

**The
Children's
Society**

Adolescent Neglect

ESCB conference – Colchester, November 2015

Adolescent Neglect

Session content

1.

- Introduction
- Adolescent neglect quiz

2.

- What do we know about adolescent neglect / why is it important?
- The elephant in the room

3.

- The Children's Society's new research programme
- Findings from first study
- What next?

Introduction

- The Children's Society
- Our history
- Our work in Essex
- Why adolescent neglect is important to TCS

The Children's Society

Over 130 years supporting the most dis-advantaged young people.

Visit our archive online:

<http://www.hiddenlives.org.uk>

A VERY OLD BOY.

TWELVE thousand four hundred and eleven long blue envelopes, each containing the essential points of the life history of the boy or girl, whose name and number are written on the outside, from birth till discharge from the Society's Home, with, in many instances, much subsequent interesting matter, offer a bewildering amount of material from which to

84.2/3

Our Waifs and Strays. Feb. 1907 29

select. Why, then, select? Let us go back to the very beginning, take up the story of our very first boy waif; note from what he came, where he stands to-day; and if the temptation ever comes to question the last- ing use of rescue work, you will, as you read his tale, banish and be ashamed of the unworthy doubt. It is a very worn and ragged case paper, this No. 2, J. —. (No. 1 was a girl), covered all over with notes and suggestions; for in those early days the founders of the Society had many difficulties to meet as to the disposal of their children, which ever-growing experience has largely overcome. There was, in about 1880, a little cripple, just ten years old, sweeping a crossing on Clapham Common. His parents—so wrote the lady who forwarded the original particulars and had known the family some years—had always been two of the most wretched and degraded people in the neighbourhood, seldom remaining in one house more than two or three months. They had a large family, none of whom were baptised. When J. was about seven years old, he fell down on the ice, receiving terrible injuries; he also got fearfully burnt; and from neglect after these accidents he never fully recovered. He was taken into a hospital for a while, and proper supports and instruments were provided for him. On his return to his wretched parents, his mother pawned these gifts, and then went round the neighbourhood to beg money for "a crippled boy at home." As the lad got a bit stronger, he swept a crossing, as already mentioned; but his strength rapidly failed, and he was found before long by a district visitor in a shocking state of want and neglect, and removed in a condition which by this time had become most critical to the Orthopaedic Hospital. Three months' treatment and care, followed by a series of visits to convalescent Homes, through the charity of friends who felt that he must be by all means kept from again going "home," did much towards setting him on his legs; and the doctor reported that with care and good food there was little doubt of his being able, as he grew up, to learn a light trade.

At this point, when it became a matter of urgency that something should be done towards finding a permanent home for the little lad, his story was brought to the notice of the newly-founded Waifs and Strays Society, and on February 14th, 1882, the Committee endorsed his paper, "Accepted, subject to the parents signing an agreement for the surrender of the child. To be received into the Clapton Home." His health, however, necessitated a six months' stay at a Convalescent Home at Southend, after which he was sent to a Cripples' Home in Kensington; from which he was, in 1884, transferred to the Home at Upper Clapton. Life there was uneventful but happy and helpful, till the time came for J., now seventeen, to leave the Home and go out into the world. There was apparently a good deal of difficulty in getting a suitable post for him, owing to his lameness, and partially, no doubt, to the fact that the Society had not yet sufficiently built up, in the mind of the public, that reputation for moulding and turning out such satisfactory material as it has now proved itself so capable of doing. However, a post as clerk was presently found for him at Natland, and this, it is interesting to note, formed the first link of a connection never since severed between the Society and that northern village, in which to-day stands one of our most prosperous Homes. Upon the following years of J. —'s story, years of steady work, we need not dwell; but he gives us ready leave to quote extracts of a letter received from him at the end of last November, from the Surrey town in which he is now settled as "reader" in a large printer's firm:—

"I read in the paper the other day of a visit to your house of my old friend Rev. E. de M. Rudolf. How I should have liked to have seen him! I was one of the first six boys received in his orphanage at Clapton. . . . Since being in this lovely country, God has blessed us, after seven years of married life, with a little girl: . . . I am delighted to hear from time to time of friends interesting themselves in the noble institution to which I am so much indebted personally." And this is the letter, written in an excellent hand, of the little crippled, ignorant crossing-sweeper of Clapham Common!

