

ASSOCIATION OF DIRECTORS OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES LTD

SAFEGUARDING PRESSURES PROJECT:

RESULTS OF DATA COLLECTION

April 2010

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1. Introduction

Safeguarding related pressures on local authority children's services departments has been a subject of much discussion and media attention since the death of Baby Peter was reported in November 2008. At its annual policy seminar on 4th and 5th of February 2010, the ADCS Council of Reference discussed the disparate information requests made to local authorities from a variety of sources to try and evidence these pressures, as well as recent media coverage which did not always report accurate data. ADCS agreed the importance of having robust, recent, national data to evidence changes in safeguarding activity. Consequently, a national project supported by the National College commenced to evaluate the impact of increased child protection and safeguarding activities as well as budget pressures associated with those increases. This report provides results of the initial phase: high level analysis of the data collection.

2. Data collection methodology

ADCS sent a request for data to all Directors of Children's Services by email on 10th March 2010 with a short deadline for response as the final analysis report was required by 7th April 2010. A copy of the data collection form is attached (Appendix A).

The information requested centred on intake and referral work together with child protection, looked after children numbers, court work and staffing, to evidence what changes there have been in the volume of safeguarding work since 1st April 2007 (a period of 33 months).

Information about other work carried out by children's services departments is outside the scope of this data collection. This includes evidence of any change in activity following the Southwark Judgement and other data around core assessments, financial information and more detailed breakdown by reasons for referral. The collection of information to evidence changes in these areas was desirable, but not included in order to keep the volume of data as minimal as possible for the following reasons:

- the short timescale for turnaround and pressure on data teams, especially at the end of the financial year when they are preparing for statutory returns;

- to maximise responses from local authorities by keeping it as short and simple as possible;
- to ensure there was no overlap with other complementary research (eg *Calculating the cost and capacity implications for local authorities implementing the Laming (2009) recommendations* by Loughborough University on behalf of the Local Government Association (LGA)).

Additional communication to maximise response rates and coverage was undertaken by:

- article in ADCS Bulletin week commencing 15th March;
- NfER Planning For Excellence member email;
- SSRG email to key regional information leads;
- mention at London Information Exchange Group meeting on Friday 19th March and Eastern & East Midlands Performance & Information Leads meeting on Friday 26th March;
- email directly to those data contacts and regional information groups known to the researcher;
- follow up telephone calls to as many local authorities as feasible with emails to others.

After commencement of the project, data collection was complicated by other local projects on the same topic in the South East Region and also the West Midlands and efforts were made to work in conjunction with these.

3. Response rates & coverage

Responses were received from 69% of all local authorities in England (105 authorities) by 5th April 2010. These responses provide data covering 73% of the England Under 18 population¹ – just over eight million children and young people. Further responses were received too late for inclusion in this first edition of the report but will be included in subsequent analysis.

The greatest population coverage is in East of England and East Midlands, although the highest response rate from local authorities was in the West Midlands, reflecting the smaller

¹ Source of all population data within report: ONS, Population Estimates Unit. ONS population data has been rounded to the nearest 100 as per ONS and DCSF guidance.

size of local authorities in this region. In terms of type of authority, a higher proportion of Shire authorities responded with London Boroughs having the lowest response rate (*Figures 1-4*).

	Responses			Under 18 Population coverage		
	Respon-dents	Total LAs	% total LAs	Data Coverage	All LAs (2008)	% total U18 pop. ¹
England	105	152	69%	8,009,900	11,008,100	73%
North East	9	12	75%	415,900	529,800	79%
North West	17	23	74%	1,128,700	1,489,900	76%
Yorkshire and The Humber	11	15	73%	828,200	1,110,400	75%
East Midlands	7	9	78%	791,500	934,400	85%
West Midlands	12	14	86%	895,500	1,199,200	75%
East of England	8	11	73%	1,102,600	1,233,600	89%
Inner London	10	14	71%	390,300	599,600	65%
Outer London	8	19	42%	449,100	1,043,400	43%
South East	13	19	68%	1,250,500	1,811,400	69%
South West	10	16	63%	757,500	1,056,300	72%

Figure 1: Number and percentage of data collection respondents by region. Note 1: percentage per Under 18 population is calculated prior to rounding of population data to be more accurate.

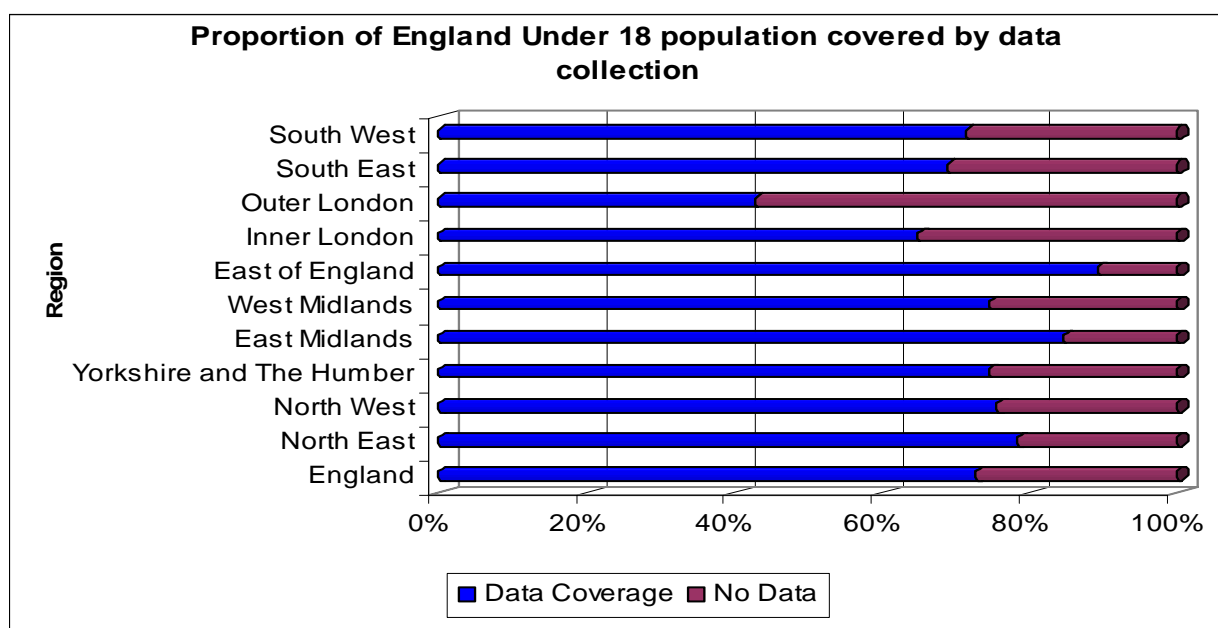


Figure 2: Graphical representation of Figure 1 - England Under 18 population coverage by region.

	Responses			Under 18 Population coverage		
	Respon- dents	Total LAs	% total LAs	Data Coverage	All LAs (2008)	% total U18 pop ¹
London Borough	18	33	55%	839,400	1,643,000	51%
Metropolitan	25	36	69%	1,622,800	2,452,900	66%
Shire	23	27	85%	3,739,900	4,286,200	87%
Unitary	39	55	71%	1,807,700	2,625,900	69%

Figure 3: Number and percentage of data collection respondents by type of authority. Note: percentage per U18 population is calculated prior to rounding of population data to be more accurate.

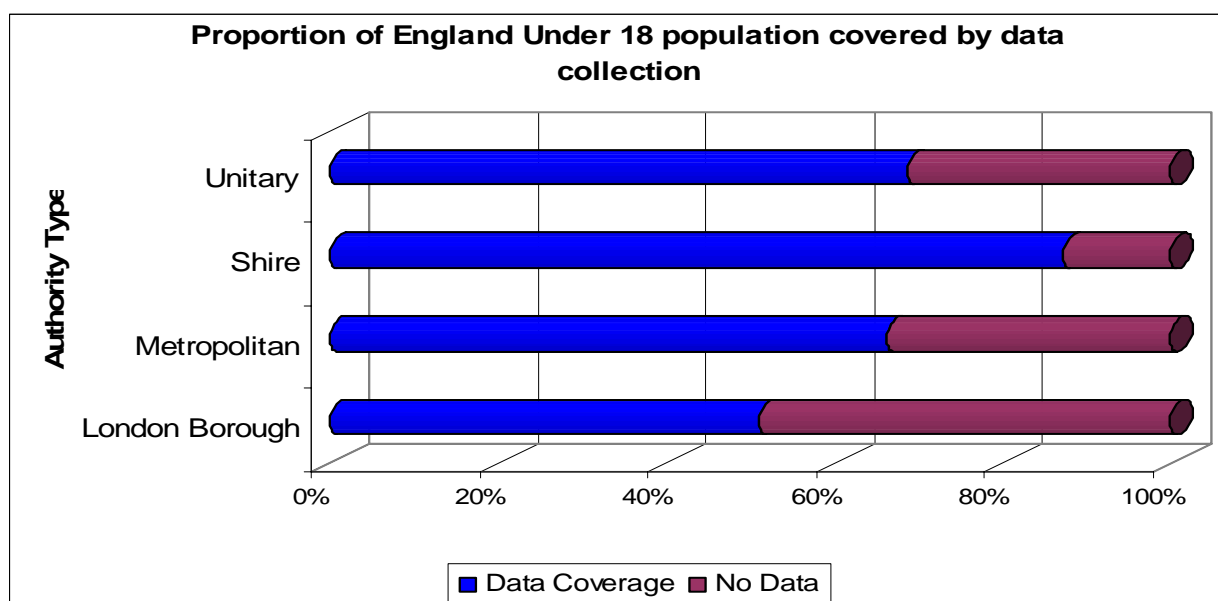


Figure 4: Graphical representation of Figure 3 - England Under 18 population coverage by authority type

The response rate compares very favourably with other surveys and data collections outside of DCSF statutory returns.

