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Transitional safeguarding: key messages from research

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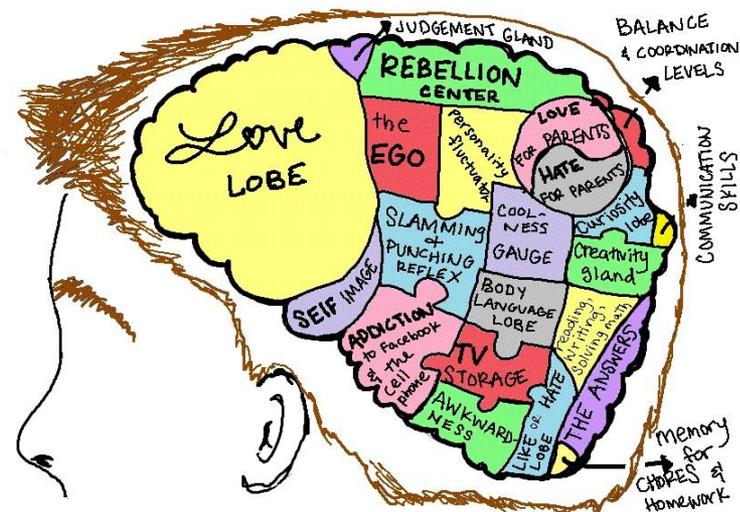
	Contextual Safeguarding	Complex Safeguarding	Transitional Safeguarding
Specific term meant to define activities	✓	✗	✗
Specific term to define types of harms	✗	✓	✗
Defined set of tools, practices, methods	✓	✓	✗
Recognises distinct adolescent safeguarding needs	✓	✓	✓
Requires cross-service / non-siloed approach to delivery (inc governance)	✓ ✓	✓ ✓	✓ ✓
Recognises evolving needs as young people enter adulthood	✓	✓	✓ ✓
Recognises role of community in safeguarding young people and young adults	✓ ✓	✓ ✓	✓
Foregrounds a participative, person-centred approach	✓ ✓	✓ ✓	✓ ✓

