

The Looked After and Accommodated Children's Psychology in Falkirk:

A Service Ahead of its Time

A child is
looked
after
when...

provided with
accommodation by
a local authority
under section 25 of
the 1995 Act; or

subject to a
supervision
requirement made
by a children's
hearing under
section 70 of the
1995 Act; or

subject to an order,
authorisation or
warrant (child
protection order,
child assessment
order, place of
safety)

subject to a
permanence order
..... under section
80 of the 2007 Act.

Thresholds for admission to the looked after system tend to be high.



Children subject to care proceedings have usually been known to children's social care services for a number of years.



Applications are often rejected by courts and cases continue to be managed via family support.

Being
accommodated

Why do children come into care?

- Care received deemed to be causing “significant harm” e.g. Protection from ABUSE, NEGLECT
- Crises in family – planned respite/shared care e.g. breakdown of family unit – marital breakdown; death of parent; imprisonment of parent/carer; psychiatric disorders of parent
- Child’s behaviour deemed “unmanageable” – violent/threat to others/ “uncontrollable” – respite/shared care
- Court order – crime/offence committed
- AT THAT PARTICULAR POINT IN TIME THERE IS NO OTHER VIABLE CARE OPTION



Looked after children can too often become needy, disenfranchised and alienated adults. It is widely accepted that they are more likely to: need mental health services; go to prison; be homeless; and, have their own children removed from them. The cost of wasted potential, of long-term support services including the cost of imprisonment, and of another generation of children in public care is almost beyond comprehension. (BAAF and TFN 2005:4)

Accessing services

- Young people in care are less likely to engage with mental health services.
- Research demonstrates that they are more likely to refuse, not meet criteria, or drop out of services.
- Reasons identified include a lack of information, transport difficulties, inconvenient appointment times, off putting venues', lack of home visits, lack of parental advocacy, a lack of support for carers as reasons for not attendance.
- Attachment difficulties, mistrusting adults and low self worth are also likely to impact on their ability to attend.



Why do they need support?

