



## Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service

Paper for the Board – 10<sup>th</sup> December 2009

### Performance Report: October 2009 (year to date)

<b>1</b>	<b>Aim &amp; Purpose</b>
1.1	To provide the Board with an overview of the operational service position as at 31 October 2009.
1.2	To provide the Board with information on the new structure of service areas – see Appendix 1 (page 8).
<b>2</b>	<b>Action For The Board</b>
1.3	This report is for information and discussion only.
<b>3</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
3.1	For the Board to note the report and key issues.
<b>4</b>	<b>Key Strategic Issues For The Board To Consider issues.</b>

Key Performance Indicator Summary	Target	Performance	Trend
1. Public allocated workload	97%	92.1%	↑
2. Private allocated workload (by March 2010)	97%	71.3%	↑
3. Safeguarding assessments rated as satisfactory or higher	97%	94.1%	↓
4. Service users expressing overall satisfaction	65%	61.8%	↔
5. Every Child Matters outcomes rated as satisfactory or higher		tbc	

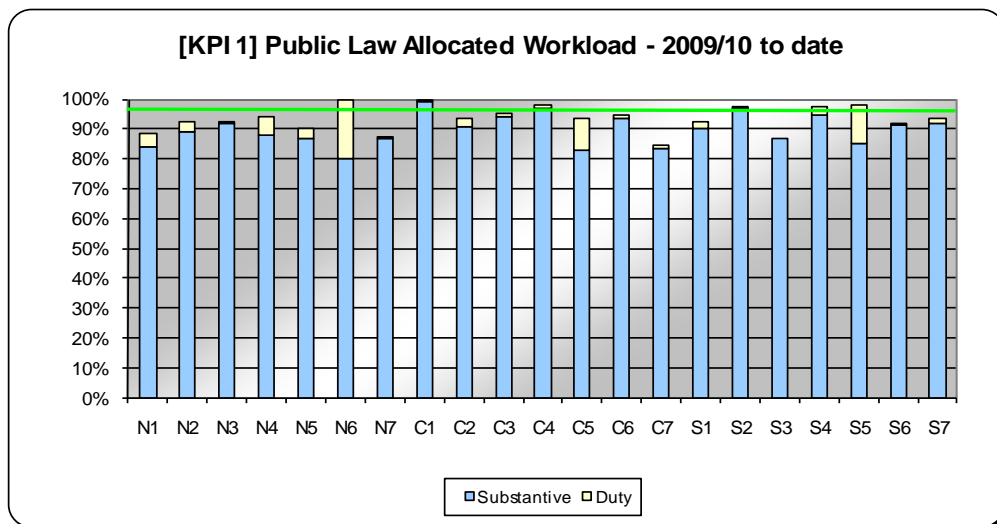
**Allison Woods** – Head of MIS

**Andrew Thorpe** – Senior Research & Data Analyst

**KPI 1: Public law workload allocated at month end**

<b>Target:</b>	<b>97%</b>
<b>Performance:</b>	<b>92.1%</b>
<b>Trend:</b>	<b>↑</b>

This indicator measures all public law cases received and ongoing, as a snapshot at the end of the month. All public law cases should be allocated upon receipt either to duty or substantive allocation. Cases should remain allocated until the case is closed, though this may involve reallocation or changes from duty allocation to substantive allocation.



For this measure a year to date average is reported to build a picture of performance for the financial year as it progresses.

Performance for this indicator has increased from the previous month's figure of 91.9% to 92.1%.

All three operational areas have been able to maintain performance in the amber range despite the continuing care demand increases (see page 3 for further details), in part through the use of duty advice arrangements.

The target of 97% was exceeded historically from September 2007 to October 2008, with April 2008's figure of 98.9% the highest performing month since the inception of this KPI.

The decline in performance from December 2008 coincides with the sharp rise in demand for care cases for the same time period, coinciding with the Baby Peter case (see page 3 for further details). At the end of October, care cases accounted for 80.1% of the total public law open workload.

**Best Performance:** N6 is achieving 99.9% this year to date, aided by its Early Intervention team for public law work, which other areas (such as S3 – London) are now moving to emulate as they act to implement the Presidents Interim Guidance of 30<sup>th</sup> July 2009.

