



IMPROVEMENT EAST

Eastern Region Residential Care Providers Event

31st January 2025

10:00 – 15:00

Essex
Luton
Suffolk
Thurrock
Cambridgeshire
Bedford Borough
Central Bedfordshire
Peterborough
Hertfordshire
Southend
Norfolk



Agenda



10:00	Refreshments, Networking & Signing In	
10:30	Welcome	Sara Tough (Exec DCS Norfolk & Chair of Eastern Region ADCS Network)
11:00	Eastern Region Analysis of Need with Q&A	Lou Willams
11:45	Refreshment Break	
12:00	Eastern Region Provider Analysis with Q&A	Andrew Rome
12:45	Lunch	
13:30	Cross Regional Project	Martha Moroney (CLA and Safeguarding Commissioning Hertfordshire) & Zoe Tompkins (Keys - Regional Manager) & Emma Beech (Keys - Chief Operating Officer)
14:00	Provider Feedback Session	James Tennant –(Commission East Programme Manager)
14:45	Close & Next Steps	Jo Fisher (Exec DCS Hertfordshire)



Welcome - Sara Tough OBE

Welcome & Purpose of Today



- Ensuring that every child has the opportunity to thrive, irrespective of their background or circumstances, is not only our professional mission but a moral imperative we all share.
- In the Eastern Region, we understand that achieving this goal requires collaborative effort.
- Today is dedicated to fostering connections, enhancing communication, and building upon our collective work.

Context



- Stable Homes Built on Love & the Children Wellbeing Bill
- The Eastern Region's collaborative approach, inspired by the government's vision for developing Regional Care Cooperatives (RCCs), has driven innovative practices.
- Despite the absence of funding from the Department for Education (DfE), the region recognised the intrinsic value of collaboration as over the past eight years, expenditure on children in care within the Eastern Region has surged by 90%, now totalling £720 million annually.
- To support this work the Eastern Region have provided funding to begin this collaboration



Through Collaboration We Aim to:

- Innovate and refine processes for enhanced efficiency and experiences.
- Increase placement sufficiency and stability.
- Ensure children remain in their local region, facilitating better access to services.
- Improve outcomes for children, their families and local communities.

Based on CRAGG data for 23/24 there are 986 beds available in the region but only 25% of the East's children reside in the East





Acknowledging the Need for Change

The Eastern Region recognises the necessity for evolution within local authorities and strives for continuous improvement. To achieve our goals, we will:

- **Foster Stronger Relationships:** Develop and maintain robust partnerships with service providers.
- **Enhance Long-Term Planning:** Implement and support more strategic and forward-thinking planning processes.
- **Promote Best Practices:** Identify, recognise, and replicate excellent practices within our region.
- **Embrace Diversity:** Understand the unique diversity of our region and the children we support, ensuring their needs are met through tailored solutions.



Vision



- **Collaboration**

Together, we are stronger. By sharing knowledge, resources, and innovative practices, we can build care that is resilient and responsive to the diverse needs of children and families.

- **Child-Centred Focus**

Every decision we make, every strategy we adopt, should prioritise the well-being, safety, and voices of the children in our care. They are the reason we are here today.

- **Ambition and Innovation**

The challenges we face whether it's sufficiency, workforce capacity, or changing needs require bold and creative solutions. Together, let us strive to push boundaries and embrace new ways of thinking to achieve the best possible outcomes.



Introductions



- James Tennant
Eastern Region RCC Programme Manager
- Rachel Black
Eastern Region Sector Led Improvement Manager
- Gemma Coxen
Eastern Region RCC Project Support
- Lou Williams
Lou Williams Consultancy supporting Eastern Region
- Jonathan Stanley
Revolution Consultancy supporting Eastern Region
- Andrew Rome
Revolution Consultancy supporting Eastern Region
- Karen Faulkner
CCRAG Lead Officer | CLA & Safeguarding Commissioning | Children's Services
- James Wilson
Director of Sufficiency, Planning and Education Strategy – Norfolk



Questions throughout the day

If you wish to ask us a question, please use Slido or the cards on your tables.

Event code



Essex
Luton
Suffolk
Thurrock
Cambridgeshire
Bedford Borough
Central Bedfordshire
Peterborough
Hertfordshire
Southend
Norfolk



Eastern Region Placement Sufficiency

Lou Williams

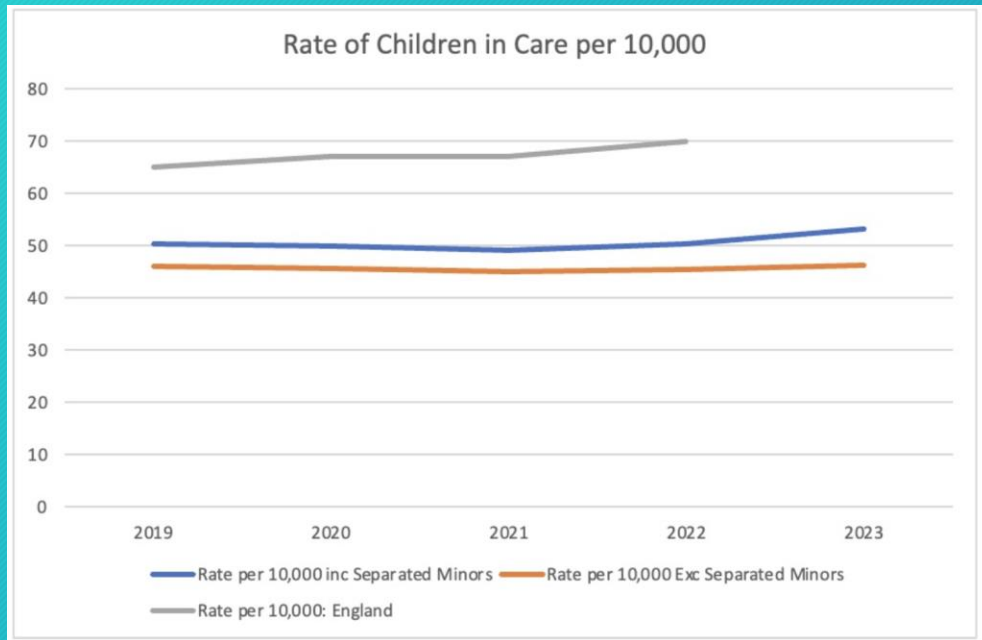
Background and Introduction

- I have worked in the Eastern Region for a number of years;
- I took early retirement in 2022, but have undertaken various pieces of work for the region since then;
- Ensuring that we have sufficient good quality placements locally for our children has always been a priority for me;
- I was very pleased to be asked to undertake some research about placement needs for children in care by the regional Directors of Children's Services group;
- This work pre-dates the recent drive from Govt about regional working...

