



Children's Social Services Data

SAIL User Forum

17th March 2022

Children's Censuses

- Children looked after census
 - All children who are looked after by local authorities
 - Reports details of every child, their episodes of being looked after, the reason for starting and how they end
- Children receiving care and support
 - All children who have a care and support plan at the census date
 - Includes children who are looked after
 - Provides details of the child and the reason they have a care and support plan

2

2 individual level collections for children collected on an annual basis from local authorities in Wales

CLA:

All children looked after at any point during the reporting year

CRCS Census:

Children with a care and support plan at 31 March who have had a plan for at least 3 months (1 January)

Flags for children who are looked after and who are on the child protection register
Gives more information in terms of the characteristics of a child in relation to health, education and other areas

History and Background

- CLA started in 1991-92 as the SSDA903 data collection
- With Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, data is now collected through the LAC Census.

- CRCS started in 2009-10 as Children in Need Census
- With Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, data is now collected through the CRCS Census.

3

- Data on children looked after by local authorities in Wales was collected from 1991-92 through the SSDA903 data collection by the Welsh Office. The SSDA903 data collection was intended to provide an anonymous profile of the care history of every child looked after in Wales since implementation of the Children Act 1989. The Children Act 1989 came into effect on 14 October 1991 and brought together into a single framework private and public law relating to children.
- SSDA903 codes were changed in Wales in 2001-02 and an electronic data collection format was developed for 2001-02 submission onwards (this was a part year collection) - published data for 2002-03 onwards can be found on StatsWales.
- Since implementation of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 in April 2016, data is now collected through the LAC Census. The data collection guidance was updated – there were some small changes to codes but this was largely to reflect the new legislation. [Part 3 of and Schedule 2 to the Children Act 1989 (“the 1989 Act”) no longer applies to local authorities in Wales - the rights and duties under those provisions were incorporated in the main, into Part 6 of and Schedule 1 to the 2014 Act.]

- Individual level data about the characteristics of children receiving social services was initially collected through the Children in Need Census. Welsh Government

started working with local authorities to collect statistics on children in need in Wales in 2008-09. A Statistical Release on children in need in Wales was published for the first time for the 2009-10 reporting year, so as at 31 March 2010. The data was collected under powers contained in the Children Act 1989 and captured children in need whose cases were open at 31 March 2010 and had been open for the previous 3 months.

- Since implementation of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 in April 2016, data is now collected through the CRCS Census. Section 17 of the 1989 Act (which defines a Child in Need) was repealed and not restated in the 2014 Act. As such, the collection was renamed and is now based on children with a care and support plan at 31 March who have had a plan for 3 months. The data collection guidance was updated – there were some small changes (e.g. exclusions taken out, language added in) but this was largely to reflect the new legislation.

Children looked after census

What it collects

- Child's details
- Legal status
- Placement type
- Reason for care
- Reason for ending
- Adoptions
- Care leavers

How it is used

- National policy development
- Local authority analysis
- Care Inspectorate Wales
- Research

4

- A record is captured for every child looked after by local authorities during each reporting year.
- A new episode is captured where there is a change in legal status, placement, or both.
- Information on adoptions includes dates for some key milestones in relation to the adoption process, and information about adopters (e.g. legal status and ethnicity).
- Information on care leavers includes whether the care leavers had a personal adviser / pathway plan and their accommodation at the point of leaving care. Further information on care leavers is captured in the new metrics for 2020-21 onwards (though not at child level).
- Data is used to inform national policy development and determine policy outcomes.
- Local authorities use this data in their analysis and performance improvement activity.
- CIW use this data for monitoring and to inform inspections.
- This data goes into SAIL so is available for further research and for academics to use.

Plans for development of CLA

- Some minor changes to be introduced in 2022/23.
 - Children transferring in from other local authorities
 - Officially changing name from Looked After Children (LAC) census to Children looked after (CLA) census
 - Clearer definitions for foster care placements
- CLA census is working well and well established

Children receiving care and support census

What it collects

- Reason for care
- Disability
- Mental health
- Youth offending
- Health checks
- Substance use
- Reason for closure

How it is used

- National policy development
- Local authority analysis
- Care Inspectorate Wales
- Research

6

As mentioned, the CRCS Census gives more information about personal characteristics of children receiving care and support in relation to health, education and other areas. Not mentioned on the list but captured is information about language, parenting issues and the UPN (Unique Pupil Number).

The UPN is used to match against PLASC (the Pupil level annual school census) data so we can determine outcomes about attainment and whether children have special education needs or are receiving free school meals. Using the looked after and child protection flags, we can break down the cohort into further groups of children. This shows differences across groups – for example, at Key Stage 3 children receiving care and support do not perform as well as the average for all pupils in Wales, but those children who are looked after have higher attainment than those who are not looked after.

The uses for the CRCS data are similar to those uses for the CLA data:

- The data is used within Welsh Government, with the example given on education data were relevant here.
- Local authorities will be able to use the CRCS Census data in conjunction with other information to analyse and plan their patterns of activity children's social

services and compare their children receiving care and support populations with that of other local authorities.

- CIW use this data.
- And the data goes into SAIL so is available for further research and for academics to use.

Plans for development of CRCS

- All year collection
 - No longer only children receiving care and support on the census day
 - Will include all children who have received care and support over the year
- CRCS also working well and people widely use the data, but there are opportunities for improvement.



Questions?

Any questions after the forum:
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