South East Needs DfE Project SE Fostering Group

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Our Project

- Started in late 2018
- Partnership established with two main provider umbrella organizations (ICHA & NAFP) and South East Sector Led Improvement Programme
- Success in bids for DfE grants (Initial £70k and a further £128k for phase 2 running until July 2021)
- Data collected from all 19 SE authorities
- Developing user perspective to inform future commissioning
- Detailed analysis of data (with insights from ICHA/NAFP)

Two Key Strands

Data

- The Complex LAC project sampled 1253 cases from all 19 Local Authorities in the South East Region. Each authority provided data on its most expensive placements.

- A sampling framework which gives statistical significance (95% confidence level and confidence interval of 10) was used. The sample size for each authority was determined by the number of LAC aged 10+ as at March 2017 (the latest published data at the time)

- Also market research, demographics and review of innovative practice

- The information collected includes:
  - Financial
  - Need/risks
  - History
  - Provider

User Experience

DfE Project (Phase 1) and Funding

- In March 2019 DfE announced a bidding process under the NSF Fostering Better Outcomes Programme

- Although our project was not primarily about fostering, our bid was successful and we received £73,350 in grant funding, with the project due to conclude in March 2020

- Our project is a joint project with ICHA, with Peter Sandiford (CX ICHA) and Lucy Butler DCS (West Sussex) as co-sponsors

- The key aim of the project is:

  "To determine the feasibility for the creation of a strategic commissioning arrangement in the south east for the effective and efficient commissioning and purchase of appropriate residential and fostering placements for looked after children and young people with complex needs"

Project Outputs

- The key project outputs to date are:
  - Production of a detailed analysis of need for the authorities participating in the project, using existing collected data and setting it in the context of wider demographic and published LAC data; feeding in information collected from users and providers (this is the draft document you had circulated earlier in the week
  - **Sufficiency statements:** We have also produced a set of analysed data for each authority and also a full anonymised database of all 1253 cases. These were circulated to our contacts in each authority in October 2019

How well is it working now?
The numbers and money -

Councils issue stark warnings as children's services overspends continue to strain most budgets

Analysis of local authority reports reveals scale of ongoing pressures exerted by care placement and agency social worker costs

by **Alex Turner** on October 4, 2019 in **Children**, **Social work leaders**

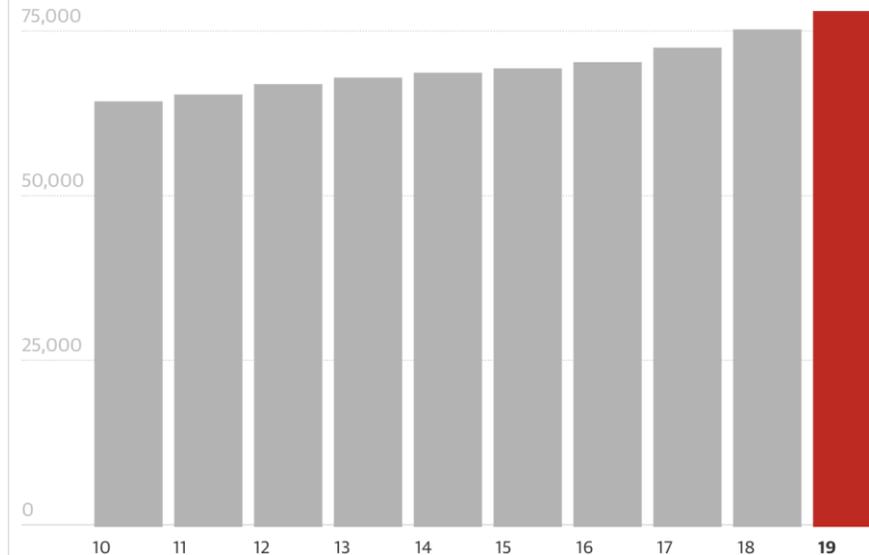Rise in children taken into care pushes 88% of councils over budget

Local authorities overspent on children's services by an estimated £807m in 2017-18

▲ In March 2018 there were 75,420 looked-after children in England, according to government data. Photograph: Nadezhda1906/Getty Images/iStockphoto

Almost nine out of 10 local authorities in England overspent on children's social care in the last financial year, as the rising number of children taken into care put extra pressure on budgets.

