

DECP 2012



PROGRAMME and ABSTRACTS

Holiday Inn, Stratford-upon-Avon
11–13 January



Symposia

Perspectives on professional engagement with vulnerable children

Prof Tony Cline, University College London

Significant adults who support vulnerable children and young people can obtain advice from a variety of supporting professionals, which can lead to a deeper understanding of children's problems, enhance empathy, facilitate clear interventions and maintain professional motivation. However there are many personal and social forces that can upset the balance between their aspirations and action.

Educational psychologists have a role in consulting with significant adults such as teachers, teaching assistants, social workers, residential care staff and others in order to foster high professional standards, often in difficult circumstances. Therefore, the psychologists' work needs to be underpinned by a strong evidence base about the engagement of adult staff with the children in their care. Only if the constraints, dilemmas and strategies of front line professional staff who work with children are understood, can effective support be provided to them. This symposium, which presents some recent research undertaken during the UCL CPD professional doctorate programme, will illustrate different ways in which such an

evidence base may be developed. Studies are outlined which illuminate the attitudes and decisions of direct contact of professionals working with out-of-age children, children with special needs in mainstream settings and young people who are sexual abusers

Paper 1

Competence, confidence and creativity: Meeting the needs of professionals who support vulnerable children

Prof Tony Cline, UCL & Dr Sean Cameron, UCL

Objectives: This presentation will introduce and summarise the background to this symposium, outline its main themes and consider some of the issues that are raised for educational psychology practice, training and research.

Background: Consultation support for change agents represents a complementary but different approach to the more traditional therapy for children, focusing less on the child and more on the empowerment of staff. Psychologically-informed consultation can provide meaningful and effective support to people who are working directly with vulnerable children and young people in schools and family, residential and foster homes. However for consultation to work, the consultant needs to be aware of the constraints (as well as the possibilities) in the work contexts of these significant adults and to appreciate the attitudes and decision making processes that inform their practices.

Key points: We will examine strategies for preparing applied psychology practitioners for work in an increasingly challenging and unpredictable working context. Illustrations will be given from two areas of practice in particular – support for residential staff in the child care system and preparation for rapid increases in the rate of social and cultural change. How can consultants best foster the enhancement of key capabilities for working with vulnerable children – competence, confidence and creativity?

Conclusions: Educational and Child Psychologists can make a distinctive and essential contribution to consultative support for those working with vulnerable children, young people and their families if their knowledge and practice is firmly grounded in psychological theory, research and evidence-based applied practice.

Paper 2

Decision-making factors involved in the consideration of retention of children out-of-age cohort: application to professional practice

Dr Anne-Marie Baverstock, Oxfordshire EPS

Objectives: To explore the decision-making factors that primary school senior managers applied to situations in which retention was considered.

Design: International research has identified that particular group are more at risk of retention. Little is known about the practice of retaining children out-of-age cohort in the UK. Analysis of one Local Authority's School Census data noted some commonalities. Given the confirmation of the existence of the practice, further investigation through an exploratory study of factors involved in influencing retention decisions.

Method: Grounded theory methodology is applied to data gathering through 10 semi-structured interviews with primary school senior managers.

Results: The following major categories are identified: observed and anticipated characteristics of children considered for retention; spectrum of provision; decision influencers; stance on retention. The relationship between these major categories and their informant sub-categories are analysed.

Conclusions: Participants' existing stance on retention as a practice was found to be central to the approach they took to considering retention requests. Their views on the spectrum of provision are closely related to their stance on retention. Temporary changes in stance on retention could be produced and several decision influencers demonstrated some power in this regard to certain circumstances. The model has application for professionals involved in discussions where the question of moving a child out-of-age cohort is raised. The use of the model can enable professionals to objectively cover a wide range of issues related to retention decisions which can help school staff and families come to an informed decision.

Paper 3

Teachers' general and student-focused attitudes towards the inclusion of students with special educational needs

Dr Charlotte Friel, States of Guernsey EPS

Objectives: Teachers' attitudes appear to be an influential factor in the realisation of inclusion in schools. This research aimed to explore the relationship between teachers' attitudes towards the ideology of inclusion and towards the actual inclusion of individual students with special educational needs. It was hypothesised that teachers who hold positive views towards inclusion in general would be more positive about the actual inclusion of a student with special educational needs in their class.

Design and Method: 77 general education primary teachers completed a survey looking at their views around inclusion in general and the actual inclusion of a statemented student with special educational needs in their class. Eight of these teachers participated in interviews to further explore the complexities of their views around this area.

Results: Survey findings indicated a small, but significant relationship between attitudes towards general and actual inclusion. This suggested that the more positively rated the inclusion of a student with a statement of special educational needs, the more negative views of inclusion in general, particularly in relation to classroom practices, and vice versa. Teacher interviews indicated that this relationship may relate to teachers seeing actual inclusion as an ongoing challenge. This involved the difficult balance between the needs of their included student with a statement of special educational needs and those of their whole class.

Conclusions: This exploratory research highlights the complexities of teachers' views around inclusion. The implications for teacher support will be discussed.

