

# Messages from Research:

Lancaster Recurrent Care Study and  
Family Drug and Alcohol Court.

Mary Ryan

1 November 2017, CASCADE conference

# Today

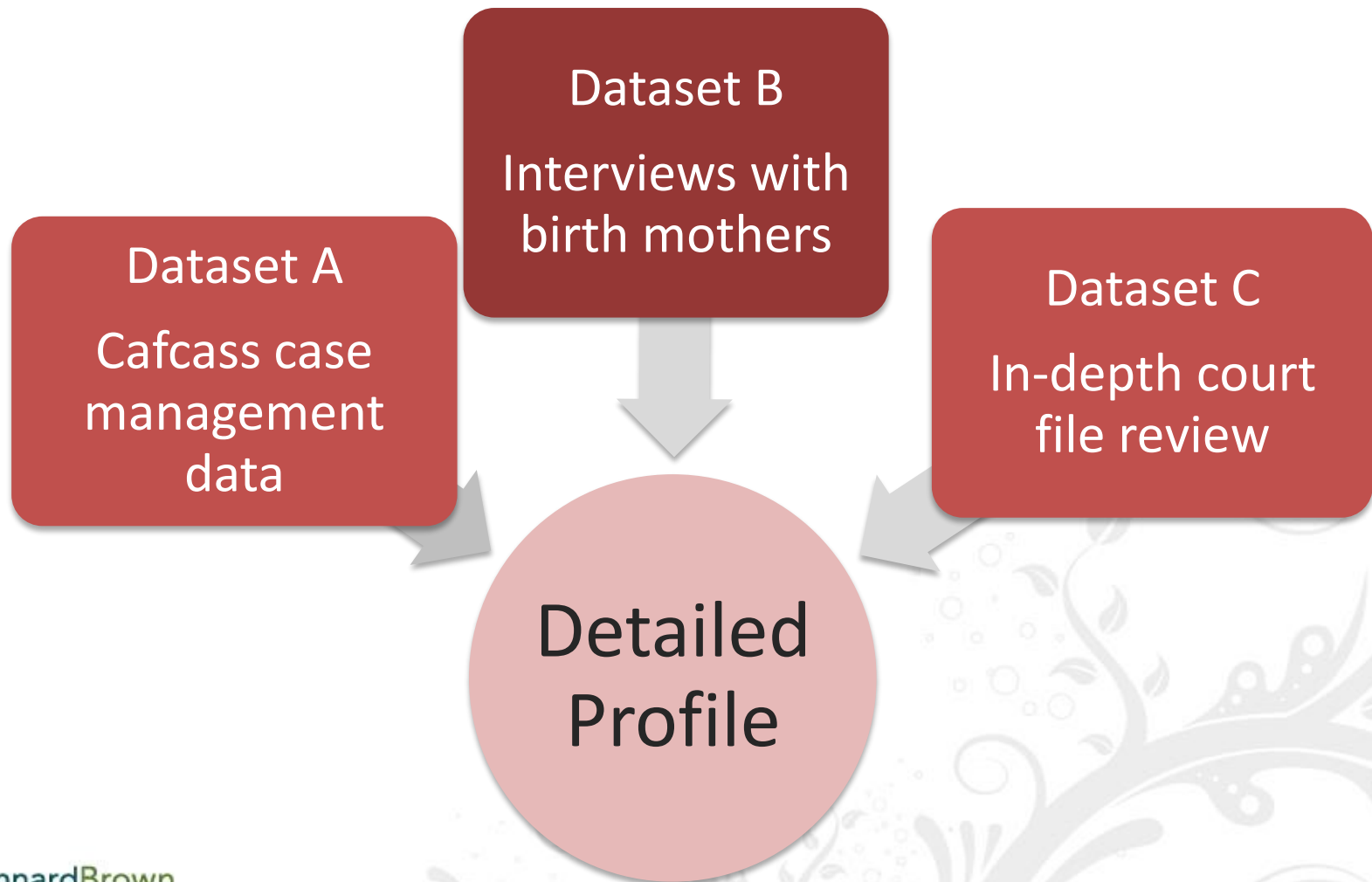
- Background
- Vulnerable Birth Mothers and Recurrent Care Proceedings
- Family Drug and Alcohol Court
- Positive Futures/PAUSE