Background and introduction...

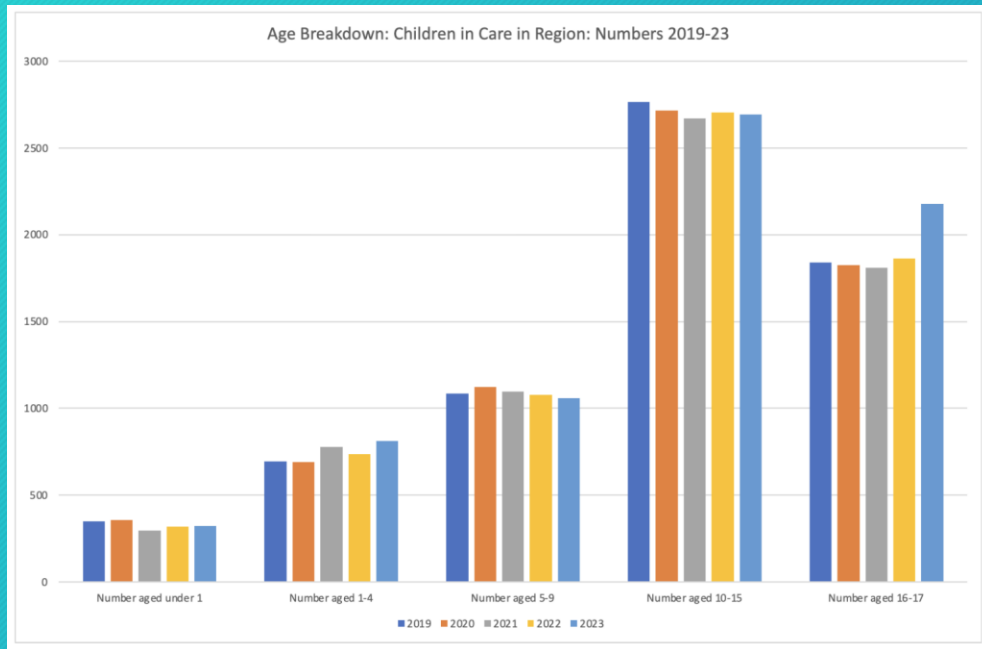
- There are 11 authorities in the region, from:
 - Central Bedfordshire, Bedford Borough, Peterborough and Cambridgeshire in the north;
 - Luton, Hertfordshire, Suffolk and Norfolk across the middle, and;
 - Essex, Thurrock and Southend in the South
- Looking at the data from these authorities on an individual basis shows variation between them in terms of numbers in care, types of placements needed and commissioned and so on;
- Aggregating to regional or sub-regional groups results in a much more consistent picture from year to year;
- Thinking regionally or sub-regionally increases confidence about predicting needs and demand into the future....

Overall numbers in care: eastern region...



- Data is to end 2023;
- Rates overall have remained relatively steady since then;
- National rate showed a further increase to end 2023 and a very small drop to March 2024;
- In numbers, there were just under 6,200 children in care, excluding separated migrant children, at end of 2023.

Age breakdown, children in care...

