Costs and outcomes for children’s services in Scotland: a tool to analyse routinely collected data

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Costs and outcomes for children’s services in Scotland: a tool to analyse routinely collected data

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Methodology overview

- Costs from ‘bottom up’
- The child or family is the starting point
- Uses child level data on children’s characteristics and experiences
- Links to unit costs of case management activity organised into ‘processes’, with service provision
- To calculate costs of support overtime
- Child, placement and service pathway variations
- Relates costs to outcomes

http://www.lboro.ac.uk/media/wwwlboroacuk/content/ccfr/publications/CCfCS%20Summary%20March%202014.pdf
The Cost Calculator for Children’s Services: Inputs and Outputs

- **Time use activity data** provided by children’s social care personnel
- **Salary data** for each type of children’s social care personnel involved in the 8 processes
- **Organizational overheads** (running costs) finance data for the children’s social care service
- **Unit costs** for the 8 processes for looked after children (includes standard case costs and variations)
- **Child level data** (needs, placements and outcomes)
- **Finance data** (placement fees and allowances)
- **Unit cost reports** for individual children, groups of children or by placement type
- **Process unit costs** of 8 cost calculator processes for looked after children
- Analysis of social care costs by outcomes
- ‘What if’ analysis to explore the costs of providing alternative placement types

Cost calculator tool
Social Care Processes for Looked After Children

1. Decide child needs to be looked after (including activity for finding initial placement)
2. Care planning
3. Maintaining the placement
4. Leaving care/return home
5. Find a subsequent placement
6. Review
7. Legal processes
8. Transition to leaving care/after care services
Social care activity: worked example

Process 6 Review: Staff Salary costs

Pay scale midpoint (includes on costs) £39,944.87
+ 45% for overheads £17,975.19
+ Capital overheads £1943

42 working weeks per year 1425.31
37 hours per week 38.52

Hourly rate for Social Worker = £38.52
Social care activity: worked example

Process 6 Review: social worker

- Consultation with child or young person prior to review
- Consultation with parents prior to review
- Consultation with carer prior to review
- Organising room booking
- Completion of social worker report
- Duration of review

- Fact finding/liaising within and outside of social services
- Visits or discussions with carers/potential placement
- After review – distribution of review form
- Actions resulting from review
- Case files and LAC/ICS paperwork
### Social care activity: worked example

**Process 6 Review: Standard case (ENGLAND)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Hourly rate</th>
<th>Unit cost per worker</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Worker</td>
<td>5 ¼ hours</td>
<td>38.52</td>
<td>202.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admin</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
<td>21.21</td>
<td>21.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Manager</td>
<td>1 ½ hours</td>
<td>48.36</td>
<td>72.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fostering Team social worker</td>
<td>2 hours</td>
<td>38.52</td>
<td>77.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent reviewing officer</td>
<td>5 ¾ hours</td>
<td>44.00</td>
<td>253.89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unit cost Review (standard case) = £626.91
# Social care activity: worked example

## Process 6 Review: Variations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variation</th>
<th>Additional activity</th>
<th>Additional cost</th>
<th>New unit cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standard case</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>£626.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First leaving Care Review</td>
<td>PLUS 5 ¼ hours</td>
<td>404.46</td>
<td>£1031.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unaccompanied Asylum seeking Children</td>
<td>PLUS 10 ½ for Translator</td>
<td>327.82</td>
<td>£954.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children in placements other than foster care</td>
<td>MINUS 2 hours for foster team</td>
<td>- 77.04</td>
<td>£549.87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Cost Calculator for Children’s Services: Inputs and Outputs

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The development for Scotland

- Funded by the Scottish Government
  - Working with two local authorities
  - Development of underpinning information:
    - Scoping exercise
    - Development of the processes for Scotland
    - Calculate unit costs
- Adapt software:
  - Initial programming
  - Testing
The development for Scotland

- Time use activity data
  - Mapped social care processes for Scotland
  - Time use activity data from frontline workers
- Focus groups
- Verification scenarios
- Online surveys
The project so far

- Focus group data collection in LA1
- Verification focus group data collection LA2
- Local authority salary and finance data collection

Future actions
- Survey verification
- Software programming
Emerging findings

- Eight social care processes map across to Scotland
  - Standardised universally applicable framework
  - Replicable across different contexts
- Fewer practice differences than initially anticipated
- Structurally the CCfCS largely remains the same
### Different types of cases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>England</th>
<th>Scotland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section 20</strong></td>
<td><strong>Section 25</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary</td>
<td>Voluntary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of home care</td>
<td>Legal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placed with parents (5% of total LAC, 2014)</td>
<td>Out of home care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Independent Reviewing Officer assigned to ALL cases</td>
<td>Looked-after at home (26.6% of total LAC, 2014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of home care</td>
<td>Out of home care</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Scotland**

| **Section 31** | **Section 86** |
| Legal orders | A Reviewing Officer NOT assigned to LAC at home |
# Social care activity: worked example

## Process 6: Review (social worker)

- Consultation with child or young person prior to review
- Consultation with parents prior to review
- Consultation with carer prior to review
- Organising room booking
- Completion of social worker report
- Duration of review
- Fact finding/liaising within and outside of social services
- Visits or discussions with carers/potential placement
- After review – distribution of review form
- Actions resulting from review
- Case files and LAC/ICS paperwork
- Collation of paper work to Children’s reporter
- Children’s Hearing
Difference in time use

- Legal process 7
  - Less waiting time for practice social workers, Children’s Hearing and working with Sheriff reduces court time
Outputs: Analysis

- Analysis of time use activity data
  - Direct and indirect activities
  - Reconfiguration of processes
    - Use of panels
- Understanding process costs can inform decision making
  - Placement change for children in care
  - “What if” analysis
Contact details

- www.lboro.ac.uk/research/ccfr

Costs and Outcomes Programme: overview paper
http://www.lboro.ac.uk/media/wwwlboroacuk/content/ccfr/publications/CCfC S%20Summary%20March%202014.pdf

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- www.lboro.ac.uk/research/ccfr