

# Towards the New Children in Need Census

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# *Towards the New Children in Need Census*

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Introduction

E.1 The last full Children in Need Census was completed in 2005. The next Census exercise is scheduled for 2008-09. Rather than being a sample week as in previous censuses, the 2008-09 collection will cover six months. From 2009-10 the census will be a full annual return.

E.2 In order to bridge the information gap, research was undertaken to update information provided from the 2005 Census but without involving the significant commitment of resources from English Authorities required for the 2005 exercise.

E.3 Estimates of three key variables were required from the research:

- numbers of Children in Need ('CIN numbers');
- the number of Children in Need receiving services in a typical week and time spent by staff in Local Authority Children's Services Departments on activities directly related to Children in Need ('CIN activity'); and
- bottom up estimates of expenditure on Children in Need by Local Authorities based upon the time spent on activities ('CIN expenditure').

E.4 As far as was feasible, estimates of the variables were to be split by:

- the ten primary need codes used in the 2005 census<sup>1</sup>;
- ethnicity;
- age and sex.

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<sup>1</sup> This is the principal reason *administratively* recorded by the authority for a young person to be considered a child in need. They are for statistical purposes only and not intended to reflect the complexity of individual children but to understand the overall pressures on authorities. The ten codes and descriptions can be found at [http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/datastats1/guidelines/children/ANNEX%20C\\_2005.pdf](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/datastats1/guidelines/children/ANNEX%20C_2005.pdf)

## **Key Findings**

### **Children in Need Numbers**

- Returned surveys from 132 (88%) authorities suggest that open children in need cases stood at 335,600; 50,300 (13%) lower than the figure recorded in the 2005 Census. Care must be taken in comparing the two numbers however, as the definition of 'open cases' in the survey for this research compared to that in 2005 was slightly different. In addition, the survey was a point estimate rather than over a sample week which was the case for the 2005 Census.
- However, there is some evidence that there has been a real decline in the number of children in need considered to be open cases in England as a whole, despite some individual authorities reporting increases.
- Of the reported decline in numbers, 75% is due to falls in the numbers of children in need due to abuse and neglect, child disability and socially unacceptable behaviour.
- The male to female ratio amongst children in need appears to have stayed relatively constant since 2005. The one difference is in children in need due to socially unacceptable behaviour. The research suggests that in January 2008 nearly 40% of children in need in this category are female, up from just under 30% in 2005.
- The research undertaken suggests that there has been an increase in the proportion of children with Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) backgrounds who are classed as open children in need cases. The research also indicates that children with a white background accounted for 66.7% of all open children in need cases in January 2008, down from 72.8% in 2005.

### **Children in Need Activity**

- Whilst the evidence suggests the survey used to produce findings on activity with children in need was robust, it was used in only six authorities in England and as such the findings should be treated carefully - as is the case for all small sample results.
- A survey on children's social care workers in February 2008 suggests that the overall number of children in need receiving individual work is broadly the same or possibly slightly higher than that in 2005, at just under 200,000 children a week.
- There is evidence of a decline in social care staff activity with children in need due to disability, and a rise in activity with children in need due to absent parenting and family dysfunction.
- The same research indicates that delivery of group work to individual children in a week may have risen by 10.5% since 2005 to around 14,500 in 2008. In the authorities included in the research, group work only accounted for 2% of all activity by time, which is little changed from 2005.

- Qualitative evidence from almost 70 authorities on group versus individual work suggests that on-balance, whilst there is movement at a local authority level in both directions, there has been a slight increase in the use of group work.

### **Children in Need Expenditure**

- The research produced few reliable results in the overall change in children in need expenditure based upon activity. This is due to the difference in methodology employed in the survey to collect this information compared to the 2005 Census.
- What evidence was collected suggested overall activity expenditure on children in need of £944 million in 2006-07, or around 70% of total actual expenditure on commissioning and social workers. Again, as was the case with activity, these findings are based on a small sample size of six authorities and so should be treated with caution.

# 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In October 2007, York Consulting LLP (YCL) were commissioned by the Department of Children, School and Families (DCSF) to provide information on the activities and expenditure by Local Authorities on Children in Need.
- 1.2 The information bridges the gap between the last full census in 2005 and the introduction of the new census for 2008-09. Rather than being a sample week as in previous censuses, the 2008-09 collection will cover six months from October to March. From 2009-10 the census will be a full annual return.

## Project Aims

- 1.3 Essentially, the project was designed to update information provided from the 2005 Census but without the commitment of resources from English Authorities required for the 2005 Census.
- 1.4 Estimates of three key variables were therefore required from the project:
  - numbers of Children in Need ('CIN numbers');
  - the number of Children in Need receiving services in a typical week and time spent by staff in Local Authority Children's Services Departments on activities directly related to Children in Need ('CIN activity');
  - bottom up estimates of expenditure on Children in Need by Local Authorities based upon the time spent on activities ('CIN expenditure').
- 1.5 As far as was feasible, estimates of the variables were to be split by:
  - the ten primary need codes used in the 2005 census<sup>2</sup>;
  - ethnicity;
  - age; and
  - sex.
- 1.6 The primary focus was estimates at a national level, with a secondary focus of analysis on the nine Government Office Regions (GORs) and the five different types of authority:
  - Unitary Authorities;
  - Metropolitan Districts;
  - Shire Counties;
  - Inner London;
  - Outer London.

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<sup>2</sup> This is the principal reason *administratively* recorded by the authority for a young person to be considered a child in need. They are for statistical purposes only and not intended to reflect the complexity of individual children but to understand the overall pressures on authorities. The ten codes and descriptions can be found at [http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/datastats1/guidelines/children/ANNEX%20C\\_2005.pdf](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/datastats1/guidelines/children/ANNEX%20C_2005.pdf)

- 1.7 The remainder of this report explains the methodology undertaken, the findings from the research and a summary of what the balance of evidence suggests is the likely position for the three key target variables cited above.



## 2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 In undertaking this assignment, YCL adopted a multi method approach with three clear elements:

- Strand 1 - an 'extrapolation of 2005 Census data' using existing statistics to estimate change to 2008;
- Strand 2 - a 'Basic Survey' of Children in Need numbers completed on a voluntary basis by all authorities;
- Strand 3 - a simplified version of the 2005 Census, or 'Sample Survey' of activity and expenditure on Children in Need in a small sample of volunteering authorities.

### **Strand 1 - Extrapolation of 2005 Census Data**

2.2 The first stage of the project produced estimates of the key variables by extrapolating findings from the 2005 census. The extrapolation involved using readily available measures of change in statistics related to the three key variables plus working with a Steering Group in the DCSF to apply weightings to the different measures of change.

2.3 The choice of weightings was based upon a subjective judgement of the perceived robustness of each statistic and its likely relevance to the key variable being estimated.

### **Strand 2 - Basic Survey**

2.4 The Basic Survey was aimed at generating information on CIN numbers in English Local Authorities.

2.5 The survey requested the number of 'open children in need cases'<sup>3</sup> that authorities believed they had on a sample day in January, chosen by the authority. If authorities were able, the survey asked for cases split by primary need code and then separately by age, sex and ethnicity.

2.6 In addition to quantitative data, the survey included several qualitative questions. These questions covered:

- difficulties authorities encountered in providing Children in Need numbers for the survey;
- the changes in expenditure and activity they believed had happened in their authority since 2005; and
- how they anticipated expenditure and activity to change in the next three years.

2.7 The qualitative information was designed to help interpret the numbers provided as well as to provide some information to help produce estimates around activity and expenditure.

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<sup>3</sup> 'Open cases' includes looked after children and children who an authority supports in their family or independently for whom the authority is *committed to taking an initiative*. For more detail see <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/datastats1/guidelines/children/CIN2005Ch2.pdf>.

- 2.8 The format of the survey was signed off by the Star Chamber and was approved by the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS).
- 2.9 Prior to distribution of the survey, in December 2007 YCL contacted Directors of Children's Services and Children in Need contacts, provided by the DCSF, via e-mail to inform them of the survey and its purpose. YCL provided e-mail and telephone contact details should any authorities have any questions before receiving the survey. In addition, in the first week of January the ADCS informed authorities about the survey as part of a regular bulletin.
- 2.10 In the second week in January the survey itself was e-mailed to Directors of Children's Services. YCL sent the survey to each Director by name copying in Children in Need contacts. Again, YCL provided named contacts for assistance or clarification should it be required. The completed survey was to be e-mailed back to York Consulting by the end of January 2008, but due to time and resource constraints the deadline was extended to the end of February 2008.
- 2.11 By the end of February 2008, 132 authorities had returned the survey, with ten authorities informing YCL that they would not be able to complete the survey due to upcoming or ongoing JARs.

#### **Differences between the Basic Survey and 2005 Census**

- 2.12 As the numbers generated from the project, especially the Basic Survey, are acting as a bridge between the 2005 and 2008/09 Censuses, it is important to understand how comparable the Basic Survey numbers are with the 2005 Census.
- 2.13 It was anticipated from the outset that the numbers from the Basic Survey should be interpreted differently from those returned in the 2005 Census. This is mainly due to the Basic Survey being a point estimate of open cases held on an electronic system on a specific day, whereas the 2005 Census was an estimate of open cases collected over a sample week.
- 2.14 In the 2005 Census, cases of new children in need referred to authorities during the Census week were included as open cases. In 2006/07, the number of referrals was around 545,000, or approximately 10,000 per week (SFR-28 2007)<sup>4</sup>. There are therefore 10,000 cases from the outset that were included in the 'flow in' of Children in Need in the 2005 Census that may be absent from the Basic Survey.
- 2.15 However, the 2005 Census did not take into account 'flow out' during the sample week as Children in Need cases closed.
- 2.16 It is also debatable whether referrals that did not lead to assessment, (around 35% of all referrals in 2006/07) whilst definitely activity, should be classed as open children in need cases.
- 2.17 It may be that by ignoring 'flow out' and including referrals not leading to assessment, the 2005 Census was an overestimate of actual open cases. In any case, these cases must be taken into account when explaining any difference, or indeed apparent lack of change, between the open cases returned in the 2005 Census and in the Basic Survey.

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<sup>4</sup> See [http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000742/SFR28-2007tables\\_corrected\\_oct.xls](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000742/SFR28-2007tables_corrected_oct.xls)

- 2.18 As part of the 2005 Census, Local Authorities provided numbers of children and young people that received a service through contracted out or voluntary provision only and where appropriate from other statutory services such as Youth Offending Teams. This involved either contacting services for lists of children and young people they were involved with or counting the young people who used their services in the census week.
- 2.19 The Basic Survey simply asked authorities to return 'open cases' from their systems, which to reiterate was for just one given day.
- 2.20 The definition of Children in Need open cases reported in the Basic Survey should therefore be cases of Children in Need that local authority social care services 'consider they have sufficient responsibility to count as open on their own monitoring systems'. This contrasts with the definition in 2005 as open cases being those 'for which they believe they are currently taking or intend to take some form of initiative'.
- 2.21 This difference in definition and collection will have acted as a deflationary pressure on numbers returned in the Basic Survey compared to the 2005 Census. Assessment of the likely magnitude of this difference is required when comparing the open cases from 2005 compared to those in the Basic Survey.
- 2.22 It should be borne in mind that even if the methodology used in the Basic Survey was identical to that in the 2005 Census, with the introduction of Integrated Children's Services and different ways of working, what Local Authorities considered to be 'open children in need cases' to social care is likely to have changed. This will have an impact on numbers returned in the Basic Survey.
- 2.23 It also means that if the methodology for 2005 Census was repeated, the numbers returned would not be comparable to those from the 2005 Census without caveats.

### **Strand 3 - Sample Survey**

- 2.24 Whilst the Basic Survey provided some qualitative information on changes in activity and expenditure, the Sample Survey was designed to collect quantitative data on key variables in a similar form to that of the 2005 Census.
- 2.25 However, the Sample Survey could not be a repetition of the last census. Authorities were being asked to volunteer and the resource intensive nature of the last census would have acted as a significant disincentive to authorities coming forward if the sample survey took the same form.
- 2.26 As such, the design of the Sample Survey was as simple as possible to encourage volunteers. The design followed two key points of principle:
1. The data items collected compared to the 2005 census must be streamlined, focussing on only the most important and relevant items.
  2. The tool used to collect Information from individual workers must be easy to complete and take as little time as possible.

