worker
CSW - Senior Social Worker / Specialist Social Worker - Court	Senior Social Worker
CSW - Senior Social Worker / Specialist Social Worker - Localities	Senior Social Worker
CSW - Senior Social Worker/Specialist Social Worker - Court Team	Senior Social Worker
CSW - Senior Social Worker/Specialist Social Worker - Disabled Children's Team	Senior Social Worker
CSW - Senior Social Worker/Specialist Social Worker - Fostering & Early Permanence Team	Senior Social Worker
CSW - Senior Social Worker/Specialist Social Worker - MASH Team	Senior Social Worker
CSW - Senior Social Worker/Specialist Social Worker - Referral & Assessment	Senior Social Worker
CSW - Senior Social Worker/Specialist Social Worker - Safeguarding & Care Planning	Senior Social Worker
CSW - Advanced Practitioner - Disabilities	Advanced Practitioner
CSW - Advanced Practitioner - Children in Care & Placements	Advanced Practitioner
CSW - Advanced Practitioner - Court Team	Advanced Practitioner
CSW - Advanced Practitioner - Referral and Assessment	Advanced Practitioner
CSW - Advanced Practitioner - Safeguarding & Care Planning	Advanced Practitioner
CSW - Advanced Practitioner/Practice Manager - CIN	Advanced Practitioner

Job Role	Core Job Type
CSW - Advanced Practitioner/Practice Manager - Independent Futures	Advanced Practitioner
CSW - Advanced SW Practitioner	Advanced Practitioner
CSW - Assistant Team Manager	Advanced Practitioner
CSW - Assistant Team Manager/Practice Manager	Advanced Practitioner
CSW - Consultant Social Worker	Advanced Practitioner
CSW - Deputy Service Manager	Advanced Practitioner
CSW - Deputy Team Manager	Advanced Practitioner
CSW - Experienced Social Worker	Advanced Practitioner
CSW - Lead Practitioner	Advanced Practitioner
CSW - Managing Practitioner	Advanced Practitioner
CSW - Practice Manager	Advanced Practitioner
CSW - Practice Manager - MASH	Advanced Practitioner
CSW - Specialist Social Worker	Advanced Practitioner
CSW - Principal Social Worker	Advanced Practitioner
CSW - Team Manager - MASH, BIT & FIT	Team Manager
CSW - Team Manager	Team Manager
CSW - Team Manager - Assessment & Intervention	Team Manager
CSW - Team Manager - ATLAS Team	Team Manager
CSW - Team Manager - Children in Care & Placements	Team Manager
CSW - Team Manager - Children Looked After & Leaving Care	Team Manager
CSW - Team Manager - Court, Proceedings and Adoption	Team Manager
CSW - Team Manager - Family Support & Protection	Team Manager
CSW - Team Manager - Integrated Youth Detached Team	Team Manager
CSW - Team Manager - Intervention Service	Team Manager
CSW - Team Manager - Localities	Team Manager
CSW - Team Manager - MASH Team	Team Manager
CSW - Team Manager - Referral & Assessment	Team Manager
CSW - Team Manager - Safeguarding & Care Planning	Team Manager
CSW - Team Manager - Youth Offending	Team Manager
CSW - Conference Chair	IRO / Conference Chair
CSW - Independent Reviewing Officer	IRO / Conference Chair

A link to the job mapping template will be added here in summer 2024. When submitted, the file should be named XXX_JM_2024 where XXX is your [local authority code](#).

Data templates

There are two data templates to be completed:

- **an assignments data template** requesting individual level data per agency child and family social work assignment
- **a general data template** requesting local authority level data, mainly focusing on the use of agency child and family social workers, compliance with the national rules, and the use of project teams and other packaged team models.

Assignments data template

In the assignments template, you are asked to record information for each agency child and family social worker assignment undertaken in the local authority's children's services during all or some of the reporting period, including assignments that are part of a project team or other packaged model. It is advised to have this template completed first as it informs the general template. The following information is required.

