



Department  
for Education

# **Children's social work workforce census 2024 to 2025**

**Business and technical specification -  
Version 1**

**November 2024**

# Contents

1.	Introduction	6
1.1	Purpose, scope and audience	6
1.2	Definition of a child and family social worker	6
1.3	Scope of children's social work workforce (CSWW) – individual level data collection	6
1.4	Structure of the children's social work workforce data collection	6
1.5	Changes from 2024 to 2025 children's social work workforce census	7
1.5.1	New data items	7
1.5.2	Deleted data items	7
1.5.3	Validation rule changes	7
2.	Message header	8
3.	Data collection	9
3.1	Overall description and scope	9
3.1.1	Aggregate local authority data	9
3.1.2	Employees included within the census	9
3.2	Outline data content	10
3.3	Local authority level data	10
3.3.1	Number of vacancies	10
3.3.2	Number of agency workers covering vacancies - FTE	11
3.3.3	Number of agency workers covering vacancies – headcount	11
3.3.4	Recruitment bonus	11
3.3.5	Retention bonus	11
3.3.6	Performance reward	11
3.3.7	Car user allowance	12
3.3.8	Relocation package	12

3.3.9 Regional weighting	12
3.3.10 Cost of Social Work England (SWE) registration	12
3.3.11 Cost of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks	13
3.3.12 Other allowances and additional payments	13
3.4 Individual workforce data	13
3.4.1 Agency worker	13
3.4.2 SWE identifier	13
3.4.3 FTE as at 30 September 2025	14
3.4.4 Date of birth	14
3.4.5 Sex	14
3.4.6 Ethnic origin	14
3.4.7 Qualification level	14
3.4.8 Step-up graduate	14
3.4.9 Role within organisation	15
3.4.10 Starting date	15
3.4.11 Origin when started	15
3.4.12 Leaving date	16
3.4.13 Destination of leaver	16
3.4.14 Reason for leaving	16
3.4.15 FTE as at 30 September 2024	17
3.4.16 Number of cases held at 30 September 2025	17
3.4.17 Number of days of work missed due to sickness absence	17
3.4.18 Agency worker length of contract (weeks)	17
3.4.19 Frontline graduate	17
3.4.20 Absent on 30 September 2024	17

3.4.21 Reason for Absence	18
3.4.22 Base salary	18
3.4.23 Recruitment and retention payments	18
3.4.24 Other additional payments	18
4. Data return formats	19
4.1 Available formats	19
4.2 Data items with no values	19
4.3 XML format submission	19
4.4 XML header	20
4.5 Local authority aggregate data and worker XML message structure	21
4.6 Special notes for XML returns	22

## Version history

1.0	<p>Dates rolled forward.</p> <p>Addition of the following data items are LA level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• &lt;RecruitmentBonus&gt; (N00804)</li> <li>• &lt;RetentionBonus&gt; (N00805)</li> <li>• &lt;PerformanceAward&gt; (N00806)</li> <li>• &lt;CarAllowance&gt; (N00807)</li> <li>• &lt;RelocationPackage&gt; (N00808)</li> <li>• &lt;RegionalWeighting&gt; (N00809)</li> <li>• &lt;CostSWE&gt; (N00810)</li> <li>• &lt;CostDBS&gt; (N00811)</li> <li>• &lt;OtherAllowances&gt; (N00812)</li> </ul> <p>Addition of the following data items at social worker level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• &lt;BaseSalary&gt; (N00813)</li> </ul>	November 2024
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• &lt;RRPayments&gt; (N00814)</li> <li>• &lt;OtherPayments&gt; (N00815)</li> </ul> <p>Removal of following data items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• &lt;QualInst&gt; (N00583)</li> <li>• &lt;CFKSSstatus&gt; (N00644)</li> </ul>	
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This specification must be read in conjunction with the current version of the [Common Basic Data Set \(CBDS\) database](#).

