

# Journal of Adolescent Health & Welfare

VOLUME 2 NO 2 SUMMER 1989

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THE BRITISH "JOURNAL OF ADOLESCENT HEALTH AND WELFARE" is the journal  
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30 CRYSTAL PALACE PARK ROAD; LONDON SE26 6UG

CHARITY NO 296080

Letter from the Editor

Dear Colleague,

In this issue we have included information about the fund raising event at Catford stadium, our seminars and workshops for professional members in London and Glasgow and Youth events. I hope you will read these with interest and 'sign up' for as many events as possible. The 'Summer school' in the Soviet Union is an exciting project which we hope will generate a lot of interest.

I feel that it is appropriate to mention some personal matters by way of explanation to members who may have been in touch with the office in recent weeks. Most of you are aware that I was seriously ill last year and had my gall bladder removed. As a result of that I was unable to attend some of the meetings and some of the YOUTH SUPPORT work was held in abeyance. Following recovery from my illness I left my post in the NHS and am now working almost full time with Youth Support. We were organising a party in Crystal Palace to celebrate this.

In June, Geoff Ball, whom many of you will have met at the RSM and Glasgow last year, accompanied me to the Soviet Union for negotiations regarding the summer school. While there, Geoff had a heart attack. This meant that we had to stay in Moscow for several extra weeks. I am pleased to inform you that Geoff is making a good recovery although he will have to take a back seat here for some time. Unfortunately the party and my planned trip to the conference in Israel had to be cancelled. We apologise to any members and colleagues who had appointments with us or cancelled meetings. Communication to and from the Soviet Union is APPALLING - some will have received messages and others may have been missed - sorry.

Instead of rescheduling the party, we are inviting you all to join us for dinner in the restaurant of the Catford Greyhound stadium on Wednesday 25th October. We should be able to make the event quite a party, the meal there is very good and views of the finishing line are excellent. A ticket application is enclosed - the meal is costing us £15 and the usual entry ticket to the stadium is £2.50 - we are offering an inclusive ticket for £20 which allows a small surplus to go to Youth Support funds. I am sure that none of you will mind being charged for tickets to the dinner/party when the money goes to such a good cause. - anyway you may make a winning on the dogs! Hope to see you all there - please send in early for tickets since numbers are limited.

I am pleased to report that this fifth edition of our journal sees us entering a promising stage. Thank you to all those who sent in their forum subscriptions. We are now nearly up to date with these payments and thus scraped together the money to print this issue. Forum membership is increasing all the time, which is very encouraging, please continue your efforts to involve colleagues.

There is also good news on the financial front for Youth Support, if we all keep our fingers crossed, we should be able to fund a number of new projects next year.

Dr Diana Birch MBBS DCH MRCP MD  
Director "YOUTH SUPPORT".

Patrons: Dame Josephine Barnes; Sir Frank Mills.

CHARITY NO 296080

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP OF THE "YOUTH SUPPORT"

"FORUM ON ADOLESCENT HEALTH AND WELFARE"

PLEASE COMPLETE IN BLOCK CAPITALS AND SEND to:-  
YOUTH SUPPORT 30 Crystal Palace Park Road SE26 6UG,  
Cheques payable to YOUTH SUPPORT

I would like to join the "FORUM ON ADOLESCENT  
HEALTH AND WELFARE" I enclose £20 registration  
fee which covers my first years membership  
(journal included in cost).

NAME ..... POSITION.....  
ADDRESS.....  
.....  
..... PHONE.....

**United Kingdom** Ten thousand copies of an HIV/AIDS school teaching pack have been destroyed by the UK's Department of Education and Science because they lacked a "strong moral message." The Health Education Authority will issue a new, censored version of the pack, which will no longer suggest that pupils compose a list of organizations that could advise on reproductive health concerns. It will, however, warn teachers of recent sex education legislation and move a chapter on sexual intercourse and condoms from the section aimed at 12- and 13-year-olds into the section for 14- and 15-year-olds. (IPPF Open File, International Planned Parenthood Federation)  
**International Clearinghouse on Adolescent Fertility (ICAF)  
Center for Population Options**

MEETINGS MEETINGS MEETINGS

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Our meeting in LONDON will be at the ROYAL SOCIETY OF MEDICINE on thursday 19th october. Coffee and registration at 6pm.

The programme includes 'Adoption of teenagers', 'Young people's worries in a nuclear age' and possibly sexual abuse issues in adolescence. Some people may find it difficult to travel to London for just one evening meeting so we have decided that this year we will provide a fuller programme. A workshop will be held from 2pm - 4pm in a committee room at the RSM on the afternoon of 19th October. The theme will be RISK TAKING IN ADOLESCENCE. Numbers are limited so please apply early.

The shops in oxford street (immediately adjacent to the RSM) are open late on a thursday night so members will have time to browse around the stores between 4 and 6pm if they wish or to relax in the lounge area. Please note that, fully paid up members may attend the evening meeting free and may bring guests free of charge. (We do need to know numbers in advance). They may also attend the workshop and bring guests at the reduced fee of £5 each.

Non members pay £5 for the evening meeting and £10 for the workshop or may join the forum for £20 and incur no further charge for attendance.

Members coming from far afield who would like help with overnight accomodation should write in as soon as possible. We are considering making available beds in London members' houses in exchange for a small donation to Youth Support (about £10).

\* \* \* \* \*

MEETING IN SCOTLAND - GLASGOW SATURDAY 28th OCTOBER 10am - 1pm. The meeting will also have a workshop format. The theme will be "Obstacles to providing effective services for youth" and should cover assessing needs, problems with statistics, communication difficulties (interprofessional and service/client), psychological issues. Venue Royal Hospital for sick children - YORK HILL GLASGOW - in the conference room of the department of Child Psychiatry - Many thanks to Professor Parry-Jones.