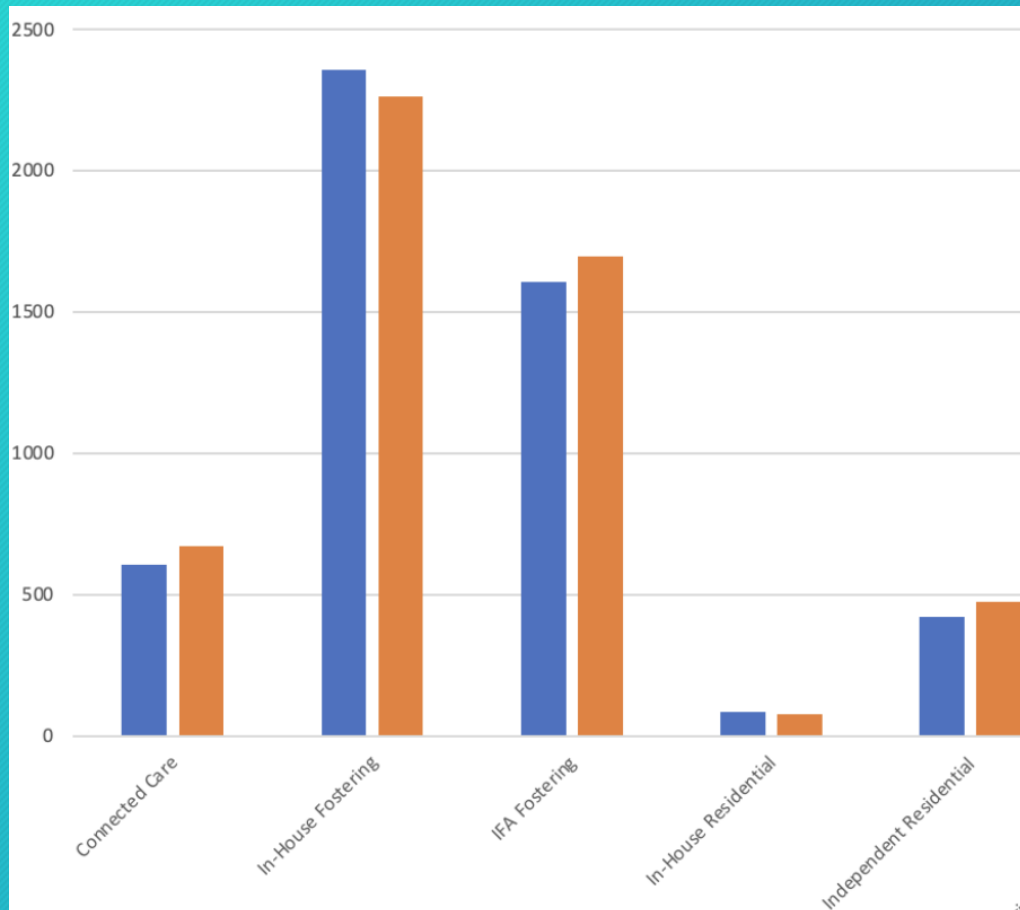


- This chart shows remarkable stability in terms of age ranges of children in care over a 5-year period;
- The significant jump in 16- and 17-year-olds relates to an increase in separated migrant children...

Children and young people entering care...

- The overall population of children and young people in care is not a static group; children and young people enter and leave care all the time;
- For older children and young people coming into care, it is more likely that they will remain in care until the age of 18;
- For the region as a whole, around 16% of children starting care are aged under 1; 12% are aged 1-4, 12% are aged 5-9, 26% are aged 10-15 and 34% 16 and 17;
- Most of our in-house fostering services are less able to provide placements for children and young people aged 10 and above;
- Many 16- and 17-year-olds are separated migrant children, the majority of whom access semi-independent accommodation.

Overall placement mix...

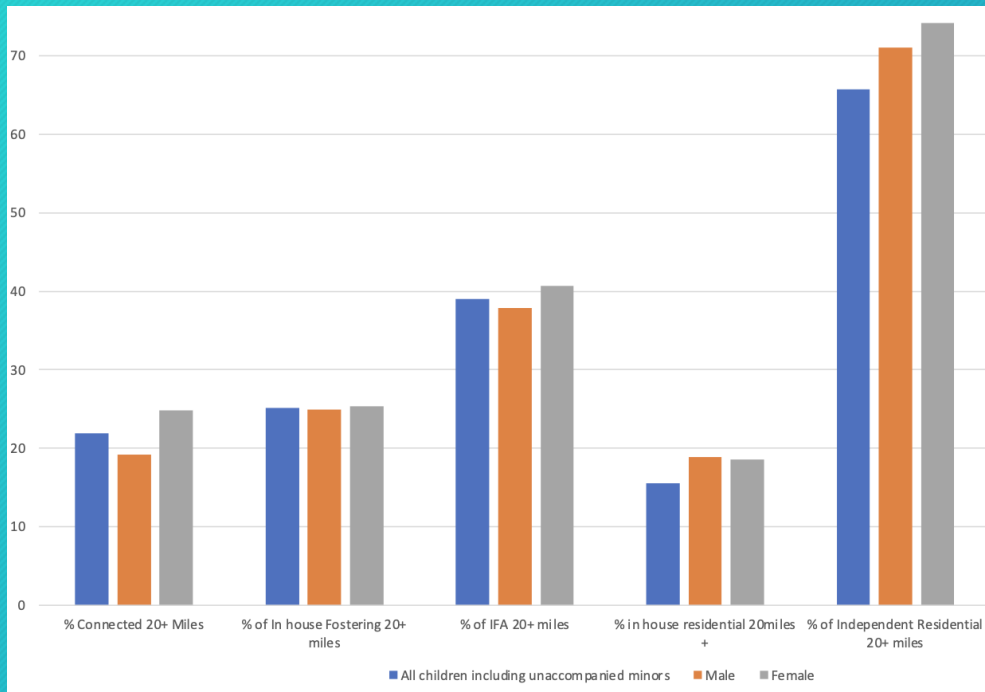


- For the region as a whole, some 1,700 are placed with Independent Fostering Agency carers;
- Just under 500 are placed in independent residential placements;
- Relatively small numbers are placed in internal residential provision;
- Some authorities aim to increase their supply of residential, but this will have only limited impact on the overall position.

Placement mix

- Around 2,200 children and young people in the region rely on Independent Fostering Agencies and independent residential placements to provide them with their homes;
- Around 2,300 children and young people in the region rely on an in-house foster-placement or residential placement to provide them with their homes;
- 700 live with relatives or close friends and around 1,000 in semi-independent accommodation;
- This means that local authorities in the region are reliant on the independent sector to provide almost 50% of core placements - fostering and residential.

Children living at distance...



- 65% of children and young people living in independent residential homes are placed 20+ miles from their home address;
- Almost 40% of those living with Independent Fostering Agency carers are more than 20 miles from their home address;
- This is appropriate for some but not for most;
- Those in independent residential are more likely to be placed very far from their home communities...

Consequences of living at distance...

- Fractures family, peer, school and community relationships;
- Can lead to periods out of education;
- Makes returning home more difficult;
- Can result in longer term problems of community belonging in terms of rights to housing and similar;
- Makes unplanned placement endings more likely;
- Means more placements are made with providers where there is only a limited or no prior relationship.

Children and young people in residential placements...

- These are clearly a diverse group in terms of age, characteristics, needs and vulnerabilities;
- Matching considerations can be a challenge when thinking about traditional block contracts with single authorities;
- Widening the pool of children and young people makes matching more likely to be possible more of the time;
- There will always be a need for very highly individualised placements and we would also like to work with the sector to think about this provision....

Regional sufficiency...

- For residential and probably fostering too, there is sufficient capacity in the region, but many of the existing placements are the homes of children and young people from outside the region;
- We are not here to disrupt the lives of settled children and young people;
- There is movement in the system that frees up capacity over time;
- And placing children and young people locally is better for them and for providers:
 - Better established, trusted relationships;
 - Fewer unplanned placement endings;
 - Local support when challenges do arise.

Taking things further...

