



Targeted Speech and Language
Assessments for Primary and
Secondary School Children at Risk
of Suspensions

Milton Keynes Youth Justice and
Support Service (YJSS)

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Statistics...

More than 60% of young people involved with the Youth Justice System have Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) which are largely unrecognised (Bryan et al, 2007)

71% based on YJB Asset Plus data, have SLCN but, as this is a hidden disability, for the majority of children this is not accurately recognised prior to them being assessed by the YOT.

57% of children with diagnosed language difficulties have Emotional and Behavioural Disorders (Benner et al, 2002)

81% of children with Emotional and Behavioural Disorders have significant unidentified communication needs (Hollo et al, 2014)

Our Local Picture...

In 2018, a 'Predicted Harm Analysis' was completed by partner organisations and identified that of the 35 young people identified by the analysis, 25 had previously had some involvement with Milton Keynes Youth Justice and Support Services (YJSS).

At least 92% of the 25 young people known to Milton Keynes YJSS had identified SLCN. Of the 92%, 79% of young people did not have their needs identified prior to our involvement. The remaining 8% had a formal diagnosis of ADHD. Therefore, what can be concluded is that 100% of this cohort had additional needs.

In December 2021, we identified that the percentage of young people who had their Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) identified before being referred to YJSS or ESP was around 15%.

Between 2022 / 2023, Of the 97 young people who had been assessed by our Speech and Language Therapy team, **88% were found to have had identified SLCN.**

Between 2022 / 2023, referrals to our Promoting Reintegration and Reducing Exclusions (PRRE) SLT project in schools, showed that out of the 48 children assessed under this project, following a referral from their school setting for being at the greatest risk of school suspensions, **98% of the children assessed had a identified SLCN.**

Local Trends – all children

In 2019 / 2020 - Of 80 young people assessed for SLCN, 80% had identified SLCN.

In 2020 / 2021 - Of 97 young people assessed for SLCN, 84% had identified SLCN.

In 2021 / 2022 – Of 86 young people assessed for SLCN, 87% had identified SLCN.

In 2022 / 2023 – Of 120 young people assessed for SLCN, 88% had identified SLCN.

Road to Nowhere...

- If untreated **33%** of children with **communication needs** (SLCN) will develop **mental illness** and over **50%** will become involved in **criminal activity**.

(Breakthrough Britain – The Centre for Social Justice)

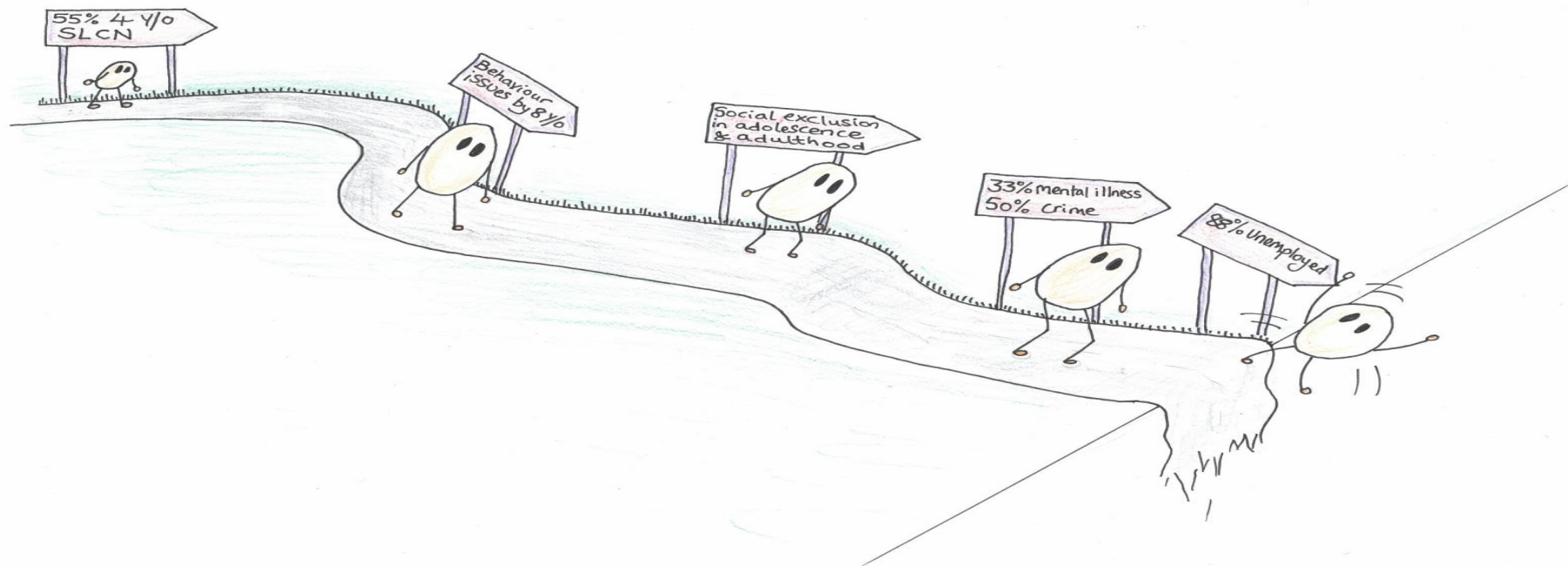
- **81%** of children with **Emotional and Behavioural Disorders** have **unidentified language difficulties** (SLCN).

