

Cost Calculator for Children's Services (CCfcs)

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Project profile

What is your idea

Local authority children's services in England provide support for most vulnerable children. Providing the right support at the right time is crucial to a child's long-term outcomes. Cost calculator is an analytics tool that enables local authorities evaluate which support leads to which outcomes, while monitoring progress and costs. Our existing Cost Calculator platform has benefited thousands of children across local authorities for 15+ years, but we now need a web-based platform to enhance data security, usability, functionality and scalability.

What problem are you solving

Currently local authorities cannot easily analyse children's needs, costs, and outcomes to inform care decision-making; making it difficult to evaluate the child's outcomes depending on the level of support. Under austerity budget cuts, this lack of information hinders good decision-making and can lead to an emphasis on short-term cost-saving instead of the long-term benefits for the children. Cost Calculator empowers local authorities by providing an analytical framework based on research so they can make the decisions best suited to each child's needs.

What is your progress to date

More than 50 local authorities have used the existing Cost Calculator or participated in research using it since its introduction in mid-2000s. We have been working with local authority partners to identify areas where the cost pressure is most acute and have been developing digital

tools that enable better decision-making, especially in relation to service provisioning and commissioning. We are in the process of establishing a social enterprise, and currently looking for funding to develop a minimum viable product.

What resources can help you grow

We are looking to develop a minimum viable product to setup a web-based platform that can generate revenue through a yearly subscription. To help grow our social enterprise, we also wish to increase the number of local authorities that we work with to broaden the impact and financial sustainability of Cost Calculator as well as to work with third sector organisations working with vulnerable children.

How will you spend the £50k money

Around £45,000 will be invested in developing a minimum viable product based on the existing tool, which then can be used for the team to obtain detailed feedback from partner local authorities. £5,000 will be used to fund a series of product development workshops with various local authorities to ensure the practical relevance to the Authorities.