Paper 4

Safeguarding the safeguarders

Dr Sarah Hatfield, Norfolk EPS

Objectives: Providing help and support for children and young people who sexually abuse peers are challenging professional activities, requiring careful support of both staff and the vulnerable children they are working with. A local authority commissioned this research to evaluate and inform future development of training and practice to support children with sexually inappropriate behaviour.

Design: The study investigated the resilience levels of key workers with the multi-agency team, aiming to identify mediating variables that contribute to increased levels of reported resilience.

Method: The participants were 24 key-workers employed by a local authority, including educational psychologists, clinical psychologists, social workers, teachers and specialist assistants. Participants completed a measure of adult resilience before and after completing the training course. Follow up 14 months later identified that six of the original 24 participants had left the employment of the authority and a further 16 were no longer involved in the multi-agency team. The research focus, therefore shifted to investigate the high attrition rates.

Results After a further follow up structured interview thematic analysis suggested that high personal resilience levels and perception of high organisational and supervisory support were insufficient to sustain working in emotionally demanding safeguarding contexts. .

Conclusions: Factors in key workers choosing to leave the team appeared to include lack of role clarity, insufficient attention to own emotional needs, team structure and perceptions that supervisors did not have sufficient specialist skills to supervise work in this context.



DECP Annual Professional Development Event 2012

Perspectives on professional
engagement with significant
adults supporting vulnerable
children

A research symposium by graduates
from the CPD Doctorate course at
UCL (DEdPsy)





**Competence, confidence and creativity:
meeting the needs of professionals who
support vulnerable children and young
people**

Tony Cline and Seán Cameron



What do Educational and Child Psychologists need to provide a *competent* service?

Autonomy...

Knowledge and skills ...

Responsibility

Atkinson, T and Claxton, G. (2000) *The Intuitive Practitioner*. Buckingham: Open University.

What do educational and child psychologists need to provide a *confident* service?

Without professional wisdom (reflective practice) cannot...

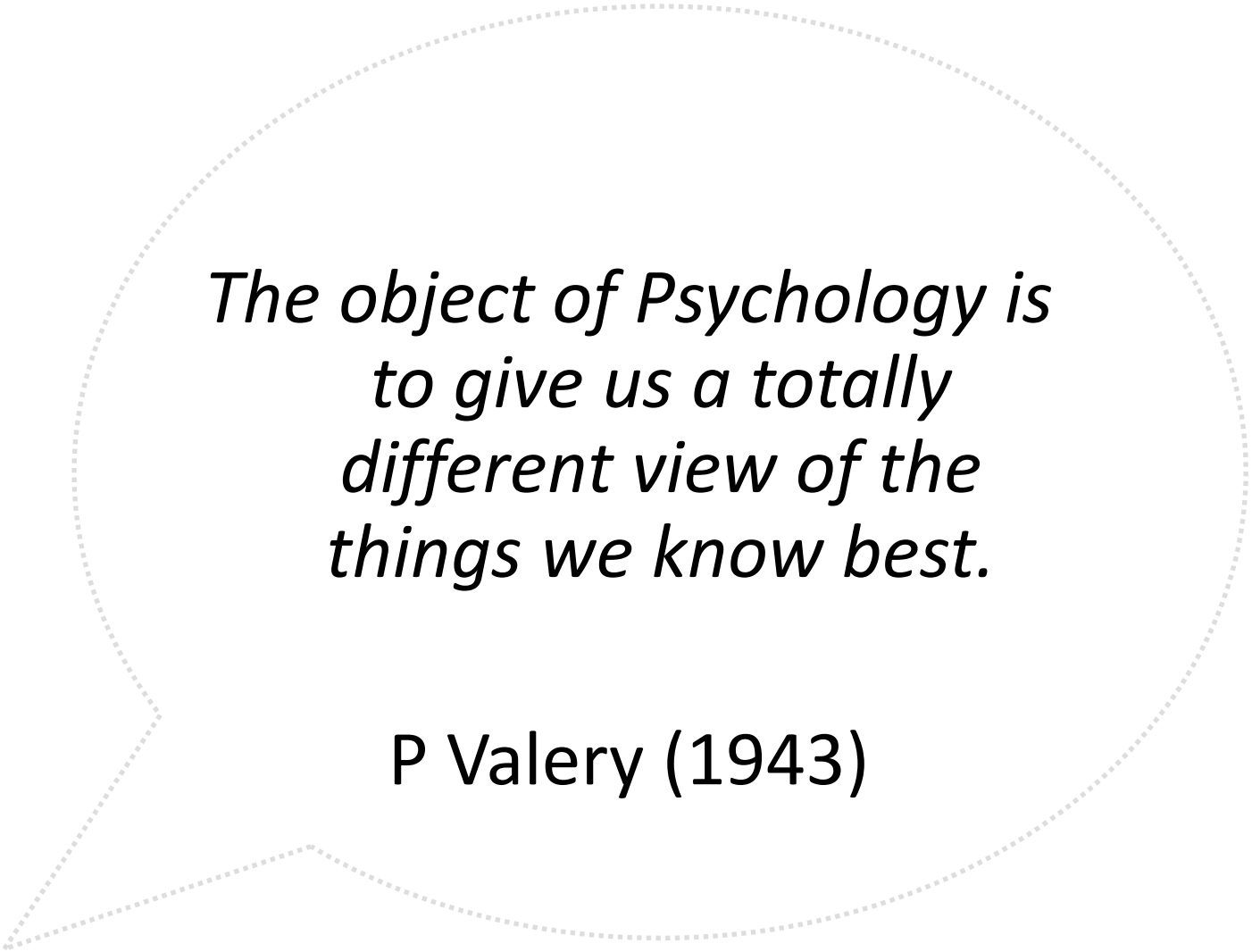
- Adapt to local circumstances;
- Operate intelligently in areas where research evidence is absent, sparse or incomplete.

