



Department  
for Education

# Changes to children's social care returns for 2013-14

## Letter to information contacts in England

Enquiries to the Data Collection Helpdesk

Please use the [Service Request Form](#)

28 September 2012

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# Changes to children's social care returns for 2013-14

Dear Colleague

This letter relates to children's social care returns which are the responsibility of the Department for Education. It provides six months advance notice of changes, including reductions, to existing data collections that local authorities will need to action from April 2013.

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

This letter provides the following information:

- Overview of changes and additions to data collections for 2013-14
- Reminder of agreed changes to the 2012-13 data collections
- Update on changes to the Children Looked After (CLA) data collection system
- Sharing of matched data with local authorities
- Other important information
- Annex 1 provides a quick summary guide of all changes for 2012-13 and 2013-14.

## Overview of changes and additions to data collections for 2013-14:

### Children Looked After (SSDA903)

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

- Position at 16 - this change was discussed at the July Star Chamber meeting and it was agreed data items on 'position at 16' which are collected for those looked after continuously for 12 months can be dropped (child eligible for GCSE examinations, activity at age 16 or over). Due to the timings of this suggestion and changes which may be required to local authority systems, this change will be made formally from 2013-14, however these data items are voluntary for the 2012-13 return.
- Care leavers information - the information currently collected about care leavers (OC3 data/19th birthday), will be extended to cover the cohort of children who local authorities are required to support under the new 'Duty of Personal Advisor' and that data will be collected at more points in time – 19th, 20th and 21st birthdays rather than just 19th birthdays. The type and format of data collected will remain as it currently is with some small changes to code sets. A full code set for these data items and definition of the cohort can be found within annex 2.
- Adoption breakdown - three new data items will be introduced to inform the policy area on adoptions which break down. For children entering care we shall collect whether the child has previously been adopted or left care for special guardianship

or residence order and, if so, the date and local authority who made the arrangements.

- Local authority of placement - information on the local authority of placement will be extended; currently is it collected for all children looked after at 31 March only, but it will be collected for all placements. This information will be collected as the postcode of placement which will be converted into the local authority of placement in the same way as is currently done for those looked after at 31 March. In doing this, we shall also drop the data item for placement location (inside/outside local authority boundary) which is currently collected for all placements.

## Children In Need (CIN)

There will be three new data items introduced to the Children in Need census for 2013-14. These are:

- Source of referral – For each new referral from 1 April 2013 onwards, the source of the referral should be recorded. See guidance notes for list of codes.
- Factors identified at the end of assessment – For assessments completed from 1 April 2013 onwards, all factors identified at the end of the assessment should be reported. These include factors relevant to the child's health and development, the parent/carer's capacity to respond to the child's needs, other people living in the household and family or environmental factors affecting the child's development.
- Interaction with lead social worker – For all child protection plans open from 1 April 2013 onwards, this flag must be completed to signify if the child has been seen by the lead social worker, within the timescales specified within the plan.

In addition to these three data items, we may need to make changes to the information collected on assessments depending upon the [outcome of the recent consultation](#) and any subsequent changes made to the statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children. If the decision is made to change statutory guidance regarding assessments, then this change will be reflected in the 2013-14 data collection. The [2013-14 CIN collection](#) guidance and specification will be issued in early October 2012 and will contain provisional additional information on how we would propose to collect information on assessments should this change be made.

## Private Fostering

There are no changes planned for the 2013-14 Private Fostering return. We have clarified the guidance relating to notifications under Regulations 3 and 5, and visits undertaken in accordance with Regulations 4 and 7 of the Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005. Updated guidance will be available on the web during October.

## Quarterly adoptions survey

We will again be asking LAs to complete the voluntary quarterly survey of adoption and adopters in 2013-14. As in 2012-13, we will collect returns at the end of each quarter, in July and October 2013 and in January and April 2014.

More [information about the adoption data collection](#) is available on our website.

## Changes to the 2012-13 data collections

### Children Looked After (SSDA903)

Changes to the SSDA903 for 2012-13 were announced last year and this return should be submitted to DfE by 31 May 2013.