The case for change

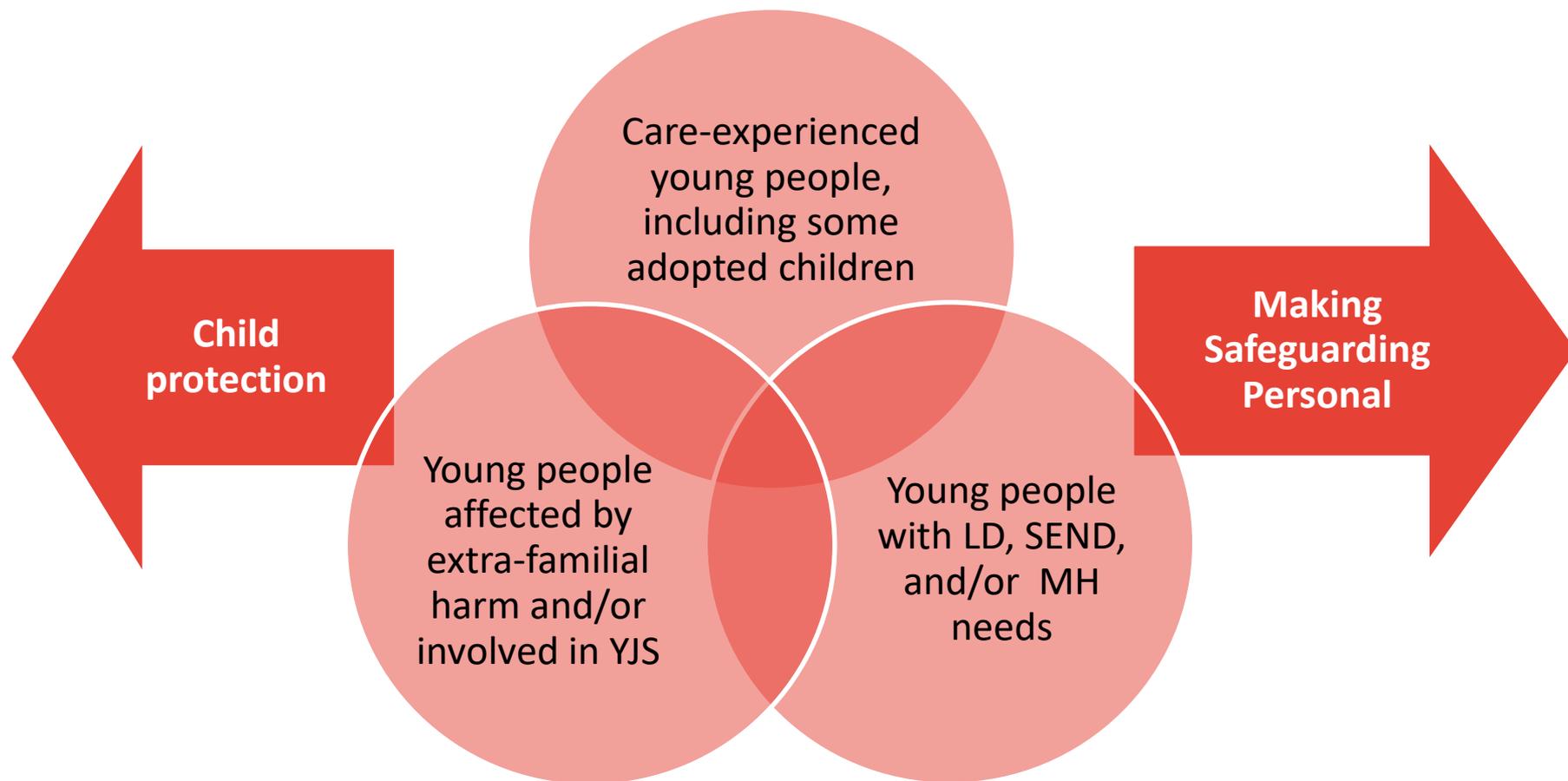
- › Adolescents may have **distinct** safeguarding needs, harms - and routes to protection - are often 'contextual' / extra-familial and are underpinned by complex social and biological drivers.
- › Harm and its effects do not abruptly end at 18; support may do.
- › **Transition** to adulthood is a particularly challenging and vulnerable time, we may need care and support without having Care & Support needs™. Dependency is not a bad thing.
- › Need to consider promoting **resilience** and their changing **developmental** needs.
- › There are **moral** and **economic** drivers for a reimagined safeguarding system which is contextual, transitional and relational.
- › (ps – it's not a prescribed 'model')

Redefining adolescence and transition

- > Some studies into brain development & effects on behaviour show some elements of brain growth – eg development to more mature affect regulation, social relationships and executive functioning - continue into the 20s. (Sawyer *et al*, 2018); Prior *et al*, 2011)
- > “An expanded and more inclusive definition of adolescence is essential ... Rather than age 10–19 years, a definition of 10–24 years corresponds more closely to adolescent growth and popular understandings of this life phase” (Sawyer *et al*, 2018)