Without empirical evidence, professional practice cannot...

- resolve competing approaches;
- Generate cumulative knowledge;
- Avoid fads, fancies and personal favourites.

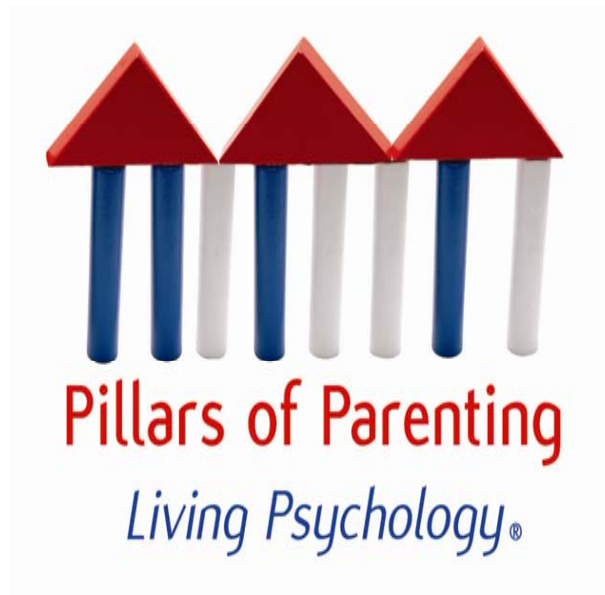
What do educational and child psychologists need to provide a *creative* service?

- ***Familiarity with the applied psychology research base***
- ***Interpersonal competence***
- ***The 'professional artistry' needed to apply Psychology in context***
- ***A belief that Psychology is one the most powerful forces for positive change in our society***



*The object of Psychology is
to give us a totally
different view of the
things we know best.*

P Valery (1943)

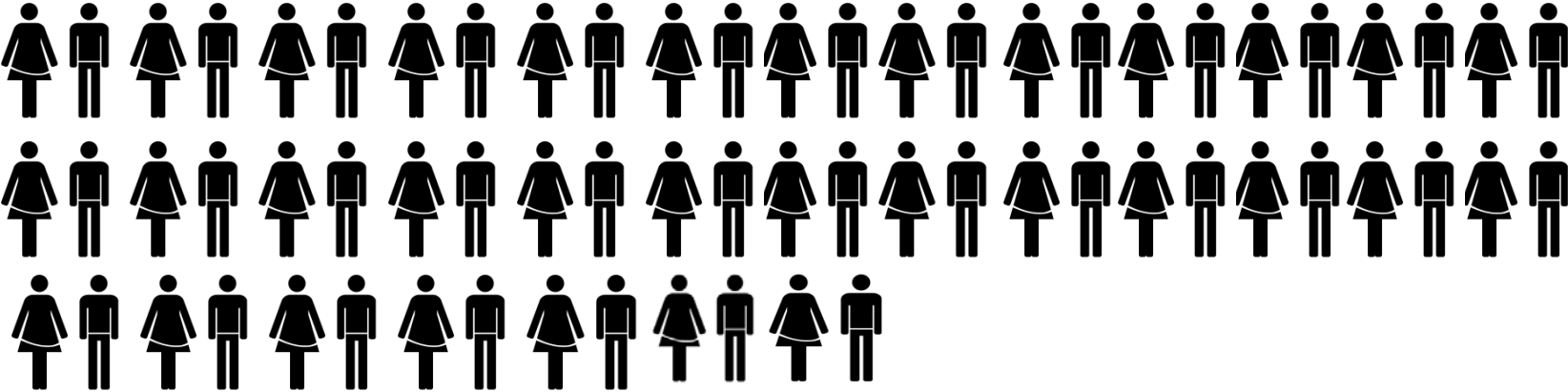


The Pillars of Parenting is a Social Enterprise set up to empower residential and foster carers of children and young people who have been rejected, neglected and abused.

Meeting the *Psychological* needs of children in care

- Meeting their *parenting needs*
- Supporting their *adaptive emotional development*
- Enabling them to build on their *signature strengths*
- *The experience of Living Psychology*
- Reference source: Cameron, R J and Maginn, C. (2009) *Achieving Positive Outcomes for Children in Care*. London: Sage.

