Childhood vulnerability in numbers

Need, spend, and the millions of children in England who miss out
Millions of children in England are vulnerable.

Across a typical class of 30, 6 children are growing up at risk due to family circumstances.

- Including 2 children living in a household where domestic violence or abuse is present.
- Or 4 children living in a household where domestic violence, substance misuse and/or severe mental health problems are present.

Across a typical class of 30, 4 children have an identified special educational need (SEN).

- **but only 1 of them** will have a SEN statement or Education, Health & Care plan.

Across a typical class of 30, 4 children will have a mental health issue.

- **but only 1 of them** will be accessing mental health services.
If children don’t get help, problems get worse.

Ben is 2.
He lives with his mum and dad. They are living in poverty and are homeless, staying in a B&B provided by the council. Both parents have poor mental health. This home life affects Ben’s development, both because his mum and dad spend less time playing with him, and since they are isolated. Ben doesn’t get to play with other children.

Ben is 5.
His family didn’t get any help and now dad is drinking too much. Ben has started school, but is already behind his classmates: he has failed to meet more than half of his developmental benchmarks. He finds it hard to communicate and manage how he feels, has difficulty understanding things, and loses his temper when he is confused.

Ben is 12.
He now lives with his mum and step dad. He never received help for his emotional and communication problems, and this has led to angry outbursts and violent behaviour at home and school. He has been expelled from school. He doesn’t get on with his parents either, and spends a lot of time out of the house. He is in a gang and ‘runs’ drugs between areas. His mum and step dad wanted him out of the house because he is aggressive. After a fight where he got stabbed, the council agreed to take him into care. No foster family will take him and so he is placed in a children’s home 100 miles away. This is one of three children’s homes Ben is placed in within a year.

Ben is 14.
He is in a gang and ‘runs’ drugs between areas. His mum and step dad wanted him out of the house because he is aggressive. After a fight where he got stabbed, the council agreed to take him into care. No foster family will take him and so he is placed in a children’s home 100 miles away. This is one of three children’s homes Ben is placed in within a year.

Ben is 16.
He ran away from his children’s home, was caught up in a fight and is now in custody. He also has a daughter Chloe, 6 months old. He has no qualifications and no contact with his family. When he gets out of jail next year he intends to return to the area where he grew up. He doesn’t know where he’ll live.

How can we help?
— Counselling for mum and dad
— A nursery place for Ben
— Access to a family-nurse partnerships would help mum and dad with parenting
— Speech and language therapy for Ben
— There are a range of programmes for Ben and his parents which can help him and them manage emotions. These have a really strong evidence base
— Mental health care for Ben
— Family-therapy for Ben and his family
— An educational psychologist to help him get back to school
— Youth services to help Ben outside of school
— Ben still needs help for his mental health
— A stable and therapeutic children’s home
— A youth worker or someone else to develop a relationship with
— Ben needs support and stability when he gets out of prison. Somewhere to live, a place at college and someone to help him get his life back on track
How many children are getting help?

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

Intensive statutory support (128,000)
- Children in care (as at 31/03/2018)
- Children on a child protection plan (as at 31/03/2018)

Other Children in Need (269,000)
- All other Children in Need (as at 31/03/2018)

Other children supported through Troubled Families (271,000)
- Children in families who are currently being supported through the funded Troubled Families (TF) programme (as at March 2019)

Other children known to children’s services (level of support unclear) (761,000)
- Other families identified by local authorities as eligible for Troubled Families-type support, but not funded through the TF programme (as at March 2019)
- Other children who had a Child in Need episode during the year (2017/18), or a referral but no further action
- Other children identified by their local authority as young carers

‘Invisible’ to children’s services (829,000)
- The remaining children are growing up at risk in vulnerable families.
In order to understand how many children get what kind of help, and how much that costs, we worked with a group of councils to map out all the services they provide for children. This diagram lists those services in ascending order based on the level of need of the child, with basic ones at the bottom and specialist ones at the top. For each level, it shows how much the services cost per child, what proportion of total spending this accounts for, and what proportion of children use that service.

**PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN ACCESSING SERVICES**

13% **PRE-STATUTORY SUPPORT**

- **Highly acute needs:** Children in care who have a specialist high-cost residential placement, or children with an Education Health and Care Plan in high-cost specialist provision.

- **Acute needs:** Children in care and unaccompanied asylum seeking children.

- **Complex needs (e.g. Child in Need):** Support for children identified as a ‘Child in Need’.

- **Pre-statutory support:** Help for children who have reached a statutory threshold, including those with an Education Health and Care Plan or a Child Protection Plan, or a young offender.

- **Other statutory services (e.g. Child Protection Plan):** Support for children with specific needs below statutory thresholds. It includes help for children with SEN support and support for families from the Troubled Families Programme or council’s ‘Early Help’ services (such as family support).

3% **TARGETED SUPPORT**

- **Highly targeted support:** Help for children with specific additional needs including mental health or well-being, pupil referral units, or youth work with specific groups.

- **Targeted support:** Support available to all children. This includes council spending to support schools (such as school buses) and early years (such as nursery places).

76% **UNIVERSAL SUPPORT**

**Spend per child**

- **Highly acute needs:** £192,000
- **Acute needs:** £52,000
- **Complex needs (e.g. Child in Need):** £12,000
- **Pre-statutory support:** £7,000
- **Other statutory services (e.g. Child Protection Plan):** £6,300
- **Targeted support:** £900
- **Universal support:** £7,000

Where does the money go?

Highly acute needs: Children in care who have a specialist high-cost residential placement, or children with an Education Health and Care Plan in high-cost specialist provision.

Acute Needs: Children in care and unaccompanied asylum seeking children.

Children in need: Support for children identified as a ‘Child in Need’.

Pre-statutory support: Help for children who have reached a statutory threshold, including those with an Education Health and Care Plan or a Child Protection Plan, or a young offender.

Permanency: Children who have a permanent home that is not with their birth parents. This includes Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs), care leaver support and adoption.

Universal support: Support available to all children. This includes council spending to support schools (such as school buses) and early years (such as nursery places).