

Characteristics of children in need

Guide to using underlying data

November 2019

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# Summary

## About this guidance

This guidance is intended to help you use the underlying data for the [‘Characteristics of children in need’ collection](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-children-in-need). The underlying data complements the main text and the main tables.

The underlying data contains data from 2012-13 to 2018-19.

## Expiry or review date

This guidance will next be reviewed in September 2020.

## Who is this guidance for?

This guidance is for:

* Local authorities
* Researchers
* Enquiring citizens

## Main points

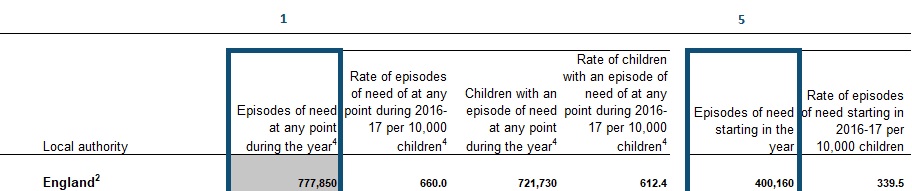
* The underlying data is published in a long format, with each value from the collection stored in a single row.
* Contains 7 years worth of data from the ‘Characteristics of children in need data’.

# Underlying Data

The underlying data is produced as a long form dataset which can be picked up and queried by analysts outside of the Department for Education. It is published in a csv format and designed to be used easily in analytical tools such as Excel, SQL, or R.

The csv contains all of the data that is published in the main tables B1 to D8, and gives the data broken down at a national, regional and local authority level. A ‘source\_table’ variable is provided to cross reference the data with the published tables if necessary.

A ‘source\_order’ variable gives the number of the column (with data in it) that a given figure can be found within, in a given ‘source\_table’ table. An example can be viewed below using table B1; the ‘Episodes of need at any point during the year’ value would have a ‘source\_order’ of 1, and the ‘Episodes of need starting in the year’ would have a ‘source\_order’ of 5.



## Using the underlying data

The structure of the underlying data is designed so that any figure can be reached by filtering on columns from the left hand side. The columns on the left hand side describe an aspect of the data such as year, location and what they measure (for example, ‘CPPs at 31 March’). The right hand columns provide the description of the figure, and the figure itself.

# Variables and definitions

The following section provides a description of each variable in the underlying data file, in order of appearance from left to right.

1. **year** – provides the collection year during which a measure was taken.
2. **level** – geographic level; either national, regional or local authority
3. **country\_code** – the code for the country in which the measure was taken, as defined by the Office of National Statistics
4. **country\_name** – the name of the country in which the measure was taken
5. **region\_code** - the code for the region in which the measure was taken, as defined by the Office of National Statistics
6. **region\_name** – the name for the region in which the measure was taken
7. **old\_la\_code** – the three digit local authority code used in Departmental publications
8. **new\_la\_code** – the nine digit code for each local authority area, as defined by the Office of National Statistics
9. **la\_name** – the name of the local authority in which the measure was taken
10. **source\_table** – the corresponding table number in the published main tables, in which the measure can be found
11. **source\_order** – order of the measure in the published tables; corresponds to the column number in the main tables, as described above
12. **measure\_of** - what the observation is measuring (‘Children in need in the year’, ‘Assessments (continuous) in the year’, etc.)
13. **measure\_type** – the subject of the measure, for example ‘Population’, ‘Primary need’ or ‘Episode duration’
14. **measure** –thedescription of the measure; this variable corresponds tothe column titles in the main tables
15. **value\_type** – whether the given value is a number, percentage, percentile or a rate
16. **value** –the value of the subset

## Year variable

The year variable provides the collection year which data was held in, in the format ‘201314’, where ‘2013’ is the year during which the collection started, and ‘14’ is the year in which it ended.

To see only data from the current year, filter the year variable to ‘201819’.

## Geography variables

The following variables relate to geography:

* level
* country\_code
* country\_name
* region\_code
* region\_name
* old\_la\_code
* new\_la\_code
* la\_name

Filtering on the ‘level’ variable will give you the option of viewing ‘national’, ‘regional’ or ‘local authority’ level data.

Selecting data for a specific region can be achieved through filtering on either the ‘region\_code’ or ‘region\_name’ variables. Region codes relate to the published ONS regional codes, and the region names are formatted in sentence case.

To access data for a specific local authority, you can filter on either ‘old\_la\_code’, ‘new\_la\_code’, or ‘la\_name’. ‘new\_la\_code’ relates to the published ONS local authority district codes.

As all values relate to local authorities or regions within England, filtering on the ‘country\_code’ or ‘country\_name’ will have no effect, however these fields have been included for ease of use with other geographic data.

## Source variables

The ‘source\_table’ variable provides a link to the published tables, referencing the table name where the corresponding measures can be found. For example, ‘children in need in the year’ refers to source\_table ‘B1’.

To complement this the ‘source\_order’ column matches to the order the columns are displayed in the published tables. This variable has been included for ease of cross referencing with the published tables, and as an easier way to access a specific subset, or order a group of subsets from the same ‘source\_table’.

