Department for Education

Children's Social Care Private Dashboard: Early Adopters

Application guide

June 2025

Contents

Executive summary

The purpose of this document is to provide local authorities (LAs) in England with guidance to apply for the children's social care (CSC) private dashboard early adopter scheme.

The scheme aims to fund a group of up to 30 LAs to test new, timely data flows through a private access version of the [children's social care dashboard](#) (CSC dashboard). The early adopter scheme provides LAs with the opportunity to inform our data modernisation work, working with the Department for Education (DfE) to identify a sustainable, scalable solution toward improving how we collect, share, and use CSC data to improve outcomes.

An early technical testing stage which will run for up to 3 months prior to the main scheme. This allows us to identify and address challenges earlier on, making necessary adjustments before further roll out. We aim to work with up to 8 of the 30 selected early adopters for this phase.

We are inviting LAs to apply for both the early technical testing (phase 1) and the main scheme (phase 2) as part of this application process. All LAs will need to pass minimum criteria for phase 2 to be considered for phase 1.

The phases will run as follows:

- Phase 1, technical testing, will onboard up to 8 LAs and run between July 2025 and September 2025
- Phase 2, the main scheme, will onboard up to 30 LAs (including the selected phase 1 LAs) and run between October 2025 and September 2026

The application period will open 21 May 2025 and close on 17 June 2025, 11:59pm. Only individual LAs can apply.

Key dates and deadlines for the application process are set out in table 1 below.

Table 1: Key milestones

Milestones	Dates (subject to change)
Applications open	Wednesday 21 May 2025
Deadline for submitting clarification questions	Wednesday 11 June 2025, 11.59pm
Applications close	Tuesday 17 June 2025, 11:59pm
Assessment of applications	June – July 2025

Milestones	Dates (subject to change)
LAs informed of application outcomes for phase 1 and phase 2 (including a 10-day standstill period)	Mid July 2025
Phase 1 grant funding agreements shared with LAs	Late July 2025
Phase 2 grant funding agreements shared with LAs	October 2025
Phase 2 grant funding agreements shared with LAs (financial year 26-27)	April 2026

We are looking to fund up to 30 LAs, £50,000 to support with the main part of this voluntary scheme (phase 2) which will include design, research, and implementation across a 12-month period.

We will support this with a preliminary 3-month technical testing phase with up to 8 LAs (phase 1). We will allocate additional funding to LAs participating in the initial technical testing during phase 1, as set out in the funding section of this document.

Support with making your application

This is one of four documents published to support applicants. The documents for applicants are:

- **Application guide** – this document outlines the Early Adopters scheme and how to apply, setting out the aims, objectives, funding, and eligibility criteria

- **Application form** – a document which must be completed and submitted within the application window for an application to be considered

- **Principles for data collection and use** – this document outlines the principles and approaches used by DfE to collect CSC data for this scheme and how it will be used and presented in the private dashboard

- **Data collection specification**– this document sets out the data items we propose to collect throughout the scheme and the validations used

Please read these documents carefully before completing the application form.

What is the early adopters scheme?

Background

The [CSC dashboard](#), and the [Children's Social Care National Framework](#) (the National Framework) are central to our ambition to set greater national direction for children's social care, and to build a system that can continually learn and improve.

In October 2024, we published the CSC dashboard, displaying high level data indicators to support LAs and central government understand the progress towards the National Framework outcomes and enablers.

We have designed the early adopters scheme as part of our ambition to improve the data we collect, share and use, by providing timely analysis and insights to inform evidence-based decisions and actions. This scheme allows us to securely test more timely data flows through a private access version of the CSC dashboard.

The private access dashboard will reflect the outcomes and enablers of the National Framework and allow us to test and understand the end-to-end data quality and burden trade-offs between more timely data flows and the current annual bulk data collections.

By testing these solutions in a pilot, we can work closely with a small group of LAs to understand the sustainability and scalability of these data flow options. We will work with participating LAs to continuously evaluate and assess the scheme throughout to understand its future potential.

Aims of the scheme

The aims of this scheme include making it easier for LAs and DfE to:

- capture and share regular, timely data
- test and discover the most sustainable and scalable technical solutions
- test the quality and usability of more timely data compared to that of the public CSC dashboard
- enable improved benchmarking of the framework indicators
- support with identifying trends and patterns quickly, through access to more timely insights for learning

This scheme, and the data it will collect, is not intended to measure LA performance on children's social care. The solutions and the data they will transfer will contribute to achieving wider long-term aims to improve data collections and reduce data burdens on LAs. It will also contribute towards understanding how to improve measuring, and improving the outcomes and enablers set out in the National Framework.

Our vision for the early adopters scheme

Using a test and learn approach, we will work with LAs to test our API (application programming interface) solution which has been developed to enable automated, low-burden movement of CSC data. We will test three data ingestion methods to best understand the burden, accuracy, scalability, and cost of each option.

Where it is technically feasible, we intend to test multiple routes with an LA allowing us to compare the outputs and burdens between options, supporting our evaluation to understand what a scalable, viable solution is. These three options are:

- **Build your Own:** LA builds capabilities to extract data items and build interface to API to share data with DfE

- **Data to Insight:** LA works with Data to Insight to share data with DfE, building on existing Standard Safeguarding Dataset work

- **Case Management Systems (CMS):** CMS suppliers extract data items and build interface to API to share data with DfE

We want to work with a representative group of LAs, across a range of CMS suppliers, LA size, and data maturity levels, to help us best understand the viability and scalability of these technical options.