Are you interested in becoming a YOUTH SUPPORT REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE? We would be delighted to hear from you. If you think that there would be sufficient interest for a meeting in your area please write enclosing details of suitable venue, list of interested people and suggestions for speakers.

"FORUM ON ADOLESCENT HEALTH AND WELFARE"

THURSDAY OCTOBER 19th at the ROYAL SOCIETY OF MEDICINE, 1 Wimpole Street, London W1

PLEASE COMPLETE IN BLOCK CAPITALS AND SEND to:- YOUTH SUPPORT, 30 Crystal Palace Park Road SE26 6UG. (Cheques payable to YOUTH SUPPORT)

MEMBERS ONLY:-I will attend the afternoon workshop 2-4pm with ..... guests and enclose £5 registration fee per person (total.....)

I will attend the evening meeting 6-9pm and I will bring ..... guests.

NON MEMBERS:-I wish to attend the afternoon workshop 2-4pm with ..... colleagues and enclose £10 per person (total.....)

I wish to attend the evening meeting with ..... colleagues and enclose £5 per person (total.....)

OR I wish to join the forum and enclose £20 membership fee including attendance at the workshop and evening meeting.

NAME ..... POSITION.....  
ADDRESS.....  
.....  
..... PHONE.....

"FORUM ON ADOLESCENT HEALTH AND WELFARE"

GLASGOW MEETING SATURDAY 28TH OCTOBER 1989

PLEASE COMPLETE IN BLOCK CAPITALS AND SEND to:- YOUTH SUPPORT, 30 Crystal Palace Park Road SE26 6UG. (Cheques payable to YOUTH SUPPORT)

I am a forum member and wish to attend the GLASGOW workshop meeting and will bring ..... guests (free of charge).

I am not yet a forum member, I wish to attend the GLASGOW workshop meeting with ..... colleagues and enclose £5 fee per person (total.....)

NAME ..... POSITION.....  
ADDRESS.....  
.....  
..... PHONE.....



SPONSORED RACE NIGHT...

Wednesday 25th OCTOBER 1989 at CATFORD STADIUM, Catford Bridge SE6. Tel: 01-690 2261.

## YOUTH SUPPORT - SCHOOLS PROGRAMME

YOUTH SUPPORT are establishing links with schools with the aim of mutual benefit.

We have for some time focussed on the educational aspect of our work and our "Forum on Adolescent Health and Welfare" has recruited a high proportion of education staff in our membership.

SCHOOLS will gain by -

- participation in YOUTH SUPPORT exchanges and in our aiding liason with youth in other countries.
- use of YOUTH SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL SERVICES in terms of a) support and education programmes for staff (eg dealing with sexuality issues, child abuse and other difficult areas, plus staff counselling and support) and b) counselling and health education service for pupils.

YOUTH SUPPORT will gain by -

- + Closer contact with schools and teachers in planning and administering our services.
- Support of schools in our appeals

### CURRENT PROJECTS

1. We are arranging exchanges with youth in the Soviet Union. This is on two levels.

a) Teenagers wishing to establish friendship with schoolchildren in Russia should be willing to correspond with the Russian teenager for several months, after which they will be able to visit Russia as guests of their pen pals family and school. There is no need for the British pupil to be studying Russian - correspondence can be in English. The aims of the project are two fold, allowing Russian pupils to gain knowledge of another culture (and vice versa) and secondly to allow pupils who would not otherwise be able to travel, to experience a holiday abroad.

b) Exchange of students with interests in computing.

A group of British pupils will be able to participate in a BOAT TRIP holiday in the Soviet Union. This will coincide with a course including computer workshops and lectures to improve general knowledge of several aspects of computer technology and application. There would also be ample opportunity for social exchange and learning about each other's culture and language in an enjoyable and entertaining setting. Teaching will be in English and Russian.

The group would be divided into two subgroups:- A - introductory - younger age group (11-16) with little knowledge of computing. B - advanced - older group (17-22) mainly University students or those with special interests.

The second part of the programme will be in England (probably London). This would consist of a one week computer workshop followed by one week sightseeing and finding out about Britain. Part one - in Soviet Union - to be organised in August 1990. (summer holiday) Part Two - in Britain - to be organised in December 1990 (Christmas holiday).

Both of these holidays will be subsidised on a sliding scale. Some pupils can be recommended by schools as deserving of entirely free trips and others will be asked for a small contribution towards costs. In this way we can stretch our resources to cover more pupils.

Pupils recommended for holidays will have to show some ability to profit from the experience. They should show either some interest in computing, language or social awareness of the importance of learning about other cultures. We would like candidates to submit a small piece of work which can be judged on this basis, it can take any form - essay, project ideas, art work, computer programme or other presentation. Judging will be on the basis of content and originality rather than on academic correctness in presentation since we do not wish to introduce bias against the interested but academically less able pupil.

2. As part of our fund raising year - September 1989 - 1990 - we are asking schools to adopt YOUTH SUPPORT as their special charity for school events during the year. We will be giving a PRIZE TO THE SCHOOL which contributes in the most enthusiastic and original way. The prize will be a COMPUTER for school use. We can supply promotional materials and T shirts to help fund raise.