- 2.27 In relation to point 1, the DCSF Steering Group decided that information requested on costs was to be focussed on the salaries of those working with children in need and employer National Insurance and pension contributions. One off expenditure was not to be collected. In previous census collections, direct staff costs accounted for the vast majority of overall expenditure outside of the residential cost of looked after children.
- 2.28 Collection of activity data was simplified, asking for the total number of young people, by need code, seen in the sample week and the time spent. This was to be provided retrospectively and on an aggregate rather than individual child level.
- 2.29 This tied in with principle 2. By keeping activity collection to a minimum, the survey itself was targeted to take no more than 15 minutes for an individual worker to complete.
- 2.30 There was a data loss from this approach as the total number of child contacts and time spent was being collected rather than the number of unique contacts. This needed to be taken into account when interpreting the survey.
- 2.31 The survey was voluntary for social workers to complete as it was felt that this would also encourage authorities to participate. It was decided to use an online collection tool for the survey, rather than paper based, as it was anticipated that this would elicit a higher response rate but would also allow easier tracking of completers and non completers who could be followed up.
- 2.32 Information requested in the survey from social service staff was:
- job role, salary within £5,000 bands and number of days normally worked in a week;
  - number of children worked with by need code on an individual basis and time spent delivering this work in the sample week;
  - total number of children worked with in group work and time spent delivering this work in the sample week.
- 2.33 In order to take account of leave and atypical workloads in the sample week, the survey allowed respondents to record what activity they would consider to be '**normal**' for them if they felt the sample week was not typical in any way.
- 2.34 Finance staff were contacted to provide information on on-costs, full time working hours and the use of agency staff. Information on agency staff was collected through finance due to potential difficulties in getting this information directly. It was anticipated that the proportional use of agency staff would be small, and that expenditure on such staff could be classed entirely as activity.
- 2.35 The aim was to achieve 10-15 volunteering authorities. This would provide information that could be used in conjunction with the other statistical data identified as part of Stage 1 to extrapolate an estimate for England as a whole.
- 2.36 Volunteers were requested through an e-mail to Directors of Children's services in December 2007 and when the Basic Survey was sent out. In order to encourage volunteers, each authority that took part in the survey was offered a bespoke report analysing findings from the Sample and Basic Surveys.

- 2.37 By the end of February 2008, seven authorities had been recruited although one of these dropped out just before the survey started.
- 2.38 Contacts in each authority were asked to provide e-mail addresses of social service staff they felt should be included in the survey. Essentially, the guidance provided to them was that the staff roles of those completing the survey should be the same as those that completed the census in 2005. With a few exceptions, this meant any paid member of staff who provided a direct service to children in need.
- 2.39 The sample week was chosen as the week commencing 25 February 2008. E-mails were sent to all potential respondents via the authorities informing them of the survey in the week prior to the sample week. The survey itself, being retrospective, was e-mailed out on 4 March 2008 with two weeks given for completion, although this was extended by a third week to increase the response rate in some of the authorities.
- 2.40 By the end of the third week, the response rates had reached 25% in all but one authority and are summarised in Table 2.1 below.

<b>Table 2.1 Response rates in volunteering authorities</b>			
<b>Authority</b>	<b>Number of Surveys Sent Out</b>	<b>Number Returned</b>	<b>Response Rate</b>
Authority 1	197	61	31%
Authority 2	124	68	55%
Authority 3	74	39	53%
Authority 4	126	34	27%
Authority 5	103	37	36%
Authority 6	210	44	21%
<b>Total</b>	<b>834</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>34%</b>

### 3 RESULTS - CIN NUMBERS

#### Strand One - Extrapolation of 2005 Census Data

- 3.1 The purpose of the extrapolation exercise was to:
- provide preliminary estimates prior to the Basic Survey;
  - act as a means to incorporate findings from the Basic Survey to produce a national picture should response be less than 100%.
- 3.2 The generation of preliminary estimates was built upon extrapolation from the numbers in each need code in each authority reported in the 2005 census.
- 3.3 In all cases, the change in children in need numbers by need code between the 2001, 2003 and 2005 censuses for individual authorities, type of authority and GOR were calculated and used as estimates of change. In addition, for all need codes the following were used to estimate change:
- the change in 0-19 population between 2005 and 2007 for each authority as projected by the ONS;
  - the change in the number of initial assessments for each authority;
  - the national change in looked after children numbers for each need code.
- 3.4 For some need codes other statistics were used, such as the national change in numbers on the child protection register; this was included to extrapolate an estimate of children in need due to abuse and neglect.
- 3.5 The appreciation of these statistics produced a range of results, from a maximum estimate for January 2008 of 1,011,500 to a minimum of 297,200. The wide discrepancy in this range was due to the wide variation in change reported by individual authorities between prior census periods, which for some authorities was over 400% for some need codes and lower than a reduction of 70% for others.
- 3.6 To generate more robust estimates of numbers in 2008, two approaches were taken.
- 3.7 **The first was a simple average** of all the change estimates which was applied for each authority and need code. This produced an estimate of 436,600.
- 3.8 Taking a simple average assumes applying equal weighting to all change estimates. **For the second approach we calculated a 'best estimate'** involving the application of different weightings to estimates of change on a subjective basis on their perceived importance to the children in need code in question and an assessment of the robustness of the estimate itself.
- 3.9 The 'best estimate' is a subjective estimate using objective evidence. After the weightings were discussed with the project Steering Group the best estimate was agreed to be in the region of 416,400 or an increase of around 8% from 2005.

3.10 A summary of estimates produced is set out in Table 3.1.

<b>Table 3.1: England Estimates of CIN Numbers in 2008 from Extrapolation from 2005 Census</b>					
<b>Primary Need</b>	<b>Estimate</b>				<b>2005 Census</b>
	<b>'Best'</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Average</b>	
N1 - Abuse or Neglect	138,000	108,600	241,000	140,800	130,100
N2 - Child's Disability / Illness	47,200	46,400	137,300	65,100	58,900
N3 - Parental Illness/Disability	18,500	13,700	42,700	19,500	17,900
N4 - (Family in) Acute Stress	42,400	31,600	91,800	44,000	39,800
N5 - Family Dysfunction	52,400	39,900	98,300	54,000	49,900
N6 - Socially Unacceptable Behaviour	24,400	15,300	96,200	27,800	22,900
N7 - Low Income	6,300	2,500	19,400	6,900	6,700
N8 - Absent Parenting	14,700	11,200	24,400	14,700	13,900
N9 - Cases Other than Children in Need	23,000	9,900	193,000	30,900	15,200
N0 - Need code "Not Stated"	49,500	18,300	67,300	32,800	30,600
<b>Total Children in Need</b>	<b>416,400</b>	<b>297,400</b>	<b>1,011,400</b>	<b>436,500</b>	<b>385,900</b>

## **Strand Two - 'Basic Survey'**

### **Results**

- 3.11 Of the 150 local authorities in England, 132 (88%) returned the survey with all but eight being able to provide breakdowns of need code by age, sex and ethnicity. The reasons given for the inability to provide a breakdown were either due to the limitations of the IT system or current recording practice.
- 3.12 Given the high number of returns, providing the survey was robust, the numbers provided by the Basic Survey should be considered more accurate than those produced in the extrapolation in strand one.
- 3.13 Total children in need numbers for missing authorities were estimated from the regional and authority type rates per 1,000 population under 18 calculated from authorities returning the Basic Survey
- 3.14 Once total numbers were calculated the numbers of children within each primary need code were estimated through applying the percentages with each need code returning the survey.

- 3.15 Table 3.2 below summarises the estimates of total numbers from the Basic Survey by primary need code against the numbers returned for the 2005 Census.
- 3.16 As the table shows, the total numbers of children in need reported in the Basic Survey are 50,300 (13%) lower than the 2005 Census. The major differences are in lower numbers of children in need due to disability and illness (14,400 (63%) lower), due to socially unacceptable behaviour (13,500 (23%) lower) and due to abuse and neglect (9,100 (7%) lower).

<b>Table 3.2: England Estimates of CIN Numbers from Basic Survey and 2005 Census</b>			
<b>Primary Need</b>	<b>Basic Survey</b>	<b>2005 Census</b>	<b>Difference</b>
N1 - Abuse or Neglect	121,000	130,100	-9,100 (-7%)
N2 - Child's Disability / Illness	45,400	58,900	-13,500 (-23%)
N3 - Parental Illness / Disability	13,000	17,900	-4,900 (-28%)
N4 - (Family in) Acute Stress	36,500	39,800	-3,300 (-8%)
N5 - Family Dysfunction	48,400	49,900	-1,500 (-3%)
N6 - Socially Unacceptable Behaviour	8,500	22,900	-14,400 (-63%)
N7 - Low Income	2,700	6,700	-4,000 (-59%)
N8 - Absent Parenting	11,700	13,900	-2,200 (-16%)
N9 - Cases Other than Children in Need	9,800	15,200	-5,600 (-35%)
N0 - Need code "Not Stated"	38,600	30,600	8,000 (-26%)
<b>Total Children in Need</b>	<b>335,600</b>	<b>385,900</b>	<b>-50,300 (-13%)</b>

- 3.17 The split of ethnicity, age and sex by primary need code were calculated as percentages from the authorities returning the survey. These are summarised in Tables 3.3 to 3.5.
- 3.18 The only noticeable difference between the 2005 Census and Basic Survey across these variables is a slightly higher proportion of Children in Need that are non white (28% in 2005, 33% in the Basic Survey). The majority of this change can be accounted for by an increase from 2% to 6% to ethnicity classed as 'other'.



**Table 3.3: Estimates of Ethnicity of Children in Need in England from the Basic Survey**

Primary Need	Percentage					
	White	Mixed	Asian	Black	Other	Unborn/ Unknown
N1 - Abuse or Neglect	71% (78%)	7% (6%)	4% (4%)	6% (5%)	4% (1%)	8% (5%)
N2 - Child's Disability / Illness	72% (76%)	3% (3%)	6% (8%)	5% (5%)	3% (2%)	10% (6%)
N3 - Parental Illness/Disability	65% (72%)	8% (7%)	5% (4%)	10% (9%)	4% (2%)	9% (6%)
N4 - (Family in) Acute Stress	72% (77%)	6% (5%)	4% (4%)	6% (6%)	4% (2%)	9% (7%)
N5 - Family Dysfunction	74% (78%)	6% (5%)	3% (3%)	5% (5%)	5% (2%)	9% (8%)
N6 - Socially Unacceptable Behaviour	71% (76%)	6% (4%)	3% (3%)	9% (6%)	4% (1%)	8% (11%)
N7 - Low Income	45% (53%)	8% (5%)	7% (7%)	23% (20%)	11% (9%)	5% (6%)
N8 - Absent Parenting	26% (39%)	3% (4%)	17% (11%)	29% (30%)	21% (14%)	3% (2%)
N9 – Cases Other than Children in Need	60% (58%)	5% (5%)	5% (4%)	9% (7%)	9% (3%)	11% (24%)
N0 - Need code "Not Stated"	50% (50%)	4% (3%)	5% (3%)	5% (6%)	13% (2%)	23% (36%)
<b>Total Children in Need</b>	<b>67% (72%)</b>	<b>6% (5%)</b>	<b>5% (4%)</b>	<b>7% (7%)</b>	<b>6% (2%)</b>	<b>10% (10%)</b>