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose, scope and audience

This specification describes the 2024 to 2025 local authority children's and family social work workforce data collection. The data collection covers all local authorities in England, for the period from 1 October 2024 to 30 September 2025.

The specification covers the expected data items to be returned to the Department for Education (DfE) and the validation rules applied to the data submitted. It has been developed to support local authorities and their management information system software suppliers. It should be read in conjunction with:

- the [CBDS](#) database
- Children's social work workforce census: guide

## 1.2 Definition of a child and family social worker

For the purposes of this collection, a child and family social worker is defined as:

A social worker who is registered with Social Work England (SWE), formerly the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), working in a local authority in a children's services department or, if working in an authority where the services are joined up, a social worker that works primarily on children and families work.

This includes all child and family social workers regardless of their position in the organisation, excluding the Director of Children's Services.

## 1.3 Scope of children's social work workforce (CSWW) – individual level data collection

The children's social work workforce data collection is a local authority collection that requires the return of individual worker information, together with a number of aggregate fields for the collection as a whole. The collection is for the period 1 October 2024 to 30 September 2025 inclusive.

## 1.4 Structure of the children's social work workforce data collection

The 2024 to 2025 CSWW data collection primarily collects worker level data. This collection comprises a header containing local authority details, an aggregate local authority level module and a repeatable module to return individual worker data.

## 1.5 Changes from 2024 to 2025 children's social work workforce census

### 1.5.1 New data items

The following data items have been added at local authority level:

- Recruitment bonus <RecruitmentBonus>, see section 3.3.4
- Retention bonus <RetentionBonus>, see section 3.3.5
- Performance Reward <PerformanceReward>, see section 3.3.6
- Car user allowance <CarAllowance>, see section 3.3.7
- Relocation package <RelocationPackage>, see section 3.3.8
- Regional weighting <RegionalWeighting>, see section 3.3.9
- Cost of Social Work England (SWE) registration <CostSWE>, see section 3.3.10
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks <CostDBS>, see section 3.3.11
- Other allowances and additional payments <OtherAllowances>, see section 3.3.12

The following data items have been added at social worker level:

- Base salary <BaseSalary>, see section 3.4.22
- Recruitment and retention payments <RRPayments>, see section 3.4.23
- Other additional payments <OtherPayments>, see section 3.4.24

### 1.5.2 Deleted data items

The following data items have been deleted:

- <Quallnst> (N00583)
- <CFKSSstatus> (N00644)

### 1.5.3 Validation rule changes

Validation checks will be applied to your data once it has been loaded into COLLECT. These checks will identify missing and invalid data, and other anomalies.

*There are new validation rules in this collection, along with amendments to some existing rules.* The validation checks can be found in the accompanying validation rules document for this collection, available on [our website](#).

## 2. Message header

Section 4 describes the XML format for the return of the data. The data items required within the header are as follows:

Survey collection name <Collection> (N00600) will be 'CSWW' Description: Name of the data collection is CSWW
Survey year <Year> (N00602) will be '2025' Description: The year of the collection
Survey reference date <ReferenceDate> (N00603) will be '2025-09-30' Description: The reference date is normally the day of the census or collection and is used as the baseline date from which comparisons with other dates in the return can be made.
Source level <SourceLevel> (N00604) will be 'L' Description: Set to L for a local authority system
LA <LEA> (N00216) is the LA number Description: Standard DfE three digit local authority number



## **3. Data collection**

### **3.1 Overall description and scope**

This section describes the data to be collected of which there are two levels, described below.

