

## **ADCS DCS Update: Annual Report 2022/23**

### **Introduction**

As at 31 March 2023 there were 152 upper tier local authorities (LAs) in England. Current legislation requires each of these LAs to appoint a director of children's services (DCS). Due to the statutory nature of the post, there must always be a named DCS which results, on occasion, in short-term interim arrangements taking place when a serving post-holder leaves. The chief executives of Trust/ADM arrangements are equivalent to DCSs in terms of ADCS membership, however, we do not refer to a Trust as being a separate local authority for the purpose of this report.

ADCS has gathered and recorded detailed information about changes in post-holders of the statutory DCS role since the Association was established in 2007. We also record the number of directors who hold both statutory roles of DCS and DASS (referred to in this report as 'twin hat').

The analysis that follows focusses on the ADCS membership year from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023. It also offers some year-on-year comparisons, several of which date back to 2007, to highlight trends over time and patterns of change.

### **Headlines**

- 21 new permanent DCSs appointed in 2022/23
- Average length of time served as a DCS, when factoring in cumulative time spent in multiple LAs as a DCS, is more than 4 years
- As at 31 March 2023, 98 LAs had a female DCSs, 54 LAs had a male DCS
- "Twin hat" directors down to just 17
- 18 interim DCSs in post as of 31 March 2023
- 42 LAs have experienced changes in DCS across the reporting period
- 50 DCS changes in total (including all interim appointments).

### **DCS Changes**

During 2022/23, there were 50 changes in DCS post-holder in total, which includes a number of brief interim appointments prior to substantive appointments. The changes have taken place across 42 LAs – this means that around three quarters of LAs (110 / 72%) have not experienced a change in the DCS post holder across the reporting period.

Of the 50 changes:

- 21 were new permanent DCS appointments:
  - 10 were from assistant director/second tier level from the same LA
  - 9 were from assistant director/second tier level from another LA
  - 1 saw the existing DASS take on the DCS role
  - 1 other appointment
- 21 were interim appointments
  - 10 were filled by assistant directors from the same LA
  - 1 was filled by assistant directors from another LA
  - 2 were filled by DCSs moving from a permanent to an interim DCS role
  - 5 were filled by other former DCSs
  - 2 were filled by the DASS from the same LA

- 1 was filled by the Chief Executive holding the statutory DCS role
- 6 DCSs have moved post from one LA to another during 2022/23
- 2 former DCSs returned to permanent DCS role.

The total of 50 changes is slightly above the average number of total changes in DCS post-holder per year (currently 48). The lowest number of total changes was in 2007/08 with 30 changes; the highest number took place in 2017/18 with 65 changes.

21 new permanent appointments took place during 2022/23. The lowest number of such appointments took place in 2020/21 with 12; the highest was 27 in 2017/18. The average number of new permanent appointments per year is currently 21.

The 50 changes have taken place across 42 LAs. 8 LAs have experienced 2 DCS changes, largely due to short-term interim arrangements being made prior to a permanent appointment.