4. Results

The data collected has provided a wealth of information about safeguarding activity that can be analysed in many different ways. This initial report provides national analysis of the data collected. Additional analysis by region and type of authority will follow in addition to any further analysis as required by ADCS. Suggestions and considerations for further work are provided in Section 5.

Trend analysis (ie percentage or number increase between two or more points in time) has been calculated only from those authorities that were able to provide full data for all quarters within the 33 month period. Whilst a significant number of respondents were able to provide data for the first three quarters of this year (2009/10), some were not able to provide historic quarterly data. This has been for a number of reasons including historic annual reporting only; change of authority to new unitary status.

When looking at percentage change (eg increase in referrals), the two quarters Oct-Dec 2007 and Oct-Dec 2009 have been used to take into account a wide enough period pre- and post-reporting of the Baby Peter case. This calculation of change in volume of activity provides as current data as possible and also limits any effect of seasonal variances when looking at different periods of the year. Data relating to the first nine months of 2009/10 has been stated throughout the report but no full year forecasts from this figure produced.

4.1 Initial Contacts

An initial contact is defined within DCSF Integrated Children's System (ICS) guidance² as an enquiry to the Council with Social Services Responsibility (CSSR) for any number of reasons including advice and information, housing benefit, applications for social services support etc. Not all of these will result in a referral. There are decisions to be made at this stage that distinguish between enquiries that are in effect requests for services from the CSSR, those that require redirection to appropriate services other than the CSSR and those that can be provided with advice/information at the point of initial contact.

² Initial Contact data is not part of any statutory data collection and there is therefore no data collection guidance as with other activities within this report. The definition of an Initial Contact according to DCSF Integrated Children's System Core Information Requirements was provided for the data collection.

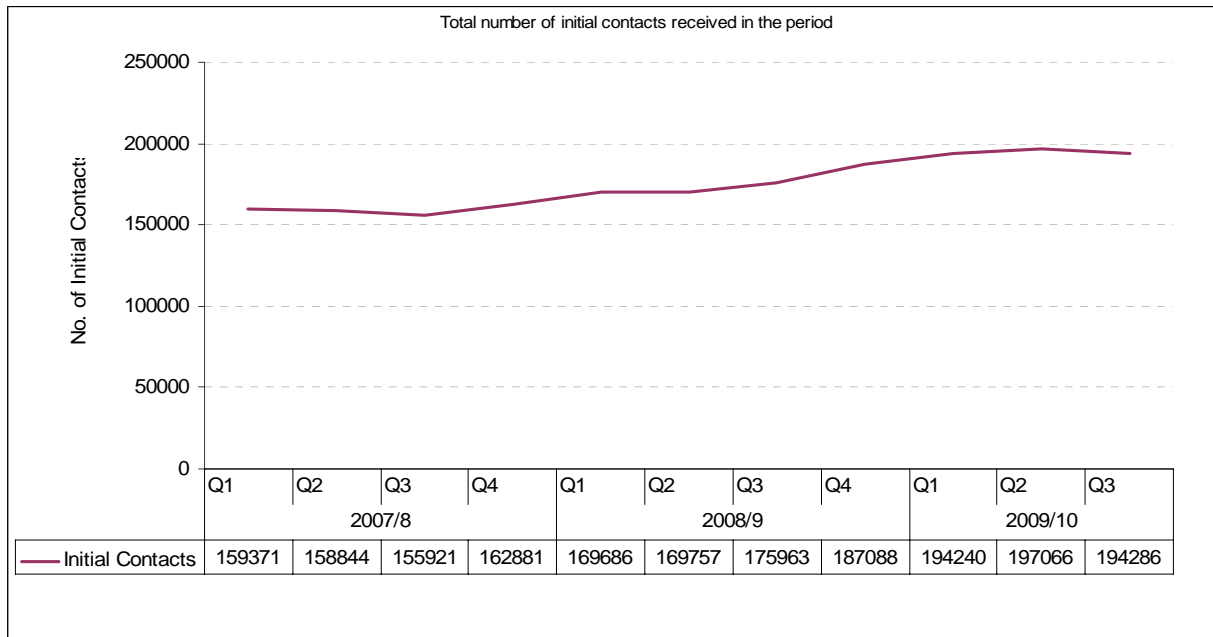


Figure 5: Total number of initial contacts (76 local authorities)

76 local authorities provided complete quarterly initial contact data from 1st April 2007, showing an increase of 24.6% in the number of initial contacts in the two years from Oct-Dec 2007 to Oct-Dec 2009.

Only 18 authorities have shown a decrease in number of initial contacts (often by very small variances) whilst 53 local authorities had an increase of more than 10%. One local authority saw a rise from 2,226 initial contacts in 2007/8 to 11,300 in the first three quarters of 2009/10.

The average number of initial contacts per 10,000 Under 18 population in 2007/8 amongst respondents was 1,188 rising to 1,311 in 2008/9 and 1,093 for the first nine months of 2009/10.

Holmes *et al* (2010) in the recent Loughborough University research concluded that reported social work time spent on activities relating to an initial contact ranged from 15 minutes to just over three hours. Because evidence of how many initial contacts are undertaken in local authorities is not part of any statutory data collection and is therefore not nationally reported or may not be high priority for reporting for local authorities, it is a hidden pressure on local authority social work teams.

Information about the reason and source of initial contacts would provide richer analysis to evidence this activity, and highlight where the biggest changes have been. Changes in recording due to ICS could also account for variances.

4.2 Referrals

DCSF CPR3 data item 1A. A referral is defined as a request for services to be provided by children's social care. This is either in respect of a case of a child not previously known to the local authority or where a case was previously opened but is now closed.

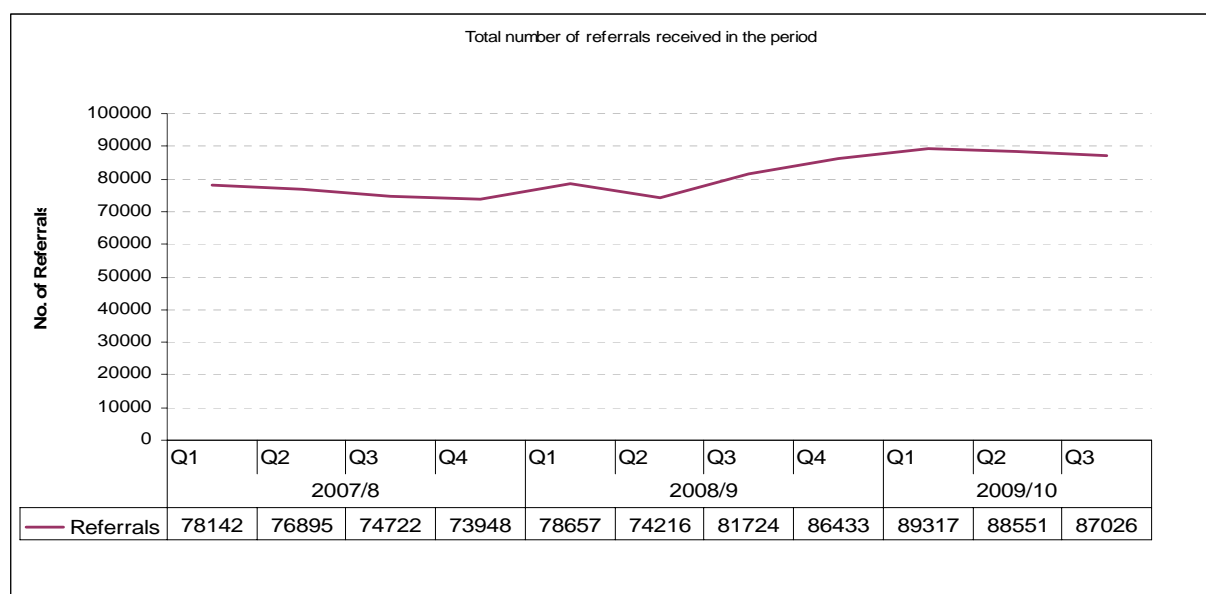


Figure 6: Number of referrals (93 authorities).