**Service Area Hotspots:** N1 (88.4%), N7 (87.3%), C7 (84.6%), and S3 (86.6%) are all below target this year to date.

**Comparison:** Performance last year to the end of October for this indicator was 98.2%.

**Unallocated:** At the end of September 2009 = 979 cases  
 At the end of October 2009 = **937** cases  
 At the end of October 2008 = 239 cases

**Supporting Information**

Year to date performance for care cases allocated within 2 days of receipt is up from 49.8% reported in September to 51.2% in October.

Performance is up for care cases allocated within 7 days of receipt from 59.8% as reported in September to 61.6% in October.

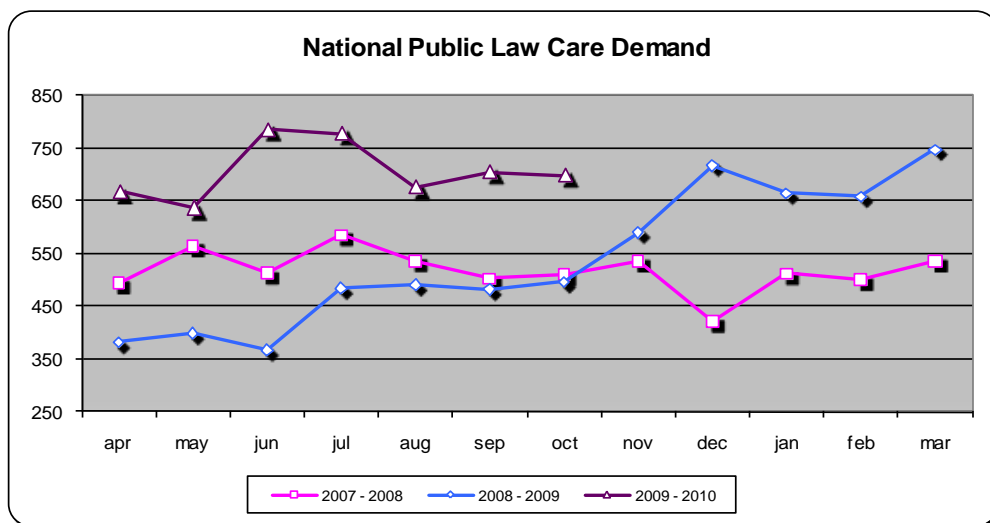
Performance is up for care cases allocated within 28 days of receipt from 76.2% as reported in September to 77.7% in October.

## Public Law Demand

Following the implementation of the Public Law Outline (PLO) in April 2008, Cafcass experienced a 27.0% drop in demand for **Care cases** across the country from April to June 2008, in comparison to the same period the previous year.

Demand levelled off for the period of July to October 2008 but then rose sharply resulting in a significant increase in applications, coinciding with the Baby Peter case.

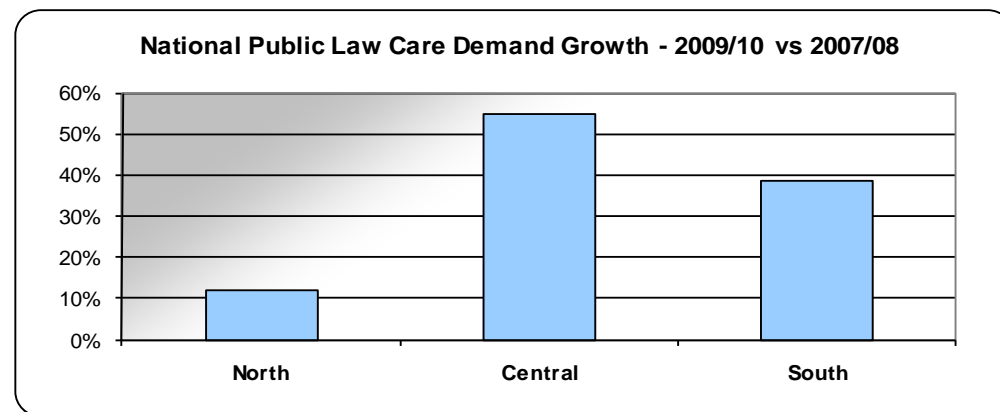
Care demand from November 2008 to March 2009 resulted in a 34.9% increase compared to the previous year.