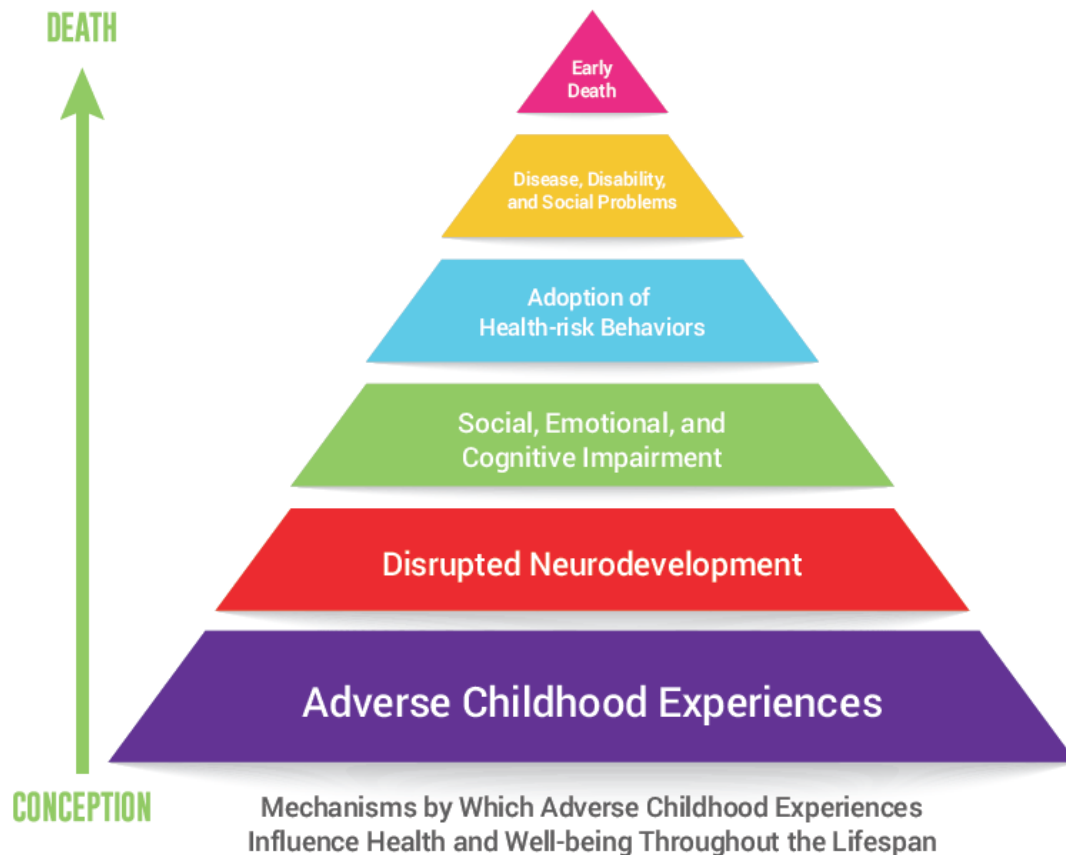


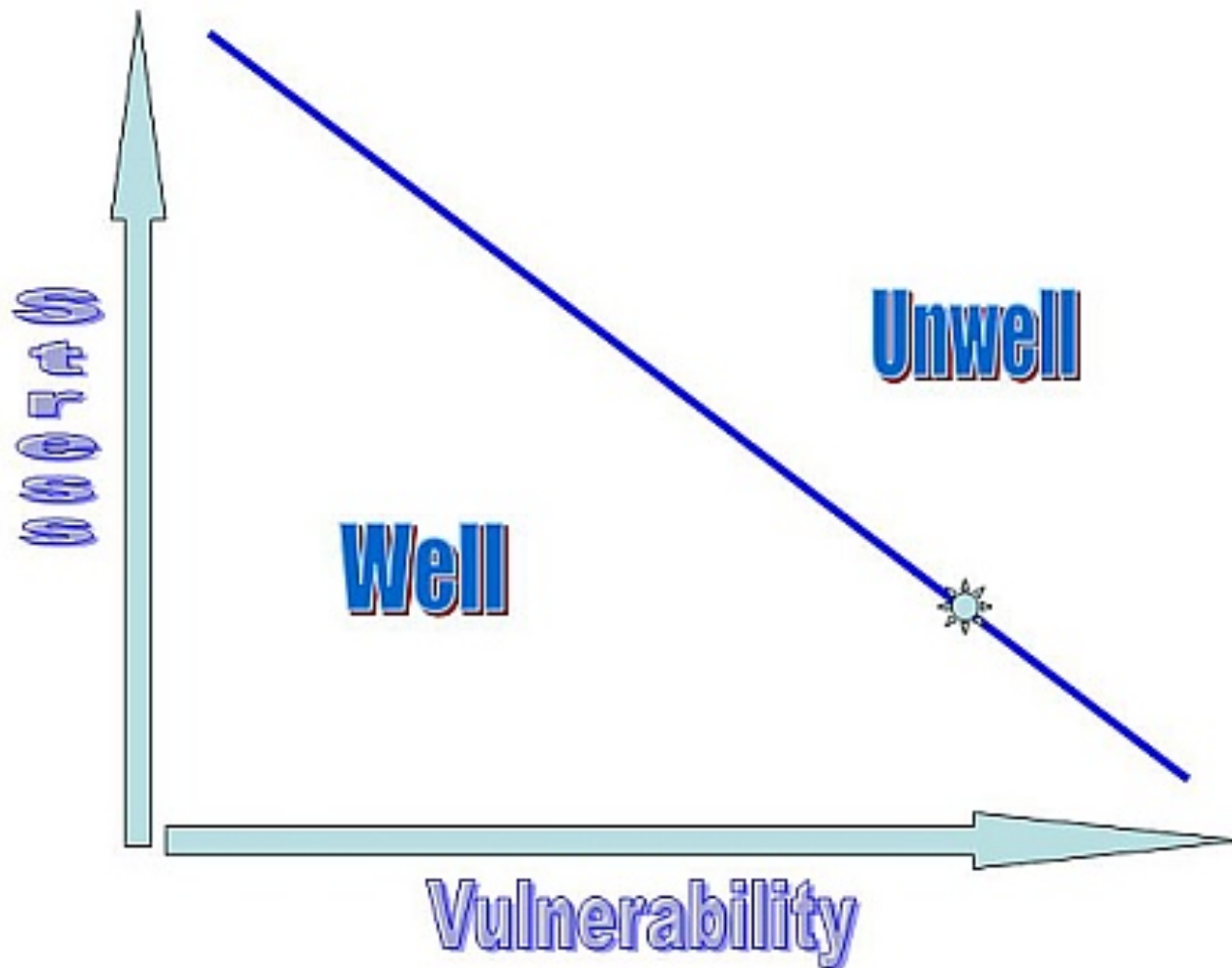
Child abuse and neglect are the major reasons that children become accommodated.