There are some interesting points to which this story indirectly draws attention. It was this particular case which, being brought to his notice, first drew the attention of that loving friend of children, Bishop Walsham How, to this Society's venture, and led him to give it so much help, cheery comfort, and personal advocacy in its early years. As Bishop of Bedford he



1884. IN THE CLAPTON HOME.



1901. IN A HOME OF HIS OWN.

From past to present

We work for vulnerable teenagers aged 10 to 18:

- to be safe from abuse, exploitation and violence;
- to have their individual needs met;
- to have positive mental health and emotional wellbeing;
- to be free from poverty and destitution.

Why we are focusing on the most vulnerable adolescents

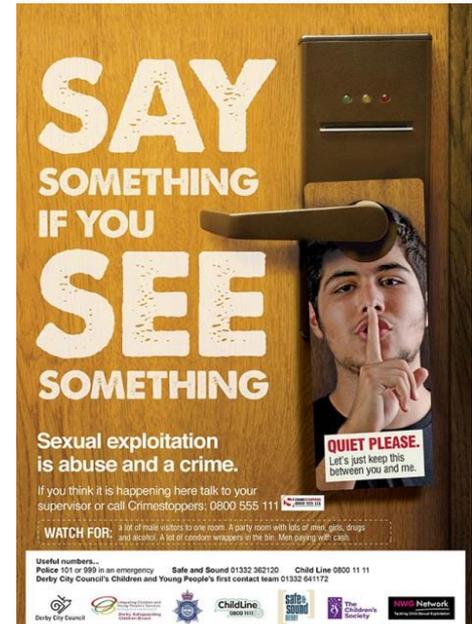
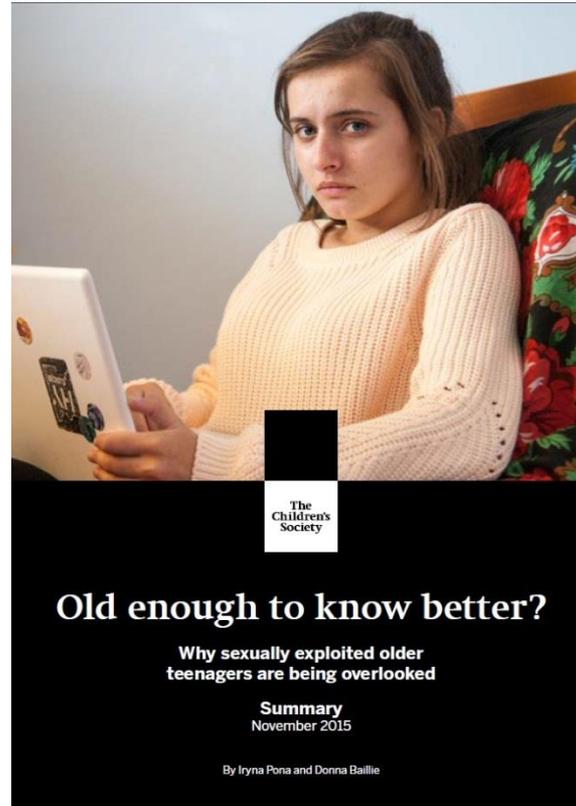
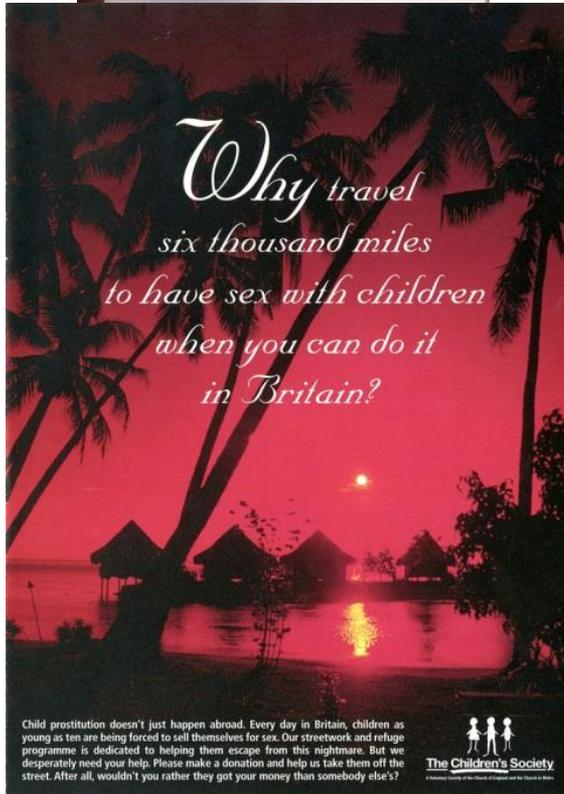
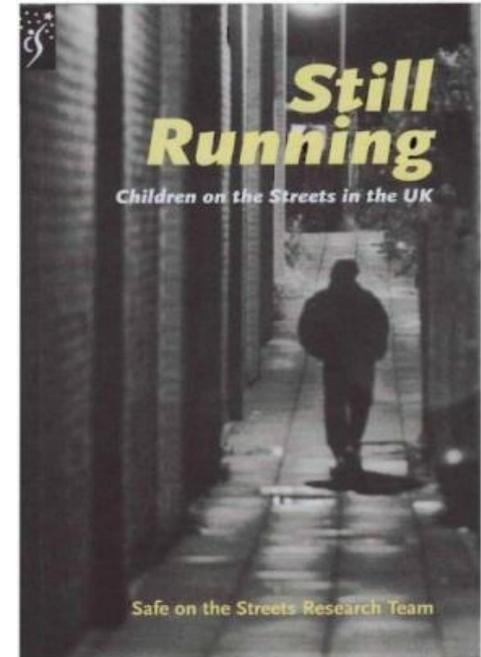
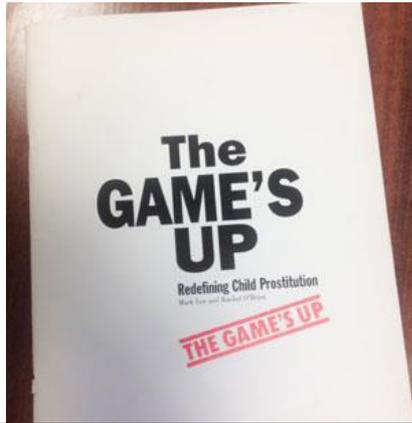
'You don't understand the badness of things that happen to you'