Data item	Notes on data item	Drop-down lists
Local authority code	Select the relevant local authority code from the drop-down list.	Local authority codes
Reporting period	Select the reporting period from the drop-down list.	1 October – 31 December 2024 1 January– 31 March 2025 1 April – 30 June 2025 1 July – 30 September 2025 1 October – 31 December 2025 1 January– 31 March 2026 1 April – 30 June 2026 1 July – 30 September 2026 1 October – 31 December 2026 1 January– 31 March 2027 1 April – 30 June 2027 1 July – 30 September 2027
Assignment identifier	Provide an assignment identifier code. Make sure that distinct assignment identifiers are assigned to each social worker working as part of any project team or other packaged team model.	
Core job type	Select the relevant core job type from the drop-down list. Job roles should have been	Social Worker Senior Social Worker Advanced Practitioner

Data item	Notes on data item	Drop-down lists
	mapped onto one of the core job types during the initial job mapping exercise.	Team Manager IRO / Conference Chair See job mapping for definitions
Hourly pay rate	Record the hourly pay rate agreed for this assignment.	
Umbrella, Ltd Company, PAYE	Select whether the worker is paid on an umbrella, limited company, or PAYE basis.	Umbrella Ltd Company PAYE
Expenses claims	Select from the drop-down list whether any expenses were claimed (including expenses relating to accommodation).	Yes No
Accommodation expenses claims	Select from the drop-down list whether expenses specifically related to accommodation were claimed.	Yes No
Assignment start date	Record the start date of the contract, even if it falls outside the quarter you are reporting on.	
Assignment end date	Record the end date of the contract. Leave blank if the contract is ongoing.	
Total hours	Record the total hours worked as part of this assignment during the reporting period. This number should be a total per reporting period and not per week. Include holidays and sick days if these were paid.	
Worker's Social Work England registration number	Record the Social Work England registration number (SW followed by one or more digits) of the child and family social worker that has been contracted to carry out this assignment. Registration details can be found at www.socialworkengland.org.uk .	
Worker's Social Work England registered name	Record the Social Work England registered name of the child and family social worker that has been contracted to carry out this	

Data item	Notes on data item	Drop-down lists
	assignment. Registration details can be found at www.socialworkengland.org.uk .	
On/off framework	Select whether the route to market used to recruit for this assignment was procured via a framework/framework agreement or not.	On-framework Off-framework
Route to market	Select the route to market you took to recruit for this assignment from the drop-down list.	Managed Service Provider (MSP) Local authority trading company (LATC) Direct to Agency Other See below for definitions
Assignment type	Select the assignment type from the drop-down list.	Individual Packaged team model – Project team Packaged team model – Managed service team Packaged team model – Other Other See below for definitions
Worker references	Select whether at least two practice-based references were provided to you for the worker contracted to carry out this assignment from the drop-down list. Note that references dated on or after the statutory guidance has taken effect can only be taken into account for the purposes of the data collection if they follow the standard template.	Yes No
Days to fill post	Record the number of working days between the job role going live and contract signing. Enter 1000 if the role was recruited through an open or rolling vacancy.	
Agency name	Record the name of the agency that was part of the supply chain through which the recruitment was secured.	

Auto-populated fields	
Local authority name	This field will auto-populate according to the local authority code selected.
Adjusted hourly pay rate	This field will auto-populated based on the hourly pay rate and whether the worker was engaged on an umbrella, limited company, or PAYE basis. PAYE pay rates will be automatically converted to the Umbrella/Limited Company equivalent. The calculation used for the conversion will be specified in autumn 2024.
Price caps	This field is going to auto-populate based on your region and the core job type selected.
Over cap	This field will auto-populate with 'over cap' in cases where the adjusted hourly pay rate is higher than the corresponding price cap.

Assignment type drop-down options explained

Individual

A local authority fulfils each individual agency assignment with an individual agency child and family social worker.

Packaged team models

A local authority holds a contract with an agency to deliver relevant social care services via a packaged team.

A packaged team is a specific team of child and family social workers created or organised by an agency, sometimes with its own manager and administrative staff, but not necessarily comprising the same individuals at all times, to provide relevant social care services to local authorities.

- **project team** – a team of child and family social workers that may or may not have previously worked together as a team. A project team may include managerial and administrative staff, and may feature payment by milestone.
- **managed service team** – a team of child and family social workers that may or may not have previously worked together as a team, including at least one manager. A managed service team may include administrative staff and additional wraparound services, and may feature payment by milestone.

