

# Characteristics of Children at Risk

This work is part of the Treasury's commitment to higher living standards and a more prosperous, inclusive New Zealand.

The analysis is focused on children aged 0 to 14 at higher risk of poor future outcomes and complements earlier work that looked at youth aged 15 to 24. Using data provided by Statistics New Zealand, the analysis has been conducted in a way that ensures all privacy, security and confidentiality requirements have been met. The analysis was undertaken by the Treasury, working with other agencies.

## Supporting a Social Investment approach

Social Investment is an approach which seeks to improve the lives of New Zealanders by applying rigorous and evidence-based investment practices to social services.

By gaining a clearer understanding of the indicators that are associated with poor outcomes, social sector and community organisations can identify where best to invest early rather than deal with problems after they have emerged.

## What does this work show us?

This work tells us about children aged 14 and under who are at higher risk of poor outcomes later in life. It identifies indicators that are associated with higher risk of poor future outcomes, shows the likelihood of these outcomes occurring, and identifies some of the costs associated with these outcomes.

## Social Investment Insights

This information can also be viewed via an interactive online tool which displays the data by geographical location. The tool can be used by a range of organisations and community groups to help provide timelier and better targeted services.

See Social Investment Insights at [www.treasury.govt.nz/sii](http://www.treasury.govt.nz/sii)

## Four key indicators of higher risk – Children aged 0 to 14

Using information collected by government agencies we can identify four indicators that are associated with having poor outcomes later in life. These are:

### INDICATOR 1

Having a CYF finding of abuse or neglect

8% of children

### INDICATOR 2

Being mostly supported by benefits since birth

15% of children

### INDICATOR 3

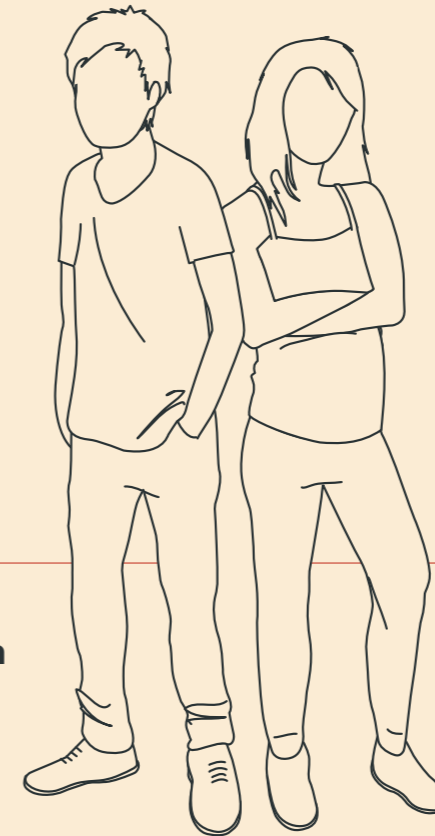
Having a parent with a prison or community sentence

17% of children

### INDICATOR 4

Having a mother with no formal qualifications

10% of children



Although these four indicators are associated with poor future outcomes, they may not cause poor outcomes directly. Instead they may be linked to other things that lead to poor outcomes.

The analysis and online tool have been made possible through Statistics NZ's Integrated Data Service. Through the collection of data from across the public sector (such as health, education and justice), Statistics NZ are enabling the analysis and understanding needed to improve social and economic outcomes for New Zealanders.