#### **3.1.1 Aggregate local authority data**

The following aggregate, local authority level data is to be returned:

- number of full time equivalent (FTE) vacancies (including those covered by agency workers)
- total number of agency workers covering vacancies (FTE)
- total number of agency workers covering vacancies (headcount)
- whether the LA pays:
  - a recruitment bonus
  - a retention bonus
  - a performance reward
  - a car user allowance
  - a relocation package
  - regional weighting
  - the cost of SWE registration
  - the cost of DBS checks
  - other allowances or additional payments

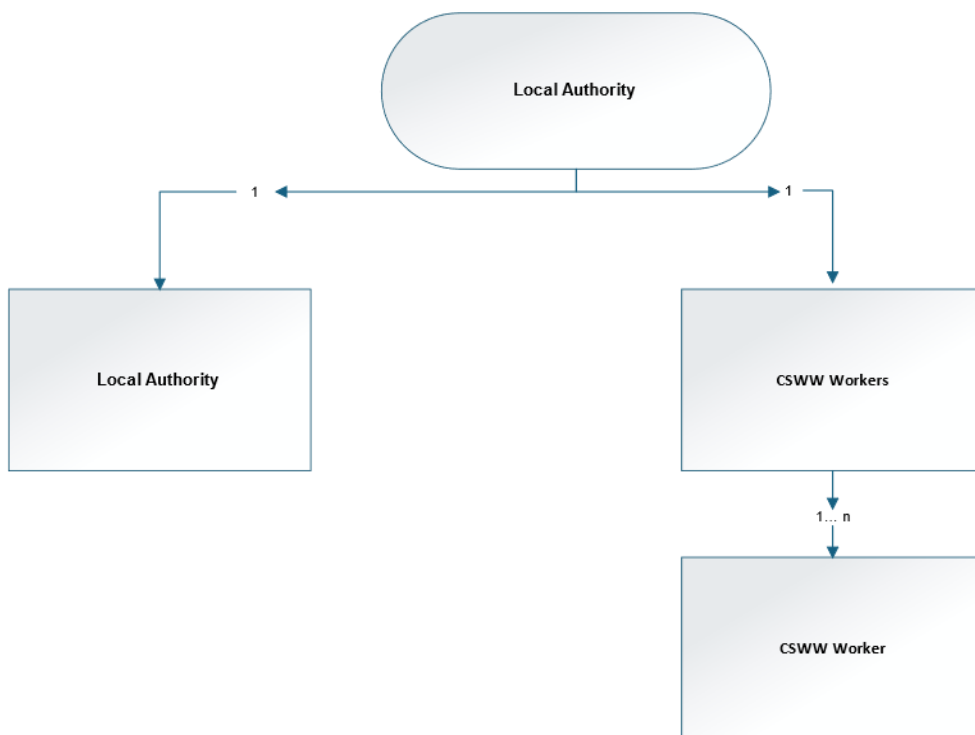
#### **3.1.2 Employees included within the census**

The following employee types are to be included within the census:

- all child and family social workers in your local authority as at 30 September 2025
- agency workers working in a child and family role in your local authority who are in post as at 30 September 2025
- child and family social workers who have left their role during the year ending 30 September 2025

## 3.2 Outline data content

The return contains two modules, one for local authority level data and one for the workforce for each worker, as shown in Figure 1 below:



**Figure 1 – Data modules**

Full descriptions of the data items in this module are provided in the common basic data set ([CBDS](#)).

Sections 3.3 and 3.4 provide information on the data modules.

[Section 4.3](#) contains a sample XML message structure which shows the modular layout.

## 3.3 Local authority level data

This module contains aggregate local authority level data and comprises the following elements:

### 3.3.1 Number of vacancies

This data item <NumberOfVacancies> (N00592) records the number of vacancies within the local authority on a full time equivalent (FTE) basis. The data item format is: 'nnnn.nn'.

### **3.3.2 Number of agency workers covering vacancies - FTE**

This data item <NoAgencyFTE> (N00580) records the number of vacancies, in full time equivalent terms, which are covered by agency workers. The data item format is: 'nnnn.nn'.

### **3.3.3 Number of agency workers covering vacancies – headcount**

This data item <NoAgencyHeadcount> (N00581) records the number of agency workers by headcount that are covering vacancies. The data item format is: 'nnnn'.