We have co-designed our value proposition for the private access CSC dashboard with LAs involved in our user research and early development:

> "The Dashboard will support improved outcomes for children and families by providing a shared secure platform, which LAs and DfE can use to better understand children's social care data and learn from each other, by providing timely benchmarking data with common indicators and comparison groups, enabling analysis at a more granular level with bespoke benchmarking groups, and enabling opportunities to collaborate."

Our ambition is to work with LAs to:

- develop and continually improve a private access version of the CSC dashboard that enables improved benchmarking against the National Framework outcomes and enablers to support learning
- understand and test our data flow solutions to identify a scalable, sustainable solution to more timely data while minimising data burdens
- understand the data accuracy, burden, associated costs for reviewing and sharing data on an increased frequency

Our approach to delivering the scheme

We will deliver the scheme over two phases:

Phase 1 (technical testing) will run from July 2025 – September 2025, LAs will have the option to apply to:

- build their own interface to the API
- work with Data to Insight to test the standard safeguarding dataset API connection

We will select up to a total of 8 LAs for this phase, with up to 4 selected to build their own interface to the API. All applicants would need to pass the minimum requirements for phase 2 to be considered for this phase and are expected to be onboarded as part of the main scheme following participation in phase 1.

Where eligible, and feasible we would encourage LAs applying to build their own connection, to also apply to test the Data to Insight solution. The remaining LAs chosen for phase 1 would test the Data to Insight solution only.

Phase 2 (the main scheme) will run from October 2025 – September 2026. Depending on their CMS supplier, we will select LAs to test either, or both the:

- Data to Insight standard safeguarding data set API connection
- CMS supplier developed API connection

We will select up to a total of 30 LAs for this phase, including those chosen for phase 1. Those selected to build their own connection to the API would continue to test that option throughout phase 2 either on its own or combined with the appropriate additional data flow solutions.

Please note that due to the test and learn approach, should findings arise from phase 1 testing that requires changes (e.g. changes to the API or updates to processes) beyond the expected delivery period for phase 1, this may result in a delay to the start period of phase 2.

Expectations and support for early adopter local authorities

LAs will enter into a grant funding agreement with the DfE to test different technical solutions.

Key responsibilities for participating LAs will include:

- leading on and submitting the grant application to the DfE
- acting as the recipient of grant funding and meeting the requirements of the grant funding agreement ([Terms and conditions for DfE grant funding agreements from 1 April 2024](#))
- supporting research, reporting, and evaluation, working with the DfE to provide the necessary information and data to monitor and evaluate progress against the aims and outcomes of the early adopters scheme
- working with the DfE to understand current data input and quality assurance processes, existing ways of measuring outcomes, identifying current tools used, and potential areas of improvement
- testing how the API works with pre-existing systems, comparing multiple solutions where relevant
- work with the DfE to understand the impact of more timely data on data quality and insights
- proactively engage with and use the private dashboard to provide feedback on functionality, needs, and indicators to help DfE understand progress and identify solutions when necessary
- engage with other early adopter LAs to support benchmarking, learning, and development of recommendations or best practice for potential roll out of the private dashboard and relevant technical solutions – this work will be facilitated and supported by DfE and Data to Insight
- actively participating in DfE led learning events as appropriate, to share knowledge across the sector

Phase 1 additional responsibilities

For LAs applying to take part in phase 1 of the scheme, additional responsibilities will apply.

For LAs applying to build their own connection

Key responsibilities will include:

- leading on and submitting the grant application to the DfE
- acting as the recipient of grant funding and meeting the requirements of the grant funding agreement

- developing a digital service that automatically extracts required CSC data from your CMS database using either:
    - LA data store
    - CMS Supplier data store
- meeting the deliverables set out in Annex A of this document to develop the solution, over an expected delivery period of up to 4 months
- making changes to the API, if required as the pilot evolves
- supporting the DfE with the development of learning materials that would benefit future LAs should the solution be required as part of a future roll out

For LAs applying to test the Data to Insight connection:

Key responsibilities include:

- leading on and submitting the grant application to the DfE
- acting as the recipient of grant funding and meeting the requirements of the grant funding agreement
- working with Data to Insight within phase 1 to set up the technical solution, meeting the requirement set out in Annex B of this document
- supporting DfE with the development of learning materials that would benefit early adopter LAs as part of the phase 2 roll out
- acting as peer-support where appropriate to early adopter LAs as they deploy their solution in phase 2

Eligibility

We cannot accept applications from LAs who have an active section 114 notice or have received one within the financial year that they would receive the grant (25-26). Aside from this, we strongly encourage all LAs to apply for this scheme regardless of size, systems, and data maturity.

Eligibility to test each of the data flow options will depend on the LAs CMS provider, and are set out in the table below:

Table 2: Eligibility

CMS provider	Eligible to apply for phase 1, Build your Own	Eligibility to apply for phase 1, Data to Insight testing	Eligibility to apply for phase 2, the main scheme
System C (Liquid Logic)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Access group (Mosaic)	Yes	Yes	Yes
OLM (Eclipse)	Yes	Yes	Yes*
Azeus	Yes	No	Yes
Advanced (care first)	Yes	No	Yes**
LAs using an in-house system	Yes	No	Yes**

*Will only be able to take part in phase 2 of the scheme if the LA applies and is selected for either, or both, Data to Insight or Build your Own as part of phase 1.

**Will only be able to take part in phase 2 of the scheme if the LA applies and is selected to build their own connection to the API

Further detail as to the Data to Insight solution deployment, and technical eligibility requirements can be found in Annex B.

Testing the CMS data flow option

As set out in our transparency notice, we are intending to contract with both System C and Azeus as part of our early adopter scheme to test the API connection.

If your LA uses either of these suppliers and is selected for phase 2 of the scheme you would be expected to test the CMS connection to the API.

