Department for Education

Agency child and family social workers

Data and price caps operational guidance

October 2026

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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: data and price caps. It sits alongside the agency rules statutory guidance and should, where relevant, be read alongside that document.

Please note that the data collection set out in this guidance is collected under section 83 of the Children Act 1989 and section 251(1)(b) of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 and is a legal requirement for local authorities in England.

Version history

Version	Comments	Date
1.0	Baseline version.	May 2024
1.1	Updated to amend timelines relating to the data collection and job mapping. Updated to include the price caps section.	September 2024
1.2	Updated to specify that each local authority should have a nominated lead individual for the data collection. Updated to include further details relating to submission and implementation of price caps. Updated to clarify some data items. Updated to remove the following data items: • Days to fill post • Total cost of agency workforce supply (per month)	December 2024
1.3	Updated to include further details relating to data submission, dashboards and data access.	March 2025
1.4	Updated to include agreed regional price caps (from 1 October 2025).	August 2025
1.5	Updated to reflect the updated data collection templates which include agreed regional price caps.	December 2025
1.6	Updated to include the output of the 2026 review of agreed regional price caps.	October 2026

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

Any updates will be clearly marked at the beginning of this document.

The data return templates will be kept under review to ensure optimal usability. Our aim is that any updates will be published three months before the corresponding submission deadline, so please ensure you are always using the latest templates.

Deadlines

Data submission deadlines

Deadline	Data return window	Corresponding reporting period
31 May 2025 Collection 1	1 April 2025 – 31 May 2025	1 January 2025 – 31 March 2025
31 August 2025 Collection 2	1 July 2025 – 31 August 2025	1 April 2025 – 30 June 2025

Deadline	Data return window	Corresponding reporting period
30 November 2025 Collection 3	1 October 2025 – 30 November 2025	1 July 2025 – 30 September 2025
28 February 2026 Collection 4	1 January 2026 – 28 February 2026	1 October 2025 – 31 December 2025
31 May 2026 Collection 5	1 April 2026 – 31 May 2026	1 January 2026 – 31 March 2026
31 August 2026 Collection 6	1 July 2026 – 31 August 2026	1 April 2026 – 30 June 2026
30 November 2026 Collection 7	1 October 2026 – 30 November 2026	1 July 2026 – 30 September 2026
28 February 2027 Collection 8	1 January 2027 – 28 February 2027	1 October 2026 – 31 December 2026
31 May 2027 Collection 9	1 April 2027 – 31 May 2027	1 January 2027 – 31 March 2027
31 August 2027 Collection 10	1 July 2027 – 31 August 2027	1 April 2027 – 30 June 2027
30 November 2027 Collection 11	1 October 2027 – 30 November 2027	1 July 2027 – 30 September 2027
29 February 2028 Collection 12	1 January 2028 – 29 February 2028	1 October 2027 – 31 December 2027

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, managed service team or other packaged model.

The first data return window opened between 1 April 2025 and 31 May 2025. During this period, local authorities submitted all relevant data for the reporting period covering 1 January 2025 to 31 March 2025.

Agency child and family social worker price caps for each of the five core job types were agreed and set by local authorities at a regional level between June and July 2025. All local authorities should comply with the agreed regional price caps for their region. The first data returns to include price caps are those for Collection 4 (reporting period 1 October 2025 – 31 December 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 statutory guidance 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 annual collection and other data sets. This will enable activities such as equality and diversity monitoring without having to further burden local authorities. Social Work England registration number and registered name will not be shared back with 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 dashboards. Further information on the dashboards is included in the dashboards and data access section.

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, human resources 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.

Each local authority has nominated a lead individual (a single point of contact or SPoC) who will be responsible for the data collection. This person will be DfE's lead contact for communications related to the data collection.

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 worker 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's 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 Advanced 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 Officer (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.

The job mapping exercise has been completed. If a local authority creates new job roles in future, these should be mapped to one of the core job types for data reporting purposes. The job mapping exercise will not need to be completed again and changes to job mapping do not need to be sent to the Department for Education.