There were 65,500+ children in care for the year ending 31 October 2011

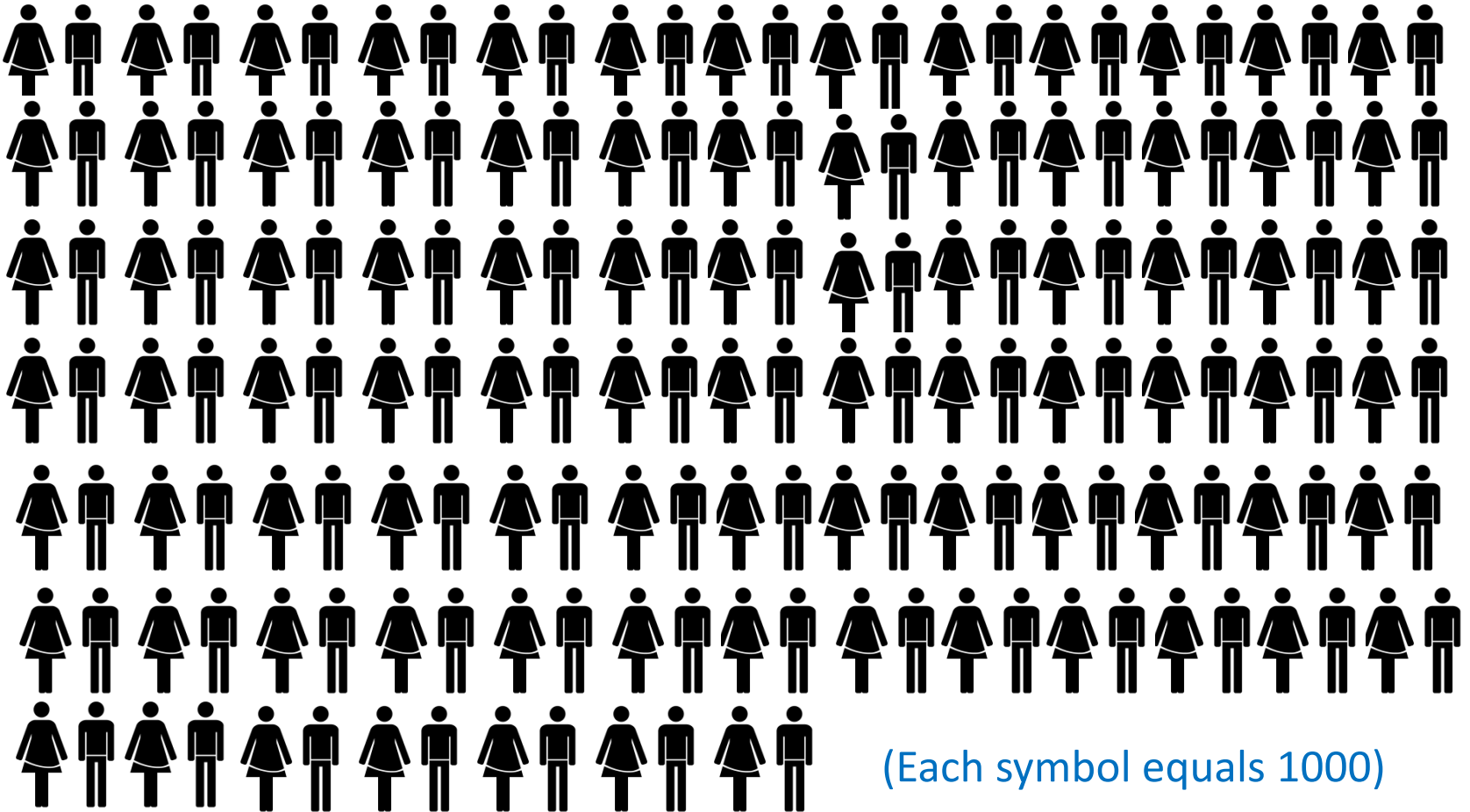


(Each symbol equals 1000 children)

Source:

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/index.shtml>

There are over 170,000 carers or support staff..



Today's menu for this symposium


Introductory comments (Sean).

Dr Anne-Marie Baverstock. *Decision-making factors involved in the consideration of retention of children out-of-age cohort: application to professional practice.*

Dr Charlotte Friel. *Teacher perspectives on Inclusion*

Dr Sarah Hatfield. *Safeguarding the 'Safeguarders'.*

Concluding Comments (Tony).