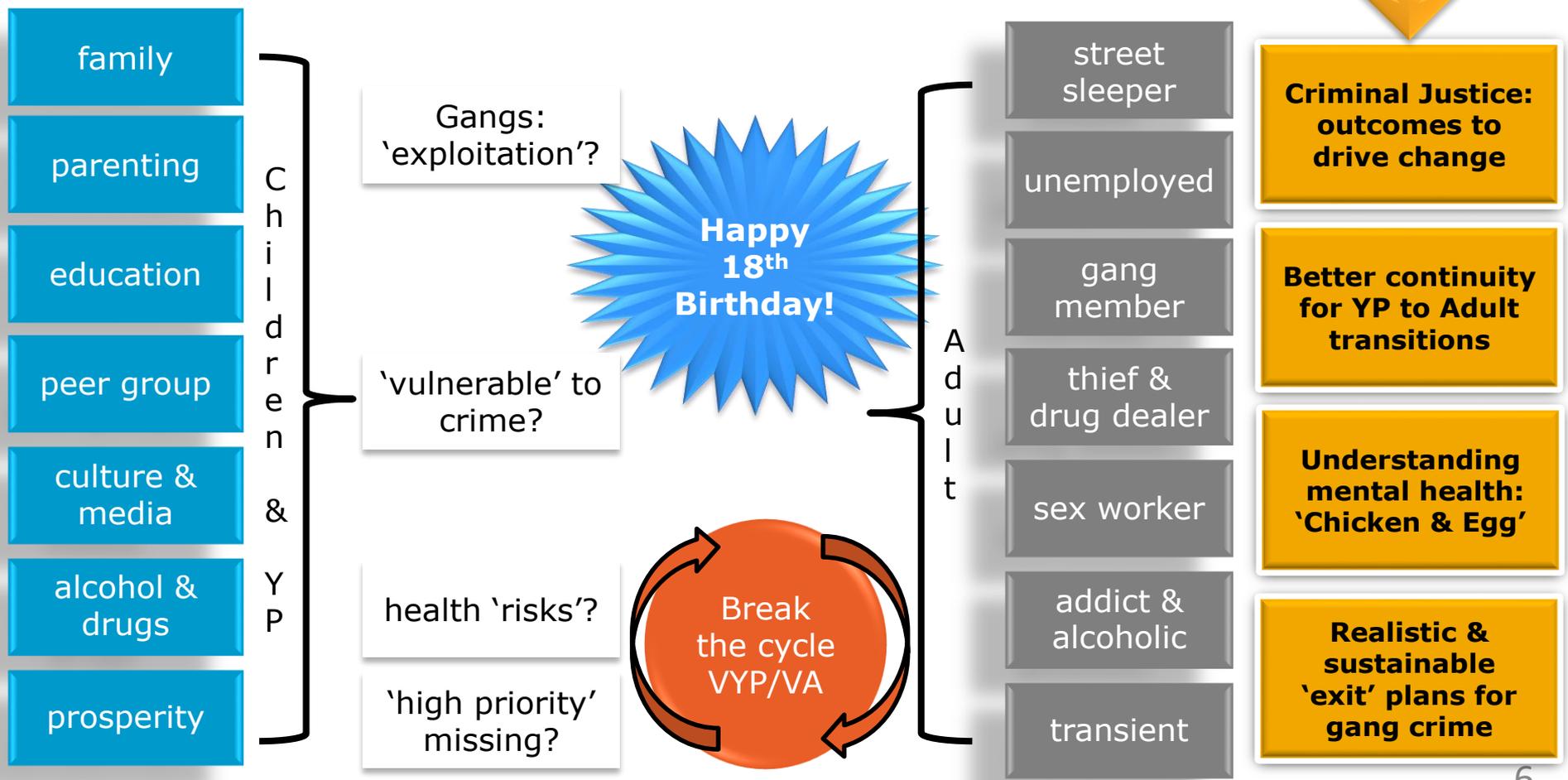


Mind the gap...



The inequity of choice

(slide credit
Tony Sagers RiPFA webinar)



Transitional issues – SCRS and SARs

- > Importance of early planning and preparation for transitions / independence. A recurring theme was a lack of clarity for YP re their future living situation due to upcoming move or transition to adult services.
- > Inclusion of young person's voice when planning.
- > Multi-agency planning and communication (including organisations, regulators, providers and commissioners), in particular around:
 - safeguarding concerns and disclosures
 - communication when young people are placed out of area/ working across borders
 - support for young people with multiple and complex needs.
- > Responses in times of crisis.
- > Understanding and utilising the YP's support system, including peers, extended family and professional support.