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

Job Role	Core Job Type
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
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

Job Role	Core Job Type
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

Job Role	Core Job Type
CSW - Senior Social Work Practitioner	Senior Social Worker
CSW - Senior Social Worker	Senior Social Worker
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

Job Role	Core Job Type
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
CSW - Advanced Practitioner/Practice Manager - Independent Futures	Advanced Practitioner
CSW - Advanced SW Practitioner	Advanced Practitioner
CSW - Assistant Team Manager	Advanced Practitioner

Job Role	Core Job Type
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

Job Role	Core Job Type
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

Data templates

There are two data templates to be completed:

- **an assignments data template** requesting individual level data per agency child and family social worker 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 or other packaged models

Before you start

Ensure you are using the latest version of the data templates. The tables at assignments data template and general data template below contain notes on each data item that explain what data should be entered. Select each cell in the first row of each tab of the data templates to see notes explaining what data should be entered in each column. This is designed to help you make a correct return and view your data accurately in the dashboards.

It is important that you do not change the structure of the templates – for example, by adding new columns, altering the formatting, or entering data that does not follow the input type required for each column, as listed in the first row of each column. This includes columns that require selections from drop-down lists. Doing so increases the risk of your data not uploading correctly, which may require you to resubmit it.

Assignments data template

In the assignments data 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 parts of the general template.

The 'price caps data' tab has been removed from the general data template. The data items previously listed within the 'price caps data' tab are now included within the assignments data template to streamline the submission process for local authorities.

We have also added an expected range to some of the data items (see table below). This is to highlight outliers and support local authorities to check and review their data (see outliers section).

The following information is required.

Data item	Notes on data item	Drop-down lists
Local authority code	For the first assignment, select the relevant local authority code from the drop-down list. For the rest of the assignments, the local authority code will auto-populate once an assignment identifier has been entered. See 'LAs, Codes, Regions' for a list of LAs and corresponding codes.	Local authority codes
Reporting period	For the first assignment, select the reporting period from the drop-down list. For the rest of the assignments, the reporting period will auto-populate once an assignment identifier has been entered.	1 January – 31 March 2025 1 April – 30 June 2025 1July – 30 September 2025 1 October – 31 December 2025 1 January – 31 March 2026 1 April – 30 June 2026 1July – 30 September 2026 1 October – 31 December 2026 1 January – 31 March 2027 1 April – 30 June 2027 1July – 30 September 2027 1 October – 31 December 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 model.	N/A

Data item	Notes on data item	Drop-down lists
Core job type	Select the relevant core job type from the drop-down list. Job roles should have been mapped onto one of the core job types during the initial job mapping exercise. If a worker moves into a role that corresponds to a different core job type, you must mark the original assignment as completed by entering a 'last day on assignment' date and record a new assignment. This would result in one SW having two entries with the same Social Work England registration number and name but different assignment identifiers.	Social Worker Senior Social Worker Advanced Practitioner Team Manager IRO / Conference Chair See job mapping for definitions
Company type: Umbrella, Ltd Company, PAYE	Select whether the worker was/is being paid on an umbrella, limited company, or PAYE basis.	Umbrella Ltd Company PAYE
Hourly pay rate	Record the hourly pay rate for this assignment. This should not include administration fees (such as agency fees), expenses, or other variable fees. Note: If a worker's pay for the same assignment changed during the reporting period, enter the hourly pay rate on record for the last day of the reporting period.	N/A ***Expected range*** *Upper threshold: £70.00*
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

Data item	Notes on data item	Drop-down lists
Assignment start date	Record the start date of the contract, even if the assignment started before the beginning of the quarter you are reporting on.	N/A
Last day on assignment	Record the actual end date of the assignment. This should be the worker's leaving date and might be different to the end date stated in the original contract. Leave blank if the assignment is ongoing.	N/A
Total hours	Record the total hours worked (invoiced) 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.	N/A ***Expected range*** *Lower threshold: 60* *Upper threshold: 650*
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. Note that Social Work England registration number will not be shared back with local authorities.	N/A

Data item	Notes on data item	Drop-down lists
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 assignment. Registration details can be found at www.socialworkengland.org.uk. Note that Social Work England registered name will not be shared back with local authorities.	N/A
Route to market	Select from the drop-down list the route to market you took to recruit for this assignment.	Managed Service Provider (MSP) Local authority trading company (LATC) Direct to Agency Other See below for definitions
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
Assignment type	Select from the drop-down list the assignment type.	Individual Packaged team model – Project team Packaged team model – Managed service team Packaged team model – Other See below for definitions