System C LAs would be expected to test this CMS connection alongside the Data to Insight, and if applicable, Build your Own, in phase 2 to allow for comparison across data quality and potential burdens.

Azeus LAs who had been selected to build their own connection would be expected to test both within phase 2. More details about the Data to Insight route for this CMS supplier is set out in Annex B.

We anticipate the connection to the API through the CMS route to require either:

- permission to be granted to the supplier to install the API and go through the normal change control procedure
- a small piece of work with networking and server teams to enable connections for the API to work

Funding

Available funding

Funding for each phase LAs can apply for is set out below:

- Phase 1 (July-Sept 2025): LAs selecting the Build your Own option in phase 1, they will receive a section 14 grant, paid in arrears, in the amount of up to £85,000 against a costed plan

- Phase 1 (July-Sept 2025): For LAs testing, the Data to Insight solution in phase 1, they will receive £15,000 through a non-ringfenced S31 grant

- Phase 2 (Oct 2025-Sept 2026): For LAs taking part in the main scheme, they would be funded £50,000 over 12 months, paid pro-rata across two financial years, through a non-ringfenced S31 grant

Eligible LAs can apply for all three within the application form. Please refer to table 2 in this document to confirm your LAs eligibility. Applications for phase 1 are optional, but the phase 2 question will need to be completed, and meet the minimum scoring criteria for your application to be considered.

LAs who apply for phase 1, but are not selected, will still be considered for phase 2 where eligible.

How can the funding be used?

The Secretary of State will provide the funding for the programme to the recipient (LA) in accordance with the grant determination letters.

Phase 1 (Build your Own): We expect funding for this phase to cover the time required to develop the technical solution and meet the required delivery milestones, including any additional resource required to maintain the solution over the scheme lifecycle. More information on this option is set out in Annex A of this document.

Phase 1 (Data to Insight): We expect funding for this phase to cover the time required to set up the solution for the data to flow, to begin developing and assuring their data against any initial issues, and to support the development of onboarding tools and best practice for phase 2. More information on this option is set out in Annex B of this document.

Phase 2 (main scheme): We expect funding for this phase to cover the time required to establish the data flow solution, working through any technical issues, to develop and assure their data as well as engagement with the private dashboard, user testing, and research.

LAs will have the flexibility to spend the funding in ways that best support their involvement in the scheme. Given the varying data maturities and systems across LAs, the work required will differ, non-ringfenced funding allows LAs to tailor their approach to their specific needs.

CMS cost - LAs will not be charged by their supplier for involvement in the scheme. We are aware of potential technical challenges between the OLM system and Data to Insight solution which we are looking to address in phase 1. If this cannot be achieved without cost to the LA, we would not pursue this option for phase 2 with those LAs.

Funding assurances and conditions assurances

Depending on participation in phase 1, funding to LAs will vary.

For LAs building their own connection we will provide funding through S14 grants paid in arrears subject to the delivery of key milestones. Participating LAs are responsible for financial reporting and assurance processes. The funding will align with the costed plan submitted in the application.

For LAs testing the Data to Insight solution in phase 1, we will provide funding through non-ringfenced S31 grants paid in advance. Participating LAs are responsible for financial reporting and assurance processes. LAs will need to indicate how they will allocate grant funding as part of their application.

For LAs in the main scheme, or phase 2, we will provide funding through non-ringfenced S31 grants paid in advance on a six-monthly basis (or pro-rata across the 12 months and financial years should phase 2 be delayed). Participating LAs are for financial reporting and assurance processes/ LAs will need to indicate how they will allocate grant funding as part of their application.

We will maintain ongoing engagement with LAs throughout the scheme. This includes regular collaboration with Data to Insight, who will act as a delivery partner to help with the early identification and management of any delivery challenges.

Funding for the scheme is currently confirmed until the end of financial year 2025/26. Future funding for all programmes is subject to outcomes from the next Spending Review.

Application process

How to apply

The application period will open 21 May 2025 and close at 11.59pm on 17 June 2025. Only individual LAs can apply.

Key dates and deadlines for the application process are set out in table 3 below.

Table 3: Key milestones

Milestones	Dates (subject to change)
Applications open	Wednesday 21 May 2025
Deadline for submitting clarification questions	Wednesday 11 June 2025, 11.59pm
Applications close	Tuesday 17 June 2025, 11:59pm
Assessment of applications	June – July 2025
LAs informed of application outcomes for phase 1 and phase 2 (including a 10-day standstill period)	Mid July 2025
Phase 1 grant funding agreements shared with LAs	Late July 2025
Phase 2 grant funding agreements shared with LAs	October 2025
Phase 2 grant funding agreements shared with LAs (financial year 26-27)	April 2026

Completing your application

To be eligible to apply, LAs must meet the mandatory criteria and complete the essential sections of the application form. Guidance on what is expected in each section is included within the form to support you in completing it.

Further information about the information requested in the application form, and how it will be scored, is set out in the assessment of applications section of this document.

When completing the application form, please ensure the following:

- refer to these prompts within the application form, as well as the scheme requirements within the application guide, to ensure all questions are fully addressed
- adhere to the word limits stated for each section, any information that exceeds the specified word limit will not be assessed
- include the total word count for each section at the bottom of each text box
- that all mandatory sections have been completed for your application to be accepted

Submitting your application

Please email a word copy of your completed application form csc.dashboard@education.gov.uk. When sending your email, please include 'LA name' followed by 'Early adopter application' in the subject field.

Once your application has been received, you will receive a confirmation email.

Application deadline

The DfE must receive all completed applications by email by 11.59pm on 17 June 2025. No changes can be made to the application form beyond the deadline.