- **other** – a model whereby the services of agency child and family social workers are supplied to a local authority as part of a packaged team or with additional services, but which is not defined by the above terms.

Other

An assignment type not defined by the above terms.

Route to market drop-down options explained

Managed Service Provider (MSP)

A local authority holds a contract with a managed service provider (MSP) for the supply of agency child and family social workers. Where a local authority has such an arrangement in place, it is likely to be the main route to market for the supply of agency child and family social workers across the local authority. Any recruitment of agency child and family social workers through the MSP would be considered to be 'on-contract'.

Local Authority Trading Company (LATC)

A company providing a managed service for temporary and contract recruitment into a local authority which is wholly owned by that local authority. Where a local authority has such an arrangement in place, the LATC is likely to perform the same functions as an MSP. Any recruitment of agency child and family social workers through the LATC would be considered to be 'on-contract'.

Direct to Agency

A local authority holds a contract directly with an agency for the supply of agency child and family social workers;

or

a local authority has a main route to market for the supply of agency child and family social workers (likely to be via an MSP), but on occasion recruits agency child and family social worker by going directly to an agency. In such cases, recruitment would be considered to be 'off-contract'.

Other

A route to market not defined by the above terms.

General data template

In the general template, you are asked to record information at local authority level. The information will be held in different places, so please ensure all relevant teams are contacted in advance.

Data item	Notes on data item	
Local authority code	Select the relevant local authority code from the drop-down list.	Local authority codes
Reporting period	Select the relevant period for which the data is being reported from the drop-down list.	1 October – 31 December 2024 1 January– 31 March 2025 1 April – 30 June 2025 1 July – 30 September 2025 1 October – 31 December 2025 1 January– 31 March 2026 1 April – 30 June 2026 1 July – 30 September 2026 1 October – 31 December 2026 1 January– 31 March 2027 1 April – 30 June 2027 1 July – 30 September 2027
Local authority full-time weekly working hours	Record the number of hours that constitute a standard working week for local authority employees, e.g., 35, 36, 37.5. If local authority-employed child and family social workers have different full-time weekly working hours that other local authority employees, record the number relevant to social workers.	
Total number of hours worked by LA-employed social workers	Record the total hours worked by all local authority-employed child and family social workers. This should be the sum of all hours worked during the reporting period, including paid holiday and sick leave.	

Data item	Notes on data item	
Total cost of agency workforce supply (per month)	Record the total cost of agency workforce per month, including all costs beyond social worker pay, such as administration fees, expenses, and packaged teams' admin costs.	
Degree of compliance (per rule)	Select from the drop-down list the degree of compliance with each rule.	Full Partial Non-compliance
Reason(s) for partial compliance or non-compliance (per rule)	If you didn't manage to fully comply with one or more of the rules other than price caps, please explain why. There is a 500-character limit.	
Assignment identifier for assignments where the hourly pay rate exceeds the relevant price cap	For each assignment where the hourly pay rate exceeded the relevant price cap, record the corresponding assignment identifier as recorded in the 'assignments' template.	
Pay rate sign-off for assignments where the hourly pay rate exceeds the relevant price cap	For each assignment where the hourly pay rate exceeded the relevant price cap, select from the drop-down list who signed off on the pay rate.	DSC and Chief Executive DCS Chief Executive Other
Reason(s) for exceeding the relevant price cap	For each assignment where the hourly pay rate exceeded the relevant price cap, please explain why you had to go over the cap. There is a 500-character limit.	
Names of agencies that contributed to partial compliance or non-compliance with one or more of the rules	List all agencies that engaged in behaviour that affected your ability to fully comply with the rules.	
Project team/other packaged model identifier	If you have used project teams or other packaged models at any point during the reporting period, enter a project team/other packaged model identifier. This should	

Data item	Notes on data item	
	<p>be a single identifier and needs to be used consistently across your agency data returns, but does not have to be linked to any contract identifiers. Assignment identifiers corresponding to each social worker that is part of the team are recorded separately.</p>	
Overall cost of original contract	Record the overall cost of the original contract.	
Non-SW cost of original contract	Record the total of all costs not related to social worker pay that were included in the original contract.	
Overall cost of any and all extensions	Record the overall cost of any and all contract extensions.	
Original contract start date	Record the start date of the contract even if that fell in a previous quarter.	
Original contract end date	Record the original end date of the contract even if that falls outside the reporting quarter. Leave blank if not specified on the contract.	
Actual contract end date	If the contract was extended, record the actual end date of the contract if that fell within the reporting period. Otherwise, leave blank.	
Project team/other packaged model's social workers' assignment identifiers	Record the corresponding assignment identifiers as recorded in the 'assignments' template for all social workers that were part of the team during the reporting quarter.	