Data item	Notes on data item	Drop-down lists
Worker references	Select from the drop-down list whether at least two practice-based references were provided to you for the worker contracted to carry out this assignment. Note that references dated on or after the statutory guidance came into effect on 31 October 2024 should follow the standard reference template.	Yes No
Agency name	Record the name of the agency that was part of the supply chain through which the recruitment was secured.	N/A
Pay rate sign-off for assignments where the hourly pay rate exceeds the relevant price cap	For each assignment with an hourly pay rate that exceeds the relevant price cap (ie marked as “Over Cap”), select from the drop-down list the role(s) of the person(s) that signed off on the assignment. Note that the statutory guidance states that both DCS and Chief Executive should sign off all assignments with an hourly pay rate that exceeds the relevant price cap. 'DCS' includes Children's Trusts Directors. Only choose 'other' if the sign-off came solely from someone not in a role equivalent to DCS and/or Chief Executive.	DCS and Chief Executive DCS Chief Executive Other
Reason(s) for exceeding the relevant price cap	For each assignment with an hourly pay rate that exceeds the relevant price cap (ie marked as “Over Cap”), explain why you had to go over the cap. There is a 500-character limit.	N/A

Auto-populated fields	Notes
Local authority name	This field will auto-populate according to the local authority code selected.
Adjusted hourly pay rate	This field will auto-populate 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 adjusted to the Umbrella/Limited Company equivalent by adding a 28.2% uplift. Umbrella and Limited Company hourly pay rates will remain the same. The ‘adjusted hourly pay rate’ conversion formula is used to align PAYE hourly rates to Umbrella/Limited Company hourly rates for illustrative purposes.
Price caps	This field will to auto-populate based on your region and the core job type selected. It will show the regional price cap for the core job type entered.
Over/within cap	This field will auto-populate with either ‘over cap’ or 'within cap' depending on whether the 'adjusted hourly pay rate' is above or equal to/below the relevant price cap.

Company type: Umbrella, Ltd Company, PAYE drop-down options explained

Umbrella

An umbrella company is a business often used by agencies to pay temporary workers. Umbrella companies typically engage workers as employees and are consequently responsible for operating PAYE on workers’ pay.

Ltd Company

In this context, limited company is referring to a personal service company. This is a limited company typically set up by a single agency worker, through which they provide their services.

PAYE

Pay as you earn (PAYE) is HM Revenue and Customs’ (HMRC) system to collect Income Tax and National Insurance from employment.

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

The statutory guidance on local authority engagement of agency child and family social workers states that local authorities should ensure all contracts to supply agency child and family social workers via a project team, managed service team or other packaged model comply with the following requirements:

- prior identification and local authority approval of all constituent child and family social workers
- disaggregation of costs related to the provision of each child and family social worker and any other service provided
- governance arrangements that allow the local authority to maintain complete oversight, control, and management of social work practice delivered via the project team or other packaged model

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 a 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 data 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.

The general data template consists of two tabs: 'general picture data' and 'project teams data'.

You only need to complete the 'project teams data' tab if you had one or more project teams or other packaged models active during the reporting period.

The ‘price caps data’ tab has been removed from the general data template. The data items previously listed within the ‘price caps data’ tab are now included within the assignments data template to streamline the submission process for local authorities.

We have also added an expected range to some of the data items (see table below). This is to highlight outliers and support local authorities to check and review their data (see outliers section).

General picture data

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 relevant quarter for which the data is being reported from the drop-down list.	1 January – 31 March 2025 1 April – 30 June 2025 1July – 30 September 2025 1 October – 31 December 2025 1 January – 31 March 2026 1 April – 30 June 2026 1July – 30 September 2026 1 October – 31 December 2026 1 January – 31 March 2027 1 April – 30 June 2027 1July – 30 September 2027 1 October – 31 December 2027
Local authority full-time weekly working hours	Record the number of hours that constitutes 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. This does not relate to agency workers.	N/A ***Expected range*** *Lower threshold: 30* *Upper threshold: 48*

Data item	Notes on data item	Drop-down lists
Total number of contracted hours for LA-employed social workers	Record the total number of contracted hours for all local authority-employed (substantive) child and family social workers up to team manager or equivalent, including Independent Reviewing Officers and Conference Chairs. This should be the sum of all contracted hours during the reporting period. This does not relate to agency workers.	N/A ***Expected range*** *Lower threshold: 4,000* *Upper threshold: 600,000*
Degree of compliance (per agency 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 agency 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.	N/A
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.	N/A

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

Total number of contracted hours for LA-employed social workers explained

Where your local authority systems are able to generate this figure automatically, you should use the figure given and no additional calculation is needed. However, where this is calculated manually, the following calculation can be used:

LA full-time weekly working hours x *total number of all LA-employed social workers in scope* x *13 (weeks in the reporting period)*

All local authority-employed child and family social workers up to and including team manager or equivalent, including Independent Reviewing Officers and Conference Chairs, are in scope.

