

ADCS DCS Update – as of 31 March 2020

Introduction

There are currently 151 upper tier local authorities (LAs) in England. Current legislation requires each of these local authorities 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 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020. It also offers some year-on-year comparisons, several of which date back to 2007, in order to highlight trends and patterns of change.

If you have any queries or proposed amendments of the data, or if you wish to reproduce this data in part or in full, please contact gary.dumbarton@adcs.org.uk.

Headlines

- 48 LAs have experienced changes in DCS across the reporting period
- 57 DCS changes in total (including all interim appointments)
- 24 new permanent DCS appointments
- Currently 31 'twin hatters'
- Average length of time served as a DCS, when factoring in cumulative time spent in multiple LAs as a DCS, is almost 4 years
- 60% of current DCSs are female
- 15 interim DCSs in post as at 31 March 2020.

DCS Changes

During 2019/20 there were 57 changes in DCS post-holder – the total number of changes includes brief interim periods prior to substantive appointment. The changes have taken place across 48 LAs – this means that almost 70% of LAs (103) have not experienced a change in the DCS post holder across the reporting period.

21 of the changes have taken place in the last quarter (January – March 2020) which is the highest number of changes in any single quarter since ADCS records began in 2007.

During 2019/20 there were:

- 24 new DCS appointments - slightly above the average annual number of new appointments, which is currently 21.77 – of which:
 - 19 were from assistant director/second tier level
 - 3 instances of an existing DASS becoming 'twin hatter'
 - 2 "other"

- 22 interim appointments:
 - 8 of which have been filled by assistant directors (7 from within the same LA, 1 from another LA)
 - 10 have been filled by former DCSs
 - 2 have been filled by Chief Executives holding the statutory DCS role
 - 2 other
- 7 DCSs have moved post from one LA to another during 2019/20
- 4 former DCSs returning to the statutory DCS role.

All of the changes have been filled with experienced local government leaders. Over a third of the changes involve a DCS moving from one LA to another, returning to the DCS role or fulfilling an interim appointment and approximately 50% of the appointments have been fulfilled by assistant directors becoming a DCS. It is evident that there is stability in children's services leadership and that experience and expertise remain in the system.

The total of 57 changes is an increase compared to the previous period (51 changes in total for 2018/19). The average number of total changes in DCS post-holder per year is currently 48.5 per year.

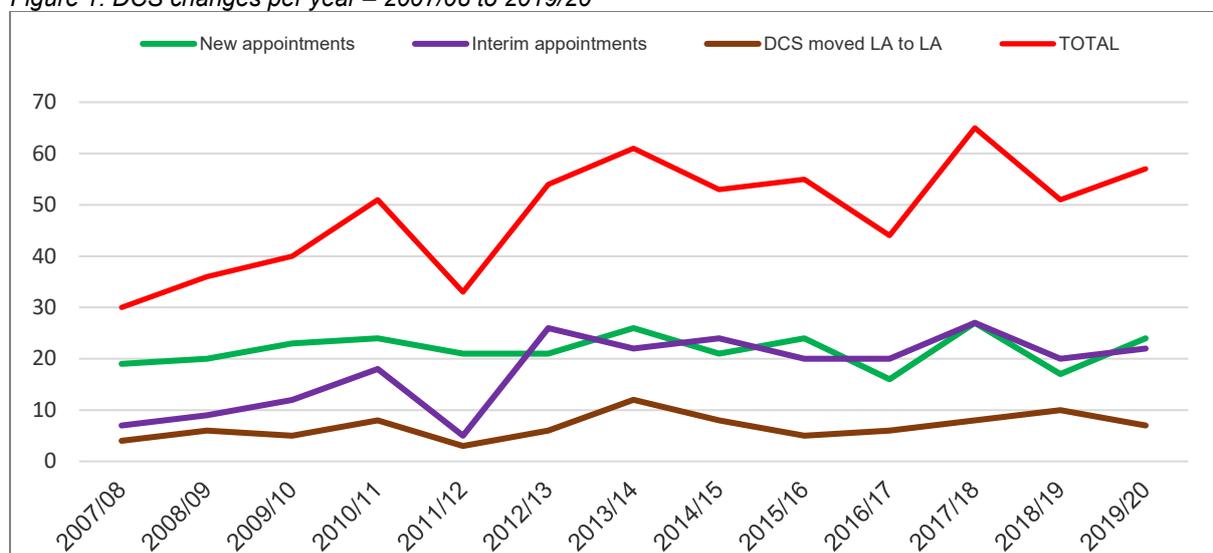
The 57 changes have taken place across 48 LAs – nine LAs have each experienced two DCS changes, largely due to short-term interim appointments being made prior to a permanent appointment .