Auto-populated fields	
Local authority name	This field will auto-populate according to the local authority code selected.

Local authorities that have a contract with a managed service provider (MSP) should work closely with them to determine the best way to complete the data templates. In all cases, the accuracy of the data returns is the local authority's responsibility. Care must be taken to add any additional assignments, including those that are part of a project team or other packaged model, or assignments that have been recruited for off-contract.

Data returns

Further details on how the completed data templates are to be returned will be published here in autumn 2024.

When submitting the data returns, the two files should be named as follows:

XXX_Assignments_MM.YY

XXX_General_MM.YY

where XXX is your local authority code, MM is the last month of the reporting period, and YY is the year of the reporting period. For example, the file names for the first data returns should read:

XXX_Assignments_12.24

XXX_General_12.24

Validation checks

More information on validation checks will be published here by autumn 2024.

Price caps

Local authorities should work within their region to agree and implement agency child and family social worker price caps that all local authorities within the region should comply with. Each local authority should submit their price caps by Thursday 27 March 2025. It is expected that price caps should then be adhered to for all new assignments from 1 April 2025. Further details will be provided as part of the first update of this guidance in summer 2024.

Appendix A: Local authority codes

Local authority name	Code	Local authority name	Code
Barking and Dagenham London Borough Council	301	Merton Borough Council	315
Barnet London Borough Council	302	Middlesbrough Council	806
Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council	370	Milton Keynes Council	826
Bath and North East Somerset Council	800	Newcastle Upon Tyne City Council	391
Bedford Borough Council	822	Newham London Borough Council	316
Bexley London Borough Council	303	Norfolk County Council	926
Birmingham City Council	330	North East Lincolnshire Council	812
Blackburn With Darwen Borough Council	889	North Lincolnshire Council	813
Blackpool Borough Council	890	North Northamptonshire Council	940
Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council	350	North Somerset Council	802
Borough of Telford and Wrekin	894	North Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council	392
Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole Council	839	North Yorkshire County Council	815
Bracknell Forest Borough Council	867	Nottingham City Council	892
Bradford City Council	380	Nottinghamshire County Council	891
Brent London Borough Council	304	Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council	353
Brighton and Hove City Council	846	Oxfordshire County Council	931
Bristol City Council	801	Peterborough City Council	874
Bromley London Borough Council	305	Plymouth City Council	879
Buckinghamshire Council	825	Portsmouth City Council	851
Bury Metropolitan Borough Council	351	Reading Borough Council	870
Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council	381	Redbridge London Borough Council	317
Cambridgeshire County Council	873	Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council	807
Camden London Borough Council	202	Richmond Upon Thames London Borough Council	318
Central Bedfordshire Council	823	Rochdale Borough Council	354
Cheshire East Council	895	Rotherham Borough Council	372
Cheshire West and Chester Council	896	Royal Borough of Greenwich	203
City of York Council	816	Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea	207

Local authority name	Code	Local authority name	Code
Common Council of The City of London	201	Royal Borough of Kingston Upon Thames	314
Cornwall Council	908	Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead	868
Council of The Isles of Scilly	420	Rutland County Council	857
County Durham Council	840	Salford City Council	355
Coventry City Council	331	Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council	333
Croydon London Borough Council	306	Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council	343
Cumberland Council	942	Sheffield City Council	373
Darlington Borough Council	841	Slough Borough Council	871
Derby City Council	831	Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council	334
Derbyshire County Council	830	Somerset County Council	933
Devon County Council	878	South Gloucestershire Council	803
Doncaster Council	371	South Tyneside Council	393
Dorset Council	838	Southampton City Council	852
Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council	332	Southend-On-Sea Borough Council	882
Ealing London Borough Council	307	Southwark London Borough Council	210
East Riding of Yorkshire Council	811	St Helens Metropolitan Borough Council	342
East Sussex County Council	845	Staffordshire County Council	860
Enfield London Borough Council	308	Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council	356
Essex County Council	881	Stockton-On-Tees Borough Council	808
Gateshead Council	390	Stoke-On-Trent City Council	861
Gloucestershire County Council	916	Suffolk County Council	935
Hackney London Borough Council	204	Sunderland City Metropolitan Borough Council	394
Halton Borough Council	876	Surrey County Council	936
Hammersmith and Fulham London Borough Council	205	Sutton London Borough Council	319
Hampshire County Council	850	Swindon Borough Council	866
Haringey London Borough Council	309	Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council	357
Harrow London Borough Council	310	The Northumberland Council	929
Hartlepool Borough Council	805	The Shropshire Council	893
Havering London Borough Council	311	The Wiltshire Council	865
Herefordshire Council	884	Thurrock Council	883