93 local authorities provided complete quarterly referral data, showing an increase of 16.5% in the number of referrals in the two years from Oct-Dec 2007 to Oct-Dec 2009. There was an increase per 10,000 Under 18 population in responding authorities from 467 in 2007/8, to 497 in 2008/9. There were 406 in the first nine months of 2009/10.

23 authorities have shown a decrease in the number of referrals although there is no common factor of location or type of authority. One authority reports a 269% increase in referrals. The total number of referrals in the first three quarters of 2009/10 across 93 local authorities providing data for this period is 283,143. A rough aggregation³ to all England gives an estimate of 447,265 referrals in England for the first nine months of 2009/10.

³ Calculated on total population of respondents to total population of England (ONS mid year estimates).

DCSF Statistical First Release (22/2009) states that there were 547,000 referrals in the year ending 31st March 2009 in England (497 per 10,000 Under 18 population).

As with initial contacts, analysis of the reason for referral and referrer would provide greater evidence of whether the increase is across all referrals or whether there is a prevalent reason which accounts for the increase. The effect and impact of ICS may also warrant investigation.

4.3 Section 47 Enquiries

DCSF CPR3 data item 4A. This item refers to enquiries conducted under the provisions of Section 47 of the Children Act 1989. The objective of such enquiries is to determine whether action is needed to promote and safeguard the welfare of the child or children who are the subject of the enquiries.

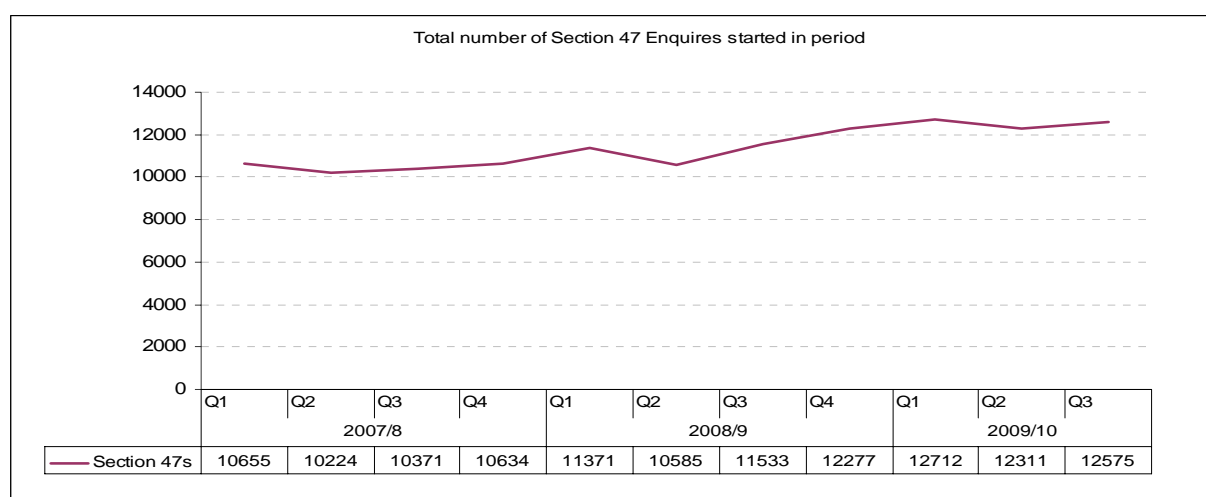


Figure 7: Number of Section 47 Enquiries (86 local authorities)

86 local authorities provided complete quarterly data showing an increase of 21.3% in the number of Section 47 Enquiries in the two years from Oct-Dec 2007 to Oct-Dec 2009. This represents an increase from 68 per 10,000 Under 18 population in 2007/8 to 74 in 2008/9. There were 61 in the first nine months of 2009/10.

Some local authorities have seen a significant increase in Section 47 Enquiries with 16 local authorities reporting in excess of 100% increase in the two years. Conversely, there were 18 local authorities whose number of Section 47 Enquiries has decreased although only eight of these showed a decreasing trend overall between 2007/8 and 2008/9. There appears to be no pattern by location or type of authority.

4.4 Initial Assessments

DCSF CPR3 data items 2A+2B. An initial assessment is defined as a brief assessment of each child referred to children's social care with a request for services to be provided.

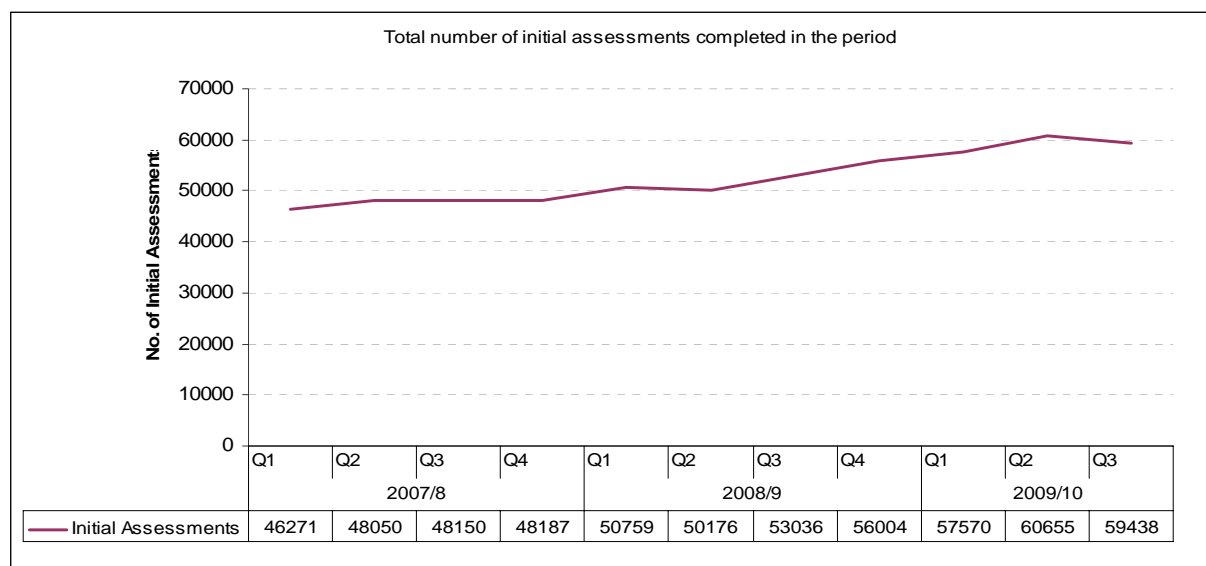


Figure 8: Number of Initial Assessments completed (92 authorities)

92 local authorities provided complete quarterly data showing an increase of 23.4% in the number of initial assessments completed from Oct-Dec 2007 to Oct-Dec 2009.

Although 11 local authorities show a decrease in number of initial assessment between the two time points, most report an increase overall in the past three years. 10 local authorities report an increase of over 100%, again with no pattern by location or type of authority.

Over the 33 month period covered by the data collection, the number of initial assessments per 10,000 Under 18 population across the responding authorities has risen from 287 for the full year 2007/8 to 317 in 2008/9 and with 268 for the first nine months of this year.

The total number of initial assessments in the first three quarters of 2009/10 across 93 local authorities providing data for this period is 177,663. A rough aggregation⁴ to all England gives an estimate of 294,622 in England for the first nine months of 2009/10.

⁴ Calculated on the total population of respondents to total population of England (ONS mid year estimates 2008).

DCSF Statistical First Release (22/2009) states that there were 319,900 initial assessments completed in the year to 31st March 2009.

The proportion of initial assessments completed compared to the number of referrals⁵ has also increased from 64% in Oct-Dec 2007 to 68% in Oct-Dec 2009. This is not the same calculation as used for the national performance indicator NI 68, but gives an indication that the rise in referrals is meeting thresholds to undertake initial assessments.

The Laming recommendation 19(1) states that *“all referrals to children’s services from other professionals should lead to an initial assessment”*. The Loughborough research estimates this will mean an average increase in initial assessments of 91% based on 36 authorities. The new Working Together issued in March 2010, and HM Government (2010) response to Laming, indicate that this has changed and there is no formal requirement for a referral to lead to an initial assessment - this is at local authority discretion. However with initial assessments as well as all other safeguarding activity reported here, future trends or estimation of future numbers are difficult to predict given the unknown impact of implementing this recent guidance.

4.5 Children subject of Initial Child Protection Conference

DCSF CPR3 data item 4B. Number of children who were the subject of an initial child protection conference in the period. This includes children who may have been the subject to a child protection conference, but the decision of the conference is that the child is not made subject of a child protection plan.

⁵ Calculated by the number of initial assessments completed in the period, to the number of referrals received in the period. This is not a common measure but is sufficient to illustrate that the number of referrals resulting in an initial assessments may be deduced to be rising.

