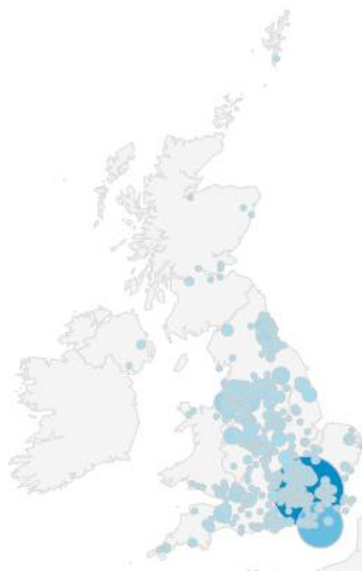




## Data to Insight: Annual Report to Colleagues

April 2022 – March 2023



Locations of D2I website users (UK only), 2022-23



Winners of "iStandUK Award" at the iNetwork Innovation Awards  
Finalists for "Innovation" and "Digital Impact" at the LGC Awards

## What is Data to Insight?

Data to Insight (D2I) is the LA-led service for children's safeguarding data professionals. Designed and owned by local authorities, and supported by the ADCS, DfE, DLUHC and Ofsted, we work nationally to make better use of data. With a primary focus on children's social care and targeted children's services, D2I supports a national community in developing and maintaining useful data tools, designing and co-ordinating national datasets, connecting people, and helping good practice spread across regional boundaries. As a community made up of hundreds of local authority officers, open to all LA and relevant colleagues, we want every authority to have great ways of working with data, because high quality data work is crucial in enabling our services to effectively support children.

D2I, with the Children's Services National Performance and Information Management Group (CS-NPIMG) and regional groups support a proven partnership of LAs working together for the sector, providing sector-defining tools, delivering on funded projects and new datasets, and shaping the work of colleagues while growing an enthusiastic community.

Our depth and breadth of expertise, and community reach, give our projects and services the capacity for producing meaningful and actionable local insight.



## What is this report?

Our Annual Report to Colleagues is an open document outlining our work over the previous year and our intentions for the near future. We review our goals and achievements, point out key learning, and gauge overall performance and value for money. We do this so colleagues, whatever their role, can feed back on our strategic direction.

The report has several audiences, among them the D2I board of directors, our partners in regional groups and other networks, and those government organisations who have contributed funding to our recent work. The most important audience is the community of children's services data professionals who are the reason D2I happens.

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## Overview of recent progress

After appointing a lead officer in 2020, Data to Insight established a new website and other community infrastructure, improved and streamlined the existing Excel toolkit, and introduced a tailored apprenticeship scheme.

The ChAT is considered essential by Ofsted and LAs for inspection preparation, and by many LAs for their regular performance monitoring. The RIIA quarterly dataset is an integral element of inter-LA benchmarking. We've also developed our advocacy role to help foreground LA perspectives in national conversations, for example with DfE around data collections, and with the national review of CSC.

Our previous year's annual report summarises other achievements. In the last 12 months, the following are notable:

- Launched the RIIA national quarterly benchmarking dataset and analysis toolkit, which is quickly becoming an essential part of the national in-year performance picture
- Developed and launched our standard quarterly benchmarking data collection for Early Help
- Launched a CIN Data Quality Tool to accompany our CLA tool, for browser-based year-round data validation
- Developed Patch, our browser-based Python environment for LA analysts, and helped analysts learn to code
- Introduced the D2I code library on GitHub to host our (and LAs') code and guidance, and provide online coding environments to project partners
- Introduced "open house" meetings to help share good practice between D2I and analysts in different LAs
- Received funding from DfE to develop and deliver a new LA-led standard safeguarding dataset specification
- Won recognition in the independent review of children's social care as a key example of model practice
- Won an award, for our work leveraging standard datasets, at the iNetwork Innovation Awards!

## Specific deliverables

In our previous report we said we'd focus on the following work streams, looking to capitalise on the team expansion made possible by short term funding grants, to embed sustainable improvements for the long term.