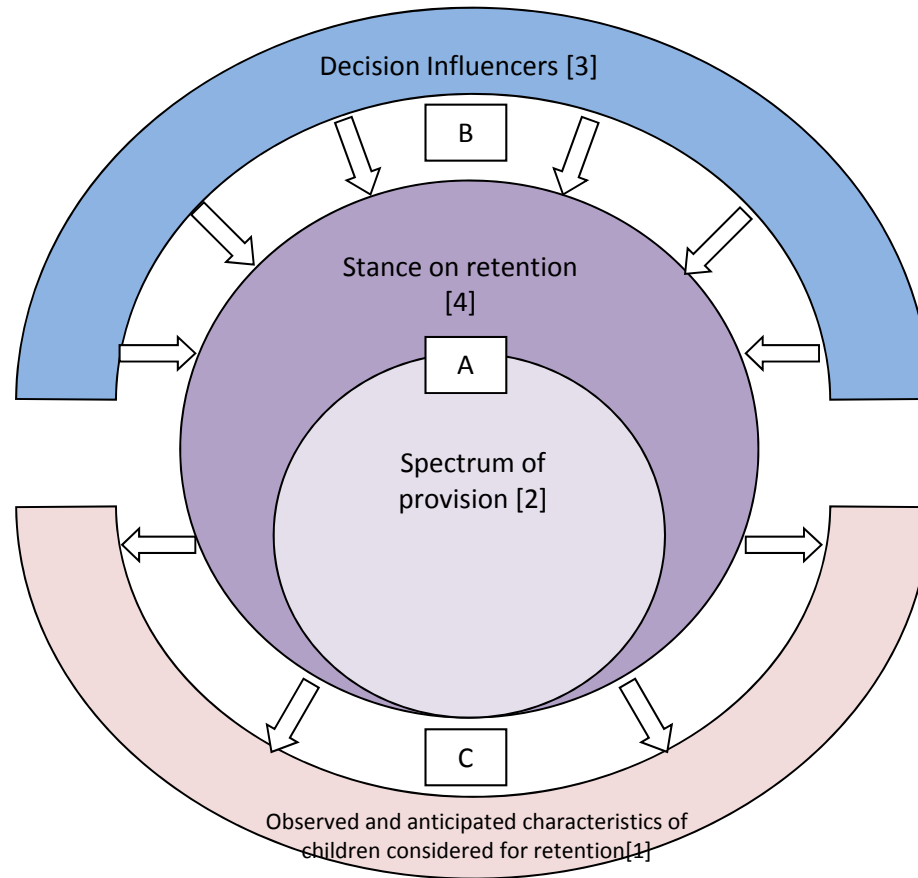
Decision making factors involved in the consideration of retention of children out-of-age cohort: application to professional practice.


Dr. Anne-Marie Baverstock
Oxfordshire Educational Psychology Service
DECP Conference
12th January 2012

Who is retained in one LA?

- School Census data (PLASC)
- Significant association between retention and:
 - Gender (male)
 - Season of birth (summer born)
 - EAL
 - SEN
 - Low achievement
 - Learning Difficulties
 - BESD (using SEN descriptor)

A grounded theory model





How can this model aid professional practice?

- “Developmentally young” conceptualisation might be operating
- Model can stimulate discussion where retention is being considered
- Developed the model into set of questions for direct and indirect consideration



Thank you for listening.

anne-marie.baverstock@oxfordshire.gov.uk



Model into questions

- What is the school's stance on retention as a practice?
- What are the general characteristics that might lead to the consideration of retention out of age cohort?
- What is the spectrum of provision available to the child both practically and conceptually?
- What are the key influencers on the decision to retain?

Retention out of age cohort decision making factors framework

WHAT IS THE SCHOOL'S STANCE ON RETENTION AS A PRACTICE?

- Does the school regard retention as intervention in its own right?
- Does the school consider repetition of a year as helpful or irrelevant?
- Does the school believe in the concept of "catch up"?

WHAT ARE THE GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS THAT MIGHT LEAD TO THE CONSIDERATION OF RETENTION OUT OF AGE COHORT?

- Are there concerns about developmental? E.g. Special Educational Needs (SEN), particular types of difficulties, what is the severity of the child's needs?
- Are there particular maturational factors that require consideration? E.g. physical size, independence & self-help skills
- With whom does the child have significant relationships?
- What is the length of the child's school experience? E.g. have they had interrupted schooling, are they summer-born, did they defer school start date?
- Does gender play a part in the consideration of retention?

WHAT IS THE SPECTRUM OF PROVISION AVAILABLE TO THE CHILD BOTH PRACTICALLY AND CONCEPTUALLY?

- How willing/able is the school to match provision to need?
- To what degree does the school differentiate?
- Does the school consider individualisation of provision as part of its role?
- Does school placement become an issue ahead of retention?
- Is retention offered as an alternative to change of placement?
- Does the school consider the peer group of the child
- What are the curriculum expectations in the child's current class?
- What is the attitude towards play-based learning?

WHAT ARE THE KEY INFLUENCERS ON THE DECISION TO RETAIN?

- Is the child coming to a natural transition points? E.g. primary to secondary school , moving from Early Years setting to school
- Are there factors particular to the school that are influencing the decision? E.g. class organisation (vertical grouping), assessment time (SATs)
- Are there particular factors associated with the child and their family influencing the decision?
 - Would retaining have a negative psychological impact? E.g self-esteem, identity
 - What are the social needs of the child currently and in the future? Who do they currently associate themselves with?
 - Are there parental factors exercising an influence on the decision?
 - What are the likely consequences and impacts on the child? Current and future?
- Are there bureaucratic issues affecting the decision?
 - Are all involved the decision aware of the local policies, processes and procedures?
- Is there contention or consensus between those involved in the decision? Are you in the role of arbiter?

Dr. Anne-Marie Baverstock, Oxfordshire Educational Psychology Service

Teachers' Perspectives on Inclusion



Perspectives on Professional Engagement with
Vulnerable Young People

Dr Charlotte Friel
cfriel@education.gov.gg

Inclusion...