If you have local authority-employed child and family social workers who have different full time contracted weekly working hours, this should be calculated separately.

If you have mid-reporting period changes in full-time equivalent (FTE) (e.g. starters and leavers during the reporting period), this should be calculated separately.

Project teams data

To be completed only if you had one or more active project teams, managed service teams or other packaged models during the reporting period.

If you have not had one or more active project teams, managed service teams or other packaged models during the reporting period you must confirm this when submitting your quarterly agency child and family social worker workforce data. When asked whether you are submitting a completed 'project teams data' file, select 'no'.

Data item	Notes on data item	Drop-down lists
Local authority code	For the first assignment, select the relevant local authority code from the drop-down list. For the rest of the assignments, the local authority code will auto-populate once an assignment identifier has been entered. See 'LAs, Codes, Regions' for a list of LAs and corresponding codes.	Local authority codes

Data item	Notes on data item	Drop-down lists
Reporting period	For the first assignment, select the reporting period from the drop-down list. For the rest of the assignments, the reporting period will auto-populate once an assignment identifier has been entered.	1 January – 31 March 2025 1 April – 30 June 2025 1July – 30 September 2025 1 October – 31 December 2025 1 January – 31 March 2026 1 April – 30 June 2026 1July – 30 September 2026 1 October – 31 December 2026 1 January – 31 March 2027 1 April – 30 June 2027 1July – 30 September 2027 1 October – 31 December 2027
Project team/other packaged model identifier	If you had active project teams, managed service teams or other packaged models at any point during the reporting period, enter a project team/managed service team/other packaged model identifier. This should be a single identifier for each project team/managed service team/other packaged model. It 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 within the assignments data template.	N/A
Overall cost of original contract	Record the overall cost of the original contract.	N/A

Data item	Notes on data item	Drop-down lists
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. This should be the overall cost of original contract minus all costs related to social worker pay.	N/A
Overall cost of any and all extensions	Record the overall cost of any and all contract extensions signed by the end of the reporting period.	N/A
Original contract start date	Record the start date of the contract even if that fell in a previous reporting period.	N/A
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.	N/A
Actual contract end date	If the contract was extended, record the actual end date of the contract if the contract came to an end during the reporting period. Leave blank if ongoing.	N/A
Project team/managed service team/other packaged model's social workers' assignment identifiers	For all social workers that were part of the team during the reporting period, record the corresponding assignment identifiers as recorded in the separate 'assignments data' template.	N/A

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

Outliers

To aid data quality and support local authorities to check their data before submitting, the templates and dashboards contain outlier detection.

Outlier values will be detected for the data items set out in the table below, and will be highlighted in the templates and in the dashboards.

Outlier values are defined as values that are outside of the expected ranges. The expected ranges are designed to act as a prompt for further review of outlier values, and have no impact on the validity of your data.

Outlier values will not invalidate your data nor cause a submission to fail. However, please check all outlier values highlighted before submitting.

Template	Data item	Expected range
Assignments	Hourly pay rate	Upper threshold: £70.00
Assignments	Total hours	Lower threshold: 60 Upper threshold: 650
General picture	Local authority full-time weekly working hours	Lower threshold: 30 Upper threshold: 48
General picture	Total number of contracted hours for LA-employed social workers	Lower threshold: 4,000 Upper threshold: 600,000

Data returns

All local authorities must submit quarterly data returns irrespective of whether they had agency child and family social workers on assignment during the reporting period.

Local authorities that had no agency child and family social workers on assignment during the reporting period must submit a nil return.