PLEASE DIRECT ALL ENQUIRIES TO YOUTH SUPPORT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

## THE VOICE OF YOUTH

This time we are publishing extracts from letters recieved from young parents. These were sent to Youth Support by girls who we were following up some years after a schoolage pregnancy. The letters were not originally intended for publication but many were so poignant that we felt it important to share their sentiments with forum members. Names have been changed for sake of confidentiality.

Reading these letters shows just how much unmet need there is among the young. Every time we dare to dip into thje pool and enquire about problems, we discover much more than our resources can deal with - leading unfortunately to thje situation when we prefer to bury our heads in the sand, we don't ask, we don't want to know - and we collude in a conspiracy of silence both sides knowing that there is nothing we can do.

Despite the feeling of failure and dejection that can be engendered by knowing that needs are remaining unmet; it is important to keep beating our heads against these brick walls; to continually expose needs and deficiencies in the hope that eventually someone with thje power to make changes will sit up and listen. We must not be duped into inaction by the magnitude of the problem and must not sit back thinking it is a problem for the government of the day - that government must be made to CARE and we must each do what little we can to bring that about.

\* \* \*

Maria - who lived in Roy Heasman house while she was a pregnant schoolgirl and then squatted in the semi derelict flat where she still finds herself four years later.

".... I sometimes fall into depression phases. I am 21 years of age and have two children aged 5 and aged 3 both boys. I've already accepted the fact that I have been handed a raw deal in life but I don't believe tha one thing I have wanted out of life is so hard to get, a decent flat 'in' a decent area to bring my kids up in. So far no one is willing to give me any help as to transferring me or helping me make the flat I have more decent by offering decorating grants etc. If you can help me with my problem I would sincerely appreciate it - if not you'll forgive me for wasting your time ..."

\* \* \*

" My son is nearly six and a half years old now. I am now nearly 25 weeks pregnant, at first I was really excited about being pregnant as we had planned it, but now as time goes on I feel maybe it was a stupid thing to do. I feel really depressed about nearly everything but keep thinking to myself that once the baby arrives life will be much better. ... Sorry to bother you with my problems - I would be glad to have a chat with you ... "

Sue's baby was born prematurely and was in the intensive care unit for several weeks during which she had problems visiting him and looking after her older child.

\* \* \*

Ann has been in contact with us for nearly nine years. Her first baby was born when she was

\* \* \*

fifteen, she was deserted by her 'husband', beaten by her boyfriend, moved home and squat many times before settling in a delapidated flat. When last seen she was about to give birth to her second child, had separated with her boyfriend and we had helped her refurbish her flat and obtain day care for her child. Ann is content with very little, she never complains although she is bringing up her children on social security paynebts alone.

"I am very happy and contented. I now have three children and seem to be coping very well. I am involved in my daughter's nursery and my son's school. My children take up most of my time as they are very active. I have recently had a stillborn baby but the children helped me overcome this ..."

\* \* \*

Kelly was seduced at a party when she was 14 years old. Charges were made against the boy and by the time the baby was born, Kelly had turned to another boy for support .. he seemed nice at first

... ".... I wanted you to know that I have changed my name again and have moved as I am no longer with my husband as my marriage didn't work out at all. I am now living with my new boyfriend. Please get in touch as soon as you can. I know I have made a lot of mistakes in my life but I was very young then and I want to have a chance to do things better. My parents have got custody of my two children. It was because I couldn't give them a good home. I thought that my second husband would be a good father to Liz as well as to his own son but he was no good for us. Now they are happy with my dad and mum. Mum says she's too old to start with kids again and my sister won't speak to me because of what I've done - At least I admit I made mistakes - but she won't give me a chance,

she doesn't believe I have changed."

\* \* \*

"I was married on my sixteenth birthday but the marriage didn't work out so I will be divorced next week. My mother hated him because he just moved in here and never worked, he was so lazy, he just stayed in bed and he was in trouble with the police. He wanted to marry me to get an English passport. I hate him now. Laura is growing lovely, she will be two soon and I am still living with my mother and brother. I am well but have put on a lot of weight. I wish I could be slimmer again. Thank you for writing to me. ..."

\* \* \*



"Four Friends" story cards from the Secondary School Health Kit on AIDS Control, Republic of Uganda, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and UNICEF, Kampala.

GREYHOUND NIGHT Catford Greyhound stadium - Wednesday 25th October 1989.

Sponsored race meetings are a good way of raising money while having a good time! Greyhound racing is becoming quite fashionable - almost, dare we say 'Yuppified'? Youth Support are taking over Catford stadium for the evening. Money is raised by sponsorship of races and nomination of dogs which is arranged prior to the event; by selling inclusive tickets for the dinner and restaurant area and by raffles and collecting tins. The general public is allowed into the stadium and betting takes place as usual. Hope to see you all there - please send in early for tickets since numbers are limited.

Also PLEASE, if anyone knows of any firms, companies or individuals who can help out with sponsorship we would be very grateful. Nowadays there are so many charities chasing after the same pennies that we have to be more and more resourceful to avoid offending people and still come up with the funds! The greyhound track managers have suggested that we ask between £150 and £250 for race sponsorship (the leaflet sets it at £200) for which the sponsor has their name in the national press, the race is named by them and they present the trophy and have their photograph taken with the winner. For dog nominations we are asking £20 which means the nominator wins a prize if their dog comes first, they have their names in the programme and join in the presentation ceremony. Most people find this quite exciting and also of course the sponsors get a lot of publicity! - There is a raffle for a colour TV and the chance of a big win to tempt you too!

