

ADCS DCS Update – as of 31 March 2021

Introduction

As at 31 March 2021 there were 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 2020 to 31 March 2021. 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

- 34 LAs have experienced changes in DCS across the reporting period
- 39 DCS changes in total (including all interim appointments) – a significant decrease compared to previous periods
- 12 new permanent DCS appointments
- Currently 26 'twin hatters' in post as at 31 March 2021
- Average length of time served as a DCS, when factoring in cumulative time spent in multiple LAs as a DCS, is over 3.5 years
- 60% of current DCSs are female
- 12 interim DCSs in post as at 31 March 2021 (although 17 interim appointments were made throughout the year in total).

DCS Changes

During 2020/21 there were 39 changes in DCS post-holder – the total number of changes includes brief interim periods prior to substantive appointment. The changes have taken place across 34 LAs – this means that over 77% of LAs (117) have not experienced a change in the DCS post holder across the reporting period.

During 2020/21 there were:

- 12 new permanent DCS appointments – the fewest number of such appointments since ADCS was formed in 2007; the average annual number of new appointments per annum is 21. Of the 12 new permanent appointments:
 - 9 were from assistant director/second tier level from the same LA
 - 3 were from assistant director/second tier level from another LA
- 17 interim appointments:

- 8 of which have been filled by assistant directors from within the same LA
- 5 have been filled by former DCSs
- 1 has been filled by Chief Executive holding the statutory DCS role
- 2 have been filled by DASS holding statutory DCS role pending substantive appointment
- 1 vacancy
- 8 DCSs have moved post from one LA to another during 2020/21
- 2 former DCSs returning to the statutory DCS role.

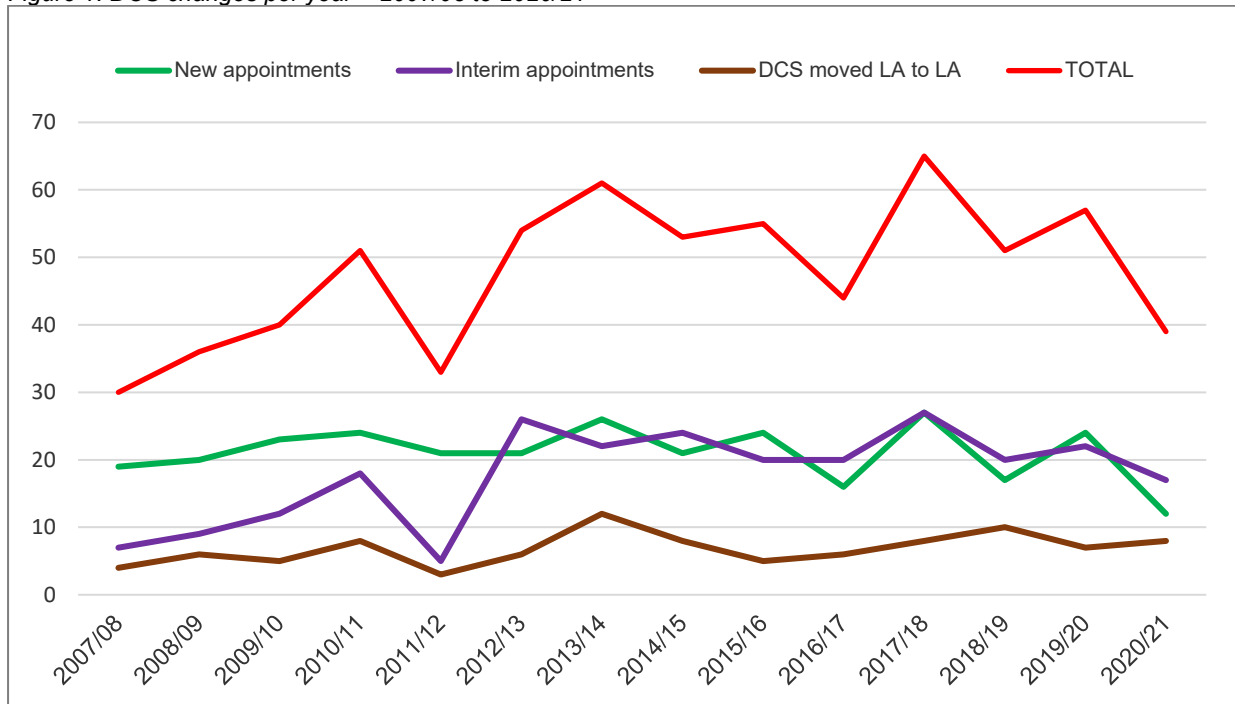
The total of 39 changes is a significant decrease compared to the previous periods (57 changes in total in 2019/20 and 51 the year before that). The average number of total changes in DCS post-holder per year is currently 47 r.39 is the fewest number of changes since 2011/12.

