

Oxfordshire

Children Services - Demand Analysis

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Oxfordshire Partnership
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Children's Services | The Big Picture

Nationally, we can't keep delivering services the way we have been or are doing today

124%

rise in the number of enquiries per 10,000 children, where LA's believe a child may be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm, over the last 10 years

The model is breaking...

94%

rise in the rate of children starting on child protection plans over the last 10 years

...and is not sustainable

£1.8bn

spent on children's social work (including local authority functions in relation to child protection) by authorities in 2014-15, up 11% since 2012-13

Costs are rising...

37%

cut local government has experienced since 2010 with even more to come in this parliament

...but budgets continue to fall

Children's Services | The local picture

The significant rises in demand are not sustainable. We need to re-focus on earlier intervention.

46%

Rise in social care assessments over the last 12 months despite 69% of contacts not requiring a social care response

Social Care demand is rising

69%

The amount of assessments that we complete that don't require a further social care response

But some of this is unnecessary

62%

Rise in the number of looked after children over the last four years in Oxfordshire

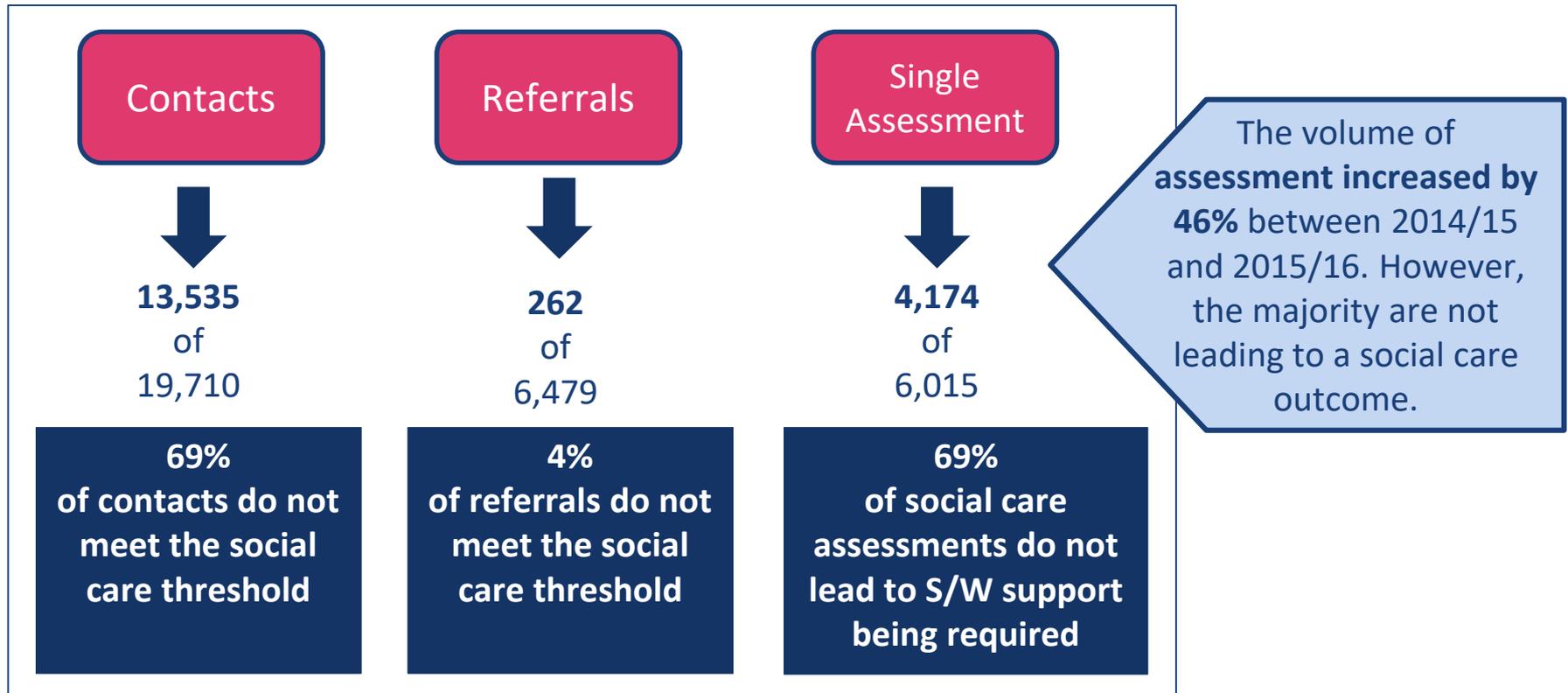
And it is unsustainable

£8.7m

Overspend this year as a result of rising demand, placement costs & SEND transport