#### INTANGIBLE BARRIERS TO FULL ADULT STATUS IN THE AGE OF TRANSITION

E ANNE MCCARTHY - Director Mill Lane Training Centre, Dublin

This paper was first submitted to the 8th International Congress of the International Association for the Scientific Study of Mental deficiency - Dublin August 1988

\* \* \* \* \*

Intangible Barriers are those unseen, subtle attitudes, structures and put downs, that impede the path to full adult autonomy, self advocacy, confidence, choice, independence and positive self image. The transition from childhood to adulthood is tough for everyone. Although most achieve a form of adulthood in the end, does the adolescent with a mental handicap get the same chance?

Alexander Pope said "Order is heaven's first law". Is it also the first law of the mental handicap services and does that order adhere to the law of finance, of efficiency or of dependency for its structural orientation? I describe how a vocational training centre evolved from the original work ethic centres outlined in the National Directives for 1974/75 into a microcosm of interrelated structures reflecting the person ethic in an ambience of work and personal growth.

The referral population were 18-25 year old male and female young adults with low mild and moderate mental handicap. They came from the communities of West Dublin and from the residential service at Stewart's hospital. Confusion in terms of definition and concept was paramount and disparities were considerable in terms of need, personality and administrative procedure. Residents required training in independence and community skills. Day attenders were isolated or overprotected at home and came from a wide variety of social backgrounds in a country characterised by deep religious mores, spiralling unemployment and a high national debt.

Different administrative procedures were required by all referral and funding categories. The European Social Fund expected trainees to be capable of open employment without supports or environmental modification, so disability was at best acknowledged but structurally denied. The department of education provided funding on condition that there was no profitable production. The department of health approved training centres with Robin's Report work ethic guidelines. Despite this morass of contradiction, clearcut, unifying factors formed the foundation of my programme and my philosophy. All trainees lived according to the objectives and decisions of others without choice or control over their lives. All belonged to the youth generation of a marginalised, minority culture called the mentally handicapped. All experienced the loneliness and the humiliation of stigma,

requiring programmes that would bring out the self and separate it from the identity of Impairment. All were entitled to full community membership and citizenship.

To create a person-centred training service at Mill Lane, and to avoid conflicting interprofessional and governmental perceptions of handicap, it was necessary to let the environmental structure evolve outwards from the trainees themselves, and to ensure that positive images of self were reflected via the environment to the trainee. We required a structure that would withstand contradictions inherent in the physical, emotional, locational, legal and social aspects of transition. In 1986, O.E.C.D.<sup>3</sup> confirmed that "the transition from adolescence to adulthood is the most significant one with the greatest long term implications." An ergonomic structure of human engineering would be necessary if those with moderate and low mild mental handicap were to grow and function to their maximum potential.

It was management by objective: -

- To maximize the person, the individual, the sense of worth;
- To minimize the disability, the limitation, the inadequacy;
- To attack the handicap.

Handicap was any barrier in the dynamic, interactive relationship of the trainee with his/her environment.

The subject areas of catering, printing, horticulture, needlecraft, pottery, social learning, sport, drama, rhythms, functional literacy, numeracy and general work skills, all stand in their own right for containing valuable skills for adult life. But they are also important MEDIA for many unseen life skills. They help overcome shyness and timidity, assist in the growth of confidence and self-esteem, develop a sense of identity and worth, and attack negative perceptions of self caused by images of helplessness, dependency or inferiority.

Academic, social, emotional and vocational considerations are all intertwined in a busy working week. A sense of person, purpose and pattern provides the cohesive force for teaching technical skills, developing conceptual skills and providing opportunities for experiencing human skills. Trainees are encouraged to be responsible for their own actions, and everything is arranged to produce maximum involvement and learning. Existing "Special" services are marginalised and only called on when absolutely necessary. As the years progressed, every structure, concept and methodology was challenged, altered and evolved until harmony was achieved between client - pace - activity - structure and personnel.

Mill Lane is the trainees' place, so they are involved in everything. Humdrum, day-to-day activities contain many valuable learning opportunities. For example, post collection, roller towels, budgeting and shopping for items required, canteen cashier and household cleaning. Going to a strange place to ask for something can take a lot of courage. All tasks are of equal status and broken down for maximum understanding in real situations.

Writing your signature lends dignity and a sense of personal identity to wages pay-out. Lunch-money is remembered each day, and maximum choice at meal times can develop assertiveness. Games and disco music at lunch-hour make for a relaxed, refreshed afternoon's motivation. Speaking up at Foróige club helps overcome barriers to confidence and self-expression, and provides valuable feedback for views and opinions. In keeping with health promotion, a group walk to the library each week, and teeth are brushed after each meal. Contact with local second level schools form the befriending programme.

The group is the foundation of our organisation model. Each group of six to nine persons rotates every three weeks to a new team member, providing flexibility, variety and group identity for the trainee, and a compatible responsibility structure for the training team. The team, with a wide variety of expertise, are all equal and on the same salary scale. The training approach is one of guidance and encouragement, as dictated by the discipline of education - educate - to draw out that which is within.

In addition to task evaluation records, an open-ended, blank assessment sheet is completed after each three-week training period. This is purposely non-structured to encourage staff to get to the guts of their impressions. It is here, and not in the more scientific task records, that the socio-emotional individuality of each trainee emerges. On completion of the entire three-year course, records are destroyed with the exception of a brief reference-like report, psychological or social reports, where necessary, and referral correspondence.

This ambience at Mill Lane, created to achieve maximum understanding and involvement, as though for people in a foreign country, is still needed by that comprehension barrier that is the reality of mental retardation that barrier between the needs, adjustment, isolation, and confidence of those with handicaps, and the needs, acceptance, supports, opinions and images of those without them. In the work shop, open employment, activity centre or residential setting, for, as Conley (73)<sup>4</sup> says "Group membership does not necessarily imply active participation". The geological term barrier, as discussed by Lewin (48),<sup>5</sup> best describes this trauma of adjustment which is the direct result of inadequate acceptance and the lack of sound personal and emotional supports.