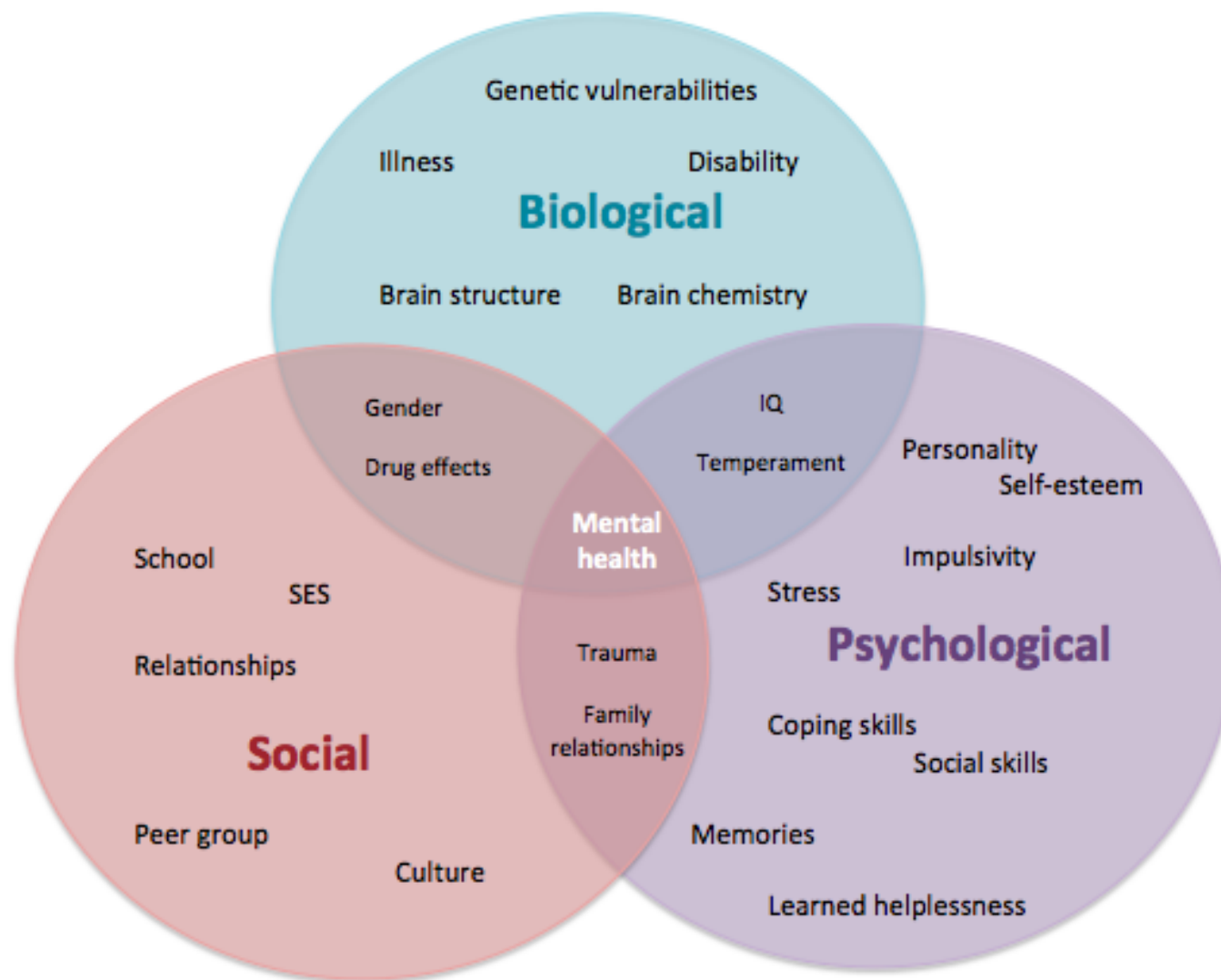
Such experiences are all classed as major risk factors that predispose an individual to the development of psychological difficulty or mental disorders.

ACES

The Impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences on Addiction and Other Health Issues







Social work data (July 2016), tells us that in Falkirk we have:

- 118 looked after children at home
- 105 children in local authority foster care
- 41 in other foster care
- 8 in LA care home
- 11 in residential school
- 4 secure accommodation
- 44 children looked after in kinship care
- 10 with prospective adoptive families

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) referral audit pre LAAC Psychology Service

It was identified that approximately 50% of one to one interventions provided by the LAAC Psychology Service would be out with the CAMHS criteria.



