CSCDUG: Data to Insight

FFPP Reforms - Data

Led by local authorities with support from the ADCS, DfE, Ofsted, and DLUHC, we're working to help LAs make better use of data in children's services

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Data to Insight (D2I) is the LA-led service for children's safeguarding data professionals.

Led by local authorities, and supported by ADCS, DfE, MHCLG, and Ofsted, D2I works to make better use of data in children's services.

The service works collaboratively to empower analysts, reduce administrative burdens, and sustainably improve local capabilities.

- Maintaining a toolkit described by LA users as "sector-defining", including tools seen as essential interfaces between DfE and LAs, and used as routine for reporting and inspection support.
- Leading award-winning collaborative projects in the sector, including introducing data tools designed to help LAs leverage existing standards to improve data quality, introducing new standard national datasets, and sharing good practice.
- More than 200 LA analysts have enrolled in the D2I tailored apprenticeship to boost local capabilities, and many more have benefited from tailored technical coaching and training opportunities.

Currently a small team of ten enabling a much broader collaborative network, D2I is hosted by East Sussex County Council on behalf of all local statutory safeguarding authorities in England.

We help DfE deliver what LA children’s tech teams need most – data, tools, learning, and supportive networks.

And we help bring local technical officers’ perspectives into national change programmes.

What is changing

Family Help

- Creates a single Family Help offer, bringing together Targeted Early Help and Child in Need support.
- Introduces a Family Help Lead Practitioner (FHLP) as the consistent lead professional for the family.
- Delivers support through multi-disciplinary teams, a single assessment, a single plan, and an integrated front door.
- Focuses on providing earlier, relationship-based, whole-family support to prevent escalation into statutory intervention.

Multi-Agency Child Protection

- Establishes dedicated MACPTs to lead all child protection decision-making and Section 47 activity.
- Brings together social work, police, health and education expertise in a single multi-agency team.
- Introduces Lead Child Protection Practitioners (LCPPs) as specialists responsible for child protection decisions and oversight.
- Aims to improve consistency in applying the significant harm threshold and strengthen protection for children at risk.

Support for Family Networks

- Embeds Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) throughout the child's journey, from Family Help through child protection, pre-proceedings and reunification.
- Places family networks at the centre of planning and decision-making wherever safe and appropriate.
- Introduces and expands Family Network Support Packages (FNSPs) to provide practical support that helps families care for children safely.
- Seeks to reduce care entry and improve reunification by enabling families to develop and implement their own plans.

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Timeline for changes

Year	Key development	Data changes
May-22	Independent Review of Children's Social Care published, recommending a stronger family-help system, greater use of family networks and a reformed child protection model.	-
Feb-23	Stable Homes, Built on Love published by the DfE as the government's children's social care reform strategy. This is really the starting point for the current reform programme.	-
2023-25	Families First for Children (FFC) Pathfinder authorities begin testing Family Help, Family Network Support Packages and Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams (MACPTs).	Pathfinder LAs making system changes
2025-26	Families First Partnership (FFP) programme rolls out nationally as a transformation year. Local areas expected to design new Family Help, MACPT and Family Network arrangements.	Targeted Early Help Annual Data Collection Y1 (submission in 2026) FFPP Quarterly Data collection Y1 introduced for LAs
2026-27	Updated Working Together 2026 and FFP Year 2 guidance set out detailed expectations for Family Help, MACPTs and Family Networks.	Targeted Early Help Annual Data Collection Y2 FFPP Quarterly data collection expanded for Y2 FFPP Quarterly dashboard developed by DfE DfE develops new social care improvement and intervention data model New module on Pre-proceedings and FGDM added to CiN Census
2027-28	Programme expectation that Family Help services, MACPTs and FGDM/Family Network Support Package arrangements are fully operational across all localities.	Significant CiN Census changes - return will now include TEH, the ability to select movement between TEH/CiN and changes to primary need codes and assessment factors. 903 changes to primary need codes Published data from these changes will be from October 2028

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Summary of Changes in Statutory Reporting – CiN Census

2026/27

• A new module has been added to cover pre-proceedings and family group decision making (FGDM). The new module includes 10 new mandatory data items which are detailed in Section 6.

• Appendix C has been added to this guidance clarify how LAs who have moved to a single workflow between targeted early help (TEH) and CIN should record certain scenarios

