



Interim Report

SAFEGUARDING PRESSURES PHASE 7

December 2020

The Association of Directors of Children's Services Ltd



1 Introduction

ADCS Safeguarding Pressures research has provided evidence of changes in demand and delivery of children's early help, social care and associated services since 2007 ([ADCS, 2018](#)). Phase 7 brings the evidence base up to date in a context which we could not have imagined two years ago in our last phase of this research, when we were forecasting what may happen in 2020 and beyond.

This interim report, ahead of our full publication in February 2021, provides key headlines including a focus on the impact of Covid-19.

A significant body of knowledge has already been generated during the Covid-19 pandemic which provides a largely consistent evidence base at that point in time about the experiences of children, families, professionals and organisations. Whilst our findings add to the existing evidence base, limited referencing has been provided, but will be included in the full report.

The findings presented here are provisional headline results using data from:

- 119 local authority responses (79% of all local authorities and 84% of England's children and young people)
- 12 interviews with directors of children's services or assistant directors
- A core dataset of 18 metrics produced by each region¹ from Quarter 1 2020/21 (April to June this year)
- DfE statistical publications.

¹ Not all regions provided the same data.

All England estimates have been extrapolated from responses where appropriate to do so. It is important to note that national and regional summaries mask significant disparity between local authorities, which will be subject of further analysis in the full report.

2 Context

In *Building a country that works for all children post Covid-19* ([ADCS, 2020a](#)) we state that "All communities and every aspect of children's services have been affected by Covid-19, however, experiences have varied greatly, and for some, this period will have been exceedingly difficult and traumatic." The evidence and context provided in this report about the impact of Covid-19 on the lives of children and young people resonates with that statement.

Consideration of the nation-wide context and contributing factors to safeguarding children at the point at which the pandemic commenced is also important, i.e. looking behind and beyond to identify changes for children and their families and services which were not attributable to, but may have been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. This longitudinal perspective and horizon scanning are core features of Safeguarding Pressures research.

2.1 Population

There were 12 million children aged 0-17 in England in 2019, 156,611 (+1.3%) more than two years ago ([ONS, 2020](#)). Growth in population accounts for some, but not all, of the increase in demand for services, and both the historical and projected increases in population vary across the country.

2.2 Poverty

In 2018/19, the most recent data available, there were 2.7 million children and young people living in relative low income, and 2.2 million living in absolute low income. The proportion of children living in low income families in individual authorities varies, from 6% to 38% for relative poverty. Seven out of the ten authorities with the highest proportion of children living on low incomes are in the North West ([DWP, 2020](#)).

In January 2020, 17.3% of school pupils were eligible for Free School Meals, an increase from 13.6% in 2018 ([DfE, 2020a](#)).

Research by the Trussel Trust highlights a range of evidence for a substantial increase in food insecurity and use of food banks and charities during the first quarter of 2020-21. Families with dependent children are over-represented in those using food banks ([Trussel Trust, 2020](#)). This subject has been the focus of much media attention and some national policy action, but much of the responsibility for ensuring access to food parcels and vouchers has rested with local authorities and their partners.

The downturn in the economy and increase in the number of families who have reduced income, or are recently unemployed, has also been the subject of much attention. Our local authority respondents spoke about the current and future role of local authorities in supporting these families as a result of destitution, homelessness, and the effects of the stress and anxiety caused to parents such as increased domestic violence and mental ill-health.

2.3 Housing and homelessness

Data for the period January to March 2020 gives us an indication of the housing situations of families with dependent children at the start of lockdown.

Between January and March 2020, there were 6,260 families assessed as being in priority need of housing due to having dependent children. This is a 25% increase on the same period in 2019, but lower than the same figure in 2018. In the same period, there were 62,610 households with children in temporary accommodation, a slight rise (of 2%) on the same quarter in 2019, continuing the slowly rising trend since March 2018 ([MHCLG, 2020](#)).

Of these families:

- 2% were in bed and breakfast accommodation (reduced from 4% in 2018)
- 28% were in nightly paid self-contained accommodation (no change from 2018)
- The majority of the remainder were housed in private or local authority accommodation.

Strikingly, more than 25,000 families, 40% of families in temporary housing were accommodated outside of their borough in the first 3 months of 2020 (36% in 2018). These families may have been particularly isolated from the support of family and friend networks during the first period of lockdown.