'There was no agencies where I was at all for young people.'

'I didn't think that there was anywhere to go.'

'[I was] frightened of destroying the family.'

Campaigns, policy and research on adolescents



ADOLESCENT NEGLECT QUIZ

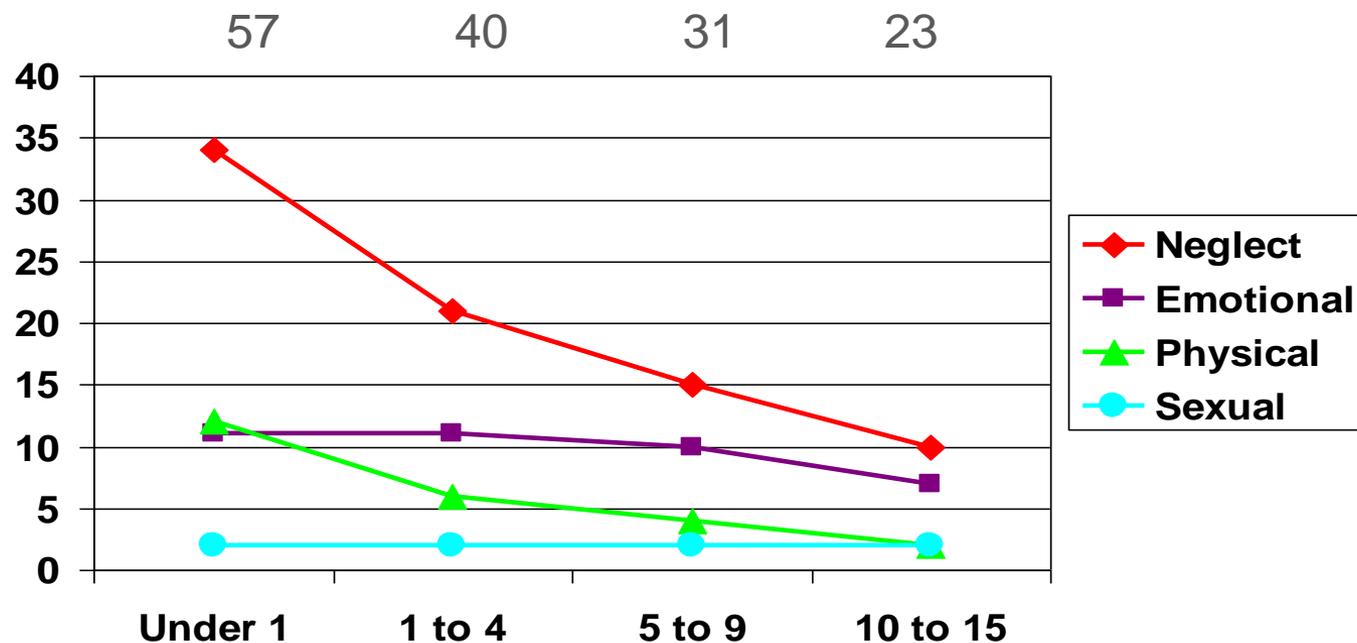
5 minutes / 5 questions



Adolescent neglect: what we know about scale

Official figures – all children and young people

Rates of children subject to Child Protection Plan per 10,000



Source: DSCF, 2009

QUIZ – Q 1)

Adolescent neglect: what we know about scale

Official figures - adolescents

Category of maltreatment for CP Plans for 11-17-year-olds

	2010		2011		2012	
Neglect	3,640	(38%)	3,910	(37%)	4,170	(37%)
Physical abuse	1,190	(12%)	1,270	(12%)	1,210	(11%)
Sexual abuse	880	(9%)	940	(9%)	950	(8%)
Emotional abuse	2,970	(31%)	3,130	(29%)	3,330	(29%)
Multiple	1,010	(10%)	1,440	(13%)	1,660	(15%)
