

ADCS DCS Update - as of 31 March 2018

Introduction

There are 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 treated as DCSs by ADCS in terms of membership, however, we do not refer to a Trust as being a separate LA 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 2017 to 31 March 2018. 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.

DCS Changes

During 2017/18 there were 65 changes in DCS post holder – the total number of changes includes every change to the statutory DCS, inclusive of brief interim periods prior to substantive appointment. The total of 65 changes is the highest number of annual changes since ADCS was established. The average number of total changes in DCS post holder is 47.4 per year.

The 65 changes have taken place across 57 LAs, with eight LAs having each experienced two DCS changes over the 12 month period, the majority of which have been due to short-term interim appointments being made prior to a permanent appointment starting.

As can be seen by the breakdown of changes, below, a great deal of expertise remains in the sector despite the headline turbulence: DCSs moving from one LA to another; former DCSs filling interim positions or returning to the DCS role; and a large amount of succession from assistant director level ensures that leadership positions are held by experienced and knowledgeable individuals.

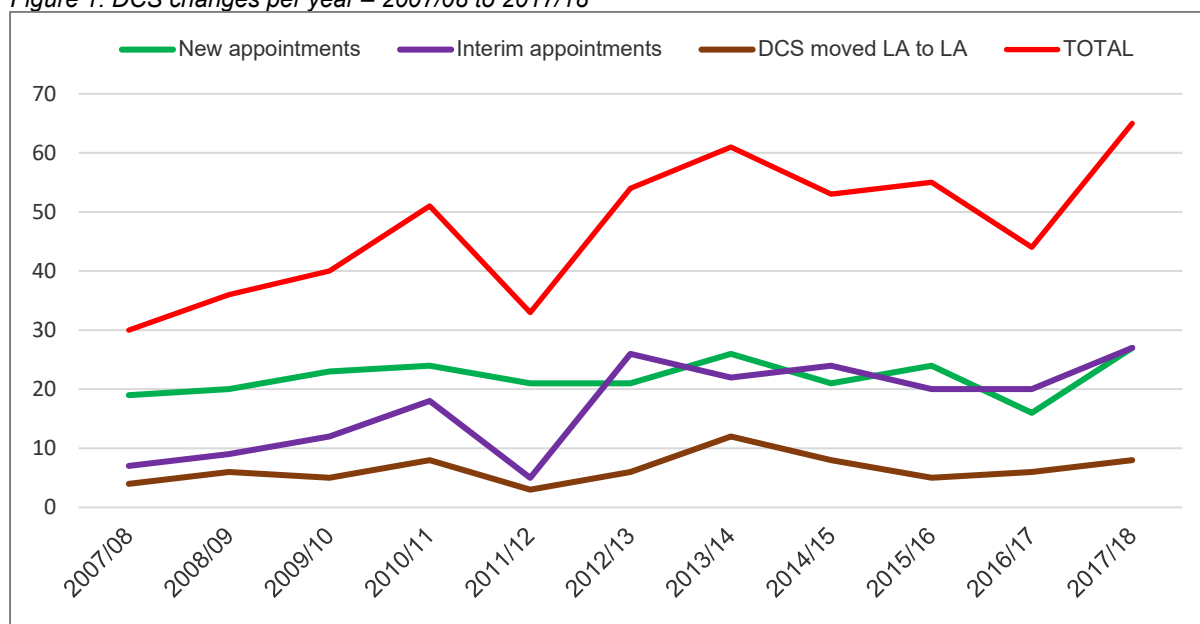
During 2017/18 there were:

- 27 new DCS appointments, the second highest number within a reporting year (there were 29 new DCS appointments during 2015/16)
 - 25 of which were from assistant director level
 - 1 instance of an existing DASS becoming 'twin hat'
 - 1 other

- 27 interim appointments
 - 15 of which were filled by assistant directors (12 from within the same LA, 3 from another LA)
 - 8 have been filled by former DCSs
 - 2 have been filled by the DASS from the same LA
 - 2 instances of the Chief Executive holding the statutory DCS duties
- 8 DCSs have moved post from one LA to another during 2017/18
- 2 former DCSs returning to the DCS role
- 1 new multi-LA arrangement established.