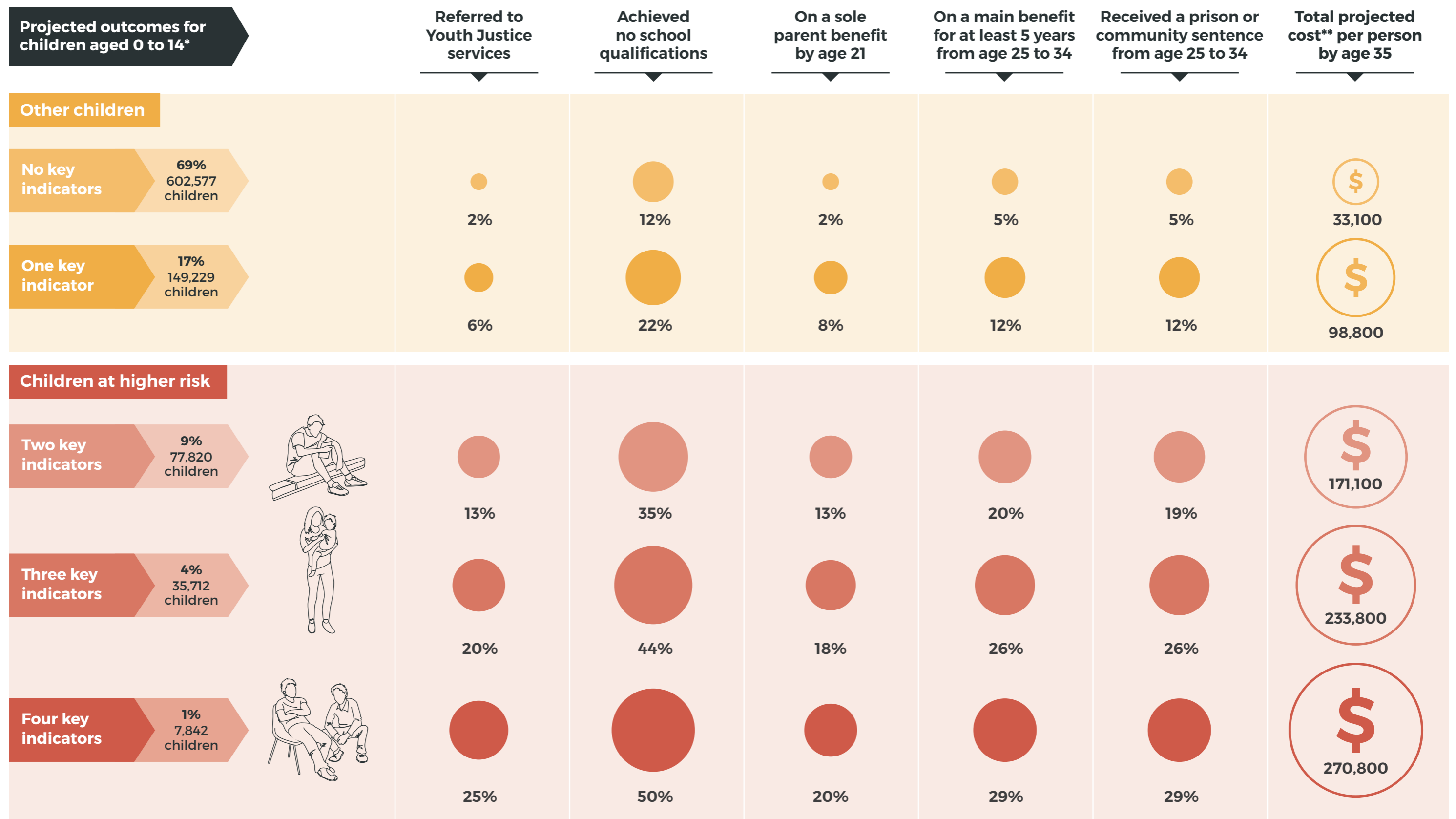


# Key indicators are associated with higher risk of poor future outcomes in life

Children who have these indicators are more likely to leave school with no qualifications, spend time on a benefit, and to receive a prison or community sentence.

The greater the number of indicators a child has, the more likely this will happen. This analysis focuses on children with two or more of the four indicators (n.b. this is just one way of looking at risk.)

Poor outcomes also lead to greater lifetime government spending. Investing this money earlier could improve these outcomes.



\* Projected outcomes calculated by statistical matching to an earlier birth cohort.

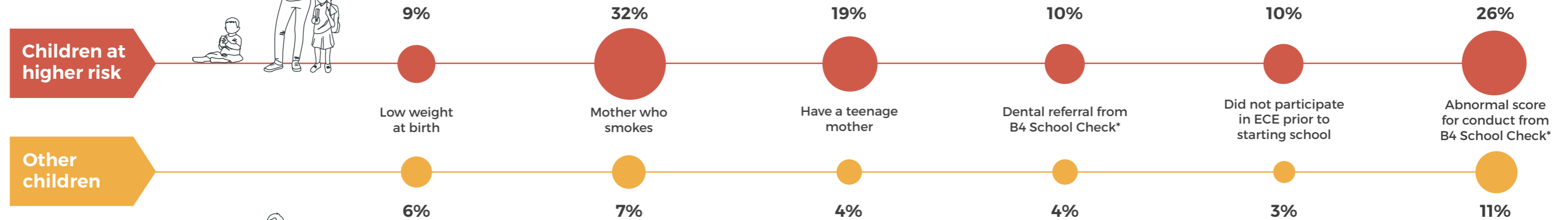
\*\* Projected costs include income support payments, costs associated with sentences administered by the Department of Corrections, and costs associated with services provided by CYF in childhood.