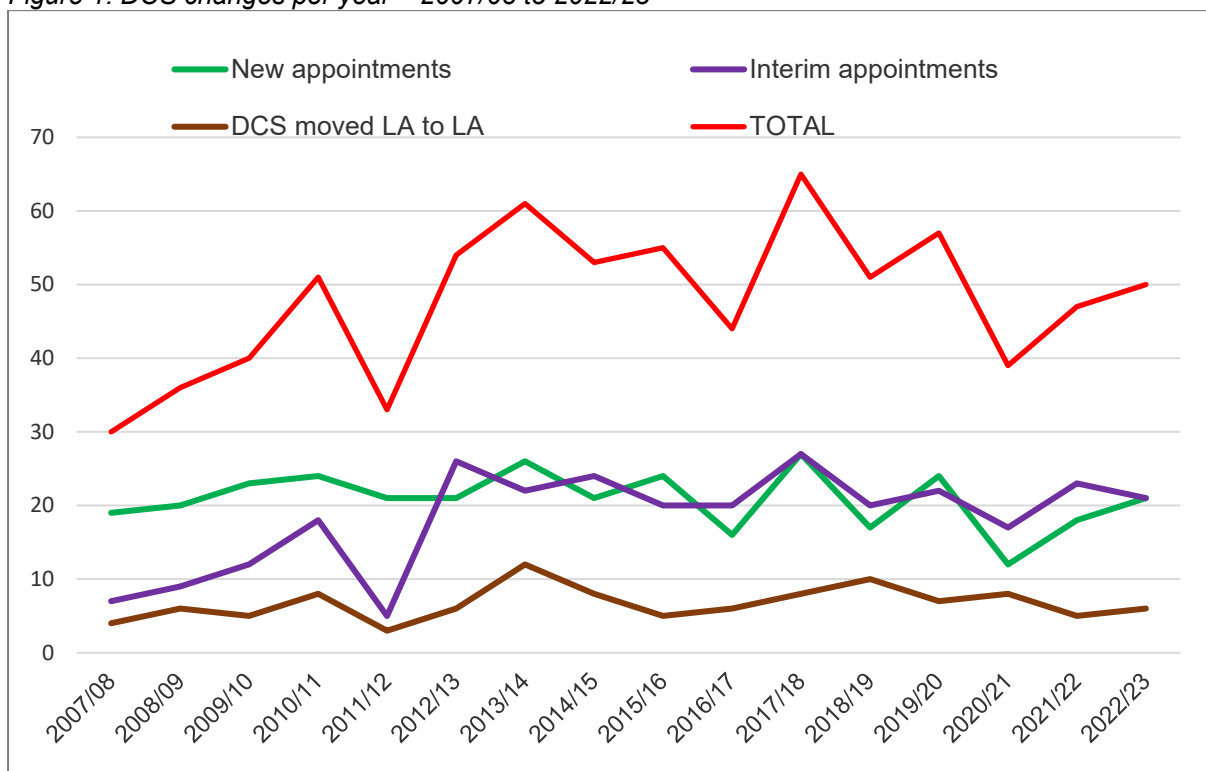
The average number of interim appointments per year is 18. The majority have been short-term appointments pending a permanent appointment being made and have been filled, in the main, by former substantive DCSs or assistant director/ second tier level officers. A total of 21 interim appointments occurred during 2022/23.

As of 31 March 2023, there were 16 interim DCSs in post, all bar one in DCS only posts. 9 of the current interim directors have previously been a DCS in another LA. 13 of the 16 interims have been in post for 6 months or less.

During 2022/23, 6 interim post-holders subsequently became permanent appointees in the same LA.

Figure 1 provides an illustration of the trends in DCS change since ADCS was established in 2007.