This trend has continued into the 2009/10 financial year where care demand of 786 cases for June 2009 was the highest figure ever recorded for a single month, amounting to an increase of 53.2% compared to June 2007. This is a more realistic point of comparison, as figures in quarter one

of 2008/09 were depressed by the rollout of the PLO, which saw an unprecedented decrease in care applications in the months immediately after April 2008.

The increase in care demand is affecting all three operational areas.



The above graph shows the growth in care cases for each operational area, comparing 2009/10 year to date to the same period in 2007/08.

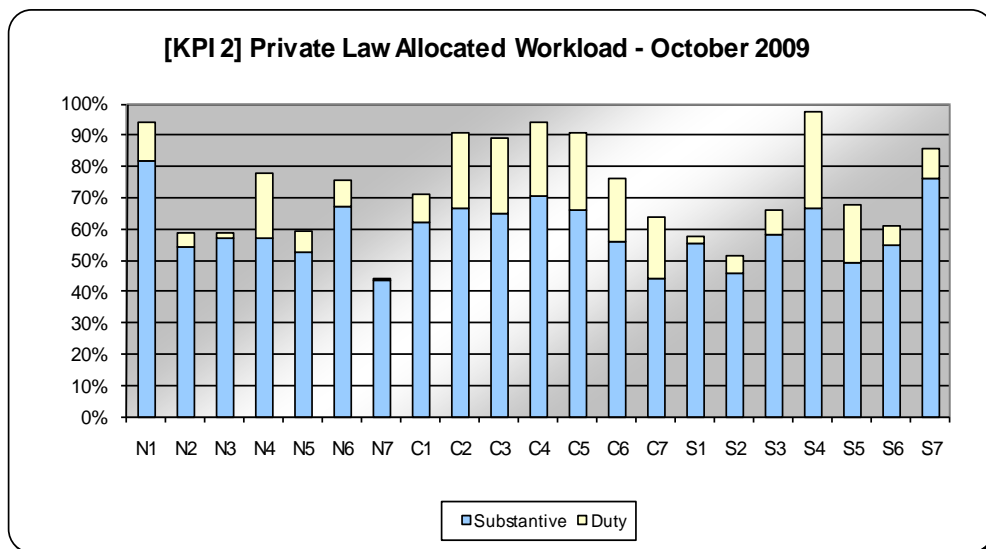
A detailed study involving Family Court Advisors and self-employed contractors is under way to gauge whether Local Authority thresholds for the initiation of s31 proceedings have changed since November 2008, and specifically to determine in what kinds of cases (using the Child Protection categories of physical abuse/sexual abuse/emotional abuse/neglect) this increase has occurred.

The Executive Summary of this study is a separate agenda item for the December Board Meeting.

**KPI 2: Private law workload allocated at month end**

<b>Target:</b>	<b>97%</b>
<b>Performance:</b>	<b>71.3%</b>
<b>Trend:</b>	<b>↑</b>

This indicator measures all private law cases received and ongoing, as a snapshot at the end of the month. By March 2010, it is expected that all private law cases will be allocated upon receipt, and that they will remain allocated, either to duty or substantively, until the case is closed.



For this measure only the most recent month is reported because the target of 97% is only to be achieved by the end of March 2010. This date has been selected to give time for teams across the country to fully establish duty allocation schemes.

Performance for this indicator has increased from the previous month's figure of 69.4% to 71.3%.

