

Freedom of Information (FoI) request: summary of data from question 3

Question 3: Has the Designated Health Professional/CCG ever reported to the Corporate Parenting Board on the numbers and needs of Looked-After Children with an autism diagnosis? If so please forward a link to this report.

A total of 151 local authorities in England were approached. Four local authorities did not respond to the request for information: *Darlington Borough Council (North East), Medway Council (South East), Somerset County Council (South West) and Torbay Council (South West)*. Of the 147 local authorities who did respond, the vast majority (139) answered question 3 in the negative.

Positive responses

Seven local authorities made responses that are considered to be positive. Four local authorities clearly replied “Yes” and attached a report or provided further information. One local authority (Warrington Borough Council) does not have a Corporate Parenting Board but presented a report to their Corporate Parenting Forum. Finally, two local authorities suggested that although they have not yet made such a report, they have plans to do so in the near future.

Negative responses

Refusals

10 local authorities refused to answer question 3 for one of three reasons:

1. Data protection i.e. low numbers and risk of identification of individuals (1) – Isles of Scilly
2. The information was reasonably available elsewhere in published reports (5) – link provided
3. Time/cost of accessing information to answer the question (4)

The reason of time/cost is confusing since the question asked if a report had ever been made which should not require accessing individual records. It is possible that this question was misunderstood. However, all four of these local authorities also responded that they do not keep records of their Looked-After children with a diagnosis of autism centrally. It is therefore likely that they applied a blanket refusal.

“No” with no further information

83 local authorities simply answered “No” to question 3 with no additional information (see Table 1).

Table 1: Numbers of “No” responses by region

Region	Total Number of Local Authorities	Number “No” with no information	% with no further information
East	11	7	63.6
London	33	21	63.6
South East	19	12	63.2
South West	16	5	31.3
West Midlands	14	8	57.1
East Midlands	9	5	55.6
North East	11	7	63.6
North West	23	6	26.1
Yorkshire & the Humber	15	12	80.0



A non-autism-specific report has been made

A total of 20 local authorities made reference to non-autism-specific reports. Seven local authorities stated no report had been made that was specific to the question; five of these were in the North West. A further five local authorities stated that reports were made regarding children with special educational needs or EHCPs but these were not autism-specific. One of these local authorities (Dorset) declared their intention to study trends in future reports and Enfield stated that everyone involved in a child's care plan would know if they had an autism diagnosis. A further five local authorities responded that regular health reports were made to the Corporate Parenting Board but that these were not autism specific. Additionally, Gateshead Council referenced a non-specific annual report, Bath & North East Somerset Council mentioned non-specific regular reports and Swindon Borough Council stated that no report had been made but that they had attended a review of the ASD Diagnostic Pathway. A link to this report was provided.

No report has been made (or no record of a report)

11 local authorities stated that no report had been made (without mentioning autism), and a further four local authorities stated that there was no record of a report having been made.

Information is not collated or held centrally

Eight local authorities stated that the information required to answer question 3 was not held or collated centrally. Of these, five local authorities redirected the enquiry to another group. In each case a website or email address was given. These would need to be accessed to determine if they were appropriate and to answer the question.

No such report has been requested

Three local authorities stated that a report had not been requested by the Corporate Parenting Board as a reason for not having made such a report. In fact there was one other local authority that mentioned this but was classified elsewhere. Brighton & Hove Council emphasised their *"strong focus on children with ASD ... with good multiagency working and all children diagnosed via the Child Development Service (i.e. those up to age 11) follow a pathway for assessment, diagnosis and post diagnosis support. This would include LAC."*

Summary of the data

- Only five local authorities were able to answer question 3 positively, with two further local authorities stating their plans to be able to do so in future.
- Ten local authorities refused to answer question 3 mostly due to the time/cost of accessing the data or since the information had been published elsewhere and therefore could be reasonably established.
- 83 local authorities simply stated "No" with no further information.
- Of those that did give more information, 11 local authorities simply restated the question with a negative response and 3 local authorities stated they had not made a report because the Corporate Parenting Board had not requested one.
- Eight local authorities stated that they did not hold the information centrally and five of these redirected the enquiry to another department.
- Finally, 20 local authorities' responses made reference to specificity of reports, that is no report had been made that was specifically related to autism diagnoses.