\* 2005 Census figures in Brackets

**Table 3.4: Estimates of Age of Children in Need in England from the Basic Survey**

Primary Need	Percentage*					Unborn/ Unknown
	0 to 4	5 to 9	10 to 14	15 to 16	17+	
N1 - Abuse or Neglect	27% (27%)	24% (26%)	26% (28%)	11% (10%)	8% (8%)	4% (-)
N2 - Child's Disability / Illness	12% (15%)	25% (28%)	33% (33%)	15% (14%)	12% (11%)	3% (-)
N3 - Parental Illness/Disability	30% (35%)	23% (25%)	25% (25%)	9% (8%)	8% (7%)	6% (-)
N4 - (Family in) Acute Stress	26% (30%)	24% (23%)	27% (27%)	13% (12%)	8% (8%)	3% (-)
N5 - Family Dysfunction	26% (26%)	24% (24%)	26% (28%)	12% (13%)	9% (10%)	3% (-)
N6 - Socially Unacceptable Behaviour	7% (4%)	14% (10%)	29% (29%)	24% (30%)	23% (26%)	3% (-)
N7 - Low Income	31% (35%)	23% (21%)	20% (17%)	10% (9%)	13% (18%)	3% (-)
N8 - Absent Parenting	6% (8%)	6% (7%)	14% (14%)	18% (22%)	53% (50%)	3% (-)
N9 - Cases Other than Children in Need	19% (29%)	22% (22%)	26% (25%)	11% (11%)	18% (13%)	4% (-)
N0 - Need code "Not Stated"	24% (35%)	21% (25%)	26% (25%)	14% (8%)	12% (7%)	3% (-)
<b>Total Children in Need</b>	<b>23% (24%)</b>	<b>23% (24%)</b>	<b>27% (28%)</b>	<b>13% (13%)</b>	<b>11% (12%)</b>	<b>4% (-)</b>

\* 2005 Census figures in Brackets

Table 3.5: Estimates of Gender of Children in Need in England from the Basic Survey			
Primary Need	Percentage		
	Male	Female	Unknown/ Unborn
N1 - Abuse or Neglect	48% (51%)	47% (49%)	6% (-)
N2 - Child's Disability / Illness	58% (64%)	38% (36%)	4% (-)
N3 - Parental Illness / Disability	48% (52%)	45% (48%)	6% (-)
N4 - (Family in) Acute Stress	51% (54%)	45% (46%)	4% (-)
N5 - Family Dysfunction	50% (53%)	46% (47%)	4% (-)
N6 - Socially Unacceptable Behaviour	58% (71%)	38% (29%)	4% (-)
N7 - Low Income	53% (51%)	44% (49%)	4% (-)
N8 - Absent Parenting	59% (64%)	38% (36%)	4% (-)
N9 - Cases Other than Children in Need	50% (52%)	45% (48%)	6% (-)
N0 - Need code "Not Stated"	50% (55%)	43% (45%)	7% (-)
<b>Total Children in Need</b>	<b>51%</b> <b>(56%)</b>	<b>44%</b> <b>(44%)</b>	<b>5%</b> (-)

\* 2005 Census figures in Brackets

### Quality of Survey Returns

- 3.19 In Chapter Five, we consider how the numbers should be interpreted, explained and analysed. To interpret the numbers with confidence, we need to make sure as far as is possible that the quality of returns where quality means accuracy and consistency of completion by Authorities.
- 3.20 There are several avenues that can be explored to provide evidence of accuracy and consistency in the Basic Survey returns. This evidence starts with the qualitative responses provided by authorities completing the return.
- 3.21 Twenty-eight (21%<sup>5</sup>) authorities provided qualitative information on potential shortcomings of their return, providing evidence that data quality may be an issue. However, twenty of these were comments about the difficulty authorities had in analysing ethnicity and age by need code rather than concerns about the overall numbers returned.
- 3.22 Of the remaining eight authorities, four mentioned they would have liked more time for data cleaning with the remainder discussing differences in the way they collected this data compared to the 2005 Census. **This is too small a number to conclude that the survey as a whole suffers from poor quality returns.**

<sup>5</sup> Of returning authorities

3.23 Further evidence of data quality can be found from examination of certain key statistics from the individual Basic Survey returns. Specifically:

- **how the changes seen compare to that between the 2003 and 2005 census;**
- **the number of children in need per 10,000 people under 18.**

3.24 Both reflect statistics where accuracy and inconsistency in return in the Basic Survey may be evident.

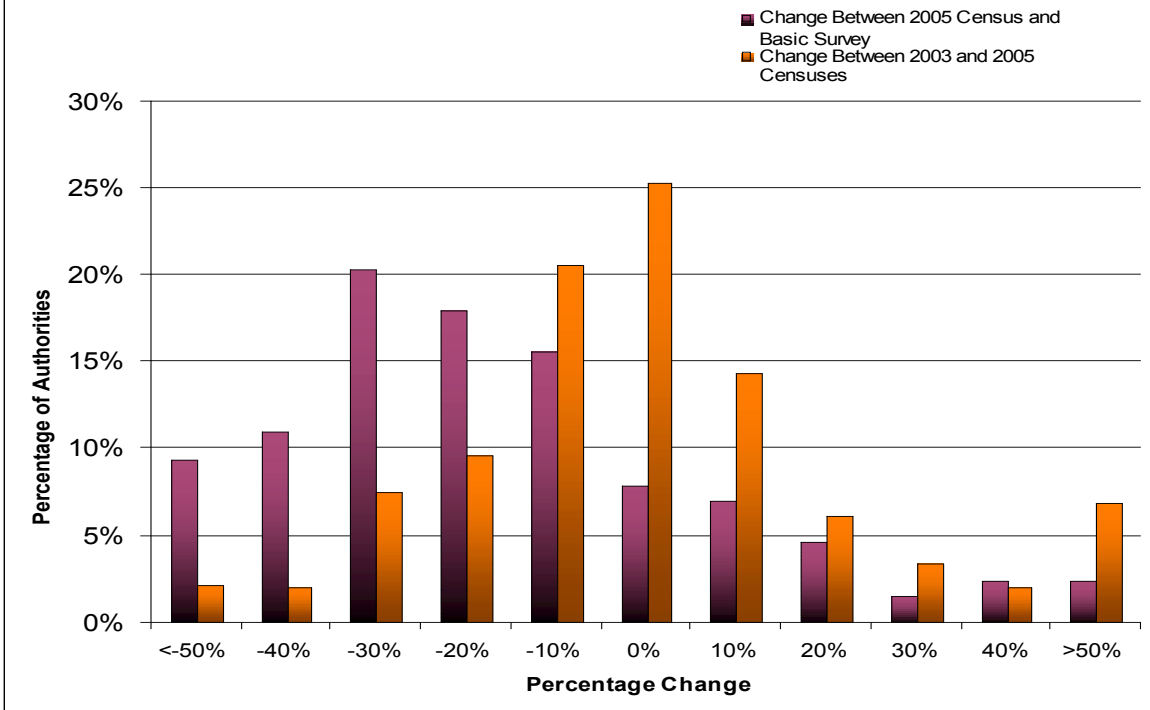
#### **Change Between Censuses and Basic Survey**

3.25 If the pattern of changes observed for individual authority returns is markedly different when looking at the changes between the 2003 and 2005 censuses, and the 2005 census and the Basic Survey, then this is evidence that there may be problems with accuracy and consistency in return for the Basic Survey.

3.26 'Pattern of change' means more than simply the direction of change. Specifically in this case examination of the distribution or spread of change could provide evidence of quality issues in the Basic Survey. If the distribution of changes reported by individual authorities between the Basic Survey and the 2005 Census is considerably different to that seen between 2003 and 2005, it would provide some evidence of systematic flaws in the Basic Survey.

3.27 The histogram in **Figure 3.1** illustrates the distribution of changes between the 2003 and 2005 Censuses and the 2005 Census and Basic Survey.

Figure 3.1 Histogram of Change in CIN Numbers: 2003 - 2005 and 2005 - 2008



- 3.28 Placing aside the overall direction of change, the distribution of changes between 2003 and 2005 Censuses, and the 2005 Census and the Basic Survey are very similar. In both cases, the change is roughly normally distributed, which is not what would be expected if there was a systematic driver of poor quality in returns.<sup>6</sup>
- 3.29 The standard deviation, a statistical measure of variability, of the change between the 2005 Census and the Basic Survey (26.5%) is actually smaller than that observed between the 2003 and 2005 surveys (34.6%). A lower standard deviation is not in itself evidence of a more accurate and consistent return, but if it was significantly greater than that evident between the 2003 and 2005 censuses there would be grounds for concern over the accuracy and consistency of the Basis Survey.
- 3.30 Table 3.6 shows the overall change between 2005 and 2008 at a regional level, compared to the change between 2003 and 2005.

<b>Table 3.6: Overall Change in Regional CIN Populations: 2003-2005 Censuses and 2005 Census and Basic Survey</b>		
<b>Government Office Region</b>	<b>2003-2005</b>	<b>2005-2008</b>
East	6%	-11%
East Midlands	2%	-10%
London	-8%	-25%
North East	4%	-13%
North West	6%	1%
South East	-11%	-10%
South West	19%	-23%
West Midlands	9%	-13%
Yorkshire and Humber	12%	-30%

- 3.31 Between the 2003-05 and 2005-08 there are five regions that broadly show the same magnitude of change, with four regions appearing significantly different.
- 3.32 The changes between the 2003 and 2005 Censuses are clustered around zero, in contrast to the changes between the 2005 Census and Basic Survey. The variation in change, as far as can be assessed from nine regions, is however broadly similar.
- 3.33 There is therefore no clear evidence relating to changes reported between the 2005 Census and Basic Survey to suggest that there are consistency and accuracy issues in the Basic Survey.

<sup>6</sup> The distribution for the Basic Survey/2005 Census change appears skewed due to the aggregation of authorities with changes less than -50% into one column.

3.34 To explore further whether there was statistical evidence to support the quality of returns, regressions were undertaken to look for statistical relationships between the change in individual authorities and their performance in the 2007 Annual Performance Assessment (APA). The hypothesis was that if there was a correlation between authorities who performed better in the APA and the change in CIN numbers this would be evidence that changes seen were not simply due to inaccuracy and inconsistency in completion of the Basic Survey.

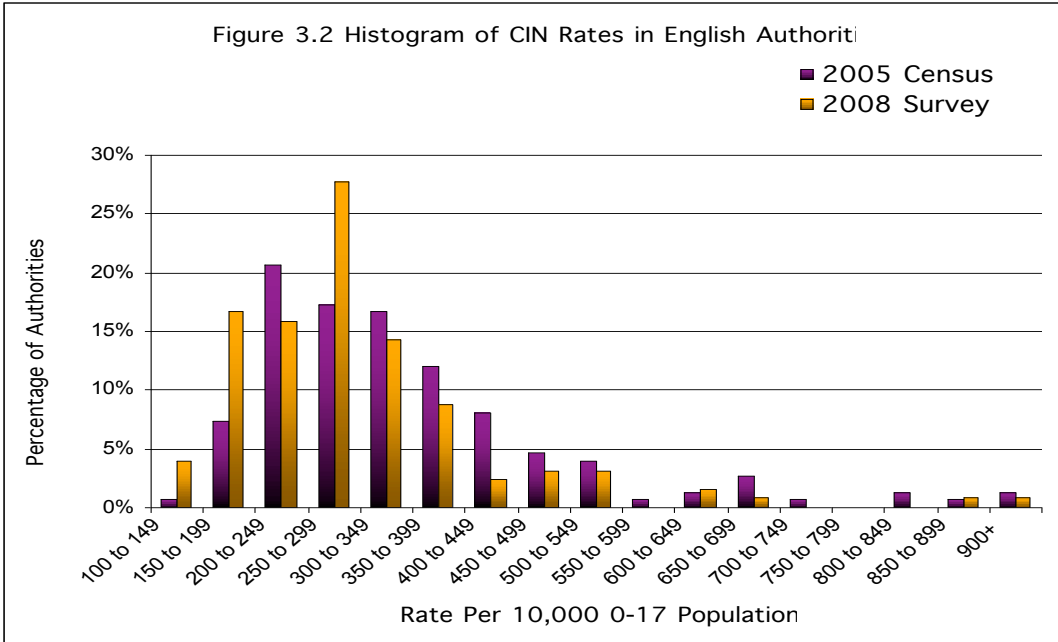
3.35 No statistically significant relationship could be found between the overall judgement or any of the individual outcome judgements.

**Number of Children in Need per 10,000 Population 0-17**

3.36 By weighting the returns by the population under 17, a more accurate picture of the relative children in need populations between authorities can be built. Differences in socio-demographic factors and policy and practice mean these rates will vary between authorities. However, YCL explored two areas where these rates can be explored for evidence of accuracy in return:

- comparison of rates in the 2005 Census to the Basic Return;
- how well rates correlate to differences in staffing levels.

