

Cost Calculator for Children's Services

Knowledge Transfer Partnerships

A Knowledge Transfer Partnership project facilitates the exchange of information between research and practice. The Centre for Child and Family Research at Loughborough University are currently working with a number of local authorities on a wider research and development programme. As part of this programme, a three-year partnership was established in April 2006 between the Centre for Child and Family Research and Coventry City Council (funded by Coventry City Council and the Economic and Social Research Council). A further two-year partnership began with Cheshire County Council in October 2007 (Cheshire County Council and the Economic and Social Research Council funded).

Extending the CCfCS

The Cost Calculator for Children's Services (CCfCS) is a computer application designed to help local authorities cost services and placements provided to looked after children. The CCfCS has been developed by the Centre for Child and Family Research, funded by the Department for Children, Schools and Families.

Work to extend the CCfCS to cover education, health and mental health will include the:

- Development of conceptual frameworks for costing processes and services;
- Collection of time use activity data for social care, education, health and mental health through practitioner focus groups; and
- Production of customised unit costs for inclusion in the Cost Calculator.

Education

Coventry City Council is extending the CCfCS to calculate the costs of providing education services, in particular, the costs of supporting Special Educational Needs, for the following processes:

- Finding, Ongoing and Leaving Education Provision;
- Multi-Agency Support Panel;
- Assessment of Special Educational Needs (SEN);
- SEN Disputes and Tribunal; and
- SEN Annual Review.



Si Chun Lam
Research Associate
Phone: 024 7678 5737
Email: SiChun.Lam@coventry.gov.uk

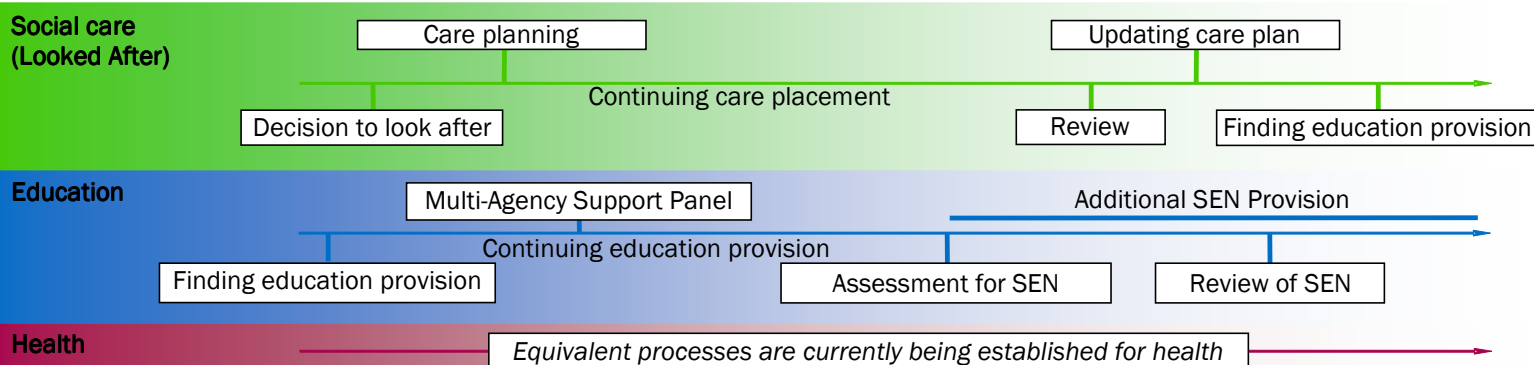
Health and mental health

Cheshire County Council is extending the CCfCS to cover health and mental health provision for looked after children. The project is also exploring joint commissioning processes and how agreements are made for joint funding.

This partnership forms part of a wider initiative to improve the commissioning of children's placements: the 'Transforming Cheshire' programme.



Anna Jones
Research Associate
Phone: 01244 977 241
Email: anna.jones@cheshire.gov.uk



Potential benefits

- Increased transparency in the costs of providing social care, education, health and mental health services to children in need, making visible the links between investments and outcomes for children.
- Clearer understanding of whether services provide value for money, thus forming a basis for comparisons and deciding where changes could be made.
- Facilitates awareness of how costs are spread across agencies leading to more efficient joint commissioning.
- Improved care packages and service provision due to enhanced communication across services, leading to improved life chances and outcomes for children and families, in line with Every Child Matters.