TOTAL	9,690		10,690		11,320	

Source: DfE CiN data

QUIZ – Q 1) & 1a)

Adolescent neglect: what we know about **scale**

Serious Case Reviews

- Neglect is much more prevalent in serious case reviews than had originally been understood (neglect found in 60% of 139 reviews from 2009-2011)
- Neglect *can* be life threatening and needs to be treated with as much urgency as other categories of maltreatment
- **Neglect with the most serious outcomes is not confined to the youngest children, and occurs across all ages**

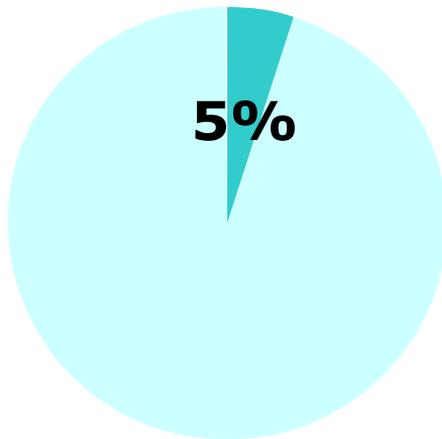
Brandon *et al.* (2013)

QUIZ – Q 2) 60%

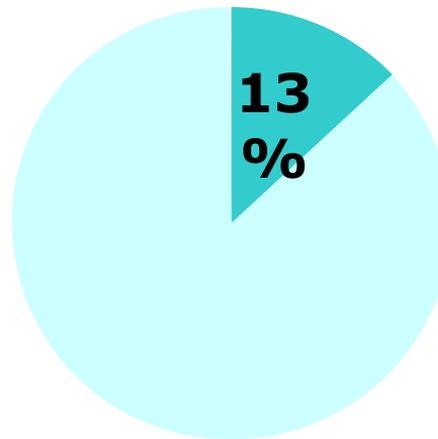
Adolescent neglect: what we know about **scale**

NSPCC, Lifetime prevalence of neglect (Radford *et al.*, 2011)

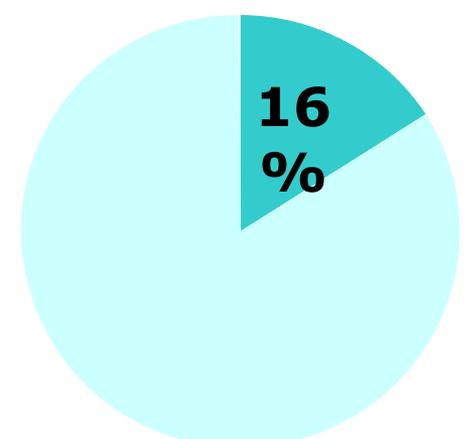
Under 11s



11 to 17



18 to 24



QUIZ – Q 3) ????????