The 39 changes have taken place across 34 LAs. Five LAs had 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 2021, there were 12 interim post holders, 10 in DCS only posts and two in 'twin hat' posts. Five of the current interim directors have previously been a DCS in another LA. 7 of the 12 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 2020/21



DCS changes per region

The amount of total change in DCS post-holders from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 by region is illustrated in Figure 2. The 10 changes in the South East region are inflated due to two changes taking place in each of three separate LAs.

Figure 2. DCS changes per region (actual) – 2020/21

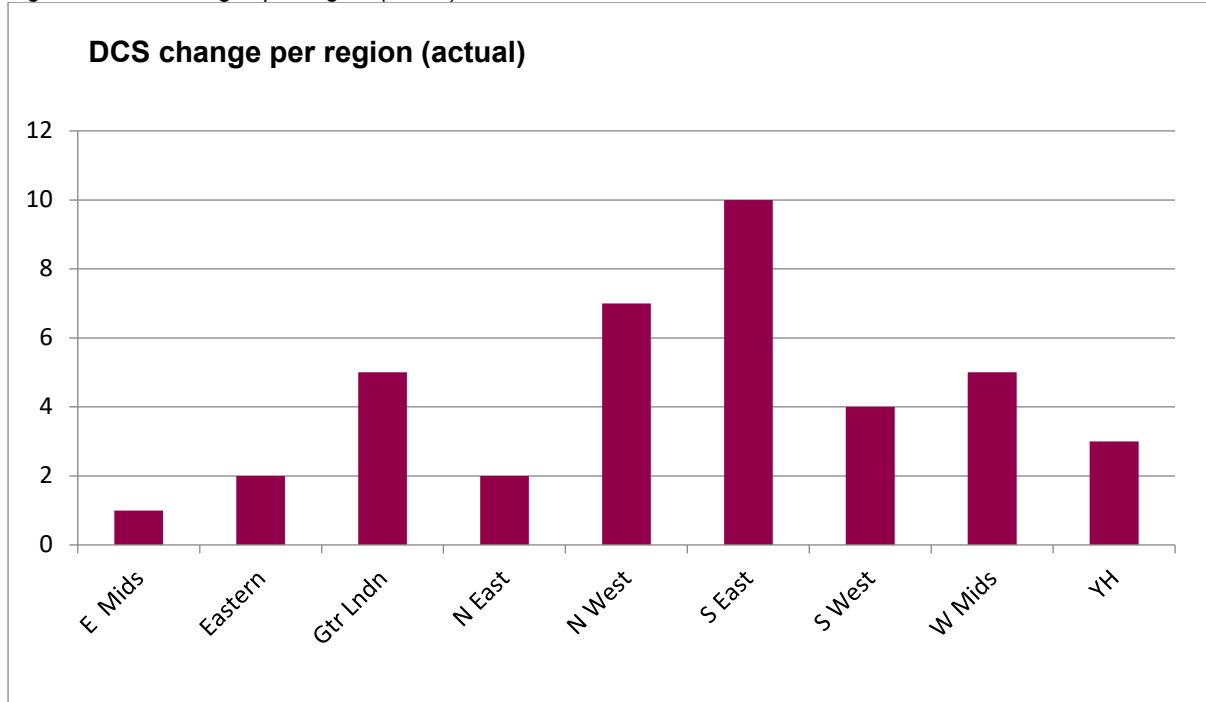
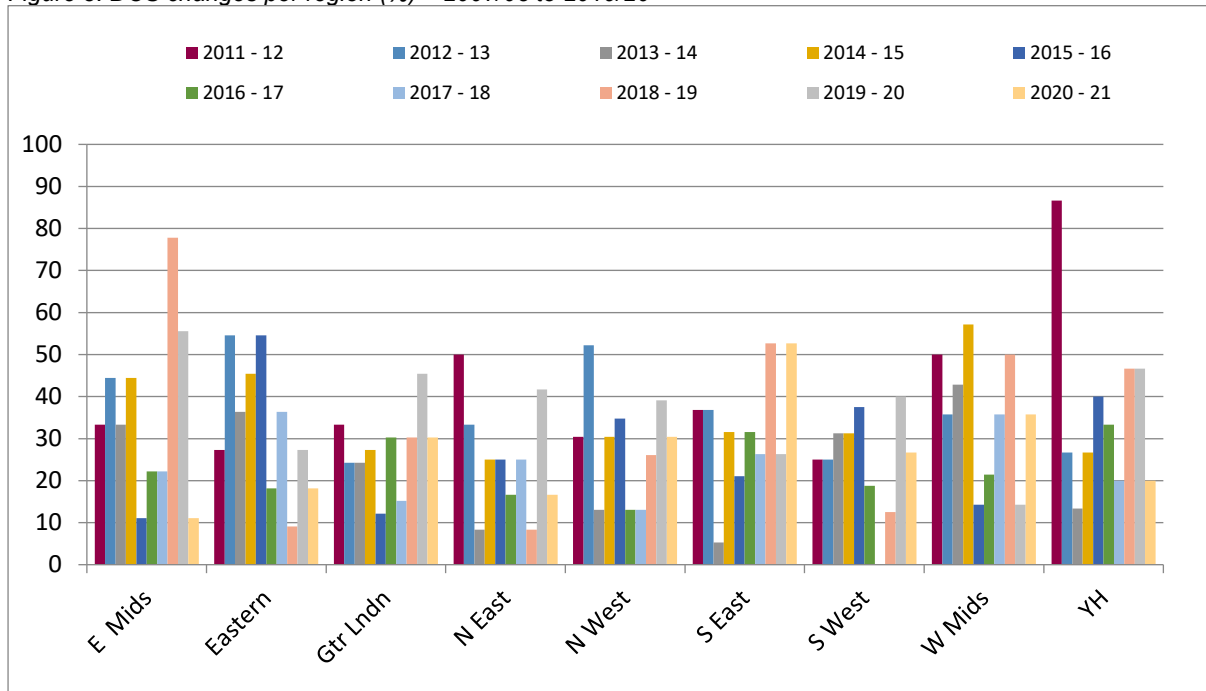