### Children in Need (CIN)

As previously announced, the 2012-13 CIN census includes some small changes to the assessment start dates:

Actual start dates are now collected for initial and core assessments and section 47 enquiries. In previous collections the effective start date ('day 0') was collected for initial and core assessments.

Assessment end dates collected are the dates the assessment has been signed off and authorised by a manager. Although this is not a change in content of the data collected in previous years, the data item name has been amended to more clearly reflect its content.

Please refer to [version 1.4 of the specification](#) which reflects the changes made to the baseline version.

This return should be submitted to DfE by 31 July 2013.

### Children's Social Care Workforce collection

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

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

We will be collecting data for the year ending 30 September 2013 and returns should be submitted to DfE by 30 November 2013. A full code set for the data items can be found within annex 3.

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

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

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

Local authorities have until Friday 12 October 2012 to complete their return. Further [information about the return requirements and the support available](#) is on the Skills for Care website.:

## **Quarterly adoption survey**

The second voluntary quarterly survey on adoption and adopters is now underway covering quarter two of 2012-13, i.e. July to September 2012. Local authorities have until Friday 12 October 2012 to submit their return. Data for quarter three (October to December) will be collected in January 2013 and data for quarter four (January to March) will be collected in April 2013.

## **Changes to the CLA data collection system**

In last year's equivalent of this letter to local authority data contacts, we stated that we had received approval to scope requirements regarding a new Children Looked After data collection system. Whilst improvements could be made, it was felt that the current system was fit for purpose at the moment, although discussions are still on-going about longer term approaches to data collection. Therefore it is not expected that a new system will be developed in time for the 2012-13 CLA collection.

## **Sharing of matched data with local authorities**

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

In December 2011 we arranged for a range of information on the outcomes of looked after children to be shared with local authorities from our matched CLA-NPD data source via the Key to Success system. We shall continue with this process for 2012 data to improve transparency and help local authorities understand the data we publish on attainment and other outcomes for looked after children. This matched data will contain

attainment information as well as absence, exclusions and characteristics information from the School Census matched to data on looked after children collected via the SSDA903.

In spring 2012 we released information direct to local authorities resulting from the matching of the 2010-11 CIN census with the NPD. This included some information on outcomes of CIN (for example Key Stage 2 (KS2) and Key Stage 4 (KS4) attainment, progression between KS2 and KS4) and also information on the characteristics of CIN (for example, special educational needs status, free school meal prevalence, absence and exclusions). Similar information from the 2011-12 CIN census will again be provided to local authorities in spring 2013.

## **Other important information**

### **Guidance notes and Technical Specification**

[Guidance notes and specifications for all these returns](#) can be found on our Children's statistical returns home page at:

### **Published data**

Information published from 2011-12 collections is available as follows:

[Private Fostering Arrangements in England, year ending 31 March 2012](#) was released on 24 July 2012 and can be found at:

[Children Looked After by Local Authorities in England \(including adoption and care leavers\) - year ending 31 March 2012](#) was released on 25 September.

Characteristics of Children in Need in England, 2011-12, will be released on 31 October and will be available on the [DfE Research and Statistics gateway](#):

Many thanks for your continued hard work in this area, and should you have any questions about the changes highlighted above please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Yours faithfully

Iain Bradley  
Head of Customer Services  
Data and Statistics Division

## Annex 1

Collection name	Time period covered	Period collected	Summary of changes for 2012-13	Summary of changes for 2013-14
Children Looked After (SSDA903)	April – March	April – June	<p>Change of age criteria for UPN field, now required for all children of school age rather than those aged 6 and above.</p> <p>Position at 16 data items made voluntary</p>	<p>Extension of data collected for care leavers.</p> <p>Addition of data items for children returning to care following adoption breakdown.</p> <p>LA of placement field to be extended to cover all placements rather than those at 31 March only.</p> <p>Position at 16 data items no longer collected.</p>
Children in Need (CIN)	April – March	April – July	Change to collect actual assessment start dates rather than effective start dates ('day 0').	<p>Collection of reason for referral for new referrals.</p> <p>Flag to identify if a child on a child protection plan has been seen.</p> <p>Collection of information on factors affecting the child, identified at the assessment</p>
Private Fostering	April – March	April – May		
Quarterly adoption survey	Quarters (April – June; July – Sept; Oct – Dec; Jan – Mar)	July, Oct. Jan, April		
Children's Social Care Workforce	Oct – Sept	Oct	Smaller set of information now collected on a statutory basis.	