The DfE is unable to consider any applications submitted after the deadline, as this would be unfair to those who submitted their applications within the specified time limit.

Assessment of applications

Scoring criteria

We cannot accept applications from LAs who have an active section 114 notice or have received one within the financial year that they would receive the grant (25-26). Aside from this, we strongly encourage all LAs to apply for this scheme regardless of size, system, and data maturity.

To maximise results from this scheme, we want to ensure that we have good representation across LAs as this will allow for more effective benchmarking and scalability testing of our solutions in subsequent phases.

We will use the criteria set out below (table 4) to help ensure there is enough representation across these factors. We have indicated the information we will use in a tie-break.

Table 4: Criteria

Criteria	Comments
Mandatory: Upper tier LA	LAs need to be one of the top 153 upper tier LAs.
Mandatory: Section 114 notice	LAs that have been or are currently subject to section 114 notice spending controls within the 25-26 financial year cannot apply.
Region	We will use LA regional location alongside additional criteria in the event of a tie break for phase 2 applicants. This is to ensure a representative range of LAs involved in the scheme.
LA size	LA population size has been used to create lots for selecting phase 2 LAs. If your CMS provider is System C (Liquid Logic) or Access Group (Mosaic), please complete this section of the form. LA size categories can be found in Annex D.

Criteria	Comments
Ofsted rating	We will use LA Ofsted ratings alongside additional criteria in the event of a tie break for phase 2 applicants. This is to ensure a representative range of LAs involved in the scheme.
	We will review applications with an inadequate rating with the relevant Regional Improvement Support Lead to ensure suitability.
Data maturity	We ask LAs to provide their data maturity rating, this is determined with the criteria outlined here: Local Government Data Maturity Assessment Tool | Rate your organisation's data management skills. We encourage LAs of all data maturities to apply.
	We will use LA data maturity scores alongside additional criteria in the event of a tie break for phase 2 applicants. This is to ensure a representative range of LAs involved in the scheme.
CMS provider	We will use your LA CMS provider to allocate your LA into the appropriate lot.
System information	We will use this information as helpful context to understand the different database configurations for testing.
	LAs are asked to provide information on their specific data base technology, and where their data is stored.
LA involvement with the Standard Safeguarding Dataset (SSD)	Phase 1 tie breaker: we will prioritise LAs who have not currently deployed the SSD solution, or deployed scripts for phase 1 if there are no single highest scoring applicants within a lot. This would not affect phase 2.

Criteria	Comments
Any further information	LAs can provide further information or context about their LA or CMS/technical configuration that may be relevant to the scheme. This will not be scored. If your information is relevant to your assessed questions, please include it in those responses as well. If known, this information could include the ability to run scripts or use tools like PowerShell or Python (Incl. within Anaconda), to help automate tasks, work with data, or connect different systems together.

Assessment Criteria

The application form is split into four parts:

- **Section 1:** Application details (essential)
- **Section 2:** Build your Own application (optional) with two scored questions and one unscored question
- **Section 3**: Data to Insight application (optional) with one scored question
- **Section 4:** Main scheme (essential) with one scored question

The below tables set out what areas we will assess in each section.

Table 5: Phase 1: Build your Own (optional) criteria

Assessment criterion	Assessment approach
1. **Delivery plan** • (60% weighting)	With reference to the early adopter design specification for the local authority Build your Own option, how will you deliver against the required activities and milestones set out in Annex A of the application guide?
2. **Capacity to deliver** • (40% weighting)	How will you use existing, or new resources to deliver your plan effectively?
3. **Costings** • (Not scored)	Please set out a costed plan for this grant funding, and the supporting narrative, we will review these together.

Table 6: Phase 1: Data to Insight (optional) criteria

Assessment criterion	Assessment approach
1. **Delivery capacity and capability** • (100% weighting)	With reference to the application guide how will you build on existing capacity to achieve the aims set out for the technical testing phase of this scheme?

Table 7: Phase 2: Main scheme (essential) criteria

Assessment criterion	Assessment approach
1. Delivery capacity and capability • (100% weighting)	With reference to the application guide, how will you build on existing capacity to achieve the aims set out for this scheme?

Scoring Methodology

An assessment panel will evaluate applications by an assessment panel and score them between 0-5 using the scoring methodology set out in table 8 below. Applications must gain an acceptable score of 3 or above on each criterion to be eligible for funding; those who score 2 or below on the phase 2 application question will not be considered for the scheme.

Each panel member will first score bids individually, and we will agree a consensus score through moderation. We will use the consensus score to select successful applications.

Table 8: Scoring methodology

Assessment	Score	Interpretation
Excellent	5	Exceptional demonstration in the bid of the understanding and skills required to provide the services. Response identifies factors that will offer potential tangible/measurable added value, with evidence to support the response.
Good	4	Satisfies the requirement with minor additional benefits. Above average demonstration in the bid of the understanding and skills required to provide the services. Response identifies factors that will offer potential added value, with evidence to support the response.

Assessment	Score	Interpretation
Acceptable	3	Satisfies the requirement. Demonstration in the bid of the understanding and skills required to provide the services, with evidence to support the response.
Minor reservations	2	Some minor reservations of the bidder's understanding and skills required to provide the services, with little or no evidence to support the response.
Considerable reservations	1	Considerable reservations of the bidder's understanding and skills required to provide the services, with little or no evidence to support the response.
Does not meet the requirement	0	Does not meet the requirement. Does not comply and/or insufficient information provided to demonstrate that the bidder has the understanding and skills required to provide the services, with little or no evidence to support the response.