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

Figure 1. DCS changes per year – 2007/08 to 2017/18



Interim DCSs

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.

There are currently 18 directors in interim posts. 14 are in a DCS only post and four are in a 'twin hat' post.

Eight of the current interim directors have previously been a DCS in another LA.

DCS changes per region

The amount of total change in DCS post holder from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018 is illustrated on a regional level in Figure 2. The figures are shown in percentages due to the variation in number of LAs per region.

Figure 2. DCS changes per region (%) – 2017/18

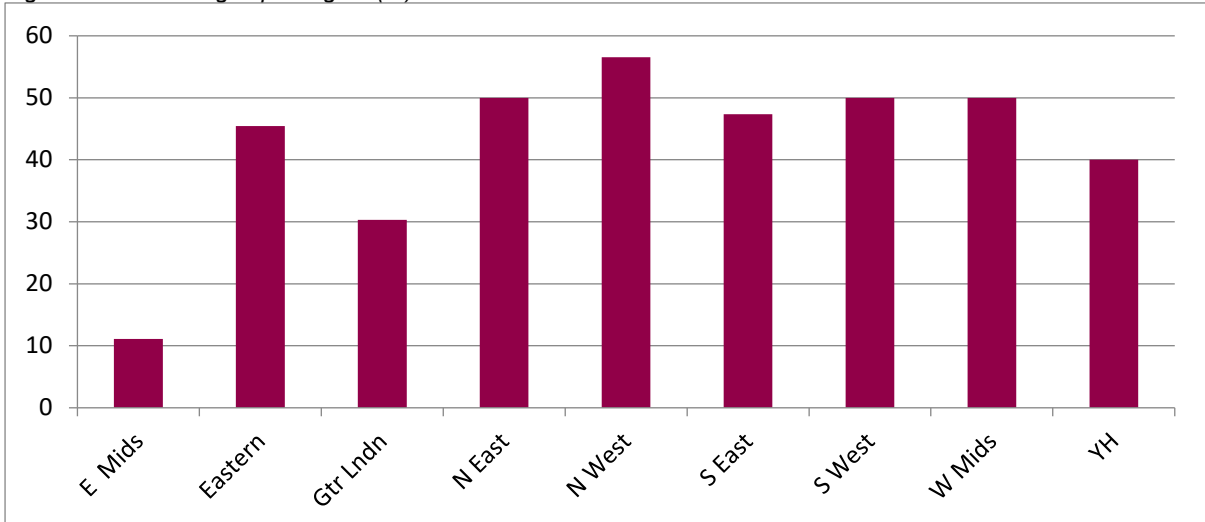
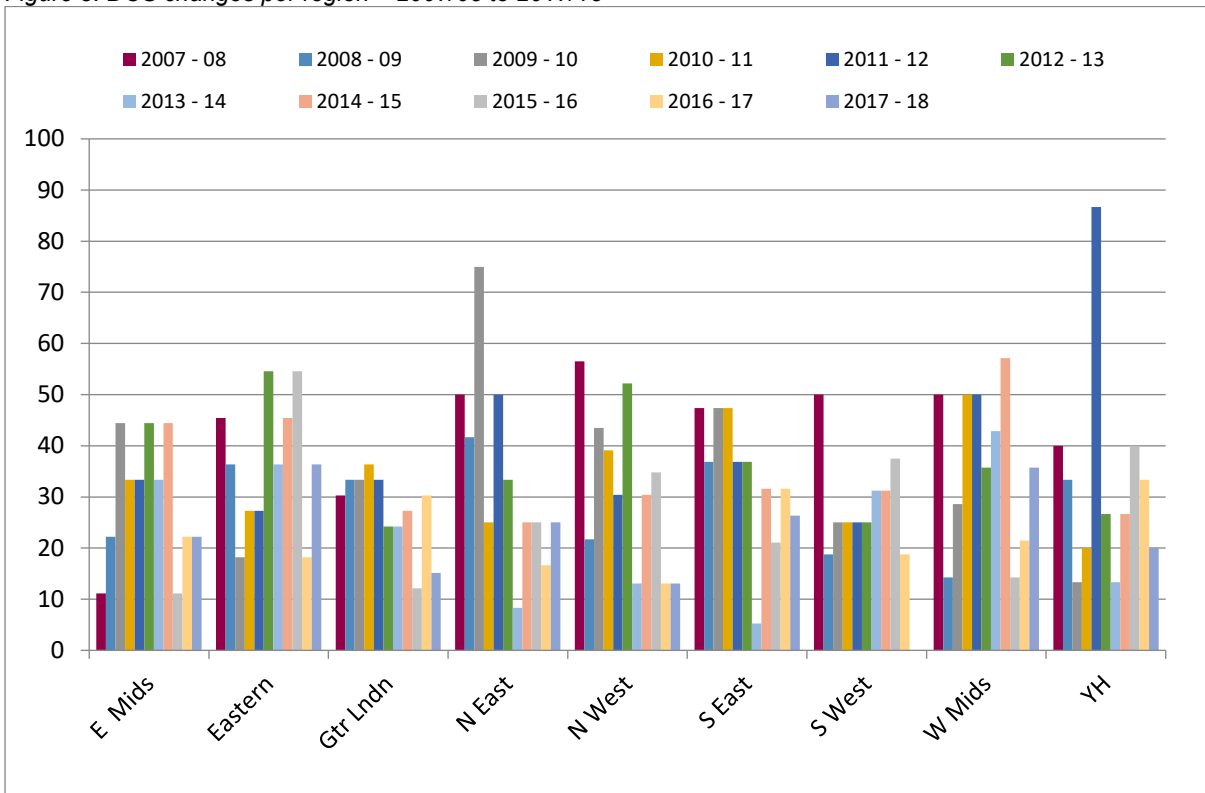