- Our aim is for more of our children and young people to live close to their homes and communities;
- We will be talking mostly about residential cohorts today, but we are interested in developing similar joint approaches for fostering;
- Relationships are key and help to support improved outcomes for children;
- There are different approaches available to us in terms of joint planning and working that go beyond simple block contracts;
- We are keen to work with good quality providers small, medium and large, regionally and sub-regionally;
- This is the data we have; but we want to hear from you what other information from us would support your planning?
- Other questions?



Refreshment Break

Investigating alternative commercial arrangements with suppliers:

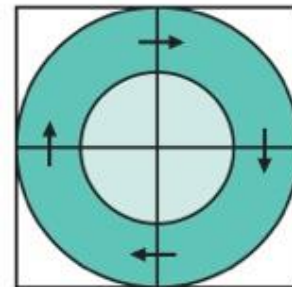


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Provider analysis

Andrew Rome &
Jonathan Stanley



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ICAEW
CHARTERED
ACCOUNTANT

Shaping the market through Regional Care Cooperatives

Working as one customer with providers to address local needs, improve value for money and commission the care places required from external providers.

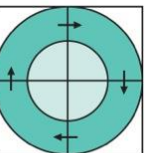
We expect RCCs to gain economies of scale and harness the collective buying power of individual local authorities.



Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive

Breaking down barriers to opportunity

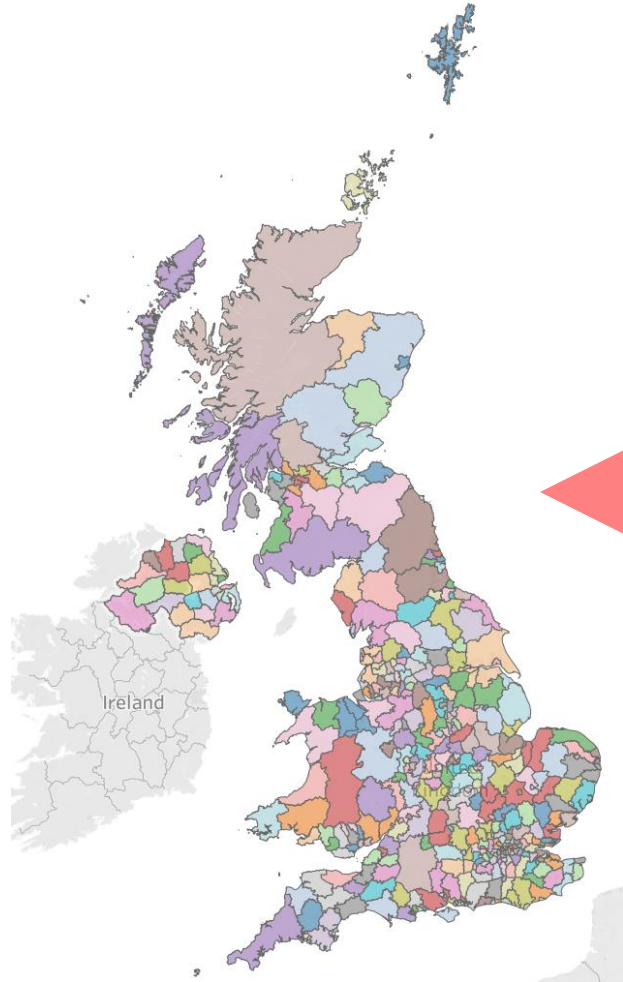
November 2024



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Local Authority – Statutory duties

Provider, Commissioner,
Purchaser




STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS


2015 No. 102

PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

The Public Contracts Regulations 2015

Made - - - - 4th February 2015
Laid before Parliament 5th February 2015
Coming into force in accordance with regulation 1(2) to (6)





Procurement Act 2023

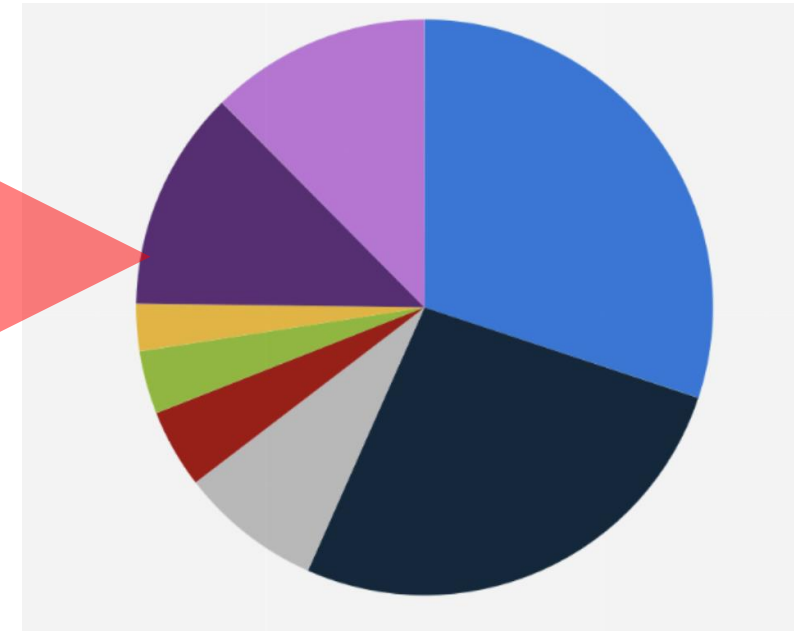
2023 CHAPTER 54

An Act to make provision about procurement. [26th October 2023]

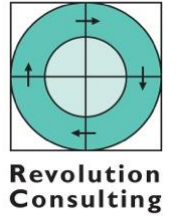
BE IT ENACTED by the King's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