Local authorities that had agency child and family social workers on assignments during the reporting period must complete the:

- assignments data template
- 'general picture data' tab in the general data template
- 'project teams data' tab in the general data template **if** they had one or more project teams, managed service teams or other packaged models active during the reporting period

The 'price caps data' tab has been removed from the general data template. The data items previously listed within the 'price caps data' tab are now included within the assignments data template to streamline the submission process for local authorities.

If you are working with a managed service provider (MSP) and they are providing the information for this template, it is still the local authority's responsibility to check it and to add any additional assignments, including those that are part of a project team, managed service team or other packaged model. It is the local authority's responsibility to submit the data returns for each reporting period to the Department for Education.

Submitting your returns

Before submitting the templates for the first time, you need to log on to your Department for Education sign-in account (available online at: https://services.signin.education.gov.uk/) and under 'My services' click on 'Add services to my account'. If you have accessed 'Online Collections Service – including Risk Protection Arrangements' previously, under 'My services' click on 'View and edit services on my account'. If you are associated with more than one organisation, you need to then select which organisation you are requesting this service for.

When asked to select a service, select 'Online Collections Service – including Risk Protection Arrangements'. When asked to select a sub-service, select 'Submit your quarterly agency child and family social worker workforce data'.

Once you have submitted the request an email will be sent to your organisation's approver for them to approve the request. If you are unsure who your organisation's

approver is you can find out by selecting ‘Organisations’ from the ribbon and expanding the Show approvers option for the relevant organisation.

Once you have been approved to use this service, you will see ‘Submit your quarterly agency child and family social worker workforce data’ under ‘My services’. After selecting the service, you will be presented with detailed instructions on how to submit your data.

If you experience issues with signing in or adding the service and sub-service to your account, contact the helpdesk support team (available online at: https://help.signin.education.gov.uk/contact-us).

Note that to upload the templates, you will need to save them as CSV files (.csv). Microsoft Excel can’t save multiple tabs in CSV; it will only save the active worksheet. This means that you will need to save all completed worksheets in the ‘general data’ template as CSV files separately. Please save your file as “CSV UTF-8 (Comma delimited) (*.csv)” if you can when exporting from/saving from Excel. This ensures special characters like accented letters display correctly. If this option is not available save as “CSV (Comma delimited) (*.csv)”

You may also find it helpful to add to your filename “assignment” “gen picture” “project team” and “csv” and the reporting period when you save your files. This will help you locate the correct file when you are asked to submit each file. It will also make it easier to make sense of any errors that show in your LA dashboard.

Please avoid inputting the following special characters into the filename:

Special character name	Special character
Tilde	~
Number sign	#
Percent	%
Ampersand	&
Asterisk	*
Colon	:
Semicolon	;
Brackets	( )
Angle brackets	< >
Question mark	?
Slash	/

Special character name	Special character
Plus sign	+
Pipe	|
Quotation mark	"
Apostrophe	’
Braces	{ }
Backslash	\

Submitting a nil return

If you had no agency child and family social workers during the reporting period, you still need to make a submission. However, you do not need to complete or submit either of the templates as you will have the option to submit a nil response.

You need to log on to your Department for Education sign-in account and submit a return following the instructions above. When asked whether you are submitting a nil return, select ‘yes’ and submit your return.

After submitting your data

After submitting your data, you will receive an email confirmation with a reference number, which will begin “AF” followed by a number. Please quote this reference number in any communication with the DfE about your data. Your submitted data should be available to check in your LA dashboard within 24 hours.

Please check your LA dashboard for any errors, omissions, or outliers. If any issues are found, make corrections and resubmit the relevant file.

The benchmarking dashboard will be available once each collection window closes.

Report an issue

You can report an issue on the DfE customer help portal (available online at: https://customerhelpportal.education.gov.uk/) if you are struggling to submit your data. Where you have received an email from DfE please include the reference number, which will begin “AF” followed by a number, in your support request.

To do this, log in and select ‘DfE returns and data requests’ then ‘other'.

Dashboards and data access

To view the dashboards relevant to you, you need to log on to your Department for Education sign-in account (available online at: https://services.signin.education.gov.uk/) and under ‘My services’ click on ‘Add services to my account’. If you have accessed VYED previously you should choose ‘View and edit services on my account’.

If you are associated with more than one organisation (for example, you are associated with a local authority and you are also associated with a RIIA), you need to then select which organisation you are requesting this service for.