<i>We said we would...</i>	<i>Are we?</i>	<i>For example...</i>
Continue to maintain and develop the core toolkit in line with LA priorities	✓	Rapid benchmarking updates, introduction of new data quality tools, and careful ongoing support
Support implementation of "RIIA '23", including cross-regional benchmarking mechanisms	✓	Launched the RIIA collection, collected data for 4 quarters, and shared via new benchmarking tools
Inaugurate an Early Help Data Partnership with regional partners developing data standards	✓	Designed a new quarterly collection and created new tools ready for launch in Q1 2023-24
Establish self-sustaining delivery models for our Demand Modelling and Quality Data projects	...	Developed low-maintenance code bases and currently exploring routes to ongoing funding
Embed Data to Insight as an ongoing "service" which the sector can rely on into the long term	...	A fourth successful year of funded core delivery, with work ongoing to agree long term arrangements
Continue to deliver and improve our tailored CSC data analyst apprenticeship programme	✓	A fourth cohort of learners currently learning, and a route to annual cohorts in the near future
Develop a formal reporting framework to keep stakeholders aware of activity and impact	✓	Supplemented our open planning process with governance docs, annual report, and open meetings

The "RIIA '23" work was exemplary of our way of working, deploying a modest resource centrally to co-ordinate partners, producing a sustainable new data framework which requires very little ongoing maintenance. Our work to develop a complementary Early Help dataset is showing similar success.

Elsewhere, we have experienced challenges in identifying the right way to help our ongoing services around data tools pay for themselves. We know we're delivering value. The challenge remains to balance our competing priorities, and focus in on areas of maximum impact, while maintaining a clear view of how best to ensure the service can pay its modest running costs.

## Check-in: what did we do for the core toolkit this year?

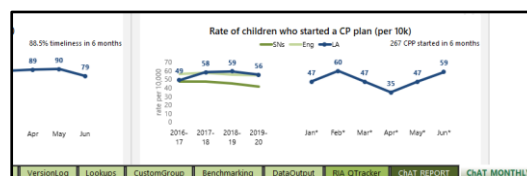
Most of our core tools have a version log embedded in the tool itself. Browsing these, or the shared Trello boards we use for task management, particularly for the ChAT and Benchmarking Tool, will give an idea of the kinds of work we do “behind the scenes”, which often only the requesting LA will know about but which benefits all LAs as users of the tools and data. For example:

### ChAT:

We folded weekly trend charts into the ChAT, meaning the tool now shows annual, monthly, weekly, and point-in-time visualisations. We also set up a “RIIA” tab which calculates most of the measures for the new standard RIIA quarterly data collection.

ChAT outputs for the RIIA quarterly dataset 2022-23

Measure quarter	Measure ID	Measure name
2022 Q1	2	201 Initial contacts
2022 Q2	2	202 Referrals
2022 Q3	2	20202 Referrals (Source: Individual)
2022 Q4	2	20203 Referrals (Source: Schools)
2023 Q1	2	20204 Referrals (Source: Education Services)



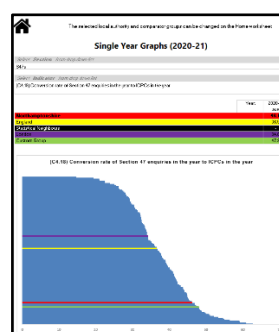
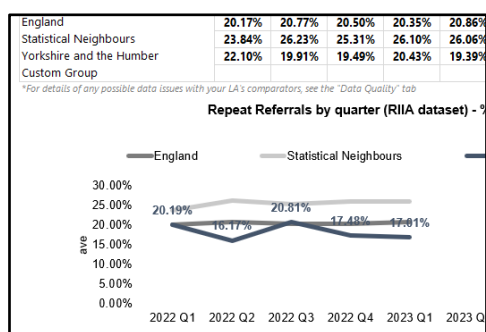
We made a lot of changes to fix minor bugs reported by users and maintained a “credits” section in our newsletter to acknowledge when LAs helped us keep things running well. This year saw a number of changes to data specifications, data publications, and even LA boundaries, and we kept abreast of those changes as they happened.

We’re currently working on incorporating recent changes to care leaver cohorts, which will expand the care leaver section of ChAT, looking at SEND, and preparing a benchmarking tool for our quarterly Early Help data collection.

### BMT:

Benchmarking updates were rapid in 2022-23, with the most important releases happening within a day of the DfE’s data publication. This was possible through use of D2I’s dedicated resource, good planning, and invaluable support from colleagues within DfE’s statistics teams.

We also introduce a new RIIA Quarterly Benchmarking Tool to assist LAs and regions with in-year benchmarking of key metrics. The tool compiles every LA’s RIIA dataset into an appropriate format for local analysis, and provides a range of data visualisations and an easy user interface – ready to use and updated quarterly.



We’re currently thinking about adapting to new population data, helping LAs access information about Ofsted inspection outcomes, and linking in with regional benchmarking projects to make outputs useful nationally.

