

ADCS DCS Update – as of 31 March 2022

Introduction

As at 31 March 2022 there were 152 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 2021 to 31 March 2022. It also offers some year-on-year comparisons, several of which date back to 2007, 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

- 36 LAs have experienced changes in DCS across the reporting period
- 47 DCS changes in total (including all interim appointments)
- 18 new permanent DCS appointments
- Currently 22 'twin hatters' in post as of 31 March 2022
- 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
- Almost two thirds of current DCSs are female
- 12 interim DCSs in post as of 31 March 2022 (although 23 interim appointments were made throughout the year).

DCS Changes

During 2021/22 there were 47 changes in DCS post-holder – the total number of changes includes brief interim periods prior to substantive appointments. The changes have taken place across 36 LAs – this means that over three quarters of LAs (116 / 76%) have not experienced a change in the DCS post holder across the reporting period.

During 2021/22 there were:

- 18 new permanent DCS appointments – up from just 12 in the previous reporting period; the average annual number of new appointments is 21. Of the 18 new permanent appointments:
 - 9 were from assistant director/second tier level from the same LA
 - 8 were from assistant director/second tier level from another LA
 - 1 saw the existing DASS take on the DCS role
- 23 interim appointments:
 - 10 were filled by assistant directors from the same LA

- 11 were filled by former DCSs
- 1 was filled by the Chief Executive holding the statutory DCS role
- 1 was filled by a DCS in addition to their own LA
- 5 DCSs have moved post from one LA to another during 2021/22
- 1 former DCS returning to the statutory DCS role.

The total of 47 changes is exactly in line with the average number of total changes in DCS post-holder per year. The lowest number of total changes was in 2007/08 with 30 changes; the highest number took place in 2017/18 with 65 changes.

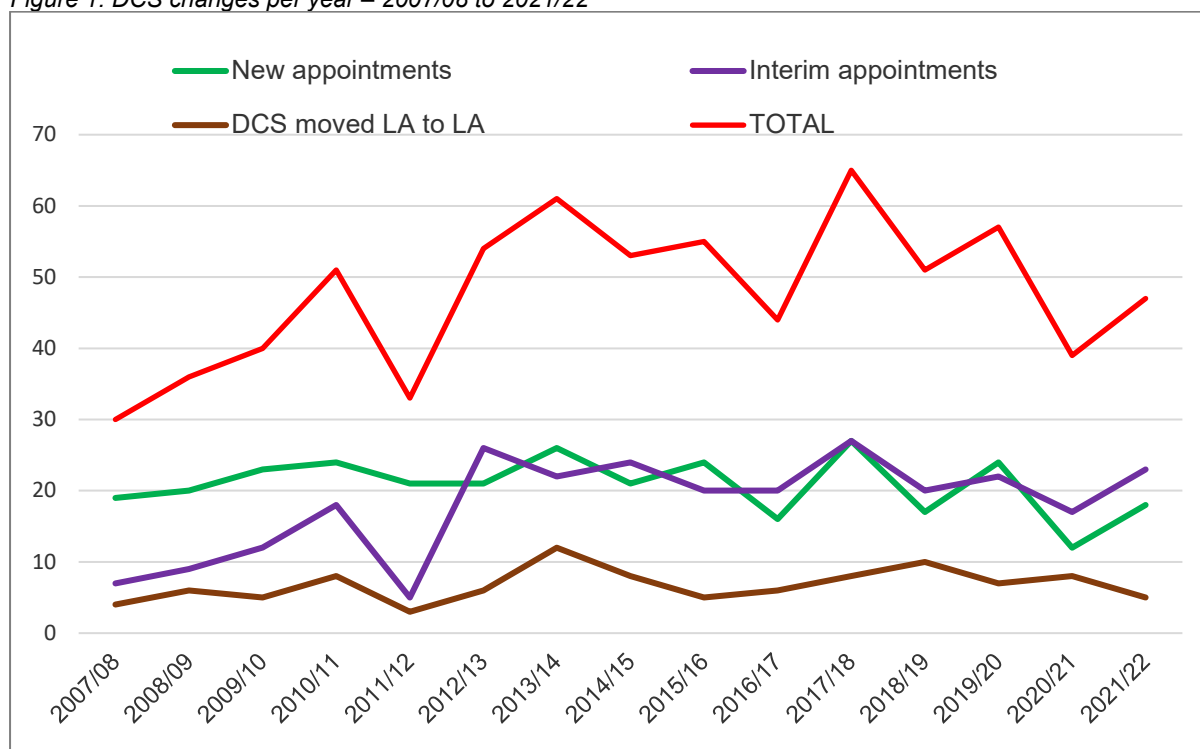
The average number of new permanent appointments per year is 20 – 2021/22 saw 18 new permanent appointments. The lowest number of such appointments took place in 2020/21 with 12; the highest was 27 in 2017/18.