# Background

- Children Act 1989
- Child Protection: Messages from Research 1995
- Children Act 2004
- Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act 2014
- Thresholds

# Lancaster Recurrent Proceedings Mixed Methods Study 2014-2017



# What is the scale and pattern of recurrent proceedings? (Lancaster)

Repeat cases are *routine* rather than exceptional within FJS

- Approx. **1 in 4 women** will return to court within a 7 year window
- 60% of repeat proceedings that concern infants, are issued within 4 weeks of a baby's birth
- Intervals between proceedings are short (25% issued prior to final hearing of an earlier set of proceedings; a further 35% within one year of final hearing [60% in short succession])

# Adverse Experiences for women (Lancaster)

From case file data (adapted ACE methodology)

- Multiple adverse experiences in women's own childhoods
- 56% of women had experienced 4+ multiple adversities in their childhoods (abuse and neglect)
- Lack of stability or 'secure base'
- Adverse experiences continued into adulthood:

Substance Misuse	56%
Domestic Abuse	65%
Mental Health problems	51%

# Childhood care experience (Lancs)

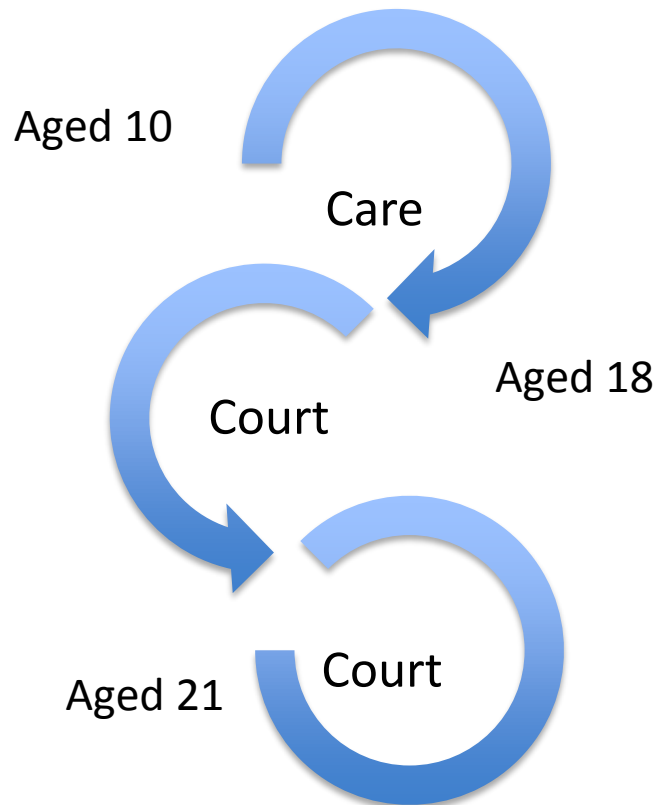
## **From case files:**

- 54% experienced formal/informal out of home care
- 40% had spent a period being formally looked after
- 14% informal/private arrangements

## **Of recurrent mothers who had been looked after:**

- 48% entered care aged 10 years or older.
- 50% experienced multiple placement moves.
- 39% residential care, 12% secure unit

