

## Communication Needs of Vulnerable Children and Young People: Are we doing enough?

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## Communication Needs of Vulnerable Children and Young People: Are we doing enough?



## Language and Psycho-Social Outcomes

Understanding the outcomes and experiences of adults with persisting SLCN

## The Individuals



## What we know

- A vulnerable population
- SLCN are often a pervasive lifelong impairment
- SLCN is a risk factor for impaired social adaptation
- SLCN is a risk factor for mental health difficulties in later adolescence and adult life

Clegg, J., Hollis, C., Rutter, M. (2005). Developmental language disorders – a follow up in later adult life. Cognitive, language and psychosocial outcomes. *Journal of Child Psychology & Psychiatry*, 46, 2, 128-149.

## Psychosocial outcomes

- What is a 'good' outcome?
- What is a 'poor' outcome?
- Are outcomes different to life experiences?
- How are outcomes and life experiences measured?
  - Education level
  - Independent living
  - Health including mental health
  - Employment
  - Much less on how life experiences are reported

## Documenting life experiences in adults with developmental communication impairments?



## Key themes

1. Lack of appropriate support and the impact of this in early childhood
2. Advantages and disadvantages of specialist educational provision compared to mainstream/other provision
3. Changing impact of developmental communication impairments over time
4. Challenging transition away from specialist educational provision
5. Absence of appropriate support in adult life
6. Differences in perspective between the adult ex-pupils and their parents

## Theme 1: Lack of appropriate support and the impact of this in early childhood

Parent: *'she couldn't speak one word when she started (mainstream) school'*

Parent: *'was the most bizarre erratic child...we couldn't go to playgroups or anything like that'*

## Theme 2: Advantages and disadvantages of specialist educational provision compared to mainstream/other provision

- Ex-pupil: *'staff understood what a pupil was trying to express'*
- Parent: *'the first day he actually started full time he came home and he'd had the most lovely day of his entire life and he said 'I love it there I'm just like everyone else' which upset me because I didn't realise that he knew he wasn't like everybody else'*

**Theme 3:** Changing impact of developmental communication impairments over time

Ex-pupils: *'having tests and assessments'; 'feeling different'; 'difficulties with confidence and shyness'; 'crying and having tantrums'; 'reading difficulties'*

Parent: *'People make assumptions that you know a certain amount so they only need to tell you a little bit, well sometimes with Grace it's the whole lot'*

**Theme 5:** The absence of appropriate support in adult life

Parent: *'they thought she was more able than she is'*

Parent: *'we've approached several organisations and they all give us reasons for not being able to support Dennis'*

Clegg, J., Anson, L., & Stackhouse, J. (2012). Developmental communication impairments in adults: outcomes and life experiences of the adults and their parents. *Language, Speech and Hearing Services in Schools*, 43, 4, 521-535

## Language and Psycho-Social Outcomes

- Persisting vulnerability
- Unmet needs over the lifespan

## Language and Social Disadvantage

Children and Young People Growing Up in the Context of Social Disadvantage

## **The Star**

**Over 25,000 children in Sheffield are living in poverty, new report claims**

Many children in Sheffield are said to be living in poverty

Feature in the Sheffield Star Newspaper 2015  
Read more: <http://www.thestar.co.uk/news/local/over-25-000-children-in-sheffield-are-living-in-poverty-new-report-claims-1-7289994#ixzz3rw00INDi>

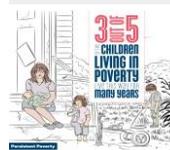
## Recent Issues for New Zealand



Twelve thousand hours; Education and Poverty in Aotearoa, New Zealand

 **The New Zealand Herald**

Education Investigation; The Great Divide November 4<sup>th</sup> 2015



Children's Commissioner  
[www.childpoverty.co.nz](http://www.childpoverty.co.nz)

## Language and Social Disadvantage

- High proportion of children have delayed or impoverished language development
- Difference or deficit debate
- Significant implication for 'school readiness'
- How do we understand this association?

Ginsborg, J. (2006). Effects of SES on language acquisition and use. In Clegg, J. & Ginsborg, J. *Language and social disadvantage: theory into practice*. London: Wiley, UK.

Locke, A., Ginsborg, J. & Peers, I. (2002). Development and disadvantage: implications for the early years and beyond. *International Journal of Language and Communication Disorders*, 37, 1, 3-15.

Roulstone, S., Law, J., Rush, R., Clegg, J., & Peters, T. (2012). Investigating the role of language in children's early educational outcomes. Department for Education. Research Report DFE-RR134. 