Adolescent neglect: what we know about “consequences”

Research says ... (???)

- Physical health, emotional / psychological health, mental health, safety, education, family responsibilities, asb / offending, externalising / risk-taking behaviours ...
- **BUT** there were methodological issues for all studies when thinking about adolescent neglect!

Adolescent neglect: what we know about “outcomes”

Landmark study (RYDS) found that:

- Maltreatment which begins during adolescence is more damaging than maltreatment which started and ceased during childhood. It causes problems during late adolescence and early adulthood including “involvement in criminal behaviours, substance misuse, health-risking sexual behaviours and suicidal thoughts”.
- Neglect during adolescence is as damaging as other forms of maltreatment - increasing the risk of arrest, offending and violent crime in late adolescence, and the risk of arrest and drug use in early adulthood.

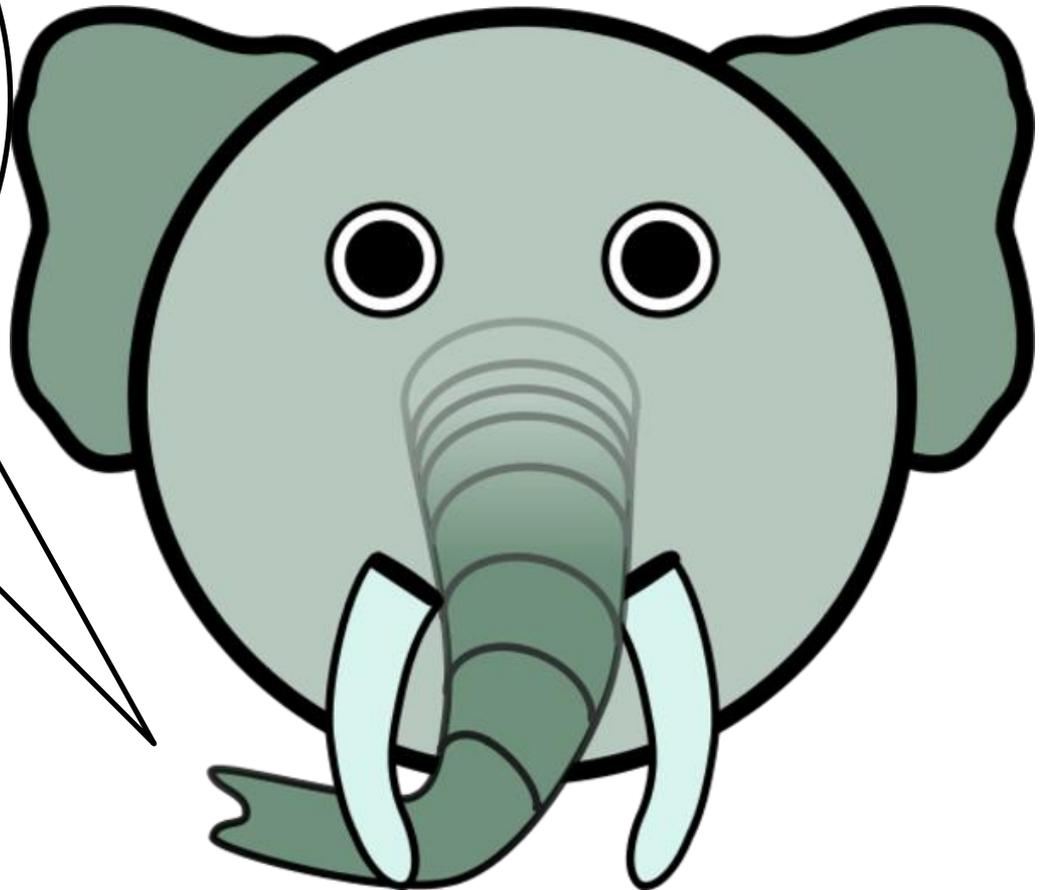
(Thornberry *et al.*, 2010)

QUIZ – Qs 4) & 5)

Adolescent neglect: Why it is important

- Many young people are neglected
- Little is known about causes and contexts
- Significant negative outcomes (RYDS)
- Lack of effective professional response

**WHAT IS
'ADOLESCENT
NEGLECT'?**



What is adolescent neglect?