Allocation of places

To achieve a representative range of CMS supplier and LA size, we will assess applications within lots based on CMS suppliers relative to market share. Where suppliers have a smaller market share, they have been grouped into one lot, as shown in the table below.

There are three lots being used to select LAs for:

- Phase 1: Build your Own
- Phase 1: Data to Insight
- Phase 2: Main scheme

We will select LAs for phase 1 first and will fill the respective lots in both phase 1 and 2 before the remaining phase 2 LAs are selected.

The lots for phase 2, where a CMS supplier has a larger market share have been further broken down into 'small', 'medium', and 'large' LAs based on population size. Details on this methodology is included in Annex C, including a list of all 153 LAs against their relevant allocation provided in Annex D. This will only apply to the lots where demonstrated.

For phase 1 Build your Own:

We will select up to four LAs sort them into lots based on CMS provider.

We will select LAs based on highest scoring applicant in each lot:

Table 9: Build your Own lots

System C (Liquid Logic)	Access group (Mosaic)	OLM (Eclipse)/ Azeus	Advanced/In house
Lot 1a Highest scoring applicant	**Lot 1b** Highest scoring applicant	**Lot 1c** Highest scoring applicant	**Lot 1d** Highest scoring applicant

Tie Breaks

For the selection of applicants, if there are no single highest scoring applicants within the lot, due to two or more applicants receiving equal scores by the assessment panel, we will award to the applicant within the lot that has the highest 0-5 score on the phase 2 question. This will help us to identify the LA best able to meet the broader objectives of the scheme.

If there are not enough suitable applicants per lot, those would be reallocated to the next highest scoring applicant across the remaining lots by CMS supplier **up to a total of 4 LAs.**

For phase 1 Data to Insight:

Selected LAs will join the phase 1 Build your Own LAs to create a total of up to 8 LAs in phase 1.

We will select LAs by the highest scoring applicants in each lot.

For LAs applying to do both Build your Own and Data to Insight, there are additional lots to allow them to test both should their application be successful (indicated through lots 2d-f).

Table 10: Data to Insight lots

System C (Liquid Logic)	Access group (Mosaic)	OLM (Eclipse)	Azeus/ Advanced/In house
Lot 2a Highest scoring applicant	**Lot 2b** Up to two highest scoring applicants	**Lot 2c** Highest scoring applicant	Not eligible to apply for this lot
Lot 2d Highest scoring Build your Own and Data to Insight applicant	**Lot 2e** Highest scoring Build your Own and Data to Insight applicant	**Lot 2f** Highest scoring Build your Own and Data to Insight applicant	Not eligible to apply for this lot

Tie Breaks

For the selection of applicants, if there are no single highest scoring applicants within the lot, due to two or more applicants receiving equal scores by the assessment panel, we will award to the applicant within the lot that has the highest 0-5 score on the phase 2 question. This will help us to identify the LA best able to meet the broader objectives of the scheme.

If this still does not determine a highest scorer, we will refer to the additional applicant details and prioritise those LAs who have yet to work on or test the standard safeguarding dataset to allow us to test the connection and identify potential issues for roll out more robustly.

If there are not enough suitable applicants per lot, those would be reallocated to the next highest scoring overall applicant. Should there be a high number of lots to reallocate we will work to ensure an even distribution where possible across the remaining CMS suppliers. Lots would be reallocated up to a total combined number of eight participating LAs in phase 1, including the selected Build your Own LAs.

For phase 2, the main scheme:

We will select up to 30 LAs, and sort them into lots based on CMS provider, and where demonstrated, LA size. The full list of LA sizes can be found in Annex D.

Please note the restrictions to applications in lot 3g and 3i based on technical eligibility.

We anticipate up to eight of these places to be filled by phase 1 participating LAs who have passed the phase 2 minimum scoring criteria. We will fill the remaining places with the highest scoring phase 2 applications, including those unsuccessful for phase 1.

Table 11: Main scheme lots by size

System C (Liquid Logic)	Access group (Mosaic)
Lot 3a Up to 3 of the highest scoring **small** LAs	**Lot 3d** Up to 3 of the highest scoring **small** LAs
Lot 3b Up to 8 of the highest scoring **medium** LAs	**Lot 3e** Up to 4 of the highest scoring **medium** LAs
Lot 3c Up to 4 of the highest scoring **large** LAs	**Lot 3f** Up to 3 of the highest scoring **large** LAs

Table 12: Remaining main scheme lots

OLM (Eclipse) *	Azeus	Advanced/In house**
Lot 3g Up to 2 of the highest scoring LAs	**Lot 3h** Up to 2 of the highest scoring LAs	**Lot 3i** Highest scoring applicant

* These LAs will only be eligible for phase 2 if they apply and are selected for phase 1.

** These LAs will only be eligible for phase 2 if they apply and are selected to build their own connection in phase 1.

Tie Breaks

For selection of applicants, if there are no single highest scoring applicants within the lot, due to two or more applicants receiving equal scores by the assessment panel, we will consider the additional applicant details included in the form to prioritise a representative range of LA involvement in the scheme. The representation criteria set out in table 7, would be considered in priority order of ensuring a representative group of LAs across:

1. Ofsted rating
2. LA data maturity
3. Region

If there are not enough suitable applicants per lot, those would be reallocated to the next highest scoring overall applicant. Should there be a high number of lots to reallocate, or several LAs with the same score, we will work to ensure an even distribution where possible across the remaining CMS suppliers.

Next steps

What happens if your application is successful?

We will inform you via email if your application is successful or not. We expect this to be during July 2025. If your application is successful, we will send an award letter directly to the bidding officer and Director of Children's Services, together with an acceptance form. Shortly after, we will also send a grant funding agreement setting out the expectations for spending the funding.