3.37 Initial investigation of rates of children in need per 10,000 0-17 year olds in authorities returning the survey reveals variation, but as is shown in the histogram in Figure 3.2, this variation is similar to that in the 2005 Census and there is now less variation around the mean.

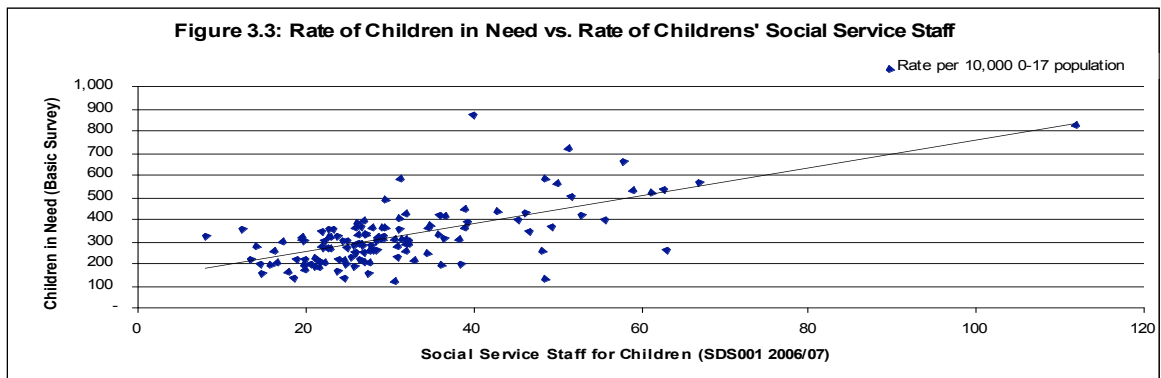


3.38 Due to the large fluctuations in change evident across regions between CIN surveys, it is interesting to look at the regional breakdown of CIN rates. This is shown in Table 3.7.

<b>Table 3.7: Rate of CIN per 10,000 Population aged 0-17 (ONS mid 2005 pop estimates)</b>		
<b>Government Office Region</b>	<b>2005 Census</b>	<b>Basic Survey</b>
East	322	297
East Midlands	323	289
London	457	375
North East	399	356
North West	335	344
South East	274	253
South West	337	270
West Midlands	316	252
Yorkshire and Humber	407	304
<b>England</b>	<b>349</b>	<b>302</b>

- 3.39 Once again, whilst the rates are lower, the variation observed between authorities in the 2005 Census is close to that of the Basic Survey.
- 3.40 There is no evidence from an examination of rates of children in need in authorities returning the Basic Survey compared to those seen in the 2005 Census, to suggest data quality issues in the Basic Survey.
- 3.41 Irrespective of the direction of causality, it is reasonable to assume there should be a strong and positive relationship between the rate of children in need in an authority and the rate of full time equivalent children's social care staff per 10,000 0-17 year olds in an authority. This relationship for the Basic Survey is illustrated in Figure 3.3, and regression analysis shows this relationship to be highly statistically significant ( $p=0.000$ ).





- 3.42 The variations in staffing levels appears to explain much of the variation in returns between councils. This strong correlation, in conjunction with the tightening of rates around the mean and the normal distribution of rates discussed above, provides confidence in the robustness of the data quality of the Basic Survey collection. Any variation observed is not different to that evident in the 2005 Census and is also a familiar characteristic of most social care statistic returns.
- 3.43 There is, therefore, no clear evidence from the numbers returned themselves that the Survey was systematically flawed or poorly completed.

## 4 RESULTS - ACTIVITY AND ASSOCIATED EXPENDITURE

### Strand One - Extrapolation of 2005 Census Data

- 4.1 As was the case with CIN Numbers, extrapolation of the 2005 Census estimates of CIN activity and expenditure was undertaken.
- 4.2 In addition to changes from previous censuses, statistics considered for extrapolation for each need code could include:
- CIN activity:
    - Change in the number of social service staff for children (from the SSDS001 return);
    - Change in the number of initial assessments;
    - Change in Special Educational Need numbers;
    - Change in the number of looked after children;
    - Changes in the child protection register
  - CIN expenditure:
    - Inflation as measured by the Retail Price Index (RPI);
    - Change in 'top down' expenditure on children in need not looked after (from PSSEX1 return);
    - Change in social worker pay.
- 4.3 The weightings chosen for the estimates followed an identical process to that for CIN numbers discussed in the previous chapter and were agreed with the Steering Group, with lowest, highest, average and best estimates. The estimates are summarised in Tables 4.1 to 4.4 below.
- 4.4 The best estimate of expenditure suggests that the number of children in need receiving individual work per week has increased since the 2005 Census by some 14% from 196,000 to 223,900 and the number receiving group work by 9% from 13,000 to 14,200. The best estimate suggests that costs have risen more slowly however, with expenditure on individual work rising 3% and on group work actually falling 25%.

**Table 4.1: England Estimates of Numbers of CIN Receiving an Individual Service in 2008 per week from Extrapolation from 2005 Census**

Primary Need	Estimate			
	'Best'	Low	High	Average
N1 - Abuse or Neglect	87,600	61,100	137,600	79,300
N2 - Child's Disability / Illness	23,300	19,500	48,300	25,700
N3 - Parental Illness / Disability	10,100	7,300	19,500	10,100
N4 - (Family in) Acute Stress	23,100	17,100	46,500	23,000
N5 - Family Dysfunction	29,000	21,400	56,100	28,800
N6 – Socially Unacceptable Behaviour	15,300	9,200	67,100	16,000
N7 - Low Income	2,600	1,200	9,700	2,700
N8 - Absent Parenting	8,000	5,800	13,300	7,800
N9 - Cases Other than Children in Need	7,200	3,200	37,900	8,100
N0 - Need code "Not Stated"	17,800	4,500	31,300	12,600
<b>Total Children in Need</b>	<b>223,900</b>	<b>150,300</b>	<b>467,300</b>	<b>214,300</b>

**Table 4.2: England Estimates of Numbers of CIN Receiving Group Work in 2008 per week from Extrapolation from 2005 Census**

Primary Need	Estimate			
	'Best'	Low	High	Average
N1 - Abuse or Neglect	2,700	1,000	11,200	2,700
N2 - Child's Disability / Illness	2,400	700	14,600	3,000
N3 - Parental Illness / Disability	1,800	400	15,300	2,100
N4 - (Family in) Acute Stress	2,300	700	11,900	2,600
N5 - Family Dysfunction	1,500	500	5,000	1,600
N6 – Socially Unacceptable Behaviour	800	100	5,600	900
N7 – Low Income	400	0	1,900	500
N8 - Absent Parenting	200	0	600	300
N9 - Cases Other than Children in Need	800	100	3,300	900
N0 - Need code "Not Stated"	1,300	100	3,000	1,300
<b>Total Children in Need</b>	<b>14,200</b>	<b>3,700</b>	<b>72,500</b>	<b>15,900</b>

<b>Table 4.3: England Estimates of Total Costs of CIN Individual Work in 2008 per week from Extrapolation from 2005 Census (£000s)</b>				
<b>Primary Need</b>	<b>Estimate</b>			
	<b>'Best'</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Average</b>
N1 - Abuse or Neglect	£13,916	£8,408	£42,842	£14,973
N2 - Child's Disability / Illness	£3,149	£1,831	£25,574	£4,437
N3 - Parental Illness / Disability	£1,482	£839	£6,927	£1,803
N4 - (Family in) Acute Stress	£2,911	£1,684	£13,223	£3,526
N5 - Family Dysfunction	£3,962	£2,318	£19,937	£4,848
N6 - Socially Unacceptable Behaviour	£2,630	£1,025	£29,122	£3,642
N7 - Low Income	£326	£67	£17,781	£497
N8 - Absent Parenting	£1,230	£729	£4,066	£1,426
N9 - Cases Other than Children in Need	£678	£190	£8,670	£933
N0 - Need code "Not Stated"	£2,032	£298	£5,429	£1,407
<b>Total Children in Need</b>	<b>£32,315</b>	<b>£17,389</b>	<b>£173,570</b>	<b>£37,493</b>

<b>Table 4.4: England Estimates of Total Costs of CIN Group Work in 2008 from Extrapolation from 2005 Census (£000s)</b>				
<b>Primary Need</b>	<b>Estimate</b>			
	<b>'Best'</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Average</b>
N1 - Abuse or Neglect	£197	£58	£2,948	<b>£256</b>
N2 - Child's Disability / Illness	£198	£46	£4,647	<b>£359</b>
N3 - Parental Illness / Disability	£144	£19	£7,433	<b>£254</b>
N4 - (Family in) Acute Stress	£105	£26	£1,132	<b>£161</b>
N5 - Family Dysfunction	£99	£24	£769	<b>£146</b>
N6 - Socially Unacceptable Behaviour	£34	£3	£417	<b>£55</b>
N7 - Low Income	£16	£0	£323	<b>£30</b>
N8 - Absent Parenting	£16	£0	£93	<b>£21</b>
N9 - Cases Other than Children in Need	£36	£3	£371	<b>£58</b>
N0 - Need code "Not Stated"	£79	£1	£242	<b>£81</b>
<b>Total Children in Need</b>	<b>£924</b>	<b>£180</b>	<b>£18,374</b>	<b>£1,421</b>

4.5 Table 4.5 overleaf summarises the 'best' estimates against the same statistics from the 2005 Census

<b>Table 4.5: Comparison of Extrapolation to the 2005 Census</b>			
	<b>Estimate</b>		
	<b>'Best'</b>	<b>2005 Census</b>	<b>% Change</b>
<b>CIN Receiving Individual Work (typical week)</b>	223,900	196,000	14%
<b>CIN Receiving Group Work (typical week)</b>	14,200	13,000	9%
<b>Total Cost Individual Work (£000s/week)</b>	£32,315	£31,310	3%
<b>Total Cost Group Work (£000s/week)</b>	<b>£924</b>	<b>£1,232</b>	<b>-25%</b>

## **Strand Two - The Basic Survey**

4.6 As stated previously, the Basic Survey asked three questions about expenditure and activity:

- whether the mix of group and individual work had changed since the last census (Q1);
- whether the split between and level of expenditure on different children in need codes had changed since the 2005 Census (Q2); and
- where they thought pressures would come in expenditure over the next three years (Q3).

4.7 The responses to the first two questions is summarised below. The final question (Q3) is not directly relevant to the *current* level of activity and expenditure and so is summarised in Appendix A.

### **The Split of Individual and Group Work (Q1)**

4.8 Seventy of the 132 authorities (53%) returning the survey provided a response to this question, with responses summarised in Table 4.6 below. On balance, the evidence from this question would indicate there may have been a slight increase in activity delivered across England as a whole, although it would appear in the majority of authorities there has been little change.

4.9 A more detailed summary of the responses is provided in Appendix A.

<b>Table 4.6: Summary of Local Authority Reported Change in Activity with Children in Need</b>		
<b>Change</b>	<b>No. Of Authorities</b>	<b>% of Authorities Responding</b>
<b>Unknown</b>	25	36
<b>None</b>	20	29
<b>Less Group Work</b>	5	7
<b>More Group Work</b>	10	14
<b>More Individual Work</b>	2	3
<b>More Individual and Group Work</b>	8	11

## Change in the Split and Level of Expenditure (Q2)

- 4.10 Seventy-nine of the 132 authorities (60%) returning the survey provided a response to this question, with responses summarised in Table 4.7 below.
- 4.11 Whilst the majority (75%) of Authorities who answered this question and were able to assess how expenditure had changed stated it had increased for at least one CIN group, there was no clear pattern to suggest anything other than different authorities are experiencing different cost pressures. However, the overall picture is one that suggests that expenditure on Children in Need has risen since the 2005 Census.
- 4.12 A more detailed summary of responses can be found in Appendix A.