Figure 1. DCS changes per year – 2007/08 to 2022/23



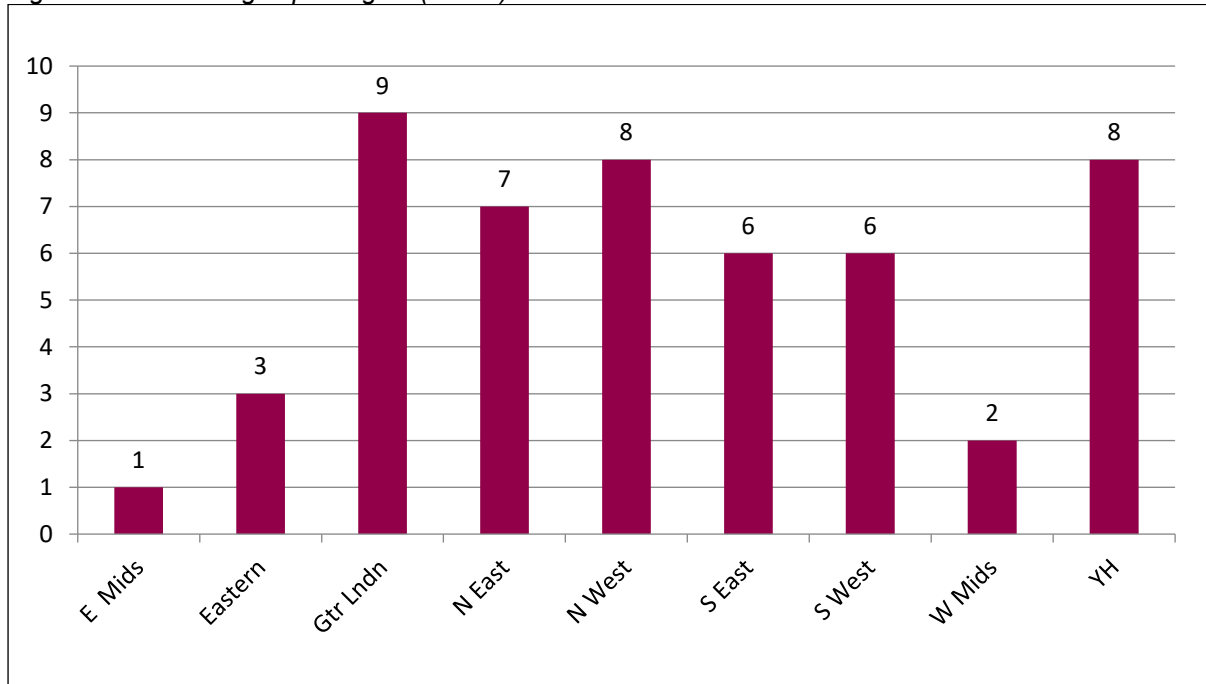
## DCS changes per region

The number of changes in DCS post-holders from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 by region is illustrated in Figures 2 and 3.

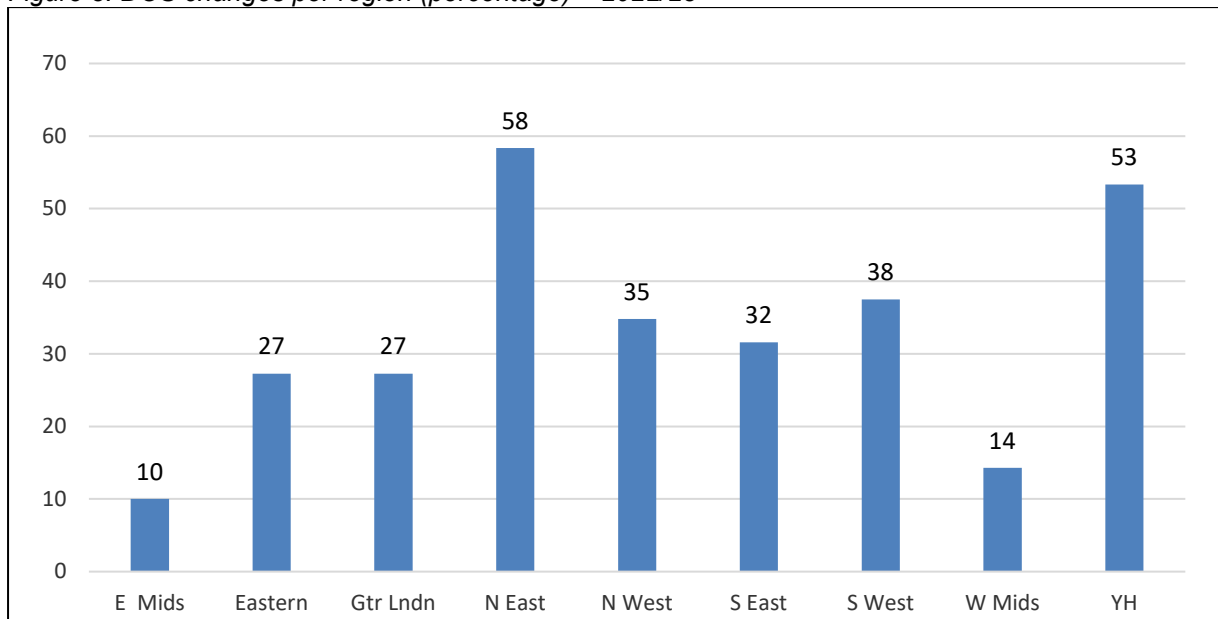
Figure 2 shows the actual number of changes, whilst Figure 3 reflects the changes per region as a percentage to account for the differing number of LAs per region.

