

**The economic case for early and
personalised support for parents with
learning difficulties (LD)**

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PSSRU (Personal Social Services Research Unit); part of LSE Health and Social Care

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the PSSRU website. The browser's address bar shows the URL www.pssru.ac.uk/index-kent-lse.php. The website header features the PSSRU logo and the text "Personal Social Services Research Unit". A navigation menu on the left includes links for HOME, BLOGS, PARTNER SITES, OUR PEOPLE, RESEARCH, PUBLICATIONS, and INTRANET. The main content area has a large blue banner with the title "Creating an Impact: Social Care Research in Practice" and a sub-headline "Learning and recommendations from two years of activity on knowledge exchange and impact in adult social care". Below the banner, there is a call to action: "Conference in London on Wednesday 26 November 2014 is free to attend – click to register". The page is divided into three columns: "About PSSRU" (mission statement), "Publications" (search and browse), and "Research" (wide range of activities). At the bottom, there are sections for "Welcome to PSSRU at Kent and LSE" and "Join our mailing list" with a name input field. The browser's taskbar at the bottom shows various application icons and the system clock indicating 07:36 on 24/08/2014.

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- RESEARCH
- PUBLICATIONS
- INTRANET

Creating an Impact: Social Care Research in Practice

Learning and recommendations from two years of activity on knowledge exchange and impact in adult social care

Conference in London on Wednesday 26 November 2014 is free to attend – click to register

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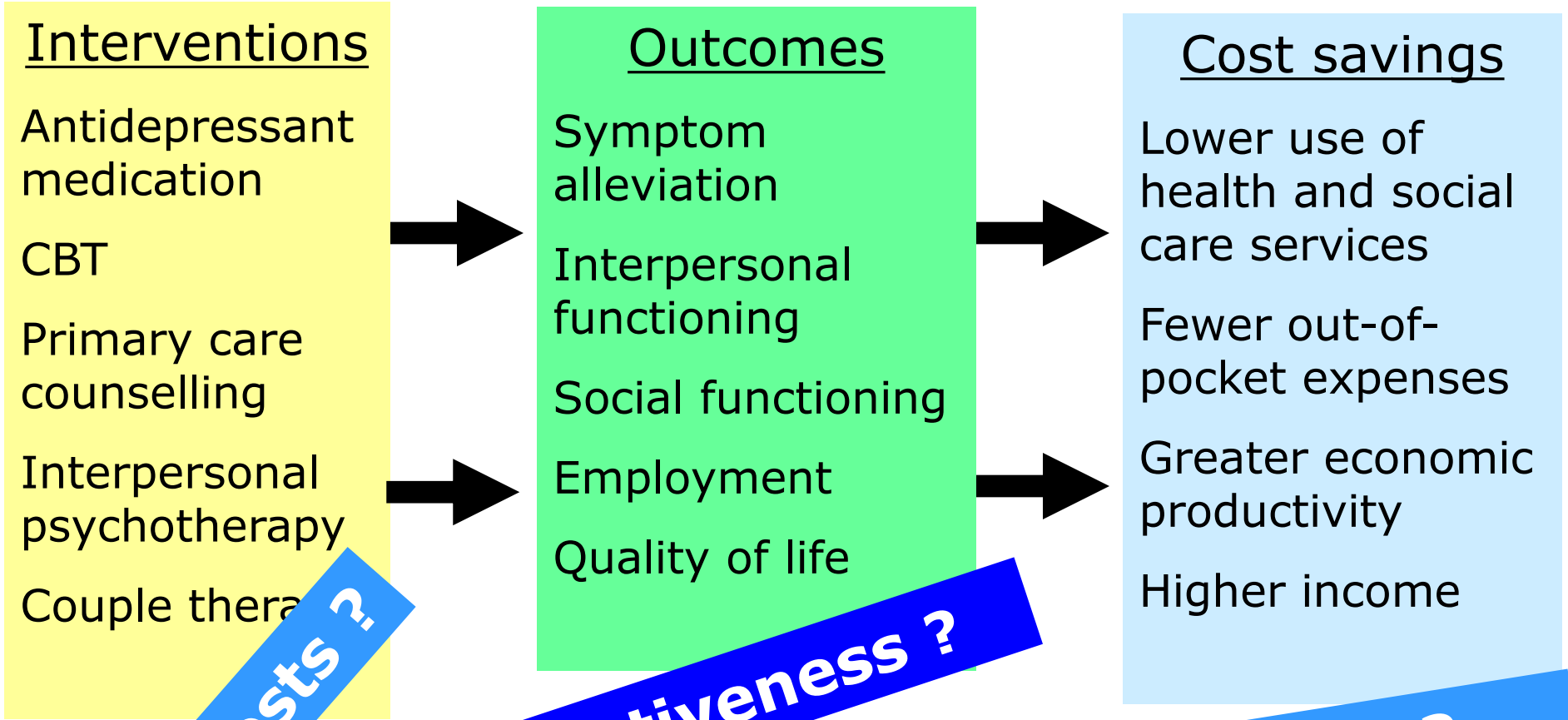
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Decision makers need to know

- what people need and what they want
 - what services can meet those needs
- what staff and other inputs are employed to deliver those services
 - what are the costs of employing them
- how to raise the funds to meet those costs
 - ... and – importantly – also:**
 - what outcomes are achieved
- and whether those outcomes are worth the cost

Is it worth it?