Ethics and expenditure

- > Maternal wellbeing (and early motherhood) connected with infants entering care. (Griffiths *et al*, 2020)
- > Care experienced people over-represented in prison population. (HMIP, 2011; Redmond, 2015)
- > 3/4 mental health problems start <24 yrs (Kessler *et al*, 2019). Est annual costs of mental health problems in England = £105.2 bn (Centre for Mental Health, 2010)
- > Disrupted / fragile family relationships contribute to homelessness. 26% of YP 16-24 have had to sleep in an “unsafe place” in 2013/14; 90% of those who had ‘sofa-surfed’ had previous CSC involvement. (Clarke *et al*, 2015)

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I was in care all my life and you did keep me really safe. You wrapped me up tight in bubble wrap... but I'm 19 now and I kind of feel like I can't move my arms.

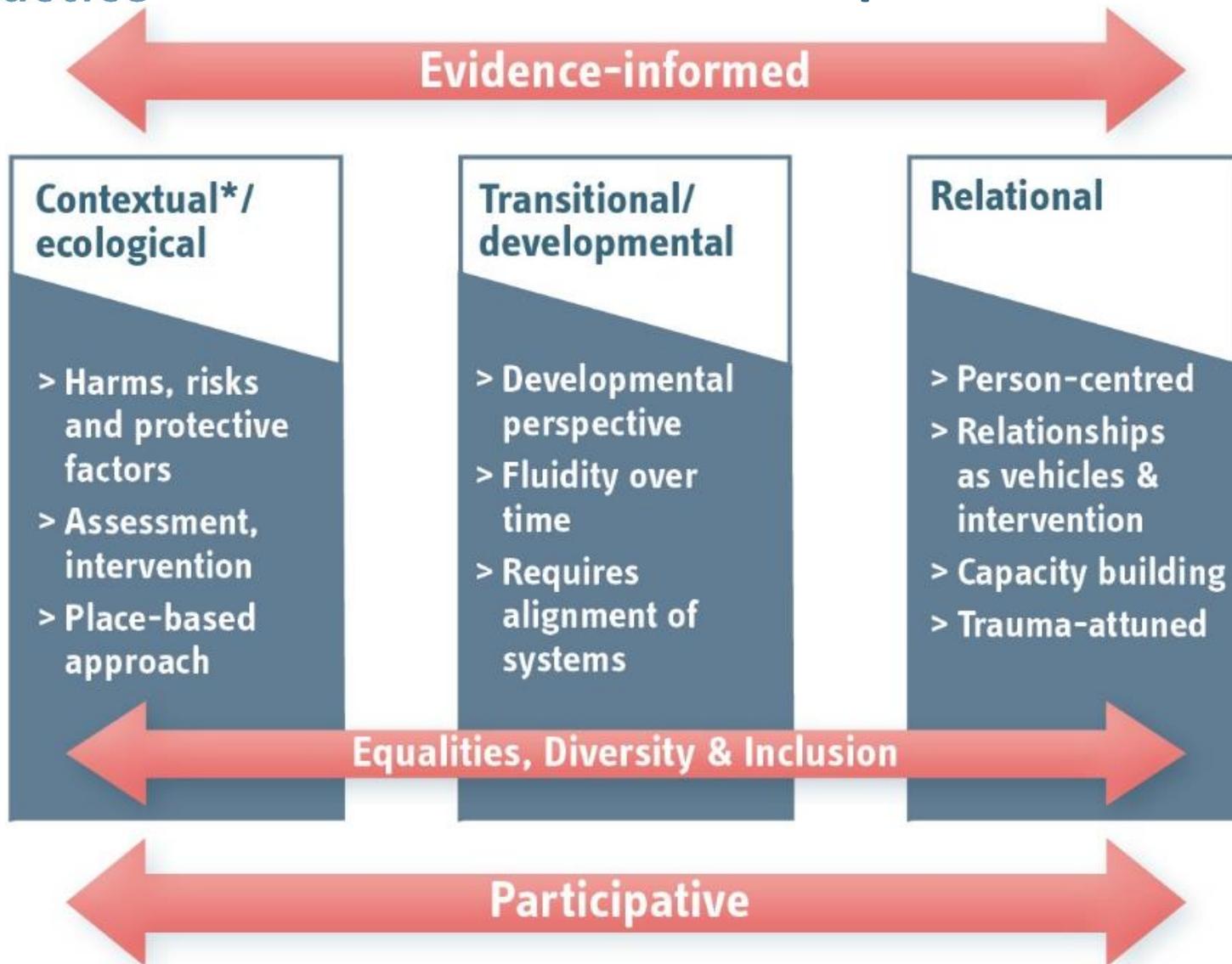
(Max, care-experienced young adult)