The number of children in care rose to 78,150 in the 12 months to March 2019

Guardian graphic. Source: Department for Education

What does the SE future look like?

Age Group	2019 Population			2024 Population		
	County	Unitary	SE Region	County	Unitary	SE Region
10-14	413,500	147,200	560,900	443,400	159,200	602,600
15-19	370,900	139,100	510,000	413,500	157,900	571,400

High Cost Residential Care Placements

114 children were placed in residential care placements costing at least £4,800 per week (excluding residential schools and secure units) of whom (score of 4 or 5)

Vulnerable to CSE	CSE Risk to others	Violence to children	Violence to adults
34	13	29	45

Risk of Radicalisation	Involvement in Gangs	Substance Misuse	Supply of Drugs
1	5	18	6

Complexity in high cost placements

Some or Most Prevalence (score 4 or 5) in any risk factor, mental health or learning disability
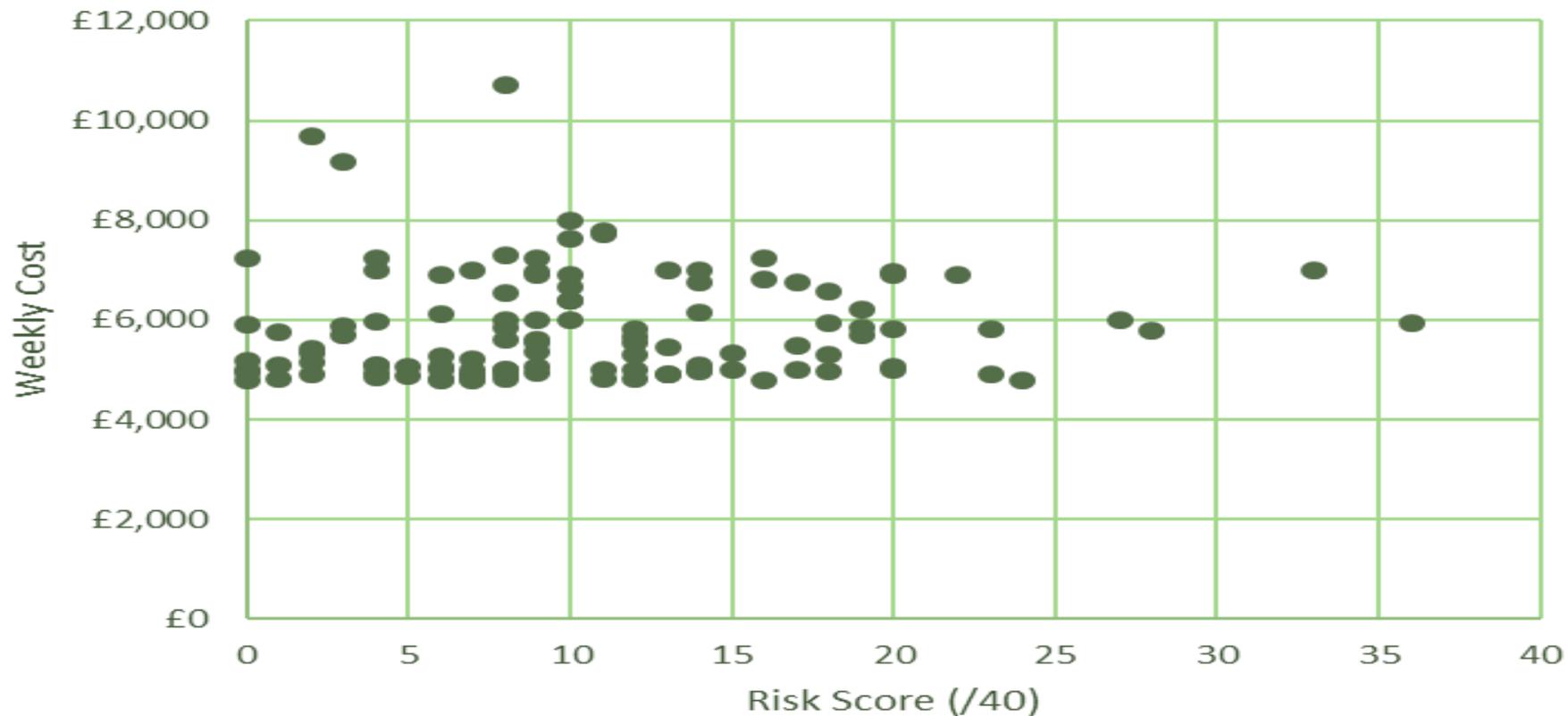

2 children in high cost residential placements had no prevalence of any risk factor, mental health issue or learning disability.