Figure 3 illustrates the amount of change in percentage, by region, from 2007/08 to 2017/18 and shows that average amount of change in DCS post holder per year, is around 30%.

Figure 3. DCS changes per region – 2007/08 to 2017/18



Areas of responsibility

As of 31 March 2018, there were 46 'twin hat' children and adult directors – compared to 57 at 31 March 2017.

There are now several examples of new first time directors being appointed to 'twin hat' roles.

There are 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 hold the statutory duty for adult services. For the purposes of this report these arrangements are not considered 'twin hat'.

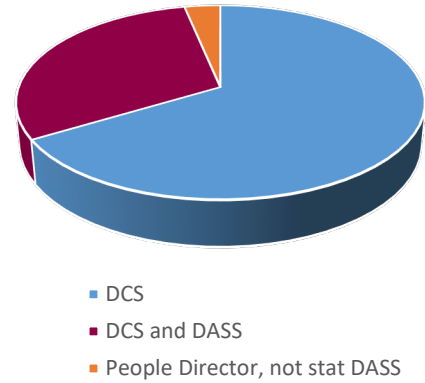
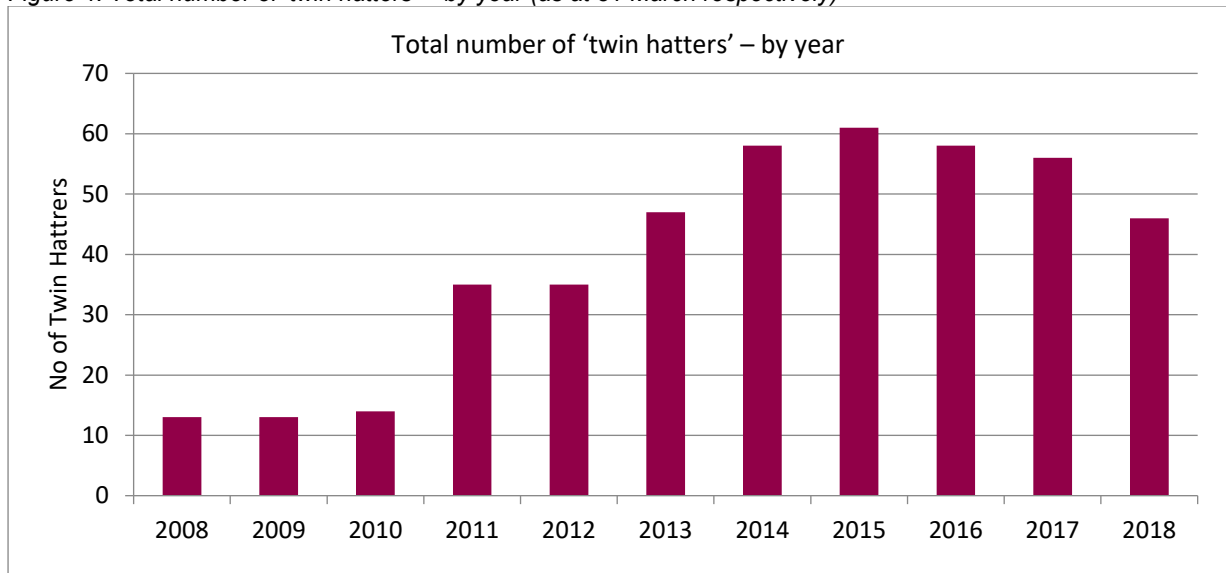