The 7 changes in the North East region equates to nearly 58% change, although it must be noted that one LA experienced 2 changes which inflates the percentage due to the low number of LAs in the region. Similarly, the Yorkshire & Humber region had 2 LAs each experiencing 2 changes, again inflating the percentage figure somewhat.

*Figure 2. DCS changes per region (actual) – 2022/23*



*Figure 3. DCS changes per region (percentage) – 2022/23*



## Areas of responsibility

As of 31 March 2023, there were 17 'twin hat' directors – the lowest number since 2010. Figure 4 illustrates the downward trend of LAs with 'twin hat' directors since the peak in 2015. There are also a number of LAs where the director has overall responsibility for children and adult services but does not also hold the statutory duty for adult services. For the purposes of this report these arrangements are not considered 'twin hat'. ADCS understands there are currently 5 LAs with this arrangement.

Figure 4. Total number of 'twin hatters' – by year (as at 31 March respectively)

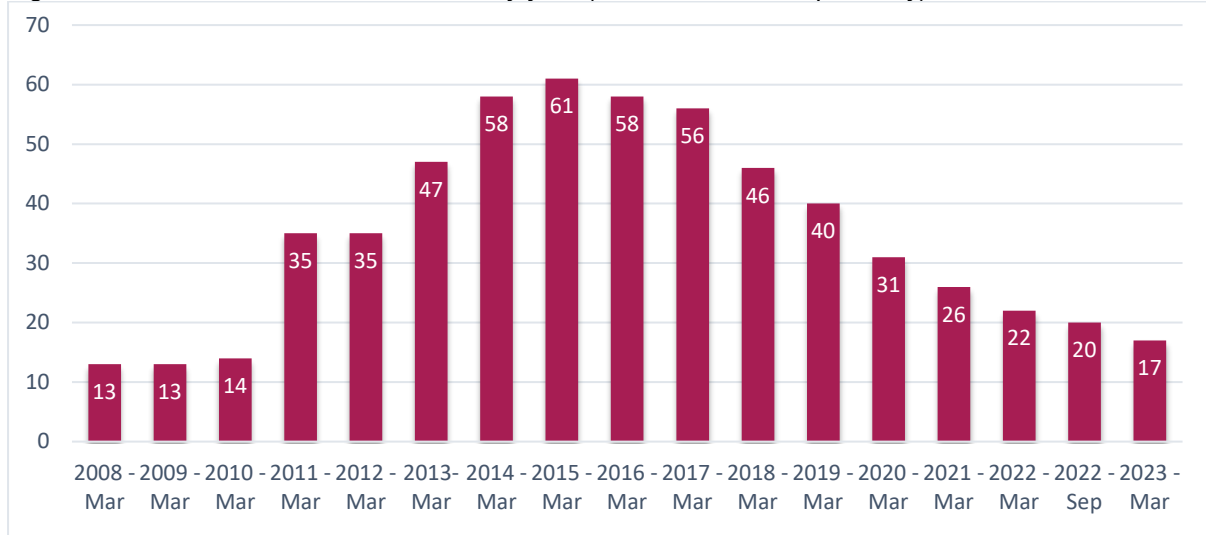
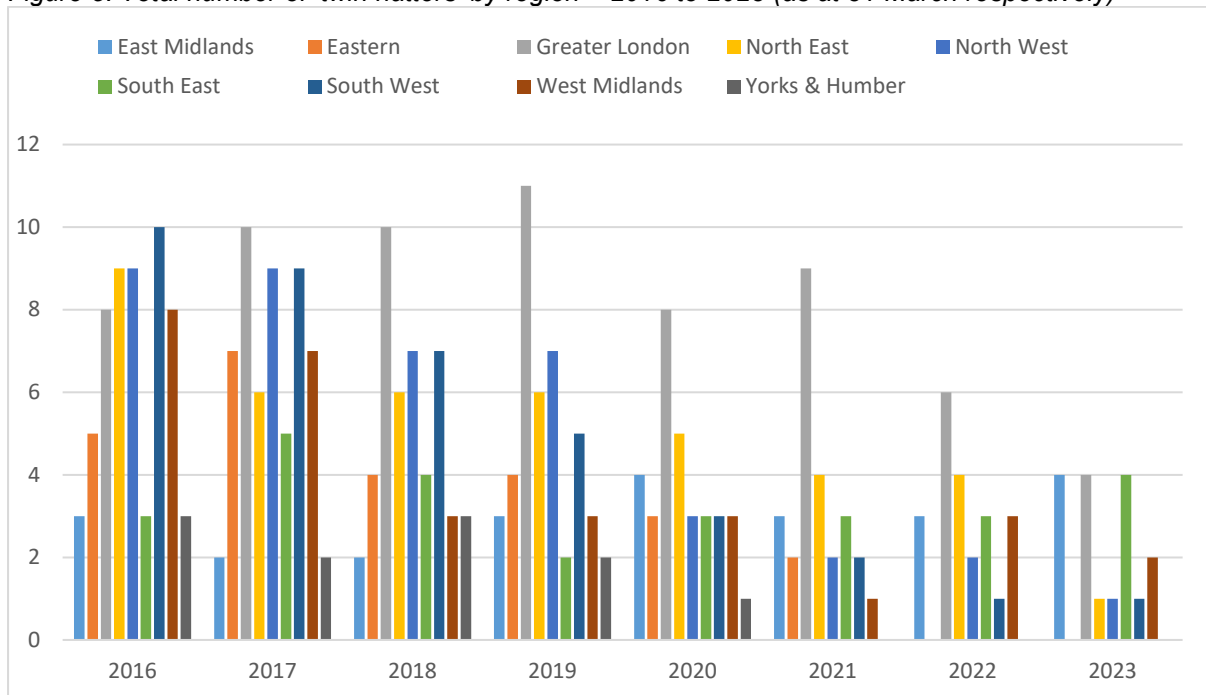