(Bercow: Ten Years On – 20th March 2018)

- **88%** of Unemployed young men had **communication needs** (SLCN) – compared to **8%** in the general population .

(Children's Communication Coalition)

So the evidence is clear - unrecognised and unaddressed needs are compounded over time and the negative consequences increase... This is the Road to Nowhere...

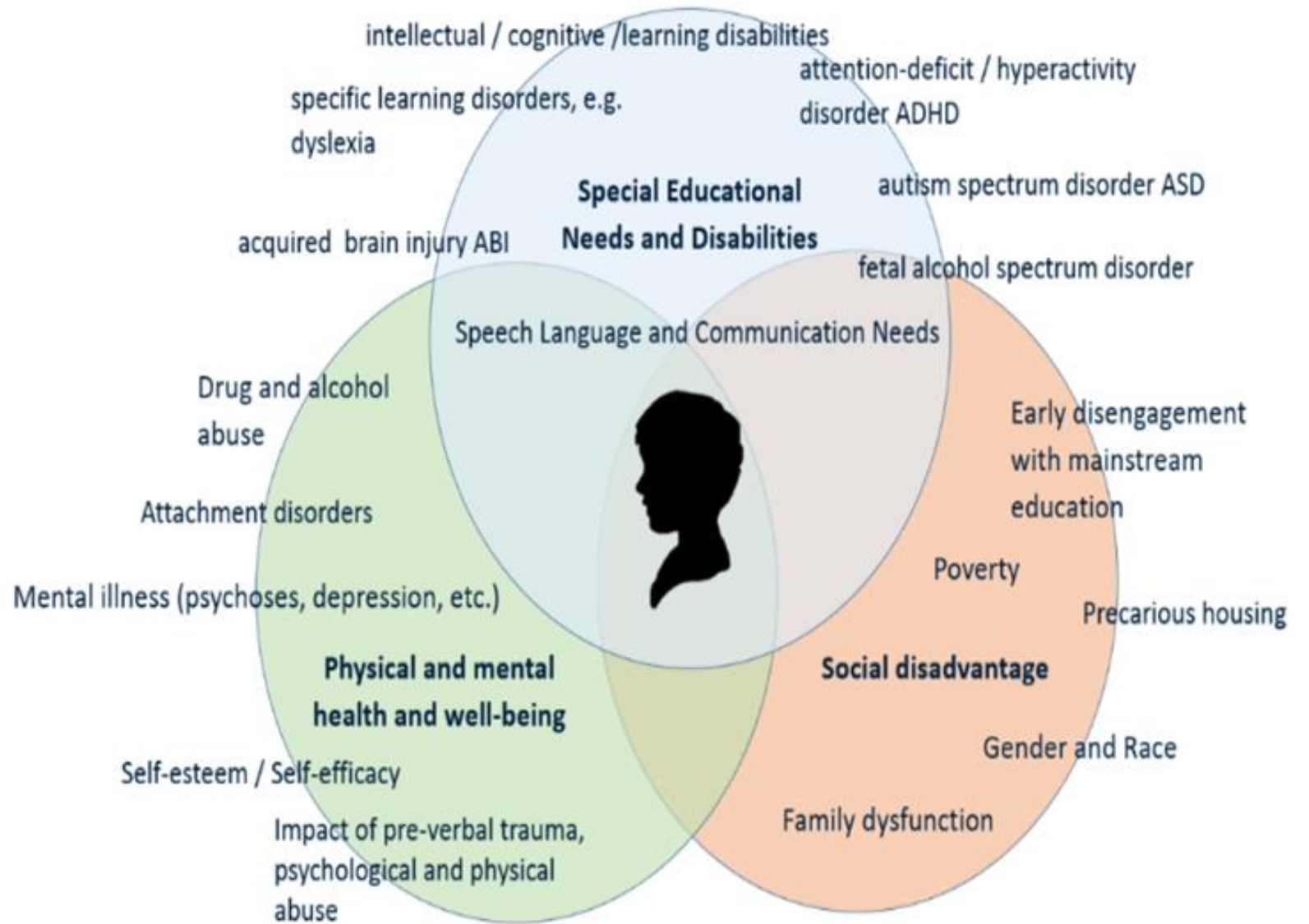




**Behaviour is a
symptom**

not the cause

What influences *and* causes behaviours?



