

# CiN 2001: Local authority tables

**Published:** October 2002

Results of a survey of activity and expenditure as reported by Local Authorities in England based on a survey in September/October 2001.

This report provides a Local Authority breakdown of the main Children in Need figures for England. England figures from the September/October 2001 survey were first published in July 2002. These figures have now been revised and were published at the same time as this report.

This is the second census of Children in Need activity. The coverage of the LA tables is the same as last time, with the addition of new tables on numbers of asylum seeking children (accompanied and unaccompanied) reported by Local Authorities Social Services, disabled children, and children with autism - tables H, J and K.

There are ten sets of tables in all, each giving figures for individual Local Authorities for a census week in September/October 2001 ( a "typical" week as chosen by the Local Authority). Within each table A-K, the authorities are given on a region by region basis, and within each region by type of authority. Overall figures by type of authority are given at the foot of each table.

## **Acknowledgement**

The collation of the data for this census required significant work for front line LA staff and data managers. Their contribution to the survey is noted with thanks.

## **Table A: Numbers of children receiving services from social services, per head of population aged 0-17**

This shows the incidence in each authority of the number of Children in Need (including Children Looked After) and receiving services, expressed as a rate per 1,000 of the 0-17 population. It should be noted that some Children in Need can be 18 or over, so using the 0-17 populations may cause a slight distortion in authorities with significant numbers of children in need aged 18 or over.

The table shows that in England as a whole, Social Services spend money on about 223,000 Children in Need in a typical week, equivalent to about 20 Children in Need per 1,000 head of population 0-17. There is a wide variation in these incidence data, with the figures varying from about 10 per 1,000 to over 90 per 1,000 - these variations cannot be wholly explained in terms of social factors alone.

As in the previous CiN census, there is a marked difference in the incidence figures by type of authority, with the shire counties being noticeably lower, and London authorities markedly higher than the national average.

## **Table B: Numbers of children in need, children supported in families or independently and children looked after**

The table shows the numbers of Children in Need receiving services from Social Services in the survey week. In England as a whole, Children Looked After are typically about 28% of the total. Overall, the proportion of Children in Need who are Children Looked After for the different type of authority lies in narrow range 26-33%, though a few authorities registered much higher figures, up to 50% in some cases.

### **Table C: Children in need and receiving services by reason for needing services (numbers and %)**

The table gives the number of Children in Need receiving a service by terms of their reason for needing these services. There are three versions of this table:

- (i) Children supported in families or independently;
- (ii) Children looked after;
- (iii) All Children in Need (that is, (i) + (ii)).

For children in (i), the predominant need category is "abuse and neglect", which in England accounts for 28% of the total, the figures varying, with a few exceptions, between 10% and 45%. This category predominates in London, but to a lesser extent - in London, "low income" (16%) is also a significant category.

For Children Looked After, "abuse and neglect" is typically twice as high for children supported in families or independently. London is again lower than the national average, but is markedly higher for "absent parenting" than other types of authority.

For all Children in Need, in table (iii), "abuse and neglect" predominates as a need category. In all categories, there are variations in the regional patterns, with Yorks and Humberside and East Midlands being high in almost all categories. The incidence of disability as a need, 14% nationally, varies from below 5% to over 20%.

### **Table D: Ethnicity of children in need**

As for table C, this is in three parts:

- (i) Children supported in families or independently;
- (ii) Children looked after;
- (iii) All children in need (that is (i) + (ii)).

In these tables children have been classified according to a schema consistent with the 2001 census. The ethnic information is shown for the six main groups.

Information on ethnicity for children supported in their families or independently has been provided by LAs for all but 13% of the children in question. The "not stated" category varies from under 1% to nearly 40%. There are relatively few authorities where the numbers of "not stated" are relatively high.

There is wide variation in the ethnic mix of Children in Need, with the white category in London being about half of what it is elsewhere for this group of children, and "black" and "other" categories" being markedly higher.

For Children Looked After, "not stated" is about 4%, concentrated in a few authorities. Ethnic groups other than white comprise a much lower proportion than is true for children supported in their families. Again, London authorities record lower numbers in the ethnic group "white" than other authorities - a quarter of Children Looked After in London are recorded in "black" ethnic categories.

### **Table E: Expenditure on children in need**

This shows the proportion of money spent by LA Social Services on Children supported in families or independently and Children Looked After. As noted in the previous CiN census there are still differences in accounting conventions in some authorities - notably in the treatment of overhead costs - as well as difference in LA recording practice, which make comparisons difficult. It is also the case that in a few

authorities, some activity on children is resourced out with Childrens & Families budgets; and in some others some services for children - for example those by adults teams or Occupational Therapists, may be centrally managed and not recharged to the Children and families budget, even though the sums involved are non-trivial. This complicates the reconciliation of activity being reported in the CiN census and the expenditure being reported separately on the annual PSS EX1 returns.

On average in England, over 60% of expenditure on Children in Need is accounted for by Children Looked After, though they account for only 25% of all Children in Need (Table B). Most authorities are in the range 65:35 to 75:25, though there are some extreme values which seem a little unlikely. The pattern of expenditure is different in London from other types of authority.