Local authority name	Code	Local authority name	Code
Hertfordshire County Council	919	Torbay Council	880
Hillingdon London Borough Council	312	Tower Hamlets London Borough Council	211
Hounslow London Borough Council	313	Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council	358
Isle of Wight Council	921	Wakefield City Council	384
Islington London Borough Council	206	Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council	335
Kent County Council	886	Waltham Forest London Borough Council	320
Kingston Upon Hull City Council	810	Wandsworth London Borough Council	212
Kirklees Metropolitan Council	382	Warrington Borough Council	877
Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council	340	Warwickshire County Council	937
Lambeth London Borough Council	208	West Berkshire Council	869
Lancashire County Council	888	West Northamptonshire Council	941
Leeds City Council	383	West Sussex County Council	938
Leicester City Council	856	Westminster City Council	213
Leicestershire County Council	855	Westmorland and Furness Council	943
Lewisham London Borough Council	209	Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council	359
Lincolnshire County Council	925	Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council	344
Liverpool City Council	341	Wokingham Council	872
Luton Borough Council	821	Wolverhampton City Council	336
Manchester City Council	352	Worcestershire County Council	885
Medway Council	887		

Appendix B: Rationale

Data item	Rationale
Local authority	Allows DfE to break down social worker data by the local authority they work for and ensure data outputs containing individualised data are only shared with the relevant local authority
Reporting period	Allows for chronological tracking of changes in use and costs of agency child and family social workforce
Assignment identifier	Allows for tracking and comparing assignment characteristics, such as cost, length, and route to market
Core job type	Allows for consistency in comparing and benchmarking pay rates, and in developing and monitoring price caps
Hourly pay rate	Allows for a better understanding of the market and will inform the development and monitoring of price caps
Umbrella, Ltd Company, PAYE	Allows for the calculation of consistent and comparable hourly pay rates
Expenses claims	Allows for a better understanding of costs directly related to the worker in addition to pay
Accommodation expenses claims	Provides an indicator of issues with local agency child and family workforce supply
Assignment start date	Allows for accurate monitoring of length of agency assignments and allows agency workforce turnover monitoring.
Assignment end date	Allows for accurate monitoring of length of agency assignments and agency workforce turnover
Total hours	Allows for the calculation of the proportion of agency workers and tracking changes in workforce constitution. Also allows for the accurate calculation of FTE
Worker's Social Work England registration number	As a unique identifier for a social worker this will allow DfE to match this data with other data sets like the yearly workforce census, which can enable activities such as equality and diversity monitoring. All data will be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and will be securely shared back with the relevant local authority using Role Based Access Control (RBAC).
Worker's Social Work England registered names	Allows the resolution of any inputting errors in the 'Social Work England registration number' field. All data will be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and will be securely shared back with the relevant local authority using Role Based Access Control (RBAC).
On/off framework	Allows for a better understanding of framework usage and how it relates to agency costs

