

Announcement of Methodological Change

**Personal Social Services: Expenditure and Unit Costs,
England 2014/15 onwards**

February 2016

Contents

Announcement of Methodological Change	3
Introduction	3
Background	3
Changes to the Collection	3
Impact on Published figures	4

Announcement of Methodological Change

Introduction

This paper announces and describes changes to the data collection underpinning the Personal Social Services: Expenditure and Unit Costs publication. In 2014/15 the collection method for this data changed from the Personal Social Services Expenditure and Unit Costs Return (PSS-EX1) collection to the new Adult Social Care – Finance Return (ASC-FR). This new return made significant changes to the data collected, including the introduction of new Primary Support Reasons which were to replace Client Groups.

This change will impact the statistics produced using the new return, with implications for the comparability of data over time, and the levels of granularity and breakdowns that data can now be presented at.

Background

The Personal Social Services: Expenditure and Unit Costs publication is an annual report on the social care activity of Councils with Adult Social Services Responsibilities (CASSRs). As a result of the Zero Based Review (ZBR), there have been a number of changes to the national data collections for adult social care for the 2014-15 reporting year. Further information on the ZBR review can be found [here](#). The changes that have an impact on the Personal Social Services: Expenditure and Unit Costs publication are the replacement of the PSS-EX1 return with the ASC-FR collection¹, and the introduction of the Equalities and Classifications Framework (EQ-CL), which has resulted in changes to some of the data collected as part of this process.

Changes to the Collection

The ASC-FR replaces the PSS-EX1 in 2014-15 and reflects important aspects of the principles underpinning the transformation of social care. The new financial reporting framework includes the following measures:

- FR001 – Long Term Support
- FR002 – Short Term Support
- FR003 – Social Support
- FR004 – Assistive Equipment and Technology
- FR005 – Expenditure on Social Care Activities
- FR006 – Information and Early Intervention
- FR007 – Expenditure on Commissioning and Service Delivery.

The key changes to the collection are as follows:

- Client Groups are replaced with Primary Support Reasons.

¹ These changes were announced in May 2013 <http://www.hscic.gov.uk/media/12017/May-2013-letter-to-social-services/pdf/new-collections-2013-v12.pdf>. More information about EQ-CL and SALT is available at: www.hscic.gov.uk/socialcarecollections2015.

- Additional age group information on costs and activities has been added to the return. The additional age categories are for 65-74, 75-84 and 85+ however they are not mandatory. Age group information is captured on the long term and the short term spreadsheets.
- Long Term and Short Term Support (SALT) costs and activities are reported on separate worksheets
- Non-SALT costs include Social Support (i.e. support for substance misuse, asylum seekers, support to carers and social isolation), Assistive Equipment and Technology, Social Care Activities, Information and Early Intervention and Commissioning and Service Delivery. These are reported on a separate worksheet which includes overall totals
- HIV / AIDS is no longer included as a separate category and costs for these clients will appear within the appropriate Primary Support Reason.
- The Activity worksheet requires the number of client weeks for Long Term and Short Term Support to be entered for the calculation of unit costs, the average standard hourly rate of home care for internal home care provision and an additional single hourly rate for the average of all externally provided domiciliary care. There is also a question asking whether capital charges have been affected by property or other revaluations during the financial year.
- A Bridging Year worksheet is included to maintain a minimum timeline series between the old and new collections. This is mandatory and will be requested for at least the first two years of the new return.
- The RO3 summary and unit cost calculations and summary are similar to those in the PSS-EX1.
- In the new data collection the two columns relating to Social Services Management Support Services (SSMSS) costs that were on the far right of the PSS-EX1 collection template have been combined so that no overhead split between internal and external service provision is required.

Impact on Published figures

As a result of the changes in collection there are a number of ways in which the Personal Social Services: Expenditure and Unit Costs publication in 2014/15 differs from previous publications in the series. In summary, due to the differences between ASC-FR and its predecessor PSS-EX1, there is no longer comparability between years for a variety of breakdowns, as data is no longer attributed to the same groups. However, efforts have been made to allow a continued time series for a number of key figures through the inclusion of the Bridging Year data. In addition, the overall total gross current expenditure retains comparability between 2014/15 and previous years.

Comparability

The new collection asks submitters to apportion data in a very different way, and includes the option for more detail to be included in the return, such as where capital charges have been affected by property or other re-evaluations. Guidance is provided to submitters regarding how data should be apportioned between the new categories, through the Service Reporting Code of

Practice (SeRCOP)², however it is possible that the new return may cause individual submitters to alter their methodology in apportioning expenditure. Users of the data should bear this in mind, and refer to the data quality statement of the report in order to understand the impact on data at a local level and its comparability to data submitted in previous years.

Breakdowns

Client groups have been replaced by Primary Support reasons, and there is no mapping between the two categories. Therefore it is not possible to compare 2014/15 data to previous years at this granularity. Instead data will be reported on by Primary Support Reason only. Analysis by client groups will be discontinued from 2014/15.

As mentioned, there will no longer be a separate grouping for HIV and AIDS, this is now contained within the appropriate Primary Support reason, and data will no longer be available separately for this specific condition.

This change in categorisation of clients will also impact Unit costs³, which will now be calculated by Primary Support reason, as well as by age group. Long term care unit costs will be split by residential and nursing costs. Short term care unit costs will be calculated for “short term care to maximise independence” only.

Time series

Due to the fact that Primary Support Reasons are not comparable to the previous client groups, only a limited time series can be maintained into 2014/15. It is possible to compare total gross expenditure, in both cash and real terms, however more granular breakdowns of this data cannot be compared over time causing a break in the time series.

In order to minimise the impact of this, bridging year data was also collected from 2014/15, to allow for a continued time series in a number of measures during the transition to the new collection. This will be maintained for a limited period, allowing a time series to be established for measures in the new collection. The following data is included in the bridging file:

- Total gross and net expenditure on assessment and care management
- Total gross and net expenditure on residential and nursing care
- Total gross and net expenditure on home care services
- Total gross and net expenditure on community-based services excluding home care
- Total fairer charging income in relation to community care services
- Total gross and net expenditure on Direct Payments
- Other gross and net expenditure
- Grand total of gross and net expenditure.

² <http://www.cipfastats.net/sercop/>

³ Unit costs are the calculation of an average cost per week for particular services, calculated through the division of expenditure on that service by the number of weeks of activity provided by the Local Authority.

Further information

The ASC-FR stakeholder group (which includes representatives from the HSCIC, the Department of Health, the Office for National Statistics and local authorities in England), working alongside colleagues in the SALT and EQ-CL groups, used the ZBR consultation responses to help produce the final ASC-FR collection, and therefore agreed to the changes outlined in this document.

If you would like to comment on these changes, or would like further information regarding their implementation and how this affects published data, please send any queries to ASCFinance@hscic.gov.uk.