Figure 4. Total number of 'twin hatters' – by year (as at 31 March respectively)



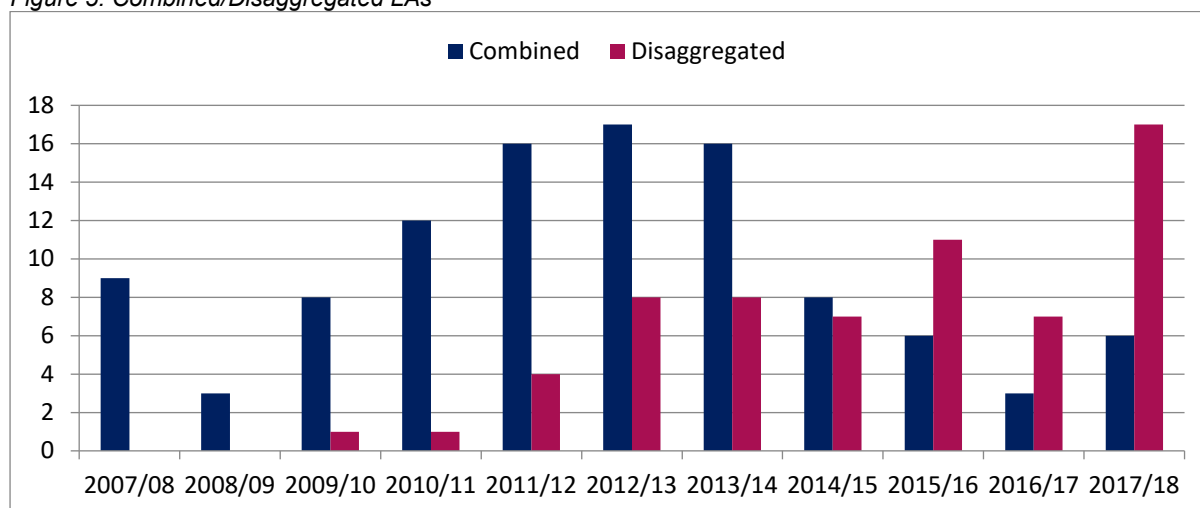
Combined and disaggregated services

Since ADCS was established in 2007, 109 of the 152 LAs have at some point had a combined children and adult services directorate and operated with a 'twin hat' director. 43 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, 17 LAs have disaggregated services and six LAs have combined services during the same period. Figure 5 illustrates the increasing trend in disaggregating services, coupled with low numbers of LAs combining services.

The total number of 'twin hatters' has noticeably reduced since numbers peaked in 2015 at 61.

Figure 5. Combined/Disaggregated LAs



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 2017) is **26 months**.