Prevalence of SLCN in the UK



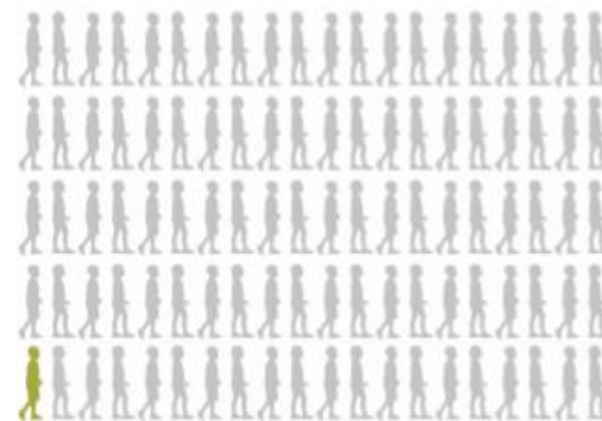
In some areas of deprivation, more than 50% of children start school with SLCN



10% of all children have long-term SLCN.



7.56% of all children have a Developmental Language



1% of all children have severe and complex SLCN

Education and School Suspensions

Research demonstrates a clear link between behavioural difficulties, communication needs and school exclusions:

- § A study of secondary age pupils at risk of school suspensions found that for a high proportion of the pupils, language difficulties were a factor in their behaviour problems and school suspension (Clegg et al, 2009).
- § In a study of pupils at risk of suspension from school, two thirds were found to have SLCN (Clegg, 2004).
- § In a study of excluded boys, 100% had undetected communication needs and behavioural issues (Ripley and Yuill, 2005).
- § Children with identified SEN accounted for 46.7% of all permanent exclusions and 44.9% of fixed period exclusions, (DfE, 2018).



Promoting Reintegration and Reducing Exclusions (PRRE)

The PRRE project sits under our Prevention offer.

The PRRE project offers primary, secondary and further education settings in Milton Keynes, **free Speech and Language Therapy provision** in order to identify any additional needs for those young people identified by the school as **being at the greatest risk of school suspensions and managed moves to alternative provisions.**

The early identification of unmet and unrecognised Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) enables children at greatest risk of suspensions to be provided with appropriate support so that they can be supported to remain in a setting on a full-time timetable, reducing the risk of children of being exploited or becoming involved in offending.

Our PRRE Model...

Our model involves offering assessments to settings and building on staff knowledge and confidence to address SLCN via free SLCN training which is delivered by our Speech and Language Therapists and Senior Educational Psychologist who is attached to Milton Keynes YOT.

Following the completion of a referral form, we undertake a comprehensive Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) assessment using a range of formal and informal assessments. This includes using industry-approved frameworks, including CELF alongside observational and bespoke assessment tools.

A full assessment report is provided to the education setting and further consultation takes place between school staff and a Speech and Language Therapist. The report details a summary of need and suggest recommendations and resources to school staff.