2.4 Local area leadership

Corporate and Member understanding of the pressures on children's services, together with their support were appreciated in many authorities. This local

area leadership prior to, and during the Covid-19 pandemic, together with a strengthened partnership collaboration, especially the three statutory partners and between social care and schools was reported to be positive.

2.5 Legislation and policy context

Local authorities report that confusion and absence of clear guidance from HM Government and particularly the Department for Education in the past year has been hugely difficult. Much needed key reviews and policy changes, such as The Care Review, are stalled.

We have updated the research timeline with a sharper lens on the period since March 2020, which illustrates the complex and 'busy' landscape of events which impact upon children's services between 2007 and 2023.

<https://adcs.org.uk/safeguarding/article/timeline>

3 Contributing Factors and Presenting Needs

In the 18 months between Phase 6 of the research and the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, local authorities report changes in particular causal factors or aspects of safeguarding. In many cases, these have been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic.

3.1 Contextual Safeguarding

Local authorities reported an increase in the work associated with safeguarding young people from exploitation, and in particular from exploitation by organised crime

networks. This was in part attributed to better identification of young people experiencing exploitation but also an overall increase in the number of young people who are being abused in this way.

3.2 Parental factors

More children were reported to be suffering abuse or neglect as a result of parental mental ill-health, drug and alcohol misuse, and domestic violence before the Covid-19 pandemic. We know that this has increased during the Covid-19 pandemic and is likely to increase further.

During the pandemic, a significant increase in domestic violence has been experienced in many local areas, not only due to forced close proximity of those in a situation where domestic abuse may have already been a feature, but as a result of stresses on families during this time.

3.3 Physical abuse and harm

Some local authorities also cited increases in self-harm and non-accidental injuries (NAI) in babies, the latter of which is the subject of a thematic review by the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel. In January 2020, the Panel reported 137 cases of babies harmed or killed due to NAI since the Panel's inception in June 2018. As social isolation and lack of access to health care services are risk factors for NAI, respondents reporting a further increase is, sadly, not surprising. ([CSPRP, 2020](#)).

3.4 Increase in complexity

Children and young people requiring support from children's services are presenting with more complex and multiple needs. Whilst this has been increasing over the past two

years, it has been more acute during the pandemic and is forecast to increase further as the full impact of the pandemic is realised. Respondents talked about 'latent' needs which may not surface for a while, and which may endure into adulthood.

3.5 Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities

Meeting the requirements of the Code of Practice (2014) and the cost and provision for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have placed significant and unsustainable budgetary pressures on local authorities over the past few years.

The number of children and young people with an Education Health and Care Plan has increased yearly, 11% between January 2018 and January 2019, with largest percentage increases in the 0-5 (13%) and 20-25 age groups (32%). ([DfE, 2019](#)).

67 out of 85 (79%) local areas whose SEND inspection reports were published since 1st April 2018 resulted in Written Statements of Action, an indication of significant weaknesses in the areas' SEND arrangements. ([ADCS, 2020b](#)).

Respondents asserted that this is a reflection on government policy and a funding formula in the High Needs Block that is 'broken' rather than the ability of local authorities to meet the requirements of the Code of Practice 2014.

3.6 Elective home education

There was a 38% increase in children who were electively home educated on 1st October 2020 (school census day) compared

to the previous year, an estimated 75,668 children and young people across all 151 LAs in England. Startlingly, 19,510 children and young people have become electively home educated since 1st September 2020, as parents elect not to send children back to school at the start of term. ([ADCS 2020c](#)).

4 Safeguarding during Covid-19

Local authorities reported how their approaches to safeguarding during Covid-19 were effective. Quick mobilisation of different ways of working were common features of social work and early help responses. Blended approaches of face to face, 'socially distanced' and virtual contact and support; implementing agile risk assessments and monitoring systems to prioritise those at greatest risk; and remaining responsive at all times. Key to keeping children and families safe and well during this time has been excellent joint working between schools and children's social care and some respondents highlighted that 'it has to be business as usual for us'.

Virtual case conferences and meetings have resulted in an increase in professionals attending, including GPs. We heard how partnership working and greater asset-based approaches as a response to the pandemic have been enabling, with communities and agencies coming together to use what they have to best effect and a less paternalistic approach by the local authorities.