1. Costs ?

3. Cost-effectiveness ?

2. Return on investment?

Why supporting parents with learning difficulties (LD)?

- At much **higher risk of losing their children** into care
- More likely to be involved in child protection cases: 15% to 22% of parents involved in child protection conferences and care proceedings have LD (Brandon et al 2009)
- Often LD **not identified**
- Parents with LD **less likely to seek help** (Cleaver & Nicholson 2008)
- Need for **additional support** as well as **responsive mainstream services**
- Evidence (from other areas) demonstrates cost-effectiveness of **early intervention** (e.g. Allen 2011)

Is early and personalised support for parents with LD worth it?

Questions

- Is early and personalised support for parents with LD **cost-effective** and/ or does it achieve **cost savings**?
 - Which types of support are likely to be cost-effective ?
 - What are the costs and **economic consequences** of different types of **care packages**
 - What are the cost savings in particular in regards to *preventing that child is removed* from home
- => Research for Working Together with Parents Network (WTPN)

Our approach.. influenced by challenges to get information

(1) Case studies of projects that provide support to parents with LD

- Electronic **survey with practitioners** (semi-structured);
- Questions about parents' characteristics; **resource inputs** as part of a care package; **outcomes** achieved;
- Assigning unit costs to resource inputs and outcomes (= economic consequences);
- Other data sources for assumptions about duration and intensity of services

(2) Literature review

- Pragmatic
- Search for evidence more widely

Economic evidence (of some kind) for...

- ...advocacy
- ...shared lives
- ...intensive family interventions
- ...public social partnership
- ...parenting programmes
- ...parenting training
- ...adult learning

Advocacy:

Costs of intervention £3,040; return on investment (ROI) 2.0

Advocacy means ‘Taking action to help people say what they want, secure their rights, represent their interests and obtain services they need’ Lewington & Clipson 2004, p4

Previous research by myself and colleagues on advocacy for parents with LD found

- **Costs of advocacy** ranged widely; average costs were £3,040 per case
- **Return on investment** of 2.0 from a government perspective i.e. £2 pound return for every pound invested;

Advocacy:

Costs savings linked to **reduced safeguarding activities** AND increased access to **early intervention**

- Possible **reduction in safeguarding activities**, care proceedings and arrangements, worth £720 per parent
- Possible economic benefits linked to **increased access to early interventions**, worth £3,130
- Costs of advocacy: £32 per hour, mean length of intervention 95hrs
- Wide range of outcomes: mental wellbeing, placement stability, better relationships with children who had been previously removed, school attendance and performance

Bauer A, Wistow G, Dixon J, Knapp M (2014), Investing in advocacy for parents with learning disabilities: what is the economic argument?, *British Journal of Learning Disabilities*. doi: 10.1111/bld.12089

Advocacy:

Early referral and targeting influences **cost-effectiveness**

Factors that positively *influenced* outcomes:

- **Early referral:** Good practice meant receiving a referral no later than the initiation of a Section 47 enquiry
- **LD as main reason** for parents' disengagement from child safeguarding process;

How advocacy made **a difference...**

- Raised professionals' awareness of and attitudes towards parents with LD;
- Improved joint working with parents;
- Increased **time** spent considering options and evaluating possible decisions;
- Improved interagency working around parents' needs.

Advocacy:

In our case study costs of care package £37,109, ROI 2.3

- **Costs of care package** £37,109;
- Included **advocacy** (£12,500); mother/baby foster placement (£8,400); costs for care proceedings (£4,825); tenancy and financial support incl. housing benefit support (£4,003); social services legal activity for children in need (£2,385); parenting capacity assessment (£1,273); family support worker (£923), social worker (£923)
- **Return on investment: 2.3**
- Savings based on annual costs of **foster care** between £83,585 and £85,045

Shared Lives Schemes:

**Max. costs of intervention
£37,024, ROI 1.7-2.4**

- Here: parent and their child(ren) who need support and accommodation become a regular visitor to, or moves in with, a registered shared lives carer
- “Carers and those they care for are matched for compatibility and then develop real relationships, with the carer acting as ‘extended family’ ” (Shared Lives Plus Ltd. 2011)
- **Costs** of shared lives: £485 to £712 per week and £25,220 to £37,024 per year (NAAPS 2009; Social Finance 2013; PSSRU 2014)
- Vast majority is **payment to carer**
- Return on investment from literature ranged between 1.7 and 2.4

