The Children's Society

Understanding and better responding to adolescent neglect

Open Forum Safeguarding Conference – May 2018

Understanding and better responding to adolescent neglect

Session content

1. Why ‘adolescent neglect’ is so challenging.
2. What we know about adolescent neglect.
3. The Children’s Society’s research.
4. How you can find out more.

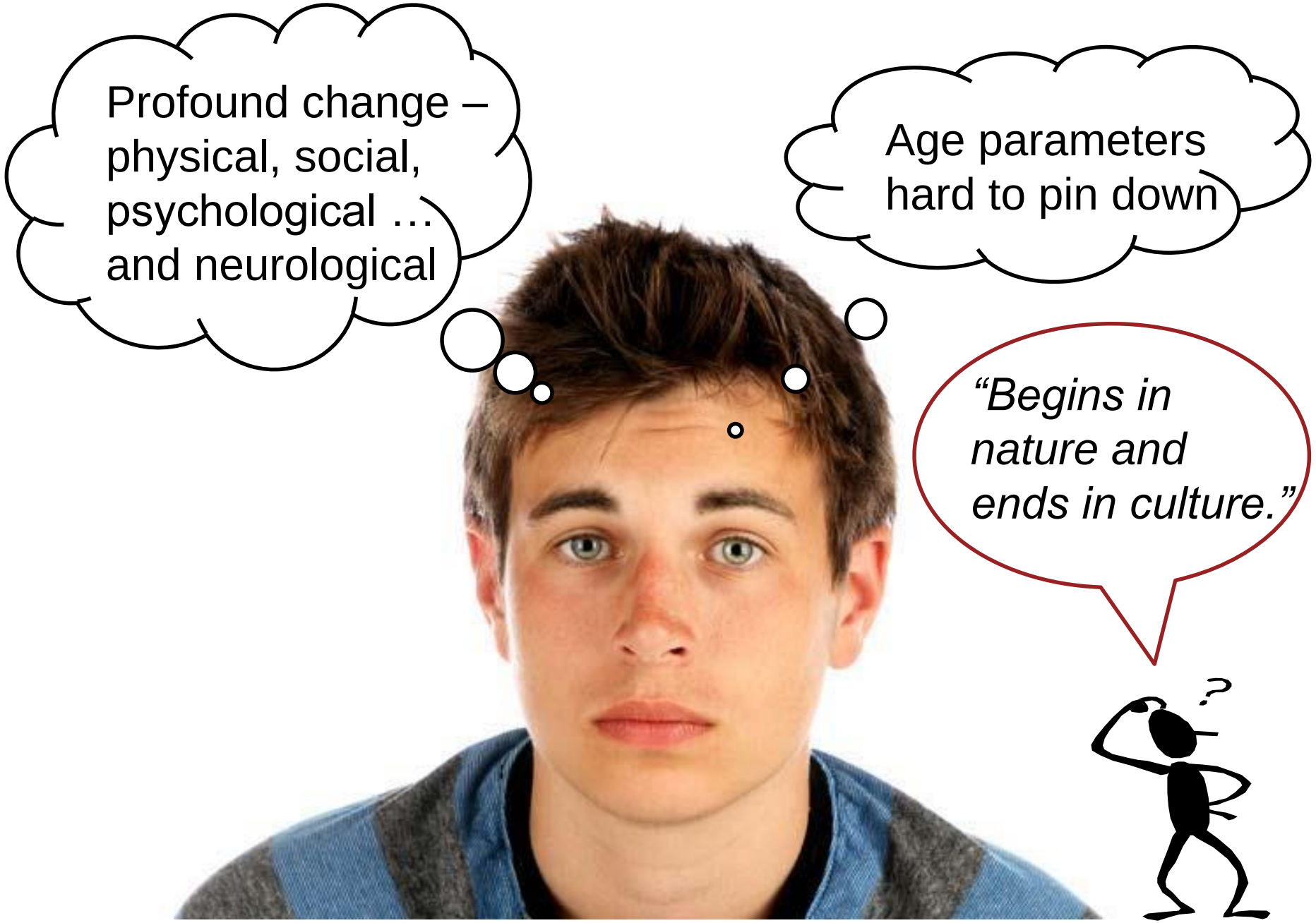
The Children's Society

- 135 years supporting the most disadvantaged children and young people.