The closure of some short break provision and residential placements during this period has meant that children with disabilities have been supported instead through flexible outreach.

Creative uses of technology to engage and support children, families and professionals during the pandemic have been harnessed. However, digital poverty, together with ‘not knowing what is happening behind the camera’ can carry additional problems for some families and groups of children including very young children, and some children with a disability. We heard how whilst some children felt connected during this time, there were some children who felt isolated, or worse, exploited online.

5 Early Help

Based on 79 local authority responses received to date, there were an estimated 165 early help assessments per 10,000 0-17 population completed in 2019/20. This equates to approximately 227,200 early help assessments completed when extrapolated to all England, and a 12.9% reduction compared to two years ago.

There was a 9.5% increase in early help cases open at 31st March 2020 compared to 2018 in the 74 local authorities providing data in both Phases 6 and 7 of the ADCS Safeguarding Pressures research.

In the past two years, early help services have continued to develop in most local areas, albeit some becoming more targeted, as local leaders have been committed to maintain early help as having a significant part to play in supporting children and families. Some respondents were clear that this position will not be sustainable as greater savings to council budgets are required.

Funding for early help services appears to come from a disparate range of sources

across local authorities, and we heard how early help budgets are ‘minimal’ compared to costs of social care.

In Phase 6 of this research, 75% of respondents stated that their early help services would be cut or reduced, in some instances significantly, when the Troubled Families programme and its funding ceases. Interim findings indicate that a much higher proportion report that the continuation of the Troubled Families funding has enabled the service to continue vital work supporting children and their families. Any withdrawal or reduction of this funding would decimate that offer and be ‘catastrophic’.

6 Children’s Social Care

6.1 Initial Contacts

Based on local authority responses, there were an estimated 2.4 million initial contacts in 2019/20, an increase of 2.1% in the last two years.

Over the years, single ‘front doors’, or contact hubs for both early help and social care have resulted in more contacts, but the increase cannot be wholly attributed to that.

6.2 Referrals

[DfE \(2020b\)](#) report that there were 642,980 referrals in England in 2019/20, a decrease of 1.9% in the last two years. The number is equivalent to a rate of 535 per 10,000 0-17 population.

Regional quarterly datasets indicate that between April and June 2020, there were 12.6% fewer referrals compared to the same quarter the previous year.

The decrease in the eight responding regions, ranging from -7% to -25%, masks some significant variation within regions. All regions had at least one authority with a 10% increase, (six with more than 20%), and all eight regions had at least one authority with a greater than 20% decrease.

- 23 authorities saw a more than 2% increase in referrals
- 88 authorities saw a more than 2% decrease in referrals.

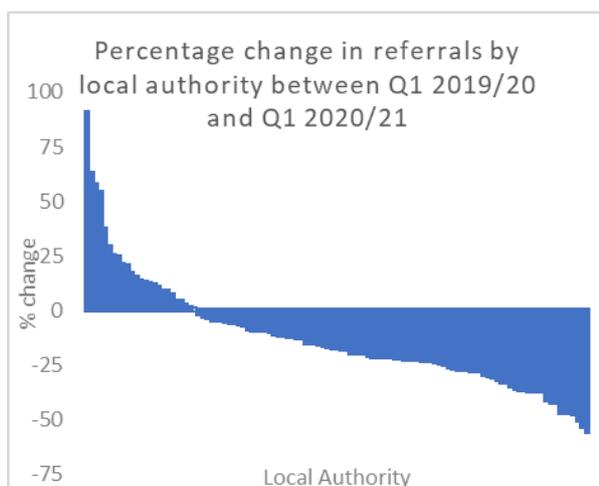


Figure 1

In Q1 2020/21, 15.6% of referrals were re-referrals within the last 12 months compared to 14.5% for the same period last year. The largest increase was 23 percentage points and the largest decrease was -34 percentage points.

The most common sources of contacts and referrals has changed since March. There were fewer referrals from schools, who are traditionally one of the highest sources of referrals, due to school closures, and an increase in those from the public and self-referrals.

6.3 Assessments

[DfE \(2020b\)](#) report that there were 665,660 assessments in England in 2019/20, an increase of 5.5% in the last two years. The number is equivalent to a rate of 554 per 10,000 0-17 population.