### **3.3.4 Recruitment bonus**

This data item <RecruitmentBonus> (N00804) records whether the LA pays financial incentives for social workers to join the LA's children's social work workforce. The data item codes are:

- '0' = No
- '1' = Yes, all LA-employed social workers are eligible
- '2' = Yes, some LA-employed social workers are eligible

### **3.3.5 Retention bonus**

This data item <RetentionBonus> (N00805) records whether the LA pays financial incentives for social workers to remain employed in the LA's children's social work workforce. The data item codes are:

- '0' = No
- '1' = Yes, all LA-employed social workers are eligible
- '2' = Yes, some LA-employed social workers are eligible

### **3.3.6 Performance reward**

This data item <PerformanceReward> (N00806) records whether the LA have a system to award bonuses or rewards to social workers based on their performance. The data item codes are:

- '0' = No
- '1' = Yes, all LA-employed social workers are eligible
- '2' = Yes, some LA-employed social workers are eligible

### 3.3.7 Car user allowance

This data item <CarAllowance> (N00807) records whether the LA make payments to social workers who use their car for work. This should be a payment made without requiring social workers to claim expenses for specific trips, journeys or miles driven. The data item codes are:

- '0' = No
- '1' = Yes, all LA-employed social workers are eligible
- '2' = Yes, some LA-employed social workers are eligible

### 3.3.8 Relocation package

This data item <RelocationPackage> (N00808) records whether the LA pay all or partial relocation costs to any social worker relocating as part of starting a social worker role at the LA. The data item codes are:

- '0' = No
- '1' = Yes, all LA-employed social workers are eligible
- '2' = Yes, some LA-employed social workers are eligible

### 3.3.9 Regional weighting

This data item <RegionalWeighting> (N00809) records whether the LA makes any payments that are not already included in the base salary that relate to the social workers' geographic location. The data item codes are:

- '0' = No
- '1' = Yes, all LA-employed social workers are eligible
- '2' = Yes, some LA-employed social workers are eligible

### 3.3.10 Cost of Social Work England (SWE) registration

This data item <CostSWE> (N00810) records whether the LA pays the cost (partial or in full) of SWE registration, either directly or by reimbursing social workers for the expense. The data item codes are:

- '0' = No
- '1' = Yes, all LA-employed social workers are eligible
- '2' = Yes, some LA-employed social workers are eligible

### **3.3.11 Cost of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks**

This data item <CostDBS> (N00811) records whether the LA pays the cost (partial or in full) of DBS checks, either directly or by reimbursing social workers for the expense.

The data item codes are:

- '0' = No
- '1' = Yes, all LA-employed social workers are eligible
- '2' = Yes, some LA-employed social workers are eligible

### **3.3.12 Other allowances and additional payments**

This data item <OtherAllowances> (N00812) is a free text field to include information on any other types of additional payments or allowances. Please indicate whether they are for some or all LA-employed social workers in children's services. Work expenses such as (but not limited to) mileage, subsistence etc should be excluded.

## **3.4 Individual workforce data**

This module contains information on individual social workers. The following items are collected for each individual workforce member within the following group types:

- child and family social workers
- leavers during the year ending 30 September 2025
- agency social workers.

### **3.4.1 Agency worker**

This data item <AgencyWorker> (N00599) records which type of worker the individual data is returned for. The data item codes are:

- '1' = agency worker
- '0' = not an agency worker

### **3.4.2 SWE identifier**

This data item <SWENo> (N00582) records the Social Work England (SWE), formerly the health care professions council (HCPC), identifier number. The data item format is 'AAnnnnnnnnnn' and is up to 12 digits.

### 3.4.3 FTE as at 30 September 2025

This data item <FTE> (N00549) records the workers FTE as at 30 September 2025. This will be a value between 0 and 1 inclusive and should be stored and displayed to six decimal places. The data item format is: 'n.nnnnnn'.

### 3.4.4 Date of birth

This data item <PersonBirthDate> (N00066) records the worker's birth date. The data item format is: 'CCYY-MM-DD'.