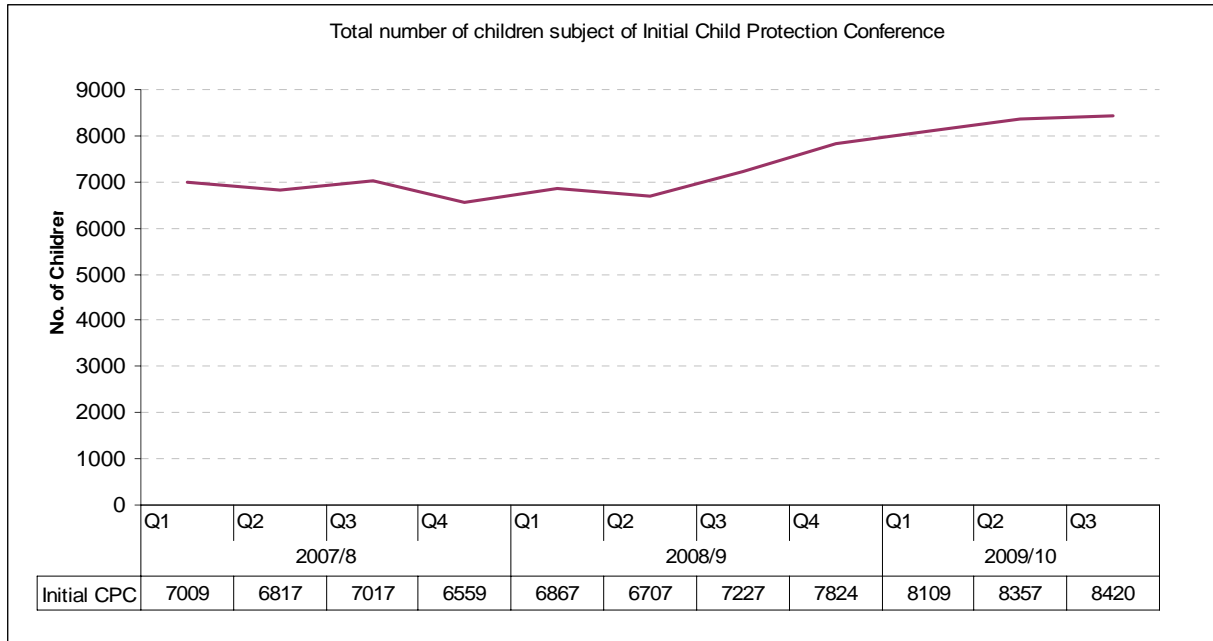


Figure 9: Number of children subject of initial child protection conference (92 authorities)

92 local authorities provided complete quarterly data from 1st April 2007, showing an increase of 20.0% in the number of children who were the subjects of an initial child protection conference from Oct-Dec 2007 to Oct-Dec 2009. The average number of children per 10,000 Under 18 population per quarter (ie three month period) across the responding authorities has risen from 9.7 in 2007/8 to 10.2 in 2008/9 and 11.8 in 2009/10.

Looking at aggregated and individual local authority data, there does seem to be a greater fluctuation across quarters than with other data items. This could be due to a variety of reasons including smaller numbers of children or size of families who are the subjects of the conference.

Eight authorities show a decrease of more than 20%. The national data is slightly skewed by one local authority which reduced the number of children subject of an initial child protection conference from over 1000 in 2007/8 to 362 in the first nine months of 2009/10 and a reduction of 65% between the two time periods used for calculating change during this analysis. No correction has been made to the figures for this authority, but it is worth noting that the average rise without this local authority included in the calculation shows an increase of 23.5% (91 authorities).

4.6 Children subject of a child protection plan

DCSF CPR3 Part B, Table 1 total. The number of children who were the subject of a child protection plan (registered) at end of period. This does not include temporary registrations (ie children subject to a child protection plan in another area who have moved into the local authority and where a receiving-in conference has not yet taken place).

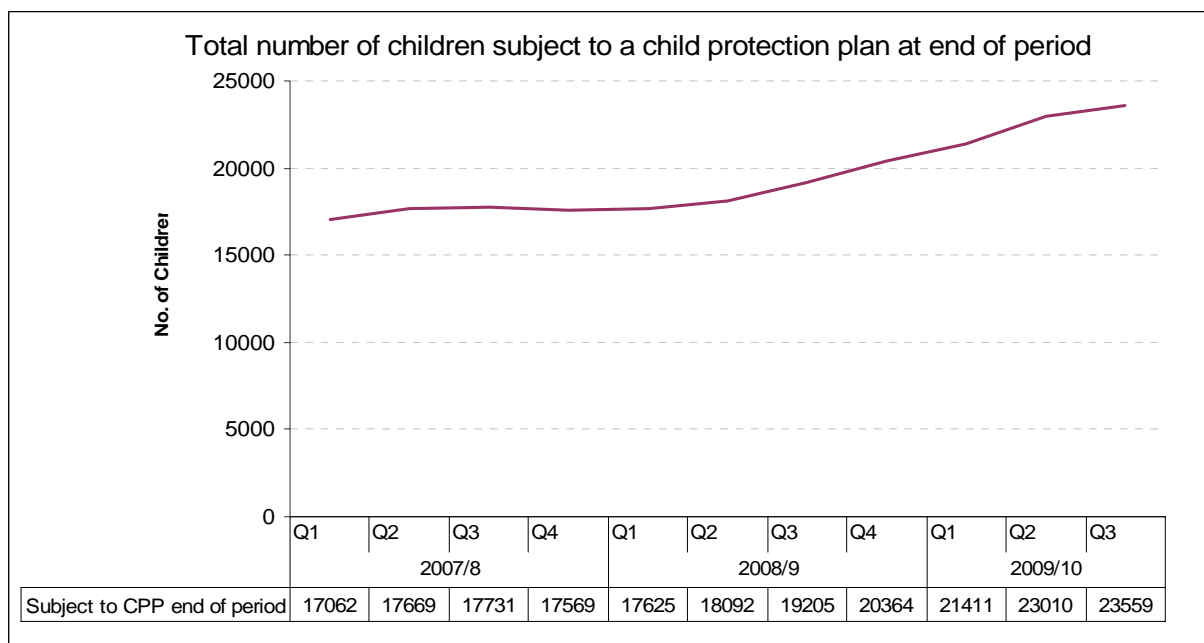


Figure 10: Number of children subject of a child protection plan at end of period (95 authorities)

95 local authorities provided complete quarterly data showing an increase of 32.9% in the number of children who were subjects of a child protection plan at December 2007 and December 2009. 72 local authorities reported an increase of more than 10% and 28 local authorities showed an increase of more than 50%. Only five local authorities show a decrease of more than 10% and none of these display significant variances overall or a trend of reduction.

The total number of children who were subjects of a child protection plan per 10,000 Under 18 population at the end of the period showed an increase from 25.4 (December 2007) to 33.7 (December 2009).

DCSF Statistical First Release (22/2009) reports that there are 34,100 children who were subjects of a child protection plan at 31st March 2009 compared with 29,200 in 2008 – equating to 31 children per 10,000 population at 31st March 2009.

4.7 Legal status and orders

DCSF SSDA 903 guidance 2008-09 Version 1.3 Issued January 09 section 2.4.17 provides definition on each legal status. Data collected refers to the number of orders made in the quarter (ie new legal orders) in an attempt to quantify new legal case work and any changes in types of legal orders gained over the period. Although Police Protection is not a legal order, it is a valid legal status under which a child can start to be looked after pending decision to return home or to seek a legal order through the Courts.

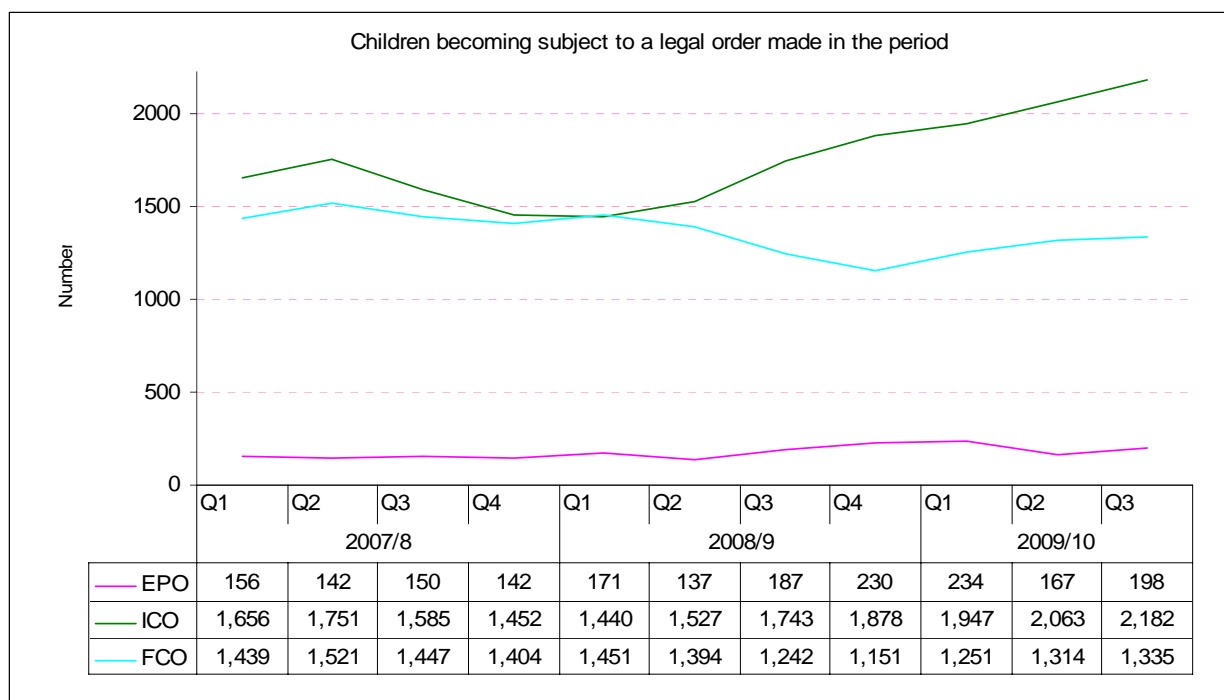


Figure 11: Number of legal orders made in the period (83-88 authorities)