In 1982, my analysis of 134 interviews and six case studies within the psycho-socio-emotional ambience of Dublin's Distribution Industry,<sup>6</sup> revealed clear examples of psychic barriers. A major barrier of non-communication and disparity existed between management and workforce, who differed in aspects of sex, generation, responsibility, need and expectation. The need for a more human job on the part of a young female workforce was matched by a willingness to befriend a person with a mental handicap, thus illustrating both an awareness of the need for support structures and their own need for deeper personal outlets at work. All agreed that being with a person with a mental handicap would be different, but that the only really non-acceptable behaviour would be of a psychiatric nature. Management only contemplated professional supports coming from the outside, and were unaware of their employee's needs.

Opinions indicated that jobs that could be done alone or with a small peer group were best for employees with a mental handicap, who had an image of dullness for management but not for the workforce. There was no evidence of personally awareness in the image responses.

The new theories of organisation and the humanisation of the work ethic as advocated, for example, by the Dublin based European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions,<sup>7</sup> clearly interconnect with the needs of all young people. Toffler (80)<sup>8</sup> confirms that it is time to "give backing to systematic theories of the patterns of interconnectedness" - a sort of infra-structuring of the system from government to site level. All this points to the feasibility of what Aronson calls person-to-person mutual interdependence<sup>9</sup> as a way of combatting the tendency to institutionalise integration. Why separate our young adults with disabilities from their more able but no less developmentally handicapped contemporaries? They all identify with Roosevelt's<sup>10</sup> "Forgotten man at the bottom of the economic pyramid". The recent research into adolescent health<sup>11,12,13</sup> inter-connects health, unemployment and that "E.Y. Feeling" of alienation as being of growing significance across the wide spectrum of youth affairs ...

In conclusion, the key issues clearly involve political and structural change. Science paints the way. Are we supports or blocks to the individuality and autonomy of our clients? Are we, in fact or in deed, Edgerion's (67)<sup>14</sup> "Benevolent conspiracy" suffering from what Kossen (75)<sup>15</sup> calls the "Bending over Backwards syndrome"? It is only by attempting to work ourselves out of a job with each group of clients that the full personhood and potential of our citizens with a mental handicap can be achieved. Thoreau tells us to "simplify, simplify",<sup>16</sup> for, as the poet Yevtushenko<sup>17</sup> says "no people are uninteresting. Their fate is like the chronicle of planets ..."

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# EPOCH

## End Physical Punishment of Children

EPOCH is a new national organisation launched in April 1989 which aims to end physical punishment of children by parents and other carers. Now that hitting children has been almost eliminated in schools and child care institutions, it is time to end it in the home as well.

EPOCH hopes to achieve its aim through public education, research and legal reforms. EPOCH will work with and for parents and other organisations to promote non-violent, positive methods of bringing up children, providing information and ideas.

For further details write to:  
EPOCH, PO Box 962, London  
N22 4UX

**THE AUTHOR: Penelope Leach, PhD.** C.Psychol. FBPsS is a psychologist specialising in child development; she is also mother of two and an active campaigner for parents and children.

Her current research is at the International Centre for Child Studies completing the 'Youthscan' national survey of adolescents. She also works closely with parents' organisations, such as the Pre-School Playgroups Association, and with charities, such as Barnardo's and the NSPCC for whom she has made parent education videos. She is Vice-President of the Health Visitors' Association.

Her books (all available in Penguin) include *Babyhood* and *The Parents' A-Z* as well as the international bestseller: *Baby and Child* of which a new and expanded edition has been published in 1989.

## NEW UNIVERSALS

### Adolescent Health in a Time of Change.

Edited by Dr David Bennett  
and Dr Murray Williams for  
the Australian Association  
for Adolescent Health.



ISEN 0 9588309 5 9 128 pages

This valuable publication consists of papers given at the Fourth International Symposium on Adolescent Health, held in Sydney in 1987. It is available for US\$20 per copy (including postage), from Dr Murray Williams, CCAE Health Centre, PO Box 1 Belconnen ACT 2616 AUSTRALIA. (Please make cheques payable to "International Association for Adolescent Health".)



Introduction In Britain, schoolgirl pregnancy is part of a culture of poverty and deprivation. Pregnant schoolgirls live in areas of poor housing, overcrowding and unemployment. A six year longitudinal study of 122 pregnant schoolgirls in an inner city area, Camberwell, (Birch 1986) revealed that 40% of such families are already known to social service agencies before their daughter's pregnancy and 20% of girls have been in care. 13% of girls have been on the social services 'child abuse' register.

The 'typical' pregnant schoolgirl is a member of a large single parent family (McEwan, Owens, Newton 1974; Birch 1986). In South London, 70% of girls do not live with both their natural parents; 16% have no mother and 65% have no father. Despite their single parent status, families are large with an average of five children, a consequence of a repeating pattern of having a man coming and going and fathering children without living permanently in the household.

Two thirds of schoolgirl mothers in South London have a family history of teenage pregnancy and in 35% their mothers have had the same experience. 43% of girls have sisters who are also teenage mothers (Birch 1986) and interestingly, the same percentage of 'Baby fathers' (teenage fathers) also have brothers who are teenage parents (Hendricks & Montgomery 1983). Poor families with little hope of advancement, fall into a pattern of early childbearing which, in itself, perpetuates their position.