### Web tools

The CLA Data Quality Tool represents a major addition to the core toolkit, providing in-year data validation for SSDA903 and CIN Census data, and we hope that LAs will use these tools to reduce the burden of statutory returns and improve data quality year-round.

Our code library and “Patch” project is also nearing completion, offering online coding options for LA colleagues and ways to share their analysis tools – or to access those produced by colleagues. Initial example uses include quick analysis of national data publications, and case flow volume mapping from front door through the CSC system.

## Measures of engagement – regional and national

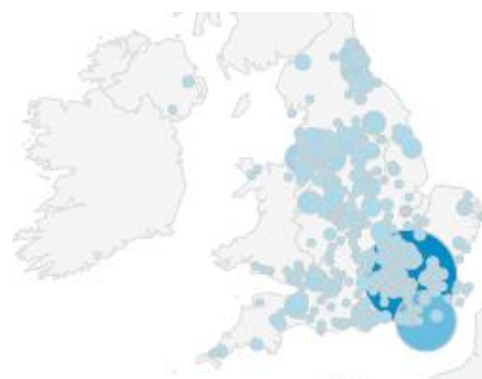
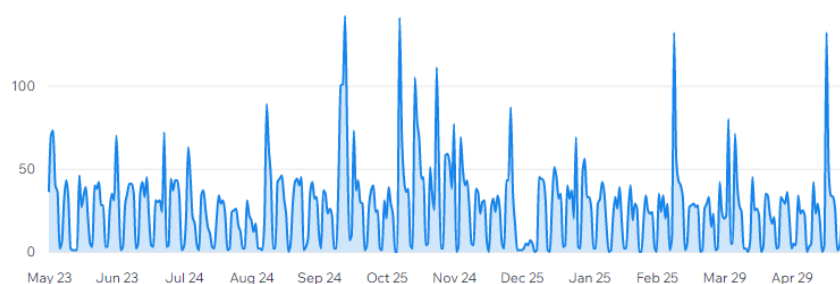
Since launching [www.datatoinsight.org](http://www.datatoinsight.org) in late 2020, we have reached over 1000 local authority professionals. We have a typical audience – measured by newsletter reach – of around 700 LA colleagues at any point in time.

By maintaining ChAT, Data to Insight supports inspection readiness for every local authority in England. Other tools support local reporting, benchmarking, performance, forecasting, analysis, technical learning, and data quality work. Part of our mission is to help local excellence diffuse within and across regional boundaries, and our projects tend to pick up collaborators from broadly distributed authorities. With a small central resource, we can help authorities and regions maximise the value of their own staff – and provide them with opportunities to help others do the same.

We can see how well that kind of engagement is working in a few different ways. Below we provide some ways of looking at this generally, including region-specific views.

### Daily website sessions (peaks coincide with newsletter dates):

### Website user locations during 2022-23:



## Regional engagement in key workstreams

Almost all the below workstreams are still in progress – many will pick up more collaborators or users as they proceed. However, the below gives a useful presentation of just how much engagement we’ve seen across regions.

D2I activity / region	East Mids	East	London	North East	North West	South East	South West	West Mids	Y & H
ChAT users / Website membership (LAs)	9	11	33	12	23	19	15	14	15
RIIA Quarterly Dataset participants (LAs)	9	10	33	12	23	19	14	14	15
Apprenticeship enrolments (people, 4 cohorts)	6	10	19	12	13	10	14	9	9
Newsletter credit for tech. engagement (instances)	10 Last year: 8	17 Last year: 11	29 Last year: 60	16 Last year: 18	41 Last year: 33	26 Last year: 73	21 Last year: 20	6 Last year: 21	25 Last year: 21
Unusually positive email feedback (instances)	4 Last year: 9	5 Last year: 4	13 Last year: 11	8 Last year: 4	17 Last year: 13	15 Last year: 11	5 Last year: 4	7 Last year: 4	8 Last year: 5
Slack development community (members)	12 Last year:12	22 Last year:20	63 Last year:52	18 Last year:12	39 Last year:24	49 Last year:27	26 Last year:12	27 Last year:16	24 Last year:15
Python developers/learners (people, 3 projects)	3	3	10	12	18	12	6	1	5

### A few examples of “unusually positive email feedback” from colleagues:

*“I was involved in the 903 project, and the training materials were so good and the team very supportive...I think LAs will get a lot from being involved in the CIN project this time around.”*

*“Can I just say how wonderful and excellent this BMT is. This is our one stop shop for everything benchmarking data. It’s nicely laid out, have different regions’ comparison data against all key measures and metrics.”*

*“D2I’s role keeping us in touch with DfE on these questions has been invaluable – it really makes a difference...”*



And a few examples of positive internet feedback:


**Sam Sirisambhand**  
@SamSirisambhand · Follow

I love that we do this in our sector! A tailored programme developing skills from day one. Building your network of likeminded people, sharing good practice, and all the while using practical examples that you can take back into the workplace immediately  
Good Luck Cohort4 🙌❤️❤️

**Data to Insight** @datatoinightUK  
Cohort #4 of our tailored Children's Services data analyst apprenticeship kicks off today.