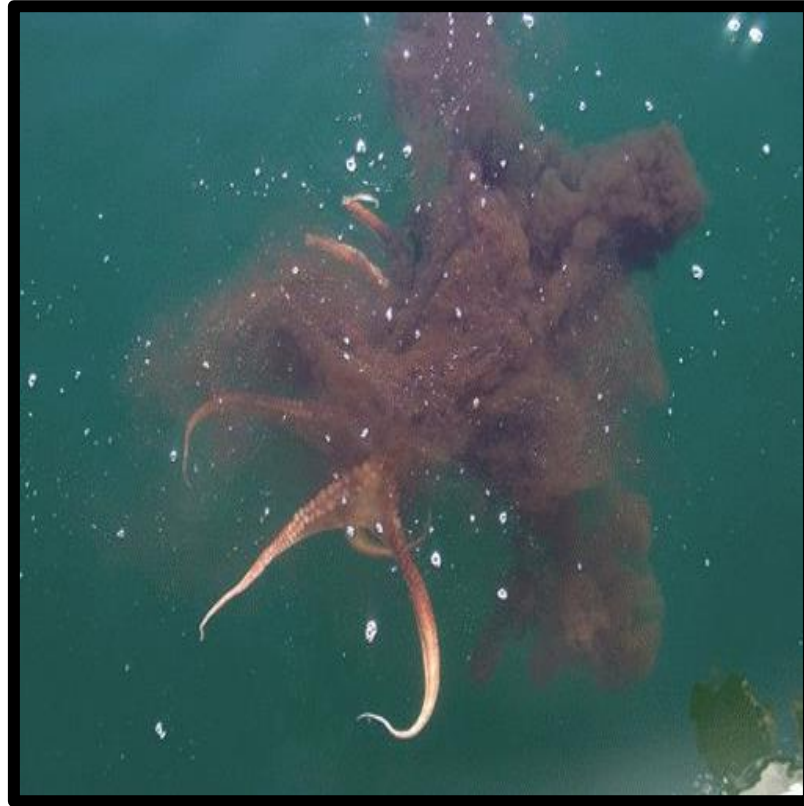
Free Speech and Language training is offered to all participating provisions, in order to upskill education staff and enable the early identification of concerns and interventions to support children and young people at the earliest opportunity.



Disguise / blend in



Defence - distract



Mask difficulties



Defence



Deflect attention

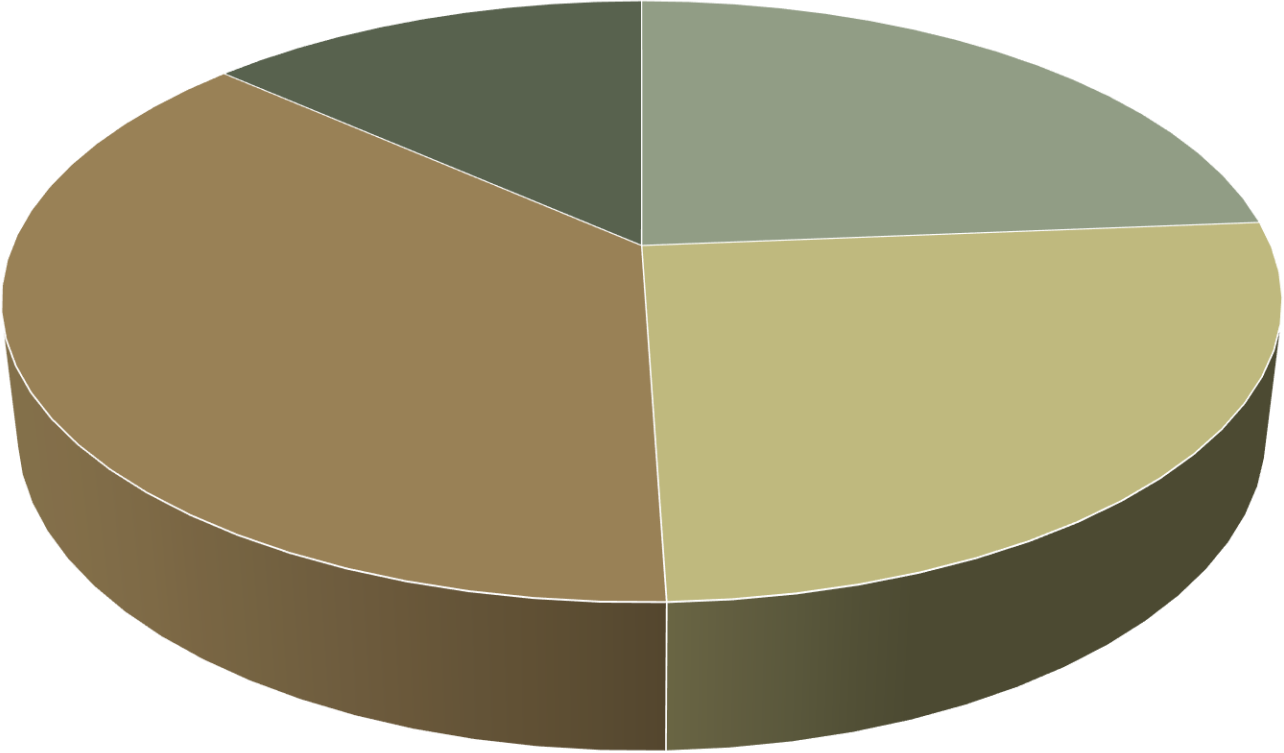
Statistics – 2022 / 2023

120 young people had contact from our Speech and Language Therapy team from April 2021 – April 2022. In terms of what area of the service the referral originated from, the breakdown is as follows:

- Statutory work (formal OOCD +) – 41%
- Diversion and Prevention – 19%
- PRRE Speech and Language Project – 40%

In terms of the PRRE data, it is useful to consider here that out of the 48 children assessed following a referral from their school setting for being at the greatest risk of school exclusions or a move to an alternative provision, **98% of the children assessed had an identified SLCN.**

Levels of Need



■ Mild ■ Mild - Moderate ■ Moderate ■ Moderate - Severe ■ Severe

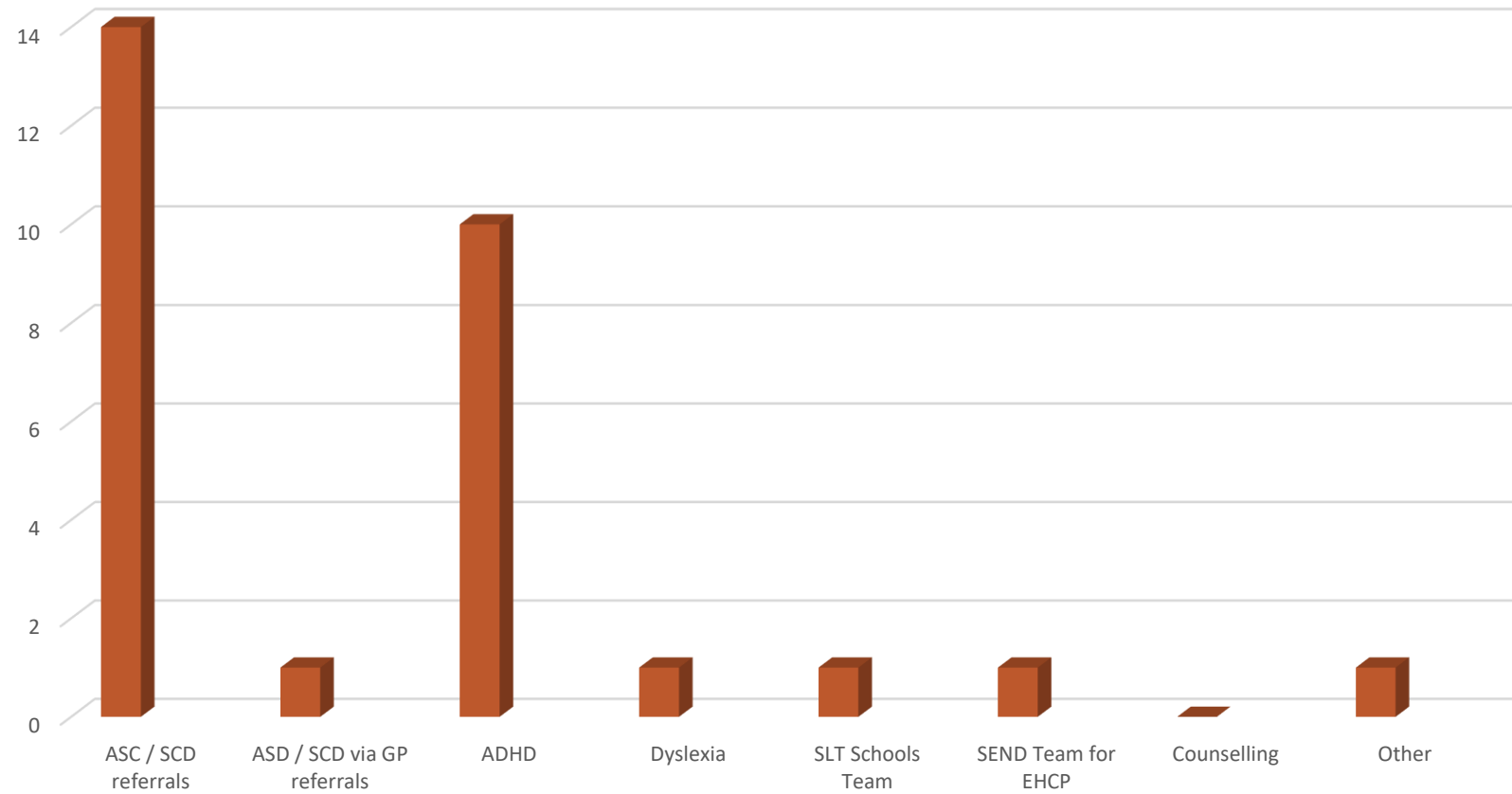
Levels of Need:

Mild Needs – Needs are greater than 84% of peers

Moderate Needs – Needs are greater than 94% of peers

Severe Needs- Needs are greater than 98% of peers

Signposting Following Assessment



Free SLCN training

- Free training is offered to all provisions that take part in the PRRE project
- The main aim of the training is to support and upskill staff to identify and support children with SLCN within a classroom setting with the aim of reducing problematic behaviour that can lead to suspensions
- The training is bespoke and is guided by a needs assessment completed by the education provider
- The training offered can be delivered to whole staff teams or small groups – depending on the recognised needs
- Large staff training – greater amount of individuals included and basic SLCN is delivered
- Small staff training – less amount of staff trained but training can be bespoke and include pro-social modelling of how to support SLCN within the classroom

Feedback from Schools and Education Providers

“The examples of case studies were useful to see how things might look in a ‘real life picture”

“I found it all useful, it helped to show why students can act the way they do and actually there can often be an underlying issue.”

Good strategies and identification process, options open to lead to establish ‘why’ pupils display traits and how we can signpost.”

“Good basic information regarding the problems surrounding speech and language and reasons for possible behaviour issues.”

“The drawing activity and simplifying sentences was a good reminder of how challenging situations can be as a student (I think as teachers/support staff we sometimes forget what it is like).”

“Useful to have the strategies and what the underlying issues may be. The iceberg was really helpful in seeing the ‘bigger picture.”

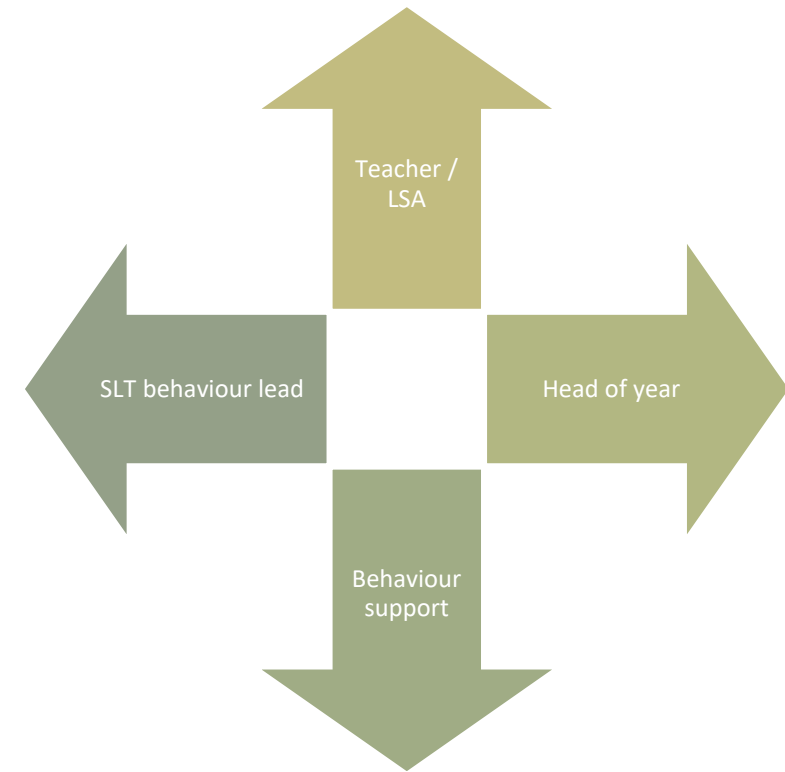
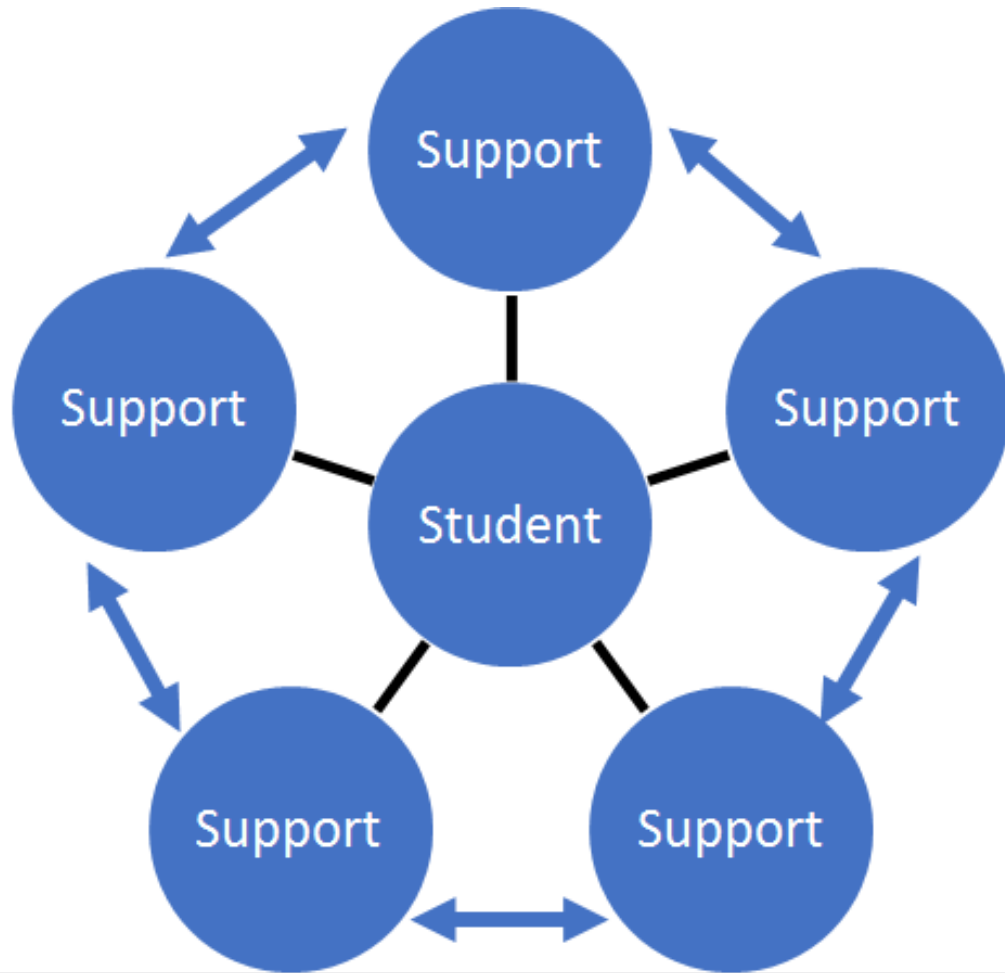
Developing Systemic Resilience