## Initial Research

'What we found is that the more talkative parents, like the parents with college educations and the professionals like doctors and lawyers are hearing about 2,100 words an hour, hour after hour after hour. The children of welfare families were hearing about 600 words and hour, hour after hour after hour'

Hart, B. & Risley, T. R. (1995). *Meaningful differences in the everyday experience of young American children*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co. 

## Difference versus Deficit

- Measuring language identifies a deficit
- Describing language identifies a difference
- Is impoverished language a deficit or a difference?

Hoff, E. (2003). Causes and consequences of SES-related differences in parent-to-child speech. In M. H. Bornstein & R. H. Bradley (Eds.) *Socioeconomic status, parenting and child development* (pp. 147-160)

Roulstone, S., Law, J., Rush, R., Clegg, J., & Peters, T. (2012). Investigating the role of language in children's early educational outcomes. Department for Education. Research Report DFE-RR134.

Snell, J. (2010). From sociolinguistic variation to socially strategic stylisation. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 14 (2), 630-656. 

## Moving into Adolescence

Does the impoverished language remain or resolve?

Adolescents aged 13-14 years: 103 socially disadvantaged compared to 48 relative socio economic advantage on 6 standardised language measures.

52% (and 25%) scored below average on two or more measures (-1.25 SD)

9% (and 0%) had scores suggesting severe language difficulties (-2 SD on two or more measures)

Spencer, S., Clegg, J., & Stackhouse, J. (2012) Language and social disadvantage: a comparison of the language abilities of adolescents from two different socio-economic areas. *International Journal of Language & Communication Disorders*, 47, 3, 274-284. 

## What do the adolescents say?

T: 'I don't come out with big words like other people and I can't understand other people'

J: 'But I think I've got some good speech and then half bad'

Spencer, S., Clegg, J., & Stackhouse, J. (2012). 'I don't come out with big words like other people': Interviewing adolescents as part of communication profiling. *Child Language Teaching & Therapy*, 26, 144-162. 

## What do the adolescents say?

S: Do you think that people in this school need help with their talking?

N: Not really, it depends though, if they want to. We all talk same, we've all been brought up in the same area - things like that - so we all just talk the same. We all know - we all understand each other, and as long as we understand each other, that's all what really matter.

Spencer, S., J. Clegg, and J. Stackhouse. (2013). Language, Social Class and Education: Listening to adolescents' perceptions. *Language and Education*, 27, 129-143. 

## Language and Social Disadvantage

- Persisting vulnerability
- Unmet needs over the lifetime

## Language and Mental Health

### Children's and Young People's Communication and their Mental Health

## Clinical Populations

- Primary/first developmental impairments in speech, language and communication as a risk factor for later psychopathology
  - conduct disorders (Beitchman et al., 1999)
  - emotional disorders (Baker & Cantwell 1987)
  - anti-social behaviour (Beitchman et al., 1996; 2001)
  - offending (Clegg et al., 2005)
  - adult mental health difficulties (Clegg et al., 2005)

## Other Populations

- Emotional and behavioural disorders viewed as the primary need rather than the SLCN
- SLCN identified as a risk factor in this primary need
- Must remember that many children and adults in these services have not been identified with SLCN

**Young offenders** (Gregory & Bryan 2010; Bryan 2004; Bryan et al., 2007; Hopkins, Clegg & Stackhouse 2015; Snow et al., 2011, 2004)

**Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services** (Clegg & Hartshorne 2004; Wintgens 2012)

**Excluded/at risk of exclusion children** (Clegg et al., 2009; Ripley & Yuill 2005; Gilmour et al., 2004)

**Looked after children** (Cross 2004; Cross et al., 2001; Spratt et al., 2012)

## Young offenders

- High proportion of young offenders have SLCNs even when compared to non-offenders matched on socio-economic status, educational attendance and non-verbal intelligence
- Supports an association between spoken language skills and offending behaviour

'(In court..) you just wouldn't be able to answer the questions right, you just stutter and everything and they'd think you were lying and stuff' – young person in the youth justice system

Hopkins, T., Clegg, J., & Stackhouse, J. Young offenders' perspectives on their literacy and communication. *International Journal of Language and Communication Disorders*. DOI: 10.1111/1460-6984.12188. [Epub ahead of print]

## Causation

Mechanisms of causation:

1. Common antecedents explain both the developmental language impairment and the psychopathology
2. The communication impairment leads directly to psychopathology
3. Social impairment in developmental language impairment leads to psychopathology
4. Other

# A General Population Study

## The ALSPAC Cohort Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents & Children



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## Questions

- What is the contribution of childhood receptive and expressive language development to children's emotional and behavioural functioning at 6 years of age relative to biological and social risk?
- To what extent is the contribution sensitive to age within the preschool period?