The acceptance form and the grant funding agreement must be signed by the Director of Children's Services. This will demonstrate that they agree to the requirements of the funding.

Clarification questions

Any questions regarding the application process should be emailed to CSC.Dashboard@education.gov.uk by 11.59pm on 11 June 2025. We will respond to these questions twice a week (or as needed), from this mailbox to the mailing list used for DCS communications as well as our pre-market communications, please contact the mailbox if you would like to be added to this list.

Annex A – Build your Own technical requirements

LAs applying to develop their own connection to the API solution will need to deliver against the following requirements:

- you will need to develop a digital service that automatically extracts required CSC data from your CMS database (daily data) using either:
  - LA data store
  - CMS Supplier data store
- the data extracted each day per child must include:
  - recent changes (within last 24 hours) to existing child records
  - new child records
- the extracted data needs to be converted into a JSON file format as defined by DfE API specification ready for submission
- the JSON file needs to be packaged using an automated service to submit your daily CSC data changes to the DfE API
- for the first data submission to DfE, you will need to extract full data from the last 1-2 years of recorded CMS history, so DfE have a robust starting point for analysis and benchmarking
- you will need to setup a GOV.UK one account on Find and Use an API and setup your connection details to be used for sending data (we will inform you on which API to use for test and production)
- you may need to make changes to the data being collected and submitted to DfE during the pilot

You can find the most up to date JSON example on our [Find and Use an API - Children in Social Care Data Receiver (TEST)](#) page. Please note, this link may change in the future.

Fulfilment of the above requirements may vary. Please see below an example guide for what you may include in your delivery plan:

Table 13: Example delivery plan

Month	Overview	Plan details
1	Design Data Extraction (Full initial data and daily changes with JSON format)	Review CSC and JSON API spec to design SQL (Structured Query Language) to extract and store required data from CMS data warehouse/local warehouse tables. Design needs to factor in a full automated child data extract for the first submission to API. It also needs to identify and store changes to each record per day and

Month	Overview	Plan details
		create and store JSON payload in required format from extracted data.
2	Implement Automated extraction logic, JSON generation, storage, and connection to API	Create the automated service to extract, process daily changes, store daily changes and associated JSON Payload for the previous day. Manually extract required CMS data. Convert to JSON and test manual transmission to DfE API for testing (no automation at this stage).
3	Test SQL extraction and JSON creation overtime using real CMS data updates to child records and new records	Test the full data and daily data extraction to JSON ready for submission.
4	Build and test the automation to collect the latest JSON file and send to DfE API	Setup access to DfE API and test the delivery of the JSON to DfE. You will need to try sending data that has issues to understand any errors codes from DfE validation checks. When ready, we will present the data in a quality assurance dashboard for submitting LAs to view their anonymised data processed by DfE.

Annex B – Data to Insight set-up technical requirements

Background to the standard safeguarding data set

The Data to Insight solution for extracting CSC data from LA case management systems (CMS) that can also be transmitted to the DfE API involves two key elements:

- Standard safeguarding dataset (SSD)

- API connection to DfE

The SSD is a CSC data middleware solution from Data to Insight that allows LAs to interact with a new standardised schema with sector defined data items.

The extracted CMS data remains hosted within, and alongside the LA's existing local reporting database/warehouse. It is easy to deploy for most LAs using the major CMS providers and will be kept up to date as the model evolves.

Data to Insight will deploy the SSD solution to extract the required CSC data from the local CMS as defined in the SSD and will automate the extraction of the subset of required CSC data to be transmitted to DfE's API each day. The subset of CSC data can be found in the API specification published alongside this application guide.

The DfE API data can then be extracted from the SSD in JSON format, using either a full CSC data snapshot each day (initially) or by extracting identified changes to relevant children's records from the previous day.

When the full child data is initially extracted, the solution will capture 1-2 years of historic data to support the inclusion of trend data and analysis over time.

Once the JSON file is generated, the file will be securely transmitted using automation to DfE using an authenticated token. DfE systems will provide a response to the submitted file (payload). As part of the solution, payload responses and submitted data are recorded internally for monitoring.

Where possible the SSD extract has been designed to run as a single SQL script. Once deployed, you will have instant access to the SSD schema, and the associated benefits. Initially this includes establishing SSD compatibility with your system(s), access to our suggested API solution and a bank of stat-returns scripts. Future benefits include access to tools from other SSD LA's, improved cross-LA benchmarking, the potential to work with any other LA collaboratively to develop data insights tools as well as Data to Insight's own developing SSD tools library.

More detailed information and technical aspects regarding the SSD schema and published project report are available at:

- [Data and Digital Solutions Fund Project 1a final report](#)

- [SSD project distribution Github web pages – [public access]](#)

LA system requirements

In preparation for the CSC private dashboard early adopter scheme, LAs must ensure that the following are, or can be put in place.

Please consult with your IT team to review these system requirements for the Data to Insight solution.