Of those rejected/ discharged by CAMHS the reasons given have been:

improvement in behaviour	move out of area	no moderate-severe mental health difficulties	change in placement resulting in improvements	non engagement
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Since 2012...

We therefore provide a dedicated psychological service where local need requires it.

Partnership Working

The Service Level Agreement

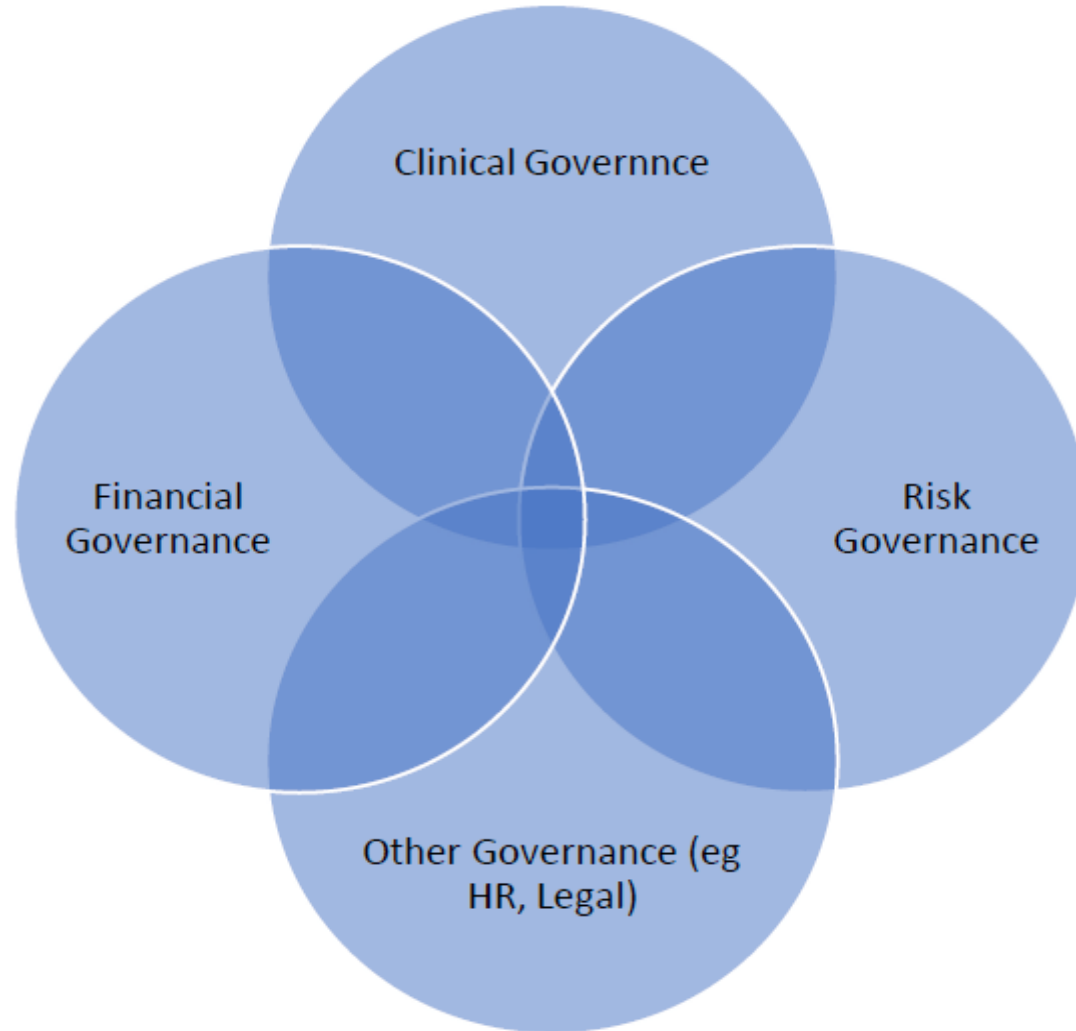


Falkirk Council



‘to ensure children presenting with psychological distress or issues have priority access to responsive and sensitive interventions’.

Accessible, effective, efficient and safe



Where we provide psychological input.

- Child
- Family
- Foster carer
- Social worker
- Residential worker
- School
- Other



The model



The service
remains
focused on
direct work
with young
people & key
professionals.

- one to one therapy with children & young people
- consultation with social workers, foster carers and residential staff, third sector and schools
- assessment of risk (harm to self and others)
- assessment of attachment functioning in respect of young people
- neuropsychological assessments

more.....