Relationship between risk and cost

There appears to be a weak correlation between risk score and cost of placement (i.e high risk does not seem to relate to high cost placement)
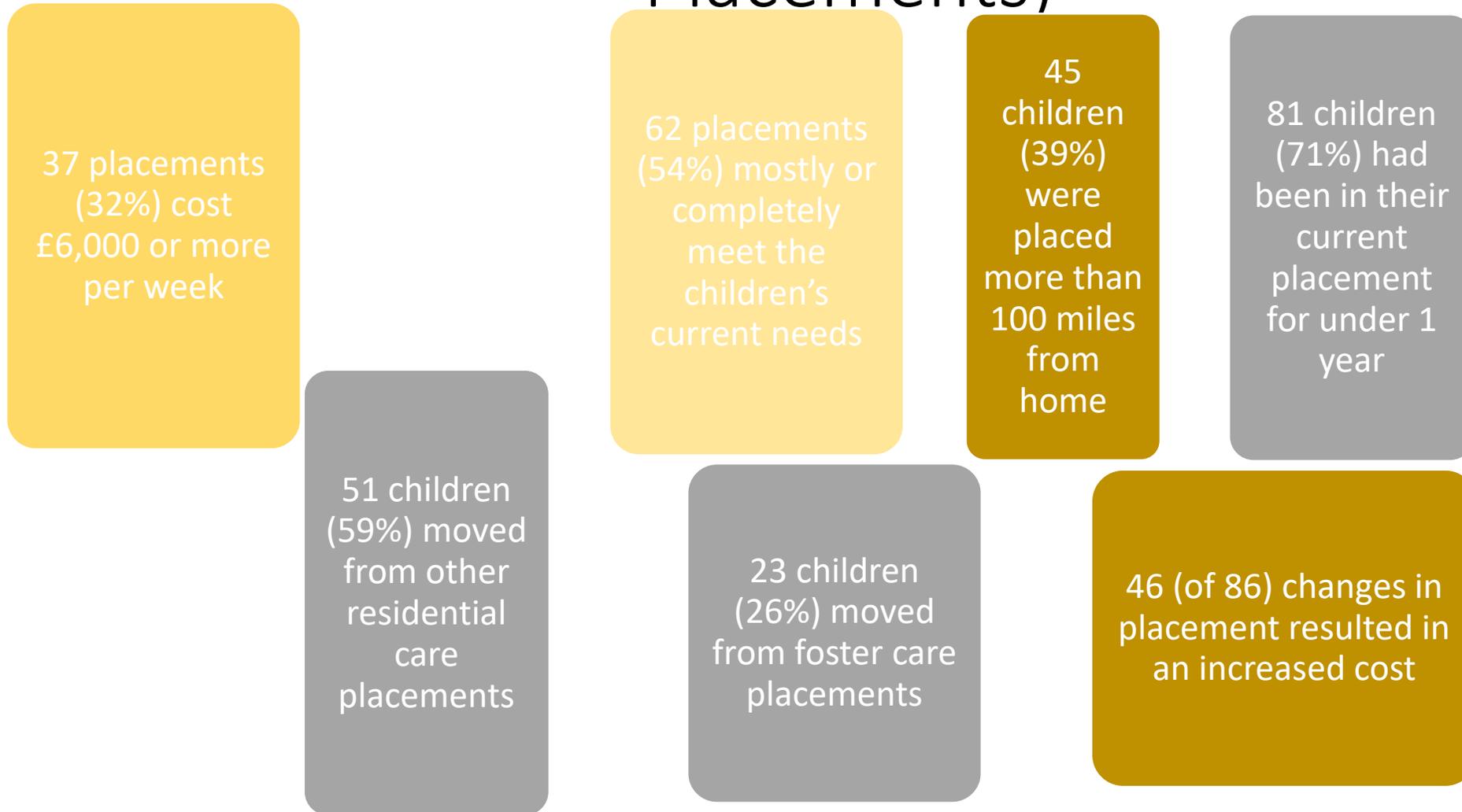

Current Placement Weekly Cost and Risk Score

Current Placement Setting & Costs

The total spend on these 114 children was £666,433 per week, this equates to an annual cost of £34.7 million. These 114 children represent 9.1% of our sample of 1253 yet accounted for 17.9% of the spend.