The number of interim appointments has remained relatively consistent over recent years. 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.

As of 31 March 2020, there were 15 interim post holders, 13 in DCS only posts and two in 'twin hat' posts. Six of the current interim directors have previously been a DCS in another LA. One of the current interim post-holders has been post for 3 years. 12 of the 15 interim have been in post for 6 months or less.

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 2019/20



DCS changes per region

The amount of total change in DCS post-holders from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020 by region is illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2. DCS changes per region (actual) – 2019/20

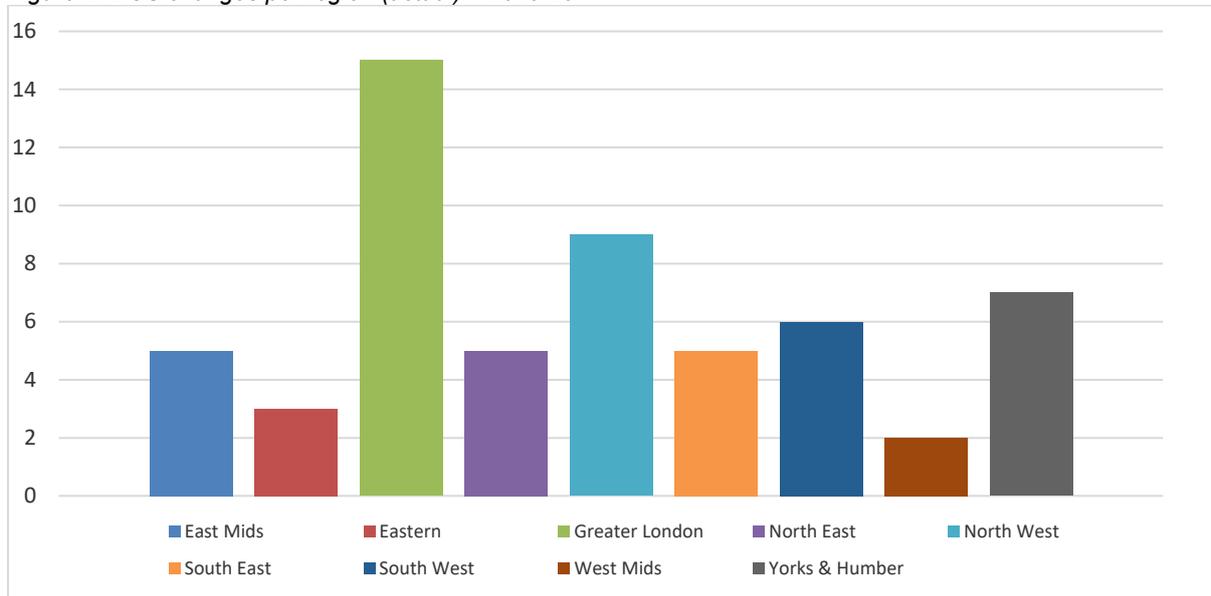
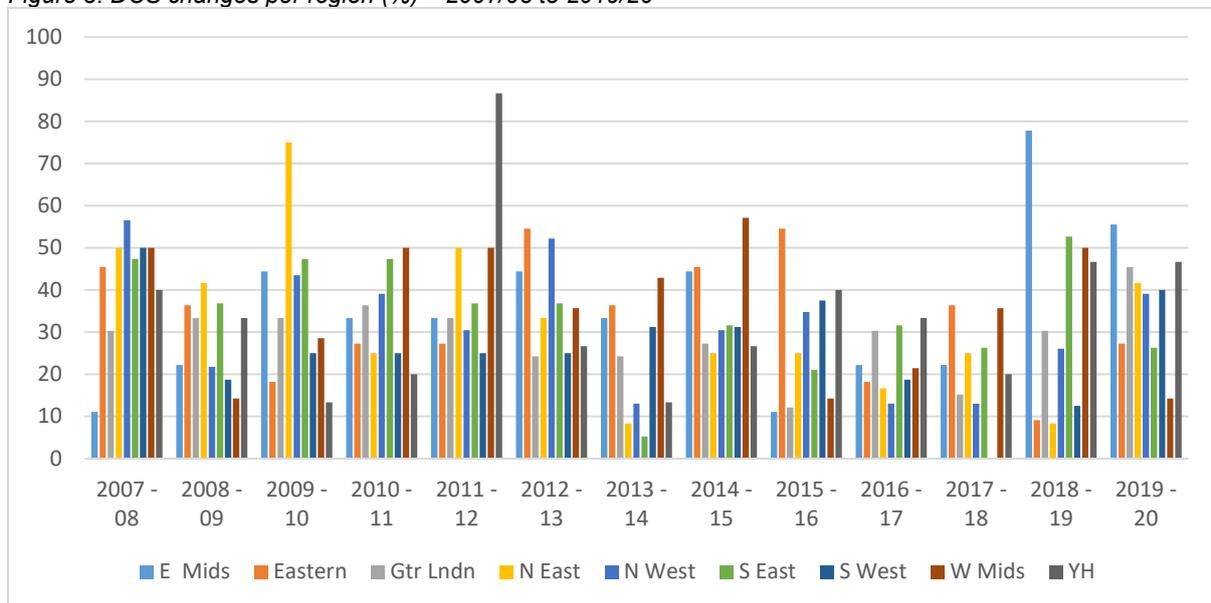