Now I've left care I get really lonely. That's a big thing for my safety I think, but no one talks about it as safeguarding. Unless you're worried about my child, I won't hear from you [children's services] again.

(Aisha, care-experienced young adult)

I couldn't wait to get to 18, I thought that once I was an adult everything would change. It hasn't worked out that way. I really wish I was a kid again so that you could lock me up.

(Kelly, young adult)



See Firmin's work:

www.contextualsafeguarding.org.uk

Structural factors require connected systems



Interconnectedness of harms and adversities requires a highly integrated system of support, whereby attention is paid to childhood/adolescent experiences. Commissioning may be a key lever for change

Spot the difference...

- > *The Mental Capacity Act 2005... confirms that it should be assumed that an adult (**aged 16 or over**) has full legal capacity to make decisions for themselves (the right to autonomy) unless it can be shown that they lack capacity to make a decision for themselves. (MCA Code of Practice, 2007)*
- > *CCE: Where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person **under the age of 18** into any sexual/criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) through violence or the threat of violence. The victim may have been criminally exploited **even if the activity appears consensual**. Child Criminal Exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.’ (Home Office, 2018)*

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- Males under 17
- Females under 17
- Males 18 to 24
- Females 18 to 24
- Males 25 to 34
- Females 25 to 34
- Males 35 to 44
- Females 35 to 44
- Males 45 to 54
- Females 45 to 54
- Males 55 to 64
- Females 55 to 64
- Males 65+
- Females 65+