When asked to select a service, select ‘View your education data (VYED)’. When asked to select a sub-service, select ‘Agency child and family social worker workforce data’.

Once you have submitted the request an email will be sent to your organisation’s approver for them to approve the request. If you are unsure who your organisation’s approver is you can find out by selecting ‘Organisations’ from the ribbon and expanding the Show approvers option for the relevant organisation.

Once you have been approved to use this service, you will see ‘View your agency child and family social worker workforce data’ under ‘My services’.

If you experience issues with signing in or adding the service and sub-service to your account, contact the helpdesk support team (available online at: https://help.signin.education.gov.uk/contact-us).

The data is being shared for purpose of helping local authorities and their RIIAs to better understand the agency market and work together to manage it, thus improving social worker stability for children, and lowering agency costs. It should not be accessed or used for any other purposes.

Dashboard development

The dashboards will be iterated over time in response to user testing and feedback. We will collaborate with local authorities and RIIAs to improve functionality.

Local authority dashboard

Each local authority has access to their local authority’s dashboard containing the full set of quarterly data submitted via approved representatives (except for Worker's Social Work England registration number and Worker's Social Work England registered name). The data is in table format.

You should check your local authority dashboard for any errors, omissions, or outliers in your data. If any issues are identified, you should resubmit the relevant data file (only possible for current and previous reporting period during any submission window). Your data will be available to download.

Benchmarking dashboard

The benchmarking dashboard includes aggregate data and is accessible to all local authorities via representatives they approve.

This dashboard presents national, regional, and local authority aggregate data. It enables you to compare aggregate data for your local authority with regional and national averages, as well as with aggregate data for other local authorities within your region, and local authorities with similar characteristics or across geographical boundaries.

RIIA dashboard

Each Regional Improvement and Innovation Alliance (RIIA) will have access to the same benchmarking data that local authorities can access.

Each RIIA also has access to their own RIIA dashboard which presents further aggregate data. It will only display data for the LAs within that region.

RIIAs will not have access to the local authority dashboard unless they have been approved by a particular local authority.

Price caps

Agency child and family social worker price caps have been agreed and set by local authorities at a regional level. All local authorities should comply with the agreed regional price caps for their region.

Price caps determine the maximum hourly rate a local authority should pay for an agency child and family social worker and are set against the following five core job types:

- Social Worker
- Senior Social Worker
- Advanced Practitioner
- Team Manager
- Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) / Conference Chair

Price caps should be applied to all contracts to supply agency child and family social workers to a local authority, including via a project team or other packaged model.

The price caps are based on Umbrella/Limited Company hourly pay rates, which are inclusive of employers' national insurance contributions and holiday pay, and are converted for the PAYE equivalent candidates.

In the ‘assignments data’ template, you will be asked to add the hourly pay rate for each assignment and specify whether the worker was paid on a PAYE, Limited Company, or Umbrella Company basis. The corresponding ‘adjusted hourly pay rate’ field will auto-populate as follows: PAYE pay rates will be automatically adjusted to the Umbrella/Limited Company equivalent by adding an illustrative 28.2% uplift; Umbrella and Limited Company hourly pay rates will remain the same.

The ‘adjusted hourly pay rate’ conversion formula is used to align PAYE hourly rates to Umbrella/Limited Company hourly rates for illustrative purposes.

Price caps should not include administration fees (such as agency or managed service providers’ fees), expenses, or other variable fees.

Implementing price caps

From 1 October 2025, hourly pay rates for all assignments should not exceed the relevant price cap.

The agreed regional price caps will be added to the updated data templates for Collection 4 (reporting period 1 October 2025 – 31 December 2025).

Local authorities are expected to reach agreement over their price caps. However, in cases where a consensus is not reached, the price caps submitted by the majority of local authorities in each region have been adopted and should be complied with by all local authorities within the region.

All assignments at hourly rates above the price caps should be signed off by the relevant local authority's Director of Children's Services (DCS) and Chief Executive (or Children's Trust equivalent) prior to the assignment being agreed. Local authorities should work within their regions to agree any additional, region-wide governance processes.

All cases where the hourly pay rate is higher than the price cap will be flagged in the agency data collection and will be part of benchmarking data available to LAs and RIIAs. Information on sign-off and reasons for exceeding the price cap is required.