We need to make a systems shift

Finding 1 | There is significant avoidable demand in the system

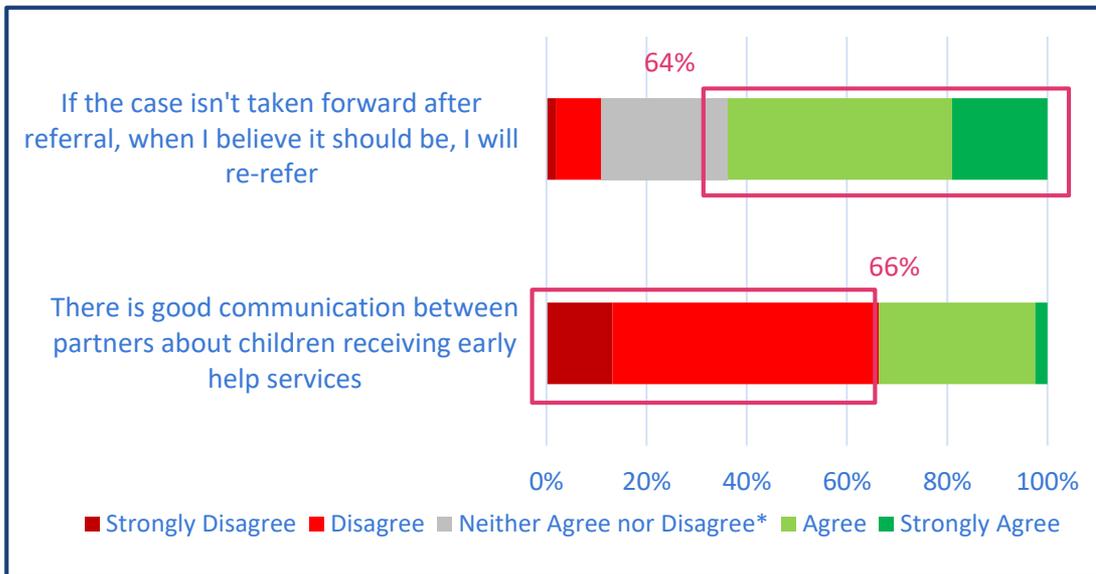


Better use of the early help offer and Early Help Assessment could enable families to be identified and supported sooner reducing avoidable demand to the social care front door. This will also enable social workers to conduct more timely and focussed assessments and experience more manageable social work caseloads – which will help recruitment and retention.

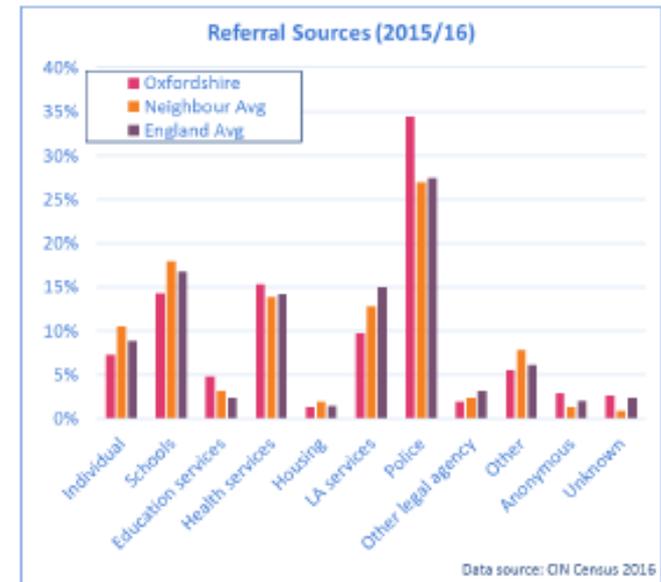
Finding 2 | Poor communication and feedback following a referral is contributing to unnecessary pressure on the system