15 local authority analysts from all over England will be working hard to bring new skills into their work, and to improve safeguarding services for vulnerable children.

Good luck!



**Data to Insight** · Mar 11, 2022  
@datatoinightUK · Follow


With some of this money we'll be helping @EastSussexCC develop the placement modelling tool for regional use, and helping @WiganCouncil and other LA analysts turn the SSDA903 validation tool into a wider platform including CIN data checks.

LA colleagues, get in touch to join in.

**Local Digital UK Gov** @LDgovUK  
We're delighted to be awarding £2.37 million of funding to eight #LocalDigitalFund projects through the Continuous Funding Model (CFM).

The projects will use their #LocalDigitalCFM funding to move into the next phase of work.

Learn more on our website 📄  
localdigital.gov.uk/continuous-fun...



**Tom Lowndes**  
@TomLowndes4 · Follow

This is important work  
8:44 AM · Mar 14, 2022

**Local Digital UK Gov**  
@LDgovUK · Follow

Congratulations to the winner of the iStandUK Award @WiganCouncil and @datatoinightUK for their project Quality Safeguarding Data Platform.


It's been great working with you on this project 🙌

#iNetworkAwards



**Joseph Cornford-Hutchings** (He/Him) · 1st  
Data Manager at Data to Insight - Trustee/ Secretary at The Snowflake Trust  
21h · 🌐

Celebrating achieving a distinction on completion of my Data Analyst Level 4 Apprenticeship! Thank you Corndel, Data to Insight and Social Finance for putting together a brilliant course tailored towards Analysts working with Children's Social Care data. #apprenticeships #keeplearning



Celebrating a New Certification

You and 22 others · 4 comments · 2 reposts

Reactions

Keep it up... I'd be happy to... Congratulations... Love this...

Celebrate Comment Repost Send

Give your good wishes...

Most relevant

**Madeleine Sweeney-Baird** (She/Her) · 1st  
Data visualisation and analytics consultant at CACI Ltd  
19h

Well done Joe!!

Like Reply

**Rashid (rj)** · 1st  
London Innovation & Improvement Alliance strategic lead for data & intelli...  
4mo · 🌐

Great work Alistair and the whole team and all the collaborators. Together we can make things better! rjx  
[Alistair Herbert Data to Insight](#)

**Data to Insight**  
210 followers  
4mo · 🌐

Our Quality CSC Data work with [Wigan Council](#) is a finalist for the [iNetwork awards](#) this year.

We're in the [iStandUK](#) category, using existing standards to enable large-scale collaboration on common problems, helping council resources go further and safeguarding services improve.

Example: <https://lnkd.in/dWhKh-QJ>

**SSDA903 Validation Tool**  
903.datatoinight.org · 1 min read  
SSDA903 Validation Tool

## Future roadmap

In *Current Toolkit and 2021 Deliverables* we provided a vision statement outlining the things we wanted to be true of Data to Insight:

*“Our tools reduce the routine data work performed by individual local authorities”*

We produce and maintain data tools which not only add value but free up time at a local level. If something needs to be done by every local authority, we look for and deliver ways of meeting the bulk of that need once, at a national level, for local implementation. Regardless of the funding model at which we eventually arrive, our tools benefit our users.

*“Our approach starts to add insight which wasn’t previously there”*

Both through innovative developments of our own, and through working to help share best practice between local authorities, we help service leaders see things about their services which they wouldn’t necessarily have seen. We help excellent analysts share their findings beyond the borders of their own base LA, and we help resource-constrained local authorities – and novice analysts – benefit and learn from the work of external colleagues.

*“Our community is beginning to work together”*

Best practice spreads, and the tools improve, and the whole community is involved. We plan our future work as openly as possible. We let stakeholders know what to expect, and when. We have open channels for feedback, feature requests, planning and prioritisation. Our community helps define what we do with our time. We act as an effective convening point for collaborations and opportunities to benefit services nationally.