Figure 3 illustrates the amount of change in percentage, by region, from 2007/08 to 2019/20 and shows that the average amount of change in DCS post-holders per year, is around 30%.

Figure 3. DCS changes per region (%) – 2007/08 to 2019/20



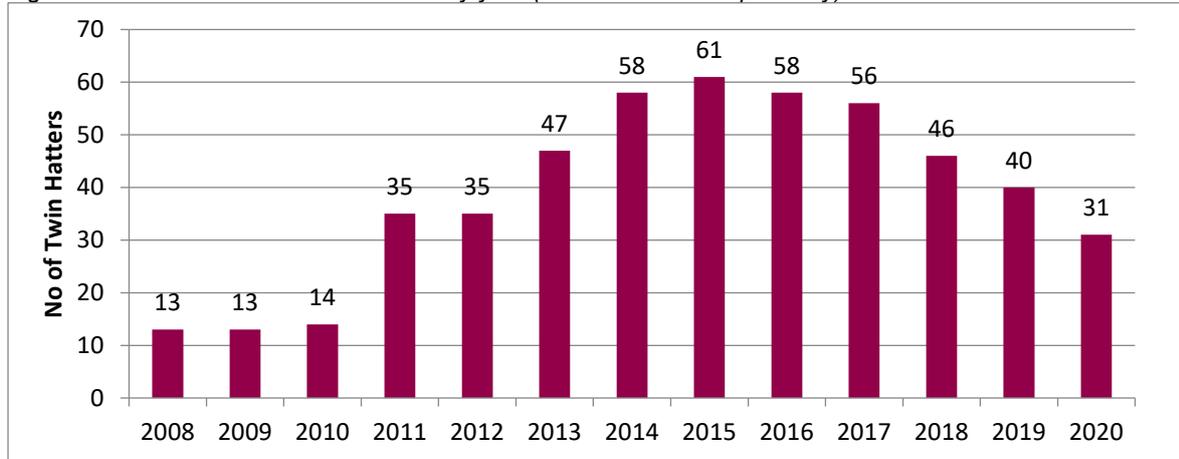
Areas of responsibility

As of 31 March 2020, there were 31 'twin hat' directors – the lowest number since 2010.

There are also a number of LAs where the director has overall responsibility for children and adult services, but whilst holding the statutory duty for children's services, they do not also hold the statutory duty for adult services. For the purposes of this report these arrangements are not considered 'twin hat'.

Figure 4 illustrates the continuing downward trend of LAs with 'twin hat' directors.