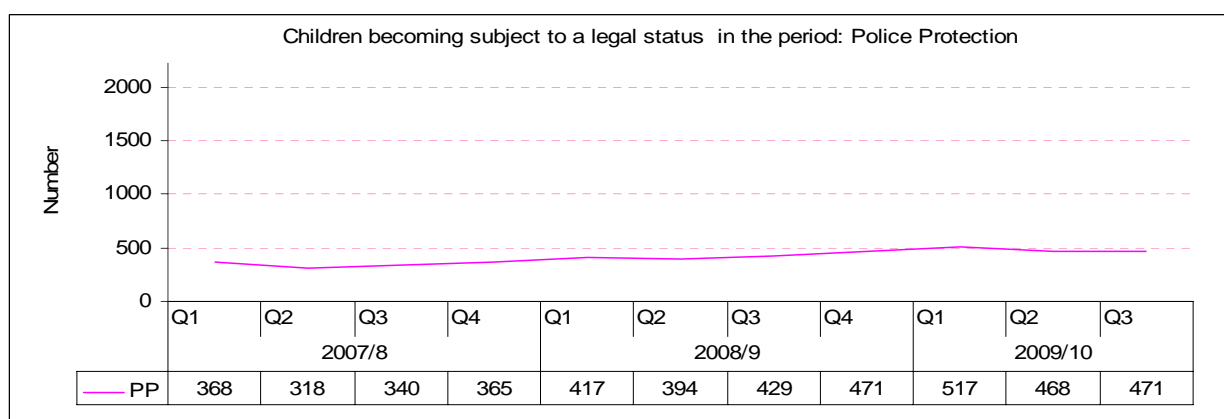


Figure 12: Number of children who were subject to Police Protection in the period (83 authorities)

Between 83 and 88 local authorities provided quarterly data showing an increase in Police Protection (39%), an increase in Emergency Protection Orders (32%) and an increase in Interim Care Orders (38%) between Oct-Dec 2007 and Oct-Dec 2009. However, the number of Full Care Orders has reduced by 8%.

This may not be in line with CAFCASS care demand figures for the number of care applications (Quarter 2 2009/10 latest quarterly figures) which indicates a 27.3% drop in demand for care applications from April to June 2008 and a sharp rise from second half of 2008/9 to “unprecedented high levels” in July to September 2009. They report 6,241 care applications in 2007/8 and 6,486 in 2008/9.

One local authority commented that the biggest impact on front line teams has been the delay in care applications being completed, although the number of applications has not increased. The authority reports that the average time taken to complete care proceedings is well beyond 12 months and is caused by delays in appointing children’s guardians and increased use by the Courts of specialist and independent assessments.

Laming (2009) quotes 45 weeks as an average time for a case to come to Court and adds that the increase in Court fees for care order applications for local authorities was unhelpful.

HM Government has stated that fees paid by councils to bring care cases to court will be abolished from 1 April 2011 following the publication of Francis Plowden's independent review into court fees, although the review recommendation was to abolish these from April 2010.

4.8 Children starting to be looked after

Definition as per SSDA903 data collection (guidance notes section 1.6 provides further detail). Number of children starting to be looked after in the period, excluding respite.

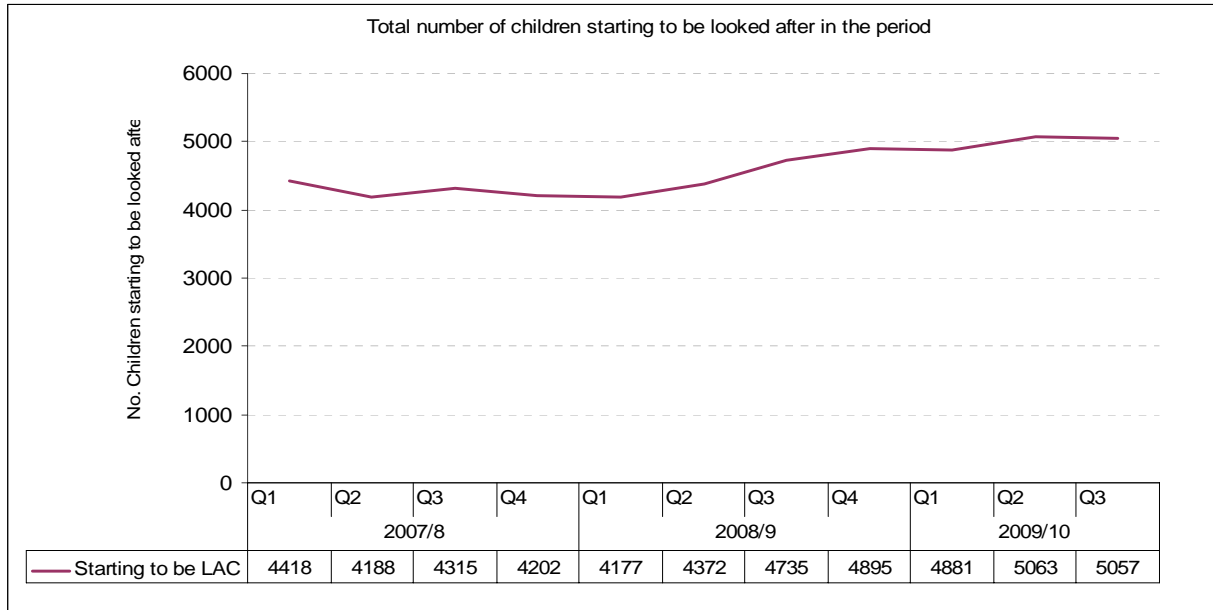


Figure 13: Number of children starting to be looked after in the period (92 authorities).

92 local authorities provided complete quarterly data showing an increase of 17.2% in the number of children starting to be looked after between December 2007 and December 2009. 45 authorities saw an increase of more than 20% with 19 reporting increases in excess of 50%. Those 16 authorities who have reported a reduction between Oct-Dec 2007 and Oct-Dec 2009 are generally smaller authorities whose numbers fluctuate between quarters.

15,001 children and young people started to be looked after in 92 responding authorities in the first nine months of this year (2009/10) equating to a rough England estimate of 23,848 in the same nine month period.

DCSF Statistical First Release (25/2009) reports that there were 25,400 children who started to be looked after year ending 31st March 2009 – an increase of 9% on the previous year.

A local authority noted the strain that this increased number of children starting to be looked after has put on foster care placements against a backdrop of already increasing numbers previously, and the financial implications of needing to use agency foster care placements.

4.9 Children looked after at end of period

Definition as per SSDA903 data collection (guidance notes section 1.6 provides further detail).
 Number of children looked after (or children in care) at end of period, excluding respite.

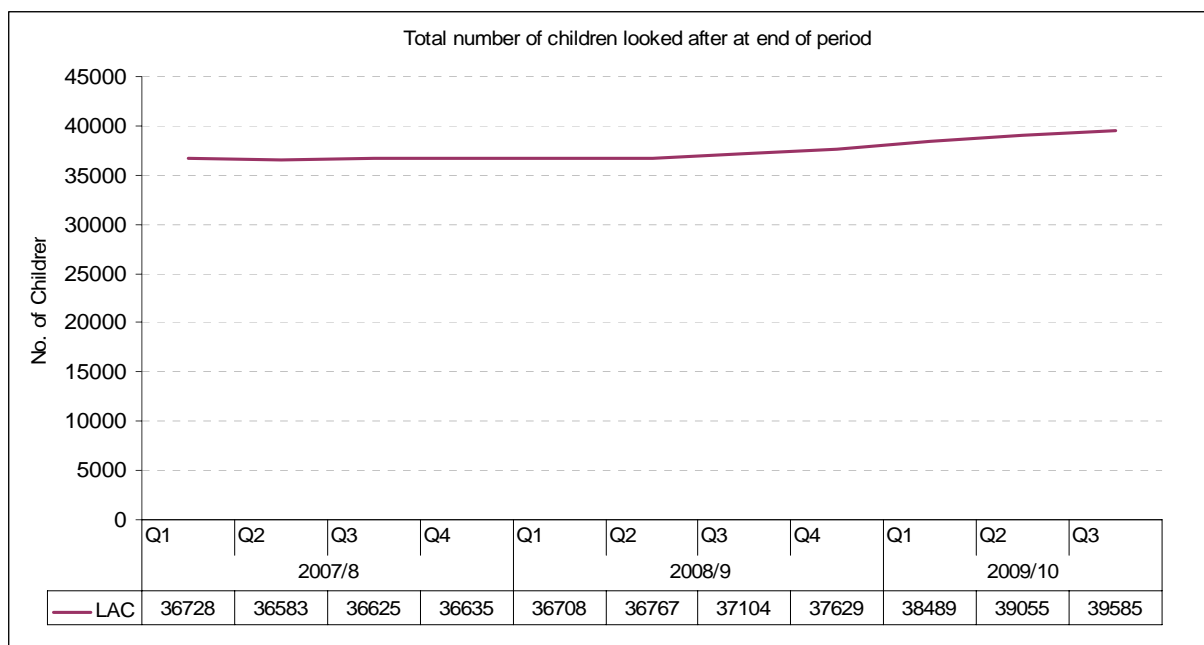


Figure 14: Number of children looked after at end of period (93 authorities)