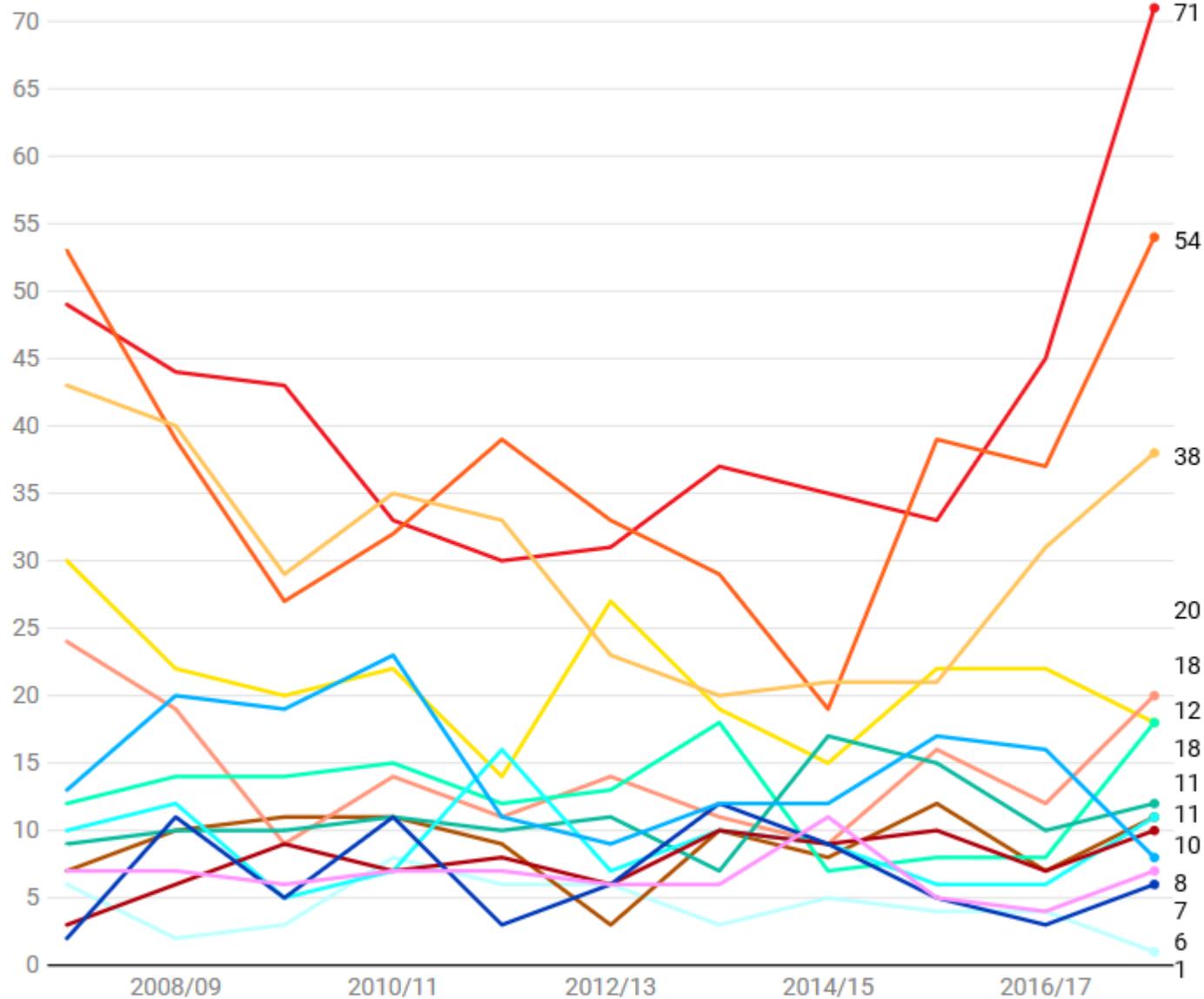


Chart: The Conversation UK • Source: Office for National Statistics • [Get the data](#)

Vulnerability and justice

	YP in general population	YP in custody
Learning disability	2–4%	23–32%
Comms impairment	5–7%	60–90%
ADHD	1.7–9%	12%
Autism	0.6–1.2%	15%
Any head injury	24–42%	49–72%
Head injury (LoC)	5–24%	32–50%

(House of Commons Justice Committee, 2016)

Young adults involved in the CJS have often themselves been victims of crime. Many have a history of being exposed to violence, including in the home, abuse, neglect, bereavement relating to the deaths of parents, siblings and other close relatives, and criminal behaviour by parents and siblings. These traumatic events have frequently occurred from a very young age and, the traumatic effects may be raw.

Resilience and participation

- > **Relationships** are paramount to promoting resilience. (Coleman, 2014)
- > **Self-efficacy, positive identity development, aspirations** - commonly associated with resilience, are areas that professionals can exercise some influence.
- > Children's **rights to protection and participation are mutually dependent and indivisible.** (UNCRC)
- > “[User] Involvement supports development of effective safeguarding practice, informed by people whose self-confidence, self-esteem and resilience can be developed through that involvement.” (Droy and Lawson, 2017)
- > ‘Both/and not either/or’ (Lefevre *et al*, 2019) Harm reduction principles might be applied? (Hickle and Hallett, 2016)

Participation as protective

Consequences of CSE	Benefits of participation
YP don't recognise exploitative situation	Critical thinking/better understanding (AYPH, 2014)
Lack of power/control	Agency and decision-making power
Isolation/sense of 'difference' (Reid and Jones, 2011)	Sense of belonging (Hagel, 2013)
Stigma	Approval/acknowledgement (Batsleer, 2011)
Low self worth/lack of purpose	Helping others (Batsleer, 2011, Levy, 2012, AYPH, 2014)

When we deny young people self-efficacy...