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

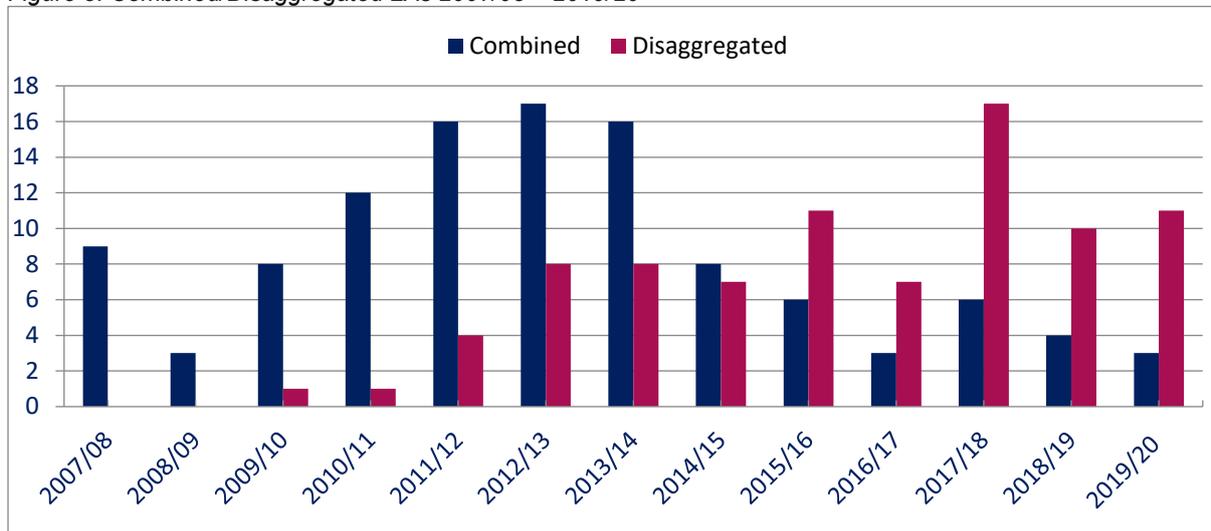


Combined and disaggregated services

During the past 12 months, 11 LAs have disaggregated services and three LAs have combined services. Changes in the total number of twin hatters are also affected by the local government reorganisation in the Dorset area – Bournemouth and Poole having had twin hat directors in 2018/19.

Figure 5 illustrates the increasing trend in disaggregating services, coupled with low numbers of LAs combining services.

Figure 5. Combined/Disaggregated LAs 2007/08 – 2019/20



Time in post

The average duration of a DCS in post in the same LA (based on all interim and permanent appointments from 2007 to 31 March 2020) is 30 months – across all permanent appointments it is 38 months and for all interim appointments it is 7 months.

The average tenure of current DCS post-holders is 29 months; 31 months for permanent post holders and 6 months for interim post holders.

Many DCSs have been the DCS in a number of LAs. The average length of time served as a DCS, when factoring in cumulative time spent in multiple LAs as a DCS, is 45 months (based on all interim and permanent appointments from 2007 to 31 March 2020).

DCSs in more than one LA

59 (39%) of the current post holders have been DCS in more than one LA in either permanent, interim or multi-LA arrangements, showing that experience is valued and expertise is not being lost from the sector.

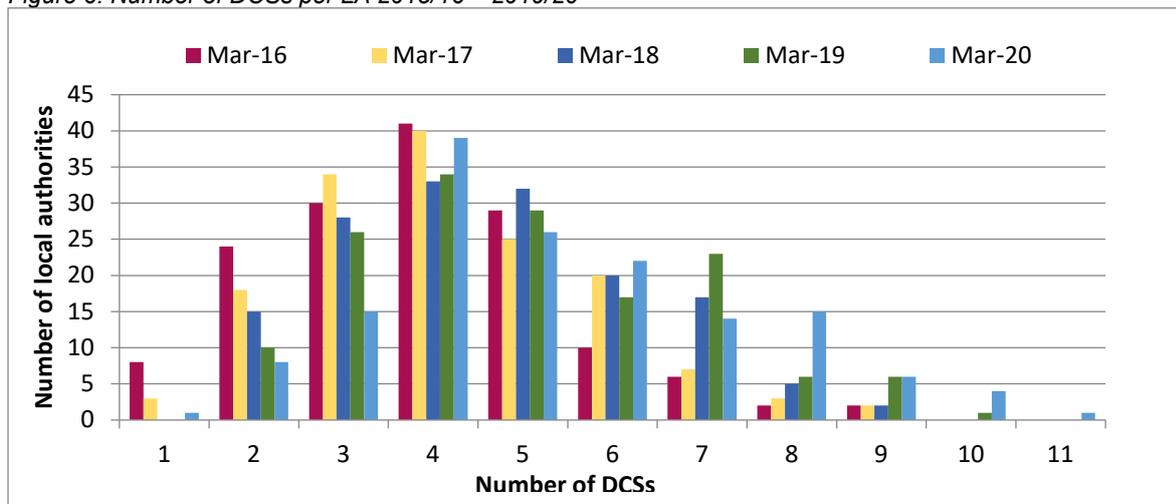
Four DCSs are currently in multi-LA arrangements, which involves a DCS holding statutory responsibility in more than one LA simultaneously.

