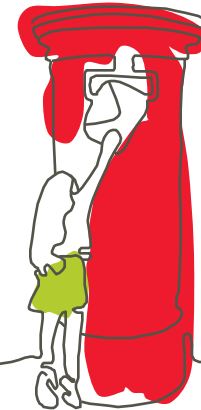


# Early intervention

Polly Neate

Executive Director of External Relations

Action for Children



*as long as it takes*

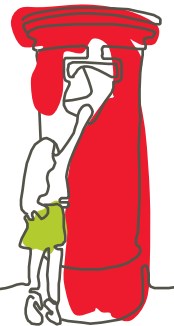
# What do we mean by early intervention?



- Early in a child's life
- Early in the development of a problem
- Early once a problem has been identified – even if there have been previous interventions

## Critical points:

- The intention to prevent repetition of the problem or prevent further problems
- Breaking cycles of deprivation and behaviour

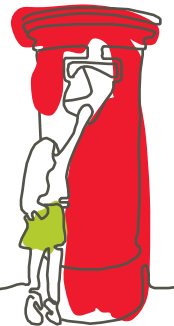


# Cycles of deprivation

- Around one million children are likely to experience the same deprivation as their parents
- These families are most likely to experience mental health problems, substance misuse, domestic violence, long-term unemployment
- Around 1.5 million children live with neglect
- In 30% of serious case reviews, the mother had been in care
- Domestic violence, mental ill-health, substance misuse are seen in over half of child protection cases
- A conference was told last July that a regional study had found that 15% of NEET young people had died within 10 years of falling out of the system
- Action for Children's case file audit this year found safeguarding concerns in 39% of files

But...

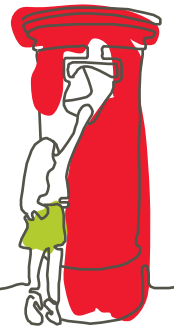
- The UK continues to invest in heavy end child protection, at the expense of early intervention – countries that do the opposite have lower rates of child deaths



# The cost of business as usual



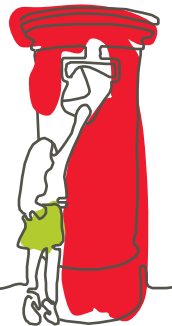
- £100,000 a year for a place in a YOI, with an 80% chance of reoffending within one year
- Almost half of children who demonstrate antisocial behaviour in the early years will continue into adulthood
- An estimated 80% of criminal activity can be traced to people who had conduct disorder as children
- A serial offender costs £1.1-£1.9 million over their lifetime
- Just 1% of the law and order budget would fund comprehensive pre-school support for 30% of all children born each year
- Putting children into care costs far more than supporting them at home



**The solution has been talked about for years**



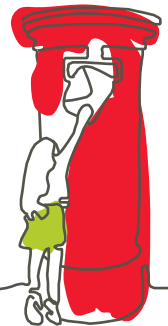
Intensive, targeted early intervention is not only the best form of child protection – it offers children a chance to thrive.



# Big numbers...

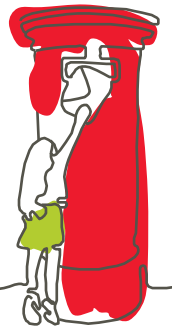


- An investment of £191 billion in targeted interventions will deliver a net return of £269 billion
- If the government invests in targeted interventions, universal child care and paid parental leave, a saving of £880 billion would be made over 20 years – compared with the £4 trillion cost of business as usual
- Social return on investment: £1 is multiplied between 7 and 9 times and statutory investment is recouped in three years



# We know what works

- Intensive, targeted family support
- Early identification of neglect
- Early response to abuse
- Support for families where parental mental health problems are affecting children



## But there is no money...

- We must not raise thresholds even higher, retreating still further into child protection
- Cultural and practice change are needed
- Need to reduce duplication and put the focus on the child at the centre
- The voluntary sector is key
- Make our existing assets (children's centres) work better for those who need them most



# We have a real chance to do things differently



- The Total Place philosophy – an opportunity to be radical, design services that work for people
- Payment by results – if we get it right, we can measure what really matters
- Social impact bonds – government needs to get this moving
- Evidence – understanding what works and learning more
- Munro Review – a welcome focus on early intervention: we need space and support for sound professional decision-making