PART 1
KEY DEFINITIONS

Providers –
Regulated and unregulated
Private, Voluntary, Large, Small

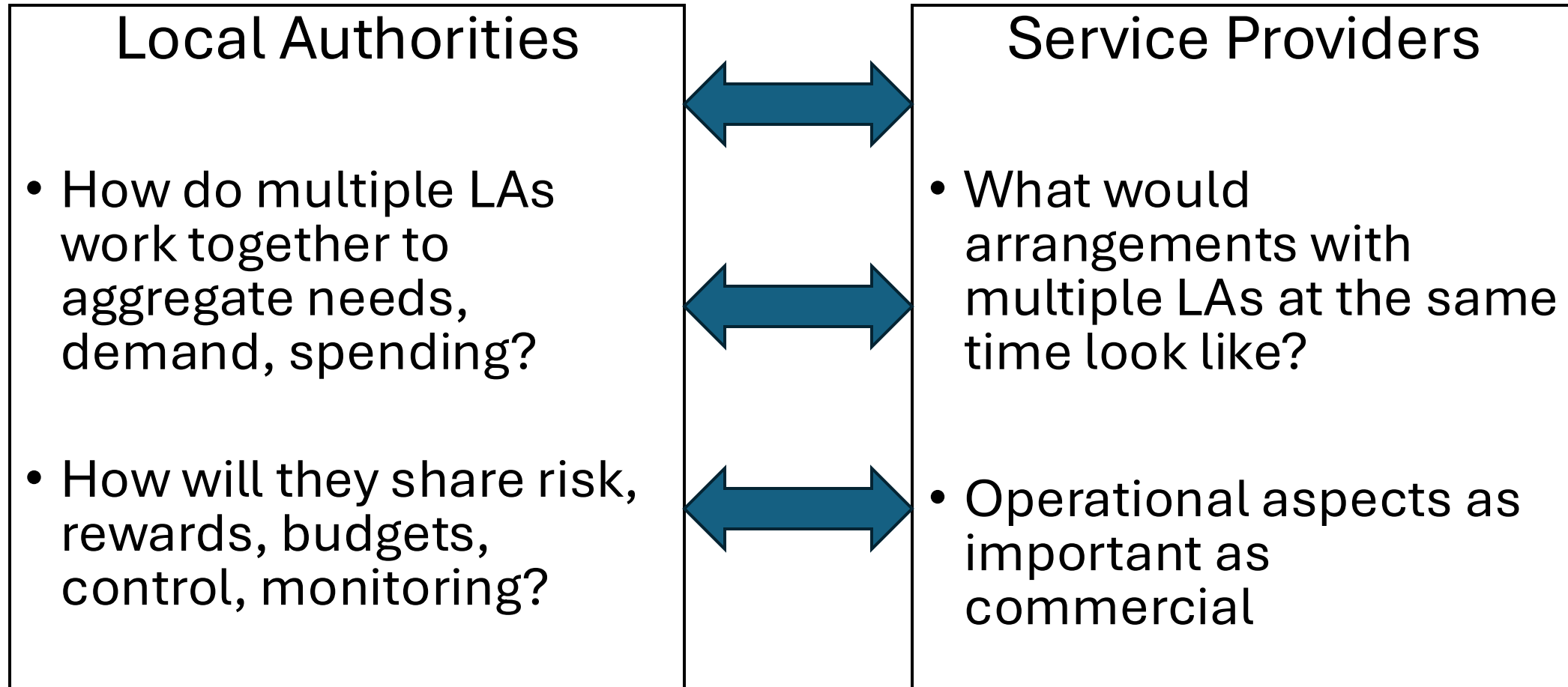


Where do you start?

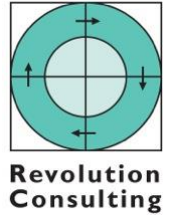


- One set of stakeholders can't solve this alone. Collaboration and co-design are key.
- As commissioners with statutory duties (e.g. sufficiency) it is a requirement that LAs provide drive and facilitation.
- How this is done, and how all other stakeholders in the sector are involved in designing how it could work is likely to influence how successful it is.
- Two parallel challenges.

Two parallel challenges

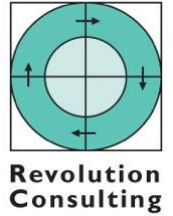


Provider analysis



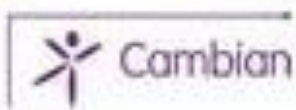
- Initial analysis of data provided by the Eastern Region local authorities about placements made, and amounts spent by local authorities in 2023/24.
- Purpose was to inform the participant authorities of status of spending in the region and to promote discussion of the approach and the next steps.
- Considered the CCRAG database.
- Early learning

Learning points – Two Types of Aggregation

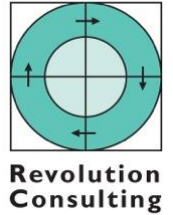


1. Aggregation of volumes of care purchased and amounts spent across the region
 - How much does the region spend with each provider?
On what?
 - How many of the constituent LAs use the same provider?

2. Aggregation to an appropriate level for the provider
 - Some provider groups operate through multiple brands, branches, subsidiaries.
 - Aggregate arrangements need to be made at the most effective level.



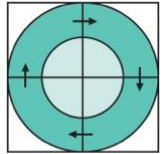
Learning points – Regional Summary



- Over £300m of spending with children's social care providers for the year 23/24 by Eastern Region (ER) LAs was aggregated by provider group.
- The region spends over £13m per year with the largest provider
- Top 20 providers (each with more than £2m of income from ER per year) account for around 1/3rd of total spend.
- Around 30 provider groups have placements from 4 or more ER LAs.
- Around 200 provider groups have placements from multiple ER LAs and account for around 2/3rds of ER spending.
- Over 500 different provider groups and organisations providing services to the region in total. i.e. Many one-to-one relationships.

Questions for Commissioners

- How can purchasers in aggregate use the information in their commercial arrangements with providers?
- What weight should be placed on factors that would indicate the greatest possibility of impact from new arrangements?
 - Amount of spend
 - Number of LAs
 - Importance of ER LA spend to the provider
 - Specific focus where scarcity of supply is indicated? – e.g. specific areas of complex needs
- How not to disadvantage valued small providers?
- Liaison with other RCCs following similar processes?



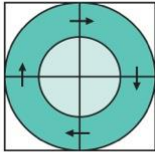
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What sort of tools are available?