93 local authorities provided complete quarterly data showing an increase of 8.1% in the number of children looked after at 31 December 2009 compared to 31 December 2007. Only five local authorities reported a decrease of more than 10%. 39 authorities reported an increase of more than 10% and five report an increase of more than 20%.

There were 39,585 children looked after at 31st December 2009 within 93 local authorities which equates to a rough estimate for England of 63,456⁶.

DCSF Statistical First Release (25/2009) states that there were 60,900 children looked after at 31st March 2009, 2% more than in 2008.

⁶ Calculated on the total population of respondents to total population of England (ONS mid year estimates 2008).

4.10 Staffing

This aims to collect information about duty or intake team establishment which receives initial contacts, referrals and undertakes initial work with the child or family. It captures the level of worker (ie manager, qualified social worker etc) as well as how many Whole Time Equivalent posts (WTE) are a permanent part of the staffing establishment (these could include people on fixed term contracts who are not agency workers); agency workers, any vacant posts and the total staff at that level. All staffing numbers refer to WTE posts

23 local authorities commented that they had difficulty providing staffing data. In some cases this was due to restructurings with the department (moving to locality working or away from locality working to a centralised intake team, or other restructuring including different ways of using call centres and family support workers). Another factor was authorities which had recently gained unitary status. One local authority stated they have a Social Care Direct team that covers children's and adults services.

Being able to reach a robust figure for how many staff are carrying out initial work proved exceptionally difficult due to these differences and some authorities reporting all social work teams undertaking family support and child protection work, not just those dealing with intake and referral. Add into the mix the staffing and workloads of Emergency Duty Teams and the complexity grows.

However, basic analysis has been undertaken as this is a key factor in measuring the impact of the increases already reported earlier in this report. Some of the outlier/incomplete data provided by local authorities has been removed from the analysis to try and capture only those workers referred to within the data collection definition.

62 local authorities were able to provide complete quarterly data showing an increase of 12.9% in the total number of WTE team managers, deputy managers and qualified social workers between 2008 and December 2009 who meet the definition given above. However, these numbers are slightly skewed by nine authorities whose staffing establishment rose by between 50% and 200%, mostly by agency staff. At December 2009, 10.5% of manager, deputy manager and social worker posts were covered by agency staff (86 authorities). 12.5% of WTE posts are vacant, but it is not clear what proportion of the reported vacancies were covered by the agency staff. In eight authorities, the number of staff (WTE) decreased between 2008 and December 2009.

52% of respondents had one or more WTE vacancies in team manager, deputy manager or qualified social worker category and 35% of respondents had non-social work WTE posts (ie social work assistants, administration etc) being vacant.

In terms of other workers (social care assistants, administration staff etc), there has been a 4.2% increase between 2008 and December 2009 across the 62 reporting authorities. 4.7% were covered by agency staff as at December 2009 and 11.7% were vacancies.

Local authority respondents report a total aggregated qualified social work and non-social work WTE staffing establishment increase of 10.6%.

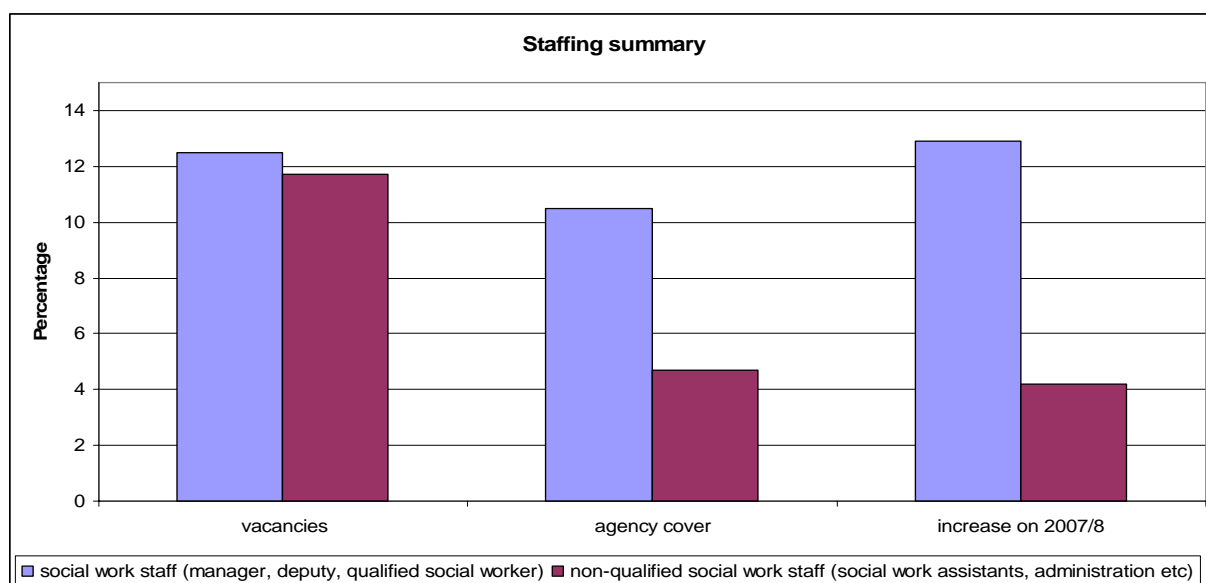


Figure 15: Summary of key staffing information (62 authorities)

4.11 Comments by local authorities

Local authorities provided the following comments to support the data collection:

- One local authority commented that the complexity of the work has increased as well as the increase in volume of activities;
- Eight authorities stated that they had difficulty reporting initial contacts as this is not routinely reported. (Refer section 4.1 above for discussion around reasons);
- 23 authorities stated difficulties producing staffing data and for the majority who provided any comments within the return or on email, it appeared this was the most complex or took the longest to produce

- Nine authorities reported difficulty reporting for certain quarters during implementation of new IT systems or differences in the way activity was reported
- Local government re-organisation has proven to be an issue for some new authorities with lack of historic data for the new area.