The 47 changes have taken place across 36 LAs. 11 LAs have experienced 2 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 2022, there were 12 interim post holders, all of which are in DCS only posts (none in twin hat roles). 7 of the current interim directors have previously been a DCS in another LA. 9 of the 12 interims 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 2021/22



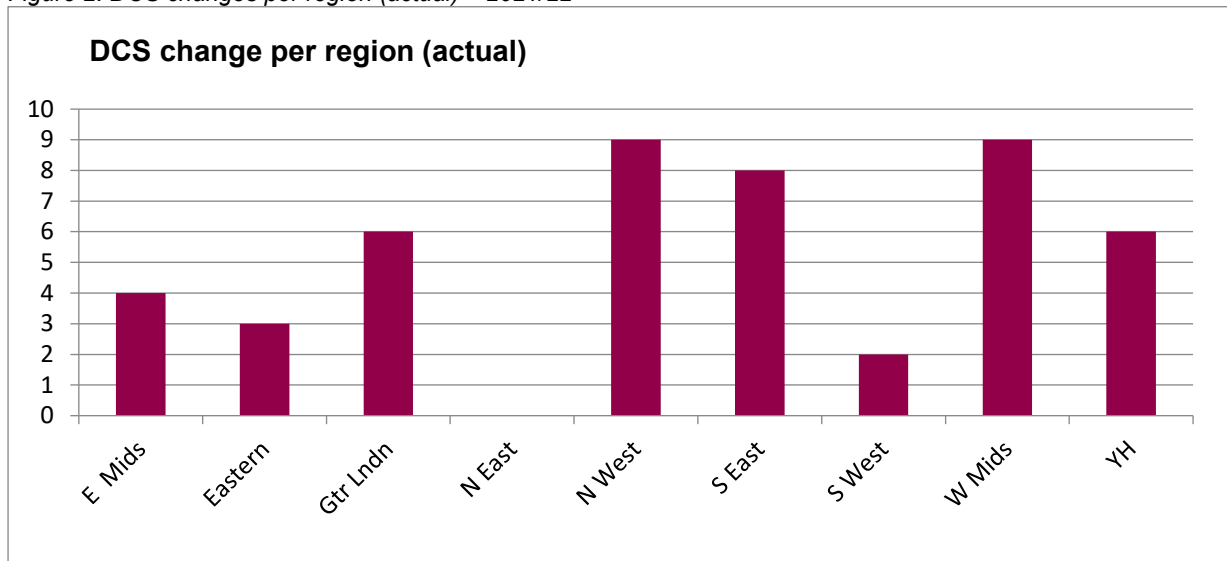
DCS changes per region

The total number of changes in DCS post-holders from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 by region is illustrated in Figure 2.

There were no changes in the North East region – this is the only occasion this has happened in any region since ADCS records began in 2007.

The 9 changes in both the North West and West Midlands regions are higher due to 2 changes taking place in 3 separate LAs in each area.