# Children with these indicators are more likely to face challenges in their lives than other children

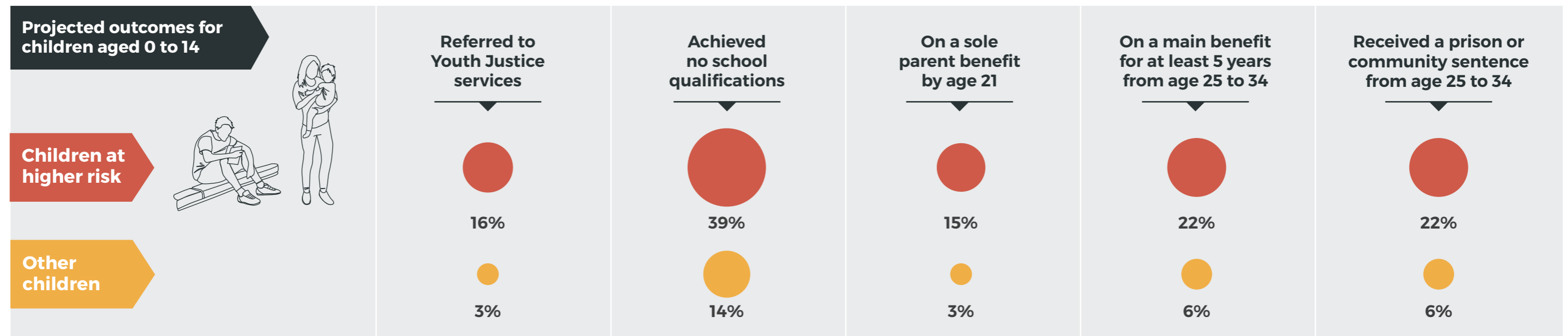
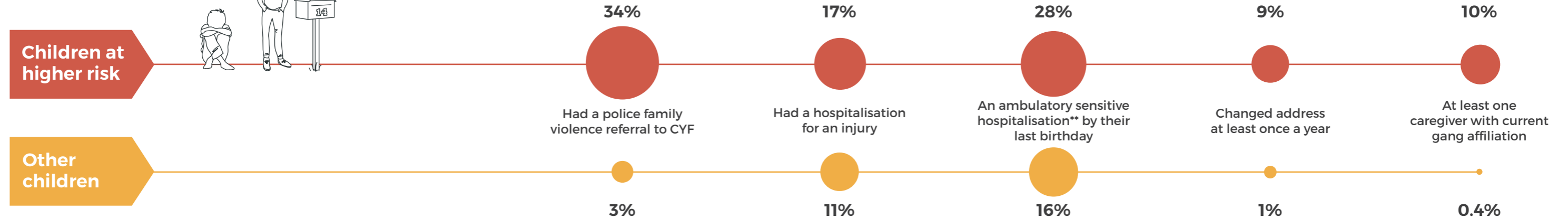
As well as being more likely to have poor outcomes as a teenager and adult, children with two or more risk indicators are more likely to face other challenges in their lives than other children.