Regional quarterly datasets indicate that fewer social work assessments (-9%) were completed in Q1 this year compared to the same period last year.

- 41 authorities saw a 2% or more increase in the number of assessments
- 46 authorities saw 2% or more decrease.

83.9% of assessments were completed within 45 working days (the statutory timescale) in Q1 2020/21 compared to 81.9% the previous year. Again, there is significant variation both between local authorities and in comparing the two quarters in an individual authority by as much as a 40 percentage point variation.

6.4 Children in Need

[DfE \(2020b\)](#) report that there were 389,260 children in need in England at 31st March 2020, a decrease of 3.8% in the last two years. The number is equivalent to a rate of 324 per 10,000 0-17 population.

Regional quarterly datasets indicate that there were 4% fewer children in need at 30th June 2020 compared to 30th June 2019. Only one region, the North East, saw an increase (3%). Again, individual authorities saw dramatic changes to the number of children in need. The largest increase was 170% and the largest decrease was -35%.

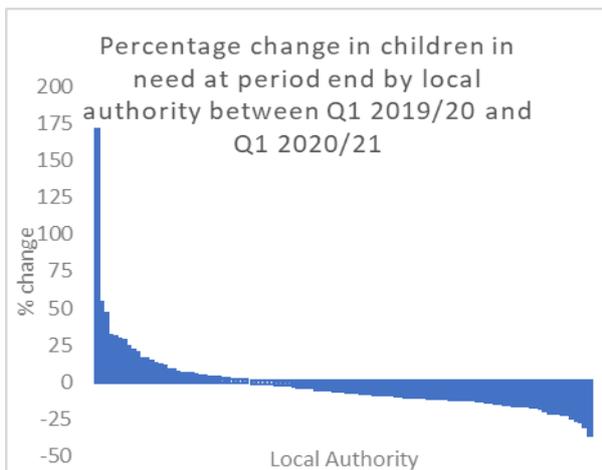


Figure 2

Only eight local authority respondents stated that there has been an increase in the number of families receiving Section 17 funds since 1st March compared to those already open to social care before that date. Support for families during the Covid-19 pandemic has been provided through dedicated council and community support. Therefore, these families and children do not feature in social care contact or referral figures.

6.5 Section 47 enquiries

[DfE \(2020b\)](#) report that there were 201,000 Section 47 Enquiries in England in 2019/20, an increase of 1.5% in the last two years. The number is equivalent to a rate of 167 per 10,000 0-17 population.

Regional quarterly datasets indicate that overall 5% fewer Section 47 enquiries were started in England in Q1 2020/21 compared to the same period last year.

Of the 113 authorities included:

- 47 saw an increase of 2% or more, with the highest being an increase of over 280%
- 60 saw a decrease of more than 5%, with the biggest decrease being -85%.

More initial child protection conferences were held within 15 working days of the Section 47 in Q1 this year (84.6%) compared to Q1 last year (79.5%), with most regions maintaining or improving timeliness.

6.6 Child Protection

[DfE \(2020b\)](#) report that there were 51,510 children subjects of a child protection plan in England at 31st March 2020, a decrease of 4.2% in the last two years. The number is equivalent to a rate of 42.8 per 10,000 0-17 population.

Regional quarterly datasets indicate overall a 1% increase in the number of children subject of a child protection plan at 30th June 2020 (end of Q1, compared to Q1 last year). This modest recorded increase does not yet reflect the experience of local authorities of a significant increase this year to date. We expect this will be evidenced in the next quarter's data.

Of those authorities providing data in the regional datasets, just over half saw a rise of more than 2%, with the highest an increase of 120% (from 64 to 146 per 10,000 0-17 population). A third of authorities saw a decrease of more than 2%, with the largest decrease being -51% (from 260 to 125 per 10,000 0-17 population).

