

# ‘Beyond 0-5 Years’

The impact on young people in later life if speech, language and communication isn’t addressed in the early years

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# National Context

## The case for extending the age range

“Supporting families to give their babies the best start for life will ultimately result in far greater levels of school readiness and a significant reduction on youth problems, such as anti-social behaviour, poor mental health, drug use and gang membership. There can be no greater contribution to levelling up across the nation”

*(p113, The Best Start for Life; A Vision for the 1,001 Critical Days, March 2021)*



Without support, children & young people with SLCN are at risk of poor outcomes across the life course:

- 81% of children with emotional and behavioural disorders have unidentified SLCN
- Children with vocabulary difficulties at age 5 are 3 times more likely to have mental health problems and twice as likely to be unemployed when they reach adulthood
- 60% of young offenders have low language skills
- The long-term negative impacts of language difficulties suggest that their associated costs to individuals, their families and society across the life course are likely to be high

*(The Best Start for Life; A Vision for the 1,001 Critical Days, March 2021)*



# SLT in Youth Justice

## A pilot project for children on the Health and Justice Pathway

- Aims:
  - Improve and develop pathways for vulnerable C&YP with SLCN that have difficulties accessing services due to unwillingness to engage
  - Develop & establish a Core Offer and SLT pathway within local YJS, including:
    - Consultations
    - Direct Assessments
    - Indirect support via bespoke resources for the child
    - Joint sessions with the Case Managers
    - Bespoke Training Packages



# Key Findings

- 82% referred to Youth Justice SLT had difficulties understanding information
  - Children with SLCN often lack the linguistic skills to understand what's happening to them within the judicial process
- 54% referred to SLT were also known to CAMHS
  - Poor social communication skills impact on a child's ability to make accurate judgements about others and their intentions, increasing the child's vulnerability in terms of gang involvement and being exploited by criminal network



# Example Case Studies from the CAMHS & Youth Justice Speech & Language Pilot 2019-2021

## Complex Case Study 1: Collaborative working between the Youth Justice Service, CAMHS & Speech and Language Therapy

- J, 15 year old male, referred to Speech and Language Therapy and CAMHS by the YJS following concerns highlighted on the SLCN screen from the Assetplus. J scored 20, indicating significant difficulties with understanding and use of language.
- J found to have complex social and emotional needs, presented as highly anxious, misread others intentions often resulting in violence and aggression, persistent difficulties with concentrating and difficulties with emotional regulation.
- J was open to the YJS on a 6 month Referral Order due to possession of a knife. J referred to the SLT at the start of this order





# Complex Case Study 2: Collaborative working between the Youth Justice Service, CAMHS, Education & Speech and Language Therapy

- C, 17 year old female, referred to Speech & Language Therapy due to concerns around understanding of spoken language, wasn't engaging well with talking therapies or work being undertaken by YJS
- Vulnerable YP, history of self harming, and relationships with her friends and family were becoming strained
- C was at college but had been involved in some incidents with her peers who were also considered to be vulnerable
- Been in contact with the police due to knife possession and threatening to harm others, contacting the police herself and disclosing what she was planning to do.
- Struggled through school and attended an alternative provision
- C presents younger than her chronological age
- C was open to the YJS on a 9 month referral order, and referred to the SLT Service as her order was coming to an end





# Next Steps for the Project

- Continue with the Core Offer and Training Package with Youth Justice System to increase staff knowledge & confidence in making referrals to SLT to get needs identified
- Extend Core Offer and Training Package to partner agencies and settings where young person is at risk of exclusion
- Increase in provision to enable wider reach and direct intervention



# Example Resources Available



<https://beaconhouse.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/What-We-Say-Comic-1.pdf>

Information courtesy of Beacon House  
Therapeutic Services & Trauma Team |  
2021 | [www.beaconhouse.org.uk](http://www.beaconhouse.org.uk)



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# What Next?



- Finalise an SLC Strategy for the City, with the vision of:
  - Developing SLC skills in 0-5 years to support school readiness, positively impact on attachment, attainment, leisure, mental health, wellbeing, later employment and ultimately improve life chances.
  - Extending the age range, so the strategy covers up to age 25 years, in order to reduce inequalities in health and contribute to positive wellbeing, increased life chances in terms of employment and reduction in youth offending.



# For more information

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