

Putting NICE guidance into practice

**Costing statement:
Attachment in children and young
people who are adopted from care,
in care or at high risk of going into
care (NG26)**

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Summary

This costing statement looks at the resource impact of implementing the NICE guideline on attachment in children and young people who are adopted from care, in care or at high risk of going into care in England.

This guideline covers the identification, assessment and treatment of attachment difficulties in children and young people.

Experts suggest that services for children and young people with attachment difficulties vary across the country. The guideline aims to address this variation and enhance best practice across the country.

Potential areas for additional costs and savings locally are:

- improving the stability of placements and the likelihood of a more permanent placement, including adoption
- supporting children and young people with attachment difficulties in schools
- assessing attachment difficulties in children and young people in all health and social care settings
- interventions for children and young people on the edge of care, in the care system and adopted from care, and in residential care.

Services for children and young people with attachment difficulties are commissioned by local authorities and clinical commissioning groups (CCGs). Providers are NHS hospital trusts and Community providers.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This costing statement covers the guideline on attachment in children and young people who are adopted from care, in care or at high risk of going into care (NICE guideline NG26).
- 1.2 This guideline focuses on the identification, assessment and treatment of attachment difficulties in children and young people.
- 1.3 Experts suggest that services for children and young people with attachment difficulties vary across the country. The guideline aims to address this variation and enhance best practice across the country.

2 Recommendations with potential resource impact

- 2.1 Potential areas for costs and savings locally are:
- Improving the stability of placements and the likelihood of a more permanent placement, including adoption (recommendations 1.1.9, 1.1.10 and 1.1.14).
 - Supporting children and young people with attachment difficulties in schools (recommendations 1.2.1 and 1.2.2).
 - Assessing attachment difficulties in children and young people in all health and social care settings (recommendations 1.3.1 and 1.3.2).
 - Interventions for children and young people on the edge of care, in the care system and adopted from care, and in residential care (recommendations 1.4.1–1.6.1).

Potential costs

- 2.2 Potential costs could result from:

- offering comprehensive training, support and education programmes to foster carers and adoptive parents (local authorities)
- training all staff in education settings (local authorities and central government)
- training key workers, social care workers, personal advisers and post-adoption support social workers, and workers involved with children and young people on the edge of care (local authorities and CCGs)
- providing psychosocial interventions (CCGs and local authorities).

2.3 The implementation section of the [guideline on attachment in children and young people](#) provides more detail on free online training programmes.

2.4 The guideline recommends offering the following psychosocial interventions when appropriate:

- Video feedback.
- Parental sensitivity and behaviour training.
- Intensive training and support combined with group cognitive behavioural therapy and interpersonal skills sessions.
- Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT).
- Group-based training and education programme.
- Parent training, education and support.

2.5 Experts suggest that providing psychosocial interventions is an area with potential significant resource implications. Additional time or capacity may be needed by healthcare or social care professionals to deliver the interventions. Costs would differ if specialist or non-specialist service interventions are needed. However, overall costs should be minimised since the guideline recommends starting with the low cost interventions.

2.6 The guideline recommends offering children and young people who have or may have attachment difficulties, and who also have a mental health problem, interventions as recommended in the relevant NICE guidelines. The associated cost details are available at the following hyperlinks.

- [antisocial behaviour and conduct disorders in children and young people](#)
- [attention deficit hyperactivity disorder](#)
- [post-traumatic stress disorder](#)
- [social anxiety disorder](#)
- [depression in children and young people](#)
- [alcohol-use disorders](#).

Potential benefits and savings

2.7 Implementation of the guideline may help to:

- timely and accurately identify children and young people with attachment difficulties. This would ensure correct referrals are made to suitable services and that timely interventions are offered
- ensure stability of placements and the likelihood of a more permanent placement, including adoption, and reduce costly short-term multiple placements.

2.8 Implementing the guideline may also lead to the following savings and benefits:

- Savings for local authorities from a potential reduction in numbers of short-term multiple placement and costs of finding subsequent care placements. The cost of finding a subsequent local authority care placement is estimated at around £740.
- In England, the latest [statistics: looked-after children](#) from the Department for Education show that 11% (7,572) of all looked-after children had 3 or more placements in the year ending

31 March 2014. Based on these numbers a saving of around £2,200 per child could be achieved when a child has 3 placements per year that are avoided. This equates to a potential saving of £16.8 million per year for England.

- A reduction in the exclusion of children and young people with attachment difficulties from schools. The guideline committee also considered high costs associated with unstable education including the additional social worker time needed to make school moves. Additional social worker time costs about £41 per hour ([Unit Costs of Health and Social Care \[2014\]](#)).
- Savings to both local authorities and CCGs from a reduction in long-term mental health, behavioural problems, and early exit from education costs associated with children with attachment difficulties.

Other long-term savings that may be achieved as a result of a more stable environment is reduced involvement with the criminal justice system.

3 References

1. DfE. Children in need in England: results of a survey of activity and expenditure as reported by local authority social services' children and families teams for a survey week in February 2005. London: Department for Education and Skills; 2005.

About this costing statement

This costing statement accompanies NICE's guideline: [Attachment in children and young people who are adopted from care, in care or at high risk of going into care](#) (NICE guideline 26) and should be read in conjunction with it. See [terms and conditions](#) on the NICE website.

The cost and activity assessments in the statement are estimates based on a number of assumptions. They provide an indication of the potential impact of the principal recommendations and are not absolute figures.

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