**Best Performance:** S4 achieved 97.2% in October.

**Comparison:** Performance last year for at the end of October for this indicator was 61.4%.

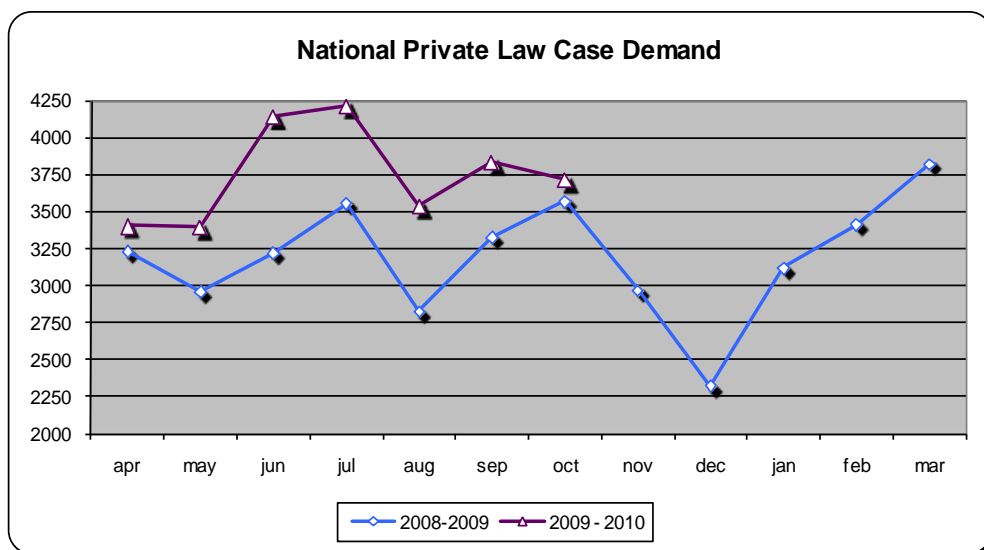
**Unallocated:** At the end of September 2009 = 9,623 cases  
 At the end of October 2009 = **9,177** cases  
 At the end of October 2008 = 8,154 cases

There are several different situations in which a private law case can have the status of 'unallocated' in Cafcass' Case Management System (CMS). Of the five sub-categories, only the fourth is particularly problematic:

- At the beginning of a case before a named practitioner is allocated either on a duty or substantive basis. Of the 9,177 unallocated cases, 1,935 (21.1%) have yet to reach the first hearing.
- After a court hearing at which further Cafcass work has not yet been requested, but a further hearing may have been scheduled. Of the 9,177 unallocated cases, 4,284 (46.7%) fit into this category.
- After a court hearing and Cafcass having been asked to prepare a report which has more than 10 weeks until the final hearing date. The remaining time is likely to be sufficient for the report to be filed on time. Of the 9,177 unallocated cases, 764 (8.3%) fit into this category.
- After a court hearing and with an open report which has less than 10 weeks until the final hearing date. This category of unallocated cases is the most problematic, in that it may well be difficult to undertake the work and file the report on time. Of the 9,177 unallocated cases, 1,693 (18.4%) fit into this category.
- After work been sent to the court (e.g. report filed), but prior to learning the outcome of the court case, which enables closure of the case. Of the 9,177 unallocated cases, 501 (5.5%) have had all reports filed and are awaiting the final outcome.

## Private Law Demand

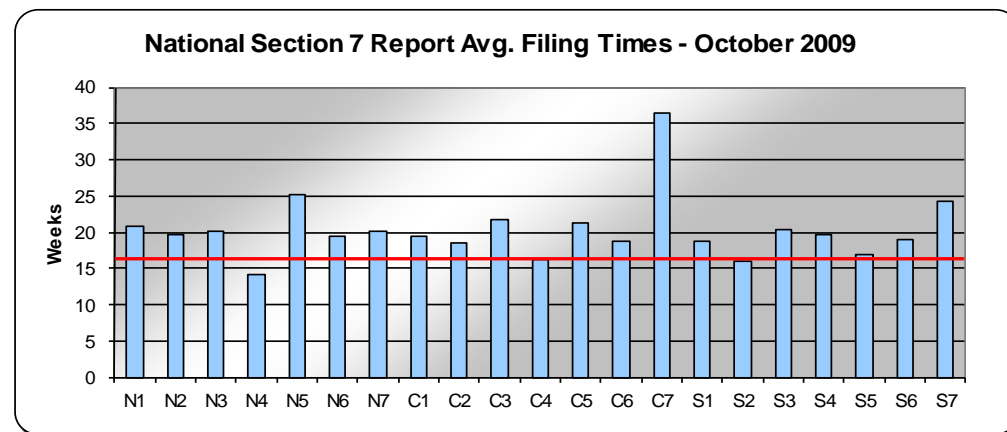
In comparison to the same period (April to October) in the previous year, **Private law case requests** are up 15.7% this year to date, which is equivalent to an increase of 3,558 cases. A total of 4,219 cases were received in July 2009, which is the highest private law case demand figure ever recorded for a single month. One factor in this increase is the continuing work to improve the transmission of C100s from the Courts to Cafcass.



All court application forms received by Cafcass are screened for possible risks to the child or other family members. Depending on the level of identified safeguarding and welfare issues involved, some cases result in no further work for Cafcass beyond the first court hearing, while some others may be dealt with by local authority children's services.