# Care and Court Circuits (Lancs)

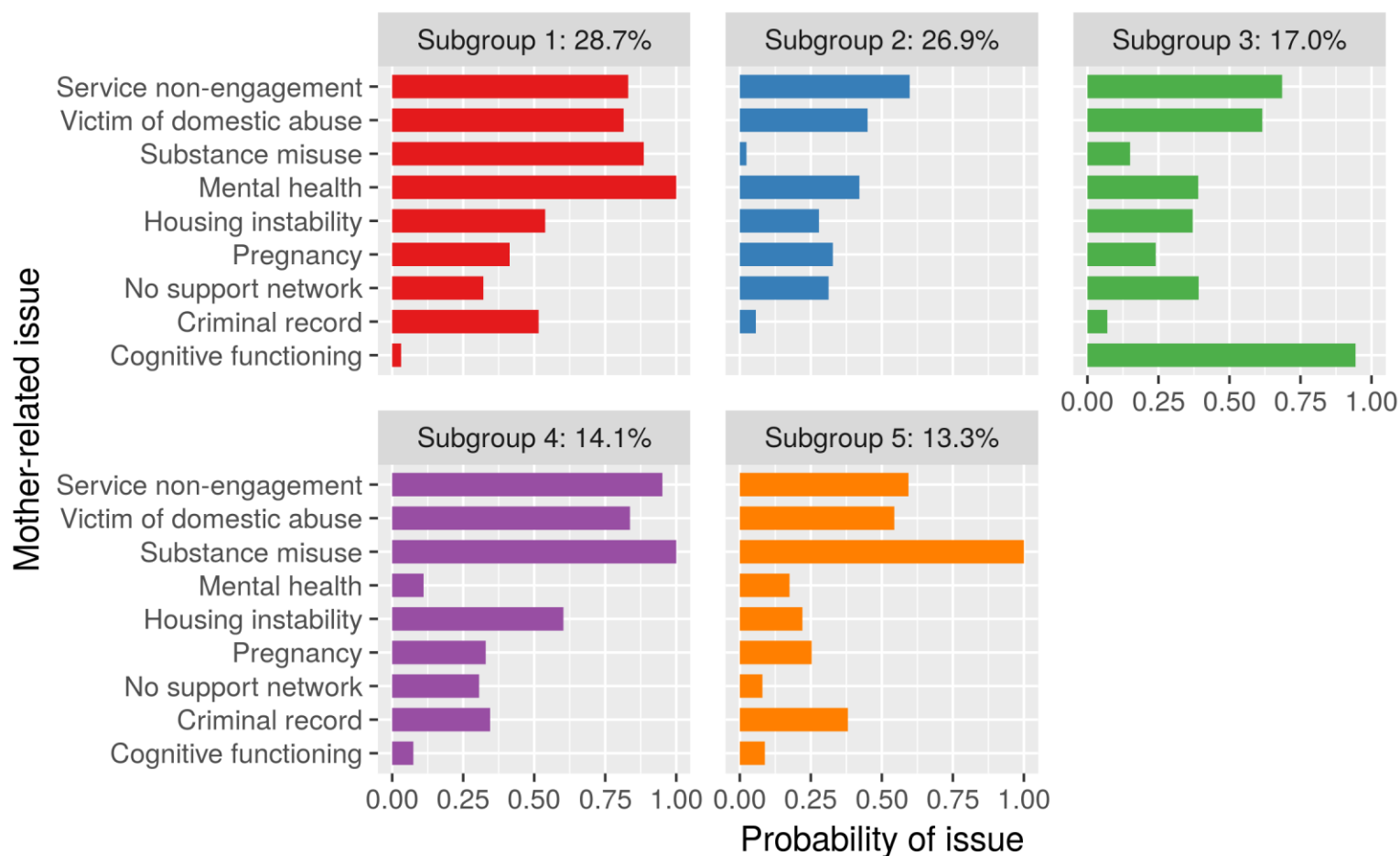


Much of childhood and early adulthood is lived under the gaze of professional intervention

Awareness of how women's care experiences impact on their interaction with the family justice system is vital



# Latent class profiles at index (Lancs)



# Points of Intervention (Lancs)



# Turning Points (Lancs)

From the interviews:

(48% had a child in their care at the time of interview)

The common factors associated with positive change, across the women's accounts, were combinations of:

- Positive change in intimate partner relationship and wider informal networks.
- Ability to reflect and learn from experience.
- Being offered better professional help and making better use of that help.
- Commitment to children, both those removed from a woman's care and those in her care.
- A sense of purpose and ability to plan for a different future.
- Access to post proceedings counselling and/or mental health services.

# Adverse Experiences (FDAC)

FDAC and comparison mothers:

- Domestic Abuse 80% FDAC 63% comparison
- Mental Health 52% FDAC 56% comparison
- In care as child 28% FDAC 32% comparison
- Previous child removed 41% FDAC 40% comparison

# More effective in achieving change (FDAC)

FDAC more successful than ordinary court and services in helping parents achieve change both in the short and longer term:

- At end of proceedings:  
significantly more FDAC mothers stopped misusing (46% v 30%)  
significantly more FDAC families were reunited (37% v 25%)
- Five years on from the end of proceedings estimates showed that:  
significantly more FDAC reunified mothers did not misuse (58% v 24%)  
significantly fewer FDAC mothers experienced any disruption (51% v 22%)

# Messages for practice

From

Lancaster research: points of intervention and turning points

FDAC: qualitative evidence from parents and professionals (including judges)