Figure 3 illustrates the amount of change in percentage, by region, from 2011/12 to 2020/21 and shows that the average amount of change in DCS post-holders per year, is around 30%.

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



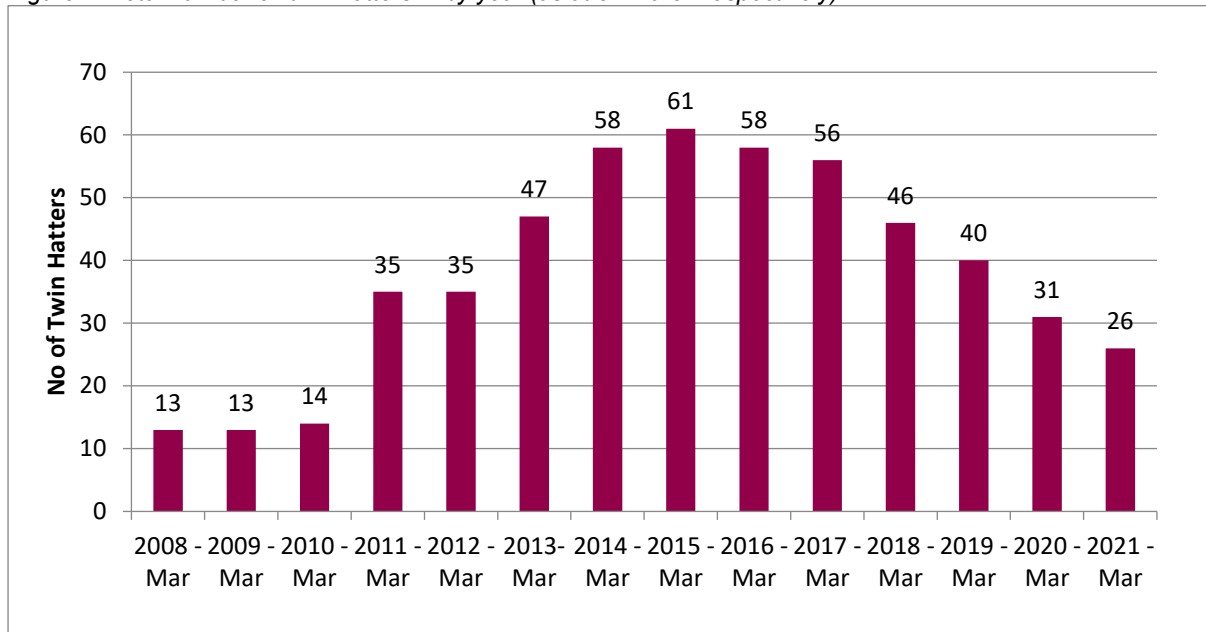
Areas of responsibility

As of 31 March 2021, there were 26 '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'.

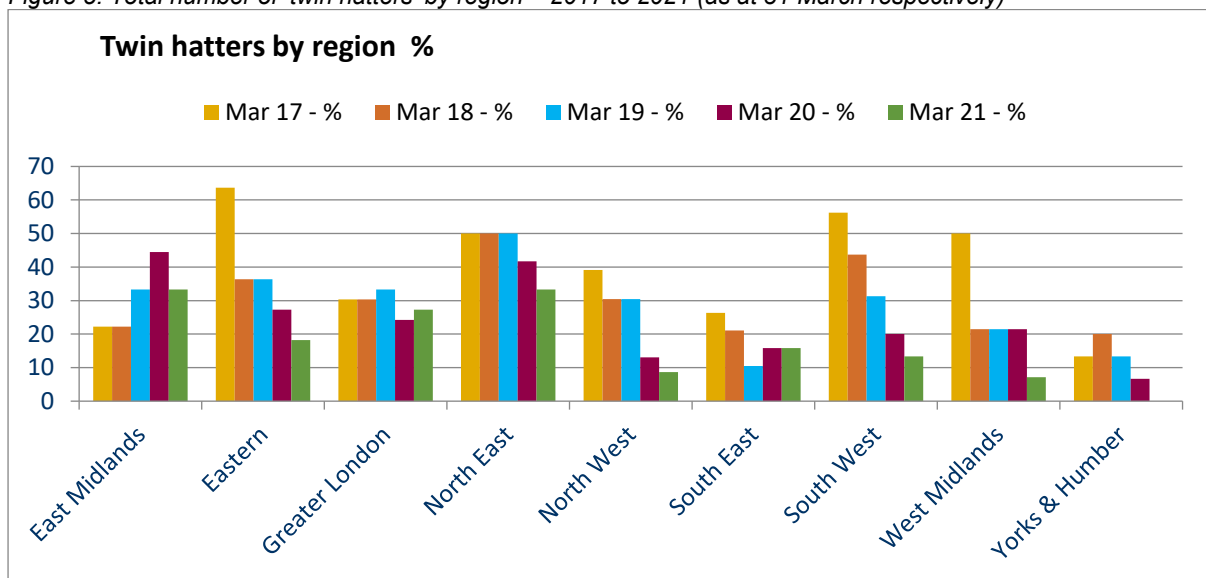
Figure 4 illustrates the continuing downward trend of LAs with 'twin hat' directors.

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



At a regional level, figure 5 illustrates the decline in twin hatters per region. Yorkshire & Humber had no permanent twin hat directors in post as of 31 March 2021.

Figure 5. Total number of 'twin hatters' by region – 2017 to 2021 (as at 31 March respectively)