Current Placement Setting	County				
	Total Weekly Cost	No of LAC	Average	Min	Max
LA Own Residential	£24,090	5	£4,818	£4,818	£4,818
Other LA Residential	£5,550	1	£5,550	£5,550	£5,550
Private/Voluntary Residential	£528,035	90	£5,867	£4,800	£10,700
Total	£557,675	96	£5,809		
Current Placement Setting	Unitary				
	Total Weekly Cost	No of LAC	Average	Min	Max
LA Own Residential					
Other LA Residential					
Private/Voluntary Residential	£108,758	18	£6,042	£4,935	£7,617
Total	£108,758	18	£6,042		

Current and Previous Placement (High Cost Placements)

37 placements (32%) cost £6,000 or more per week

51 children (59%) moved from other residential care placements

62 placements (54%) mostly or completely meet the children's current needs

23 children (26%) moved from foster care placements

45 children (39%) were placed more than 100 miles from home

46 (of 86) changes in placement resulted in an increased cost

81 children (71%) had been in their current placement for under 1 year

Provision in the South East

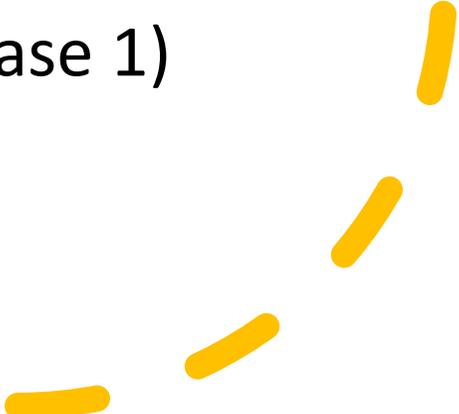284 registered children's homes in south east and 15 residential schools

(Nov 18)

- 2134 places in total
- 232 establishments rated Ofsted "good" or "outstanding" (Nov 18)

7565 approved foster care places in south east

(March 19)

- 4985 were filled
- 1070 vacant
- 1395 (18.4%) not available

DfE Funding Phase 2 (Nov 20– July 31st)

- Working with 4 local authorities (West Sussex, Kent, Portsmouth and Milton Keynes)

- Demonstration project to co-produce with local authorities, providers and young people

- Key output 'blueprint' for procurement across 4 themes (identified in phase 1)

Impact of Legal Advice

- The project received clear and unequivocal legal advice about the risks of local authorities working with a selected group of providers (risk of legal challenge, providers needing to be disallowed from subsequent procurement activity etc)

- 24th November Project sub-team met to develop a proposal to maintain collaboration element of the project whilst minimizing risks if we go to full procurement exercise
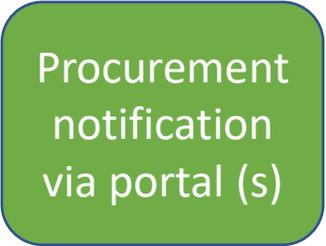
Local Authority Workstream

- Between now and the end of January 21 we need to work with the four local authorities involved with the project to agree:
  - Which of these themes we want to take forward
  - Define much more specifically what want to achieve (e.g. number of children, age, locations etc)

Keeping children local: our needs analysis evidenced that many children are placed at considerable distance due to placement availability rather than need (200 children - 16.5% placed over 100 miles from home).

Preventing the use of unregistered care: The needs analysis highlighted a small but significant group of children placed in high cost settings that are not regulated.

Sufficiency: Our analysis identified children from the South East placed in other distant regions for no obvious good reason.

New placement options: (e.g. hybrid local authority/independent providers, developing links between residential and foster care etc.)

Provider Workstream

- ICHA and NAFP working together to research
  - What is likely to attract providers to engage in procurement exercises
  - What will alienate them from working with authorities
  - Options for what they believe could work better than current approaches
  - The appetite to collaborate with local authorities (and also other providers)