<b>Table 4.7: Summary of Local Authority Reported Change in the Split and Level of Expenditure Between Children in Need Groups</b>		
<b>Change</b>	<b>No. Of Authorities</b>	<b>% of Authorities Responding</b>
<b>Unknown</b>	36	46
<b>No Significant Change</b>	11	14
<b><i>Need Group (Increase)</i></b>		
<b>N1 - Abuse or Neglect</b>	6	8
<b>N2 - Child's Disability / Illness</b>	11	14
<b>N3 - Parental Illness / Disability</b>	0	0
<b>N4 - (Family in) Acute Stress</b>	3	4
<b>N5 - Family Dysfunction</b>	5	6
<b>N6 - Socially Unacceptable Behaviour</b>	0	0
<b>N7 - Low Income</b>	1	1
<b>N8 - Absent Parenting</b>	4	5
<b>Looked After Children</b>	8	10
<b>Children on the Child Protection Register</b>	3	4

## Strand Three - The Sample Survey

- 4.13 As stated in Chapter Two, six authorities agreed to take part in the Sample Survey.
- 4.14 The small number of volunteering authorities means that any changes identified in expenditure and activity nationally since the 2005 Census need to be treated with caution. Analysis also focuses on the aggregate of returns across these authorities rather than on an individual authority basis.
- 4.15 Change in expenditure in particular is problematic, as the method of calculating hourly costs to apply to time spent completing activities was calculated differently in the sample survey compared to the 2005 Census.
- 4.16 The 2005 Census invited authorities to estimate detailed reference costs for each worker. As stated in Chapter Two, the Sample Survey asked only for a workers' salary band and number of days worked, with approximately 25% added on for on-costs.

- 4.17 This difference in methodology should not have greatly influenced a comparison of expenditure between the 2005 Census and the Sample Survey. However, the average unit (hourly) cost of workers completing the Sample Survey was £22, compared to a unit cost of £96 in the 2005 Census for the same six authorities. This suggests that the differences in methodology adopted to calculate unit costs are too great to be able to make any meaningful comparison of changes in expenditure suggested by the Sample Survey since the 2005 Census.
- 4.18 Changes in overall expenditure are therefore not particularly meaningful. However, the split in expenditure between children in need by primary need code can be explored.
- 4.19 The total number of workers asked to complete the survey was 834, compared to the 1063 workers who completed the 2005 Census in these authorities in 2005. The reason for this difference can only be speculated upon, although the exclusion of agency staff and contracted out provision in the Sample Survey may explain some if not most of this difference.
- 4.20 Activity by agency staff was captured from the finance department in each authority through details of expenditure on such staff. It was assumed that all expenditure on agency workers must be activity related. Expenditure on agency staff ranged from 1% to 5% of the overall children's social worker budget in each authority, so any estimates of activity from the survey should be inflated by these amounts to gain a more realistic picture.
- 4.21 In total 33.9% of workers across all LAs responded to the survey. It is assumed that there was no selection bias in those workers not responding. As such figures from returned surveys have been extrapolated out to what they suggest for the level and nature of activity for all workers in the six authorities.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Individual workers were asked to estimate 'typical figures' if the Sample Survey week was considered to be atypical. 20% of respondents said the week was not typical, the differences were on the whole not substantial. For consistency of comparison between the Sample Survey and the 2005 Census, only results from the Sample Survey week are included in the analysis in this section.

## Individual Work

- 4.22 Table 4.8 summarises the individual work reported in the Sample Survey against that reported by the same authorities in the 2005 Census.

<b>Table 4.8: Individual Activity in the Six Volunteering Authorities</b>		
	<b>2005 Census</b>	<b>Sample Survey</b>
<b>Number of Children Workers Reported Working With</b>	10,654	10,400 <sup>*</sup>
<b>Average Number of Workers Reporting Working with each Child</b>	1.47	-
<b>Number of Unique Children in Need Receiving an Individual Service</b>	7,223	7,100 <sup>**</sup>

Extrapolation of number of respondents to number of surveys distributed

Calculated from average number of workers reporting working with each child in the 2005 Census

- 4.23 The sample survey asked for the number of children in total seen by each worker, however, some children in need will have been seen by more than one worker. To gain a more accurate picture of the total number of children in need seen in a given week, the total number of children reported to have received individual work were deflated by the average number of workers reporting working with each child from the 2005 Census.
- 4.24 The results shown in Table 4.6 are encouraging for the reliability of the survey. The number of children in need that were worked with on an individual basis in the six authorities is almost identical to that reported in the 2005 Census.
- 4.25 This implies a fall of around 2% in the number of children in need receiving an individual service. If this was applied nationally, it would mean approximately 192,000 Children in Need received an individual service in a sample week, compared to 196,000 in the 2005 Census.
- 4.26 As stated above, this does not take into account the use of agency or contracted-out work. Again, agency work accounted for between 1% and 5% of overall expenditure on social work in volunteering authorities. As all of this expenditure should be on activity, the difference between 2008 and 2005 may well disappear and should be taken into account, before considering contracted out services.
- 4.27 The Sample Survey, therefore, provides evidence that the number of children in need worked with individually has stayed roughly the same as reported in the 2005 Census.
- 4.28 The total minutes of activity delivered suggested by the survey in the six authorities is approximately 840,000 in the sample week, down from 1,153,000 minutes delivered in the sample week in the 2005 Census. Again, this difference may be accounted for at least in part by the absence of agency work. It may also be an artefact of approximations in retrospective data collection on time spent, which may be more prone to inaccuracy than recalling the number of young people worked with.



4.29 Table 4.9 shows the split of individual activity by children seen and time spent.

<b>Table 4.9: Split of Individual Activity in the Six Volunteering Authorities</b>				
	<b>2005 Census numbers</b>	<b>Sample Survey numbers</b>	<b>2005 Census Time Spent</b>	<b>Sample Survey Time Spent</b>
Absent Parenting	3%	10%	2%	10%
Abuse or Neglect	45%	39%	50%	46%
Childs Disability	13%	9%	13%	7%
Family Dysfunction	11%	17%	10%	15%
Family in Acute Stress	12%	8%	10%	5%
Low Income	1%	4%	1%	3%
Parental Illness / Disability	5%	3%	4%	4%
Socially Unacceptable Behaviour	6%	5%	6%	6%
Other / Not Stated	5%	4%	4%	5%

### **Group Work**

4.30 Table 4.10 summarises the group work reported in the Sample Survey against that reported by the same authorities in the 2005 Census.

<b>Table 4.10: Group Work in the Six Volunteering Authorities</b>		
	<b>2005 Census</b>	<b>Sample Survey</b>
<b>Number of Children Workers Reported Working With</b>	952	1,050*
<b>Average Number of Workers Reporting Working with each Child</b>	1.40	-
<b>Number of Unique Children in Need Receiving an Individual Service</b>	679	750**

\*Extrapolation of number of respondents to number of surveys distributed

\*\*Calculated from average number of workers reporting working with each child in the 2005 Census

4.31 Using a similar calculation to individual work, the number of group work contacts is deflated to suggest that the number of children in need worked with in a group setting has increased by 10.5% compared to the 2005 Census.

4.32 Whilst the total number of children recorded in group work is around 10% of all children in need, the percentage of time spent in delivery of this work, at around 10,000 minutes, is less than 2% of all activity in the sample authorities.

## Expenditure

- 4.33 As stated previously, comparison of overall expenditure between the Sample Survey and the 2005 Census is not meaningful due to differences in the methodology in the calculation of individual worker costs.
- 4.34 Looking at the Sample Survey to provide a point estimate of expenditure, adding in on-costs and agency work suggests that weekly activity based expenditure in total across the six sample authorities is around £605,000, or circa £32 million per year. Overall expenditure on commissioning and social work for the six sample authorities in 2006-07 was circa £47million (PSSEX1). This suggests that non-contact time accounted for around a third of all expenditure.
- 4.35 The split of activity between need codes by expenditure is given in Table 4.11 below.

<b>Table 4.11: Split of Activity Expenditure in the Six Volunteering Authorities</b>		
	<b>2005 Census numbers</b>	<b>Sample Survey</b>
Absent Parenting	3%	8%
Abuse or Neglect	49%	49%
Childs Disability	11%	7%
Family Dysfunction	10%	14%
Family in Acute Stress	10%	5%
Low Income	1%	2%
Parental Illness / Disability	3%	3%
Socially Unacceptable Behaviour	8%	6%
Other / Not Stated	5%	5%

## **5 INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS**

### **Children in Need Numbers**

- 5.1 Extrapolation of the 2005 Census using relevant statistics suggests that the number of open children in need cases could have risen by 8% to January 2008. Findings from the Basic Survey, returned by 132 authorities, suggests that open cases have fallen 13%.
- 5.2 Given that no evidence could be found that completion of the Basic Survey was inaccurate or inconsistent and the high number and proportion of authorities returning it, the figures provided by the survey should be considered more robust and accurate than those provided through extrapolation. As such, it is on the Basic Survey numbers that we now focus.
- 5.3 As discussed in Chapter Two, the numbers in the Basic Survey and the 2005 Census are not strictly comparable. Given the difference of 50,000 between the two however, it would be remiss not to analyse and try to understand the disparity in the two figures. This difference could arise for several reasons:
  - Differences in definition between the 2005 Census and the Basic Survey
  - The effect of data cleansing
  - Changes in service delivery

### **Differences in Definition between the 2005 Census and the Basic Survey**

- 5.4 The definitional difference between the 2005 Census and the Basic Survey was discussed in Chapter Two. It was suggested that due to the measure of flow of children in need becoming open cases in a sample week, as many as 10,000 children in need may have been captured in the 2005 Census that would not be included in the Basic Survey. If this is an accurate estimate, then it would account for 20% of the difference between the two numbers.
- 5.5 Of potentially greater impact is the failure of the Basic Survey to capture children in need that are not held on a central social care database but receive contracted out provision.
- 5.6 As stated in Chapter Three, four authorities returning the Basic Survey reported their inability to capture information on contracted out services that they were able to include in the last Census. Only one authority reported the magnitude of the difference they felt this made to their return: a shortfall of some 30% or 1,700 in the total number of children in need classed as open cases in the last Census. If this was a fair reflection of the position of only 25% of authorities, it would largely account for the disparity in numbers reported in the Basic Survey.
- 5.7 However, around 75% of the difference in the Basic Survey and 2005 Census numbers is due to decreases in the numbers of Children in Need due to Abuse and Neglect, Child Disability or Illness or Socially Unacceptable Behaviour. These categories are likely to be children or young people that would be classed as 'open cases' on a social care information system - even if services were contracted out or passed to voluntary services.

- 5.8 While the evidence is not clear, it would suggest that the difference in the methods of counting of children and young between the 2005 Census and Basic Survey only partially explains the difference in numbers.

### **Data Cleansing**

- 5.9 As has been discussed previously and will be discussed further below, there have been major organisational changes in authorities since the 2005 Census with the move to integrated children's services (ICS). Several authorities mentioned ICS in the qualitative responses of the survey in terms of the data cleaning involved when moving to a new ICS IT system. This would have resulted in de-duplication of records or closing of old cases.
- 5.10 The scale of this is unknown, although data cleaning is known by the Department to have occurred during previous censuses. There is no specific reason why this should have been more thorough on migration to new IT systems, although better systems could have made identification of invalid or duplicate CIN cases more transparent.
- 5.11 In any case, additional 'data cleaning' would usually mean that the number of cases would fall rather than rise. This evidence suggests that the Basic Survey is an overestimate of CIN open cases as defined for the Basic Survey.

### **Changes in Service Delivery**

- 5.12 Between 2004-05 and 2006-07, according to the PSSEX1 returns expenditure on children's social services has increased by 13.3% in absolute terms. At the same time the number of looked after children has fallen by 1.6%<sup>8</sup> and the number of days looked after children are in care by 4.3% (PSSEX1). Over the same period the number of young people with a Child Protection Plan increased by 2,000 or 7.7%.<sup>9</sup>
- 5.13 As stated previously, there have also been initiatives such as Targeted Youth Support and the Common Assessment Framework that aim for more holistic provision of services to young people with a focus on early intervention. As is evident from Appendix A, authorities are unclear on the impact.
- 5.14 It would seem a fair hypothesis therefore that the fall in open cases reflects what at first sight may appear a contradiction - a focus of social workers and social care on cases with greater need, whilst at the same time a concentration by the authority on lower level preventative services.
- 5.15 This would result in some young people who would have previously been considered an open case in social care now having their needs met predominantly by other services. Social care may still have input but not to an extent that they are considered a child in need by Children's Services.
- 5.16 This hypothesis is further evidenced by the responses to the qualitative questions in the Basic Survey. These show the complexity of the environment in which social care is operating and how the same factors can change the number of open cases differently in different authorities.

