

action for children UNIVERSITY OF STIRLING

Action on Neglect - a resource pack

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UNIVERSITY OF DUNDEE ESRC ECONOMIC & SOCIAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

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Action on neglect: fieldwork

- 4 meetings with 3 local authority areas over a one year period
- 3 meetings with a parents group from a different local area, whose children had been subject to Child Protections plans or been removed from the family
- 3 meetings with a group of young people who had experienced neglect (age 14-17 years)

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Action on Neglect
- a resource pack

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Young people's views of neglect



- It's not enough love
- My parents not spending time with me
- Having to look after your brothers and sisters
- Not getting helped with homework
- My parents neglecting themselves
- Having messy hair and clothes , getting judged for my appearance.
- My parents having no control

"Love is a doing word"

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How the project came about

- The initial study (and subsequent book) by Brigid and colleagues 'Noticing and Helping the Neglected Child: a systematic literature review (part of Safeguarding Children Across Services Research Initiative)
- Application for ESRC Follow-on Funding
- Continued partnership work with Action for Children



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What does neglect feel like ? young people's views

- Putting up a pretence
- Covering up my feelings
- Having no friends
- Other kids not realising how hard it is
- Loosing focus at school and then getting told off
- Getting the mickey taken out of you, but I blamed myself not my parents

"I didn't think much about it at the time but when I look back I think it shouldn't have happened"

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Parents' views of neglect

- It's like you see on the NSPCC adverts
- It's when children are under-weight and dirty
- Not having enough money to give them the right food and giving them pasta all the time
- It can be because of parents drinking or using drugs too much
- It's when there is bad language in the house or a violent abusive man
- It's when children go to strangers too easily – or when they are clingy

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Practitioner groups: local systems and processes

- Do systems work? Where are the barriers to children and their families getting help?
- Where do pathways between services work well and why?
- Where are the hurdles? And how can these be overcome?



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Practitioner groups: format

- Overarching themes: understanding, responding to and helping neglected children
- Research summaries and questions to prompt discussion
- Use of case studies (from Childhood Neglect : Improving Outcomes for Children Training Materials, DfE)

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Practitioner groups: children's journeys

- Focus on local examples of children's experiences of being helped
- Development of composite children's pathways
- Getting away from the language of services - putting the child back in the centre



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Practitioner groups: reflection and discussion

- Composition varied between areas
- Structure and keeping to topics v opportunity for free-flow and honest exchange of ideas
- Recording the sessions and analysis: the reality of constraints and realistic 'solutions'

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Practitioner groups: barriers and solutions main themes – identifying children

Parents' and practitioners' perspectives

- Making services 'easy to reach'
- Parents who resist: who is seeing the children?
- Filling the gaps and then tuning in to children: opportunities

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Practitioner groups: barriers and solutions main themes- responding to families

- Taking time to listen and understand
- Dilemma: which children are most in need?
- Forms and meetings: skills and approaches
- Streamlining pathways to help; avoiding duplication

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Practitioner groups: participation

- Opportunities to reflect on practice with those from other disciplines
- Reminder to keep child at the centre
- Solution-focused
- Interest in what parents and young people say



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Practitioner groups: barriers and solutions main themes- helping children

- Being a parent: learning the skills from others – combining care with ‘warm authority’
- Schools as a ‘hub of help’
- Adolescent and ‘middle-class’ neglect
- Balancing parents’ capacity to change with the (daily) impact of neglect on a child

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Letters from young people and parents

- How these were written
- The letters – seeing things from service users’ perspectives
- The experience of being consultants to the project

‘It was good to hear other young people’s experiences and find out that others had been through some of the same things when they were younger’

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The pack: other contents

- Links to practice examples
- Court processes and inspections
- Theoretical bases of neglect
- Research and useful practice materials

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And finally.....

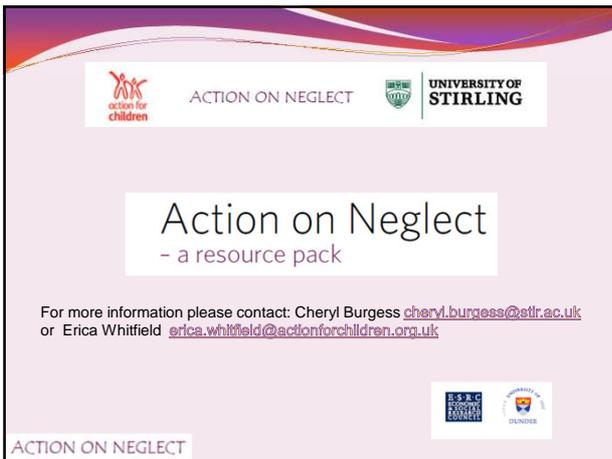
Young people said:

‘take me seriously and really listen’

Parents said :

‘be positive – it’s really hurtful and I can get upset but it’s worth it in the end’.

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The slide features a decorative header with a purple and red wave pattern. It includes logos for 'Action on Neglect', 'University of Stirling', 'R.S.P.C. (Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children)', and 'Centre for Child Protection'. The main title is 'Action on Neglect - a resource pack'. Contact information for Cheryl Burgess and Erica Whitfield is provided. The footer contains the text 'ACTION ON NEGLECT' and a small logo.

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- a resource pack

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