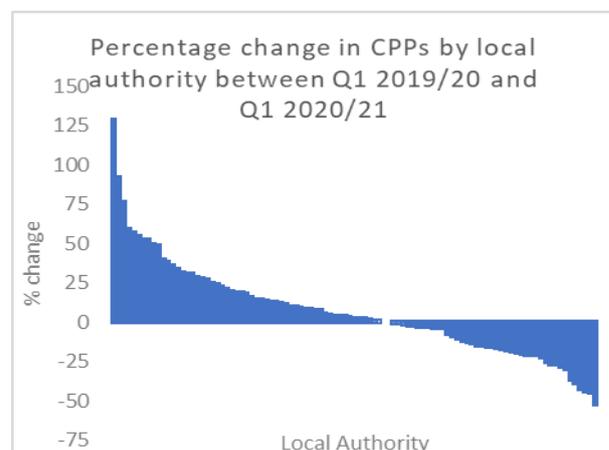


Figure 3

1% more children became the subject of an initial child protection plan in Q1 this year compared to Q1 last year in responding regions, with a 10% increase in two regions:

- Six authorities saw an increase of more than 100%, and 51 saw an increase of more than 2%
- Six authorities saw a decrease of more than 50% (largest = -78%) and 47 saw a decrease of 2% or more.

8% fewer children ceased to be subject of a child protection plan in Q1 this year compared to last year with a reduction in all nine regions responding to this question although there is significant variation within regions.

Local authorities reported that more children remained subject of a plan and fewer children were stepped down due to potential heightened risk, and absence of other support services.

There was a slight increase from 19.7% to 21.2% (2 percentage points) in the percentage of children subject to a second or subsequent child protection plan, either ever or within the last 2 years.

Respondents stated that since March, more referrals result in a child protection plan but fewer children cease to be subject of a plan which, some have hypothesised, is due to limitations on the ability to do face to face visiting and assessments and thus fewer cases are stepped down.

6.7 Care Proceedings

Between April and June 2020 there was:

- 4% reduction in the number of public law cases compared to the equivalent quarter in 2019
- 30% reduction in the number of children where care proceedings were completed
- 35% reduction in the number of applications for Adoption Orders
- 52% reduction in the number of Adoption Orders made during that period. ([Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service statistics](#)).

Respondents reported the damaging impact of the significant delay in legal proceedings for some children in terms of being unable to leave care at the planned time resulting in delays in permanence for the child.

6.8 Looked After Children

Based on local authority responses received to date, there were an estimated 67.9 looked after children per 10,000 0-17 population at 31st March 2020, an increase of 8.2% from two years ago. This rate is equivalent to approximately 81,700 in all England.

Regional quarterly datasets indicate that there were 3% more children looked after at the 30th June 2020 than 30th June 2019 (up from 67,203 to 68,270 in the 113 local authorities providing data).

- 58 authorities saw an increase of more than 2%, and three authorities saw an increase of more than 20%
- 27 authorities saw a decrease, with only one authority seeing a decrease of more than 10%.

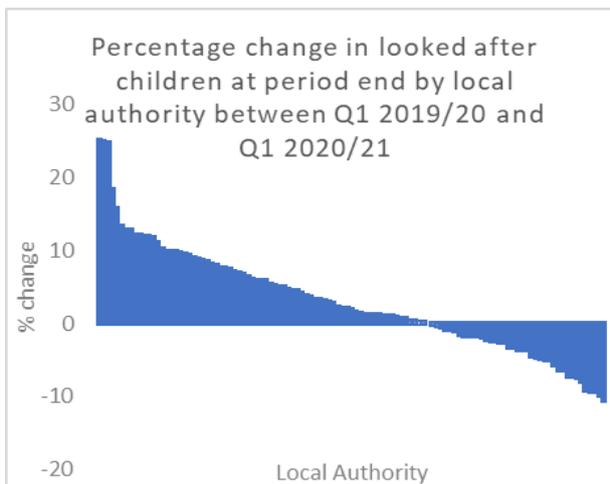


Figure 4

6% fewer children started to be looked after in the quarter compared to Q1 of the previous year. Of the 111 authorities providing data:

- 37 saw an increase of more than 2%, with two authorities seeing a more than 100% increase
- 71 saw a decrease of more than 25%, with six authorities seeing a decrease of more than 50%.

There has been a 10% decrease in the number of children ceasing to be looked after in the quarter in the 112 local authorities providing data.

- 19 authorities saw an increase of more than 2% and only eight local authorities saw an increase of more than 50% in the number of children ceasing to be looked after
- 84 authorities saw a decrease in the number of children ceasing to be looked after, and 14 saw a decrease of 50% or more.