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<sup>8</sup> Children looked after in England (including adoption and care leavers) year ending 31 March 2007, DCSF

<sup>9</sup> Referrals, Assessments and Children and Young People who are the subject of a Child Protection Plan or are on Child Protection Registers, England - Year ending 31 March 2007, DCSF

- 5.17 For example, closer multi-agency working can mean that social care does not take the lead on as many cases, but could be involved in more cases overall undertaking more lower level preventative work. How these cases are recorded is likely to vary between authorities. If they are not being logged routinely on information systems, it may be that the overall number of children receiving assistance from social care has gone up since the 2005 Census, whilst the number that authorities feel should be kept logged on their databases as open cases has gone down.
- 5.18 As data becomes available from the 2008-09 CIN census (results available in Autumn 2009), there should be greater understanding of trends in numbers of children in need - although it should be pointed out that the definition of Children in Need in future censuses will be different to that in the Basic Survey and previous censuses.

### **Children in Need Activity**

- 5.19 Strand One extrapolation suggested that the number of individuals receiving individual and group work have risen by 14% and 9% respectively compared to the 2005 Census week.
- 5.20 Significant caution needs to be exercised when using this extrapolation in isolation, as the statistics available to estimate change were on the whole more closely linked to demand for services and internal capacity rather than actual delivery. In addition, the changes observed between previous censuses showed considerable variation to the point where for most authorities it was not prudent to include any history of change as a statistic to be used in extrapolation.
- 5.21 Stronger evidence on activity was provided in responses to the qualitative questions that were part of the Basic Survey and through the results of the Sample Survey return.
- 5.22 The Basic Survey qualitative question on group versus individual work suggests that on-balance, whilst there is movement at a local authority level both ways, there has been a slight increase in the use of group work.
- 5.23 Where change was reported, it was linked to changes in the delivery of services due to new ways of working and integrated services. Interestingly, these changes were reported to both increase and decrease the amount of group work delivered.
- 5.24 The evidence from the Sample Survey suggests that for the six participating authorities the number of children in need observed through individual work has remained relatively constant between the 2005 Census sample week and the week at the end of February 2008 used for the Sample Survey.
- 5.25 The total number of individual minutes delivered may have fallen slightly over the same period, although this may be an artefact of the data collection.

- 5.26 Reflecting on individual need codes, there has been a decline in activity with children in need due to disability, which may be a reflection of the increase in use of direct payments. The proportion of activity related to children in need due to absent parenting and dysfunctional families, whilst still small overall, increased markedly from 12% (combined) by time spent in the 2005 Census to 25% (combined) by time spent in the Sample Survey.
- 5.27 The number of young people receiving group work increased by 10.5% in the Sample Survey week compared to the 2005 Census sample week. Whilst 10% of children in need in the six authorities received only group work, it only accounted for less than 2% of overall time spent delivering services by workers completing the survey.

### **Children in Need Expenditure**

- 5.28 As the estimation of expenditure was to be 'bottom up', estimates of expenditure are integrally linked to estimates of activity. As such, the extrapolation of expenditure from the 2005 Census suffers from the same weaknesses as the extrapolation of activity.
- 5.29 For completeness, the extrapolation suggested a 3% increase in the total cost of individual work and a 25% decrease in the total cost of group work. Again, these figures need to be treated with caution due to the weak evidence base on which the extrapolations were made.
- 5.30 The qualitative questions in the Basic Survey suggest that there is no overall pattern across England of how expenditure on children in need with different primary need has changed, with small numbers of authorities reporting increases for almost all need codes individually. This is understandable as different authorities have different demands, priorities and cost pressures.
- 5.31 Due to differences in the calculation of reference costs, overall cost comparison between the 2005 Census and the Basic Survey is not meaningful. However, as discussed in Chapter Four, the Sample Survey suggests that individual and group activity accounts for around 70% of all expenditure on commissioning and social work in the six authorities in the sample.
- 5.32 If this figure was extrapolated out to all English authorities, using expenditure data for 2006-07 from the PSSEX1 return, it would suggest that expenditure on individual and group activities by social care in 2006-07 was approximately £944 million.

**ANNEX A**  
**SUMMARY OF BASIC SURVEY QUALITATIVE QUESTIONS**

**Question 1: “If you are unable to provide a breakdown of need codes by age, sex or ethnicity, please provide reasons as to why”**

**Responding authorities**

Twenty eight authorities provided a response to this question, broken down by authority type and region in Table A1 below:

<b>Table A1: Authority Type and Region Split of Authorities Responding to Basic Survey Question 1</b>		
	<b>No. Of Authorities</b>	<b>% of Authorities Returning Survey</b>
<b>Authority Type</b>		
<b>Inner London</b>	1	8
<b>Metropolitan Districts</b>	10	34
<b>Outer London</b>	2	13
<b>Shire Counties</b>	8	27
<b>Unitary Authorities</b>	7	17
<b>Region</b>		
<b>East</b>	0	0
<b>East Midlands</b>	1	13
<b>London</b>	3	10
<b>North East</b>	4	40
<b>North West</b>	8	42
<b>South East</b>	4	22
<b>South West</b>	3	21
<b>West Midlands</b>	2	15
<b>Yorks and Humber</b>	3	27
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>22</b>

Responses to the question are summarised below.

**Missing Data**

The most common response to this question, mentioned by 10 authorities, was that there was data missing. This was attributed to a variety of reasons. For some authorities, the data was simply not recorded - this was most commonly ethnicity data.

One authority explained that their figures were an underestimate, because “not all cases are held electronically and we have only been able to count electronic ones this time, so feel we are undercounting what we do by at least 1700 children. It has not been possible to include anything from Family Resource Centres or Voluntary Agencies at such short notice. Additionally there are a significant number of children and young people receiving Section 24 and 17 where we do not have ethnicity or need details on our finance system”.

For some authorities, time and resource issues also meant they did not have time to carry out a full data cleaning exercise on the data provided.



## **Data Recording**

For several authorities, the way data is recorded had an impact on their ability to delivery the breakdown requested. Eight respondents gave this is a reason for the lack of breakdown by category. For instance, one LA only records need code for Looked After Children.

Another noted that because their electronic system was historically set up for social services, it records cases open to social care and will not include those where, for example, the health visitor, youth service or youth offending service is the lead professional.

Importantly, some LAs noted that changes in the way data is recorded since the 2005 CIN census mean that comparisons may not be possible. For example, one authority explained that "information is only held electronically for current open cases allocated to social work teams. YOT clients included in the last Census are held on a separate system and financial clients (e.g. post adoption support) are only recorded manually and have not been counted. The data in this return is thus only a partial count of CIN and is less than the 1,641 open cases submitted in 2005".

Another LA commented "please note that the figures supplied relate only to those children with an open 'case' on our SSD client database on the extraction date. These figures therefore exclude children working with social work staff in CAMHS clinics... and children working with voluntary organisations supported by grants from Children's Service budgets; both of these groups of children would have been included in the full 2005 CiN Census".

## **IT issues**

Seven authorities mentioned issues relating to IT in this context. For example, one explained that their electronic records were only saved in Word and there was no electronic database system in use, while another commented that the current version of their children's care recording software does not allow for the recording of CIN codes for all children. Another noted that while they hold information about all open cases, their facility for reporting on age, sex and ethnicity is only presently possible for Looked After Children.

Where IT issues were mentioned, some authorities did state that work was ongoing to upgrade their software or reporting systems in the future.

## **Unborn Children**

Five authorities noted that in some cases the breakdown requested was not available due to the fact that the children in question were unborn babies. In the case of one authority, this meant that "our return is limited to those aged 0-20 in receipt of children's services. There may be additional unborn children, but these have an "empty" date of birth and we cannot include these as we would also draw in some adults by doing this. The unborns in this return will fall under the 0-4s".

### **Other Reasons**

Other, less commonly mentioned reasons included the externally contracted nature of some services (e.g. one LA said it could provide data for their own practitioners' caseloads but not for contracted out provision, e.g. voluntary organisations), and a possible overestimate of the number of 17+ ("the number of 17+ may be over estimated because of post migration issues, which will also need to be rectified with some closures").

### **Regional Variations**

There were no discernible patterns in terms of variation between regions or authority types.

**Question 2: “How has the Relative Amount of Group and Individual Work Changed Since the Last Census in 2005?”**

Eighty eight authorities provided a response to this question, broken down by authority type and region in Table A2 below:

<b>Table A2: Authority Type and Region Split of Authorities Responding to Basic Survey Question 2</b>		
	<b>No. Of Authorities</b>	<b>% of Authorities Returning Survey</b>
<b>Authority Type</b>		
<b>Inner London</b>	8	62
<b>Metropolitan Districts</b>	18	62
<b>Outer London</b>	11	69
<b>Shire Counties</b>	21	70
<b>Unitary Authorities</b>	30	71
<b>Region</b>		
<b>East</b>	5	63
<b>East Midlands</b>	2	25
<b>London</b>	19	66
<b>North East</b>	6	60
<b>North West</b>	13	68
<b>South East</b>	15	83
<b>South West</b>	11	79
<b>West Midlands</b>	10	77
<b>Yorks and Humber</b>	7	64
<b>Total</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>68</b>

Responses to the question are summarised below.

**Missing Data / Unknown**

25 responding authorities said they did not know whether the amount of individual and/or group work had changed since the 2005 CiN Census. This was either because the data simply was not available, or because changes since 2005 meant the data was not comparable. For example, one authority explained that the two years “are not directly comparable as we have been a Children’s Service for several years now and the border between social care and education inclusion work has got blurred”.

**No Significant Change**

For 20 authorities, there had been no significant change in the amount of group/individual work conducted since 2005. Two of these authorities provided caveats to this comment:

- One authority stated that “we have seen a more coordinated approach via integrated working, which has enabled us to maintain the same level of face to face intervention but in a more effective way”;

- another explained that although there had been no change overall, there were certain areas of work where there *had* been a change: “if we consider specialist services...for example the Youth Offending Service and Early Years services, there will be lots of change since 2005 in terms of group work with young people to prevent crime, parenting groups in Sure Start/Children's Centres etc. Young Carers and the Substance Misuse team also have seen an increase in group work since the 2005 census”.

### **Less Group Work**

Five authorities said they were doing less group work than they were at the time of the last census.

In all of these cases, this change was due to changing responsibilities within the service: for example, one explained that “at the time of the 2005 CIN Census Social Care was responsible for a day nursery, which was the principal group work reported in the Census. This is now managed by Education and, thus, would not be reported”. Another said that “due to realignment of services within the LA, there is now less ‘group work’ undertaken under social services than in 2005. Most of this function now takes place elsewhere within the children's trust”.

### **More Group Work**

Ten authorities said that they were now doing more group work than in 2005.

Nearly half of these mentioned Children's Centres in this context. As one respondent summarised, “this trend is associated with the development of more preventative approaches adopted, particularly in Children's Centres, designed to reduce dependency on more formal approaches and promote mutual parental support”.

For one authority, a significant increase in Family Group Meetings and other preventative work (which has led to a drop in the number of CLA cases) was a result of ECM processes aimed at earlier identification and intervention.

Other reasons for more group work included:

- More group work for looked after children and care leavers (approximately 6 hours per week)
- Additional groups for other CIN & planning groups for privately fostered children
- To provide increased range of parenting support
- For children and families at lower levels of need

### **More Individual Work**

Only two authorities said they were doing more individual work. One said that they had focused on social care staff prioritising meeting casework responsibilities for individual children in need, while the other noted that multi-agency developments directed primarily at children and need and their families have increased individual work through professionals based in schools/children's centre outreach as well as supporting families with a multi agency team approach.

### **More Group and Individual Work**

Eight authorities reported an increase in both individual *and* group work.

For one authority, this was because a new family intervention team had been set up to do more individual and group work with children and families.