Where the courts request further work by Cafcass, this can take one or more of a number of forms – the most usual type of work is the preparation of a section 7 report.

In comparison to the same period in the previous year, **section 7 report requests** are down by 9.6% this year to date, which is equivalent to a decrease of 1,082 reports.



**Section 7 report average filing times** are based on the average number of weeks taken to file full and addendum section 7 reports. The starting point is the date on which the court's request is received by Cafcass.

- ↔ 9.7% of teams filed reports in less than 12 weeks in October.
- ↓ 15.3% of teams filed reports in 13 – 16 weeks in October.
- ↑ 73.6% of teams filed reports in more than 16 weeks in October.

**Rule 9.5 appointments** are made where the court decides, in more complex private law cases, that the child should become party to the proceedings and be separately represented by a guardian ad litem and a solicitor.

In comparison to the same period in the previous year, Rule 9.5 appointments are down by 20.4% this year to date, which is equivalent to a decrease of 212 appointments.

**KPI 3: Safeguarding assessments rated as satisfactory or higher**

<b>Target:</b>	<b>97%</b>
<b>Performance:</b>	<b>94.1%</b>
<b>Trend:</b>	↓

Safeguarding is monitored through routine supervision, audits and appraisal using the Quality for Children (Q4C) performance management system. Q4C contains a standardised toolkit that line managers and quality improvement specialist managers use as the basis for their assessment of the quality of staff work.

All Cafcass practitioners will have a sample of their case files assessed through supervision at least twice within the financial year by their line manager. Staff with a safeguarding assessment rated as inadequate are supervised in accordance with the performance and conduct policy.



Performance for this indicator has decreased from the previous month's figure of 94.9% to 94.1%.

**Best Performance:** Five service areas are achieving 100% this year to date.

**Service Area Hotspots:** C1 (87.8% - 36 of 41 assessments rated as satisfactory or higher), C2 (81.9% - 59 of 72), and S7 (71.4% - 25 of 35) are all below target this year to date.

**Supporting Information**

Nationally, 1,417 safeguarding assessments have been carried out this year to date, with 1,334 or 94.1% rated as satisfactory or higher.

A total of 817 or 68.3% of practitioners have been assessed for safeguarding at least once in the year to date, and 364 or 28.2% have been assessed at least twice, out of a total active workforce of 1,291.

**Safeguarding Checks**

Requests for Local Authority checks in private law have been sent by Cafcass for 97.9% of cases received in the year to date. The average time for Cafcass to send for Local Authority Checks is 3.3 working days from receipt of the case.

Requests for Police checks have been sent by Cafcass for 95.2% of cases received in the year to date. The average time for Cafcass to send for Police checks is 5.1 working days from receipt of the case.

**KPI 4: Service users giving feedback express overall satisfaction with the service they have received from Cafcass**

<b>Target:</b>	<b>65%</b>
<b>Performance:</b>	<b>61.8%</b>
<b>Trend:</b>	↔

Cafcass launched HearNow in December 2007 as a mechanism for collecting service user feedback. It is an electronic feedback questionnaire that is completed online.

From 1<sup>st</sup> December 2007 to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2009, we received 1,416 responses complete enough to be included in this analysis of overall satisfaction with Cafcass' service. Of these responses, 213 children, aged 5-8 years, 426 young people aged 9-17 years and 777 adults completed the survey.

Of the 1,416 responses collected, 1,378 answered questions about their overall satisfaction with Cafcass' service and of these 851, or 61.8% expressed a positive overall opinion. The confidence interval for this analysis is 4.2%, which is within the desired level of 5%. The confidence interval tells us that if the exercise were repeated one hundred times under the same conditions, the results would fall within 5% either side of our stated result on ninety-five of those one hundred occasions. A confidence interval of 5% is the standard point at which results can be considered universally representative.

