

# C4EO – June 2010 Conferences

## Effective Early Intervention

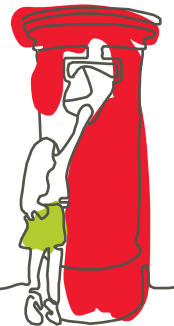
David Derbyshire and Kate Mulley



# Effective Early Intervention

## Action for Children

- Large children's charity with over 420 services across the UK and a consultancy arm
- Largest single provider of children's centres in England
- Services organised around:
  - supporting families through universal and targeted help
  - short breaks for disabled children
  - placements, support, assessment and treatment for children in care
  - assistance for young people re independence, training, education and employment
  - schools for young people with special educational needs
- A campaigning organisation seeking to improve outcomes and life chances for children and young people



# Effective Early Intervention

## What is Early Intervention?

It can be different things:

- Early in a child's life
- Early in the development of a problem
- Early once a problem has been identified - even if previous efforts to tackle the problem have not succeeded

All Action for Children services provide early intervention

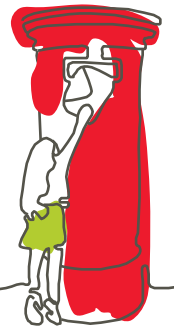
Action for Children services can point to evidence of success and the importance of continued investment in intervening early at all three of the above stages



# Effective Early Intervention

## Effective interventions early in children's lives

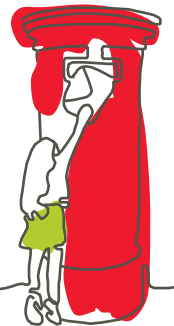
- Above average ratings from Ofsted for day care services achieved through effective partnership working
- Children's Centres commended for effective parenting programmes and outreach support
- Benefits in knowledge about managing debt and developing self-esteem and confidence for parents and young people who attended the Financial Futures workshops in partnership with Barclays Bank.
- Partnership with the Ramblers (2009-10) improved healthy lifestyles, confidence and self-esteem amongst participating families, including greater attendance at the Action for Children Children's Centres.



# Effective Early Intervention

## Effective interventions in the early stages of a problem

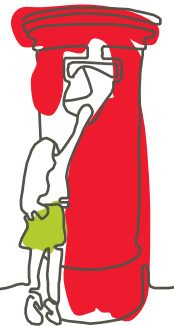
- Intensive family support services were evaluated by Tunstill et al from the Synergy research group as effective in overcoming neglect and in raising the self-esteem of vulnerable parents
- Early indications from services participating in the longitudinal neglect research programme (University of Salford) suggest that Action for Children services improve safety and self-esteem for children through a range of interventions, including consistent analysis related to a Graded Care Profile approach



# Effective Early Intervention

## Effective interventions in the early stages of a problem

- There is positive evidence of change through the provision of intensive support via Family Intervention Programmes (FIPs) to turn around anti-social behaviour by young people and families often where there exists a risk of eviction and homelessness- research in Inverclyde (2008) and Salford (2010)
- Delivery of structured plans in context of a lasting relationship with a professional has helped to improve rates of employment and education for vulnerable young people including care leavers.



# Effective Early Intervention

## Effective early interventions once a problem has been identified

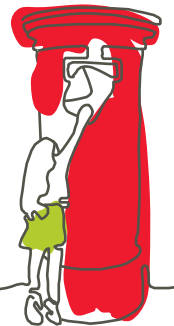
- The achievements of the Youth Build programme in securing highly vulnerable young people supported apprenticeships in the building trade with a external evaluations now produced
- Use of outreach and relationship to improve offending and substance misuse by young people
- External research has indicated the strength of our therapeutic services for children who have been sexually abused leading to improved emotional and psychological wellbeing.



# Effective Early Intervention

## Effective early interventions once a problem has been identified

- The specialist Black Adoption service has an impressive track record in particular in both recruiting black adopters and in supporting lasting placements of children with those adopters.
- Successful prevention of re-offending and engagement in education, employment and positive activities in respect of young people assisted by the Action for Children specialist intensive fostering programmes



# Effective Early Intervention

## Cost effectiveness

- Through our partnership with the New Economics Foundation, Action for Children has been able to demonstrate the social return on investment (SROI) of our family support, intensive family support and short breaks services.
  - The SROI analysis found that for every £1 invested annually in targeted interventions designed to catch problems early and prevent reoccurrence, society benefits by between £7.60 and £9.20.
  - This work goes to the heart of needing to ensure that national and regional policy in the short term maintains a commitment to early intervention not only to enable the achievement of positive impact but also to ensure the longer-term financial and emotional health of the nation.



# Effective Early Intervention

## Keeping children safe

- Action for Children services play an important role in ensuring that statutory agencies take action to keep children safe.
- In 4% of cases Action for Children expressed a disagreement with a local authority or local statutory social work service about how well children were safeguarded. These disagreements always involved Action for Children expressing a higher degree of concern about children's safety and almost always led to an improved set of arrangements to secure a child's protection
- In more than two-thirds of cases Action for Children services were involved with other agencies in planning for outcomes for vulnerable children and in reviewing achievements to ensure that children were safeguarded and well served by services.



# Effective Early Intervention

## Common strands

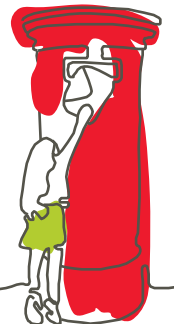
- Use of relationship over time, including outreach, to work successfully with the most vulnerable and excluded
- Commitment to both intensive and long-term support where necessary
- Flexibility to provide services to meet need through intensive contacts. Support, use and adapt tools
- Sound basis in safeguarding principles and procedures
- Commitment to ensuring the achievement of qualitative outcomes over and above success in meeting timescales and other process measures
- Stable staffing within services albeit contracts are often too short-term to guarantee services



# Effective Early Intervention

## In summary

- Early intervention is critical to keeping down human and financial costs
- Early intervention is planned, structured and measurable activity - it is no longer a triumph of hope over adversity
- Commitment to early intervention requires planners to rely on factors deeper than easily measurable processes and plan on the basis of the richness of research in the field and on the quality of human experience expressed by service users
- Early intervention requires us to value the importance of emotional well-being and the role of the relationship with a vulnerable service user
- Early intervention is not a single answer but a collection of answers to meet needs effectively requiring a flexible and adaptive approach to service provision and outcomes



# Effective Early Intervention

Time for Questions

[www.actionforchildren.org.uk](http://www.actionforchildren.org.uk)