### **Table F: Expenditure per child in need receiving a service from LA social services**

This table converts the expenditure data in Table E into an expenditure figure expressed per Child receiving a service. The same caveat as for table E applies here too. Overall, a Child in Need costs the typical LA in England £225 per week; £500 per week for a Child Looked After, and £90 per week for a child supported in a family or independently.

Within Children Looked After, the per capita figures vary - with a few exceptions - in the range £300-£650 per week, with London being higher than other authorities, and unitaries being lower. In the group of children supported in families or independently, the per capita expenditure figures vary between under £30 per week to over £200 per week, with London again being higher than other types of authority.

Overall, there is a quite wide variation in the per capita figures, with the northern authorities being typically lower and the southern ones typically higher.

### **Table G: Number of hours of staff or centre time received by children in need in the census week**

This shows the amount of service time received per child in need receiving a service. This is time provided by a social work team or in a centre. It does not include services provided by way of care and accommodation. Typically, Children Looked After receive about 50% more staff/centre time in a week than other Children in Need. In this analysis, London authorities are in line with the national picture - what variation there is appears to be concentrated in the northern regions, North East, North West and Yorks and Humberside.

### **Table H: Numbers of asylum-seeking children in need**

This gives the numbers of asylum seeking children reported by Social services Children and Families teams. This shows the numbers of children, either Looked After or supported in their families, who are either (i) on the books or (ii) receiving a service from, the authority is a typical week. The figures cover children who are unaccompanied minors, or as members of families which are recognised as having asylum seeking status.

As might be expected, there is significant clustering of the figures, though the actual distribution is rather more uneven than might have been anticipated. The proportion of asylum seeking children who are formally Looked After is relatively small in all authorities.

## **Table J: Numbers of reported disabled children known to social services**

This table gives the numbers of children who are disabled - authorities were asked to identify all children who are disabled whether or not that was the reason for their requiring social services intervention.

## **Table K: Numbers of reported autistic children known to social services**

This table gives the numbers of autistic children known to Social Services in each authority. Specifically, authorities were asked to identify any child known to them as having been diagnosed as autistic by a qualified medical practitioner. In the CiN census the term "autism" was intended to cover "classical autism" through to "autistic spectrum disorders" which covers a much wider range. Authorities were asked to include Aspergers syndrome. Note: For CiN purposes, autism was NOT linked to disability, and in fact, out of the estimated 6,400 autistic children in England, or about 5%, were recorded as having autism but not as being disabled.

The reason for including this specific table is the level of public interest in identifying this small but important group of children. The Children in Need survey provides one of the few ways of investigating the demands which such children make on Social services. There are a number of important caveats about these data:

(i) They represent the reporting of cases by authorities, and this may reflect different levels of awareness of autism across the country;

(ii) The figures are not incidence data, and should not be used for that purpose. These figures only include children with autism receiving social services support;

(iii) Reporting of autism appears to vary from authority to authority with some authorities reporting relatively large numbers and others very small numbers, including a significant number of zeros.

The figures confirm that social services support children with autism, even though the figures in the table are likely to under-represent the true position, given the problems associated with the factors mentioned above.

The 2003 survey should give us a further year's worth of data for autism.

## **Technical notes**

### **Coverage**

The LA tables are based on 144 returns - data for England published in July was based on 139 returns. The analysis also includes some minor corrections notified to us by a few Local Authorities after the Children in Need publication had gone to press.

In view of these updates and data corrections, the England totals in the LA analysis differ slightly from those published in July, but the differences overall, with one exception, are small and do not affect the conclusions of the main England report in July.

### **Quality of the data**

At the England level the data appear robust. There is, however, much more variation in the data at the LA level, as the tables show. Some of this variation may result from

actual authority practice in the provision of services. In other cases it may reflect in part differences in reporting. This is especially true for the expenditure data, as noted in the next paragraph.

### **Cost comparisons**

In the case of the cost data, the survey has thrown up some apparent differences in the way LAs account for their administrative and other overhead costs, which may have distorted the cost figures in a few individual LAs. Very great care is needed in interpreting these figures. Further work is needed to understand the significance of these figures and the reasons for the apparent variations between authorities.

### **General notes on the content of the tables**

The England totals quoted include estimates (also derived on the basis of the 0-17 populations) for those authorities from whom no returns at all was received.

1. At the time of going to press, no return had been received from Isles of Scilly, Brent, Bromley, Milton Keynes and Wokingham .
2. Windsor and Maidenhead were only able to make a partial return but not enough information about the return was available for it to be included within this report.
3. Provisional national figures were published in July 2002, these have been revised and tables are available here. Even though there have been some small changes to national figures the main messages remain the same as those in "Children in Need in England: First results of a survey of activity and expenditure as reported by local Authority Social Services' Children and Families Teams for a survey week in Sept/Oct 2001" published in July 2002. The report of the earlier 2000 Children in Need survey can be found here.

### **Confidentiality - suppression and rounding**

To ensure that no individual can be identified we have suppressed very small numbers and rounded figures. All figures of five or less have been suppressed. It has on occasion been necessary to suppress other data wherever it would be possible by simple arithmetic to calculate missing data. In addition in general, national figures have been rounded to the nearest 10 and all figures at local authority level have been rounded to the nearest five.

### **Symbols used in the tables**

.. not available

- data suppressed. Normally this will refer to numbers of five or less or a percentage where either the numerator or denominator is less than five.