Resourcing:

Deployment of the Data to Insight solution will involve a commitment of resources within initial testing from data/IT support teams to support the running of scripts locally. This approach best enables working through low-level running issues, before scripts are included into the overnight server jobs, minimising delays in deployment. LAs are expected to assign:

- a designated contact (or contacts) who can work with Data to Insight and are able to run the scripts and feedback during initial testing

- project awareness and support from the relevant contact within such as IT support, overnight reporting, or (SQL) Server services team in preparation to integrate the locally tested solution into existing overnight CMS reporting data processing

CMS:

Pilot LAs are expected to be using:

- System C (Liquid Logic): SQL Server 2017 or later with compatibility settings at 120+

- Access Group (Mosaic): SQL Server 2017 or later with compatibility settings at 120+

- OLM (Eclipse): PostgreSQL (development nearing completion)

Database Additions:

- Standard Safeguarding Dataset (SSD) schema deployed on CMS reporting database *(e.g., for System C, commonly HDM_Local)*

Additional supplied SSD add-on(s), including:

- change tracking table to store pending JSON payloads and API response codes (including an extra link table added to the SSD deployment and all required SQL)

Automation:

- PowerShell 5.1+ (or alternative shell/scripting)

- Permissions to run: PowerShell, Python, or Bash script locally would reduce early testing overheads, but scripts must be able to run later as part of the server tasks/overnights for automating the daily data extraction & API

- SSD extract SQL will require daily refresh, via server overnights. Initial testing can be done via any SQL client access, but this is then likely a manual process.

IT System Support Team further information:

A list summary that LA colleagues can share with their IT support teams to enable project access:

- **SSD deployment:** Analyst access to CMS DB (SELECT/CREATE table+index. *Ideally also* permissions for ALTER|DROP table+index)

- **DB compatibility:** Compatibility setting at 120+ to enable more efficient JSON manipulation options for the SDD and structured data extract required for the API payload. Potential workarounds exist for compatibility <= 120 but will be less optimised.

- **Automation:** PowerShell 5.1+ (or Bash) scripts locally - script type/language will be the same that will require running from the server to enable to full API automation later

Deploying the solution and support for LAs

To deploy the SSD:

- SSD deployment script(s) will be supplied for your CMS type. Depending on CMS type, the SSD deployment may/may not require any localised configuration

- use any SQL client with connection to your CMS DB reporting instance e.g., SQL Server Management Studio, Azure Data Studio

- if there are any fail points during the SSD, setup can be recorded and returned to Data to Insight for support and any needed bespoke script configuration

To enable the API data flow, we have added an additional non-core table to the SSD specification. These, and all needed changes to the SSD will be packaged within the initial set up scripts and there is nothing additional that requires action. The table enables change tracking and the storing of the API submission/status responses. All related set up and configuration will be supplied to populate this table with the pending JSON payloads.

Data to Insight will be available to support some of the above where access allows, and to assist with the needed set-up configuration or localised changes to the available scripts.

Phase 1 deployment: CMS considerations

System C (Liquid Logic)/Access group (Mosaic)

The development of the Standard Safeguarding Dataset (SSD), and the Data to Insight API solution has been tested to ensure some breadth of compatibility with these systems and formalise our suggested minimum system requirements for the Data to Insight solution.

Some system constraints may prevent some LAs from testing the Data to Insight solution as part of phase 2, as it's not possible for Data to Insight to predict/guarantee our solution against the full range of potential LA system configurations and available technical stacks.

For this reason, we are including Data to Insight testing with System C and Mosaic as part of phase 1, to work through and identify such issues before wider roll out to the full group of early adopters.

OLM (Eclipse)

Deployment of the SSD involves creating/updating a labelled subset of additional reporting tables within an existing database instance. Usually this is placed within your data team's existing non-live reporting environment, to create and populate the SSD tables from existing CMS data.

For OLM users we are aware that there may be some additional permissions issues that restrict or prevent access to those requirements. We are reviewing deployment options to address OLM constraints in collaboration with OLM and the OLM SSD development partner LAs.

We would seek to work with OLM early adopter LAs to test the SSD deployment options for the API in phase 1. If we are unable to resolve these issues the LA would not be able to continue testing the data flow in phase 2 unless selected to build their own connection to the API.

OLM users who currently refresh data into their own reporting or data warehouse instance(s) and therefore already could create their own custom tables, are not impacted by this and should be able to deploy the SSD without such constraints. We would still work to test this in phase 1 before onboarding to phase 2, or the main scheme.

Azeus

Development work is currently ongoing towards the required SSD middleware on this system. Prior to a confirmed delivery date for the essential components on this, LAs who use Azeus will be unable to test the Data to Insight solution as part of phase 1.

If the solution were to become available within the scope of the main scheme, we would seek to test it with your LA where possible.

Advanced (Care Director), or an in-house solution

This solution has not been developed to support Advanced (Care Director) due to them leaving the CMS market. The design of the SSD provides a standardised mapping between known CMS schemas and the SSD's common schema structure. Therefore, we are unable to offer it to LA's using their own bespoke or in-house CMS data structure. These LAs will need to apply for the Build your Own API integration option to participate in the main scheme.

Annex C – Allocation of lots – breakdown by LA size: methodology

We know that capacity and capability in data and digital services have the potential to impact the implementation of the early adopters scheme. As funding of data and digital capacity and capability within LAs can be proportionate to population size, we have therefore identified a Lot system for selection, with a breakdown of population size across CMS providers where possible to ensure we have a representative group while using a scored system.

To define size, a quartile split on LA population has been implemented with the lowest population 25% of LAs categorised as small, the top 25% large and the 50% of LAs in the middle as medium. LA population estimates are taken from ONS Estimates of the population for England and Wales mid-year population estimates 2023, for children aged 0 to 17 years.

The lots for CMS suppliers with the larger market share have been broken down to ensure a more representative group in phase 2 based on size. Suppliers with a smaller market share have not been broken down further. It is important for representation within the scheme for all suppliers to take part, however, should LAs using smaller suppliers not apply these spaces will be proportionally allocated to the other lots.

A full list of how LAs have been allocated by size is provided in Annex D.

Annex D – Local authorities by size

Below is a full list of LAs categorised by size, as outlined earlier in this document. size will only be considered as part of the phase 2 lots for LAs using System C (Liquid Logic) and Access Group (Mosaic) as a CMS supplier.