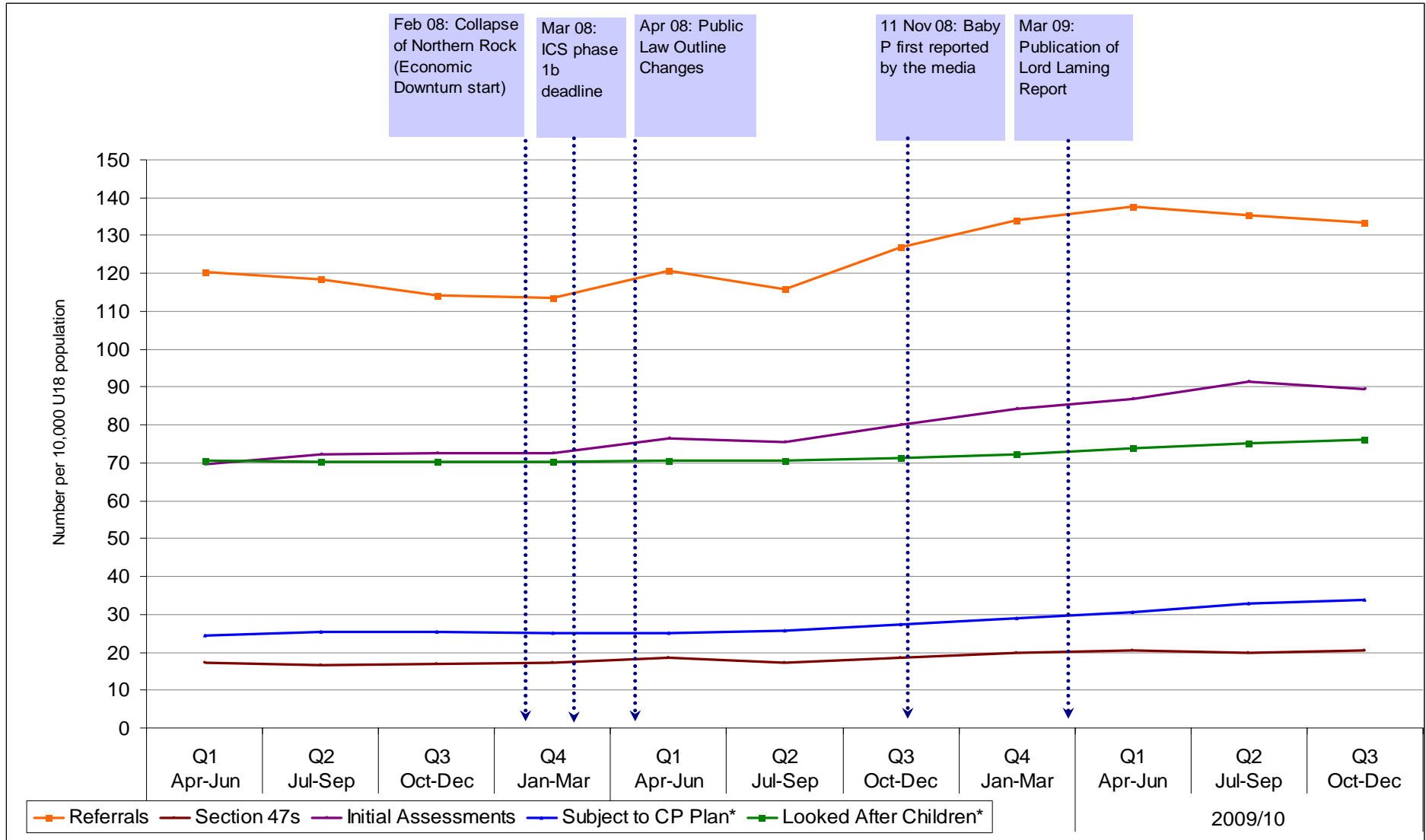
4.12 Timeline

The chart overleaf provides a summary of the safeguarding activity data by quarter together with events that may have influenced this activity to identify any possible cause and effect. However, a significant health warning must be issued that there could be a number of factors all contributing to levels of increased activity and it would be inappropriate to assign just one cause without further study and investigation.

For the purposes of illustrating the changes over a period of time for a range of activities (eg referrals, Section 47 Enquiries, Initial Assessments, Subject to a CP Plan and looked after children), the number per 10,000 Under 18 population across total survey respondents has been used.

* The number of children who are subject to a child protection plan and looked after children is as at the end of the period.

Figure 16: Safeguarding activity timeline with significant events



5. Considerations & the evidence continuum

5.1 About the provision of data

The data collection was kept as simple as possible in order to maximise returns but local authorities were reporting a completion time of 4-5 hours, resulting in a burden on the 105 local authority data teams who responded amounting to a total of around 473 hours. ADCS is very sensitive to the additional burden this data collection has put on local authorities at a busy time of year and is extremely grateful to all authorities for contributing to this vital work on evidencing increased safeguarding activity .

The pressure on data teams and complexity or reliability of ICS systems to produce this information has been an issue for some local authorities, and there were gaps in a few authorities' data when they were changing systems. The impact of changing IT systems and ICS on provision of data is not always positive.

5.2 About the data

The analysis provided within this report is robust in terms of representing a good proportion of the England Under 18 population and range of local authorities. However, the lower response rate from London Boroughs may affect the validity of generalisation across the whole of England and in pure statistical terms the gold standard would be a confidence interval (response rate) of 95%. We can therefore make good assumptions about the whole of England but cannot truly represent the findings of the survey to an England total.

Generally, local authority data teams take advantage of the end of year to carry out increased data validation prior to submission of statutory returns and therefore quarterly data may not match annually reported statutory data exactly.

With annual statutory data collections being undertaken at present, it will be September 2010 onwards before a complete national picture from DCSF is available. The need to rely on more recent ad-hoc reporting to understand the national evidence of current service delivery, to inform funding and policy when there are these levels of safeguarding pressure, is essential.

5.3 The evidence continuum

The results of this survey provide the most up to date data available at this present time on a national basis and we believe the results justify collection of data to evidence safeguarding pressures.

Media reports which include data are often colourful and inexact. Two examples are given below:

“Referrals of vulnerable young people to councils' children's services departments have rocketed having previously been going down - while there has been a corresponding leap in the numbers of applications by local authorities to take children into care.” Guardian DataBlog, accessed 5 April 2010, which has a range of data including DCSF SFR at 31 March 2009.

“Almost four thousand extra children have been put in care in the wake of the Baby P case” (Telegraph newspaper, 6 March 2010 quoting a survey they conducted of more than 100 councils across England which found an average of 6% rise in the number of children in foster care or children's homes in the six months between April and September 2009 compared to the same period in 2008)

Other recent research studies and data reported are largely in line with the results of this data collection, including synergy with DCSF Statistical First Release 2008/9 data generally.

However, there is a mismatch in data around care orders when compared to CAFCASS data which may indicate issues between a reported rise in care applications compared to a decline in Full Care Orders granted. With a rising population of looked after children (8.1% from December 2007 to December 2009), further investigation into this area may be warranted.

Suggestions for further analysis to add to the evidence continuum are given below:

- Analysis of ADCS data by region and type of authority (underway);
- Following publication of Children In Need Census data later in 2010 – analysis of type of work (ie CIN codes);
- Analysis of initial contacts and referrals by reason for referral (within local authorities);

- Changes over time in profile of children starting to be looked after and those subject to a child protection plan (ie has there been a change in the profile by age, reason for starting to be looked after or category of abuse);
- Investigation into rise in number of looked after children against a drop in Full Care Orders and CAFCASS data;
- Triangulation with other agency safeguarding data, such as Police (possibly under the oversight of Local Safeguarding Children Boards), Health Visitors, A&E Departments;
- The ADCS may wish to consider assisting local authorities with the benchmarking opportunities that this level of national data provides. As well as provision of the report, local authority data teams will be able to map their own individual performance against national, regional, and type of authority if we are able to provide them with an excel workbook of aggregated data.

6. Conclusion

There has been a significant increase in all activities except granting of Full Care Orders over the period covered by the data collection, against a relatively static population (0.1% increase from 2006 to 2008 mid-year population estimates and a projected growth of 0.01% in 2009)⁷.

2009/10 data gathered within this survey shows that the increase is significant in all areas of safeguarding activity with the largest percentage increases in children subject to a child protection plan, initial contacts and initial assessments. The increases are at a greater pace than illustrated by HM Government in the report The Government's Response To Lord Laming: One Year On⁸ which states that:

"We have seen a significant rise in demand for children's services, particularly children's social care. The latest set of national data available up to March 2009 indicates that referrals to children's social care services have increased by 2%, initial assessments by 9% and core assessments by 15%. There have also been sharp rises in the number of children entering the care system, up 9%, and in the number of children who are the subject of a child protection plan, up 17%. Many local areas will be experiencing significant challenges around workforce capacity and competing priorities."

⁷

2008-based National Population Projections Published 18 November 2009

⁸ HM Government (2010) The Government's Response To Lord Laming: One Year On. (page 3)

The survey has raised further areas for exploration, including the apparent reduction in Full Care Orders granted against a rising looked after child population and CAFCASS reporting a rise in care applications.

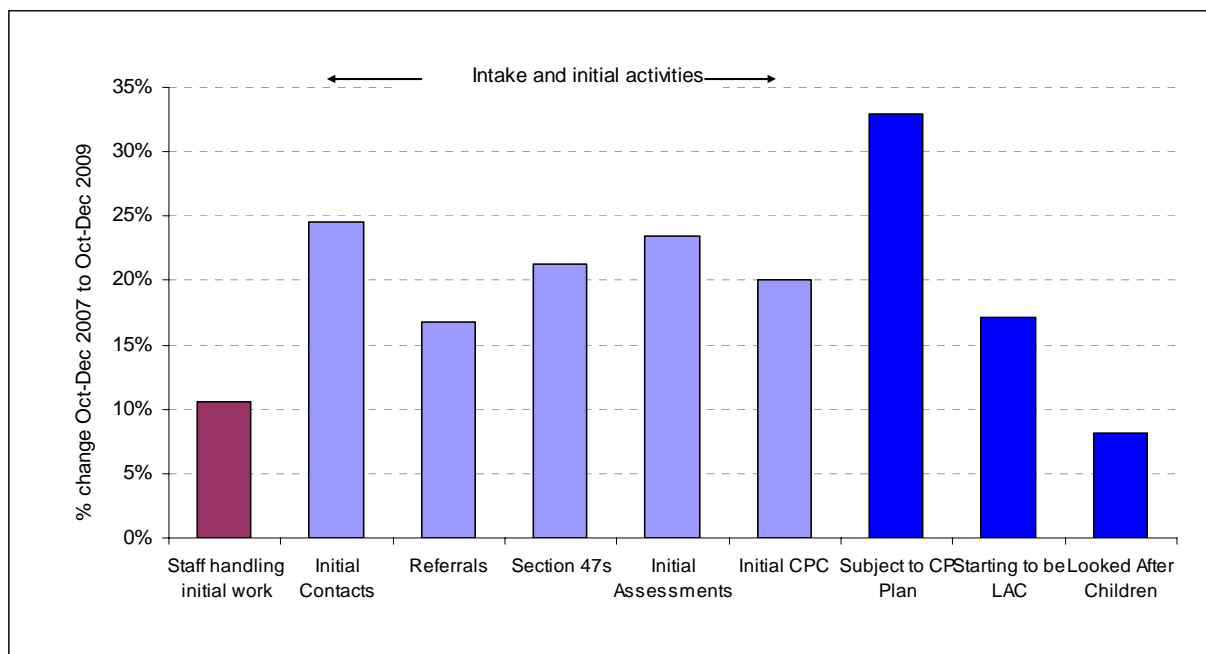


Figure 17: Summary of percentage change across local authority respondents

Although reporting staffing across authorities is complex, it appears that the average rate of growth of social work teams included in the survey to undertake the work required (10.6% WTE) has been insufficient to meet the additional demand given the increase in the volume of activities undertaken by these staff.