Online archive:
http://www.hiddenlives.org.uk

- Now services nationwide for young people and families alongside policy, campaigns and research to understand and advocate for improvements to young people's lives.
www.thechildrenssociety.org.uk

Ambitious
Fun
Challenges
Idealistic
Transition
Potential
Learning
Friendship
Growth
Well-informed
Difficult
Hedonistic
Defiant
Grumpy
Naïve
Spotty
Scary
Angsty
Incoherent
Hormonal
Excitable
Boundaries
Noisy
Challenging
Anxiety
Excited
Self conscious
Insecure
Withdrawn
Worried
Identity
Pressured
Misunderstood


Profound change – physical, social, psychological … and neurological
Age parameters hard to pin down
“Begins in nature and ends in culture.”

Neglect … what do you think of ?

~~Adolescent~~ neglect: Scale – official figures

Initial category of maltreatment for CP Plans (at 31st March 2017)

	Total	Neglect		Physical abuse		Sexual abuse		Emotional abuse		Multiple	
NATIONAL (All ages)	51,080	24,590	48%	3,950	8%	2,260	4%	17,280	34%	3,010	6%
NATIONAL (10-17)	*16,310*	*7,496*	*46%*	*1,127*	*7%*	*1,105*	*7%*	*5,473*	*34%*	*1,111*	*7%*
Greater Manchester	3,498	1,650	47%	198	6%	107	3%	1,283	37%	247	7%
Bolton	258	120	47%	35	14%	14	5%	80	31%	9	3%
Bury	227	127	56%	X	-	8	4%	80	35%	X	-
Manchester	1,154	574	50%	39	3%	14	1%	289	25%	238	21%
Oldham	404	175	43%	27	7%	13	3%	189	47%	0	-
Rochdale	235	129	55%	24	10%	X	-	81	34%	X	-
Salford	499	217	43%	30	6%	25	5%	227	45%	0	-
Stockport	308	128	42%	9	3%	6	2%	165	54%	0	-
Tameside	413	180	44%	34	8%	27	7%	172	42%	0	-

[‘x’ = 1 to 5 inclusive]

Source: DfE children in need data

What is 'neglect'? Official definition

Neglect is the **persistent failure?** neet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the **serious impairment?** e 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?** anger;
- ensure **adequate supervision?** luding the use of inadequate care-givers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiver **a child's basic emotional needs?** needs.

Working Together to Safeguard Children (Dept. for Education, 2015)

Adolescent neglect is challenging …

- ‘Adolescence’ is complex (and contested)
- ‘Neglect’ is complex (and subjective?)

Very little!

Tiny number of studies; many only consider ‘maltreatment’ overall; rely on CP data; don’t look at when neglect occurred (or what type / how severe); treat young people as a homogeneous group; only offer a snapshot …

What do you know about adolescent neglect?

1) What does research say is the proportion of adolescents who experience neglect by their parents or carers?

i) 13% ☑

ii) 15% ☑

iii) 16% ☑

iv) 18% ☑

2) If you compared the outcomes for children who had been neglected only during their earlier (pre-adolescent) life with those for young people who had been neglected only during their adolescence which would be worse?

- Worse outcomes for earlier childhood neglect ☐
- About the same ☐
- Worse outcomes for neglect during adolescence ☑

Rochester Youth Development Study

Key me ages from research on adolescent neglect:

- Ho re it, a significant number of adolescents are ex t of it not picked up in official s
- ffects of neglect. It has f ways – AND emerg ed to other forms of mal
- Once neglect is serious enoug tection classification it is often accompanied b maltreatment.

EVIDENCE IS THIN!

‘Understanding Adolescent Neglect’ research programme

- 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?
- How can we improve responses to adolescent neglect?

- National schools online surveys. 1,000 young people in Year 10 (aged 14-15).
- *Did not* ask about ‘neglect’.
- Asked about experiences of care and support at home – and about well-being, experiences in school and externalising behaviours.
- Hypothesis: Less care = lower well-being, more risk-taking, etc. Neglect can be measured by association.

