

Indicator specification:

PLDR collection of population health indicators

Finance Indicators: Local Authority Finance
(FIN_07_63L)



Version: 1.00

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Overview

Indicator title

Local Authority Finance: Children's Social Care Services individual spending lines (R03), Lower Tier (FIN_07_63L)

Indicator family name

Local Authority Finance

Summary

This dataset describes individual spending lines (i.e., sub-categories of spending) for Children's Social Care services. The extract is sourced from the Social Care and Public Health Services revenue outturn from Local Authorities (known as R03). Figures are provided for every Lower Tier Local Authority in England for each financial year between 2008-09 to 2021-22, however, note that there are significant inconsistencies on the spending line descriptions between years. Only common lines were included. Generally, the spending categories are more consistent from 2014 onwards. The dataset contains Net spending figures.

Technical description

The Children's Social Care Services spending lines (part of R03) were compiled from annual revenue outturn estimates of Local Authority (LA) revenue expenditure and financing. This includes 9 variables describing spending lines, namely:

- Sure Start
- Children Looked After
- Family Support Services
- Youth Justice
- Safeguarding Children
- Asylum Seekers
- Services for young people

During the time period, there have been changes in spending lines due to services phasing in/out; or changes to the reporting process. The dataset contains only common spending lines (or where changes in wording were minor); some consistency is generally observed after 2014-15. When there is no similar spending line in previous years, values for that financial year are described as `NA`. As such the Total Children's Social Care value may not be equal to the sum of all individual spending lines; the total value was instead taken directly from the reported total in the source data. A few spending lines have changed names slightly. When obvious, it was assumed they regard the same services.

Values are expressed in thousands (£) and presented on the basis of financial years, i.e. from April 1st to March 31st. However, annual figures were not adjusted for inflation. Figures are provided in Net values, as in:

$$\text{Gross service spending} - \text{Total Income from service} = \text{Net service spending}$$

Total Income is the sum of Sales, Fees & Charges, and Other Income of said service provision.

Figures for Lower Tier LAs have been calculated by disaggregating Upper Tier and Other Authority figures based on population ratios (see section “Construction of LA-level data” for a detailed description). Figures from historic LA geography have been referenced to the 2021 LA geography. This includes changes in name/codes, merges, or splits of old LAs to new LAs based on population ratios for that year.

Unique Identifier

FIN_07_63L

Construction

Data sources

Outturn revenue data of LAs in England are published annually by the *Local Government Finance - Data Collection Analysis and Accountancy* division of the *Department for Communities and Local Government*. The Local Authority Net Current Expenditure figures were extracted from the *Revenue Outturn Summary* datasets. The collection of datasets and additional information about LA revenue outturn data estimates can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-authority-revenue-expenditure-and-financing>. Data on annual population estimates have been provided by the UK Office for National statistics.

Construction of LA-level data

Some services are provided in Lower and some in Upper tier local authorities (e.g. at County level). LA spending figures thus includes both Upper Tier (UTLA) and Lower Tier (LTLA) authorities (i.e. 152 and 309 respectively in England as of April 2021). In order to provide a common denominator for direct comparisons with other types of data, LA expenditures were distributed from Lower to Upper and from Upper to Lower. Further expenditures on specific services also includes spending from “other” authorities. In particular, these are:

- The Greater London Authority
- Combined Authorities
- Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable Authorities
- Fire and Rescue Authorities
- Waste Authorities

- Transport Authorities

All spending by all of the above types of authorities has been included in the calculations of the total LA-level service expenditure, and has been referenced either to LTLAs or UTLAs. Note that the only type of authority for which expenditures have not been taken into account are Park Authorities (however, these show generally low levels of expenditure, mainly within the Cultural and Related services and Central Services). Also note that many of these special local authorities have been abolished and their services incorporated (in part or in whole) into other administrations (for instance Transport Authorities' services have been transferred to Combined Authorities).

The specific methodology by which the total levels of expenditure per service category are calculated for each Local Authority is as follows:

- LTLA Methodology: Shire Counties' expenditures were disaggregated to Shire Districts by means of population-based ratios, i.e. annual expenditure was distributed to LTLAs based on their share of population, derived from their total population estimates for that particular year (Source: ONS).

The Greater London Authority expenditure was distributed to London Boroughs by means of distributing expenditure according to population. Expenditures from Combined Authorities, Police Authorities, Fire and Rescue Authorities, Waste Authorities and Transport Authorities were also attributed to LTLAs by means of distributing expenditure according to population for that year. All the above expenditures are aggregated and added to the recorded LTLA service expenditure in order to produce the estimated total service expenditure for that LA.

For the construction of LTLA measures, all expenditure values from historic LA geography have been referenced to the 2021 LA geography. This includes changes in name/codes, merges, or splits of old LAs to new LAs based on population ratios for that year. For instance, after 2009 the (upper tier) Cheshire County Council and the (lower tier) 6 Cheshire Local Authority Districts were abolished and replaced by two new unitary authorities, Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester. In order to calculate the "would-be" Cheshire East's spending figures in 2008, values for the 3 of the 6 historic districts that formed Cheshire East as well as 47.28% of the historical Cheshire County spending were aggregated.

- UTLA Methodology: Shire Districts' expenditures are attributed to Shire Counties by means of aggregating. Expenditures from the Greater London Authority, Combined Authorities, Police Authorities, Fire and Rescue Authorities, Waste Authorities and Transport Authorities have been disaggregated to UTLAs by means of population ratios, and referenced to the 2021 Local Authority geography, similarly to the LTLA methodology.

Note that spending categories are not consistent throughout the time period, with the introduction of new services (and removal of others). This also suggests that total expenditure values may not be directly comparable between all years.

Presentation

Breakdowns

Time period

Financial year (April 1st to March 31st) data: 2008-09 to 2021-22.

Geography

Lower Tier Local Authorities (as of April 2021).

Coverage

England.

Disclosure control

This indicator has been produced using only publicly available datasets.

Output FIN_07_63L.csv

Column name	Description
Year	Start of financial year, i.e. "2015" refers to the financial year "2015-16".
LTLA21CD	Lower Tier Local Authority Code.
LTLA21NM	Lower Tier Local Authority Name.
Pop_Est_Total	The total mid-year population estimate of that local authority in that year.
Children_social_care_Sure_start_Net	Value in £1000's.
Children_social_care_Children_Looked_After_Net	Value in £1000's.
Children_social_care_Other_children_and_families_services_Net	Value in £1000's.
Children_social_care_Family_Support_Services_Net	Value in £1000's.
Children_social_care_Youth_Justice_Net	Value in £1000's.
Children_social_care_Safeguarding_children_and_young_people_services_Net	Value in £1000's.
Children_social_care_Asylum_Seekers_Net	Value in £1000's.
Children_social_care_Services_for_young_people_Net	Value in £1000's.
TOTAL_CHILDREN_SOCIAL_CARE_Net	Total spending value in £1000's.

Revision history

Version	Date	Summary of changes
1.00	Jan 2024	First release