### 3.4.5 Sex

This data item <Sex> (N00783) records the sex of the worker. It is intended to record the sex as on a birth certificate or gender recognition certificate. The options are:

- 'F' = Female
- 'M' = Male

### 3.4.6 Ethnic origin

This module contains the worker's ethnicity. For code set see CBDS data item N00575 and code set CS080.

### 3.4.7 Qualification level

This data item <QualLevel> (N00584) records the qualification level achieved by the worker. The data item codes are:

- '1' = under-graduate
- '2' = post-graduate
- '3' = other

### 3.4.8 Step-up graduate

This data item <StepUpGrad> (N00585) records whether the worker is a step-up graduate. The data item codes are:

- '1' = yes
- '0' = no

### 3.4.9 Role within organisation

This data item <OrgRole> (N00586) records the worker's roll within the organisation. The data item codes are:

- '1' = senior manager
- '2' = middle manager
- '3' = first line manager
- '4' = senior practitioner
- '5' = case holder
- '6' = qualified without cases

See code set CS090 in CBDS.

### 3.4.10 Starting date

This data item <RoleStartDate> (N00550) records the date the worker joined a vacant child and family social worker post within the local authority. The data item format is: 'CCYY-MM-DD'.

### 3.4.11 Origin when started

This data item <StartOrigin> (N00587) records the worker's situation prior to starting work with the organisation. The data item codes are:

- '1' = newly qualified social workers
- '2' = social worker role in a different local authority in England
- '3' = social worker role outside England
- '4' = agency or consultancy in social work (in England)
- '5' = other social work role non- local authority (in England)
- '6' = other social care role in local authority / non-local authority (in England)
- '7' = non-social care role / any role outside England / no employment / career break
- '8' = other
- '9' = not known
- '10' = not yet collected

See code set CS091 in CBDS.

### 3.4.12 Leaving date

This data item <RoleEndDate> (N00551) records the date the worker left a post with local authority in the period 1 October 2023 to 30 September 2025 inclusive. The data item format is 'CCYY-MM-DD'.

### 3.4.13 Destination of leaver

This data item <LeaverDestination> (N00588) records the destination of the worker after leaving a post with the local authority during the year ending 30 September 2025. The data item codes are:

- '1' = social worker role in different local authority in England
- '2' = social worker role outside England
- '3' = agency or consultancy social work (in England)
- '4' = other social work role non-local authority (in England)
- '5' = other social care role local authority / non-local authority (in England)
- '6' = non-social care role / no employment / redundancy / career break / any other role outside England / left England
- '7' = other
- '8' = not known
- '9' = not yet collected

See code set CS092 in CBDS.

### 3.4.14 Reason for leaving

This data item <ReasonLeave> (N00595) records the reason for leaving information for social workers who left their social worker role at your local authority during the year ending 30 September 2024. The data item codes are:

- 1 = Resignation
- 2 = Voluntary redundancy
- 3 = Compulsory redundancy
- 4 = Dismissed
- 5 = Retired
- 6 = Deceased
- 7 = Moved to a non-child and family social work role within LA
- 8 = Other
- 9 = Not Known
- 10 = Not yet collected

See code set CS097 in CBDS.



### **3.4.15 FTE as at 30 September 2024**

This data item <FTE30> (N00589) records the worker's FTE as at 30 September 2024. This will be a value between 0 and 1 inclusive and should be stored and displayed to six decimal places. The data item format is: 'n.nnnnnn'.

### **3.4.16 Number of cases held at 30 September 2025**

This data item <Cases30> (N00590) records the number of cases held by the worker as at 30 September 2025. The data item format is: 'nnnn'.

### **3.4.17 Number of days of work missed due to sickness absence**

This data item <WorkingDaysLost> (N00556) records the number of days work the worker missed due to sickness absence during the year 1 October 2023 to 30 September 2024. The data item format is: 'nnn.n'.

### **3.4.18 Agency worker length of contract (weeks)**

This data item <ContractWeeks> (N00591) records the length of the contract of the agency worker. It is not expected that this will exceed 500 weeks. The data item format is: 'nnn'.