Parenting behaviours measure

In the last year how often did your parents, or the adults you live with …	
… show an interest in what you were doing at school? … attend parents' evenings at school? … keep track of how you were doing at school – by doing things like reading reports?	**EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT**
… help you if you had problems? … support you if you were upset? … tell you when they thought you had done something well?	**EMOTIONAL SUPPORT**
… make sure you saw a doctor if you needed one? … take care of you if you felt ill? … support you to look after your teeth and go to the dentist?	**PHYSICAL CARE**
… ask you where you were going when you went out? … like to know where you were after school? … expect you to call or text to let them know if you were going to be home late?	**SUPERVISION**

Always	Often	Sometimes	Hardly ever	Never

Parenting behaviours measure: scoring

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

In the last year how often did your parents, or the adults you live with …

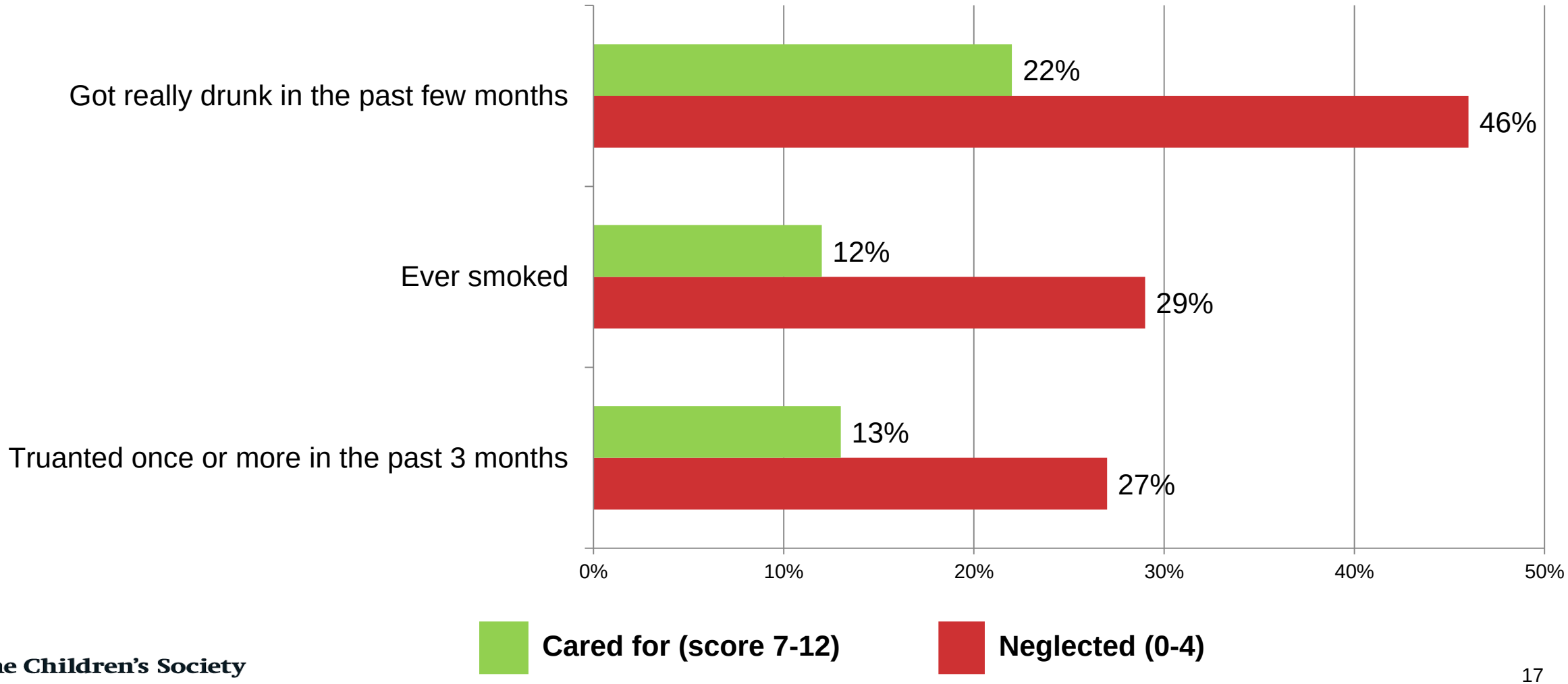
	Always	Often	Some-times	Hardly ever	Never
… help you if you had problems?	☑ 4	3	2	1	0
… support you if you were upset?	4	☑ 3	2	1	0
… tell you when they thought you had done something well?	4	☑ 3	2	1	0