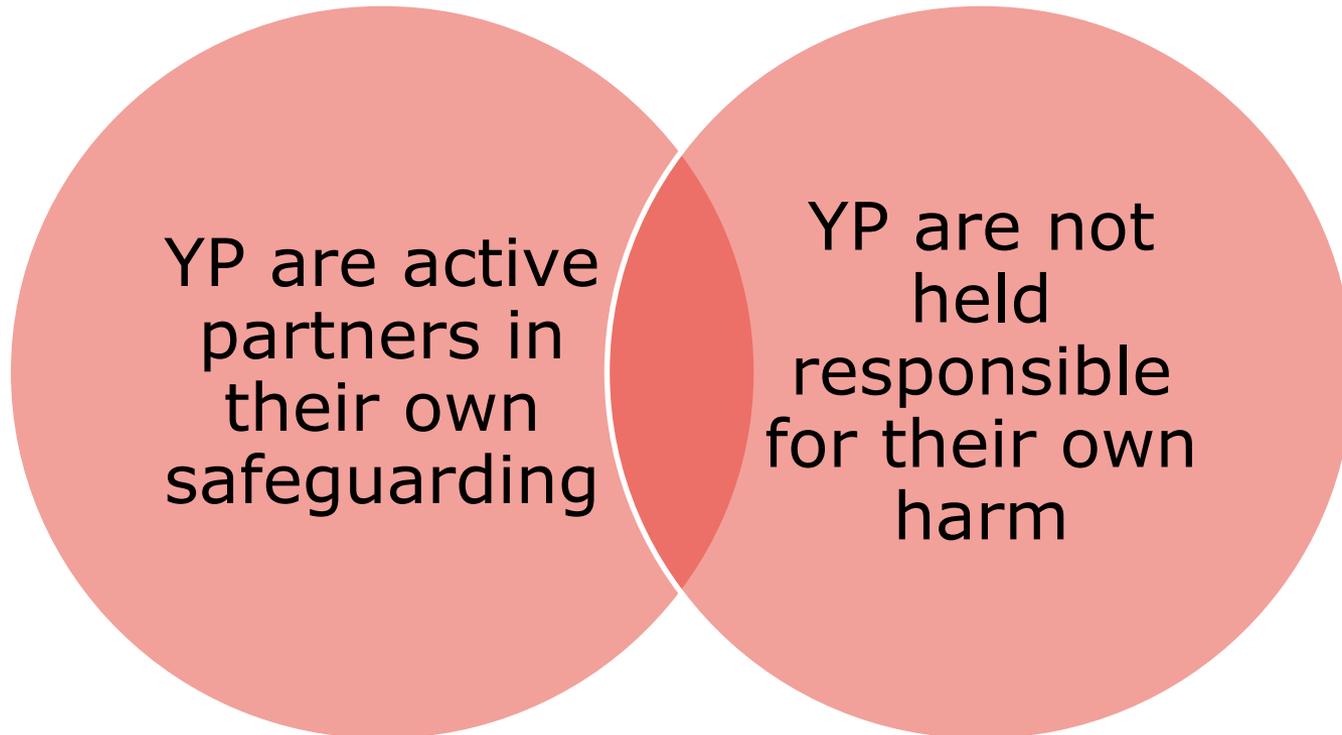
I was basically a puppet. When they [the police] wanted me, I had to do it. When they didn't want me, I heard nothing.

(Beckett and Warrington, 2015)

Workers expect you to tell them everything about your lives but then they tell you nothing about theirs That's how the men work too – they find out everything about you then don't even tell you their real name.

(Warrington 2013, in Melrose and Pearce, 2013)

The sweet spot



What gets in the way of treating people as partners?

