

The English Adoption Journey: Mapping Needs, Costs, and Outcomes

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Outline of session

- Adoption policy and practice context in England
- Development of a standardised conceptual framework
- Introduction to the Cost Calculator tool
- Estimating costs of the adoption journey
- Making use of the information

Adoption policy and practice context in England

- Context: Data (to year end March 2015)
 - 69,540 looked after children in England (in out of home care)
 - 3,320 placed for adoption (5%)
 - Variability across local areas
- Adoption breakdowns
 - 3.2% after Adoption Orders granted (12 year period)
Selwyn and Masson (2014)

Adoption policy and practice context in England

- Policy focus over the past five years: Plan for improving and tackling delay in the adoption system
 - Fostering for Adoption
 - Concurrent planning
 - Adoption Leadership board
 - Adoption Support Fund

Development of a standardised conceptual framework

- Explore the relationship between ***needs***, costs and ***outcomes*** for vulnerable children and their families
- Process driven approach
- Bottom up costing methodology
 - Child as the unit of analysis
- Routinely collected child level data linked with time use activity and finance data to develop unit costs

Development of a standardised conceptual framework

- Unit costs and costs of care packages
- Longitudinal analysis
- Comparative element to conduct cost effectiveness analysis
- Use of assumptions and ‘decision-rules’
- Transparency
- Potential costs avoided and cost savings

Development of a standardised conceptual framework

Separation between

- **‘Services’**
 - Placement, universal, targeted and specialist (therapeutic interventions, including groups and one-to-one)
- **‘Case management activity’**
 - Assessments, finding services, statutory visits, reviews
 - Activities are organised into processes
- **Variations**
- Explanation for variations in costs

Development of a standardised conceptual framework

- Child welfare service response and processes
 - What happens?
 - Who is involved?
- Standardised universally applicable framework
 - Decision making; Assessment; Care planning; Placement support; Referrals
- Replicable across different contexts (and countries)

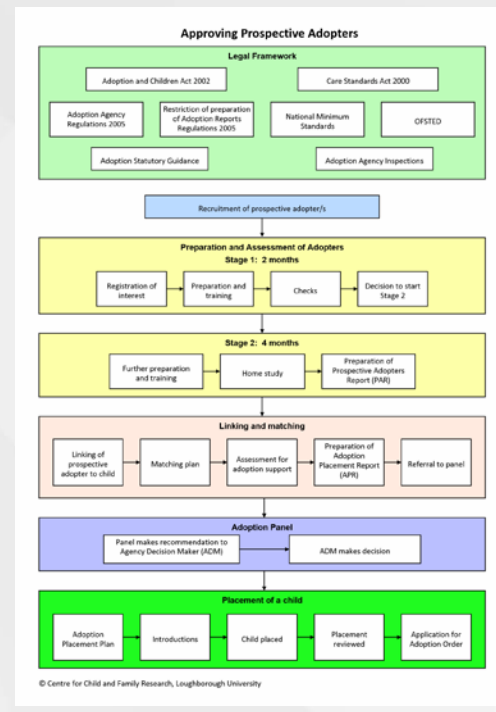
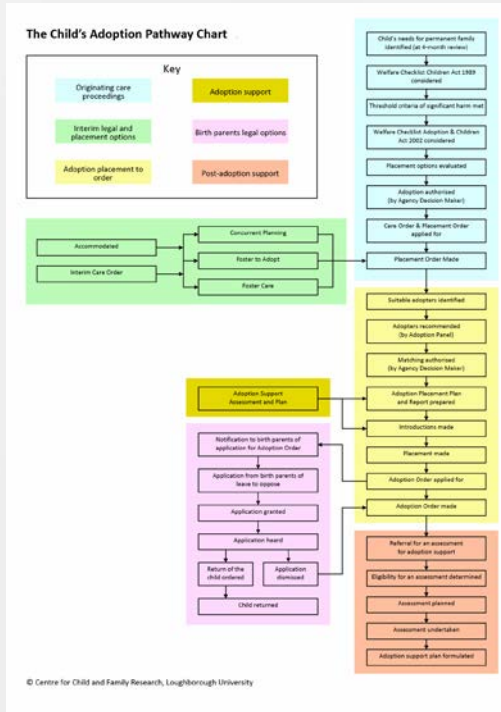
Estimating the costs of the adoption journey

- Extension of the Cost Calculator model
 - Funding from the Department for Education Children's Social Care Innovation Programme
 - Build on work to date to estimate the care journey for children placed in out of home care
 - Captures the adopters and the child's journey