Shared Lives Schemes

Case study: costs of care package

£47,738, ROI 1.9

- **Costs of care package:** £47,738; this included shared lives support (£25,220), social worker (£11,400), special parenting (£5,850), health visitor (£3,380), core group meetings (£1,848)
- **Return on investment:** 1.9 based on prevented foster care and prevented expenditure for housing benefits for the period of a year
- Savings based on annual costs of **foster care** between £83,585 and £85,045 and cost of housing support £3,744

Intensive family interventions:

Wide ranging costs and (unrealistically?)
high ROI

- = **Care coordination** approach: key worker works with a range of agencies to provide a period of intensive support for high risk families often with the aim to prevent children's entry into care (e.g. McDermid and Holmes 2013)
- **Costs** for this support ranged widely between £5,140 and £23,000 (excluding accommodation);
- **Return on investments** for troubled family programmes ranged widely and were arguably unrealistic in size (based on savings for family eviction)
- E.g. Flint et al 2011 estimate at 8.0; and DCSF (2009) estimate of up to 25 for family intervention programme

Intensive family interventions:

Costs of care package

£32,427; ROI 2.6-2.7

Child disability social worker (from case study)

- **Cost of care package** (excluded were costs of service related to child disability) £32,427; this included costs of child disability social worker (£7,349), family support worker (£5,400), care proceedings (£4,825), child in need support (£4,238), advocacy (£4,263), health visitor (£2,600), midwives (£2,600), CBT (£930), adult learning disability team (£134), befriending (£88)
- **Return on investment: 2.6**

Valuing parent support service (from Tarleton et al 2011)

- **Cost of intervention** was £8,450; costs of care package were not evaluated
- **Return on investment 2.7**

Family Support Public Social Partnership : Costs of care package **£42,219, cost savings??**

- Works with parents with LD and their families to enable them to access services in their homes and in the community; consultative, asset based approach in which local networks and resources are identified and utilised
- **Costs of care package:** £42,219; this included the support by PSP (£1,100), care proceedings (£4,825), adoption (£27,000), advocacy (£4,263), welfare advice and housing benefits support (£4,003), social group (£88), health visitor (£260), midwives (£260), social worker (£220), voluntary sector worker (£200)
- No immediate cost savings because child was given to adoption but this was considered the more appropriate care arrangements; likely that positive long-term outcomes were achieved for child and parent but difficult to evidence

Parenting programmes, training and support

Positive Parenting Programme (Glazemakers et al 2013)

- =Adaptation to Triple P
- Longer sessions, more time for relationship and trust building, additional contact; additional elements of support
- Parents achieved some positive outcomes
- Costs were not measured but likely to be higher than costs of Triple P

Training interventions for parents with LD (Cochrane review)

- Different types, common aim to help parents protect their children from harm, and prevent their children being removed from home
- Improvements in: child health knowledge, recognising dangers, home precautions, child care routines, maternal child interaction
- Costs not evaluated

Parenting programmes to address specific problems relevant for parents with LD e.g. child abuse, child behaviour, child (learning) disability (Cochrane review, economic studies e.g. Bonin et al)

- More likely to be cost-effective if they reduce child behaviour problems

Adult learning approaches

McGaw et al 2002, Booth and Booth 2003,
McConnel et al 2008

- For mother with LD, 12wks intervention; involved group meeting as well as one-to-one support, focused on individual goals and strengthening social relationships
- Interventions achieve improved psychological wellbeing and social contacts, quality of life and self-confidence to access support

Befriending programmes or home visiting

Fraser et al 2000; Mead et al 2010

- Targeted at high risk populations
- Reduction in social isolation and improved mental health

Return on investment (ROI) for early and personalised support for parents with LD

Intervention	Cost of care package	Return on investment (range)	Sources
Advocacy	£37,109	2.0 to 2.3	Bauer et al 2013, case study
Shared Lives	£47,738	1.7 to 2.4	NAAPS 2009, Social finance 2013, PSSRU 2014, case studies
Intensive family interventions	£32,427	2.6 to 2.7	Case studies
Public Social Partnership	£42,219	None	Case study

Challenges and limitations

- Evidence on long-term support from case studies and literature; evidence on short-term support from literature only
- Cost of care package versus costs of intervention
- Missing information about resource use and costs
- Mismatch units of costs from the literature and units reported in case studies
- Different time periods covered (12-24 months)
- Return on investment in case studies based primarily on annual costs of foster care provision
- A range of additional outcomes could not be transformed in monetary terms ('monetised')

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Implications and considerations

- Early and personalised support for parents with LD likely to achieve improved outcomes and cost savings i.e. to be **cost-effective**
- BUT.. likely to depend on *timing of referral* and *targeting* groups of parents
- Data of local projects and partnerships **often poor** and not collected collaboratively
- Urgent need for improving collaborative **data collection** practice: information on key *resource inputs* and *outcomes*

THANK YOU!

Please get in touch
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