There is no single definition of inclusion (e.g., Odom, 2000;).....

This research used the following:

'...the process of increasing the participation of students in, and reducing their exclusion from, mainstream curricula, cultures and communities. We link the notions of inclusion and exclusion together because the process of increasing participation of students entails the reduction of pressures of exclusion.'

(Booth & Ainscow, 1998, p. 2).

What research said about inclusion

The research base looking at inclusion suggested:

- some benefits to inclusion, with no significant drawbacks (e.g., Farrell, Dyson, Polat, Hutcheson & Gallannaugh, 2007; Kalambouka, Farrell, Dyson & Kaplan, 2005).
- it is a dynamic and interactive process, with the school environment potentially impacting upon inclusion (e.g., Dyson, Howes & Roberts, 2002; Lindsay, 2007).

The literature on the inclusion of students with special educational needs in general schools pointed to the potential importance of the school-based environment, including aspects such as the attitudes and behaviours of others within schools.

Research aims...

Teachers' attitudes appeared to be an influential factor in the realisation of inclusion in schools.

- As a result this research aimed to explore the relationship between teachers' attitudes towards the ideology of inclusion and towards the actual inclusion of individual students with special education needs.
- It was hypothesised that teachers who hold positive views towards inclusion in general would be more positive about the actual inclusion of a student with special educational needs in their class.

The survey...

77 general education primary teachers completed a survey looking at their views around inclusion in general and the actual inclusion of a statemented student with special educational needs in their class.

The survey was based on that developed by Stoiber, Gettinger and Goetz (1998) in Wisconsin, USA. It consisted of:

- a question relating to the *actual inclusion status* of a student with special educational needs.
- *Thinking About Inclusion* - a general attitudes towards inclusion scale, with 3 sub-scales (*Core Perspectives*, *Expected Outcomes* and *Classroom Practices*).
- the *Accommodation* and *Preparedness* scales.
- the *Barriers* and *Improving Inclusion* scales.

Survey key findings...

- a high proportion of teachers rated their included student as somewhat successfully included and had a somewhat positive attitude towards inclusion in general.
- correlation analysis indicated a small but significant negative relationship between teachers' rating of actual inclusion and their more general attitudes towards inclusion ($r_s = -.25$, two tailed, $p < .05$).
- further correlational investigation of the sub-scales of the general attitudes towards inclusion questionnaire suggested that this relationship was strongest for the *Classroom Practices* sub-scale ($r_s = -.35$, two tailed, $p < 0.01$).

This indicated that the more positively teachers rated the inclusion of a student with a statement of special educational needs, the more negative their views of inclusion in general, particularly in relation to classroom practices, and vice versa.

Teacher interviews...

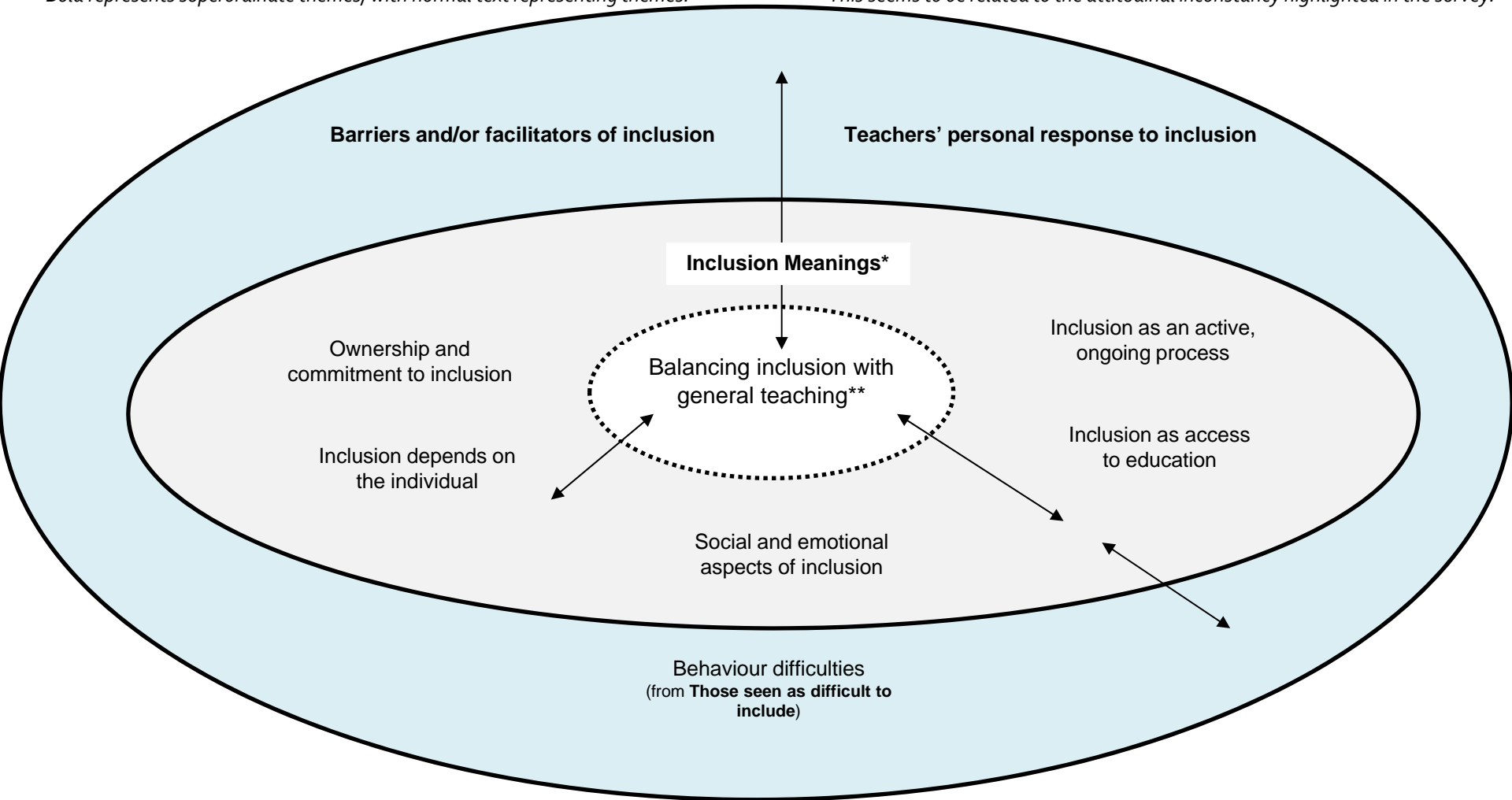
- Survey findings suggested an attitudinal inconsistency around inclusion.
- 8 of the survey teachers participated in interviews to further explore the complexities of their views around this area.
- Here the inconsistent views looked at were a more positive view around actual inclusion and more negative view around inclusion in general (reflecting the typical pattern of response to the survey).
- Interviews were analysed using the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) approach. This attempts to explore participants trying to make sense of their world. It also acknowledges the researcher trying to make sense of the participants trying to make sense of their world (Smith & Osborn, 2003).