Figure 5 illustrates the decline in twin hatters per region. Both the Eastern and Yorkshire & Humber regions had no twin hat directors in post as of 31 March 2023. The downward trend is again notable on a regional level with only the East Midlands and South East showing a slight increase in numbers.

Figure 5. Total number of 'twin hatters' by region – 2016 to 2023 (as at 31 March respectively)

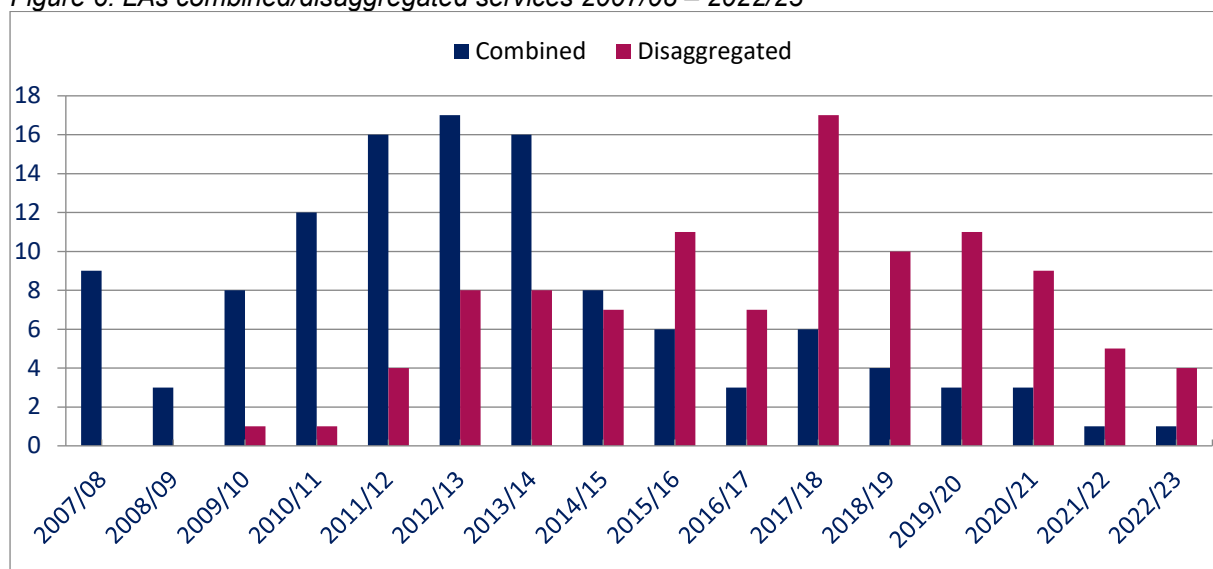


## Combined and disaggregated services

Between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023, 4 LAs disaggregated services, whilst just one area combined the children and adults director role during this period. From 1 April 2023, local government reorganisation took place in Cumbria forming two unitary Councils, Cumberland Council and Westmorland and Furness Council. Both areas have separate children and adult directors therefore the total number of twin-hatters from April 2023 will be down to 16.

Figure 6 illustrates the increasing trend in disaggregating services, coupled with low numbers of LAs combining services.

Figure 6. LAs combined/disaggregated services 2007/08 – 2022/23