**Children at higher risk** There are **121,400**  
**Other children** There are **751,800**

## Birth and early years



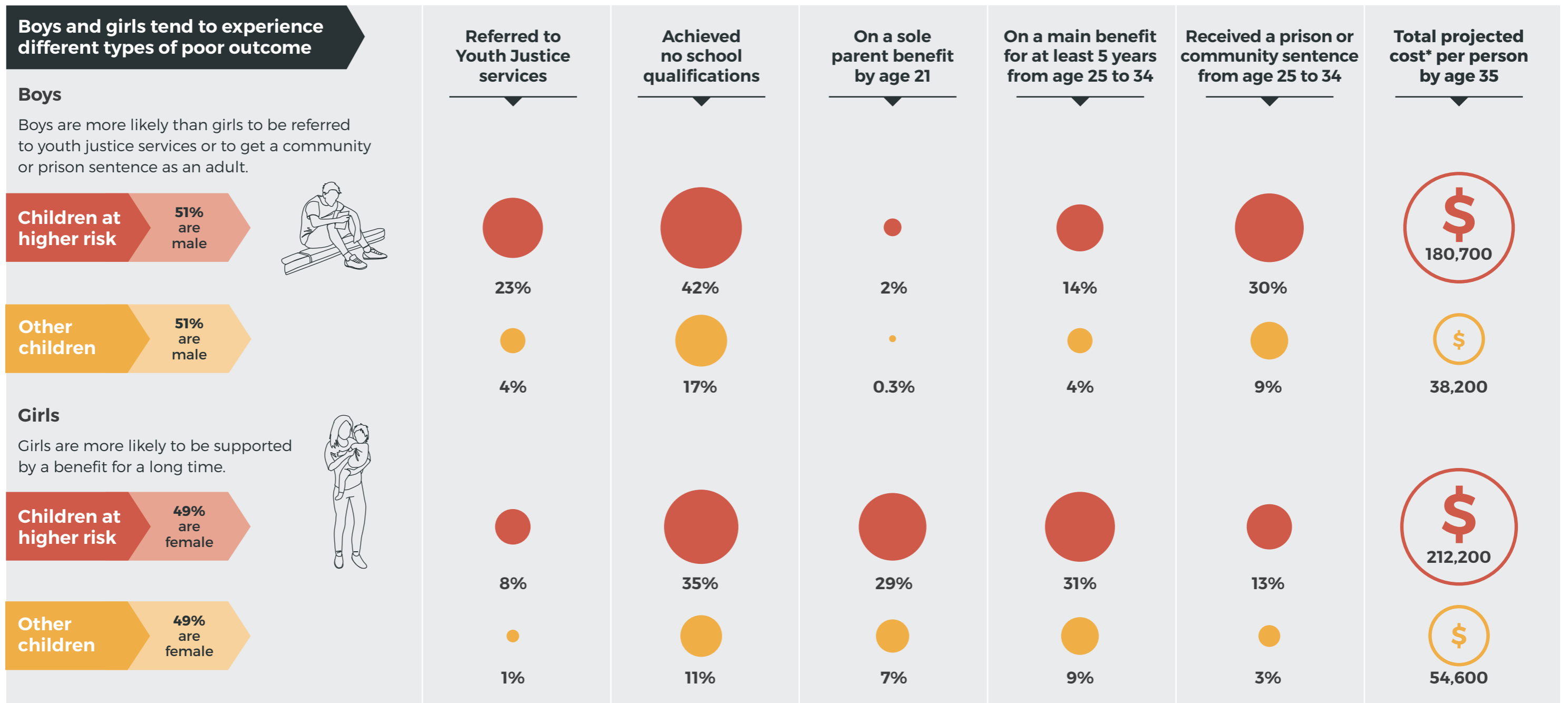
## Childhood



\* The B4 School Check is a nationwide programme offering a free health and development check for 4-year-olds. The B4 School Check aims to identify and address any health, behavioural, social, or developmental concerns which could affect a child's ability to get the most benefit from school, such as a hearing problem or communication difficulty.

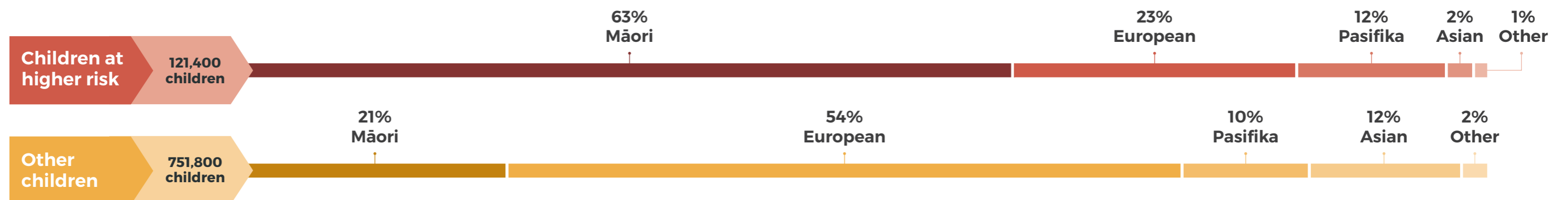
\*\* Ambulatory Sensitive Hospitalisations (ASH) are mostly acute admissions that are considered potentially reducible through prophylactic or therapeutic interventions deliverable in a primary care setting.

# The risk and type of poor outcomes varies by gender and ethnicity



## Children at higher risk of poor outcomes are more likely to be Māori

Better services should provide opportunities for all New Zealanders. We need to better understand how to build on the strengths of New Zealand's communities and whānau, particularly for Māori.