Interview findings

- Apparent relationships between interview themes/nature of attitudes towards inclusion.

**Bold represents superordinate themes, with normal text representing themes.*

***This seems to be related to the attitudinal inconstancy highlighted in the survey.*



Juggling?



"Mr. Osborne, may I be excused? My brain is full."

Ways forward...

This research suggests some ways forward for working with and supporting teachers involved in inclusion. For example:

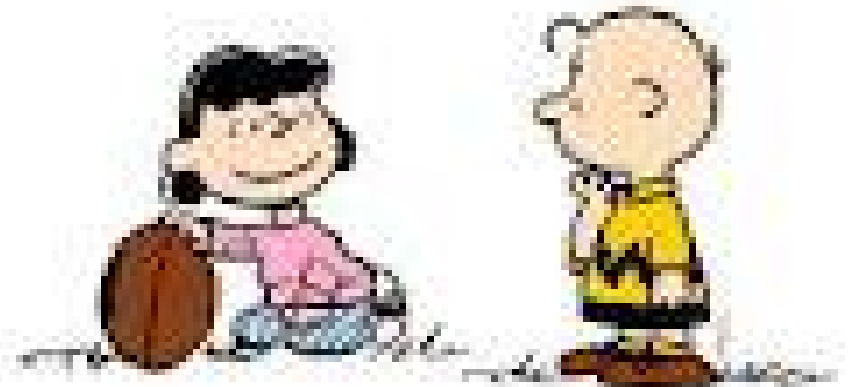
- Be aware that teachers can hold apparently conflicting views about actual and specific inclusion (i.e., seem positive about inclusion while simultaneously being negative about its practice).
- It may be useful to explicitly acknowledge the difficulties in balancing inclusion and look at ways of addressing it (with a focus upon classroom practices).
- Both the survey and interviews suggested teachers would like more practical opportunities to help their inclusive practice. Such Practical and positive experiences of inclusion could include observations and/or joint working with school staff involved in effective inclusion).

Teacher Perspectives on Inclusion...

'...no other circumstance in life, can I think, and maybe I've got my head in the clouds, I would deliberately go about excluding groups of people within my work, space, for example. Life isn't like that.'

(Teacher; in research interview)

NEVER EVER
EVER
GIVE UP!



References

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- Dyson, A., Howes, A. & Roberts, B. (2002). *A Systematic Review of the Effectiveness of School-Level Actions for Promoting Participation by all Students*. Technical Report. In: Research Evidence in Education Library. London: EPPI-Centre, Social Science Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London.
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Norfolk County Council
at your service

Safeguarding the Safeguarders

Dr Sarah Hatfield

DECP 2012

Key Point

- Commissioned research project around evaluation of development of services to support children displaying inappropriate sexual behaviour.