### **3.4.19 Frontline graduate**

This data item <FrontlineGrad> (N00596) records whether or not the social worker is a Frontline graduate. The data item codes are:

- 1= Yes
- 0 = No

### **3.4.20 Absent on 30 September 2024**

This data item <Absat30Sept> (N00597) records if the social worker had an absent period covering 30 September 2024. The data item codes are:

- 1= Yes
- 0 = No

### 3.4.21 Reason for Absence

This data item <ReasonAbsence> (N00598) records a reason for absence for those cases where absent on 30 September 2024 was marked as “Yes”. The data item codes are:

- MAT = Maternity/Paternity leave
- OTH = Other paid authorised absence, such as: compassionate leave, annual leave requiring reallocation of cases
- PUB = Paid absence for public duties, such as: jury duty
- SIC = Sick leave
- TRN = Training
- UNA = Unauthorised absence
- UNP = Unpaid authorised absence

See code set CS098 in CBDS.

### 3.4.22 Base salary

This data item <BaseSalary> records the base salary for the child and family social worker. Base salary must reflect annual salary. The data item format is ‘nnnnnn.nn’.

### 3.4.23 Recruitment and retention payments

This data item <RRPayments> records any recruitment and/or retention payments paid to the social worker in the reporting year. The data item format is ‘nnnnnn.nn’.

### 3.4.24 Other additional payments

This data item <OtherPayments> records the sum of any other payments that the social worker received in the reporting year that were not part of their base salary. The data item format is ‘nnnnnn.nn’.

## 4. Data return formats

**Please note: example data shown in this section is for illustration purposes only.**

### 4.1 Available formats

The local authority children's social work workforce census is submitted to the DfE via the following formats:

- direct entry into COLLECT
- entry into an XML template (provided by the DfE)
- an XML upload onto COLLECT

For local authorities without a MIS that can output a CSWW census compliant XML file, the DfE provides a data entry spreadsheet which enables the input of file header and individual pupil record information. On completion the file is converted to XML format (using the spreadsheet) and uploaded to COLLECT. The data entry spreadsheet is provided on request.

### 4.2 Data items with no values

There may be cases where there are no values to be provided for particular data items.

Where values are described in this specification which are not mandatory, it is not expected that data must be returned. For example:

- agency worker length of contract
- absent on 30 September 2024
- reason for absence
- recruitment and retention payments
- other additional payments

In the above scenarios the XML tag is not required to be present in the census return if no data is present / recorded. This applies to all data items that are not mandatory in nature. For all other scenarios, a missing item or value will result in an error being generated.

### 4.3 XML format submission

An XML submission is a single message consisting of:

- a header

- the aggregate local authority vacancy data
- a repeating group containing the data for each worker

Overall message structure
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>
<Message>
<Header> - see 4.4 below for details
<LALevel> - see 4.5 below for details
<CSWWWorkers> - see 4.6 below for details
</Message>

## 4.4 XML header

A standard XML message header is required for each census file. The data items should be populated according to the guidance in Section 2. The layout is as follows:

CBDS Number	Data Item
	<Header>
	<CollectionDetails>
N00600	<Collection>CSWW</Collection>
N00602	<Year>2024</Year>
N00603	<ReferenceDate>2024-09-30</ReferenceDate>
	</CollectionDetails>
	<Source>
N00604	<SourceLevel>L</SourceLevel>
N00216	<LEA>999</LEA>
N00605	<SoftwareCode>CSWW Template v1.0</SoftwareCode>
N00609	<DateTime>2024-09-30T11:11:11</DateTime>
	</Source>
	</Header>