- developmental assessments
- cognitive assessments
- parenting capacity assessments
- contact assessments/observations
- sibling assessments
- report writing
- permanence planning
- attendance at child focused meetings

We believe

All looked after children in Falkirk are important.

Each looked after child deserves a specialist service that will meet their needs in a timely, evidence based and competent fashion, regardless of their post code.

The Falkirk LAAC Psychology service is committed to better outcomes for Looked After Children.

Falkirk's Strategic Outcome and Local Delivery (SOLD) plan

SOLD Outcome 3: Our children will develop into resilient, confident and successful adults:

Inclusion - Children and young people live, learn and thrive in Falkirk.

Implement the 6 corporate parenting duties in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act – Part 9

Improving mental health and wellbeing (SOLD Key Priority 1)

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

In 2015 at a Children's Commission consultation event, young people told us that support with mental health and stress was a key priority for them.

- Taking account of the Mental Health Strategy: 2017 – 2027, we will develop systems that support early intervention via promotion and prevention. Some of our children and young people have experienced loss, trauma and abuse and we want to make sure they have the support they need to ensure they can thrive. We want to ensure those experiencing mental illness, thoughts of self-harm/ suicide or significant distress can access the specialist resources and care they need.
- Our referrals to CAMHS continue to increase. Not all children and young people who experience mental distress need support from CAMHS. We want to support ALL of our staff to support children and young people to have positive mental health and for them to feel confident to do this.



Closer to home strategy

At its core the strategy aims to refresh work practices to help strengthen families so that more children can remain safely at home – or within their own community - rather than be placed in a residential home or school often miles away.



- The model of care was designed to provide immediate access (the average waiting time is 1 week) to the right interventions delivered to the right person, at the right time and in the right place.
- This means that the needs of the LAAC population are met quickly and competently and with cognisance of the local context

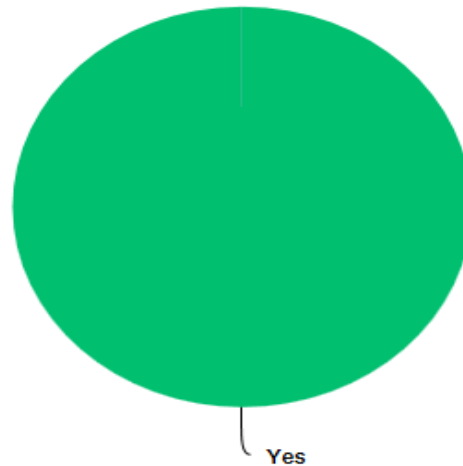
Is it effective?