Table 14: LAs by size

Local authority	Size	Population
Barking and Dagenham	Medium	64,341
Barnet	Large	92,218
Barnsley	Medium	51,047
Bath and North East Somerset	Small	36,453
Bedford Borough	Small	43,070
Bexley	Medium	57,761
Birmingham	Large	289,481
Blackburn with Darwen	Small	40,390
Blackpool	Small	28,663
Bolton	Medium	73,832
Bournemouth, Christchurch, and Poole	Medium	74,285
Bracknell Forest	Small	28,647
Bradford	Large	141,384
Brent	Medium	73,805
Brighton and Hove	Medium	46,666
Bristol	Large	91,427
Bromley	Medium	72,770
Buckinghamshire	Large	127,616
Bury	Medium	43,965
Calderdale	Medium	45,005
Cambridgeshire	Large	139,191
Camden	Small	36,292

Local authority	Size	Population
Central Bedfordshire	Medium	68,000
Cheshire East	Medium	81,634
Cheshire West and Chester	Medium	70,881
City of London	Small	642
Cornwall Council	Large	105,686
Coventry	Medium	80,494
Croydon	Large	91,350
Cumberland	Medium	51,775
Darlington	Small	22,411
Derby	Medium	60,058
Derbyshire	Large	154,488
Devon	Large	147,313
Doncaster	Medium	66,236
Dorset	Medium	66,022
Dudley	Medium	69,761
Durham	Large	99,629
Ealing	Medium	81,216
East Riding of Yorkshire	Medium	62,209
East Sussex	Large	103,606
Enfield	Medium	80,441
Essex	Large	322,812
Gateshead	Small	39,784
Gloucestershire	Large	130,472
Greenwich	Medium	65,045
Hackney	Medium	54,352
Halton	Small	27,533
Hammersmith and Fulham	Small	31,788

Local authority	Size	Population
Hampshire	Large	285,610
Haringey	Medium	53,550
Harrow	Medium	59,703
Hartlepool	Small	20,417
Havering	Medium	61,295
Herefordshire	Small	34,052
Hertfordshire	Large	273,455
Hillingdon	Medium	74,195
Hounslow	Medium	67,788
Isle of Wight	Small	23,438
Isles of Scilly	Small	364
Islington	Small	35,656
Kensington and Chelsea	Small	22,931
Kent	Large	348,332
Kingston upon Hull	Medium	61,075
Kingston upon Thames	Small	36,515
Kirklees	Large	98,726
Knowsley	Small	35,251
Lambeth	Medium	52,172
Lancashire	Large	256,087
Leeds	Large	174,133
Leicester	Medium	88,726
Leicestershire	Large	145,169
Lewisham	Medium	62,085
Lincolnshire	Large	147,250
Liverpool	Large	95,953
Luton	Medium	60,207

Local authority	Size	Population
Manchester	Large	129,785
Medway	Medium	66,687
Merton	Medium	47,076
Middlesbrough	Small	34,791
Milton Keynes	Medium	72,797
Newcastle upon Tyne	Medium	60,086
Newham	Medium	83,467
Norfolk	Large	169,965
North East Lincolnshire	Small	33,257
North Lincolnshire	Small	34,349
North Northamptonshire	Medium	81,196
North Somerset	Small	43,874
North Tyneside	Small	42,037
North Yorkshire	Large	114,622
Northumberland	Medium	58,812
Nottingham	Medium	67,515
Nottinghamshire	Large	168,939
Oldham	Medium	62,995
Oxfordshire	Large	152,505
Peterborough	Medium	55,957
Plymouth	Medium	51,847
Portsmouth	Small	42,307
Reading	Small	37,929
Redbridge	Medium	77,165
Redcar and Cleveland	Small	27,441
Richmond upon Thames	Medium	43,947
Rochdale	Medium	56,376

Local authority	Size	Population
Rotherham	Medium	58,096
Rutland	Small	7,972
Salford	Medium	61,372
Sandwell	Medium	86,835
Sefton	Medium	53,970
Sheffield	Large	114,285
Shropshire	Medium	59,393
Slough	Medium	44,849
Solihull	Medium	48,533
Somerset	Large	111,604
South Gloucestershire	Medium	61,307
South Tyneside	Small	30,096
Southampton	Medium	50,373
Southend-on-Sea	Small	38,715
Southwark	Medium	56,514
St Helens	Small	37,107
Staffordshire	Large	172,912
Stockport	Medium	64,102
Stockton-on-Tees	Medium	44,087
Stoke-on-Trent	Medium	60,165
Suffolk	Large	150,357
Sunderland	Medium	55,636
Surrey	Large	265,672
Sutton	Medium	50,069
Swindon	Medium	52,984
Tameside	Medium	52,031
Telford and Wrekin	Small	43,064

Local authority	Size	Population
Thurrock	Medium	45,349
Torbay	Small	24,887
Tower Hamlets	Medium	63,147
Trafford	Medium	56,015
Wakefield	Medium	75,878
Walsall	Medium	70,112
Waltham Forest	Medium	62,102
Wandsworth	Medium	58,342
Warrington	Medium	44,153
Warwickshire	Large	125,385
West Berkshire	Small	35,325
West Northamptonshire	Large	94,937
West Sussex	Large	179,008
Westminster	Small	30,140
Westmorland and Furness	Small	38,971
Wigan	Medium	70,544
Wiltshire	Large	103,351
Windsor and Maidenhead	Small	34,281
Wirral	Medium	65,875
Wokingham	Small	43,314
Wolverhampton	Medium	65,371
Worcestershire	Large	119,641
York	Small	34,612

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