It is possible to *imply* a number of hypotheses from this evidence provided by local authorities but very difficult for any to be proven and extreme care should be taken that this is not the case. These include:

- Uncovering of un-met need through improved multi-agency working concluding that the increase in social work activity is appropriate;
- There has been a reduction in early intervention pre-statutory social work activities resulting in increased workload at this higher tier of intervention;
- The increases are due to any number of other collective factors, such as an increase in recognition of domestic violence and referral of these cases from the Police and better understanding of thresholds across a range of agencies;

- The increase can be attributed in part to central government recommendations, change in social work practice and other effects which may be associated with the Baby Peter case.

We have provided robust evidence of a national increase across a wide range of initial children's social work activities through this study and initial work already undertaken on calculating resource implications will be expanded in the next phase of work by ADCS. This will bring together knowledge from other work in this area; explore in more detail resource implications, test some of the hypotheses to identify reasons for the increases and subsequently how it can be effectively addressed.

HM Government (2010 p25) states that "Access to high quality data is fundamental in supporting planning, performance and improvements for safeguarding". The data provided by this survey will assist the ADCS in taking these next steps.

7. References

ADCS (2010) *ADCS response to Loughborough university findings on Laming Recommendation 19.*

CAFCASS (2009) *care demand quarterly bulletin*

DCSF (22/2009) *Referrals, assessment and children and young people who are the subject of a child protection plan, England - Year ending 31 March 2009*

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000873/index.shtml>

DCSF (25/2009) *Children Looked After in England (including adoption and care leavers) year ending 31 March 2009* (date accessed: 23 March 2010)

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000878/index.shtml>

HM Government (2010) *The Government's response to Lord Laming: One Year On*

Holmes et al (2010) *Calculating the cost and capacity implications for local authorities implementing the Laming (2009) recommendations*, Loughborough University

ONS (2009) *2008-based National Population Projections* Published 18 November 2009

http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_population/NPP2008/wHfLleHmiEng08singyear.xls

Lord Laming (2009) *The protection of Children in England: A progress report*

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DCSF statistics division for provision of reference data

National College

Appendix A: Data Collection Sheet

ADCS SAFEGUARDING PRESSURES NATIONAL PROJECT: DATA COLLECTION ON CHILD PROTECTION ACTIVITY

The ADCS is asking all local authorities to assist in a national project to evaluate the impact of the effects of increased child protection and safeguarding activities and budget pressures associated with those increases.

We are collecting data which is generally in line with DCSF data collections (eg CPR3, SSSA903 and CIN Census) and which you may already have been producing on a quarterly basis for performance reports. This means that data should already be easily available in your authority and definitions should be clear. Definition and references have been provided in italics below each data item using the 2008/9 guidance where appropriate. Four years data is being requested to show robust trends. If you are able to provide this, it would be appreciated but as a minimum we would like data for 2007/8 onwards.

Data will be aggregated to national level and therefore the more information we have, the more robust the national data will be. Individual local authorities will not be identified within the final analysis and individual authority data will remain confidential.

The work plan for this project is as follows: Data Collection 10th to 24th March; Analysis 24th to 31st March; Report to ADCS Board of Directors and Council of Reference subsequently.

If there is any data item you are unsure of or you are unable to make a full return due to changing systems or other reason, please do contact Carole Brooks on the email below.

PLEASE COMPLETE THE GREEN SHADED AREAS BELOW AND RETURN BY **24TH MARCH 2010** TO:

carole.brooks@luton.gov.uk

NAME OF LOCAL AUTHORITY:

CONTACT NAME:

CONTACT TELEPHONE:

SECTION 1: QUARTERLY DATA

Data Item	2007/8				2008/9				2009/10		
	Q1 Apr-Jun	Q2 Jul-Sep	Q3 Oct-Dec	Q4 Jan-Mar	Q1 Apr-Jun	Q2 Jul-Sep	Q3 Oct-Dec	Q4 Jan-Mar	Q1 Apr-Jun	Q2 Jul-Sep	Q3 Oct-Dec
1 Number of initial contacts received in the period											
<i>An initial contact is defined within ICS guidance as an enquiry to the CSSR for any number of reasons including advice and information, housing benefit, applications for social services support etc. Not all of these will result in a referral. There are decisions to be made at this stage that distinguish between enquiries that are in effect requests for services from the CSSR, those that require redirection to appropriate services other than the CSSR and those that can be provided with advice/information at the point of initial contact. Some authorities may not have this information, in which case, please leave blank.</i>											
2 Number of referrals received in the period											
<i>CPR3 data item 1A. A referral is defined as a request for services to be provided by children's social care. This is either in respect of a case of a child not previously known to the local authority or where a case was previously opened but is now closed.</i>											

Data Item	2007/8				2008/9				2009/10		
	Q1 Apr-Jun	Q2 Jul-Sep	Q3 Oct-Dec	Q4 Jan-Mar	Q1 Apr-Jun	Q2 Jul-Sep	Q3 Oct-Dec	Q4 Jan-Mar	Q1 Apr-Jun	Q2 Jul-Sep	Q3 Oct-Dec
3 Number of children subject of Section 47 Enquiries started											
<i>CPR3 data item 4A. This item refers to enquiries conducted under the provisions of section 47 of the Children Act 1989. The objective of such enquiries is to determine whether action is needed to promote and safeguard the welfare of the child or children who are the subject of the enquiries.</i>											
4 Number of initial assessments completed in the period											
<i>CPR3 data items 2A+2B and denominator for NI59 (all Initial Assessment completed, regardless of whether completed in timescale or not). An initial assessment is defined as a brief assessment of each child referred to children's social care with a request for services to be provided.</i>											
5 Number of children subject of Initial Child Protection Conference											
<i>CPR3 data item 4B.</i>											
6 Number of children subject to a child protection plan at end of period											
<i>CPR3 Part B, Table 1 total. The number of children who were the subject of a child protection plan (registered) at end of period. This does not include temporary registrations.</i>											
7 Number of legal orders made:											
a) Police Protection											
b) Emergency Protection Order											
c) Interim Care Order											
d) Full Care Order											
<i>SSDA 903 guidance 2008-09 Version 1.3 Issued January 09 section 2.4.17 provides definition on each legal status.</i>											
8 Number of children starting to be looked after in the period											
<i>Definition as per SSDA903 data collection (guidance notes section 1.6 provides further detail). Excludes respite.</i>											
9 Number of children looked after at end of period											
<i>Definition as per SSDA903 data collection (guidance notes section 1.6 provides further detail). Excludes respite.</i>											

SECTION 2: ANNUAL DATA				
Data item	2007/8		2008/9	2009/10
10 Under 18 population				

This is the the mid-year population estimate used in each of these years to calculate the number of children subject to a child protection plan, or number of looked after children per 10,000 under 18 population. For example, 2008/9 will be the Under 18 population from ONS mid-year population estimates in 2007.

Data item	2007/8				2008/9				2009/10 (at 31 Dec or nearest date)			
11 Staffing within Duty/Intake teams at end of period (WTE):	Perm- anent	Agency	Vacant	Total	Perm- anent	Agency	Vacant	Total	Perm- anent	Agency	Vacant	Total
a) Team Manager												
b) Deputy Manager or Senior Practitioners												
c) Qualified Social Workers												
d) other workers (social care assistants, administration staff)												

This aims to collect information about your duty or intake team establishment which receives initial contacts, referrals and undertakes initial work with the child or family. It captures the level of worker as well as how many are a permanent part of the staffing establishment (these could include people on fixed term contracts who are not agency workers); agency workers, any vacant posts and the total staff at that level. As many authorities operate differently, we realise this may be difficult data to provide robustly, but hope that local authorities will do what they can.

<p>12 Please use this space to add any additional comments or notes about the data that you would like to make. This could include additional increases in social work activity you have experienced.</p>	
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Thank you.

Please return your completed form by Friday 24th March to:

carole.brooks@luton.gov.uk

If you have any queries about the data collection, please send Carole an email with your contact telephone number and she will respond to you.