## Time in post

As in most careers, individuals move from organisation to organisation. This is no different for many DCSs with over a third of the current DCS cohort having been a DCS in 2 or more LAs in either permanent, interim or multi-LA arrangements. The average tenure of current DCSs, when factoring in cumulative time spent in multiple LAs as a DCS, is 51 months – this figure includes all permanent and interim appointments.

The average tenure of all current DCS post-holders is 34 months; 36 months for permanent post holders and 7 months for interim post holders.

The average duration of a DCS in post in the same LA (based on all interim and permanent appointments from 2007 to 31 March 2023) is 31 months – across all permanent appointments it is 40 months and for all interim appointments it is 7 months.

## DCSs in more than one LA

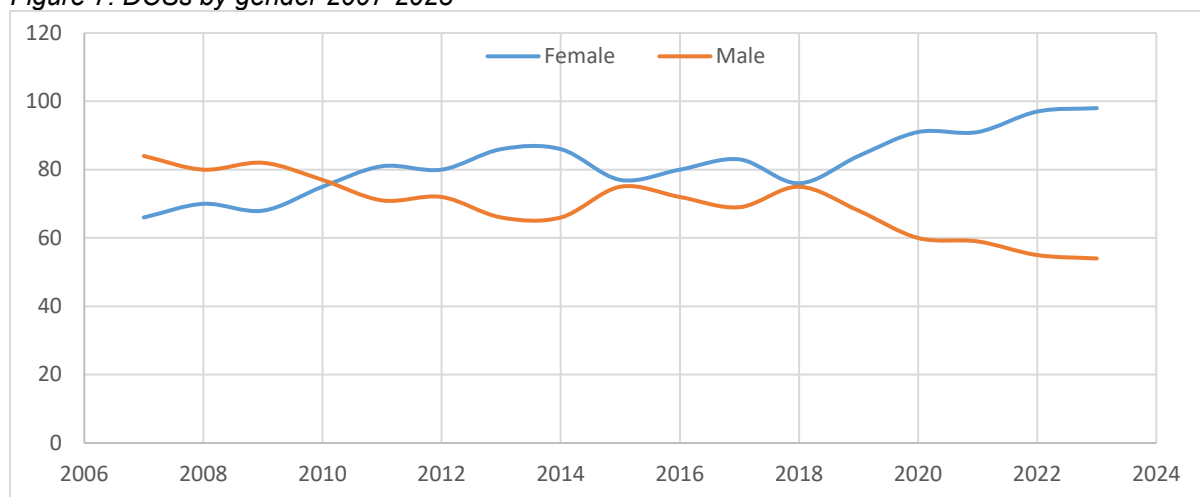
57 (37.5%) of current post holders have been DCS in more than 1 LA in either permanent, interim or multi-LA arrangements. 3 of the current post holders have been DCS in 5 LAs and 2 in 4 LAs.