Estimating the costs of the adoption journey

- Conceptual framework
 - Map out the processes
 - Capture the ‘time use’ activity
 - Link these to data about the needs and outcomes of children
- Develop a series of analyses and reports to inform practice and policy

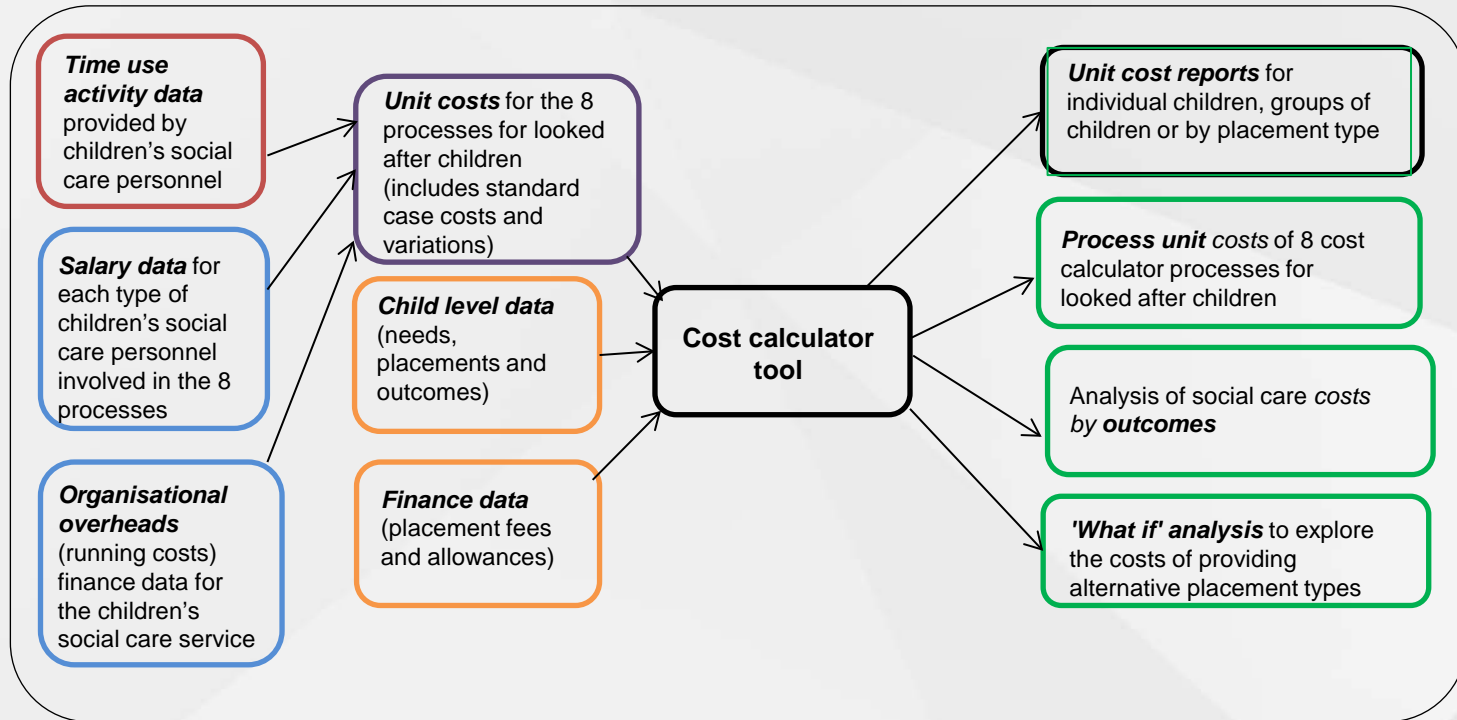
Estimating the costs of the adoption journey



Collection of 'time use' activity data

- Focus groups
 - Distinction between case related and non-case related activities
 - Identification of key tasks and who carries these out
 - Identification of a 'standard case' and variations
 - Context setting
- Online surveys
 - Time use data for key tasks and activities
 - Data from large sample of workers

Cost Calculator: Inputs and Outputs



Implementing change

- Cost effectiveness analysis requires differentiation between:
- Organisational components
 - Administrative, structural processes, wider systems change
- Staff components
 - Recruitment and retention, confidence, skills and competencies
- Child components
 - Outcomes

Making use of the information

- Exploration of time use
 - Potential efficiencies without compromising quality
- Comparing costs between different agencies
 - Introducing transparency and comparability
- Economic impact of different approaches to regionalisation
 - Changes to the adoption process
 - Organisational costs

For more information

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