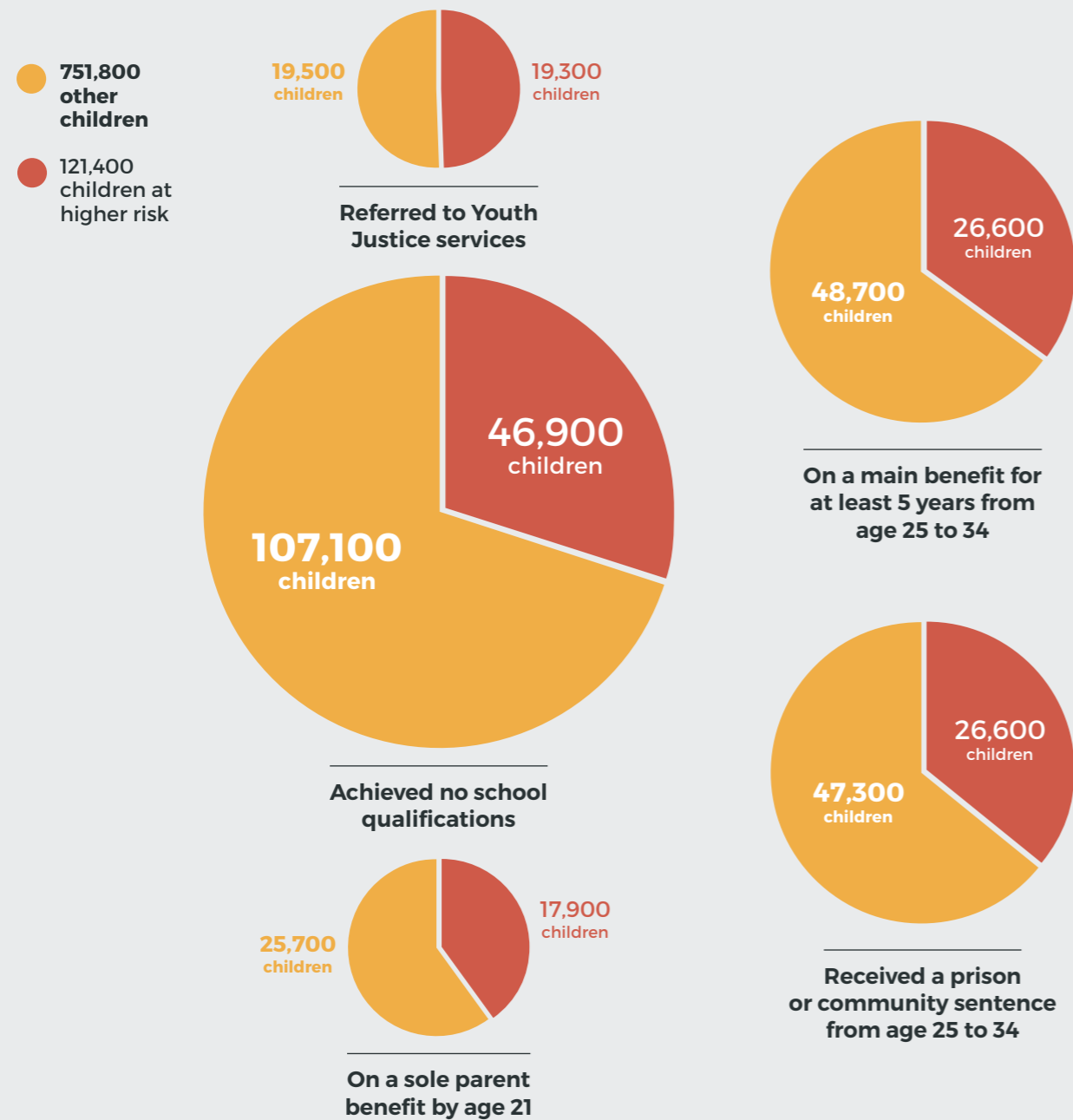
\* Projected costs include income support payments, costs associated with sentences administered by the Department of Corrections, and costs associated with services provided by CYF in childhood.

# Risk indicators don't always lead to poor outcomes

Risk indicators are predictive of poor outcomes. This provides information for agencies and service providers to help develop and deliver more effective services. But many children can overcome disadvantaged backgrounds, and others have poor outcomes despite their relative advantage. Measuring risk is inexact and services will always need to be flexible enough to provide support based on individual need.