DCSs per local authority

The average number of DCSs per local authority, including interim appointments, since ADCS was established in 2007 is now 5.31 (a 0.4 increase on the previous year). 127 of the 151 LAs have now had four or more DCSs since ADCS records began in 2007. One LA has had 11 DCSs, whilst another four LAs have had 10 DCSs each.

Excluding the newly formed Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole and Dorset Councils, seven LAs have had just two DCSs.

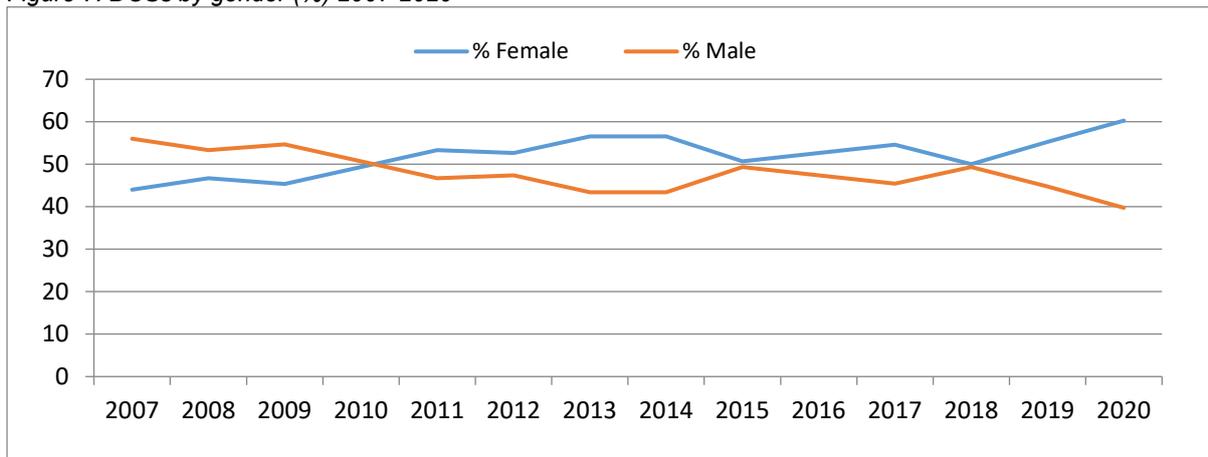
Figure 6. Number of DCSs per LA 2015/16 – 2019/20



Gender and ethnicity

As of 31 March 2020, there were 91 LAs with female directors and 60 LAs with male directors. Of the 91 LAs with female directors, 15 are 'twin hatters'. Of the 60 LAs with a male director, 16 are 'twin hatters'. Of the 15 interim directors currently in post, 12 are female and three are male.

Figure 7. DCSs by gender (%) 2007-2020



During the 2019/20 membership year, ADCS started to collect ethnicity data from across the membership. Of the DCS cohort, 94 (62%) have so far responded to the request to submit their ethnicity information.

Of those who responded, 84% have identified as white British; 3% as white Irish; 7% as 'other' white; 1% as other; 1% as black African; 1% as black Caribbean; 1% as white and Asian. One DCS preferred not to state their ethnicity.

Alternative Delivery Models and Trust arrangements

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 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
- Children First Northamptonshire provides children's services on behalf of Northamptonshire County Council
- Worcestershire Children First provides children's services on behalf of Worcestershire County Council.

Trust arrangements

As at 31 March 2020, Trust arrangements are in place in Birmingham, Doncaster, Sandwell and Slough.

Doncaster Children's Services Trust became an arms-length management organisation (ALMO) from April 2019. During 2019/20 the Trust experienced two changes in Chief Executive, with Alan Adams as interim Chief Executive ahead of James Thomas' permanent appointment to the post.

Comparison with Chief Executives

ADCS has taken a snapshot of Chief Executive post-holders to offer some comparison with the data provided in this report regarding DCSs. The snapshot compares Chief Executive post-holders in March 2019 with March 2020 and does not include any changes that may have taken place in between those dates.

Between March 2019 and March 2020:

- There have been 27 changes in Chief Executive post-holders (compared to 57 DCS changes)
- As at March 2020, 23 Chief Executives have previously been a DCS
- There are currently 7 interim Chief Executives (compared to 15 interim DCSs)
- 3 instances of multi-LA arrangement where the Chief Executive holds the role for two LAs simultaneously (East Sussex and West Sussex; Cambridge and Peterborough; and, Richmond and Wandsworth)
- 91 Chief Executives are male and 59 are female (compared to 60 male and 91 female DCSs)
- One LA (Shropshire) currently has interim Joint Chief Executives – one male and one female.