Data item	Rationale
Route to market	Allows for a better understanding of how local authorities recruit their agency workforce and whether it affects agency costs
Assignment type	Allows for a better understanding of the composition of agency supply across local authorities
Worker references	Allows for a better understanding of compliance with the reference rule
Days to fill post	Provides an indicator of the level of challenge to fill vacancies
Agency name	Allows for a better understanding of market composition and monitoring market and supply trends
Local authority full-time weekly working hours	Allows for the accurate calculation of FTE
Total number of hours worked by LA-employed social workers	Allows for the calculation of the proportion of agency workers and tracking changes in workforce constitution. Also allows for the accurate calculation of FTE
Total cost of agency workforce supply (per month)	Allows for a better understanding of what proportion of agency workforce supply costs is workers' pay
Degree of compliance (per rule)	Allows DfE to monitor compliance with the rules
Reason(s) for partial compliance or non-compliance (per rule)	Allows DfE to understand compliance with the rules and inform policy development
Assignment identifier for assignments where the hourly pay rate exceeds the relevant price cap	Allows DfE to understand potential difficulties with compliance with the price caps rule in general and the level at which different price caps have been set in particular
Pay rate sign-off for assignments where the hourly pay rate exceeds the relevant price cap	Allows DfE to monitor compliance with the price caps rule, specifically the requirement to have any pay rates over the relevant price cap signed off by the DCS and Chief Executive
Reason(s) for exceeding the relevant price cap	Allows DfE to understand potential difficulties with compliance with the price caps rule in general and the level at which different price caps have been set in particular
Names of agencies that contributed to partial compliance or non-compliance with one or more of the rules	Allows DfE to monitor patterns of potentially unwanted agency behaviour

Data item	Rationale
Project team/other packaged model identifier	Allows DfE to monitor compliance with the project teams rule
Overall cost of original contract	Allows for a better understanding and monitoring of costs associated with project teams or other packaged models
Non-SW cost of original contract	Allows for a better understanding and monitoring of costs associated with project teams or other packaged models, including where they are supplied with additional services
Overall cost of any and all extensions	Allows for a better understanding and monitoring of costs associated with project teams or other packaged models
Original contract start date	Allows for a better understanding of project teams' or other packaged models' contracts' length
Original contract end date	Allows for a better understanding of project teams' or other packaged models' contracts' length
Actual contract end date	Provides an indication of the degree of difficulty in exiting a project team or other packaged model arrangement
Project team/other packaged model's social workers' assignment identifiers	Allows DfE to monitor compliance with the other agency rules for each of the agency child and family social workers of any project team or other packaged model

Appendix C: Glossary

Term	Definition
Agency	An employment business within the meaning of Section 13(3) Employment Agencies Act 1973 and including the supply by the employment business of persons employed by or supplied through a third party or intermediary.
Agency child and family social worker	A child and family social worker (up to and including team manager, independent reviewing officer, or equivalent) registered with Social Work England who is assigned to work for a local authority but is not in direct employment with that local authority.
Central Purchasing Organisation	A Central Purchasing Body within the meaning of regulation 37 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or, as the case may be, a centralised procurement authority within the meaning of section 1(4) of the Procurement Act 2023 or any other similar public buying organisation.
Cool-off period	A defined period of time during which a local authority may decline to engage an agency worker if they were previously directly employed by the local authority in their children's services department or that of local authority in their region.

Term	Definition
Dynamic Purchasing System or Dynamic Markets	Arrangements within the meaning of regulation 33 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or sections 35ff. of the Procurement Act 2023 (as the case may be), between a contracting authority (including a local authority) or a Central Purchasing Organisation on the one hand and suppliers party to those arrangements (members) on the other, setting out in advance the conditions under which the former may from time to time award contracts for works, services and goods to its members in accordance with contract conditions that have been set out in advance. As a procurement tool, it is in many respects similar to a framework agreement or framework, but provides greater flexibility insofar as new suppliers can join at any time, subject to meeting the conditions for membership.
Framework agreement or framework	A type of agreement within the meaning of regulations 33 and 34 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or (as the case may be) sections 45ff. of the Procurement Act 2023, enabling contracting authorities (including local authorities) or Central Purchasing Organisations from time to time to award contracts for the supply of goods or services to pre-selected suppliers who were successful in their application to become parties to the framework agreement or framework following a competitive selection procedure in accordance with contract conditions that have been set out in advance.
Local authority	Any public body that is responsible for providing a range of services to any specified local community. It includes legal entities such as Children's Service Trusts or other entities created by local authorities under Alternative Delivery Models.
Local authority region	<p>Nine regions in England comprising multiple local authorities in a geographical area.</p> <p>These were established across England in 1994 as the nine Government Offices for the Regions (GOR)</p>