## Large numbers of children go on to have poor outcomes even though they have fewer than two risk indicators.

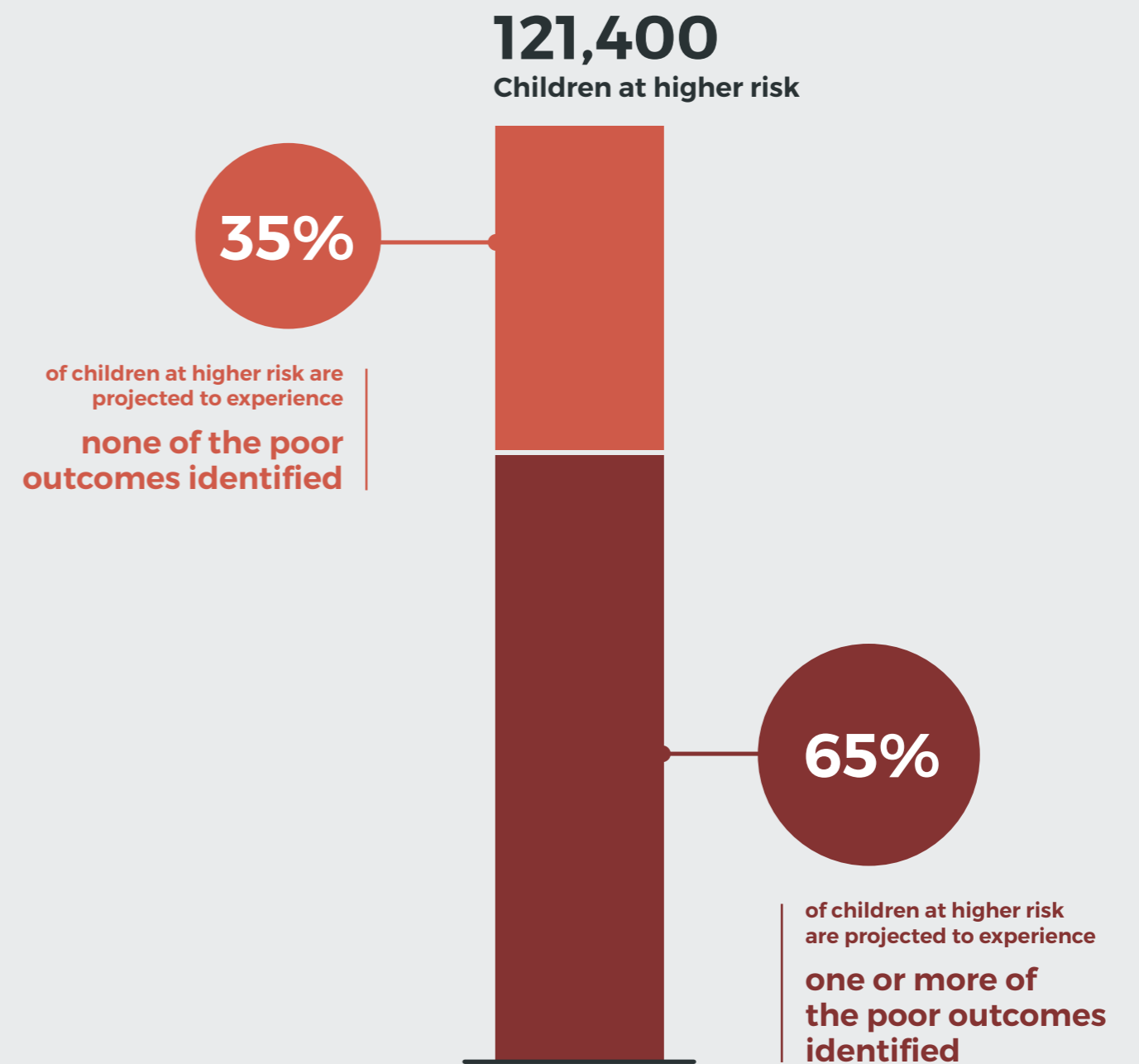
Children with no indicators or just one indicator are much less likely to have poor outcomes than children with two or more indicators. But because they are a much larger group of children they still make up more than half of all children who are expected to have poor outcomes.



These figures translate percentages shown on page 3 into the number of children with poor outcomes.

## On the other hand, many children who have two or more indicators will not have poor outcomes.

We expect a third of children at higher risk to not have any of the five poor outcomes later in life. While it is possible to identify children who are at higher risk of poor outcomes, they will not all have poor outcomes.