2027/28

• Rename 'CIN details' module to 'Episode details'
• Rename 'CIN closure date' to 'Closure date'
• **Collect 'Level of Support' (TEH or CIN) at referral, initial assessment and the**
date of any change in level of support after initial assessment to track movement within Family Help
• Amendments to Source of Referral code set:
o Amend codes 5C and 5D to include 'Universal services and community based early help'
• Amendments to Reason for Closure code set:
o Amend closure code RC7 to include child no longer in need of Family Help services
o Amend code RC9 to include 'Universal services and community based early help'
o Addition of code RC10 – 'Targeted early help services ended following withdrawal of consent'
• **Amending the Assessment Factor list drawing from the existing assessment**
factors and supporting families framework, as well as amending the list in other places in line with policy, evidence, and legislative changes, and re naming to 'Factors'
• To note, the domestic abuse factors have been revised to better capture children's experiences of domestic abuse. Where concerns relate to domestic abuse between a child's parents, carers or relatives, they should be recorded under the 'child victim of domestic abuse (section 3 Domestic Abuse Act 2021 definition) and concerns about domestic abuse in pregnancy' factor. Concerns about domestic abuse in pregnancy should also be recorded under this factor. Appendix B4 provides further information about the domestic abuse factors.
• **Replacing Primary Need with 'Factor Groups' which are a more expansive, non-hierarchical set of options and group the longer list of Factors**
• **Adding 'extra-familial harm', 'domestic abuse' and 'other' to the child protection plan categories of abuse and removing 'multiple/not recommended'.**

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Summary of Changes in Statutory Reporting – CLA in England

2026/27

A new module has been added to the collection to record the start and end dates of deprivation of liberty orders. These should be reported for any child looked after on or after 1 April 2026.

2027/28

'Primary need' when starting to be looked after (codes N1-N8) has been replaced with a new codeset - 'Main factor group'. Alongside this, a new module has been added to the collection to record the detailed factors identified when the child started to be looked after. These detailed factors should be reported whenever a child starts a period of care.

Information on care leavers turning 17 to 21 years old during the year should now be reported based upon the last contact with the care leaver during the reporting year (previously contact around their birthday was reported). Note that this means care leaver information should be reported for any care leavers who turned 17 or 18 during the year (and not just those who ceased to be looked after and became a care leaver on or before their birthday, as collected previously).

A new accommodation code of 'supported accommodation' has been added to the code set for reporting the accommodation of care leavers. Note that there have been clarifications to the use of accommodation codes 'D', 'E', and 'F'.

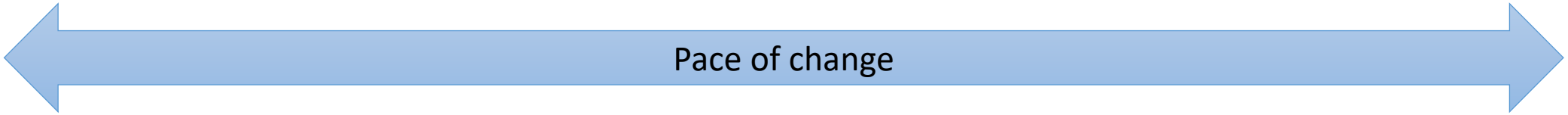
The terminology used around children looked after for at least 12 months who were identified with a substance misuse problem has been updated to clarify that problem drug and / or alcohol use should be reported, and that interventions relate to specialist interventions.

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Implementation Challenges

- While these changes are seen as positive and necessary, Local Authority analyst feedback on the implementation has identified several challenges:

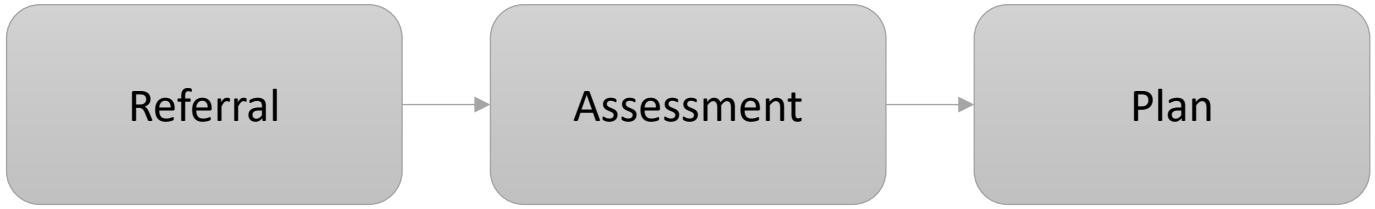
Capacity	Scale	Marginalisation	Fragmentation	Uncertainty
• LA analyst capacity is low in many authorities • New ways of working require upskilling/recruiting	• The scale of change is unprecedented • Tools we've relied on in the past, such as in-built CMS reporting have been impacted by the changes	• Analysts are not always involved in designing the new pathways – with practice colleagues taking the lead. • LAs sit in a slightly awkward space between DfE and CMS providers – they don't have complete autonomy to make system changes, and these changes are costly	• LAs now have several external reporting structures beyond the stat returns – an analyst today will be submitting: • Annual returns • Quarterly FFP monitoring • BSIL monitoring • RIIA dataset • Regional datasets • Not all of that data is accessible and in some cases is being used in judgement on LAs	• Changes have been happening to the data specifications throughout the programme • While we now have a clearer idea of requirements for 27/28 - we still don't know what will be reported in the longer term (consultation on bringing TEH into CiN) • While we know what's being collected, we don't know what data we will get back