Delay in care proceedings in the courts was reported to have affected the number of children leaving care in the period.

6.9 Placements and placement providers

The 'lockdown' period and restrictions have had a significant impact for some looked after children, who have been prevented from moving on to permanent arrangements - either discharge from care, adoptive placements (often because of delays with final hearings), care leavers and UASC and being prevented from moving onto more independent accommodation. For other children, respondents report that they have thrived, forming even closer relationships with carers.

The higher number of looked after children together with reported reductions in foster carer capacity (often due to carers shielding) has created a shortage across all placement types, but specifically in-house foster care resulting in the greater use of more expensive, independent fostering agencies and residential providers.

The resulting competition for places, respondents explained, meant that some placement providers chose not to take children with complex needs.

Respondents also report increased demand for and reduced availability of for secure accommodation.

The availability, quality and the cost of external placements has changed over the past two years and significantly more so during the Covid-19 pandemic according to 83% of respondents. They talk about a market that: *"was pretty much broken before Covid-19"* and *"is absolutely saturated"* where *"private placement providers fees have become so exorbitant"* they are *"making a profit on the back of vulnerable children"*.

Frustrations about the delay in The Care Review and lack of government action with private placement providers were expressed by all respondents. The crisis in external residential provision is the subject of recent research by [Children's Commissioner \(2020\)](#).

We heard how as a solution to a lack of affordable residential placements of the right quality, some authorities are developing LA-owned children's home provision in addition to foster carer recruitment.

Examples of placement costs provided by respondents illustrate this issue:

- A placement for a young person with challenging behaviour in the North West costs £7,900 a week, (£410k a year)
- A South East authority reported having to pay between £0.25m and £0.5m a year for some placements, and recently a placement for an 11 year-old child costing £75,000 a month (£900k per year).
- An interviewee described a young person who was placed in a £1m a year placement which they described as completely disproportionate to needs.
- A small North West authority has calculated they will need 61 more placements in the next six months to meet demand, with a potential shortfall of 35 placements after actions have been taken to increase placement capacity.
- A range of local authorities described overspends for the year 2020/21 of between £2m and £8.6m on

placement budgets as a result of the increase in the number of children needing a placement and placement costs.

7 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)

The number of UASC in the care of the local authority had increased for half of all respondents in 2019/20. Only 9% had experienced a decrease. There is a 7.8% increase in UASC number over two years based on the 98 local authorities providing data. However, some authorities have experienced greater change since 31st March 2020.

Whilst there were 3,223 UASC in these 98 areas at 30th September 2020 and 4,432 who had been looked after at any time in the first six months of the year, the most significant increases and demand pressures arise from the 6,530 care leavers who had formerly been UASC. 85 local authorities providing data for both phase 6 and 7 evidenced a 67% increase in care leavers who had formerly been UASC (from 3,415 to 5,702 care leavers)

The surge of spontaneous arrivals to the south coast following the lifting of the first pan-european lockdown saw the number of UASCs starting to be looked after in Kent in the first six months of this year (352) already in line with the total number of UASC cared for by Kent County Council across the whole of last year (366). Some authorities have seen numbers of UASC decrease, mostly in the north of England. Conversely, the increase in some areas in the South resulted in Kent County Council reluctantly taking the unprecedented step in August of refusing to

collect arrivals from the port of Dover because the LA could not safely fulfil its statutory duty of care towards these minors. A similar situation occurred in Portsmouth in November. This emergency humanitarian situation resulted in the majority of LAs across the country pledging placements for new arrivals. There have been approximately 200 UASC transferred directly from the port to other local authorities as a result of LA pledges.

Local authorities report that more young people are presenting locally through ports and motorway service stations than had been transferred through the voluntary National Transfer Scheme, although half of local authorities responding state that UASC arrive through both routes.

86% of respondents were clear that the current rate of Home Office funding is not sufficient to meet the costs of caring for and supporting UASC. Whilst the recent increase in funding is welcome, in most instances it will cover at best the cost of an in-house foster care placement only. It will not fund the support needs of the young people, some of whom require intensive support and accommodation packages, resulting in additional costs coming out of the central children services budget.

These additional support services include translation, social work time, education and healthcare, including specialist mental health for those young people who have experienced, in some cases, significant trauma.