For another, the increase was predominantly due to the greater integration of services which means, for example, “the use of Youth Workers doing 1:1 and group work with children in care; an increased CAMH Service available for such work and parenting work with health and voluntary sector workers enabled through Children Fund, Sure Start or other funding streams”.

### **Regional Variation**

There was no pattern in responses based on region or authority type.

**Question 3: “Has Your Authority Seen Expenditure Change More for Some Need Codes than Others Since the 2005 Census?”**

**Responding authorities**

Eighty seven authorities provided a response to this question, broken down by authority type and region in Table A3 below:

<b>Table A3: Authority Type and Region Split of Authorities Responding to Basic Survey Question 3</b>		
	<b>No. Of Authorities</b>	<b>% of Authorities Returning Survey</b>
<b>Authority Type</b>		
<b>Inner London</b>	8	62
<b>Metropolitan Districts</b>	20	69
<b>Outer London</b>	11	69
<b>Shire Counties</b>	18	60
<b>Unitary Authorities</b>	30	71
<b>Region</b>		
<b>East</b>	6	75
<b>East Midlands</b>	2	25
<b>London</b>	19	66
<b>North East</b>	6	60
<b>North West</b>	14	74
<b>South East</b>	14	78
<b>South West</b>	10	71
<b>West Midlands</b>	9	69
<b>Yorks and Humber</b>	7	64
<b>Total</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>67</b>

Responses to the question are summarised below.

**Unknown**

Thirty six of the local authorities who responded to this question were unable to say how expenditure had changed for different need codes. For many of these authorities, this was due to the information not being recorded, or the finance and case records systems not being linked.

## **No Significant Change**

Eleven authorities reported that there had been no significant change in expenditure by need type since the last CiN Census.

## **N1: Abuse or Neglect**

Six authorities had increased their expenditure on this need code since the last Census, and one authority said expenditure had decreased in this area.

Of the six where expenditure had increased, one explained that “this is due to a refocus of resources following our JAR inspection” and another reported that the increase in neglect cases was attributed to enhanced awareness of staff.

## **N2: Child’s Disability / Illness**

Eleven authorities mentioned increased expenditure related to disability. Five of these specifically mentioned direct payments in this context, for example:

- “Expenditure on Children with Disabilities has also see an increase in expenditure, possibly as a result of the need for more complex high cost packages and the take up of Direct Payments”.

## **N3: Parental Illness / Disability**

None of the authorities mentioned any change in expenditure in this area.

## **N4: Family in Acute Stress**

Three authorities said that expenditure on ‘families in acute stress’ had increased.

## **N5: Family Dysfunction**

Five authorities mentioned family dysfunction, and all five said expenditure had increased in this area. Reasons for this included:

- “Family dysfunction has increased and therefore greater expenditure around family support / parenting courses etc”
- “There has been a notable increase in activity in relation to N5 (family dysfunction) which in some cases is attributed to domestic violence situations resulting in family breakdown”.

## **N6: Socially Unacceptable Behaviour**

None of the authorities mentioned any change in expenditure in this area.

## **N7: Low Income**

Only one authority mentioned this need code, and said expenditure had decreased.

### **N8: Absent Parenting**

Four authorities mentioned absent parenting. Expenditure on this need code had declined in one of these authorities, but increased in the other three.

### **Looked After Children**

Three authorities said that expenditure on LAC had decreased, one of which explained that this was due to their placement strategy.

However, another eight authorities said expenditure had increased on LAC. One authority gave a precise figure, saying that there had been a 58% increase in LAC expenditure. Comments included:

- “We have seen particular growth in key areas such as LAC placement costs (both in house and external)”
- “Average cost of Looked After Child has decreased as result of targeted commissioning”
- “Children Looked After (CLA) require more intensive support, so the unit costs have increased. The overall costs have only increased slightly because the number of CLA are falling”.

### **Child Protection**

Three said child protection cases were up/child protection activity has increased.

### **Regional Variation**

Again, there was no pattern in responses by region or authority type.



**Question 4: “What Factors will Impact on Expenditure on Children in Need Over the Next Three Years?”**

**Responding authorities**

Eighty four authorities provided a response to this question, broken down by authority type and region in Table A4 below:

<b>Table A4: Authority Type and Region Split of Authorities Responding to Basic Survey Question 4</b>		
	<b>No. Of Authorities</b>	<b>% of Authorities Returning Survey</b>
<b>Authority Type</b>		
<b>Inner London</b>	7	54
<b>Metropolitan Districts</b>	18	62
<b>Outer London</b>	11	69
<b>Shire Counties</b>	18	60
<b>Unitary Authorities</b>	30	71
<b>Region</b>		
<b>East</b>	5	63
<b>East Midlands</b>	1	13
<b>London</b>	18	62
<b>North East</b>	6	60
<b>North West</b>	12	63
<b>South East</b>	14	78
<b>South West</b>	11	79
<b>West Midlands</b>	9	69
<b>Yorks and Humber</b>	8	73
<b>Total</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>67</b>

Responses to the question are summarised below.

**Unable to Comment**

Three authorities felt unable to comment or did not know the answer to this question.

## **Demographic Trends and Demands on Services**

A number of factors relating to demographic changes and consequent demands on services were mentioned in response to this question.

### Looked After Children

Six authorities specifically mentioned increases in the numbers of LAC here; for example, one commented that “we have seen a rise of 30% in our LAC population over the last four years and the trend seems to be continuing which impacts on expenditure. There are expectations of new services being provided for this population which will also affect expenditure”.

### Disability

Disability was another factor mentioned by several LAs: 19 authorities cited this as a reason for changes in expenditure over the coming years.

Some said that this was simply due to increasing numbers of children with a disability; others made more specific comments about (for example) the increase in extreme spectrum autism cases requiring a 24/7 residential or educational response. An increased survival rate of children born with complex disabilities was also seen as a factor.

Others specified which kinds of services would be affected by this: two suggested increased respite facilities would be required, while another mentioned the potential increase in the number of Direct Payments for children with a disability.

The implementation of ‘Aiming High’ for disabled children was also mentioned.

### New Arrivals in the UK

Another factor which was mentioned by six respondents was the arrival of families from outside the UK. Some expected to experience increasing pressure from asylum seeking children and families, while other changes may be affected by migration patterns. For example:

- *“Newly arrived communities from Eastern Europe are having an impact”*
- *“Increasing numbers of Unaccompanied Asylum seeking children and Persons from Abroad”*
- *“[The LA] has a significant incoming population and new communities are growing - particularly Somali, Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Eastern European”.*

### Trends in Need Type

Several authorities noted that social patterns would affect expenditure on CiN in the coming years. Several noted an increase in families where parents were misusing drugs and alcohol. Comments included:

- *“Costs of responding to drug abusing parents with support programmes often requiring protracted support and monitoring through relapses... [There are] a growing number of such families”*

- *“increased prevalence of alcohol and substance misuse and domestic violence leading to family breakdown”*
- *“Awareness of the impact of domestic abuse and challenges around substance misuse in young people as well as recognition of different areas of abuse such as child trafficking, children missing, internet abuse and child sexual exploitation have the potential to impact on services to children in need”*
- *“Latest demographic data shows increasing levels of deprivation in the borough for children and young families. This is likely to result in increasing demand for social care and Children's Services across the borough”*
- *“Costs associated with impact of rising exclusions in schools, impact on family etc”*
- *“Increasing rates of family break down, and entrants in to the criminal justice system”*

### Demands and Expectations

In addition, some authorities felt that they would need to respond to increasing demands from service users. For example, one reported that expenditure would be affected by “responding to the demands for more and better quality services from children, families and other stakeholders, e.g. schools”. Another said there would be “increased expectations of service users and increases in demand for services will be important factors, particularly in relation to children with disabilities”.

### **Legislative / Policy Changes**

A number of responses related to legislative and policy changes which will influence the way services operate.

### Common Assessment Framework (CAF)

Sixteen authorities specifically mentioned the CAF in their responses. Comments included:

- *“there will be rising numbers of CiN due to Common Assessment Framework”*
- *“Implementation of the CAF may increase the burden on children’s services with regards to expenditure on preventative services”*
- *“The Common Assessment Framework and co-ordinated, multi-agency working can ensure that children's needs do not escalate or reach crisis point and will hopefully impact in a positive way on social care expenditure as it will promote preventative working and early identification of difficulties”.*

### Care Matters

Six authorities thought that the Care Matters White Paper will influence expenditure. They did not provide concrete examples of how this would happen, although they did note that it represents pressures which can increase costs. The Care Matters agenda seeks to improve services for children in care.

## Public Law Outline

Eight authorities specifically mentioned the Public Law Outline, the recommendations of which “may increase demand on Family Group Meeting service and early assessment costs”. There will also be implications for additional preparations in advance of care proceedings, and for the likely need for more expensive specialist assessments to be charged to the local authority.

## Court Costs

Nine authorities mentioned the change in court protocols and resulting increase in court costs which “will leave the burden at the LA door”. This is because “funding of assessments etc that was shared between LA and Legal services Commission now shunted to LA alone”. It is believed that the increase in court fees payable by LAs will have a ‘significant’ impact on expenditure.

## Other Legislative / Policy Changes

Several authorities said that the introduction of the Children and Young Persons’ Act will increase expenditure on LAC and care leavers. For example, one reported that there would be “more local placements required, and [a need to] continue to provide an increase in permanence and stability”.

The Adoption Act was also cited in this context, as it “places additional requirements to assess and provide services, including financial support, to adopters and adoptees”. It also covers post adoption support.

Other legislative / policy changes mentioned were:

- Special Guardianship Orders
- the introduction of Integrated Service Areas
- Family support and strategy review.

## **Focus / Approach of LAs**

Several issues were raised in relation to how authorities approach services for children in need; for example, an increased focus on preventative measures, more joint/multi-agency working and the role of commissioning of services.

## Preventative Approach

Twenty five authorities noted that an increased focus on preventative measure would have an impact on expenditure. For example:

- *“Historically [the LA] has had comparatively high numbers of looked after children, and reducing the need for children to become looked after is a key priority within the City’s Children & Young People’s Plan. As numbers reduce we anticipate a shift in expenditure from the high costs associated with looked after children towards preventative services for children in need and their families”*
- *“More focus on prevention should mean we start to see a shift from statutory to preventative , in the short term we may see an increase in statutory as unmet needs are potentially identified”*

- *“In an attempt to prevent children from becoming looked after and to stem the growth in areas such as fostering it is envisaged that more family support activity will occur and our strategies aim to promoting these outcomes”*
- *“We anticipate a rise in referrals of CIN during at least the next 18 - 24 months as we implement our preventative strategy with tier 1 services working with vulnerable children”*
- *“Earlier identification may mean more spend on things such as short breaks and other preventative services”.*

### Joint and Multi-Agency Working

Twelve authorities said that more multi-agency working would have an effect on expenditure. Comments included:

- *“Factors will include the increasing implementation of integrated/joint working which will mean we are not measuring the same things as we measured in 2005, and expenditure will appear different as CIN work will be jointly undertaken with professionals who are not from the LA budget”*
- *“Increasing identification of children with additional needs through local integrated working may increase nos. of CIN referred to children's social work services”*
- *“Anticipating increased demand through earlier identification and increased costs”*
- *“Efficiencies that may be achieved through more effective integration of services”*
- *“Integrated working should result in less duplication and more targeted working”.*

### Commissioning of Services

Several authorities said that the way services are commissioned will have an impact on expenditure over the coming years. For example, one authority said that they have “a clear focus to undertake appropriate commissioning, and this is likely to lead to more expenditure being placed with external agencies”. Another respondent agreed, stating that the “complexity of cases requiring externally commissioned assessments will also have an impact on expenditure over the coming years”. One authority predicted a greater role for the voluntary and independent sector as well as the effective use of commissioning/contracting processes.

### **Employment / Workforce Issues**

Eight authorities reported that issues affecting the social care workforce would influence future expenditure. For example, one suggested that there would be pay demands from the social care workforce in light of increase pay for teachers.

The availability of high grade quality experienced Social Workers was also seen as an issue. This was particularly a problem because the increasingly complex needs of children who are in the care population mean that they require “better skilled and qualified staff and other carers, and higher ratios of staff in children’s homes”.