In the partner survey:

- 66% thought there was poor communication between partners about children receiving early help services.
- 64% would re-refer if their case was not taken forward when they believed it should be.
- Feedback following referrals and assessments will be essential for reducing re-referrals.
- 53% indicated that they had never or rarely received feedback after a referral. Of those who did, 92% found it useful.



* For the second question this was not an answer option

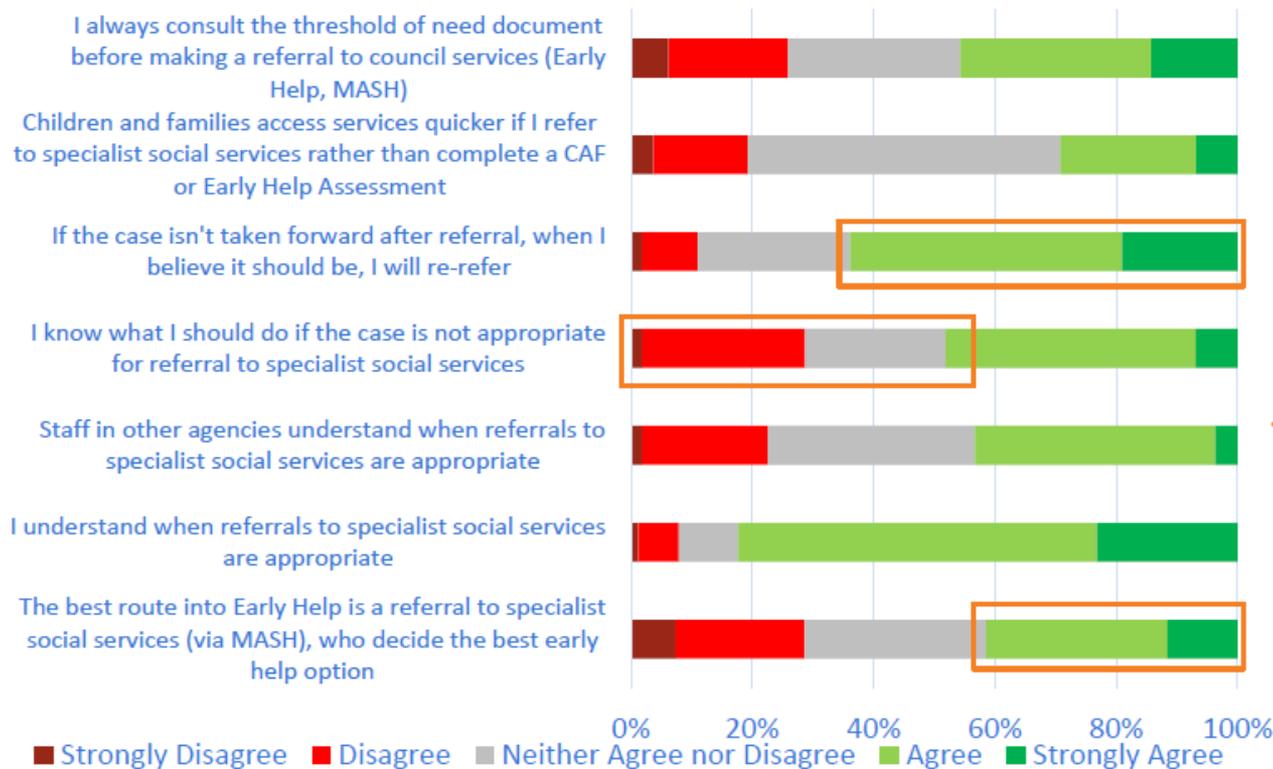


Data source: CN Census 2016

Building the whole workforce's understanding of the early help offer and their role within it will be crucial for increasing communication on early help cases. MASH and assessment teams will play a key role in providing timely feedback which will to help stem future avoidable demand