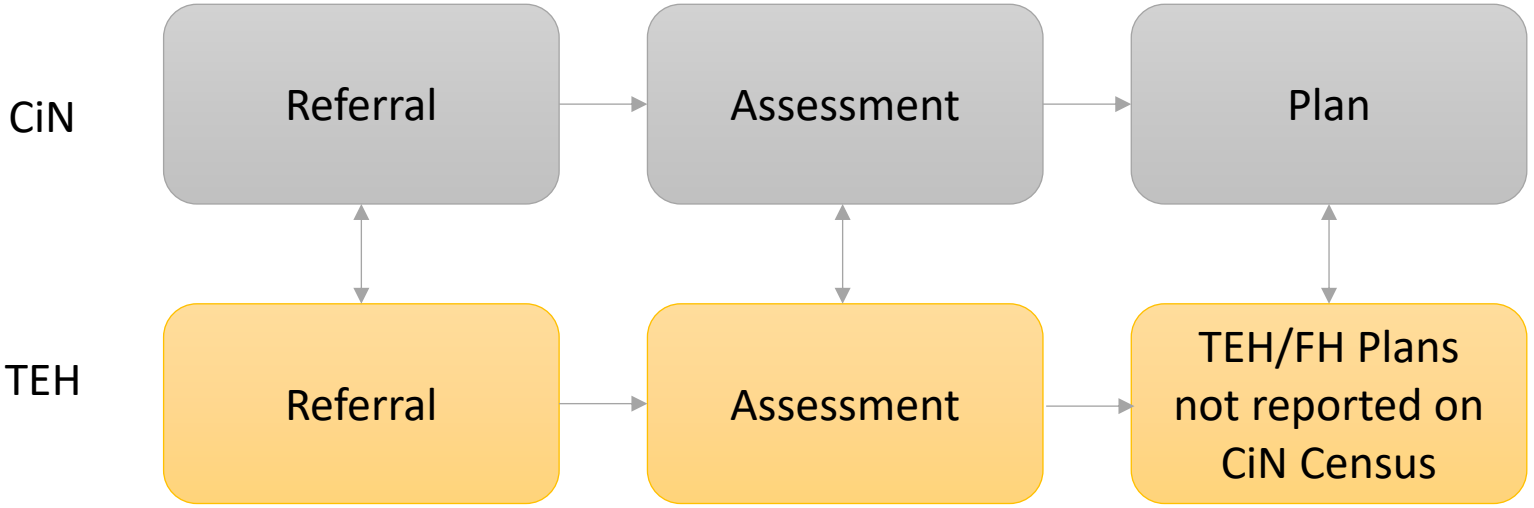
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How data may change

Current process



New process



New CiN Census guidance states:

[LAs will….] Collect 'Level of Support' (TEH or CIN) at referral, initial assessment and the date of any change in level of support after initial assessment to track movement within Family Help

- Currently we use administrative data to understand the experiences of children supported by social care. One way of doing this is by looking at 'levels of need'.
- This has worked well as process has been largely linear, with defined stages i.e. this child has met the threshold for referral, and that may lead to an assessment, possibly a plan.
- The latest CiN Census challenges this by decoupling process from 'level of need' to some extent.

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Things to look out for

Changes in sensitive measures

- As we start to get the first round of stat returns for 25/26, we may see impact on measures that are part of the FH workflow – drops in numbers etc. even though for the period they cover, the data reported hasn't changed.
- It's going to be incredibly important that any analysis is done with the understanding that huge changes are taking place behind the scenes.
- Is that drop in referrals really representing a change in demand, or is it process?

Continuity

- A huge positive from the CiN Census changes is the ability to better describe how our system supports children – a good example of this is CP categories of abuse – with the additions of extra-familial harm, domestic abuse and 'other'.
- However, there will be an impact on continuity – we will see changes published data on existing categories

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The growing data gap

- For some time now there has been a growing gap between our reporting and the actual system we're aiming to describe.
- LAs describe increasing demand, children requiring more intensive support and more financial pressures.
- However, the key historical measures we use to describe the system point to stability – over the last 5 years referrals, assessments, CiN, CP are all stable or falling slightly – CLA has increased, though understanding that is harder due to UAS children being looked after.
- We do see some contextual evidence of 'increased complexity' – child mental health identified as a factor more often at assessment, increased S47s (though not increased ICPCs), increased numbers of CLA with an EHCP, a move from Fostering placements to residential and the huge increase in residential costs.
- However, we capture limited data on 'factors' and almost none on need.
- To some extent the changes in the reforms have tried to address this, with changes to primary need codes and factor groups.
- While LAs will understand their local system and pressures, these are national issues and we're almost entirely reliant on research to understand the bigger picture as we can't get there through data alone.

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How LAs are meeting the challenge

- While the process is challenging, there have been some great examples of how the sector is working to incorporate the changes:
    - DfE Workshops and improved dialogue with LAs
    - Knowledge Hub engagement
    - Data to Insight sessions
    - CSCDUG
    - Regional Groups
    - NVEST - NVEST | Data to Insight
- By building on the work of these groups, we can work together to navigate these changes and ensure that the future direction of CSC data gives us what we need to support improvements for children.

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