Figure 2. DCS changes per region (actual) – 2021/22



Areas of responsibility

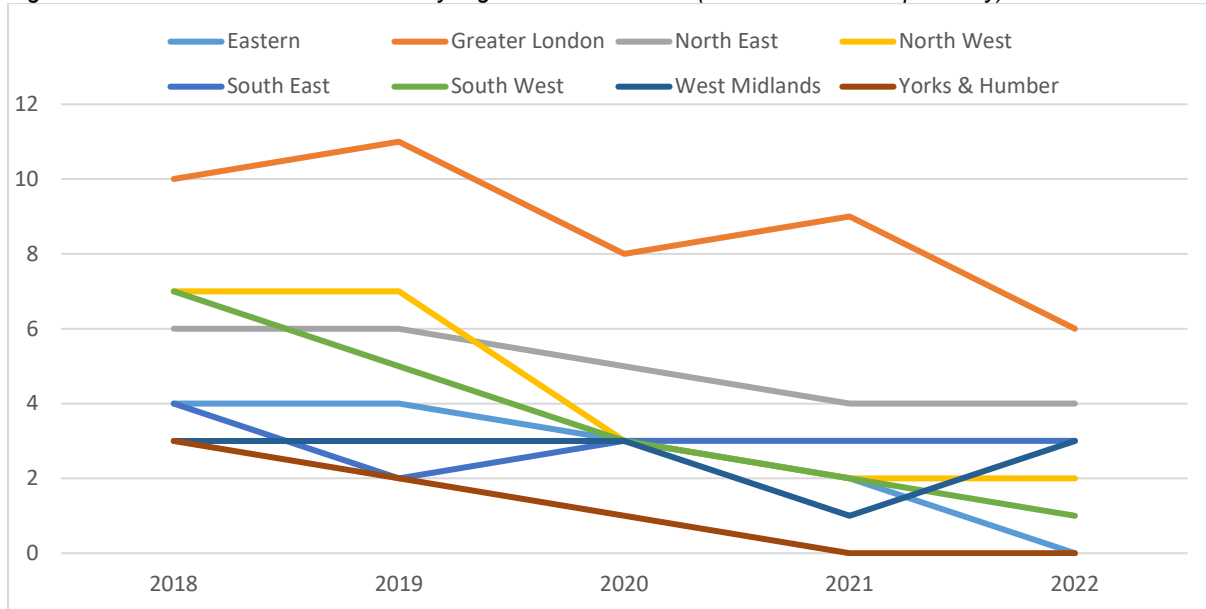
As of 31 March 2022, there were 22 'twin hat' directors – the lowest number since 2010. Figure 3 illustrates the downward trend of LAs with 'twin hat' directors since the peak in 2015. There are also a number of LAs where the director has overall responsibility for children and adult services but, whilst 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 3. Total number of 'twin hatters' – by year (as at 31 March respectively)



Figure 4 illustrates the decline in twin hatters per region. Both the Eastern region and Yorkshire & Humber region had no twin hat directors in post as of 31 March 2022. The downward trend is again notable on a regional level with only the West Midlands showing a slight increase in numbers.

Figure 4. Total number of 'twin hatters' by region – 2017 to 2022 (as at 31 March respectively)