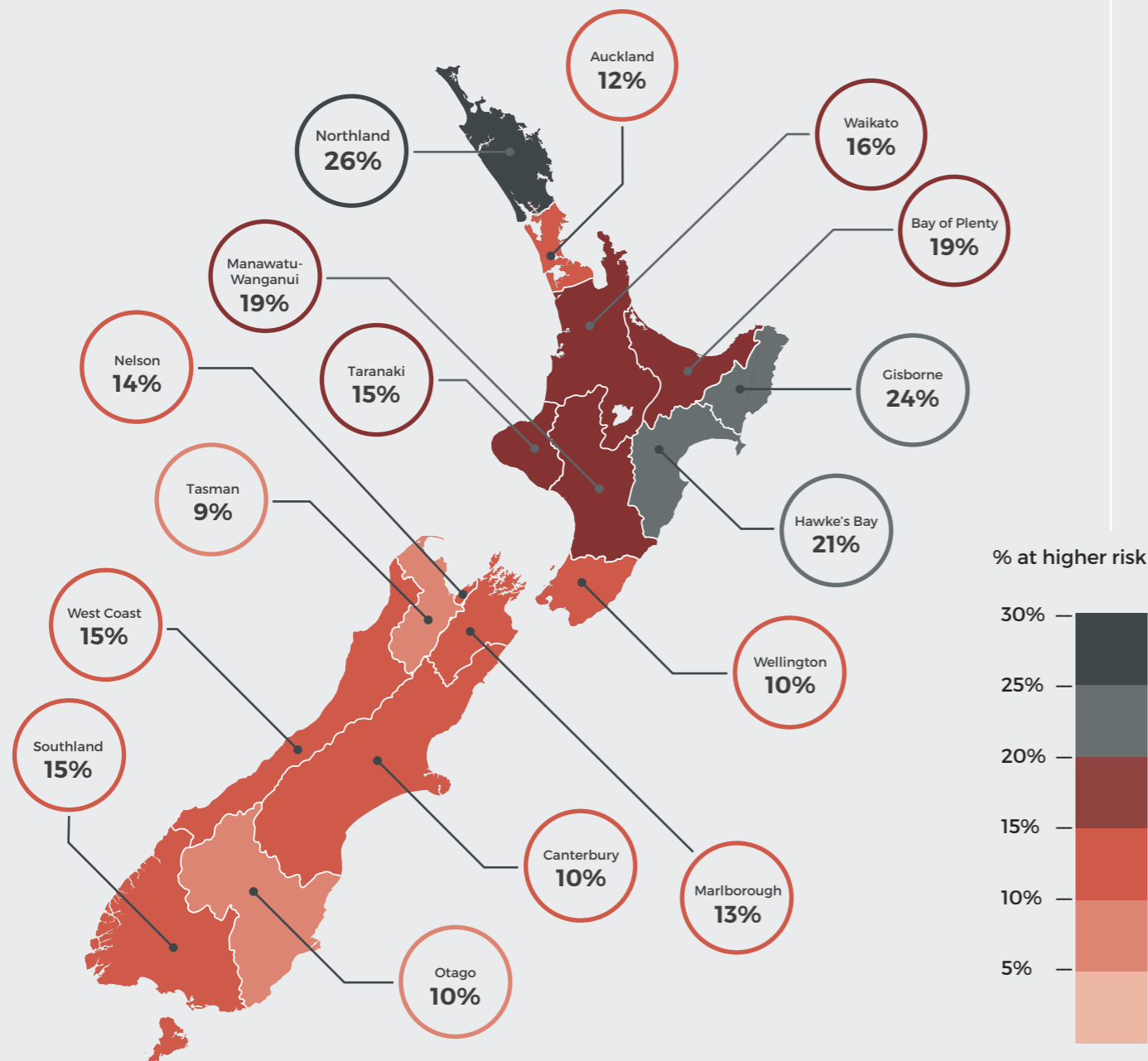


# A regional picture of children at higher risk

Social Investment Insights is an interactive online tool that presents detailed geographic information on children and youth at risk. See [www.treasury.govt.nz/sii](http://www.treasury.govt.nz/sii)

## New Zealand

Children in the Northland, Gisborne, and Hawke's Bay regions are more likely to have two or more risk indicators than children living in other regions. Almost a third of these children live in Auckland however, and large numbers live in the other big cities.