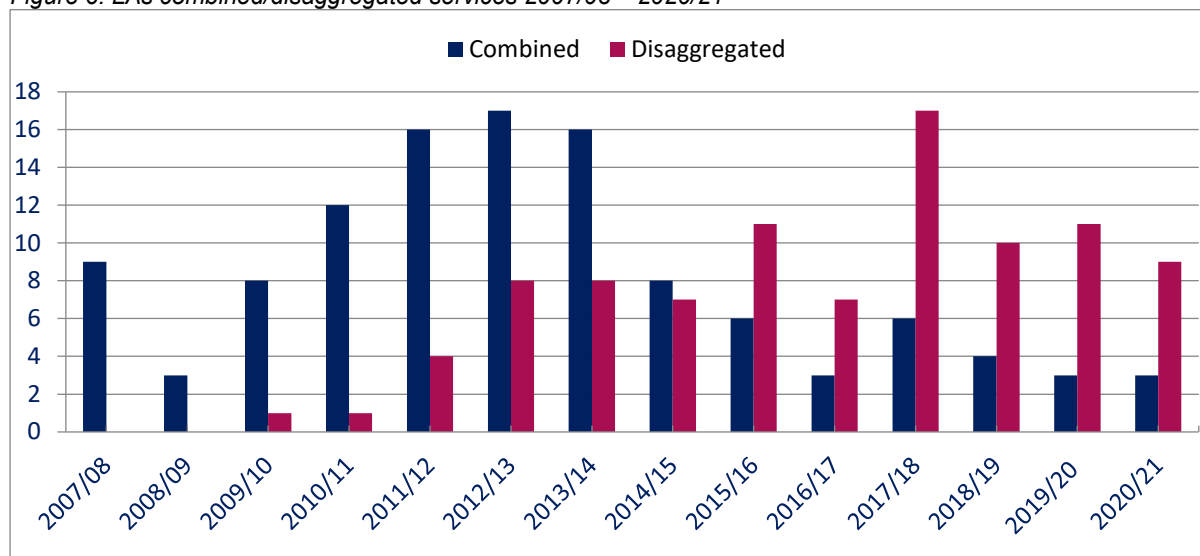


Combined and disaggregated services

As at 31 March 2021, 109 of the 151 LAs had at some point a 'twin hat' director. 42 LAs have never combined the DCS and DASS role. The picture continues to change as LAs combine and disaggregate services. During the past 12 months, eight LAs have disaggregated services and three LAs have combined services. One LA briefly disaggregated services pending recruitment of a twin hat director.

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 – 2020/21



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 39 months and for all interim appointments it is 7 months.

The average tenure of current DCS post-holders is 32 months; 35 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 43 months (based on all interim and permanent appointments from 2007 to 31 March 2021).

DCSs in more than one LA

58 (38%) 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.

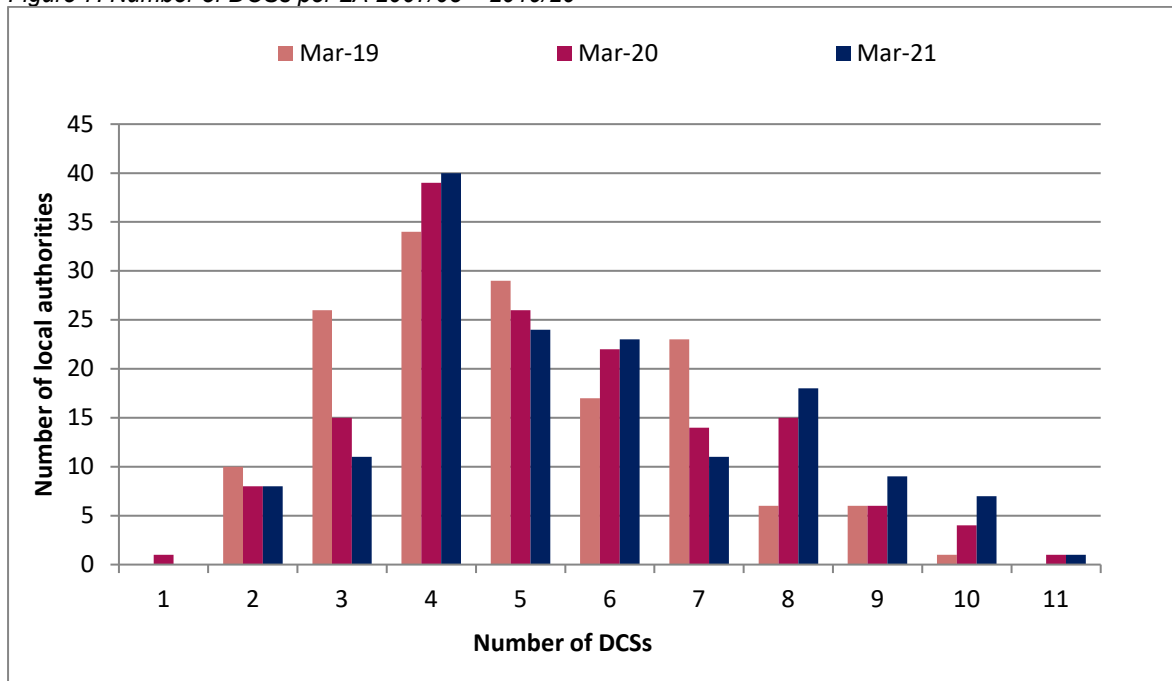
Four DCSs are currently in multi-LA arrangements.