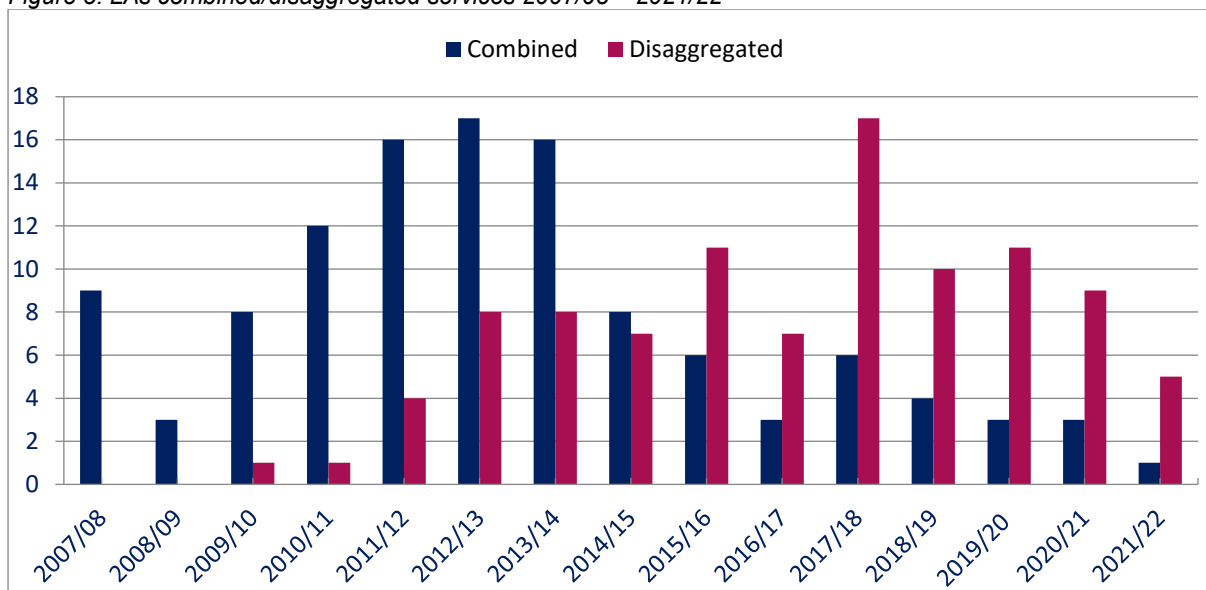


Combined and disaggregated services

As at 31 March 2022, 108 of the 152 LAs have had a 'twin hat' director at some point. 44 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, 5 LAs have disaggregated services and just 1 LA has combined services. Figure 5 illustrates the increasing trend in disaggregating services, coupled with low numbers of LAs combining services.

Figure 5. LAs combined/disaggregated services 2007/08 – 2021/22



Time in post

These figures have remained largely static in recent years with the average time in post for a DCS being around 3 years.

The average duration of a DCS in post in the same LA (based on all interim and permanent appointments from 2007 to 31 March 2022) is 31 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 34 months; 36 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 2022).

DCSs in more than one LA

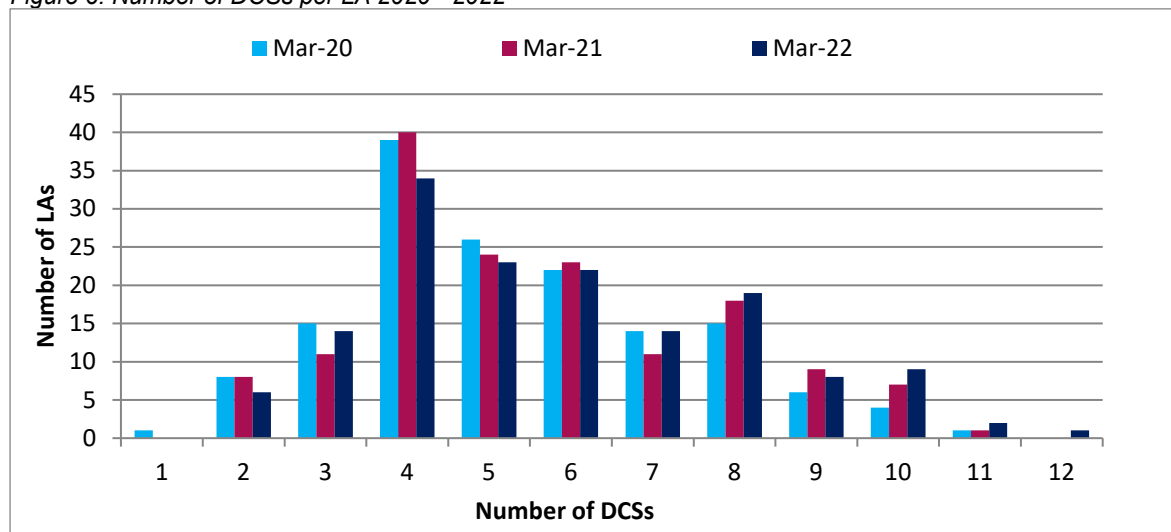
60 (40%) current post holders have been DCS in more than 1 LA in either permanent, interim or multi-LA arrangements. 2 DCSs have been DCS in 5 LAs and 4 in 4 LAs. A further 14 have been DCS in 3 LAs and 32 in 2 LAs.

Four DCSs are currently in multi-LA arrangements.

DCSs per local authority

The average number of DCSs per LA, including interim appointments, since ADCS was established in 2007 is now 5.8 (a minor increase on the previous year). One LA has now had 12 DCSs in the 15 years since ADCS started to record this information.