As of 31 March 2023, four DCSs were involved in multi-LA arrangements.

## Gender and diversity

As of 31 March 2023, there were 98 LAs with female directors and 54 LAs with male directors. Of the 98 LAs with female directors, 7 were 'twin hatters'. Of the 54 LAs with a male director, 10 were 'twin hatters'. Of the 18 interim directors currently in post, 13 are female and 5 are male.

Figure 7. DCSs by gender 2007-2023



In 2022, ADCS collected diversity data from across the full membership. The data was gathered anonymously and also collected broader protected characteristics. Of the DCS cohort, 131 (86%) responded to the data request.

Of those who responded:

- 81% identified as white British; 5% as white Irish; 6% as 'other' white; 1% as black African; 1% as black Caribbean; 2% as white and black Caribbean; 2% as white and Asian. 1 DCS preferred not to state their ethnicity
- 60% were aged 50-59; 21% were aged 40-49; and, 15% aged 60-65. 4% of respondents preferred not to state their age
- 8% of DCSs considered themselves to have a disability
- 51% of DCSs identified as having no religion; 37% identified as Christian
- 83% of DCSs identified as heterosexual; 11% as gay or lesbian; and, 3% as bisexual.

The diversity data request will be undertaken annually, with the 2022 data providing a benchmark to build upon in future reports.

## Alternative Delivery Models

There are a number of Alternative Delivery Models (ADMs) currently providing aspects of children's services on behalf of local authorities:

- Achieving for Children provides children's services on behalf of the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames and the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames
- Achieving for Children also provides some services on behalf of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead
- Together for Children provides children's services on behalf of Sunderland City Council

- Brighter Futures for Children provides children's services on behalf of Reading Council
- Slough Children First provides children's services on behalf of Slough Borough Council
- Worcestershire Children First provides children's services on behalf of Worcestershire County Council.

## **Trust arrangements**

As of 31 March 2023, Trust arrangements were in place in Birmingham, Northamptonshire (covering North and West Northamptonshire Councils) and Sandwell. Bradford Children and Families Trust went live on 1 April 2023.

## **Comparison with Chief Executives, Directors of Adult Social Services (DASS) and Directors of Public Health (DPH)**

In order to offer some comparative context to the rate of turnover of statutory DCSs, ADCS has started to collect a range of data relating to Chief Executives, Directors of Adult Social Services (DASSs) and Directors of Public Health (DPHs) in order to provide an annual snapshot to offer more informed comparisons going forward. DPH turnover figures are not currently available, therefore, we have collected data on current post holders to enable us to make comparisons in future reports.

## **DASSs**

There have been 42 changes in statutory DASS post-holders during 2022 (1 January – 31 December) compared to 50 changes in DCS post-holders. ADCS has started to collect more detailed data in this area for future comparisons.

## **Chief Executives**

For a number of years, ADCS has taken a snapshot of Chief Executive post-holders to offer comparative data. The data does not include any changes that may have taken place in-year, therefore any short-term interim appointments which may have taken place will not be included in the figures.

Between April 2022 and March 2023:

- There have been 19 changes in Chief Executives, compared to 33 changes in the previous reporting period (April 2021 – March 2022)
- As of March 2023, 13 Chief Executives had previously been a DCS
- There are currently 15 interim Chief Executives – one LA has a joint acting arrangement in place
- There are currently 2 instances of multi-LA arrangement where the Chief Executive holds the role for two LAs simultaneously
- 89 Chief Executives are male and 62 female (compared to 96 male and 56 female in 2021 – 2022).

There is limited crossover in LAs which have experienced both a change in Chief Executive and DCS. Of the 42 LAs which have experienced a change in DCS, 4 had also experienced a change in Chief Executive.