

# Vulnerable Children: Priorities for the Spending Review

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**Children's**  
COMMISSIONER

# Priorities for the Spending Review

## Covid Pressures

- All the major risks to children are up. Lots of support has fallen away.
- We anticipate a huge rise in unemployment affecting families and children.

## Existing Pressures (Pre-Covid)

- Funding shortfall of £2.9bn per annum
- Research from Children's Commissioner Office and DfE's 'Child in Need' Review show a large population of children whose needs were not being consistently met. Child in Need Review identifies 1.6m children who have needed statutory interventions over past six years. All of these children have very poor educational outcomes.

The situation pre-Covid was that **services were simultaneously unsustainable in their current form and insufficient relative to the needs of children.** This is going to have worsened.

In short – the status quo is not an option.

# We've been asking the wrong questions

What we've spent the last four years asking	What we should have spent the last four years asking
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ How many children are being referred to services?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ How many children need help and protection?</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ How long do children spend on 'Child in Need Plans'</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Is a child better off 12-months after being on a 'Child in Need' plan?</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Why are there differences in 'CIN' plans per capita?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Are all children who need help receiving it?</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Why are some local authorities reporting more spend per unit of statutory activity?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Are some local authorities doing a better job of providing for children relative to spend?</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Are some local authorities better at managing demand?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Are some local authorities better at meeting the needs of children?</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Why is there variation in Ofsted outcomes?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Why is there variation in outcomes?</li></ul>

# Children at risk, and those in receipt of services

All children at risk due to family circumstances: 2.3 million

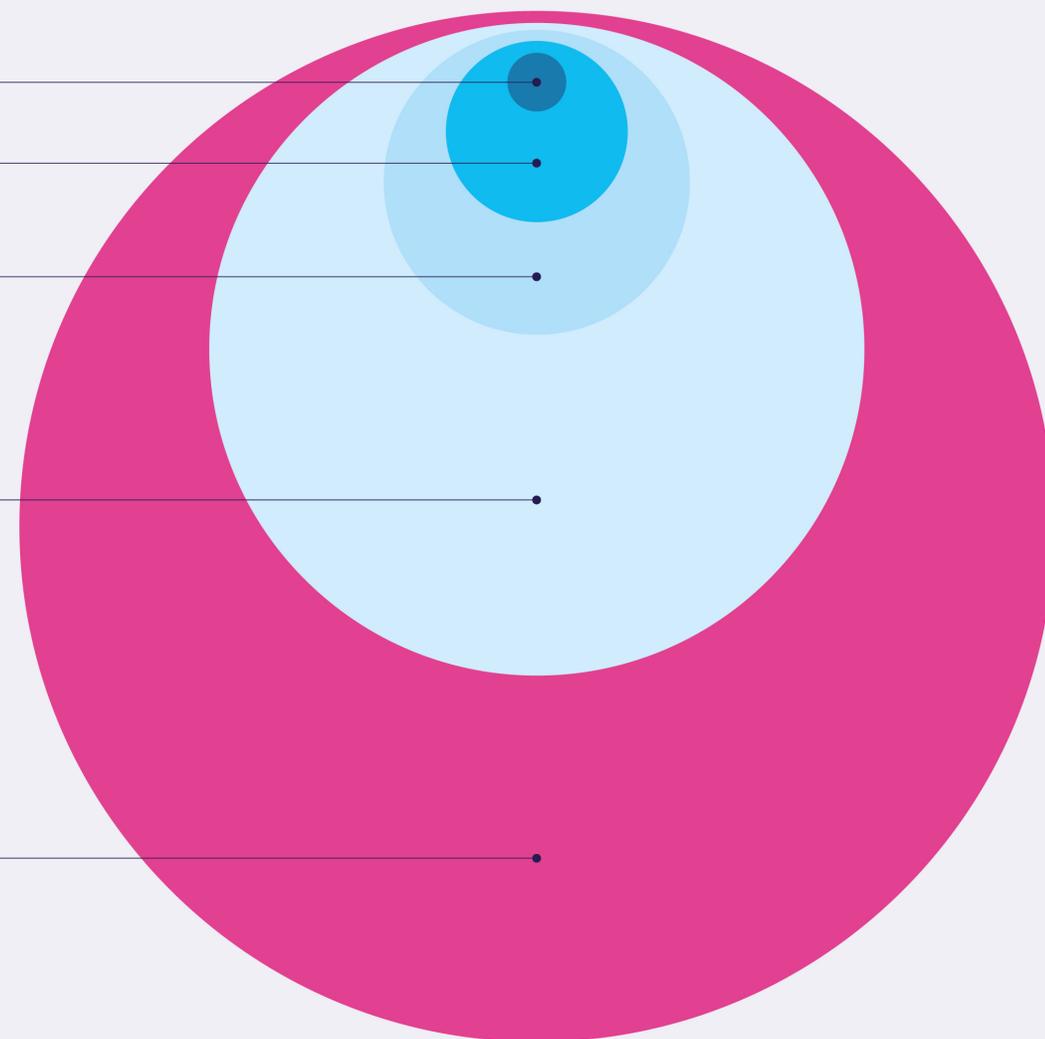
Intensive statutory support:  
**128,000**

Other Children in Need:  
**269,000**

Other children supported through Troubled Families:  
**271,000**

Other children known to children's services (level of support unclear):  
**761,000**

'Invisible' to children's services:  
**829,000**



# Lack of national understanding

- We need a better picture of who children's social care serves and what it achieves

What we do know – nationally – about children's social care	What we don't know – nationally – about children's social care	What we do know about the Troubled Families programme
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Children referred to + receiving statutory services. 1.3m children have been on the CIN register in past three years.</li><li>2. How long statutory interventions last – normally less than a year, even when a child enters care.</li><li>3. The educational outcomes of children in care or ever on a CIN plan.</li><li>4. Broad categories of spend.</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. How provision of services relates to the need of children.</li><li>2. What services are provided outside of statutory services.</li><li>3. Which children and families receive not statutory services.</li><li>4. (Most importantly) what outcomes are achieved within statutory and pre-statutory services.</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Defined population both in the programme, and in the control group.</li><li>2. Clear record of who gets support and for how long</li><li>3. Clear payment criteria</li><li>4. Records progress against a range of outcomes</li></ol>

# Making the case for investment in children

A compelling case needs:

- A clear idea of what we want to do, and why
- An understanding of what this will be cost, and how it will be spent
- A clear and measurable conception of what it will achieve

**We can only get there if we focus on children's needs and how we meet them. This means focusing on the outcomes children achieve as a result of the help they get.**

A long way from where we are at present. But we have the ingredients to bring this together:

1. CHLDRN app giving detailed data on children's needs relative to the services they receive at a local level
2. Locally owned data showing much richer picture of needs and service provision
3. Troubled Families earned autonomy model gives a model for an outcomes framework
4. Host of evaluations proves the good we can do for children and families.

# Thank you!

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