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## Method

Children in Focus (CIF) sample from ALSPAC cohort (n= 1,314 children)

Biological risk

Social risk

Language variables at 2 and 4 years

Behaviour variable at 6 years as the outcome

Age and IQ as covariates

Univariable and multivariable regression analyses

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Table 4 Multivariable Regression Coefficients (95%) for Biological Risk, Social Risk, Early Language and Later Language with Behaviour as the Dependent Variable

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9
N	811	811	522	510	519	417	404	313	305
Child's sex	-1.106 P=0.006 (-1.859, -0.317)	-1.117 P=0.05 (-1.804, -0.531)						-1.048 P=0.01 (-1.847, -0.248)	-1.203 P=0.004 (-2.014, -0.391)
Smoking	1.204 P=0.026 (0.162, 2.247)	1.230 P=0.027 (0.198, 2.277)						1.137 P=0.038 (0.061, 2.213)	1.425 P=0.013 (0.307, 2.539)
BMJ weight	-0.752 P=0.007 (-1.620, 0.116)	-0.853 P=0.004 (-1.642, -0.064)						-0.83 P=0.035 (-1.615, -0.045)	-0.827 P=0.011 (-1.674, -0.081)
Education	<0.01 P=0.624 (-0.395, 0.214)								
Social risk		0.302 P=0.008 (0.018, 0.590)							
2 y Expressive Vocabulary			-0.005 P=0.897 (-0.029, 0.019)	-0.014 P=0.004 (-0.029, -0.002)				-0.011 P=0.064 (-0.029, 0.01)	
2 y Receptive Vocabulary			0.008 P=0.869 (-0.022, 0.037)						
2 y Expressive Grammar				1.015 P=0.175 (0.298, 2.308)					
2 y Receptive Grammar				0.067 P=0.523 (-0.395, 0.555)					
2 y IQ				-0.225 P=0.025 (-0.748, 0.284)					
6 y IQ									
6 y Story-Information									
6 y Story-Comprehension									
6 y Story-Recall									
6 y Story-Understanding									
6 y Story-Production									
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## What does this mean?

The study identified that:

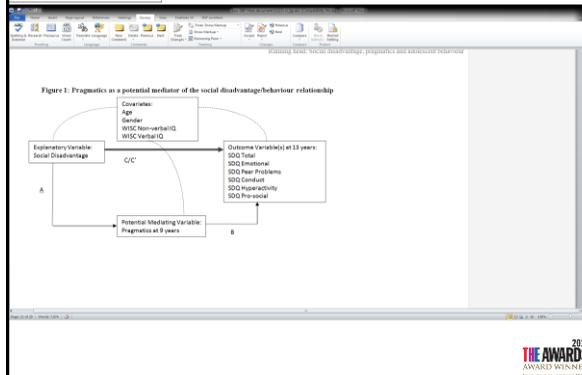
1. Early language ability at 2 years, specifically expressive vocabulary and later receptive vocabulary at 4 years both made a moderate but important contribution to emotional and behavioural functioning at 6 years of age.
2. Children's language development is important in understanding children's emotional and behavioural functioning but it is only one of many developmental factors involved.

Clegg, J., Law, J., Rush, R., Peters, T.J., Roulstone, S. (2015). The contribution of early language development to children's emotional and behavioural functioning at 6 years: an analysis of data from the Children in Focus sample from the ALSPAC birth cohort. *Journal of Child Psychology & Psychiatry, Early online.*

## Study 2 - Question

- What is the role played by pragmatics in mediating the relationship between social disadvantage in early childhood and behaviour in adolescence, controlling for age, gender, and verbal and non-verbal IQ?

Law, J., Rush, R., Clegg, J., Peters, T., Roulstone, S. (2015). The role of pragmatics in mediating the relationship between social disadvantage and adolescent behaviour. *Journal of Developmental & Behavioural Pragmatics, Early online*



## Study 2 - Method

- Sample from ALSPAC cohort (n= 2,915 children)
- Birthweight
- Social disadvantage
- Children's Communication Checklist (Bishop 1998) at 9 years
- Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire at 13 years (Goodman 1997)
- WISC verbal and non-verbal IQ
- Analysis: univariable, multivariable and mediational
- Analysis repeated without children with a label of ASD

## Study 2 - What did we find?

The study identified that:

1. Pragmatic skill at 9 years does mediate the relationship between social disadvantage and adolescent behaviour
2. Greater social disadvantage leads to lower pragmatic skills which then increases risk of behaviour difficulties
3. Role of pragmatics in assessment of and intervention for children and young people with behaviour problems

Law, J., Rush, R., Clegg, J., Peters, T., Roulstone, S. (2015). The role of pragmatics in mediating the relationship between social disadvantage and adolescent behaviour. *Journal of Developmental & Behavioural Pragmatics, Early online*

