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Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London SW1P 3BT

Telephone:

Press Office

020 7925 6789

Public Enquiries

0870 000 2288

Statistician

Ruth Edwards

020 7972 1509

Email

info@dfes.gsi.gov.uk

Internet

[http://www.dfes.gov.uk/
rsgateway/DB/SFR/](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/)



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Children in Need in England: Preliminary results of a survey of activity and expenditure as reported by Local Authority Social Services' Children and Families Teams for a survey week in February 2003

This statistical first release presents provisional results from a survey of Children in Need and figures on the activity and expenditure reported by Social Services in respect of provision for Children in Need in a typical week in February 2003.

The key results show that, in England, during the survey week in February 2003:

Numbers of Children in Need

- There were approximately 384,200 Children In Need in England in 2003
- 69,100 of these were Children Looked After, and the remaining 315,100 were other Children in Need
- Social Services provided services for around 224,400 (58%) Children in Need in a typical week
- 90% (62,100) of Children Looked After and 52% (162,300) of other Children in Need received a service or had money spent on their behalf during the survey week (either in terms of staff/centre time or in terms of cost of the Local Authority paying for provision need – eg residential costs)

Cost and resources

- Services provided to Children in Need cost Social Services on average about £61m per week; £37m per week on Children Looked After, and £24m per week on other Children in Need
- The average Child Looked After who received a service cost Social Services £600 per week, and other Children in Need who received a service around £145 per week

Activity

- The average Child Looked After receives 3.4 hours per week of service from Social Work staff, either in teams or centres, of which around 0.2 hours is group work
- Other Children in Need receive on average about 2.4 hours per week of service from Social Work staff, either in teams or centres, of which around 0.6 hours is group work.

Comparison with 2001 Census

- The 2001 census was the second Children in Need census, and took place in September/October 2001
- The number of children receiving services during the census week increased by around 2% in the 2003 census. Overall, the number of Children Looked After receiving services decreased by 0.5%, but this was offset by an increase of 3% in the number of other Children in Need receiving a service
- The cost of providing services to Children in Need increased by about 23% from £49.9m per week in September/October 2001 to £61.1m in February 2003
- The average amount spent per child per week on Children in Need increased by 20%, from £230 in 2001 to £270 in 2003. Expenditure on Children Looked After increased by 20%, from £500 per week in 2001 to £600 per week in 2003, and for other Children in Need was up 23% from £120 per week to £145 per week.

Notes to Editors

1. The 2003 survey is the third comprehensive national survey covering all children in need: that is, children who are known to their Local Authority Social Services as requiring the provision of services. Details of the first and second Children in Need (CiN) surveys can be found on the Department of Health website at <http://www.doh.gov.uk/cin>
2. 146 authorities have made complete returns to date. These authorities account for 97% of the 0-17 age group in England, as at the latest date. The figures for England therefore have been derived by uprating by around 3% the figures for the responding authorities. This grossing up factor has been used to allow for all authorities not making a complete return.
3. Data for individual Local Authorities will be published early in the New Year. Authorities are being given time to check they are content that their figures are a true reflection of the position in their authorities. Therefore, the above results are preliminary findings only, and may be subject to change. In particular, the activity and expenditure data may be liable to change, as some authorities have recorded activity but no costs, and others costs but no activity. It is not known whether these factors 'cancel out' to any significant effect.
4. The number of Children Looked After (CLA) as provided by the CiN survey (60,900) is greater than the number recorded as Looked After at 31 March 2002 in the CLA returns (59,700). This is because the CiN survey covers all children looked after at any time during a seven day period. Note that both of the above figures exclude children receiving planned short term breaks.
5. As in previous years, there is a possible discrepancy between the CiN census and the CLA returns in terms of the reported numbers of children receiving planned short term breaks - 8,200 were reported in the CiN census week, and 12,200 in the CLA collection for the year to 31 March 2002. On examination of these figures, there is an indication that planned short term breaks are being provided to children and their families more frequently than was indicated by the CLA statistics. This difference will be investigated further.

Tables

Table 1: Children reported on the CIN database based on a sample week in February 2003

Table 2: Total weekly costs as reported on the CIN database based on a sample week in February 2003

Table 3 Average cost (£ per week) per child receiving a service based on a sample week in February 2003

Table 4: Children in Need: Time spent with teams or at centres

Rounding and suppression

1. In order to ensure confidentiality of all Children in Need, rounding and suppression conventions have been used in this Statistical First Release.
2. All numbers have been rounded to the nearest 100 if they exceed 1,000 and to the nearest 10 otherwise, with the exception of the average cost data shown in Table 3. Here, average costs have been rounded to the nearest 5.
3. Numbers from 1 to 5 inclusive have been suppressed, being replaced in the published tables by a hyphen (-). Where any number is shown as zero (0), the original figure submitted was zero.

Table 1 Children reported on the CIN database based on a sample week in February 2003

England	Numbers and Percentages					
	Children Looked After	Children Supported in Families or Independently	Total Children in Need	Children Looked After	Children Supported in Families or Independently	Total Children in Need
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
No activity in the census week	7,000	10	152,800	48	159,800	42
Some activity in census week	62,100	90	162,300	52	224,400	58
Total	69,100		315,100		384,200	

These figures are estimates based upon the actual figures received from 146 Local Authorities. Figures may not add due to rounding.

Table 2 Total weekly costs as reported on the CIN database based on a sample week in February 2003

England	£ millions					
	Children Looked After	Children Supported in Families or Independently	Total Children in Need	Children Looked After	Children Supported in Families or Independently	Total Children in Need
	Amount (£m)	%	Amount (£m)	%	Amount (£m)	%
Costed staff / centre time	10.4	28	18.0	75	28.4	46
Ongoing costs	26.3	71	5.1	22	31.5	52
One-off costs	0.5	1	0.7	3	1.2	2
Total costs	37.3		23.8		61.1	

These figures are estimates based upon the actual figures received from 146 Local Authorities. Figures may not add due to rounding.

Table 3 Average cost (£ per week) per child receiving a service based on a sample week in February 2003

	England		
	£ per week	£ per week	£ per week
	Children Looked After	Children Supported in Families or Independently	Total Children in Need
	Amount (£)	Amount (£)	Amount (£)
Costed staff / centre time	170	110	125
Ongoing costs	425	30	140
One-off costs	10	5	5
Total costs	600	145	270

These figures are estimates based upon the actual figures received from 146 Local Authorities. Figures may not add due to rounding.

Table 4 Children in Need: Time spent with teams or at centres

	England			Numbers and Hours
	Children Looked After	Children Supported in Families or Independently	Total Children in Need	
Number of children receiving services in week	62,100	162,300	224,400	
Number of children seen in week ⁽¹⁾	48,500	141,000	189,500	
Number of hours provided in week by teams/centres				
Individual Work	199,300	282,500	481,800	
Group Work	9,600	100,400	110,000	
Average hours seen per week				
Individual Work	3.2	1.7	2.1	
Group Work	0.2	0.6	0.5	

These figures are estimates based upon the actual figures received from 146 Local Authorities. Figures may not add due to rounding.

(1) The figures include children where administrative action occurred in the week