Finding 3 | Partner survey initial findings – referring to social care

Partners are not confident in what to do if a case is not appropriate for referral to social services



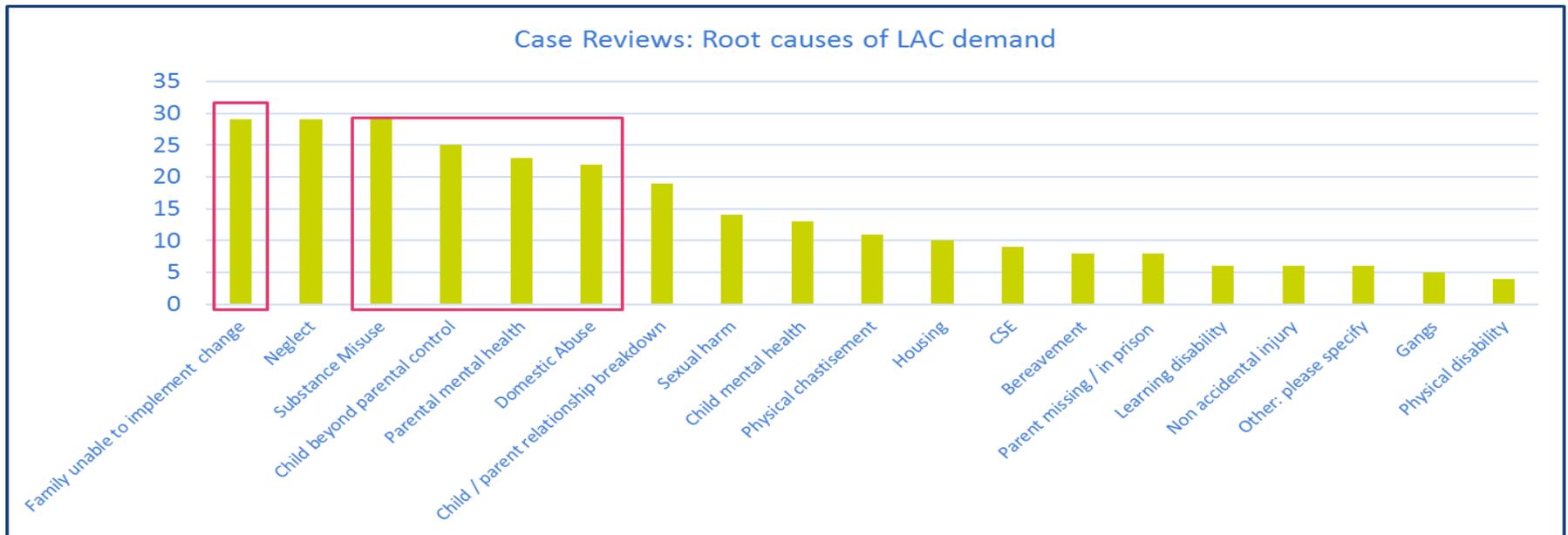
64% of respondents would re-refer if the case wasn't taken forward when they believed it should be

Partners understand when referrals to specialist social services are appropriate, however are not sure / are not confident in what to do if they are not. Over 40% would refer to MASH to decide the best early help option.

There needs to be a clear strategic narrative setting out roles and responsibilities in providing early help and a clear communications plan for internal staff and partners. This will ensure that the workforce are aware of the offer and how to effectively support and signpost families in Oxfordshire.

Finding 4 | There are clear needs driving demand which require a *cross-council* and *cross-partnership* approach to early intervention and prevention

- Key causes of demand identified as: family unable to implement change, substance misuse, child beyond parental control, parental mental health and domestic abuse.
- These largely stem from problems faced by the parents
- It is essential that our early help offer links in with key partners to build long term resilience in families.



The Safeguarding Board, Children's Trust and Council's Corporate Leadership Team will play key roles in developing an early help offer and skilling up the workforce to effectively respond to these key drivers of family breakdown

Finding 4 | There are clear needs driving demand which require a *cross-council* and *cross-partnership* approach to early intervention and prevention



A third of school age children had been excluded from school.