Survey for Social Workers 2017

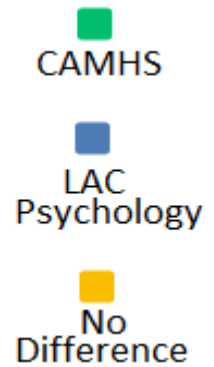
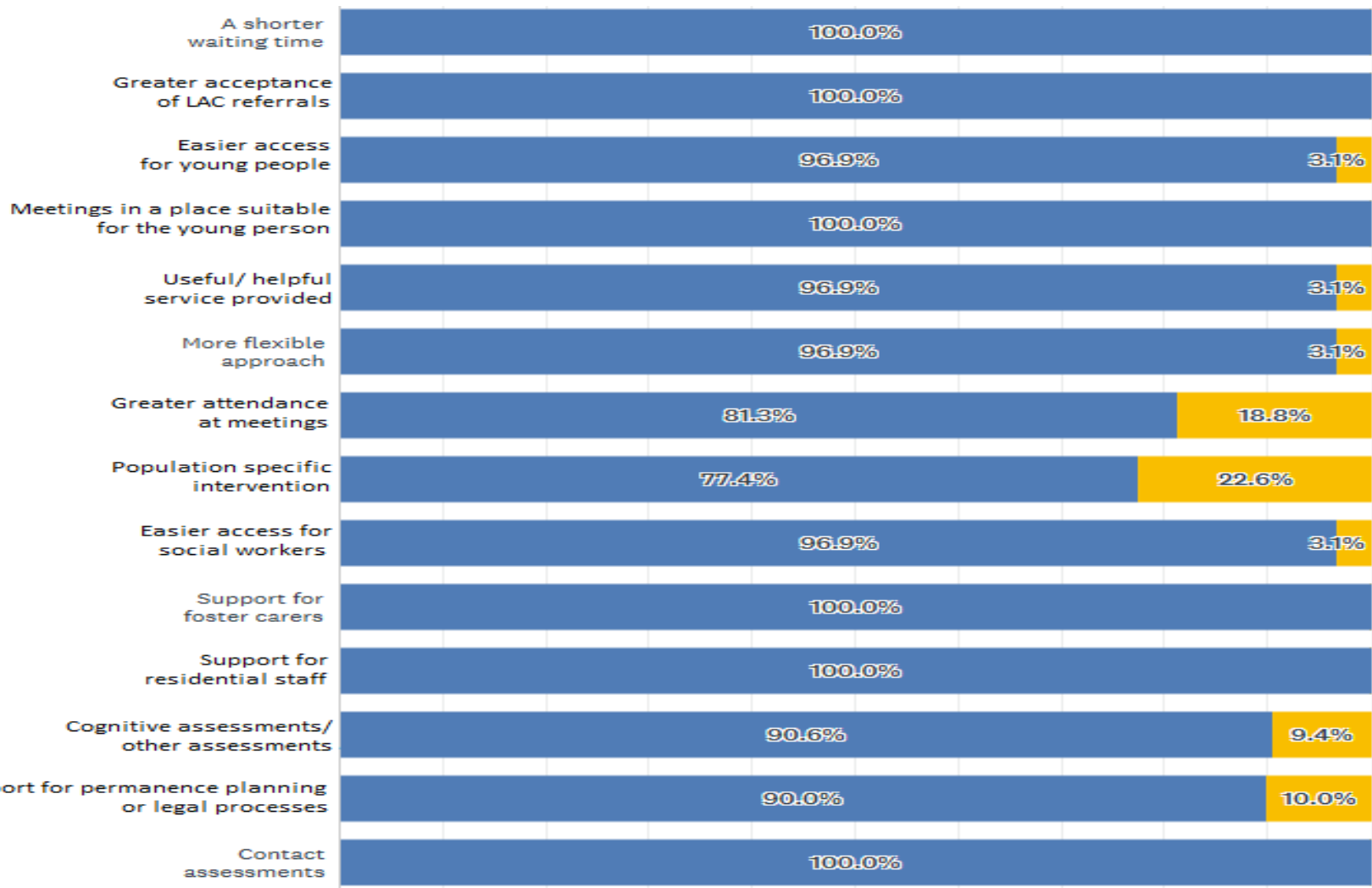
Do you find the LAC Psychology Service useful?

Answered: 31 Skipped: 3



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	100.00%	31
No	0.00%	0
TOTAL		31

Which service is more likely to provide the following for the LAC population?

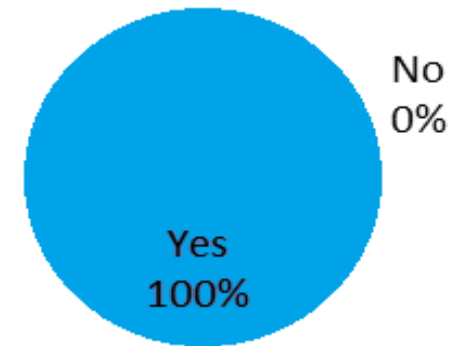


■ CAMHS
 ■ LAC Psychology
 ■ No difference

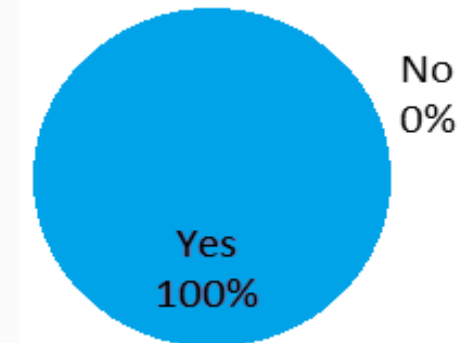


Survey for foster carers/residential staff 2017

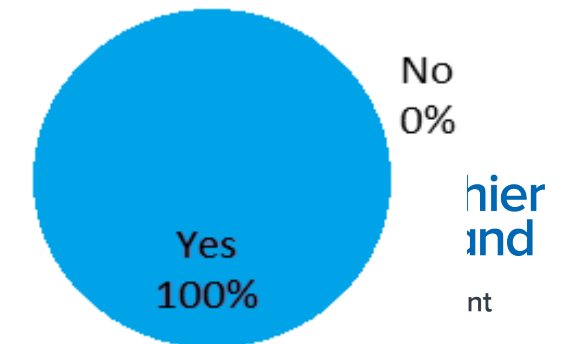
Do you believe that the position of a LAAC psychologist is useful for social work staff?