- We intentionally created a model that aims to increase systemic resilience by identifying children who may have SLCN, assessing needs and recommending different ways to work with children and young people to address any difficulties identified
- The school in itself is a system – we want to support provisions to make changes to develop a positive school culture by identifying and meeting SLCN
- Our aim is to support education staff to make the school environment a positive learning experience that is tailored to supporting children and young people with SLCN
- We want to create a system that reduces the risk of children experiencing negative situations in the future
- Micro to macro approach – from individual change to whole school / provision changes
- We are working to upskill many systems and environments, including Police and Courts
- Training for provisions – can lead to environments having a greater insight and the learning from this is not located around one child, it can influence many children
- This is our methodology that we endorse with all agencies and organisations across YJSS

Developing Systemic Resilience

- We want to encourage a paradigm shift in how children and young people's problematic behaviour is viewed
- Behaviour is communication
- Behaviour is a symptom – not the cause!

Changing from Linear to Whole School Support



Secondary PRRE Service Evaluation - 2019

21.42% of the students that had a SLCN assessment had a reduction in the number of fixed term exclusions they received from their referral date to 31.03.2020.

Our evaluation in 2019 also indicated that 64.28% of the students that had a SLCN assessment did not receive a further fixed school exclusion.

Only 7.14% of the students assessed for SLCN went on to receive a further fixed term exclusion.

A Primary and Secondary PRRE evaluation is currently in progress to review the service post-pandemic.