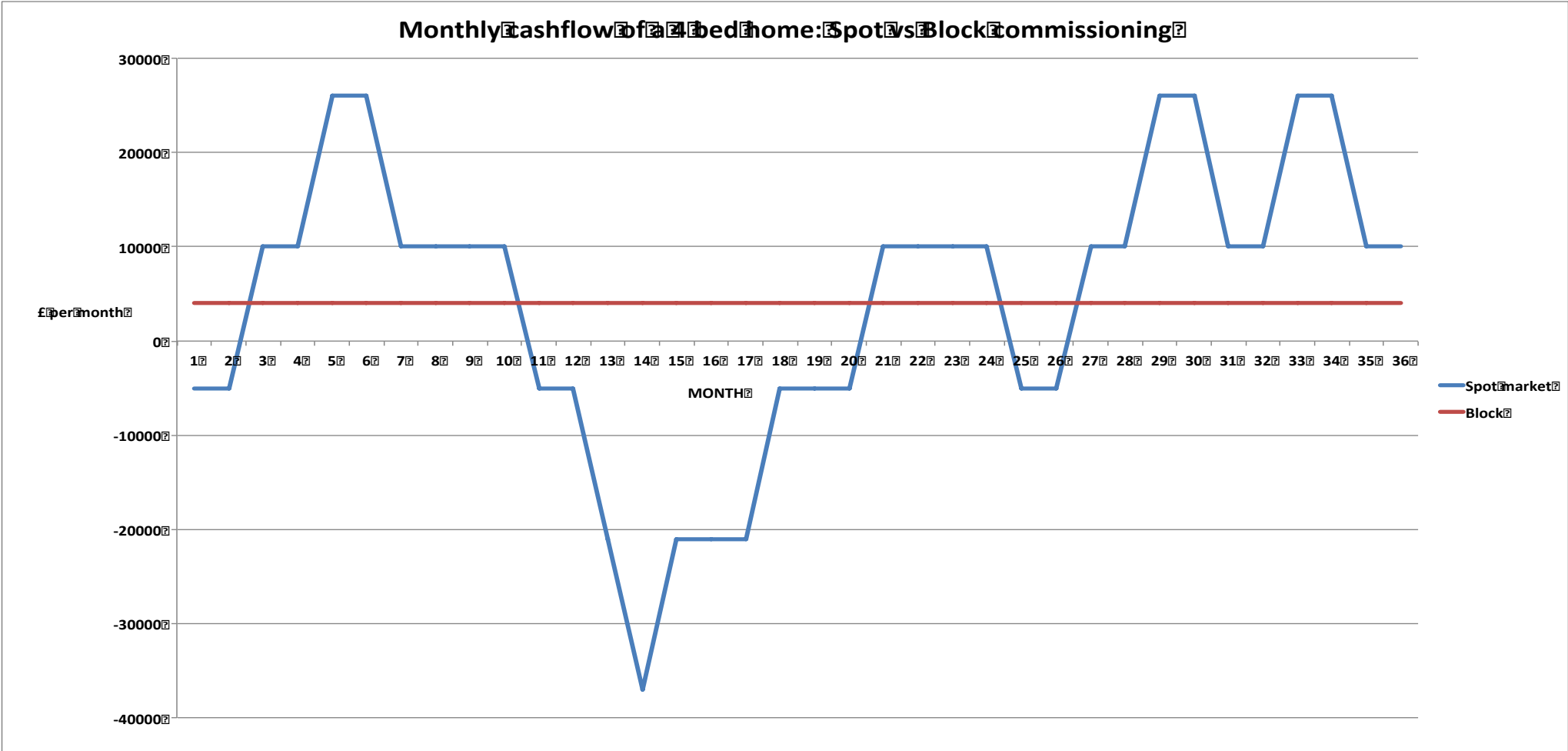
- **Spot via balanced terms DPS, volume and early payment discounts, removing the annual uplift tension**
- **Retainers and preferred local access**
- **Fixed cost contributions and preferential pricing**
- **Soft Blocks**
- **Hard blocks**
- **Strategic Partnerships**
- **Cost plus**
- **Joint Venture, profit sharing**
- **Do it In house**
- **LAs as providers – region as a provider**
- **LAs/pension schemes as acquirors/owners**