Do you believe that the position of a LAAC psychologist is useful for carers/residential staff?

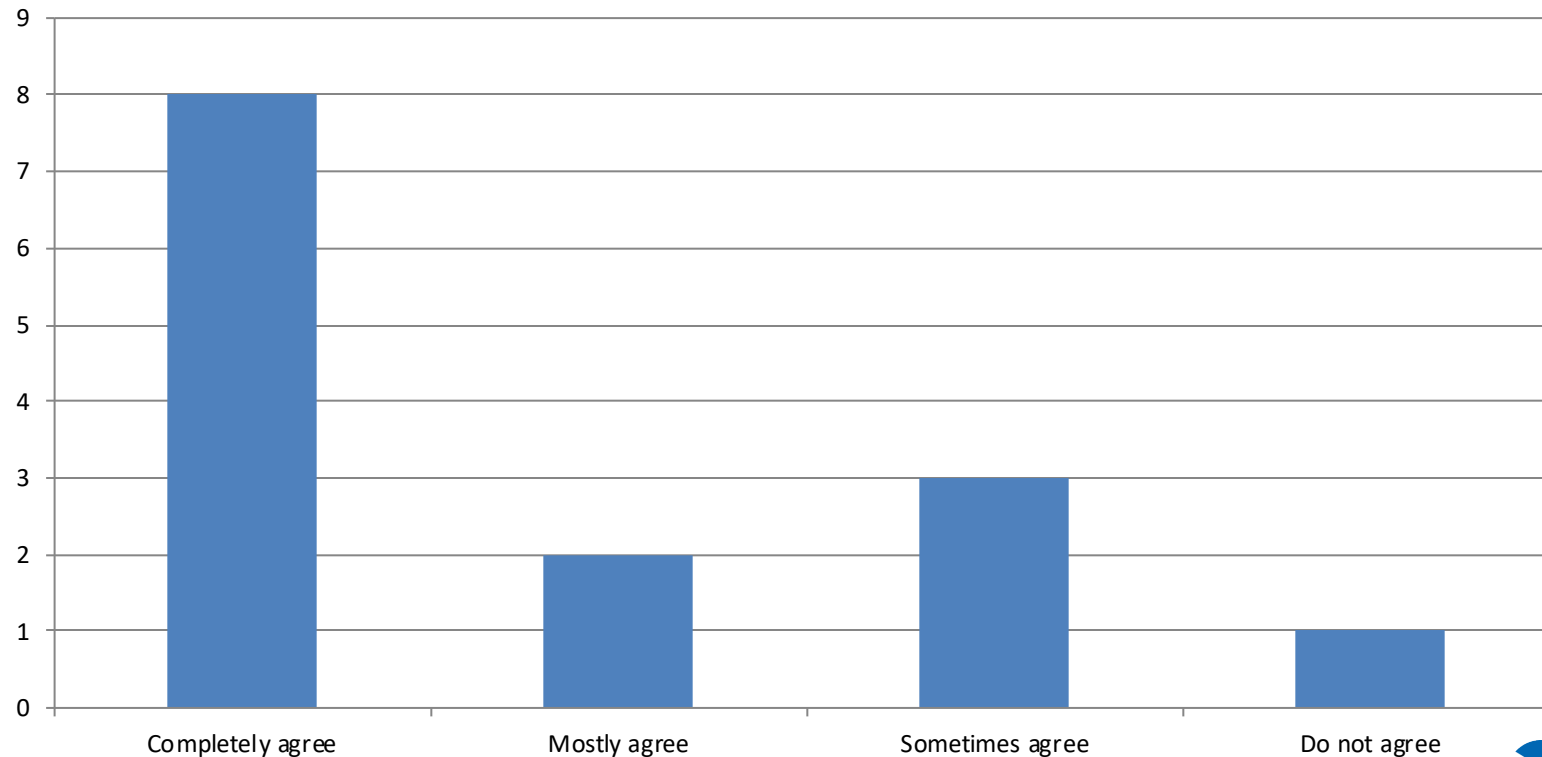


Do you believe that the position of a LAAC psychologist is useful for looked after or accommodated young people?



Survey for young people (over 10 years old) 2017

Seeing the psychologist has helped me see things differently:



How well are children and young people helped to be healthy?