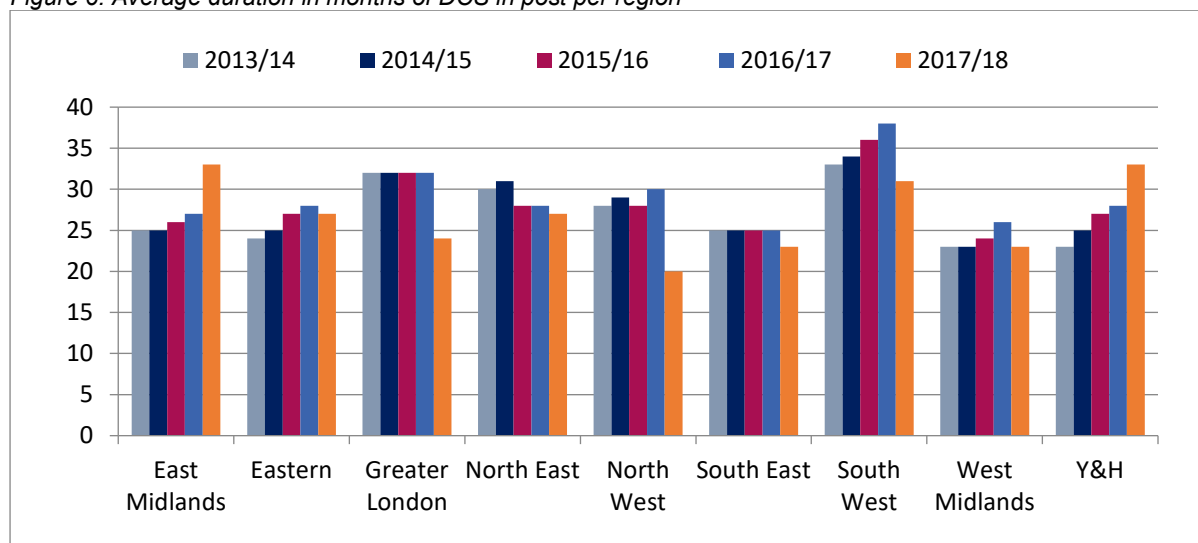
For all permanent appointments across the period, the average tenure remains at **37 months**. This average has increased steadily since 2012/13 when the average was 32 months. The average tenure for interim appointments has been seven months for the past five reporting years.

The average tenure of current post holders (as at 31 March 2018) is 26 months (which includes all permanent and interim post holders). The average tenure of current permanent post holders is 29 months.

Time in post – by region

Figure 6 shows the average duration (in months) of DCSs in post by region. The overall trend shows an increase in average tenure up until the current reporting period.

Figure 6. Average duration in months of DCS in post per region



DCSs per local authority

The average number of DCSs per local authority since ADCS was established in 2007 is now 4.6 – an increase from 4.2 in 2017, and from 3.9 in 2016. Every LA will experience change in DCS post holder at some point therefore the average number of DCSs per LA will only ever increase.

DCSs in more than one LA

62 (40%) of the current post holders have been DCS in more than one LA in either permanent, interim or multi-LA arrangements. Five DCSs are currently in multi-LA arrangements, which involve a DCS holding statutory responsibility in more than one LA.

Gender

As of 31 March 2018 there were 76 LAs with female directors and 75 LAs with male directors. Of the 76 LAs with female directors, 22 are 'twin hatters'. Of the 75 LAs with a male director, 24 are 'twin hatters'.

One LA has an interim arrangement with a man and a woman jointly holding the DCS role on an interim basis (Merton). Of the other 17 interim directors currently in post, six are female and 11 are male.

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 with a single DCS responsible for both LAs and most recently, on behalf of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, who operate with their own DCS.

Together for Children provides children's services on behalf of Sunderland City Council. The current statutory DCS responsibility is held by the existing DASS on an interim basis.

We understand that Reading will also establish an ADM in the near future.

Trust arrangements

As at 31 March 2018 trust arrangements are in place in Doncaster and Slough. Children's trusts were launched on 1 April 2018 in Birmingham, Northamptonshire and Sandwell. We understand that Worcestershire will also establish Trust arrangements in the near future.

In light of the new arrangements and the first change of a Trust Chief Executive, we will ensure that details of turnover and change in trusts feature in future reports.