In implementing their price caps, local authorities need to be aware of their legal obligations under the Agency Workers Regulations 2010.[1] This includes ensuring that an agency worker that has completed their qualifying period (as set out in those Regulations) in the same role with the same hirer receives the same basic working and employment conditions, including aspects of pay and annual leave, as a direct recruit.

Setting and reviewing regional price caps

Price caps represent the maximum hourly rate that local authorities should pay for an agency child and family social worker and should not be interpreted as the standard or default rate. If offering a worker the maximum rate, consider that this will mean that small increases in employer costs may then be challenging to absorb within the cap and that it may be helpful to factor in a margin of tolerance when setting your price caps.

Following a review process conducted in June/July 2026, all regions have confirmed that they will keep their existing regional price caps, with no changes.

The next opportunity to review and update price caps will be in June 2027.

For a full list of local authorities by region, see Appendix D.

[1] *The Agency Workers Regulations 2010* (SI 2010/93). https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/93 (Accessed September 2024).

Regional price caps per core job type

Based on Umbrella/Limited Company hourly pay rates:

Region	Social Worker	Senior Social Worker	Advanced Practitioner	Team Manager	IRO / Conference Chair
East Midlands	£36.00	£38.00	£40.00	£45.00	£45.00
East of England	£39.00	£40.50	£42.50	£45.50	£45.50
Greater London	£37.52	£39.04	£41.10	£45.20	£45.20
North East	£31.58	£36.04	£38.89	£41.21	£38.89
North West	£39.00	£40.00	£40.00	£46.00	£40.00
South East	£38.00	£42.00	£42.00	£47.50	£47.50
South West	£38.00	£42.00	£42.00	£47.50	£47.50
West Midlands	£28.55	£30.57	£33.30	£41.42	£38.00
Yorkshire and Humber	£30.00	£35.00	£37.00	£40.00	£40.00

Appendix A: Local authority codes

Please refer to the Common Basic Data Set (CBDS) for a full list of LA names and codes.

The following local authorities should submit a combined return:

Local authority	Submit as
314 - Kingston upon Thames	314 - Kingston upon Thames
318 - Richmond upon Thames	314 - Kingston upon Thames
940 - North Northamptonshire	941 - West Northamptonshire
941 - West Northamptonshire	941 - West Northamptonshire

Appendix B: Rationale

Data item	Rationale
Local authority code	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
Umbrella, Ltd Company, PAYE	Allows for the calculation of consistent and comparable hourly pay rates
Hourly pay rate	Allows for a better understanding of the market and will inform the development and monitoring of price caps
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 agency workforce turnover
Last day on assignment	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.
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.
Route to market	Allows for a better understanding of how local authorities recruit their agency workforce and whether it affects agency costs

Data item	Rationale
On/off framework	Allows for a better understanding of framework usage and how it relates to 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
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 contracted hours for 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
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
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
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
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

Data item	Rationale
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
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 supplied by an Employment Agency or Employment Business to perform work or services for a local authority but is not in direct employment with that local authority, and includes those who are employed or contracted by the Agency (either directly or through one or more intermediaries).
Alternative Delivery Models	Where the delivery of children's services is outsourced to a Trust or not-for-profit organisation that is separate from, but accountable to, the 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 child and family social 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 35*ff.* 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.
Independent social worker	An Independent Social Worker takes on cases from local authorities or the children's courts, carrying out specialist assessments or providing an expert opinion where one is required.
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.

Term	Definition
Local authority region	Nine regions in England comprising multiple local authorities in a geographical area. These were established across England in 1994 as the nine Government Offices for the Regions (GOR) 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'.[2] 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.
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.
Partnership based models	Where a single leadership team oversees delivery of children's services across two or more local authorities.
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.
Procurement Rules	Statutory provisions that central government and wider public sector bodies must follow above set financial thresholds, when acquiring goods, services or works. They include, insofar as either are applicable, the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and the Procurement Act 2023 once in force.

[2] Office for National Statistics. *Administrative geographies: England*. https://www.ons.gov.uk/methodology/geography/ukgeographies/administrativegeography/england#regions (Accessed September 2024).

Term	Definition
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 necessarily comprising the same individuals at all times, to provide relevant social care services to local authorities. 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.
Regional Improvement and Innovation Alliances (RIIAs)	Regional Improvement and Innovation Alliances (RIIAs) are a key resource for accessing improvement support. Each RIIA 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 for Education

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