Estimating deprivation Demographic variables associated with schoolgirl pregnancy were studied in Camberwell using two methods, a 'pregnant schoolgirl index' (the ratio between percentage of fifteen year olds residing in a ward and the percentage of cases of schoolgirl pregnancy in that ward) and superimposable maps of girls addresses, electoral ward boundaries and ACORN (A Classification of Residential Neighbourhoods) group characteristics.

Several workers have attempted to quantify parameters of the degree of deprivation suffered by various communities by using particular scoring systems. One such system was described by Jarman (1983) whereby underprivileged areas could be identified using a points system which focussed on lack of amenities including lack of employment. Jarman regarded areas scoring more than 10 points as being 'high', ie. very underprivileged; areas scoring +10 to -10 points were 'medium' and scores of less than -10, ie 'low' indicated an area which was not underprivileged. Using this scale Jarman found that 30% of electoral wards in England and Wales had 'high' scores, 35% 'medium' and 35% 'low'. Applying Jarman criteria to place of residence of pregnant schoolgirls, 97% live in very underprivileged areas, moreover the majority

live in areas scoring more than 30 points of deprivation.

Camberwell electoral wards fall within two London boroughs, Lambeth and Southwark. In Lambeth the wards with highest rates of schoolgirl pregnancy are also the wards with the highest levels of unemployment. Rates for all wards (defined by PSG index) correlate well with unemployment rates, particularly female unemployment.

The electoral ward is a relatively large unit with an average population of 10,000 people and is therefore not the most useful demarcation area for studying schoolgirl pregnancy. It is more profitable to use the much smaller 'ACORN' groupings. Study of 'ACORN' groups in Camberwell reveals that 75% of pregnant schoolgirls live in areas with a male unemployment rate of over 20%. Unemployment rates alone are incomplete indicators of social deprivation, poor housing must also be considered. 53% of pregnant schoolgirls live in ACORN groups with more than 10% overcrowding and 61% in groups with less than 10% owner occupied accommodation. (fig 1) In fact, housing conditions are unsatisfactory for 44% of Camberwell's pregnant schoolgirls. Families are cramped, pregnant girls share bedrooms with other family members, in some cases beds are also shared, and few have enough room for the expected baby.

After giving birth, housing conditions are characterised by more severe overcrowding, due to the presence of the baby and sometimes the boyfriend, and lack of privacy. Girls frequently change address in the hope of finding better accommodation, moving from parent's house to boyfriend's family and friend's flats. By the time their babies are 1 year old, only one fifth of girls have their own place to live, many spend some time squatting. By two years, half the girls have their own flats but by that stage the majority of those rehoused have two children (Birch 1986).

The results of deprivation Deprivation breeds further deprivation; difficult family circumstances lead to very few pregnant girls having any sex education at home. 37% of Camberwell girls learn nothing from their parents about the facts of life. This ignorance is further compounded by the fact that 64% of girls have also had no sex education at school. Two thirds of pregnant schoolgirls persistently truant from school. Education is not a priority when there are younger siblings to look after, poor health intervenes and goals such as passing exams and getting a job are unrealistic.

Being largely ignorant of the facts of life, it is hardly surprising to find that girls do not immediately realise that they are pregnant.

"I kept convincing myself I wasn't - I kept missing periods but I kept putting it off, saying nay, it's just ... I was saying to myself, I've had sex so it's most probably changing my body or something. Just giving myself any old excuse" (Janet 15, 'Schoolgirl Mum' 1985)

Late recognition, leads to late presentation for pregnancy counselling, abortion or antenatal care, ignorance therefore further deprives young girls of essential medical services. Nationally, in Britain, 2 out of 3 pregnant schoolgirls decide to terminate their pregnancies, however in areas of socioeconomic deprivation a higher proportion of girls go to term (Simkins 1984: Straton & Stanley 1983). In Camberwell only 1 in 4 girls choose abortion (Birch 1986, Dean 1984).

Younger teenagers have a higher rate of late, more dangerous abortions (Russell 1983). In the United States, where schoolgirl pregnancies show the highest rate of a 'developed' country, mortality from legal abortions rises from 0.5/100,000 at 8 weeks gestation to 6.7 at 15 weeks (National centre for Health Statistics 1976). However "the later a girl applies for an abortion - the more she needs it" (Ketting 1982: Savage 1985).

Schoolgirls book late for antenatal care and attend hospital irregularly with the result that 'the antenatal care of pregnant teenagers is often grossly deficient' (Block, Saltzman and Block 1981). One fifth of teenagers under 20 years of age do not consult their General Practitioners until they are more than 20 weeks pregnant (Simms & Smith 1981). The situation for younger, schoolage teenagers is even worse, over half (52%) of South London schoolgirls book for antenatal care after 20 weeks gestation (Birch 1986).

If antenatal care is adequate, the risks of childbearing do not appear to be greater for the teenager than for older women but the risks to the baby are increased, particularly for very young mothers (Straton & Stanley 1983) however, poor care exerts a more powerful influence than young age (Elster 1984).

Camberwell is a deprived inner city area. The disadvantaged circumstances of its young people can be seen to influence rates of antenatal anaemia, perinatal mortality and birthweight. Studies of young mothers have reported higher rates of anaemia (defined as less than 10gm Hb per 100 mls) in teenage patients than in older pregnant women. Rates have been quoted in the region of 14% for under 16s with an inverse relationship to the age of the sample (Jovanovitch 1972: Elliot & Beazley 1980: Osbourne & Howat 1981: Scholl, Decker, Karp, Greene, DeSales 1984: Miller & Field 1984). The increased frequency of

anaemia in teenagers can be related to socioeconomic circumstances (Russell 1983: Miller & Field 1984). In Liverpool, young girls attending hospital in a deprived area of the city were more likely to be anaemic (18%) than in the more affluent areas (6%) (Elliott & Beazley 1980).