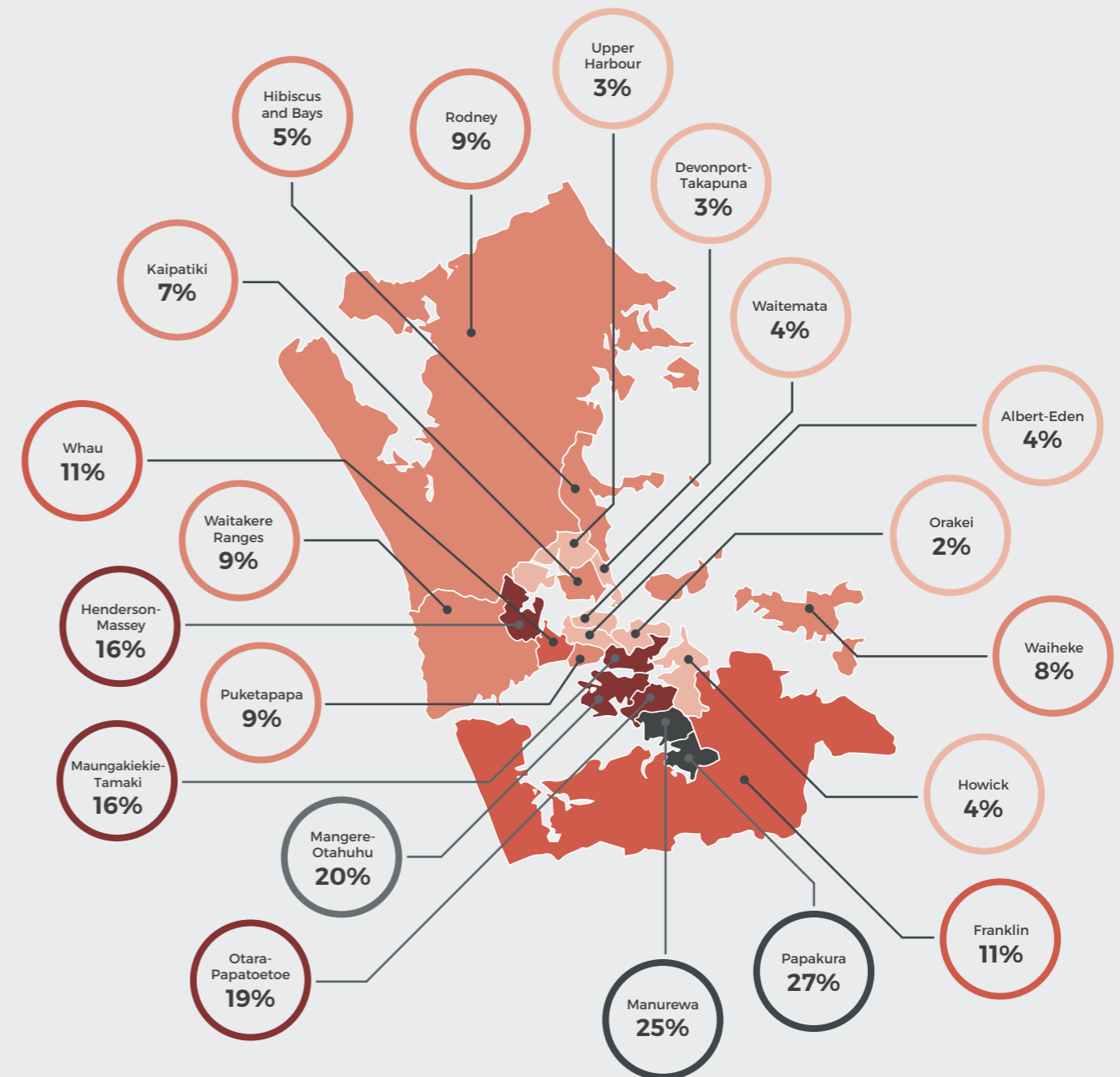


### NZ regions - Children at higher risk

- Northland-8,640
- Hawkes Bay-6,885 Gisborne-2,607
- Waikato-14,229 Bay of Plenty-11,142 Manawatu-Wanganui-8,457 Taranaki-3,477
- Auckland-35,250 Canterbury-10,041 Wellington-9,480 Southland-2,745 Nelson-1,203 Marlborough-1,002 West Coast-801
- Otago-3,249 Tasman-837

## Auckland Region

Within the Auckland region, children in South Auckland local board areas are more likely to have two or more risk indicators than children living in other parts of Auckland. As in Auckland, there are small areas where children at higher risk are more likely to live in every region.



### Auckland local boards - Children at higher risk

- Manurewa-5,802 Papakura-3,201
- Mangere-Otahuhu-4,266
- Henderson-Massey-4,209 Ota-Papatoetoe-4,038 Maungakiekie-Tamaki-2,631
- Whau-1,656 Franklin-1,578
- Kaipatiki-1,164 Waitakere Ranges-993 Rodney-969 Puketapapa-933 Hibiscus and Bays-867 Waiheke-105
- Howick-957 Albert-Eden-672 Orakei-345 Waitemata-285 Upper Harbour-282 Devonport-Takapuna-273