



*National Treatment Agency  
for Substance Misuse*

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**Young People & Families**

**Hidden Harm: Families, drugs and alcohol: taking  
practice forward**

**22 June 2010**

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## Parental characteristics and family circumstances are strong predictors of future problems

### Parental drug and alcohol misuse

- Children of parents who misuse alcohol are at a higher risk of mental ill-health, behavioural problems, involvement with the police, and substance and alcohol misuse
- Alcohol misuse identified as a factor in 50% of all child protection cases

### Safeguarding

- Nearly 75% of Serious Case Reviews (2007 study) found that parental mental ill health, substance misuse and or domestic violence, often in combination, were a factor

### Antisocial Behaviour and Crime

- 25% children witnessing domestic violence have serious behavioural problems
- Parents involved in crime have children who are more likely to be both perpetrators and victims of crime themselves.
- 63% of boys with convicted fathers go on to be convicted themselves

### Worklessness and Poverty

- 60% of children of workless households live in poverty - Children in these households are much more likely to be poor and out of work in adulthood

### Education and Skills

- Parental interest in education is four times more important than Socioeconomic Status (SES) factors in influencing attainment at 16

# Safeguarding is everyone's business

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## Learning the Lessons from Serious Case Reviews

- National overview of serious case reviews (where a child died or was seriously harmed) found 75% of cases involved parental drug misuse, domestic violence or mental ill-health
- “The enmeshed interaction between overwhelmed families and overwhelmed professionals contributed to the child being lost or unseen” – Laming report

## Laming recommendations:

- Adult mental health and adult drug/alcohol services should be represented on LSCBs
- Safeguarding is everyone's business - Laming One Year On report published
- S.11 Children's Act 2004- LA duty to investigate safeguarding concerns

## Safeguarding climate:

- Initial and Core Assessments increased by more than 10% (2007/8 -08/9)
- No. of children who started to be looked after increased by 9% (2007/8 -08/9)

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- **Why**
  - **How**
  - **Pitfalls**
  - **Opportunities**

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# WHY

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- **120,000 Children**
- **1 in 3 Adults**
- **Recovery**
- **Motivation**
- **Support**
- **Safeguarding**
- **Life chances**

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# HOW

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- **Local**
- **Planning**
- **Assessment**
- **Referral**
- **Sharing**
- **Management**

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# PITFALLS

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- **Pass the buck**
- **Hold the baby**
- **Hide the problem**
- **Accountability not action**
- **Protect the agency not the child**

# OPPORTUNITIES

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- **Shared ownership**
- **Resources**
- **Reintegration**
- **Community support**
- **Prevent harm**
- **Improve outcomes**

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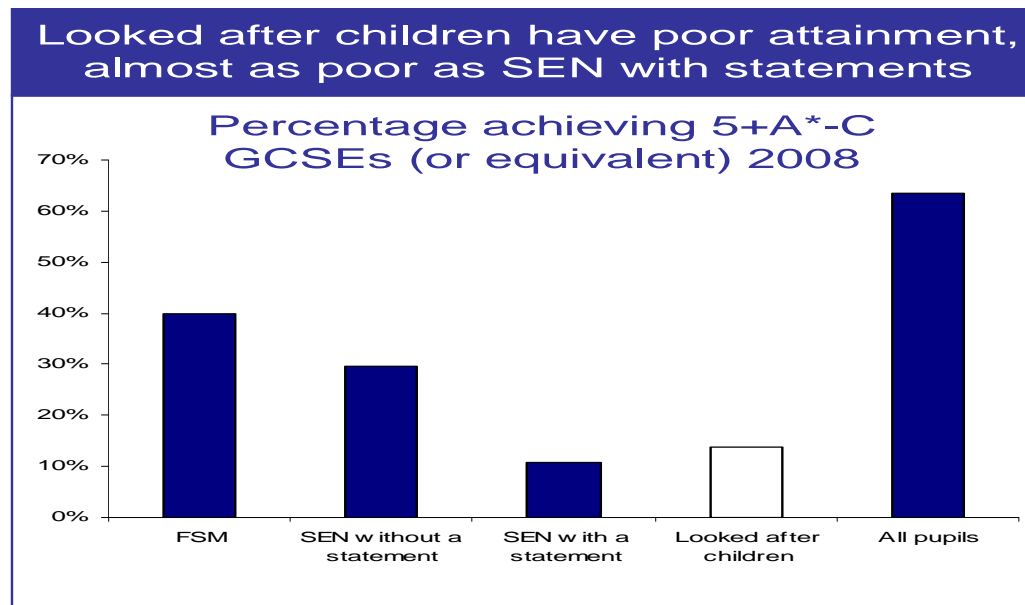
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## Whole family intervention support could act as an alternative to children on the edge of care