## 4.5 Local authority aggregate data and worker XML message structure

### Local authority aggregate data XML message structure

CBDS	Variable name	Cardinality (1 unless specified)	Description
	<LALevel>		All aggregate variables are mandatory for all local authorities
N00592	<NumberOfVacancies>34</NumberOfVacancies>		
N00580	<NoAgencyFTE>20.5</NoAgencyFTE>		
N00581	<NoAgencyHeadcount>27</NoAgencyHeadcount>		
N00804	<RecruitmentBonus>1</RecruitmentBonus>		
N00805	<RetentionBonus>2</RetentionBonus>		
N00806	<PerformanceAward>0</PerformanceAward>		
N00807	<CarAllowance>1</CarAllowance>		
N00808	<RelocationPackage>1</RelocationPackage>		
N00809	<RegionalWeighting>2</RegionalWeighting>		
N00810	<CostSWE>1</CostSWE>		
N00811	<CostDBS>1</CostDBS>		
N00812	<OtherAllowances>Free text</OtherAllowances>		
	</LALevel>		

### Worker XML message structure

CBDS	Variable name	Cardinality (1 unless specified)	Description
	<CSWWWorker>	1..n	
N00599	<AgencyWorker>1</AgencyWorker>		Mandatory for all records
N00582	<SWENo>XX1234</SWENo>		Mandatory for all records

N00549	<FTE>0.5</FTE>		Mandatory for all records (0 for leavers)
N00066	<PersonBirthDate>1066-03-24</PersonBirthDate>	0..1	Mandatory for all non-agency staff
N00783	<Sex>F</Sex>	0..1	Mandatory for all non-agency staff
N00575	<Ethnicity>WBRI</Ethnicity>	0..1	Mandatory for all non-agency staff
N00584	<QualLevel>2</QualLevel>	0..1	Mandatory for all non-agency staff
N00585	<StepUpGrad>Y</StepUpGrad>	0..1	Mandatory for all non-agency staff
N00586	<OrgRole>2</OrgRole>	0..1	Mandatory for all non-agency staff
N00550	<RoleStartDate>1066-09-01</RoleStartDate>	0..1	Mandatory for all non-agency staff
N00587	<StartOrigin>5</StartOrigin>	0..1	Mandatory for all non-agency staff
N00551	<RoleEndDate>1067-08-31</RoleEndDate>	0..1	Mandatory for leavers
N00588	<LeaverDestination>5</LeaverDestination>	0..1	Mandatory for leavers
N00595	<ReasonLeave> 1 </ReasonLeave>	0..1	Mandatory for leavers
N00589	<FTE30>0.7</FTE30>	0..1	Mandatory for all non-agency staff (0 for starters during the year)
N00590	<Cases30>10</Cases30>	0..1	Mandatory for all other than leavers as N/A
N00556	<WorkingDaysLost>2.25</WorkingDaysLost>	0..1	Mandatory for all non-agency staff
N00591	<ContractWeeks>38</ContractWeeks>	0..n	Voluntary
N00596	<FrontlineGrad>1</FrontlineGrad>	0..1	Mandatory for all non-agency staff
N00597	<Absat30Sept>1</Absat30Sept>	0..n	Voluntary
N00598	<ReasonAbsence>MAT</ReasonAbsence>	0..n	Voluntary
N00813	<BaseSalary>35000</BaseSalary>		Mandatory for all non-agency staff
N00814	<RRPayments>1000</RRPayments>		Voluntary
N00815	<OtherPayments>		Voluntary
	</CSWWWorker>		

## 4.6 Special notes for XML returns

The standard XML entity references should be used for the following special characters:

Character	Entity reference
Ampersand (&)	&amp;
Left angle bracket (<)	&lt;
Right angle bracket (>)	&gt;
Single quote / apostrophe (')	&apos;
Double quotes (")	&quot;

For special characters such as é use a character reference such as '&#233'. This produces a generic XML file which can be viewed as such in a suitable browser. Details of all such characters are found within the XML standard documentation - see for example [Extensible markup language \(XML\) 1.0 \(fifth edition\)](#) Section 2.2.

DfE recommends that the file is given a meaningful name that includes the local authority number (the 3 digit serial number). The file extension is '.xml'. This will help users in selecting the correct file to upload to COLLECT.



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