In 44% of cases (26) at least one parent was not in employment. In only 17% (11 cases) were reviewers able to identify that either one or both parents were in employment.

In 34% of cases (20) the family was being supported by a housing association / District Council. In 54% of cases (32) this factor was unknown /not recorded and therefore there could be some under reporting here.

- Other factors such as school exclusions, worklessness and housing related issues also impacts demand
- Many families were known to the police and health during the previous 12 months.



In 54% of cases (32) the Police had attended the home either on one or more occasions.



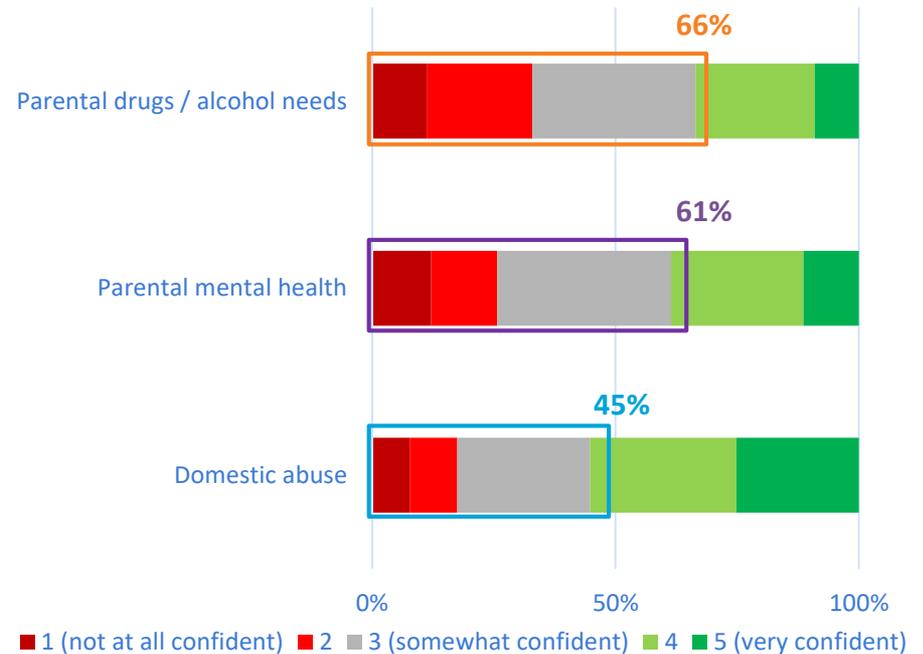
In 15 cases (25%) there had been at least one or more hospital attendance during the last 12 months.

District Councils need to be engaged regarding their role in supporting families with access to housing and employment, as well as identifying families in need of support early

Finding 5 | The workforce is not currently equipped or confident in meeting the identified causes of family breakdown

- Partners reported they are not confident practicing in certain areas that drive demand.
- Staff also reported in practice week that:
 - They are not confident working in these areas
 - There are not enough resources in these areas
 - Some policies and practice in these areas are having a negative impact.
- Internal and external workforce needs to be skilled up to identify issues early, offer families low-level support and signpost them to access early help

Partner Survey: How confident are you in your ability to practice in this area?



A skills audit of CE&F staff is needed to identify what needs areas the workforce are / are not confident in. This combined with the partner skills audit will need to feed into learning and development plan for all which is owned by the Safeguarding Board / Children's Trust

Young people believe that any relationships at any stage could have a significant impact

- Any relationship at any stage can have a huge impact – when asked who they found supportive, answers from young people were varied and included:

- EAL teacher
- Attach Team
- Designated teacher
- Social worker
- Foster Parent
- Learning Mentor
- Personal assistant
- SENCO
- Care Forum
- Roundabout Centre

- However effective relationships all had certain characteristics in common, including:

“Enabled independence”

“My PA asked me about me”

“Made me feel comfortable”