Costs continue to be incurred into adulthood as UASC become care leavers, for example supported accommodation and those who are now accessing university.

Responding local authorities forecast that the number of UASC will increase further and as a direct result, so too will UASC care leaver numbers.

2017/18 was the first year when LAs reported they were supporting and caring for more UASC care leavers than UASC. This trend will continue as spontaneously arriving UASC quickly reach the age of 18 after their arrival.

We will be providing greater analysis in more detail in the full report.

8 Finance

ADCS Safeguarding Pressures research has consistently provided evidence of funding pressures on local authorities as well as ways in which these are being mitigated. Evidence gathered for this report concludes that for many authorities, councils had indeed increased children's services budgets in recognition of the financial and demographic growth. However, current demand and increasing costs continue to out-strip budget settlements.

The top funding pressures cited by local authorities now, are the same as they were two years ago:

- **Placement costs:** The earlier section provides evidence that placement costs have increased sharply, and more so since March 2020. There are concerns that the heightened cost of placements during the Covid-19 pandemic, will not come back down to pre-pandemic prices in the way other cost pressures might.

- **SEND and High Needs Block spending:** Continuing requirement to fund home to school transport and an increase in children with EHC plans continues to be a significant factor which local authorities are not able to ameliorate, partly due to pressures of current legislation, Tribunal decisions and funding formulas.
- **Agency staffing:** Continued spend on agency social work staffing was cited as the third significant funding pressure.

In Phase 6 of this research, we evidenced that local authorities had an estimated shortfall of approximately 10.4% in their children's services budget, equivalent to an additional £830 million in 2018/19 before inflation to 'steady the ship'. We stated that *"This budget shortfall is current, very real, and is not going away as it is driven by demand-led services which local authorities must fund by law"*.

Corporate support for children's services budgets, to the extent it has been possible thus far is less sustainable going forward given greater gaps in council funding and changes in funding formulae. The transition to funding from business rates retention, and the impact on some local authorities of lost income generation due to Covid-19 (for example, one authority estimates a loss of £50m transport/tourism income this year), points to further pressures next year and beyond.

9 Direction of Travel – What Next?

The child population is projected to increase further to 12.5 million children by 2025 according to the ONS (with regional variations) and respondents predict an

increase in unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. The ONS projections become less reliable, however, in the lead up to Brexit, the legacy of Covid-19, and the anticipated changes both of these factors may bring to the country's socio-economic profile.

The real impact of Covid-19 on safeguarding children is only now starting to become apparent with predicted increases in referrals and complexity of need. Respondents are concerned about the impact of latent needs of children, families and communities which means that we have not yet seen the escalating need predicted by many respondents. This includes the emerging impact on children's emotional and mental health, wider societal determinants including employment and housing concerns and the pressures that puts on families that would ordinarily thrive.

10 Conclusion

There was a greater variation between authorities in terms of the volume of safeguarding activities in 2019/20, resulting in an overall reduction in referrals and children in need, and increases in contacts, assessments and Section 47 Enquiries in England. We estimate, based on local authority responses, that there has also been an increase in the number of looked after children, UASC and care leavers.

This interim report provides a high-level overview only of the rich data obtained for this phase of the ADCS Safeguarding Pressures research. It illustrates a resilient, responsive approach by local authorities to ensuring children have been safeguarded through the pandemic.

This is against the backdrop of further increases for some authorities in continuing high levels of need such as criminal exploitation, parental ill health, substance misuse, and domestic abuse, over the previous 18 months, and more alarmingly, the financial pressures resulting from some private placement providers appearing to profiteer on the back of vulnerable children.

Respondents described a range of innovations and transformation programmes which are having a positive impact on both their services, and the lives of children, their families and communities, a proportion of which is grant funded. These will be explored further in the full report.

Respondents were clear that the sector requires a three-year settlement, the conversion of grants into a base budget, and a move away from small funding pots allocated via bidding processes.

A whole system approach to investing in children and families is required if we are to achieve the ambition of making this a country that works for all children. [ADCS's submission to the Comprehensive Spending Review process](#) outlines the level of investment we believe is required and how that investment should be prioritised.

Detailed analysis and the full report on Safeguarding Pressures research Phase 7 will be published in late February 2021.