## **Annex 2: Further detail of changes to SSDA903 return in 2013-14**

### **Care Leavers information**

#### **Previous cohort definition (as used in the 2012 SSDA903 collection)**

These data items should be completed in respect of all young people, who were formerly looked after by your local authority, and who fall within the following definition:

All young people who: were being looked after on 1 April 2009 under any legal status other than V3 or V4 and whose date of birth fell between 1 April 1992 and 31 March 1993

An alternative way of describing this group would be to say 'all those who were looked after on 1 April in their 17<sup>th</sup> year with a standard (i.e. non-respite) legal status'. This group, by definition, will then include all those who were either aged 16, or had reached their 17<sup>th</sup> birthday, on 1 April 2009. When this cohort reaches their 19<sup>th</sup> year, they then constitute the group for whom data are required.

#### **New cohort definition**

These data items should be completed for all young people who are eligible for care leaver support and whose 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> or 21<sup>st</sup> birthday falls within the collection period. For the 2013-14 collection, this therefore covers young people whose date of birth fell between 1 April 1992 and 31 March 1995.

Young people are eligible for care leaver support if they have been looked after for a total of 13 weeks after their 14<sup>th</sup> birthday, including at least some time after their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday. It is possible for the 13 week period to be made up of a number of separate periods.

Therefore if a 17 year old becomes looked after and accrues 13 weeks then he/she would be included in the cohort. However, a young person who accrues 13 weeks but leaves care before age 16 would not be included. A young person who became looked after aged under 14 and was last looked after aged at least 16, would be included so long as they were looked after for at least 13 weeks after turning 14. A young person who spent exactly 13 weeks being looked after in total and left care aged 16 or 17 would not be included if some of the 13 weeks took place before they turned 14.

(See 'Supplementary Information' for a more detailed description of category of an eligible child, as well as the categories of relevant, former relevant and qualifying for advice and assistance.)

## **Codesets for main activity, accommodation, suitability of accommodation and in touch**

The main activity, accommodation and suitability of accommodation codesets will be the same as the previous codesets. As in previous years, information should be collected within the timeframe of 3 months before and one month after the young person's birthday. If the local authority is in contact more than once during the relevant 4 months around the child's birthday as described above, the most up to date information on the last occasion of contact should be recorded for activity and accommodation.

The in touch codeset will be amended to include codes for young people who have been deported and young people who have refused or who no longer require services. The validation across "in touch" and activity and accommodation will be relaxed so that LAs can record known activity and accommodation of young people with whom they are not formally in touch.

### **Codeset for Main Activity**

F1	Young person engaged full time in higher education (i.e. studies beyond A level)
P1	Young person engaged part time in higher education (i.e. studies beyond A level)
F2	Young person engaged full time in education other than higher education
P2	Young person engaged part time in education other than higher education
F3	Young person engaged full time in training or employment
P3	Young person engaged part time in training or employment
G4	Young person not in education, employment or training because of illness or disability
G6	Young person not in education, employment or training due to pregnancy or parenting
G5	Young person not in education, employment or training: other circumstances