A full list of available source tables is listed below:

Local authority figures: children in need

Table B1: All children in need episodes at any point during the year, episodes starting, episodes ending, and children in need at 31 March 2019 by local authority

Table B2: Children in need at 31 March 2019, by disability and local authority

Table B3: Children in need at 31 March 2019, by primary need and local authority

Table B4: Children in need at 31 March 2019, by duration of open case and local authority

Table B5: Episodes of need ending in the year ending 31 March 2019, by duration of episode of need and local authority

Table B6: Episodes of need ending in the year to 31 March 2019, by reason for case closure and local authority

Local authority figures: referrals and assessments

Table C1: Referrals to children's social care services, referrals which resulted in no further action, referrals which were assessed and resulted in no further action, children referred and where the referral was within 12 months of a previous referral, in the year ending 31 March 2019, by local authority

Table C2: Assessments completed by children's social care services in the year ending 31 March 2019, by duration of assessment and local authority

Table C3: Episodes with assessment factor information in the year ending 31 March 2019, and factors identified at the end of assessment by local authority

Table C4: Section 47 enquiries and initial child protection conferences in the year ending 31 March 2019, by local authority

Table C5: Referrals to children's social care services in the year ending 31 March 2019, by source of referral and local authority

Table C6: Referrals to children's social care services, in the year ending 31 March 2019, by month of the year and local authority

Local authority figures: children who were the subject of a child protection plan

Table D1: Child protection plans starting, ending and at any point during the year ending 31 March 2019, children subject to a child protection plan at 31 March 2019, by local authority

Table D2: Child protection plans starting during the year ending 31 March 2019, by initial and latest category of abuse and local authority

Table D3: Child protection plans starting in the year ending 31 March 2019 and child protection plans which are a second or subsequent plan, by local authority

Table D4: Children who were the subject of a child protection plan at 31 March 2019, by initial and latest category of abuse and local authority

Table D5: Children who were the subject of a child protection plan at 31 March 2019, by length of time as the subject of a plan and local authority

Table D6: Children who were the subject of a child protection plan at 31 March 2019, and who had been on a plan for at least three months and had reviews carried out within the required timescales by local authority

Table D7: Child protection plans ending, during year ending 31 March 2019, by length of time as the subject of a plan and local authority

Table D8: Child protection plans ending during the first six months of the year ending 31 March 2019, by length of time the child remained in need and local authority

## Measure variables

The measure columns allow you to filter to a specific measure or set of measures.

The ‘measure\_of’ column describes what group is being measured (children in need in the year, assessments in the year, etc.).

The ‘measure’ variable is analogous to a column header in the published tables, such as ‘Episodes of need at any point in the year’, or ‘Children in need episodes at 31 March’, and provides a description of the value being measured.

To provide context of the measure, the ‘measure\_type’ variable provides the subject of the measure, such as ‘Population’, ‘Disabilities’ or ‘Primary Need’.

## Value variables

The ‘value’ variables provide the numeric figures for a given ‘measure’.

The characteristics of children in need publication publishes numbers, rates, percentages and percentiles (inc. median). The ‘value\_type’ column describes which of these types of figure the ‘value’ is.

# Examples

All of the following examples assume you are starting with the dataset completely unfiltered.

## Selecting national population figures for 2018-19

In order to select the national population figures (‘at 31’, ‘started’, ‘ended’, ‘any point’) for the current year:

* filter ‘year’ to ‘201819’
* filter ‘level’ to ‘National’

This will limit the dataset to only national metrics from the current year. There are then ways to filter to the population figures:

* filter ‘source\_table’ to B1, as table B1 is the population breakdown in the published tables
* filter ‘measure\_of’ to ‘Children in need in the year’
* filter ‘measure\_type’ to ‘Population’

## Timeline of CPPs at 31 March for a specific local authority

To access only data that relates to a local authority, such as ‘Sheffield’ there are three ways:

* filter ‘old\_la\_code’ to ‘373’, as it appears in the main tables
* filter ‘new\_la\_code’ to ‘E08000019’, as it appears in the published ONS local authority district codes
* filter ‘la\_name’ to ‘Sheffield’

Then you can filter down through the measure variables as such:

* filter ‘source\_table’ to ‘D1’, or filter ‘measure\_of’ to ‘Child protection plans in the year’
* filter ‘measure’ to ‘Number of child protection plans at 31 March’, or filter ‘source\_order’ to ‘13’

Now the dataset can be ordered on ‘year’ to provide a time series of child protection plans at 31 March in Sheffield.

## Comparing assessment duration in the current year across all regions

To compare the median number of days for an assessment across all regions in the current year:

* filter ‘year’ to ‘201819’
* filter ‘level’ to ‘Region’
* filter ‘measure\_type’ to ‘Assessment duration’
* filter ‘measure’ to ‘Median (days)’ , or filter ‘subet\_order’ to ‘13’

# Further information

## Useful resources and external organisations

* [Children in need and child protection statistical collection](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-children-in-need)

## Other relevant departmental advice and statutory guidance

* [Children in need census guidance](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/children-in-need-census)



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