Term	Definition
	<p>which were abolished in 2011. Due to the requirement to maintain a region-level geography for statistical purposes, the Government Statistical Service Regional and Geography Committee agreed that from 1 April 2011, the former GORs should be simply referred to as 'regions'.¹</p> <p>A list of local authorities within each region (at time of publication) is included in Appendix D. The Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) maintains an updated list, available at: https://adcs.org.uk/regions/home.</p>
Managed Service Provider (MSP)	A Managed Service Provider is an organisation that manages the temporary worker recruitment for a local authority. 'Managed Service' does not refer to a specific type of recruitment service but can encompass any recruitment service that can be outsourced.
Notice period	The amount of time an employee or contractor must continue to provide their services for following a resignation, dismissal or redundancy.
Post-qualifying experience	Time an individual has been employed as a registered social worker practising entirely or primarily in an English local authority's children's services department or, in local authorities operating joined up services, practising entirely or primarily in a child or family context.
Project team or other packaged model	A specific team of child and family social workers created or organised by an agency, sometimes with its own manager and administrative staff, but not

¹ Office for National Statistics. *Administrative geographies: England*. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/methodology/geography/ukgeographies/administrativegeography/england#regions> (Accessed May 2024).

Term	Definition
	<p>necessarily comprising the same individuals at all times, to provide relevant social care services to local authorities.</p> <p>This includes all packaged models, including those not within the definition of a 'project team', by means of which the services of agency child and family social workers are supplied as part of a packaged team or with additional services.</p>
Regional Improvement and Innovation Alliances (RIAs)	Regional Improvement and Innovation Alliances (RIAs) are a key resource for accessing improvement support. Each RIA will include a lead chief executive and lead Director of Children's Services as well as a workforce lead.
Substantive child and family social worker	An individual child and family social worker who is registered with Social Work England and directly employed by the local authority. The individual will be practising entirely or primarily in child and family social work.

Appendix D: Local authorities by region

These are the geographical regions that group the local authorities based on their proximity and collaboration. There are nine local authority regions in England, each with a different number of local authorities.

- **East of England:** Bedford Borough, Cambridgeshire, Central Bedfordshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Luton, Norfolk, Peterborough, Southend-on-Sea, Suffolk, Thurrock.
- **East Midlands:** Derby, Derbyshire, Leicester, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, North Northamptonshire, Nottingham City, Nottinghamshire, Rutland, West Northamptonshire.
- **North East:** Darlington, Durham, Gateshead, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Northumberland, North Tyneside, Redcar and Cleveland, South Tyneside, Stockton, Sunderland.
- **North West:** Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool, Bolton, Bury, Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Cumberland, Halton, Knowsley, Lancashire, Liverpool, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Sefton, St. Helens, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford, Warrington, Westmorland and Furness, Wigan, Wirral.
- **South East:** Bracknell Forest, Brighton and Hove, Buckinghamshire, East Sussex, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Kent, Medway, Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire, Portsmouth, Reading, Slough, Southampton, Surrey, West Berkshire, West Sussex, Windsor and Maidenhead, Wokingham.
- **South West:** Bath and North East Somerset; Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole; Bristol, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Isles of Scilly, North Somerset, Plymouth, Somerset, South Gloucestershire, Swindon, Torbay, Wiltshire.
- **West Midlands:** Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Herefordshire, Sandwell, Shropshire, Solihull, Staffordshire, Stoke-on-Trent, Telford and Wrekin, Walsall, Warwickshire, Wolverhampton, Worcestershire.
- **Yorkshire and Humber:** Barnsley, Bradford, Calderdale, Doncaster, East Riding of Yorkshire, Hull, Kirklees, Leeds, North East Lincolnshire, North Lincolnshire, North Yorkshire, Rotherham, Sheffield, Wakefield, York.
- **Greater London:** Barking and Dagenham, Barnet, Bexley, Brent, Bromley, Camden, City of London, Croydon, Ealing, Enfield, Greenwich, Hackney,

Hammersmith and Fulham, Haringey, Harrow, Havering, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Islington, Kensington and Chelsea, Kingston upon Thames, Lambeth, Lewisham, Merton, Newham, Redbridge, Richmond upon Thames, Southwark, Sutton, Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest, Wandsworth, Westminster.



Department
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