Research project

- Evaluate and inform development of training/practice
- Initial research questions investigated mediating variables around key-worker resilience
- Later research around perception of supervisory/organisational support/clarity of role in team.
- The Resilience Scale for Adults (RSA) (Friborg et al., 2003)

Participants

- 24 participants (12 female/12 male)
- educational psychology, social care, education, clinical psychology and specialist workers from a jointly funded (social care/health authority) family centre
- 2 teams, over 10's and under 10's

Resilience

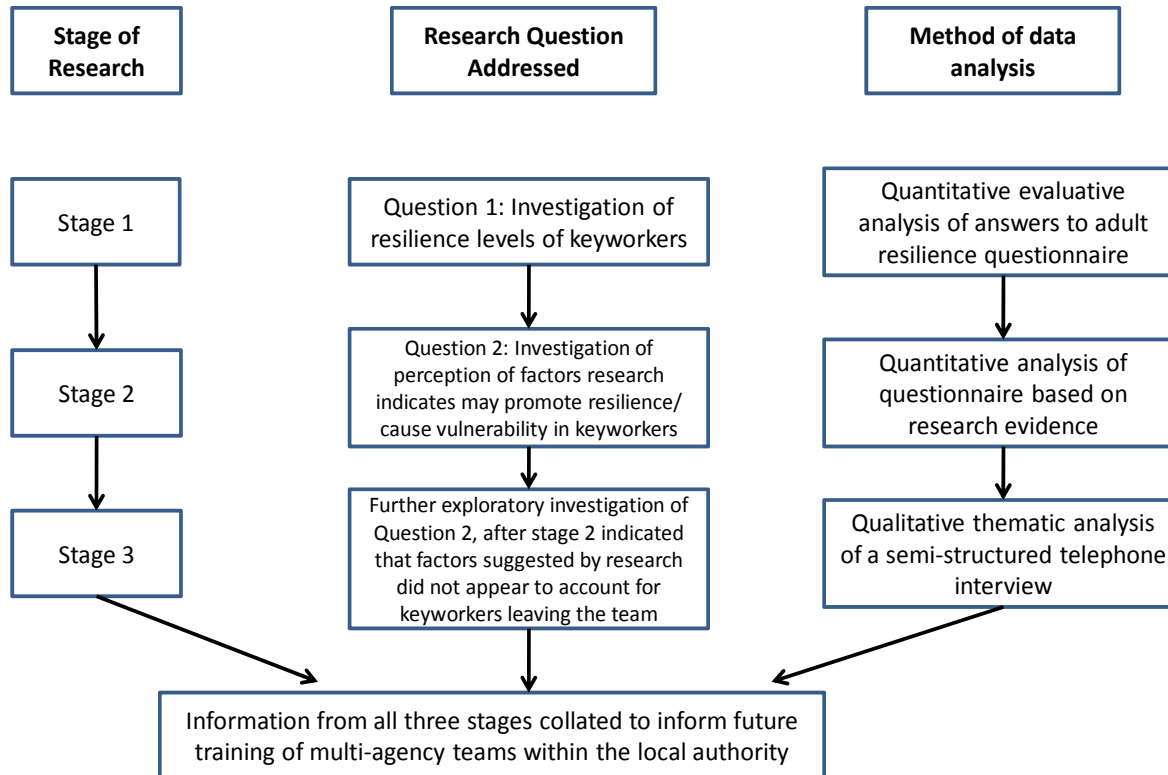
Of 24 participants, 18 remained working in the local authority in the same job title 14 months after the final training course.



Resilience

- Of the 18 remaining LA participants, 14 months after final training only 2 were still actively following team working procedures.
- The research focus moved to investigate why so many participants had left the new multi-agency team.

Research conducted during the three phases of investigation:



Resilience



Results

- No significant change in R levels (or components measured by RSA)
- Perception of supervisor/organisational support was not a factor in staff choosing to leave the team.
- Clarity of role in cases, management of own emotional needs, structure of the staff team and perception of the skills of their supervisors were involved in decisions to leave the team.



Impact of research

- Multi-agency approach maintained.
- Rota system of work partners/supervisor.
- Consideration of emotional need/
supervisory focus.
- Components of resilience, such as self-
efficacy, more useful measure for research.

Engagement with commissioners



Team processes



References:

Friborg, O., Hjemdal, O., Rosenvinge, J. H., & Martinussen, M. (2003). A new rating scale for adult resilience: What are the central protective resources behind healthy adjustment? *International Journal of Methods in Psychiatric Research*, 12, 65-76.



**Perspectives on professional
engagement with vulnerable children
- concluding thoughts**

Three objectives in our work with staff who are engaged with vulnerable children

- Confidence
- Competence
- Creativity

Four objectives in our work with staff who are engaged with vulnerable children

- Confidence
- Competence
- Creativity
- Contextual integrity and stability

Such studies inform our planning of staff consultation by leading us to take account of:

- a) Paradoxes and inconsistencies in teachers' and others' attitudes to their craft (e.g. on inclusion)
- b) Individual and contextual factors that influence decision making on pupils (e.g. on retention)
- c) The interaction between how individual staff see their role and the support available to them on the one hand and their potential for action and creativity on the other (e.g. on safeguarding) ⁴

Professional engagement in times of change

- Shifting situations of and demands on:
 - Teachers
 - Social workers
 - EPs
- Payment by (contested) “results”