‘Neglect is when parents ignore you ... or leave you and you get hurt ... and you have no one to turn to ... when you don’t get fed properly ... I was underweight, my skin was dead pale.’

(Young person’s view)

‘All of my work with teenagers is about trying to rectify neglect of some sort.’

(Professional’s view)

(TCS, University of York, NSPCC: *‘Safeguarding Young People’*, 2010)

What is adolescent neglect?

What do **you** think? (10 minutes)

In groups discuss:

- How you think neglect at home shows itself in the adolescents you work with

[3 main things]

- What you might ask a teenager to ascertain whether they were being neglected at home?

[3 questions]

Adolescent neglect – official definition

Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2015

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

New research programme

Broad aims

- What is 'adolescent neglect'?
- How much adolescent neglect is there in England?
- What are the contexts for adolescent neglect?
- What are the consequences of adolescent neglect?

First study

(publication in Jan 2016)

- National schools online surveys
- Around 2,000 young people in Years 8 and 10 (12-13 / 14-15-year-olds)
- Developed and used a new measure of 'experiences of parenting behaviours' – alongside indicators of well-being (initial findings in GCR 2014)

Parenting behaviours measure

Developing a measure – parenting categories:

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

During the last year how often did your parents, or the adults you live with ...

	Always	Often	Some- times	Hardly ever	Never
... help you if you had problems?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
... support you if you were upset?		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
... tell you when they thought you had done something well?			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

Parenting behaviours measure

Creating scales:

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

During the last year how often did your parents, or the adults you live with ...

	Always	Often	Some-times	Hardly ever	Never
... help you if you had problems?	4	3	2	1	0
... support you if you were upset?	4	3	2	1	0
... tell you when they thought you had done something well?	4	3	2	1	0

SCORE for emotional support → 3 + 3 + 4 = 10

Thresholds for neglect

Scores for experiences of parenting ...

- Emotional support
- Educational support
- Physical care
- Supervision



- **Risk-taking behaviours**
 - 'Do you ever smoke cigarettes?'
- **Psychological health**
 - (Problems with sleeping / feeling depressed)
- **School**
 - In the last three months have you missed school without permission?
- **Subjective well-being**
 - Huebner life satisfaction (five item scale e.g. 'My life is just right')
 - 'Relatedness' (four item scale e.g. 'People in my life care about me')

Summary of some overall findings

14-15-year-olds

Young people are more supported in some ways than in others

- Almost half reported full scores for 'physical care' and 'supervision'
- Less than 1/3 reported full scores for 'educational' or 'emotional support'

Context makes a difference

- Boys are less supervised than girls
- Young people living with a lone parent less 'physical care' or 'emotional support'
- Material deprivation underpins much neglect

Neglected teenagers do worse

- Less parenting inputs (mostly) = poorer outcomes e.g. smoking / drinking, life satisfaction
- Importance of 'emotional support'

Adolescent neglect – scores/thresholds ... and % of young people

<i>Parenting type</i>	Cared for	At risk	Neglected	% of 14-15-yr-olds neglected
EMOTIONAL SUPPORT	7 – 12	5 – 6	0 – 4	8%
EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT	7 – 12	5 – 6	0 – 4	5%
PHYSICAL CARE	8 – 12	6 – 7	0 – 5	4%
SUPERVISION	7 – 12		0 – 6	8%

Adolescent neglect

What next for TCS?

More research

- Disseminate first study findings
- Second study – asking young people, parents and professionals about parenting and neglect
- Survey / interviews in PRUs

Campaigns / policy work

“Seriously awkward” (16 / 17s focus)

- Around 20% of 16 and 17 year old have mental health issues a jump from 12% for 11 to 15 age group
- 70,680 of 16 and 17 year olds assessed by children’s services as ‘children in need’
- 44% of all children at risk of sexual exploitation are 16 and 17

BUT ... the law does not offer the same protection as for under 16s

REFERENCES (and links to online publications)

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