DCSs per local authority

The average number of DCSs per local authority, including interim appointments, since ADCS was established in 2007 is now 5.5 (a minor increase on the previous year). One LA

has had 11 DCSs (six permanent and five interim), whilst another seven LAs have each had 10 DCSs.

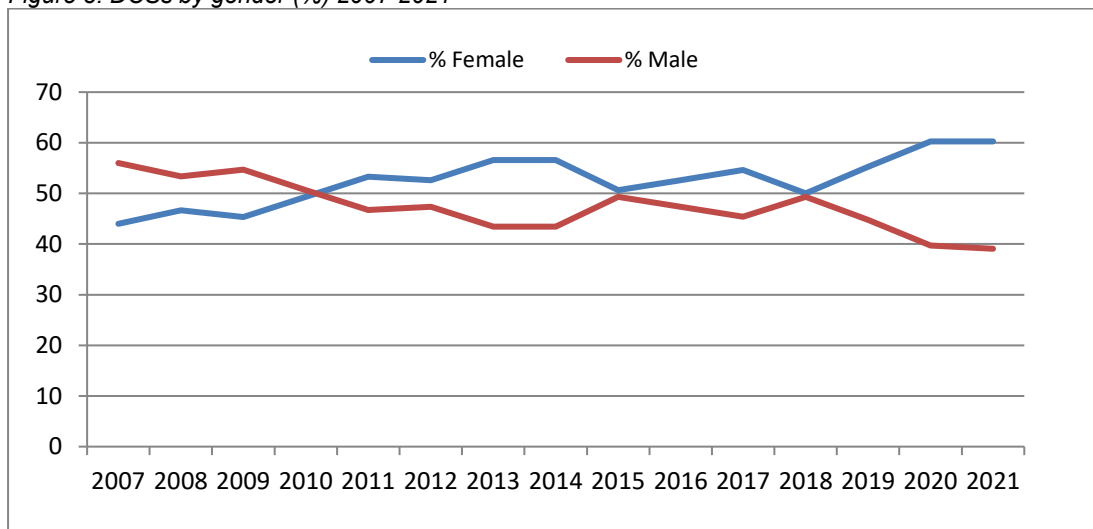
Figure 7. Number of DCSs per LA 2007/08 – 2019/20



Gender and ethnicity

As of 31 March 2021, there were 91 LAs with female directors and 59 LAs with male directors (one LA is carrying a vacancy in the DCS role). Of the 91 LAs with female directors, 13 are 'twin hatters'. Of the 59 LAs with a male director, 13 are 'twin hatters'. Of the 12 interim directors currently in post, eight are female and four are male.

Figure 8. DCSs by gender (%) 2007-2021



During the 2019/20 membership year, ADCS started to collect ethnicity data from across the membership. Of the DCS cohort, 93 (62%) have shared their ethnicity information.

Of those who responded, 80% identify as white British; 5% as white Irish; 8% as 'other' white; 1% as other; 1% as black African; 1% as black Caribbean; 3% 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 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
- Worcestershire Children First provides children's services on behalf of Worcestershire County Council.

Children First Northamptonshire provided children's services on behalf of Northamptonshire County Council until 31 March 2021. It will cease to do so for the two new unitary authorities with effect from April 2021.

Trust arrangements

As at 31 March 2021, Trust arrangements are in place in Birmingham, Doncaster, Northamptonshire, Sandwell and Slough.

Doncaster Children's Services Trust became an arms-length management organisation (ALMO) from April 2019.

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 2020 with March 2021 and does not include any changes that may have taken place in between those dates.

Between March 2020 and March 2021:

- There have been just seven changes in Chief Executive post-holders compared to 27 in the previous year – this compares to 39 changes in DCS post-holders
- LAs identify post-holders in different ways; 139 LAs have a Chief Executive, six LAs a Managing Director, five LAs a Head of Paid Service and one LA a City Director
- As at March 2021, 20 Chief Executives have previously been a DCS
- There are currently 7 interim Chief Executives (compared to 12 interim DCSs)
- 3 instances of multi-LA arrangement where the Chief Executive holds the role for two LAs simultaneously
- 90 Chief Executives are male and 61 are female (compared to 59 male and 91 female DCSs).