Evaluation by Essex University into Positive Choices and Mpower

Evaluation of PAUSE for DfE Innovation programme

# Messages for practice

Work is intensive

Motivational Interviewing approaches

Staff develop a therapeutic relationship

Staff are:     reliable, can be trusted  
                 flexible  
                 empathetic  
                 able to challenge  
                 model behaviour  
                 encourage accountability

Work is trauma informed

# Messages for practice

Trauma informed:

- Understand impact of long experience of neglectful or abusive situations
- Recognise reasons for 'non-engagement'
- Cultural shift, not a treatment model
- Rebuilding control
- Strengths based
- Takes account of all aspects of the service, from waiting room onwards





# Parents in FDAC

- ‘When I got introduced to FDAC it was like they were my diary and they were telling me where I had to be. They were my rock and my support’.
- ‘The support they give me is amazing. It can be about anything that’s worrying me or getting me down. It’s not just about drugs and it can be really, really silly and they’ll still listen and help’.
- They (Judge and team) made me feel normal. I didn’t feel judged straightaway. They treated me like a human being.

# Professionals views

- *Clients say they don't feel pushed around, patronised and intimidated like they do in ordinary care proceedings. [social worker]*
- *The whole FDAC philosophy is that the approach CAN work – and parents get that message very early on, whereas in other cases parents feel everyone has given up on them. [lawyer]*
- *Families are given a fair chance and a fair assessment that informs the decision, including when they are not managing to change enough, or quickly enough, for their children. Families learn how to work in partnership and a robust case is made to the court. It's a shame it's not like that in the ordinary court [adult treatment services]*

# Judges

- *It gives parents a real chance to change with appropriate support. Importantly, it is humane. Even parents who do not succeed come away acknowledging that they have had a proper chance. That is why so few cases end in contested final hearings.*
- *We have all been part of the normal care process for years. In many cases outcomes are predictable and the process is perceived to be unfair. Parents are assessed and the prospects for change assessed but, often, inadequate support is given to parents which means that very little does change. That is why FDAC works. It's more fair.*

# Projects

**Research in Practice Change Project: Recurrent Care Proceedings in partnership with Lancaster and Essex Universities. November 2017 to November 2018**

**<https://www.rip.org.uk/events-and-online-learning/change-projects/>**

**Family Rights Group supported Sector Led Review: Responding to the crisis in the Family Justice System. November 2017 to April 2018.**

**NCB/All Party Parliamentary Group for Children: inquiry into thresholds for children's social care**

**[https://www.ncb.org.uk/news-opinion/news-highlights/failure-invest-childrens-social-care-services-ignores-rising-demand-0?mc\\_cid=c89f4c411d&mc\\_eid=0a6c0c2d41](https://www.ncb.org.uk/news-opinion/news-highlights/failure-invest-childrens-social-care-services-ignores-rising-demand-0?mc_cid=c89f4c411d&mc_eid=0a6c0c2d41)**

# Reports and publications

## **Vulnerable Birth Mothers and Recurrent Care Proceedings :**

Final summary report and final main report

<http://wp.lancs.ac.uk/child-and-family-justice/publications/>

## **FDAC**

Evaluation reports 2011, 2014 and follow up study 2016

<http://wp.lancs.ac.uk/cfj-fdac/publications/>

## **Positive Futures and M Power**

Article on emerging findings from evaluation

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09649069.2017.1345083>

## **PAUSE**

Evaluation

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/625374/Evaluation\\_of\\_Pause.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/625374/Evaluation_of_Pause.pdf)



# Reports and publications

The FDAC model: <http://fdac.org.uk>

**FDAC Blogs in Family Law:**

[http://www.familylaw.co.uk/news\\_and\\_comment/fdac-a-trauma-informed-service#.WfHeOGhSzIW](http://www.familylaw.co.uk/news_and_comment/fdac-a-trauma-informed-service#.WfHeOGhSzIW)

[http://www.familylaw.co.uk/news\\_and\\_comment/the-fdac-trial-for-change-combining-expert-assessment-and-intervention-during-proceedings#.WfHeF2hSzIV](http://www.familylaw.co.uk/news_and_comment/the-fdac-trial-for-change-combining-expert-assessment-and-intervention-during-proceedings#.WfHeF2hSzIV)

# Thanks to

Karen Broadhurst and Claire Mason at Lancaster University

Sheena Webb, Manager, London FDAC team