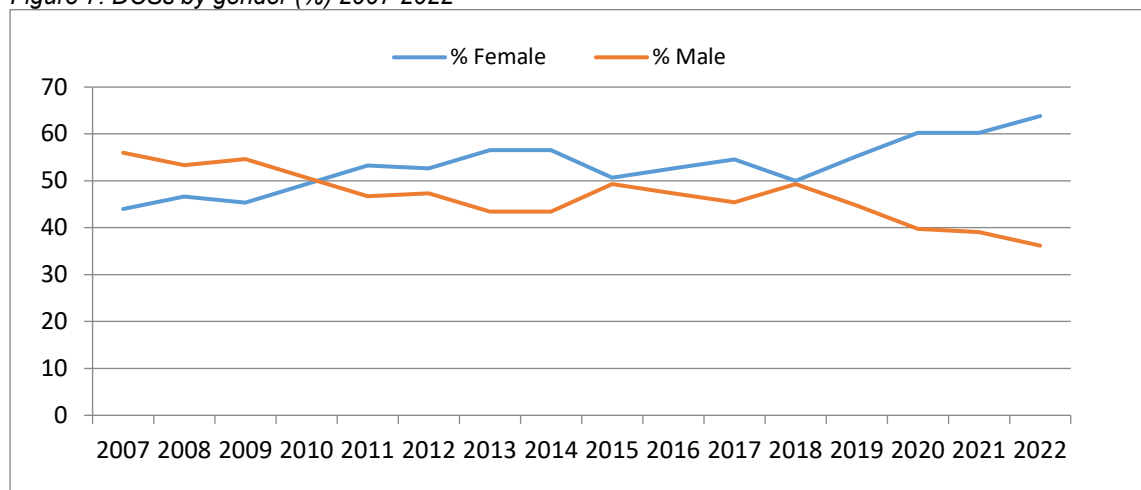
Figure 6. Number of DCSs per LA 2020 - 2022



Gender and ethnicity

As of 31 March 2022, there were 97 LAs with female directors and 55 LAs with male directors. Of the 97 LAs with female directors, 11 are 'twin hatters'. Of the 55 LAs with a male director, 11 are 'twin hatters'. Of the 12 interim directors currently in post, 9 are female and 3 are male.

Figure 7. DCSs by gender (%) 2007-2022



ADCS has collected ethnicity data from across the membership. Of the DCS cohort, 94 (62%) have shared their ethnicity information.

Of those who responded, 82% identify as white British; 4% as white Irish; 8% as 'other' white; 1% as black African; 1% as black Caribbean; 1% as white and black Caribbean; 2% as white and Asian. 1 DCS preferred not to state their ethnicity.

ADCS is currently undertaking an exercise to gather wider diversity characteristics from across the entire membership.

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 LAs:

- 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 – during 2021/22 the separate roles of Council DCS and Trust Chief Executive were combined into one role
- Worcestershire Children First provides children's services on behalf of Worcestershire County Council.

Trust arrangements

As of 31 March 2022, Trust arrangements were in place in Birmingham, Doncaster, Northamptonshire and Sandwell.

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 2021 with March 2022 and does not include any changes that may have taken place in between those dates, therefore any short-term interim appointments which may have taken place will not be included in the following figures.

Between March 2021 and March 2022:

- There have been 33 changes in Chief Executive post-holders compared to just 7 in the previous year – this compares to 47 changes in DCS post-holders
- As of March 2022, 21 Chief Executives have previously been, or are currently, a DCS
- There are currently 17 interim Chief Executives – there were 7 as of 31 March 2021. In comparison there are currently 12 interim DCSs
- There are currently 2 instances of multi-LA arrangement where the Chief Executive holds the role for two LAs simultaneously
- 96 Chief Executives are male and 56 are female (compared to 55 male and 97 female DCSs)
- LAs identify post-holders in different ways; 139 LAs have a Chief Executive, 1 a Town Clerk & Chief Executive; five LAs have a Managing Director; 4 LAs have a Head of Paid Service; 2 have a Chief Operating Officer and 1 LA has a City Director.

There is limited crossover in LAs which have experienced both a change in Chief Executive and DCS. Of the 36 LAs which have experienced a change in DCS, 9 have also experienced a change in Chief Executive.