11 References

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Safeguarding Pressures: Change in children's services activity

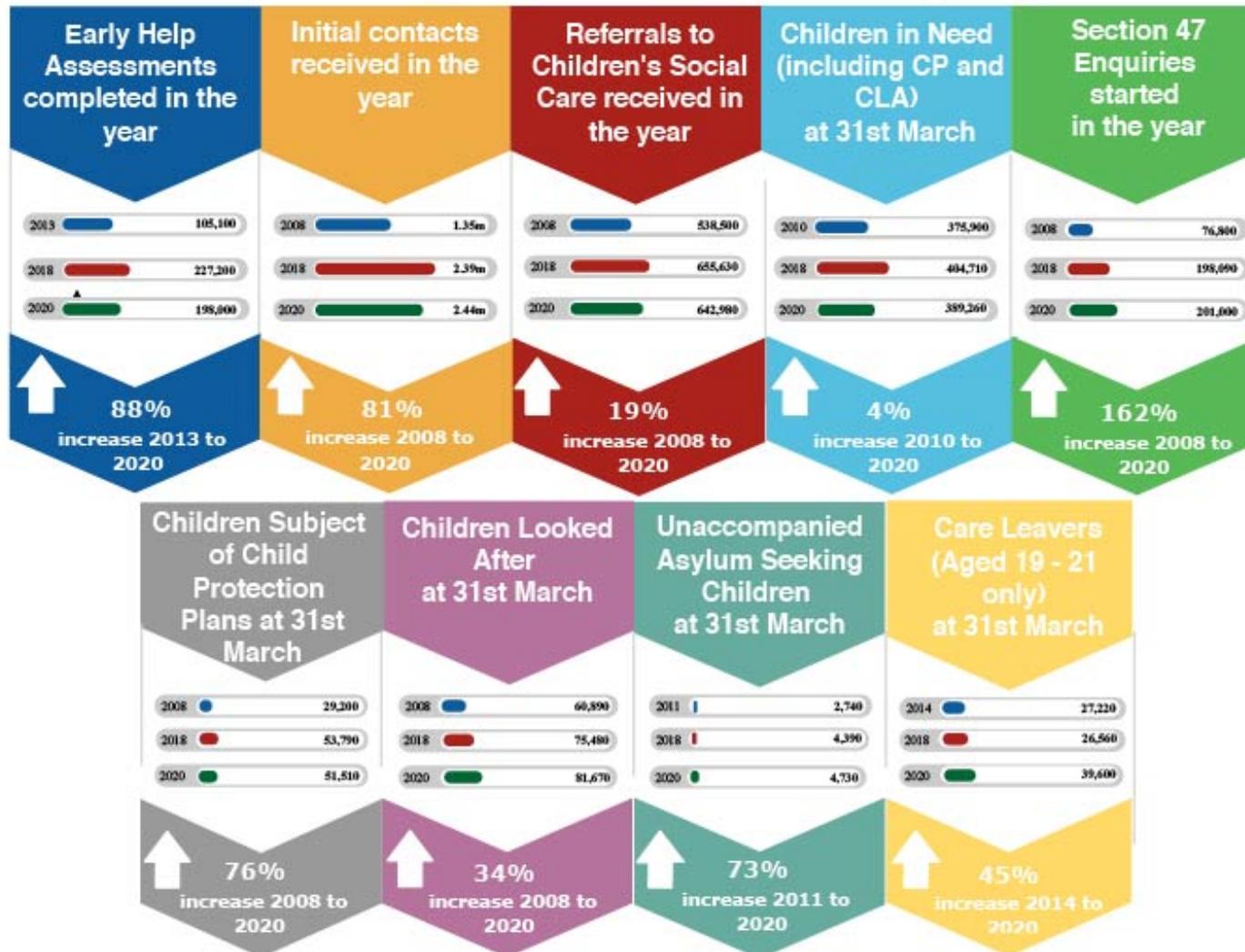


Figure 5: Where nationally available data is not available, results from responding authorities has been extrapolated to an all-England total based on proportion of population covered.

The research was commissioned by the Association of Directors of Children's Services Ltd and undertaken by Carole Brooks Associates Limited on their behalf.

The Association retains ownership of the data and of the publication rights to the report.

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