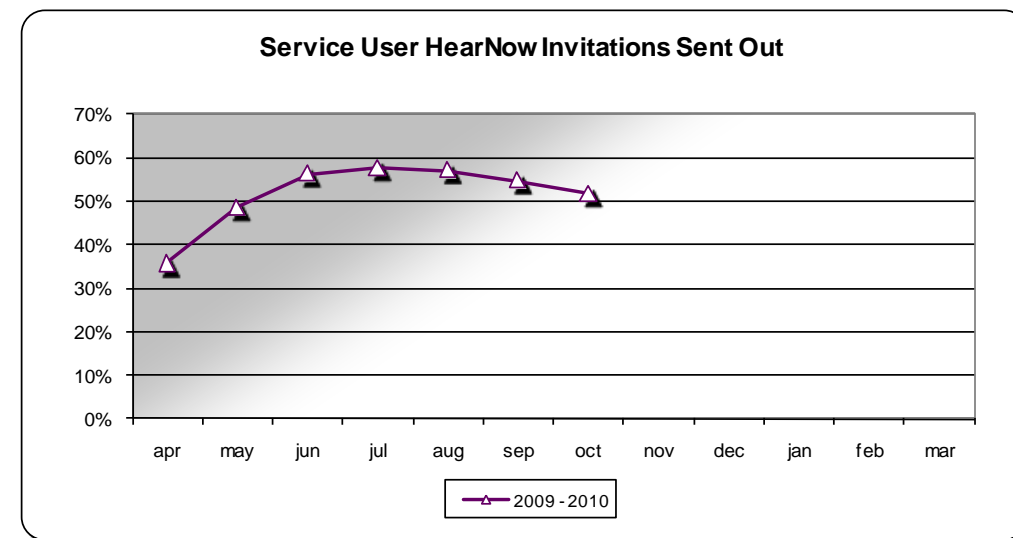
18.7% of services users were either "not sure" or "didn't know" their level of satisfaction with the level of work performed by their Cafcass practitioner. 19.6% of service users expressed dissatisfaction with Cafcass' services.

**5 – 8 Years Old:** Younger children (aged 5-8 years) who responded to the survey were most satisfied with Cafcass' work, with 83.6% (178 children) reporting that their Cafcass workers' were either "great" (57.3%, 122 children) or "ok" (26.3%, 56 children).

**9 - 17 Years Old:** Among young people (aged 9-17 years), 67.0% (282 young people) have reported being either "very satisfied" (40.9%, 172 young people) or "fairly satisfied" (26.1%, 110 young people) with the service Cafcass provided since the survey began.

**Adults:** Among adults, 52.6% (391 adults) have expressed satisfaction with our service, with 30.9% (230 adults) stating that they were "very satisfied" with our work and 21.6% (161 adults) being "fairly satisfied".

The graph below displays the percentage of service users who are being given the opportunity to record their feedback via HearNow. The introduction of welcome packs in April 2009 initially increased the number of HearNow invitations sent to service users, although this has levelled off in recent months. Following feedback from staff, the content of the welcome packs have been revised into a more simplified format, and will be in use from November 2009. The revised packs are expected to have a positive impact on the number of questionnaires that will be completed in the future.



**KPI 5: Every Child Matters outcomes rated as satisfactory or higher**

The Every Child Matters checklist section of the case plan will be assessed through audit. 97% of case plans assessed should be satisfactory or higher. This measure is still under development.

## APPENDIX 1



### North Teams

- N1:** North & South of Tyne
- N2:** Durham & Tees Valley
- N3:** Blackburn, Cumbria, Lancaster/Blackpool, & Preston
- N4:** Hull, South Humberside, & York
- N5:** Batley, Bradford, Leeds, & Wakefield
- N6:** Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham, & Sheffield
- N7:** Bolton, Manchester, Rochdale, & Stockport

### Central Teams

- C1:** Derbyshire & Nottinghamshire
- C2:** Bedfordshire/Hertfordshire, Lincolnshire, & Cambridgeshire
- C3:** Coventry, Leicestershire, & Northamptonshire
- C4:** Shropshire, Staffordshire, Stoke, & Worcestershire
- C5:** Birmingham & Black Country
- C6:** Chelmsford, Colchester, Norfolk, & Suffolk
- C7:** Cheshire, Liverpool, Southport, & St Helens

### South Teams

- S1:** Avon, Gloucestershire, & Wiltshire
- S2:** Berkshire, Milton Keynes, & Oxford
- S3:** Greater London & High Court Team
- S4:** East & West Kent
- S5:** East & West Sussex, & Surrey
- S6:** Dorset, Isle of Wight, North Hampshire, Portsmouth, & Southampton
- S7:** Cornwall, Exeter, Plymouth, & Somerset