## Language and Mental Health

### Evidencing language interventions in the SEBD population

## The premise and a challenge:

- 'Communication skills and mental health are closely related and intervention in the one field may have an impact on skills and achievement in the other' Law & Garrett (2004)
- Alternatively: Language interventions can increase access to and engagement with other interventions/services and therefore contribute to overall outcomes

## Language Interventions

- More involvement of SLTs in services  
(Parow 2009; Snow & Sanger 2011; Stringer & Clegg 2006)
- Early preliminary evaluations show that SLT intervention can be effective through direct one to one intervention and staff training (Gregory & Bryan 2010; Heneker & Benedyk 2011; Heneker 2005; Law & Sivyler 2003; Spencer, Clegg & Hartshorne 2011; Clegg et al., 2007; Law, Garrett & Nye 2004)
- Evidence base must develop much further

## How do children with SEBD learn new words?

- Series of 5 case studies, repeated measures within subject design
- Learning of school curriculum words
- Individual interventions – meaning and structure of the words
- All children learnt the target words but learning of phonological structure more difficult than the meaning
- Increases access to and engagement with the curriculum
- A very challenging process

Clegg, J. (2014). Curriculum vocabulary learning intervention for children with SEBD: findings from a case study series. *Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties*, 19, 1-127.

## The Challenge

- Evidence that language interventions can be effective
- Much more difficult to engage children/young people with mental health difficulties in language interventions.....
- Therefore, very little evidence base available for this population

## Language and Mental Health

- Persisting vulnerability
- Unmet needs over the lifetime





## Communication Needs of Young Offenders: Are we doing enough?

The Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Reforms and Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) in the Youth Justice Sector: Findings from a Survey of Youth Justice Services (YJS) in England

Judy Clegg, PhD, University of Sheffield  
 Tom Hopkins, Birmingham City University  
 Kim Turner, University of Sheffield












### Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years

Statutory guidance for organisations who work with and support children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities

July 2014







## Youth Justice









## Questions

How the youth justice sector in England is responding to the SEND reforms and how young people with SLCN are identified and reported

- Level of awareness and engagement with the SEND reforms
- Reported rates of SLCN and their impact
- Identification of SLCN and meeting needs







## Survey

**SLCN and the SEND Reforms in the Youth Justice Sector**

The Communication Trust and the department of Human Communication Sciences (HCS) at the University of Sheffield are running this survey for YJF managers and practitioners in custodial settings based in England, to assess awareness of speech, language and communication needs in the youth justice sector and of the SEND reforms and to monitor their impact in practice.

This short survey will close 29th June and the results will be analysed by The Communication Trust and the University of Sheffield. All responses to the questionnaire will remain confidential. Only the project team will have access to the data. Any write-up or publication of the project findings will remain anonymous and it will not be possible to identify staff, people or services in any written or verbal dissemination.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this short survey.

1. What is the remit of your service?

Community  
 Custodial  
 Both community and custodial  
 Other  
 Other (please specify):

2. What is your role in the service?

Manager  
 Case Worker  
 Other  
 Other (please specify):



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## Key Findings

- 41% response rate
- Over 70% reported high awareness of the SEND reforms and engagement
- Only 28% reported service users have their SEN documented through statement and/or EHC plan
- 42% have SLCN as part of other needs
- 30% have SLCN as their primary need
- 46% of service users with SLCN have no statement and/or EHC plan

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## Key Findings

- High impact of SLCN on young people's behaviour
- 90% reported SLCN makes it more difficult for the young person to engage in CJS
- 29% reported no access to support for SLCN
- 40% reported needs of services users with SLCN are not met
- 96% perceive their service can benefit from SLT

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## Important

- A higher rate of statements/EHC plan than previously reported
- A higher identification of SLCN than previously reported
- High awareness of SEND reforms
- Less confidence in engaging in reforms
- SLCN prevents young people's full engagement
- SLT provision perceived as very valuable

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## Respondent

'It is hard to engage and then effectively work with some young people, especially if they have lost concentration or have no idea what is meant or forget. It is not possible to affect change if the young person cannot understand what is happening or what has been said/written/shown'

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## Respondent

'We are very fortunate in our Youth Offending Service that we have a Speech and language therapist who is not only an asset for the young person but also there to assist the team in ways to make communication more effective for the young people they communicate with'

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## Recommendations

- SEND reforms need to be communicated across all sectors of the YJS
- Assessment of SLCN in all service users when EHC needs assessment requested
- All aspects of the YJS must be accessible to service users with SLCN
- All YJS have access to SLT provision as recommended in the Bercow Report

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## In summary



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Full report will be available on The Communication Trust website:

[www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/youthjustice](http://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/youthjustice)

and will also be shared widely with youth justice contacts.

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# To Discover And Understand.

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