The incidence of anaemia in pregnant Camberwell schoolgirls is high at 19% (Birch 1986) and excluding girls with an associated haemoglobinopathy, HbS or HbC which are present in 10% of the overall sample, the rate of antenatal anaemia is only reduced to 16%. White anaemic girls are more likely to come from homes with no employed parent (100%), have a poor diet (96%) and book late for antenatal care (65%). The mean time of booking for anaemic girls is 24 weeks gestation as opposed to 20 weeks for all schoolgirls. Hence those girls most in need of antenatal care, are less likely to receive it.

The perinatal mortality for babies of mothers under 20 is one of highest (National Birthday Trust and Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists survey (British births, 1970 the first week of life). Babies of Camberwell schoolgirls have a perinatal mortality of 16.95 per thousand, higher than that seen in social class V mothers and one and a half times the district average (OPCS 1983).

Illegitimacy independent of age is a predictor of low birth weight and high perinatal mortality. The important factors which have been shown to be more important than age for teenage mothers are marital status at conception (Gill, Illesley, Koplick, Aberdeen 1970: Osbourne & Howat, Glasgow 1981: Ventura & Hendershot USA 1984); timing of antenatal care (Ventura, Hendershot 1984) and socioeconomic status (Phipps-Yonas 1980).

In the Camberwell study one third of girls had a diet which was grossly deficient in both quantity and quality. All of their families were on low incomes so that they were unable to spend much money on food and two thirds were surviving on supplementary benefit only. The younger girls had poorer diets than the older girls and this was associated with their giving birth to smaller babies. (Birch 1986)

Long term effects of deprivation In order to confront the question of deprivation from a slightly different angle, the work of Kolvin (1984) and colleagues in Newcastle is considered. They looked at evidence from a longitudinal social study of one thousand families to establish whether childhood deprivation had long lasting sequelae. Six criteria of disadvantage were identified. Family disruption, Parental illness, Defective care, Social Dependence, Housing overcrowding, Poor mothering. Multiply deprived children are defined as those having a history of more than one factor, deprived children have a history of one and children who have not been

and children who have not been exposed to any of the factors are considered to be non-deprived. Applying these six criteria to Camberwell pregnant schoolgirls and their babies 82% of girls and 96% of their babies score as very deprived. In addition babies score higher numbers of criteria of deprivation, the mean being three criteria for schoolgirl mothers and four criteria for their babies. (fig 2)

Multiply deprived children have been shown to be shorter, poorer school attenders, less likely to take exams, and more likely to attend court (28% as opposed to 6% non deprived) (Kalvin 1984). These very factors have been ascribed to schoolgirl mothers (Wilson 1980, Birch 1986) and it would indeed seem that such young mothers are locked in a cycle of deprivation with the degree of deprivation increasing in the next generation.

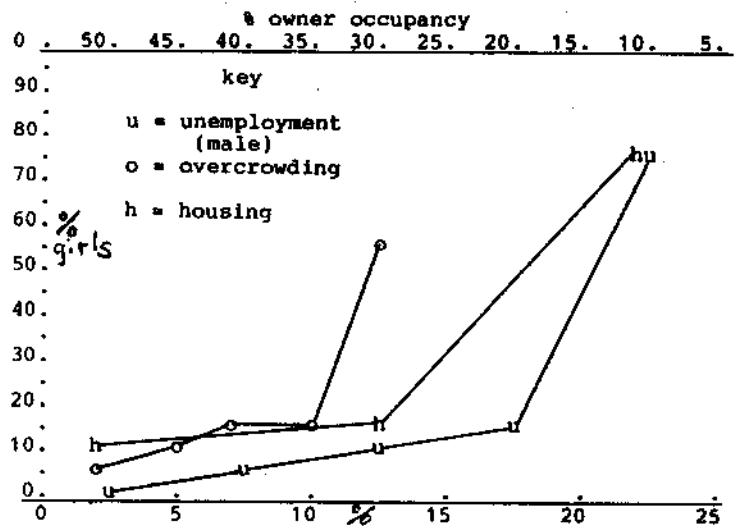
Pregnant schoolgirls come from families with social problems, it is also true that early motherhood is predictive of a deprived future. In the United States 63% of social security payments (AFDC) went to once teenage mothers (Moore 1975). 35% of the general population were at one time teenage mothers (before 20) but this was true of 61% of mothers receiving aid. In London, only 13% of pregnant schoolgirls live in households where both parents are earning. 57% are from families where there is no employed adult. On follow up the situation is no better. The only source of income for most schoolgirl mothers reaching the age of sixteen is in the form of social security payments.

Young mothers are frequently isolated and lonely, confined to their homes with their babies, with little hope of employment. They find it difficult to reconcile their poor circumstances with the image of carefree young people buying clothes and records that they see in teenage magazines and on television. The young unemployed "have been nurtured in a closed world of material things brought to perfection, goods that cry their competitive desirability to them from the moment they are born. Their only business it seems, is to yearn and strive for possession of them ..... the young ... have no place in the world, except as obedient and abject competitors for all that is tantalisingly held out to them" (Seabrook 1983). Held out, but unattainable for a schoolgirl mother.