We have delivered against these objectives and retain them as core values. We propose the following key objectives for 2023-24. We will provide updates on these goals via our mailing list, and elsewhere, as the year proceeds.

<i>We want to...</i>		<i>Progress updates to arrive via mailing list...</i>
Continue to maintain and develop the core toolkit in line with LA priorities		ChAT, BMT, Ofsted inspection dataset...
Continue to support the RIIA and Early Help quarterly benchmarking processes		Collection processes, benchmarking tools...
Support LAs with responding to renewed focus on SEND data		Benchmarking options, analysis tool options...
Support LAs and DfE with data-related work in response to “Stable Homes, Built on Love”		Standard safeguarding dataset, DfE data strategy...
Establish the D2I code library and python-based data tools with accessible routes for LAs		CIN/903 validator, Patch, open-source deployment...
Find more ways to share good practice, not just in data but also performance, between LAs		Open house, workshops/clinics, case studies...
Draft a new service model and business plan to ensure we continue to meet running costs		Relationships, plans, vision, community...
Agree how we fund core D2I services in future – and what to include in the core service		Customer focus, stakeholders, sensible approaches...

We know that the world will undoubtedly change, and some of our plans may change as a result. We want D2I to remain a valuable mechanism for LAs to leverage time savings, service improvements, and collaboration opportunities to benefit their local work. We welcome feedback on all aspects of this report, both now and as the year progresses, and hope to continue developing ways for colleagues to feed into our work.

## Money matters

D2I was established with a grant from DfE of £80,000 to support 1 FTE of resource for one year, plus costs associated with hosting by East Sussex County Council. This covered our costs, including overheads and contingencies, from September 2020 to August 2021. Since then, we have funded our further work with grants from specific DLUHC and DfE project funds, either directly or via contracts with LAs hosting collaborative projects.

The apprenticeship scheme is currently self-funding, provided we continue to ensure that it is attractive enough to potential learners that we can continue running a new cohort each year. Our other workstreams currently remain dependent on grant funding from DfE and DLUHC. We've been successful in drawing in project funds to deliver new things and keep the service running, but we don't think this is the ideal long-term operating model for the service.

We think the key value we provide to the sector is not to supply a specific product, or develop specific new products, but to exist as a service helping LAs work together – and with central government – to improve their data work and context, and supporting the things which matter to the sector. We therefore continue to explore possible routes to sustainable funding for D2I as a core service.

What we've learned by observing and consulting with other LA-focused services, and with LAs themselves, is that per-LA licensing for D2I's service would both increase running costs and, more importantly, split our community of contributors. This leads us to two other immediate possibilities:

- Negotiate with the various stakeholders within DfE to continue to fund a core service, as an obvious essential support element for local government, either directly or via existing regional structures
- Negotiate with the regional groups themselves to agree a split of costs from regional budgets

We retain the original vision to keep the central resource at the heart of D2I as small as possible. We want to ensure we can operate even during "lean" periods and keep our core services running, and we want to minimise the likelihood of exhausting that core funding. It may be that further discussions with colleagues lead us to a different approach than the above, but we will work to ensure that the core service remains stable for all local authorities.

We will use the coming year to pursue discussions around each of our future funding options with all stakeholders.

## Governance and board membership

This year saw the first changes to the D2I board of non-executive directors since the initial project began in 2020. Last year we marked a transition from fixed-term project to ongoing service, and we knew that we needed to prepare for the possibility of personnel changes as part of that, so our formal governance document already made arrangements for succession planning and handover.

We're sorry to lose both Alastair Lee and Adam King, but both are adamant that their "seats" should be occupied by people who are currently "doing the doing" in their respective contexts, so we're really happy to have found some fantastic new colleagues to welcome into D2I's leadership: Sam, Emma, Clare and Kevin have all joined the D2I board, maintaining the balance of LA and other voices, and extending LA representation beyond the South East and London where the project originated.

These changes should help us continue balancing the broad range of views we need to keep doing our work, while also continuing to prioritise the views of LA data professionals and service leads in our strategic decision-making. We've already had our first board meeting with our new members and will continue to review governance periodically.

## Contact

To get in touch about anything to do with Data to Insight, email [datatoinsight.enquiries@gmail.com](mailto:datatoinsight.enquiries@gmail.com)

To find out more, or to connect with our work in other ways, please visit [www.datatoinsight.org](http://www.datatoinsight.org)