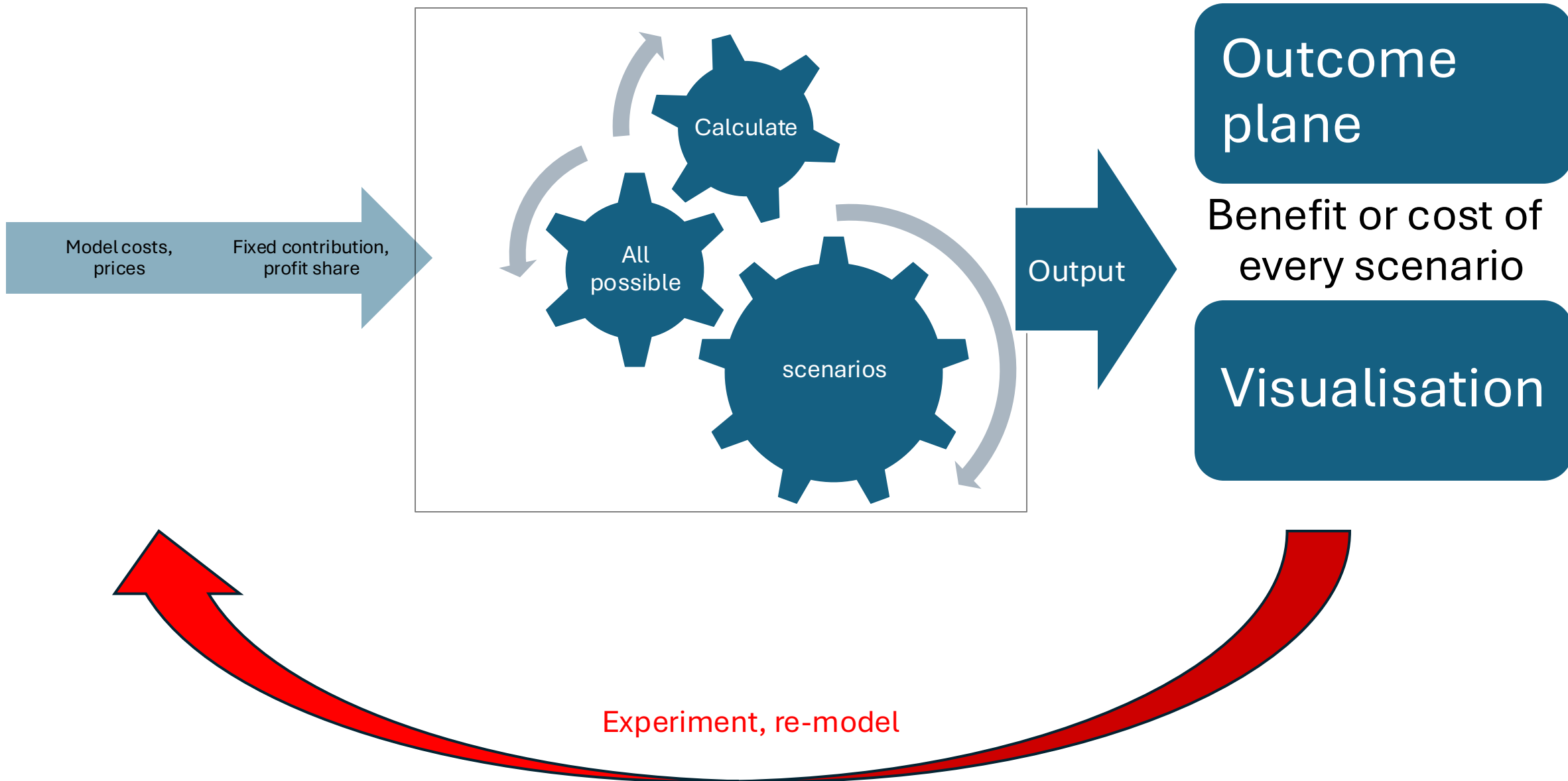
- **Think “The Art of the Possible” – (Cross Regional Project to follow)**

Spot and Block are very different models: Is there anything in-between?



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Model costs,
prices

Fixed contribution,
profit share

Calculate

All
possible

scenarios

Output

Outcome
plane

Benefit or cost of
every scenario

Visualisation

Experiment, re-model

Challenges and Opportunities

- How to engage and involve the whole market equitably?
- How to test the concept?
- Defining need and services to meet need
- Void risk
- Pressure to take placements where views on matching differ
- Relationships transformed by closer partnership working
- Knowing the children already placed
- Additional unanticipated benefits
- Power of “We’re in this together”
- Stability, wrap around local resources
- Take risk, pilot, trial, experience, find out, make mistakes, learn, develop

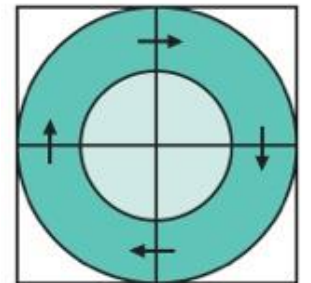
Questions for Providers

1. How much do you interact with the ER?
2. What would work for you commercially?
At what level within your group should we engage?
Do you have examples of what works for you from elsewhere?
3. How could operational interactions with ER LAs be improved?
(E.g. Referrals, preferred access to local resources, monitoring, issue resolution, moving on, communications).
4. How can we best engage you in this work?
Keeping you informed
Involvement in co-design
Getting your input as to what would work for you, and what might work for others
Would you be a pilot for proof of concept?



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Lunch 12:45 – 13:30



Cross Regional Project

**Martha Moroney, Zoe Tompkins &
Emma Beech**





Here's one we made earlier...

The Cross Regional Partnership



What were we trying to make...

A partnership between Local Authorities and an independent provider to deliver high quality homes and education close to home and in a new relationship of shared risk...