The retention of social workers and foster carers was also mentioned, as was the availability of new adopters.

One respondent noted that they had created new posts to strengthen child care teams following the Climbie Inquiry.

### **Budgetary Constraints**

Finally, many authorities noted that expenditure on children in need would ultimately be determined by budgetary constraints and the financial settlements they receive. The “tight budgets” set “means pressure on services and the constraint towards making any significant changes to expenditure”.

### **Regional Variation**

Again, there was no pattern in responses by region or authority type.

**ANNEX B  
THE BASIC SURVEY**

**Survey  
Instructions**

This survey asks for the number of "open Children in Need cases" on a specific day (to be chosen by your authority) in January 2008. The definitions of "Children in Need" and "open cases" are the same as those in the 2005 Children in Need census and can be accessed through the link below. Please complete as much data as possible for your authority. For example, if you are able to provide aggregate figures on Children in Need by need code, but not their age and ethnicity, please only complete the totals for the need code.

[http://www.dcf.gov.uk/datastats1/guidelines/children/ANNEX%20C\\_2005.pdf](http://www.dcf.gov.uk/datastats1/guidelines/children/ANNEX%20C_2005.pdf)

Please direct any questions on the survey to James Mahon at York Consulting via e-mail:  
*James.Mahon@YorkConsulting.co.uk* or telephone 0131 2706061

Alternatively, for questions around definitions please contact Isabella Craig at the DCSF via e-mail:  
*Isabella.Craig@dcf.gov.uk* or telephone 0207 9253802

At the end of this file is a sheet with additional questions that will both help with our understanding of how to undertake the 2008/09 census as well as provide useful information to understand how expenditure and activity on Children in Need has changed since 2005. Once all the sheets have been completed please save the file and return it to James Mahon using the e-mail address above.



**Ref: Sheet 1 - Number of Open Children In Need Cases by Ethnicity**

<b>Local Authority</b>	
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<b>Survey Date</b>	
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<b>Need Code</b>	<b>Ethnic Group</b>						<b>Total</b>
	White	Mixed	Asian	Black	Other	Unknown / not stated	
N1 - Abuse or Neglect							
N2 - Child's Disability / Illness							
N3 - Parental Illness / Disability							
N4 - (Family in) Acute Stress							
N5 - Family Dysfunction							
N6 - Socially Unacceptable Behaviour							
N7 - Low Income							
N8 - Absent Parenting							
N9 - Cases Other than Children in Need							
N0 - Need code "Not Stated"							
<b>Total CiN Numbers</b>							

**Ref: Sheet 2 - Number of Open Children In Need Cases by Age and Sex**

<b>Local Authority</b>	
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<b>Survey Date</b>	
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Need Code	Age					Sex		Unborn	Total
	0 to 4	5 to 9	10 to 14	15 to 16	17+	Male	Female		
N1 - Abuse or Neglect									
N2 - Child's Disability / Illness									
N3 - Parental Illness / Disability									
N4 - (Family in) Acute Stress									
N5 - Family Dysfunction									
N6 - Socially Unacceptable Behaviour									
N7 - Low Income									
N8 - Absent Parenting									
N9 - Cases Other than Children in Need									
N0 - Need code "Not Stated"									
<b>Total CiN Numbers</b>									

**Ref: Sheet 3 - Additional Questions**

<b>Local Authority</b>	
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**A. Open Cases**

- A.1 Does your authority hold information on the number of open cases electronically?
  
- A.2 If you are unable to provide a breakdown of need codes by age, sex or ethnicity please provide details below as to why.

**B. Expenditure and Activity**

- B.1 How has the relative amount of individual/group work that has taken place in your LA changed since the last CIN census in 2005?
  
- B.2 Has your LA seen expenditure change more for some need codes than others since the last CIN census in 2005?
  
- B.3 What factors do you believe will impact on expenditure on Children in Need over the next three years?

**ANNEX C**  
**THE SAMPLE SURVEY**

**YORK CONSULTING - SOCIAL SERVICES CHILDREN IN NEED REVIEW**  
**ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE<sup>10</sup>**

This survey is being completed by all social workers, social work assistants and social service officers in your authority who have contact with and deliver services to Children in Need.

Whilst completely different in form to the 2005 CIN census, the purpose of the survey is broadly similar. It will provide information on the way the time and resource used by your authority on Children in Need is focused. Looking back to the last census, we will also be able to see how this has changed since 2005. The information is valuable locally, to understand how resource is being used. It is also important nationally, as a key evidence source for the DCSF, used to work out what services money is being spent on, and how children's outcomes are improved by these services.

The survey is anonymous, although we will know when you have completed it. The analysis of the information will be done outside of your authority, and will be done on an aggregate basis. No information will be released to either your authority or the DCSF that would allow individuals to be identified.

Due to the anonymity, there are a few key questions at the start of the survey that we need completing for statistical purposes.

Please answer as honestly and accurately as possible.

ON PAGE 2 PLEASE PUT THE SCREEN WHICH EXPLAINS THE TIME-OUT FUNCTION AND THE USE OF THE "RESUME LATER" BUTTON

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<sup>10</sup> This is a Word version of the on-line questionnaire.

<p><b>Q1</b></p>	<p>Please enter your job role.</p> <p><i>Please enter this in full (i.e. do not use abbreviations)</i></p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>		
<p><b>Q2</b></p>	<p>Rounding up to the nearest half day, how many days are you contracted to work in a normal week?</p> <p><i>NOTE: If you work compressed hours or similar, then please state how many days to the nearest half day your working week is compressed from.</i></p>	<p>0.5 1</p> <p>1 2</p> <p>1.5 3</p> <p>2 4</p> <p>2.5 5</p> <p>3 6</p> <p>3.5 7</p> <p>4 8</p> <p>4.5 9</p> <p>5 10</p> <p>5.5 11</p> <p>6 12</p>	
<p><b>Q3</b></p>	<p>Please indicate which band your salary falls into:</p> <p><i>We ask for your salary so that we can estimate a money value of the time you have spent. We appreciate that this is sensitive information, but it is vital for our analysis. Just to remind you, this information will be anonymised and aggregated together with the answers of everyone else taking part in this survey.</i></p>	<p>£0 - £5,000 pa 01</p> <p>£5,001 - £10,000 pa 02</p> <p>£10,001 - £15,000 pa 03</p> <p>£15,001 - £20,000 pa 04</p> <p>£20,001 - £25,000 pa 05</p> <p>£25,001 - £30,000 pa 06</p> <p>£30,001 - £35,000 pa 07</p> <p>£35,001 - £40,000 pa 08</p> <p>£40,001 - £45,000 pa 09</p> <p>£45,001 - £50,000 pa 10</p> <p>£50,001 - £55,000 pa 11</p> <p>£55,001 - £60,000 pa 12</p> <p>£60,001 - £65,000 pa 13</p> <p>£65,001 - £70,000 pa 14</p> <p>£70,001 - £75,000 pa 15</p> <p>£75,001 - £80,000 pa 16</p> <p>£80,001 - £85,000 pa 17</p> <p>£85,001 - £90,000 pa 18</p> <p>£90,001 - £95,000 pa 19</p> <p>£95,001+ pa 20</p>	

<b>Q4</b>	<p>Please enter the total number of children in need on whose behalf you undertook individual work in each of the following categories, during the week 25<sup>th</sup> February to 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2008.</p> <p><i>Please note: each child should only be counted in one category, so please classify them by what you feel was the primary need for the child at the time of your work with them. 'Individual work' means activities that relate directly to an individual young person or their family, including direct contact, reviewing case notes and preparation for contact. Young people that you did not have direct contact in the week in question could therefore be included.</i></p>	
	Absent parents Abuse and neglect Child disability Family dysfunction Family in acute stress Low income Parental illness / disability Socially unacceptable behaviour Other	ENTER FIGURE ENTER FIGURE ENTER FIGURE ENTER FIGURE ENTER FIGURE ENTER FIGURE ENTER FIGURE ENTER FIGURE
	(ALLOW 0-999 IN EACH CATEGORY)	

<b>FOR EACH CATEGORY THAT IS NOT BLANK OR '0' IN Q4, ASK Q5</b>		
<b>Q5</b>	<p>Focussing now on the &lt;NUMBER FROM Q4&gt; child / children on whose behalf you undertook individual work, under the primary need of &lt;CATEGORY FROM Q4&gt;.</p> <p>Excluding time spent in group work, how many minutes did you spend in total in undertaking individual work with these children in the week commencing 25<sup>th</sup> February to 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2008?</p> <p><i>Please note: By 'undertaking individual work' we mean activity that relates directly to the individual child in need, either with the young person or their family. Please include any travel or administration time such as reviewing or writing case notes. Please note, we do not require accuracy beyond the nearest 15 minutes. You may find referring to your diary will help with this.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">ENTER NUMBER _____</p>	
<b>Q6</b>	<p>How many children in need did you undertake group work with in the week 25<sup>th</sup> February to 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2008?</p> <p><i>Please note: Only include young people that were children in need in any group work. If preparation or write ups from group work were undertaken but no actual activity then the number of children in need that were or are anticipated to be involved should be included.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">ENTER NUMBER _____</p>	
<b>IF ANSWER TO Q6 IS GREATER THAN 0, ASK Q7</b>		

<b>Q7</b>	<p>And how many minutes did you spend undertaking group work?</p> <p><i>Please note: By 'undertaking group work' we mean activity that relates directly to the children in need receiving group work. Please include any travel or preparation time. Please note that we do not require accuracy beyond the nearest 15 minutes. You may find referring to your diary will help with this.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">ENTER NUMBER _____</p>		
<b>Q8</b>	<p>Would you describe the week commencing 25<sup>th</sup> February as fairly typical in terms of your workload?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Yes No</p>	<p>01 02</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">END GO TO Q9</p>
<b>Q9</b>	<p>Please enter the total number of children in need on whose behalf you undertook individual work in each of the following categories, during a typical week.</p> <p><i>Please note: each child should only be counted in one category, so please classify them by what you feel would be the primary need for the child at the time of your work with them. 'Individual work' means activities that relate directly to an individual young person or their family, including direct contact, reviewing case notes and preparation for contact.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Absent parents Abuse and neglect Child disability Family dysfunction Family in acute stress Low income Parental illness / disability Socially unacceptable behaviour Other</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(ALLOW 0-999 IN EACH CATEGORY)</p>		<p>ENTER FIGURE ENTER FIGURE ENTER FIGURE ENTER FIGURE ENTER FIGURE ENTER FIGURE ENTER FIGURE ENTER FIGURE ENTER FIGURE</p>
<b>FOR EACH CATEGORY THAT IS NOT BLANK OR '0' IN Q9, ASK Q10</b>			
<b>Q10</b>	<p>Focussing now on the &lt;NUMBER FROM Q9&gt; child / children you on whose behalf you would expect to undertake individual work in a typical week, under the primary need of &lt;CATEGORY FROM Q4&gt;.</p> <p>Excluding time spent in group work, how many minutes would you spend in total in undertaking individual work with these children in a typical week?</p> <p><i>Please note: By 'individual work' we mean activity that relates directly to the individual child in need, either with the young person or their family. Please include any travel or administration time such as reviewing or writing case notes. Please note, we do not require accuracy beyond the nearest 15 minutes.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">ENTER NUMBER _____</p>		



<p><b>Q11</b> How many children would you usually undertake group work with in a typical week?</p> <p><i>Please note: Only include young people that would be children in need in any group work. If in a typical week preparation or write ups from group work would be undertaken on not related to delivery in the same week, then the number of children in need that were or would be anticipated to be involved should be included.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">ENTER NUMBER _____</p>		
<b>IF ANSWER TO Q11 IS GREATER THAN 0, ASK Q12</b>		
<p><b>Q12</b> And how many minutes would you usually spend undertaking group work in a typical week?</p> <p><i>Please note: By 'undertaking group work' we mean activity that relates directly to the children in need receiving group work. Please include any travel or preparation time. Please note that we do not require accuracy beyond the nearest 15 minutes.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">ENTER NUMBER _____</p>		

**THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME AND CO-OPERATION**

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