Young people, staff and carers viewed the personalised **service offered by the looked after children's psychologist as very positive** due to her accessibility and persistence in engaging often reluctant young people. In our review of vulnerable children's records, we found that for the children and young people who required them, specialist supports such as CAMHS and speech and language therapy were being made available. However, carers and staff expressed concern generally at the lack of flexible mental health resources available. Care leavers we met were worried about what support would be available after they reached the age of 18. A number of children and young people, particularly those who are looked after away from home, would have benefitted from additional support to address the impact of early life trauma related to abuse and neglect.

How well are children and young people helped to feel included?

“Many vulnerable children and young people were being helped to maintain a sense of belonging and identity within their families as a result of staff having a firm focus on promoting and strengthening family relationships, including those within the wider family network. The looked after children’s psychologist provided valuable support to young people, including those placed out with the Falkirk area, that helped them to remain connected to services and supports. A few vulnerable children needed more help to strengthen their resilience through support to make sense of their early experiences.”

Looked after children's psychologist



Partners recognised that meeting the emotional needs of looked after children requires a model for support that takes into account their social systems and provides looked after children and their carers with a range of **flexible interventions** to help them establish a secure base to **develop healthy relationships** and **reduce risk factors**.

Looked after children often sit outside the CAMHS intervention criterion as their needs do not fit with treatment focussed models. In January 2012, Falkirk Council developed a joint working agreement with NHS Forth Valley and employed a full time clinical psychologist for a period of four years. Notwithstanding the need for services to achieve a sustainable approach to meeting the needs of this high risk population, for looked after children in Falkirk, the looked after children's psychologist **has delivered significant benefits for looked after children and those caring for and supporting them**. The services provided include one to one interventions; consultations with foster carers and social workers; attendance at planning meetings for children and young people; training of social workers, teachers, foster and kinship carers and residential staff; contribution to service development; providing professional advice to children's hearings and undertaking assessments of risk, cognitive functioning and emotional attachment.

Young people are **seen promptly**, generally within three weeks, often within one week. Many young people are able to access the service on more than one occasion. They appreciate being **seen within their care placements** rather than attending a clinic and this **includes those placed out with the Falkirk area**. Foster carers are helped to support children with difficult contact arrangements. Residential staff in regulated care services both within and out with the Falkirk area identify how the role is helping the young people they care for and building capacity in the staff group. The **highly personalised flexible approach has demonstrated considerable successes in overcoming barriers to accessing and sustaining engagement with vulnerable young people**.



Is it efficient?



Spend to
save

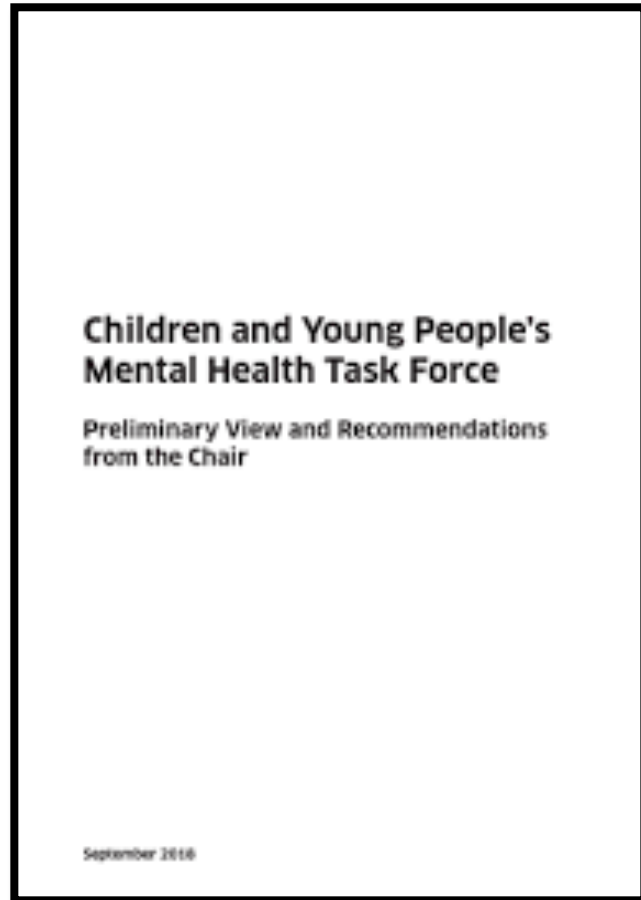
Cost of care

Cost of residential

Cost of secure

Future costs

Ahead of its time because...



Thank you

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A service ahead of its time