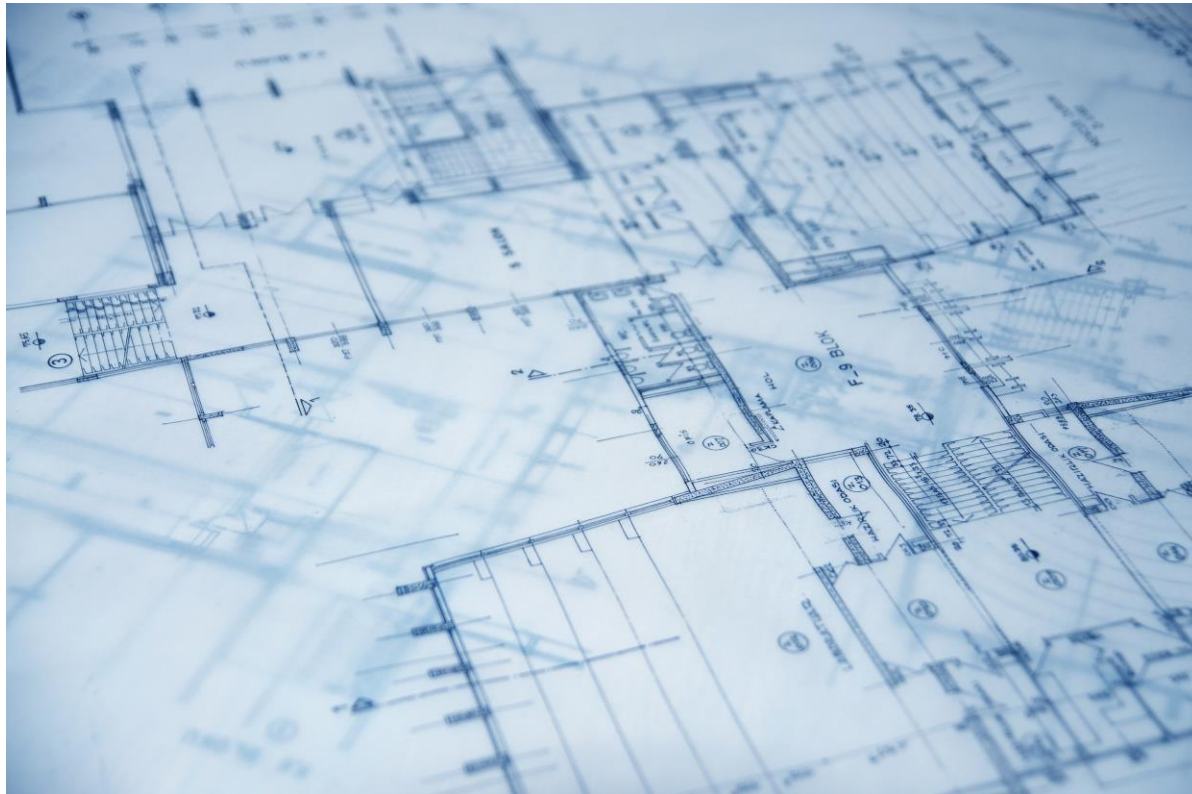


The First Model



- Launched 2009
- Six Local Authorities
- To accommodate 20 young people across 6 homes, with provision to expand
- To ensure education through the provision of an independent school

Once you've made the first model, you can develop your ideas...



- Recommissioned 2019
- Four Local Authorities
- 11 homes
 - 36 beds
- 2 school sites

Where are they now?



Local Authority area

-  Buckinghamshire
-  Hertfordshire
-  Bedfordshire
-  Milton Keynes
-  Oxfordshire

What else?

Therapy:

- team comprising of a Psychologist, two therapists and an Assistant Psychologist
- therapeutic goals and strategies to assist the children to achieve positive outcomes

Quality:

- All homes delivering cost effective quality care to the children
- Quality and development manager

Investment in staff:

- Comprehensive training packages and learning opportunities
- Succession planning for the staff teams

What makes it work?



- It's all about relationships...

What could possibly go wrong...

- How do you get multiple Local Authorities to work together and agree
- How do you manage the contract?
- Yes, but what about voids?



Does it all stack up?

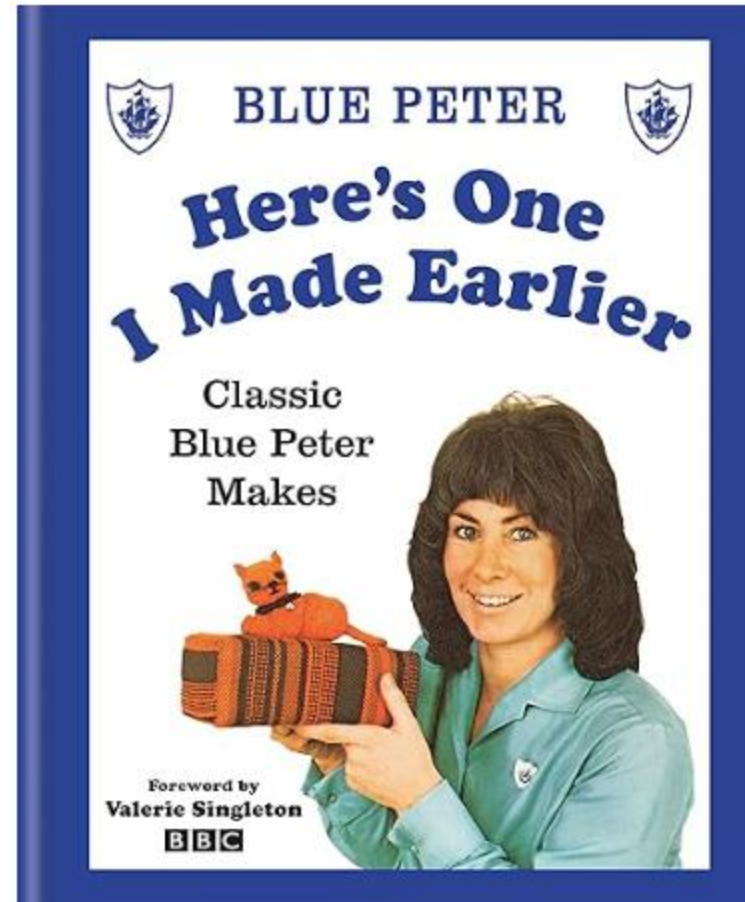


- Consistent delivery of high-quality children's homes
- Coupled with an effective education offer
- At an acceptable price to Local Authorities

What was the outcome for the child?



Any questions?





Provider and LA Feedback

James Tennant



Using the scale can you rate how you feel about doing things differently.

1. Very interested
2. Interested
3. Take it or leave it
4. Heard it all before – need convincing!





What was the most interesting point from today?





How do we engage with you better going forward?





What are you 3 biggest fears for Regional Commissioning?





What are your 3 biggest hopes for Regional Commissioning?





Next Steps & Close

Jo Fisher

Exec DCS Hertfordshire



Next Steps



- **Collate and Review Feedback**

Collect and analyse feedback from today's session.

- **Develop Cross-Regional Data**

Continue enhancing data sharing across the region to guide our next steps.

- **Establish Co-Production Forums**

Set up forums with providers to co-produce work going forward, including Eastern Region Practice Principles.

- **Engage with Providers**

Initiate further discussions with providers for collaborative insights.

Closing



- Thank you to all the presenters for attending and sharing their work with us.
- And thank you to you all for taking your time out of your busy weeks to come together.
- We hope this is the beginning of us working better together in a collaborative, child-centred, innovative and ambitious way to improve outcomes for children, families and communities in the Eastern Region.

Tell Us What You Think!



Your insights are essential to our regional efforts. Please take a moment to share your thoughts on today and suggest ways we can enhance collaboration moving forward.

Please scan the QR code to complete our brief online survey.

<https://forms.office.com/e/BL6wzDyzeB>

Contact us at:

easternregioncib@norfolk.gov.uk

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**Thank you for everything you do for
our children and young people and
your participation today**

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