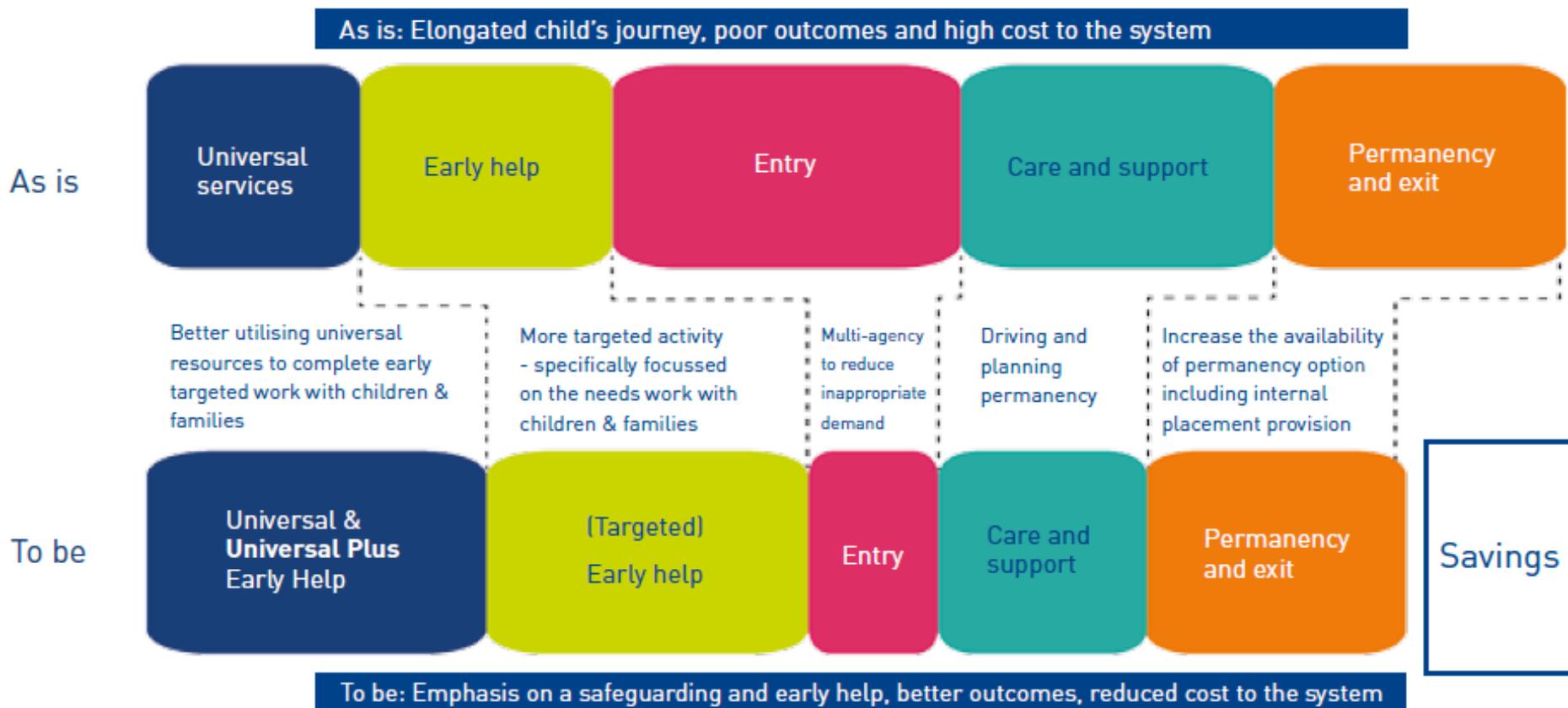
“Listened”

“Me and her clicked from the get go”

The views of young people emphasise the need for a partnership approach to early help, and an approach which encourages professionals to be aware of key signs and to listen

Transforming our system

- Increase the 'early help' offer across the partnership for families across Oxfordshire.
- Secure greater integration of services and partners across the early help model.
- Safely reducing the number of children in statutory services will free up resources & achieve better outcomes.



Full implementation of the proposed transformation programme will enable children's services to become financially sustainable