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

RANGE for all categories is 0 - 12

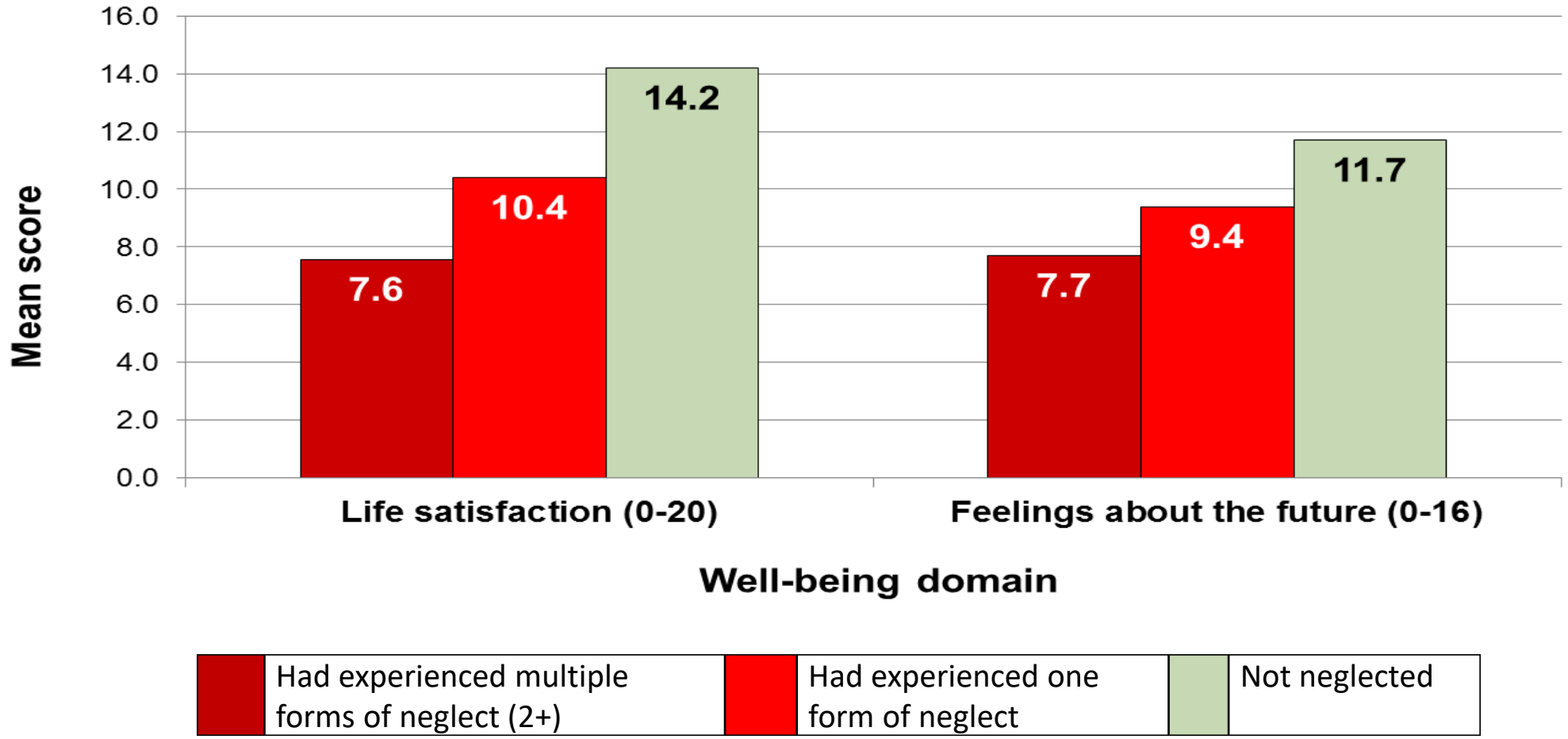
Negative associations: risk-taking

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT: Differences in behaviour of cared for and neglected young people