### Codeset for type of accommodation

B	With parents or relatives
C	Community home or other form of residential care such as an NHS establishment
D	Semi-independent, transitional accommodation (e.g. supported hostel, trainer flats); self-contained accommodation with specialist personal assistance support (e.g. for young people with disabilities, pregnant young women and single parents); and self-contained accommodation with floating support.
E	Supported lodgings (accommodation, usually in a family home, where adults in the “host family” provide formal advice and support).
G	Gone abroad
H	Deported
K	Ordinary lodgings, without formal support.
R	Residence not known
S	No fixed abode / homeless
T	Foyers and similar supported accommodation which combines the accommodation with opportunities for education, training or employment.
U	Independent living, e.g. independent tenancy of flat, house or bedsit, including local authority or housing association tenancy, or accommodation provided by a college or university. Includes flat sharing.
V	Emergency accommodation (e.g. night shelter, direct access, emergency hostel)
W	Bed and breakfast
X	In custody
Y	Other accommodation
Z	With former foster carers - where the young person has been fostered and on turning 18 continues to remain with the same carer who had fostered them immediately prior to their reaching legal adulthood, and where the plan for their care involves their remaining with this former foster family for the future.

### Codeset for suitability of accommodation

1	Accommodation is considered suitable
2	Accommodation is considered unsuitable

### Codeset for “In Touch”

YES	Yes
NO	No
DIED	Died after leaving care
REFU	Young person refuses contact
NREQ	Young person no longer requires services

Note, if the young person died after their birthday in the latest year, the information as at their birthday should be provided including whether they were in touch or not at that point.

### Supplementary information

#### Categories of Young People Eligible for Leaving Care Services and Support

Eligible children: [paragraph 19B(2) of Schedule 2 to the Children Act 1989 and Regulation 40 of the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010]

- An eligible child is a young person aged 16 or 17 who is looked after and has been looked after for at least 13 weeks which began after they reached the age of 14 and ended after they reached the age of 16. [Can become an eligible child at any point from 16th to 18th birthday as long as they have completed 13 weeks] [must complete 24 hours looked after age 16/17]
- The 13 weeks can be continuous period or a series of episodes.
- In calculating the 13 weeks no account is taken of pre-planned short breaks amounting to no more than 4 weeks and where a child returns to their parent, or someone with parental responsibility.

Relevant children: [Section 23A(2) ]

- A relevant child is a young person aged 16 or 17 who was an ‘eligible’ child’ but is no longer looked after.
- Additional relevant children:
  - Detained, or in hospital on 16th birthday, and
  - Looked after for at least 13 weeks which began after they reached age 14 and looked after at point of being detained, or entering hospital.
- In calculating the 13 weeks no account is taken of pre-planned short breaks amounting to no more than 4 weeks and where a child returns to their parent, or someone with parental responsibility.
- A child who has lived with someone who has parental responsibility or a residence order for a continuous period of 6 months or more, and has ceased

to be looked after (whether that period commenced before or after they ceased to be looked after) is not deemed a Relevant child (but is deemed a qualifying child).

- If the above arrangement breaks down and the child ceases to live with the person concerned, the child becomes a relevant child.

Former Relevant children (age 18 to 21, or, until the education or training programme set out in the pathway plan and being undertaken on their 21st birthday is completed): [Section 23C (1), (6) and (7)]

- A young person who was previously an 'eligible' child or a 'relevant' child

Former Relevant children (age 21, and under 25) [Section 23CA (1)]

- Young people who inform the local authority that they want to pursue education or training between the age of 21 and 25 and where previously a former relevant child.

Persons Qualifying for Advice and Assistance (aged 16 to 21, and under certain circumstances aged under 25)

- Young people aged at least 16, and under 21 who were subject to a special guardianship order and were looked after before the making of that order
- Young people who were previously subject to a private fostering arrangement
- Young people who successfully returned home for six months (aged 16/17) and were previously eligible and/or relevant
- Young people who were looked after for less than 13 weeks between the age of 14 to 18, but were looked after for at least 24 hours aged 16 and 17
- Young people aged 16, and under 21 who were looked after in a series of pre-planned short breaks.

## **Annex 3: Further detail of Children's Social Care Workforce collection 2012-13**

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

### **Vacancy rate of social workers**

To be calculated from:

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

### **Turnover rate of social workers**

To be calculated from:

- Total number of starters (FTE) in the year ending 30 September 2013
- Total number of leavers (FTE) in the year ending 30 September 2013

### **Sickness absence of social workers**

To be calculated from:

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

### **Percentage of agency workers**

To be calculated from:

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