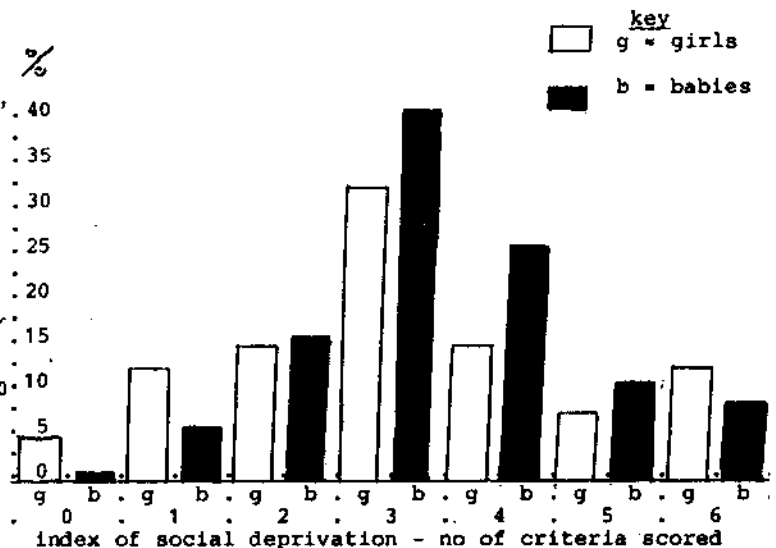
Early pregnancy can thus result in a spiral of social deprivation. Pregnancy results in loss of education, which reduces the chance of finding employment. This leads to poverty and the tendency for the girl to find another man, in the hope that he will support her. She then becomes pregnant again and the spiral takes one more turn towards poverty, illiteracy and poor health.

(This paper was first presented at the International Medical Women's federation conference in Sorrento, Italy in June 1987. Full references have been omitted due to lack of space.)

**SOCIAL DISADVANTAGE  
ACORN GROUPS - ANALYSIS BY FIRST ADDRESS**



**DEGREE OF DEPRIVATION - SCHOOLGIRLS AND THEIR BABIES**



"YOUTH FOR TOMORROW" - SUMMER SCHOOL - The idea of a permanent 'Summer School' for young people arose out of our exchange programme. We have now expanded the boat trip exchange to a full summer school which will take place for two to three weeks each summer in the Soviet Union. The co-sponsors of the school are YOUTH SUPPORT from the British end, MOSCOW STATE UNIVERSITY, and the ECOLOGY FUND.

The aims of the summer school are to allow young people from differing cultures to participate jointly in a holiday coupled with a varied programme of talks, workshops and practical experience of a range of subjects. Young people will be able to choose their own programme of teaching sessions which will cover ecological issues, scientific developments (presented in simplified manner), sociological issues and use of computers. There may also be some reciprocal language tuition.

We have been very fortunate in attracting to our education committee a number of Soviet Academicians from the very top of their fields, experts in 'Nuclear Winter', 'Greenhouse effect', Computer technology, Linguistics, Ecology, Agriculture ..... A true Nobel Prize winning group!! Any young person attending the school will, I believe, have something to tell their grandchildren!

Places are being allocated as described for the boat trip exchange (see over). ie some free, some subsidised, some full price. We have 150 places available for summer 1990 (end august, beginning of september). Age range 14-21yrs (older full time University students considered under special circumstances). School age groups will be accompanied by teachers. We will have some extra teacher places for people willing to keep an eye on pupils from other schools - please apply to YOUTH SUPPORT asap if you wish to participate in any way.

ROY HEASMAN HOUSE - This excellent mother and baby home in Beckenham has been under threat of closure for some time. In november 1987 we heard that the education unit there was being closed, thus making it less suitable for the young pregnant schoolgirl. Youth Support applied to the owners and the lease holders, the 'Church Army' and the 'Church Moral Aid' with a view to taking over the lease and upgrading the home. At the time we were told that our information was wrong and that the home would not be closed.

In July 1989 we have been told that the staff have been issued with closure notices effective from the 31st august. The Church army now admits that the home will be closed and that the site will be sold. Youth Support are still interested in taking over the lease. Apparently there are

problems because we are not a 'religious' charity. It does seem extraordinary that a charitable organisation would rather sell out to a developer than allow another charity to take over it's good work.

Roy Heasman House was one of the last 'mother and baby' homes in the London area. Contrary to some opinion, these homes are still needed. Many young mothers and pregnant girls need a centre with accommodation to help them through crisis periods and give them some stability. The old style image of a 'church based' mother and baby home is no longer attractive to thje young. Rather than give up and do away with these homes, they need updating, bringing into the 21st century so that they can provide staff training programmes and serve as models of good practice.

If you wish to help in furthering Youth Support's attempts to keep Roy Heasman House open and to take over the running of the home, please write to the Church Army, Independant's road, Blackheath SE3 9LG OR to the Archbishop of Canterbury (who is their patron) in support of our ideas. Thanking you in advance - we look forward to an avalanche of letters - please send us copies for the file.

T shirts We now have T shirts printed with the new 'parachute' logo. Many thanks to Roger Towndrow and his assistants at TIN (Teenage information network) for printing them for us. These are white with black lettering. Write in and ask if you want some for fund raising or promotion. The next stage is to get some prepared for the Soviet Union exchanges. We want to do some coloured ones perhaps with our logo and some Russian symbol - any ideas? We would appreciate any ideas for logo/ design or catchy title for the summer school too.

FAX We now have a fax machine! The fax is connected to 01-659 3309 number and the answerphone still works on the same number - clever eh?! This means it is cheaper for us to send papers to Australia or the USA and cuts down on phone bills. Look forward to hearing from you faxers out there ...