The Cost of Late Intervention: £16.6 billion per year

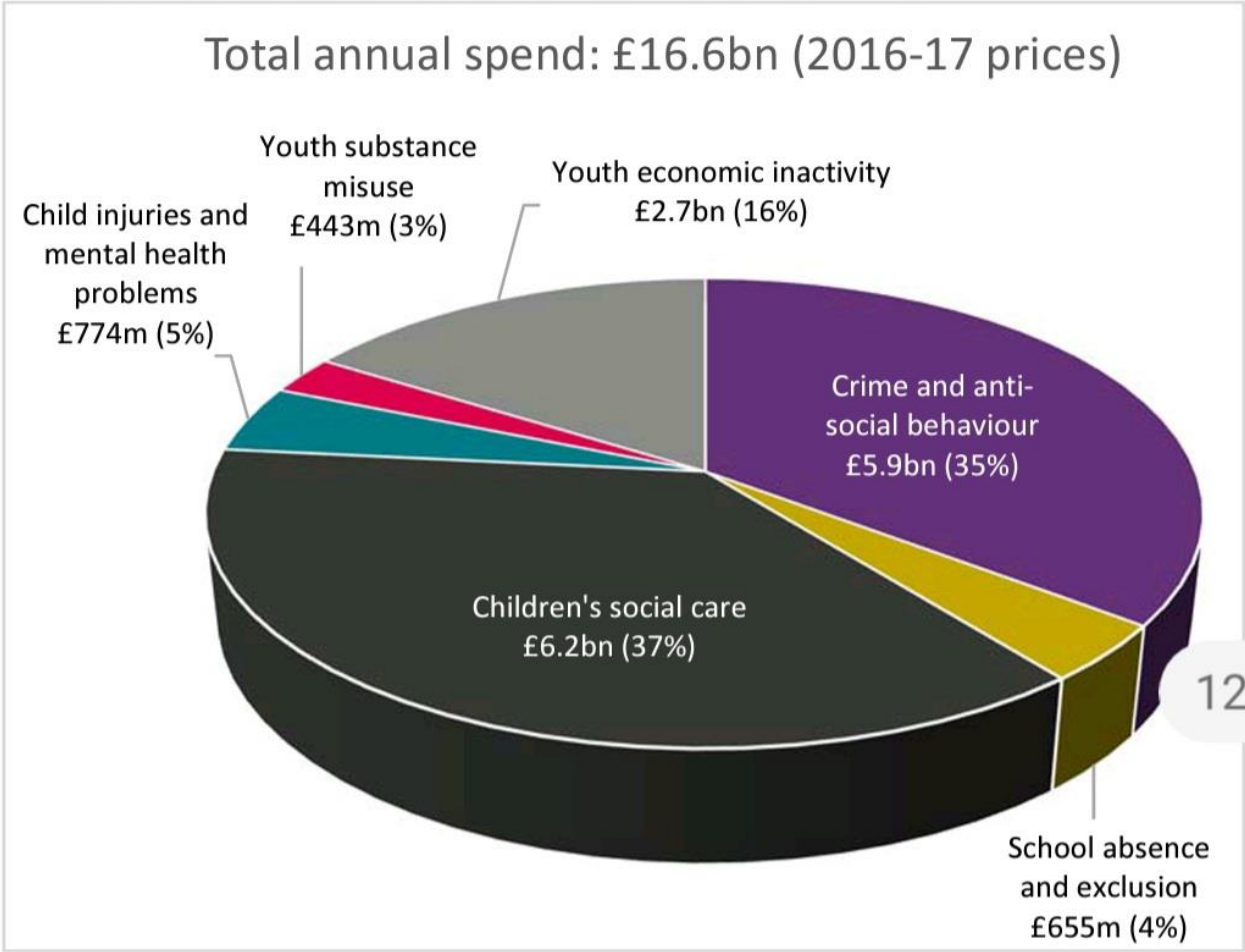
- § The Early Intervention Foundation have suggested that “in England and Wales, we spend nearly **£17 billion per year** nearly **£300 per person** on the damaging problems that affect children and young people such as domestic violence and abuse, child neglect and maltreatment, mental health problems, youth crime and exclusion from education and the labour market.”
- § “While this figure is substantial, it is only the immediate fiscal so **does not capture any lasting effects into adult life** and sometimes into the next generation, nor the wider social and economic costs.”

Chowdry and Fitzsimons, The Cost of Late Intervention: EIF
Analysis 2016



Societal Cost of Late Intervention

FIGURE 1. LATE INTERVENTION SPEND ON EACH SOCIAL ISSUE



The Impact on Systems

School exclusions involve a huge societal cost. The cost to the state of failing each pupil is an estimated £370,000 in additional education, benefits, health care and criminal justice costs across a lifetime

It has been calculated on official estimations of numbers of exclusion, that this is a £2.1 billion cost for every year's cohort of permanently excluded young people.

However, the full extent of exclusion greatly exceeds official figures, the true cost of exclusion is likely to be many multiples of this estimated *(Gill et al., 2017)*.

Individual Cost of Late Intervention

0-2

- Takes longer to start to talk
- Fewer words

3-5

- Difficult to understand
- Behavioural issues

6-11

- Reading and writing difficulties
- Difficulty making friends

11-14

- Literacy problems
- Behavioural issues

15-16

- Difficulty interacting with peers
- Increased vulnerability
- Mental health issues

Leaving school

- Fewer GCSEs than peers
- Limited job prospects