- > In policy / procedure (perhaps less nuanced than practice) young people (and parents) are often categorised in binary terms - as victims or villains?
- > Have agency – blamed, or have no agency – helpless and passive.
- > Problematising / individualistic constructs of safeguarding stop us seeing the systems and complexity.
- > Professional power paradigm?
- > Structural inequality, racism and other barriers to inclusion.
- > It's emotional.

What could we do?

- › Deliberative learning from other services and parts of the wider system where transitional approaches are more embedded.
- › ‘Drawing down’ best practice from safeguarding adults into safeguarding adolescents: rights-based approaches, MSP, wellbeing focus.
- › Considering how Contextual Safeguarding and Complex Safeguarding and other innovations in children’s safeguarding might inform safeguarding of young adults: place-based, partnership approach.
- › Reflect on how safeguarding responses can overlook – even exacerbate – vulnerability...iatrogenic interventions?
- › Build local capacity for system redesign, analysis, cost-benefit.

Six key principles

- › **Empowerment:** People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent.
- › **Prevention:** It is better to take action before harm occurs.
- › **Proportionality:** The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
- › **Protection:** Support and representation for those in greatest need.
- › **Partnership:** Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse.
- › **Accountability:** Accountability and transparency in safeguarding practice.

A system, not a service

- › Beware assuming this is only about statutory safeguarding provision.
- › Developing a more fluid, developmental response requires more than a ‘service’ – whole place *offer*.
- › The community must be seen as part of that system – professional intervention does not last for ever.
- › The role of the community (inc schools / colleges) is far more than ‘referring in’ – it’s also about creating safe spaces, enabling healing and rehabilitation. Implications for L&D – ‘awareness raising’ is not enough.
- › Commissioning can be a powerful lever for system change – if it operates systemically.
- › ‘Human Learning Systems’. (Lowe and Plimmer, 2019)

Money matters

- > The economic context makes innovation as difficult as it is essential.
- > The current approach isn't great value...
- > Investing in preventative and recovery-oriented work to promote people's safety and wellbeing can play an important role in avoiding the costs of later intervention.
- > Evidence from the UK and international contexts suggests that failing to help young people recover from harm and trauma can mean that problems persist and/or worsen in adulthood, creating higher costs for the public purse.
(Chowdry and Fitzsimons, 2016; Kezelman *et al*, 2015)
- > Adults facing multiple problems and adversities can find services are not able to meet their needs effectively, meaning this group of adults 'end up living chaotic and expensive lives'. (see MEAM Network)

What practice leads told us (and each other)

- > We 'get this' and we want to do this. We want to innovate to minimise the 'gap(s)'.
- > Give us permission and trust us to do this.
- > We need leaders to steer us through the challenges eg organisational & institutional barriers.
- > We need leaders to create a joint vision across the LA & partners, communicate it to all, and support us to work together.

Children's services to Adult services: Can we develop a shared culture that meet the legislative & regulatory requirements for us both? Can we pool budgets? How can we help you develop 'early help' for adults?

Adult services to Children's services: Identify young people in transition – tell us who is coming through! Help us understand adolescent devt and we will help you with positive risk taking approaches. You need better legal literacy – esp. re mental health - we can help with this.

Transitional safeguarding

- > Binary notions of child/adulthood can mean that young people can 'slip through the net' or face a 'cliff-edge'.
- > Many environmental / structural factors that increase children's vulnerability persist into adulthood, resulting in unmet need.
- > Investing in preventative work to promote people's safety and wellbeing can play an important role in avoiding costs (financial and human) of later intervention.
- > Resilience, self-efficacy, social connectedness – all key to wellbeing – invites relational practice (and concordant policy).
- > Does *not* propose all young adults facing risk should be protected via statutory means, nor does it propose a paternalistic approach to safeguarding young adults.
- > **If not now, then when? If not you, then who?**

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Thank you