Negative associations: low well-being

Differences in well-being for young people who experienced multiple forms of neglect



Source: The Children's Society Survey, 2014

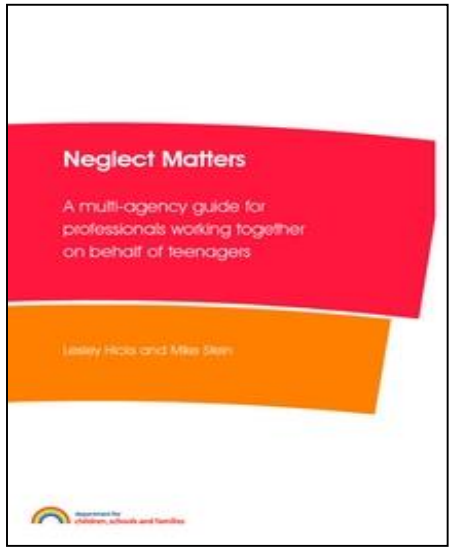
Findings: thresholds and proportions

✓ More care = positive associations / less care = negative associations (... *mostly).*

👍 Consistent patterns in the data for when infrequent parenting became neglectful.

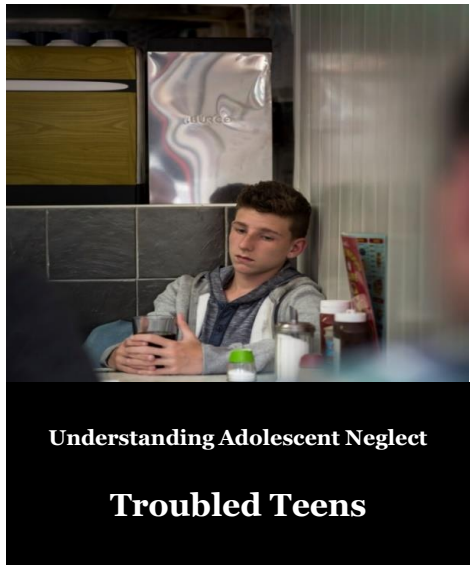
Parenting type	Cared for	At risk	Neglected	% of 14-15 year olds neglected
EMOTIONAL SUPPORT	7 – 12	5 – 6	0 – 4	8%
EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT	7 – 12	5 – 6	0 – 4	5%
PHYSICAL CARE	8 – 12	6 – 7	0 – 5	4%
SUPERVISION	7 – 12		0 – 6	8%
Overall proportion experiencing one or more form of neglect				15%

‘What can I read? <u>Free</u> online resources on adolescent neglect



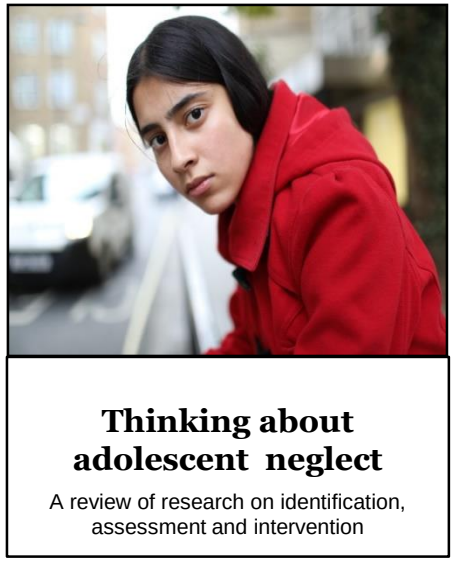
Neglect Matters (2010)

Guide to effective multi-agency working.



Troubled Teens (2016)

Review of research on adolescent neglect + study of the scale of adolescent neglect in England.



Thinking about adolescent neglect (2018)

Review for Luton SCB focused on identification, assessment and interventions.

Adolescent neglect – briefing for professionals (2018)

Four pages – key messages.

Young people want to be listened to respectfully, have account taken of their views and have a stake in decision-making.

Work with them as 'assets and resources'.

(Hanson & Holmes, 2014)

Selected references

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Sarah-Jayne Blakemore TED talk on the adolescent brain.

https://www.ted.com/talks/sarah_jayne_blakemore_the_mysterious_workings_of_the_adolescent_brain

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