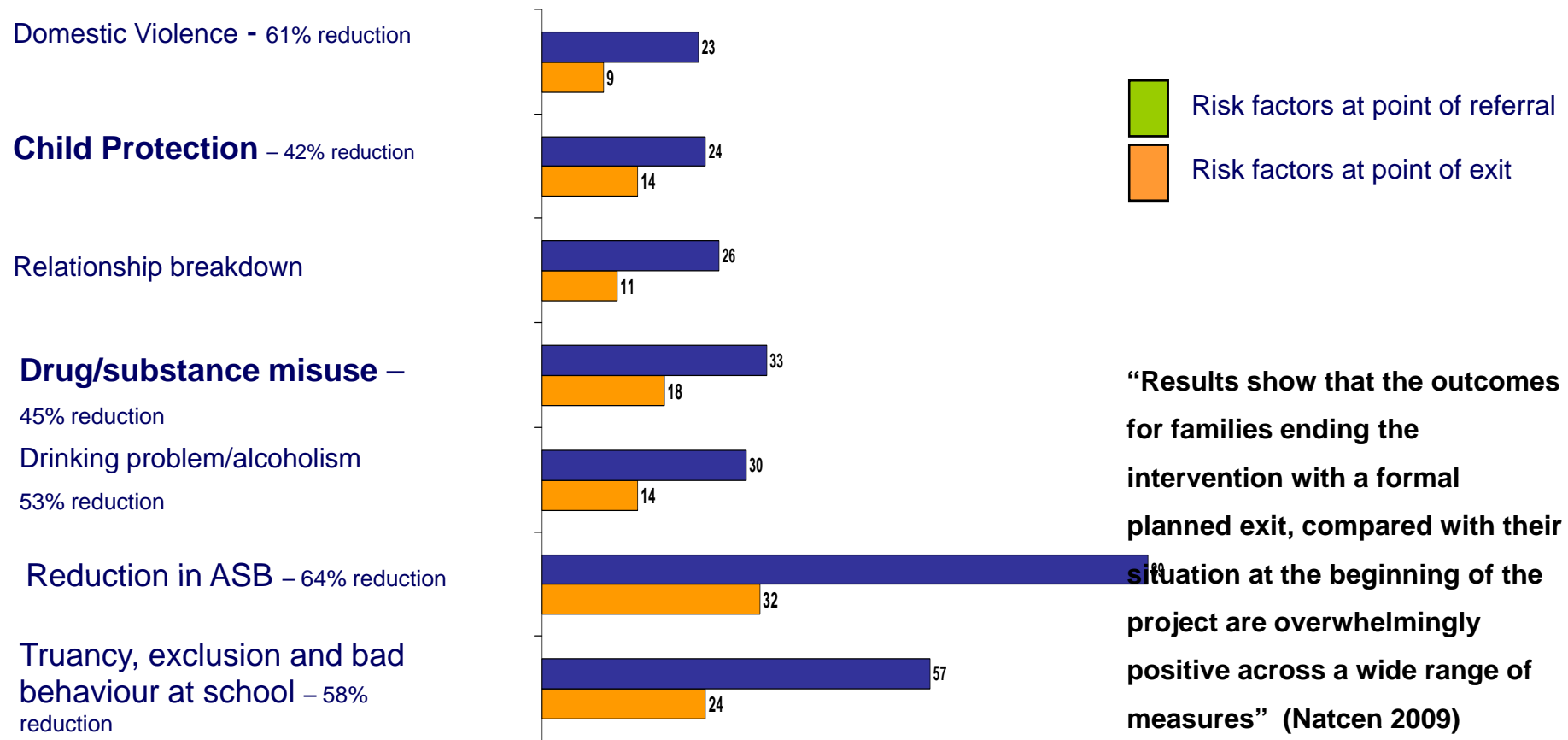
The costs of putting children into care are much higher than supporting them in their family homes, but they may still suffer poor outcomes



- **Family Intervention Projects** work with families experiencing family dysfunction or acute stress, **27% of which include children subject to children at risk proceedings**
- Outcomes for children in these 1,030 families demonstrate reductions in the kind of problems affecting 10-15 year olds who enter care (including a **42% reduction in the proportion at risk**).

# Strong evidence to support Family Intervention Projects and whole family ways of working

NatCen research based on 1013 families who have exited the intervention (March 2010).



## **Family Intervention Projects are Cost Effective**

**Department for Education has developed a Family Savings Calculator (FSM)**

**From a sample set of 40 families/cases who have completed the FSM, collected from 19 local authorities, the average saving per family per year from a Family Intervention Project is £81,624**

# Government's Role

Support local implementation by:

- Facilitating local agencies to share good practice based on evidence
- Removing ring fences on Think Family grant funding so that Local Authorities can prioritise
- Facilitating access to expertise to expand/develop/maintain services
- Create environment for a Big Society response to social problems i.e Non-State funded models; Social Enterprises/voluntary sector

# NTA

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## Current position:

- Recovery
- Local arrangements increasingly in place
- “Families with multiple problems” are a national priority
- Partnership level advocates need to make the case

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## Contact

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