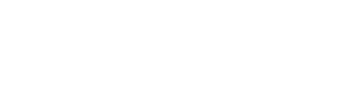
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**©2015 NSPCC. Photography by Tom Hull. The child pictured is a model. Registered charity England and Wales 216401 Scotland SC037717**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL**

For

**Getting to know the Community: Improving support for families facing adversity**

**March 2017**

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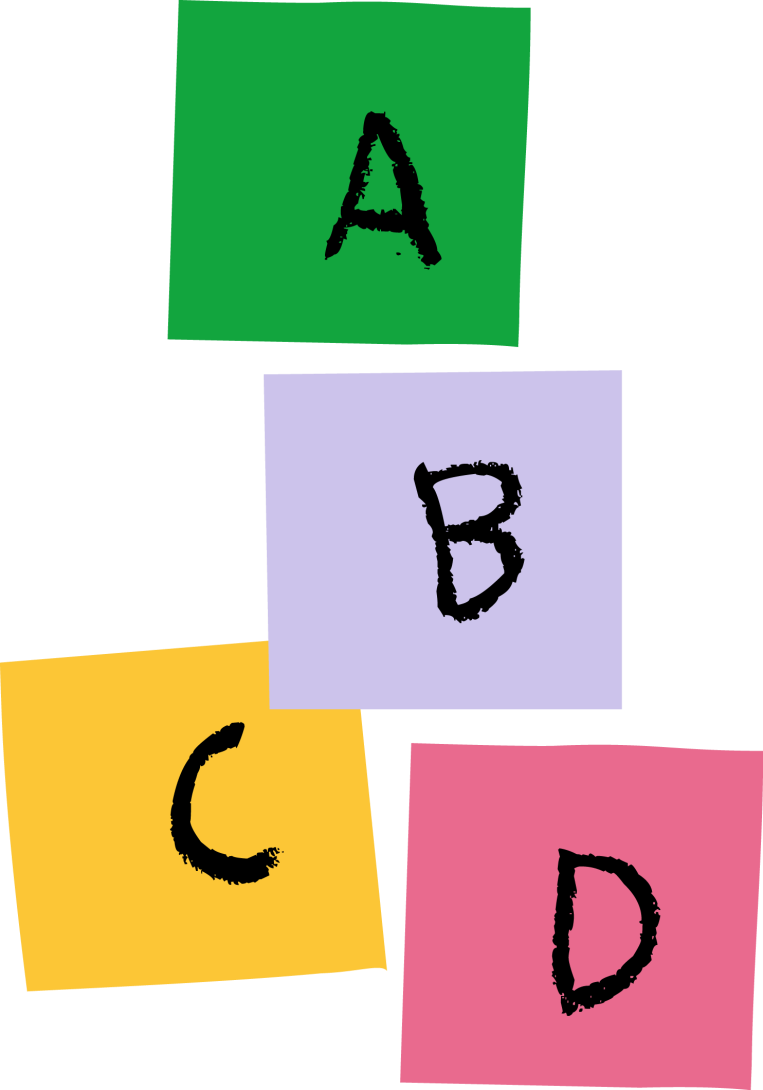
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1. **Introduction and Background**

Our goals to prevent sexual abuse and to make children safe from abuse online require a significant advance in our understanding of how to prevent adults from committing child sexual abuse.

Child sexual abuse can have serious and long term consequences for the children who experience it and for wider society. The NSPCC has estimated the financial cost of child sexual abuse to the UK in 2012 to be between £1.6 billion - £3.2 billion . The costs are largely incurred by health services, social services and the criminal justice system.

Online child sexual abuse is a relatively new area of concern, compared to combatting other forms of off-line child abuse, with many organisations just now beginning to engage in this work. The NSPCC, along with a few other key organisations, has been at the forefront of this work. There is increasing evidence of a link between online offences and contact sexual abuse offences . The online risks to young people include the sharing and viewing of child abuse images, sexual grooming, bullying and sexual abuse. The nature and scale of the challenge is fast moving given the dynamic nature of the digital world.

There is an emerging body of research on what works in the prevention of child sexual abuse, much of which supports the use of a public health approach . This approach strives to prevent sexual abuse by identifying and reducing risk factors for sexually abusive behaviour including family dysfunction, negative peer influences, adverse community living conditions, and inappropriate social messages.

Developments in this area has reached a point such that targeted research on offenders and potential offenders could result in significant gains in protecting children from online sexual abuse and potentially contact sexual abuse.

Research into the links between image collection, grooming and contact abuse could allow us to target offenders who are most likely to commit contact sexual abuse. Some child abuse image collectors have serious images of children (as rated on the COPINE scale), but no history of contact offending. There is some evidence that offenders who have smaller collections of child abuse images and are linked with small networks of other child abuse image offenders are more likely to contact abuse. Understanding more about the links would help identify which groups of child abuse image offenders pose most risk to children.

Understanding what works in terms of deterring offenders and potential offenders.Research into what works in terms of deterring offenders, both from looking at child abuse images for the first time, and in terms of deterring more committed offenders is needed to develop effective deterrent programmes, that includes, but goes beyond stop and desist messages. What might be the most promising forms of deterrence and where should we put our energies in terms of devising new and improved deterrents to tackle this phenomenon? Translating research into a theoretically and empirically founded prevention and intervention for child abuse image offenders and potential offenders could have a significant impact on the prevention of child sexual abuse.

The NSPCC is looking to appoint a research team who will conduct detailed research, including day-in-the-life studies, into how socially isolated families experiencing parental mental health problems and/or alcohol and substance misuse and/or domestic abuse (referred to as families facing adversity) receive support. We are focussing on these three kinds of adversity as the presence of these things are key risk factors for child abuse and neglect. We are particularly interested in the experiences of the most isolated families, those who are least likely to engage with formal services or their local communities. We also want to find out what these families and the communities around them suggest would help. The research will focus on a particular ward in a town in the north of England, which will be referred to in this request for proposal as ‘the town’. Applicants may contact us to find out the specific location.

This research will focus on a ward in the town and will help us understand the numerous communities within this area. We will want to know about the support that families receive from communities and networks that stretch outside this geographical area, for example online networks, but the research should focus on the experiences of those who live in the ward in the town

This research will contribute much needed evidence to what we know about how communities can help to prevent abuse and neglect. This research will inform the development of a programme of work in the town to prevent abuse and neglect in families facing adversity, providing opportunities for recommendations generated by the research to be tested in practice.

**Support for socially isolated families**

Social isolation and lack of support is linked with abuse and neglect (see literature summary at appendix E). More formal support is important, but not the whole answer – there are particular types of support that are only available from informal sources, and often families will turn to informal sources of support long before they contact professionals. Informal support in this context is support provided by community members, rather than professionals or those acting in a specific volunteer role. This type of support might include practical support (for example car-pooling or babysitting) or emotional support (for example reassurance or listening) or advice giving, and might be given by friends, neighbours, family members, co-workers or other members of the community. Sometimes it is asked for, sometimes it is given without being asked. Sometimes informal support is helpful, and sometimes it is not, for example condoning excessive drinking or giving poor parenting advice

**Link to broader NSPCC work**

The NSPCC and external partners are developing a place-based approach to reducing child abuse and neglect. Our vision is to create partnerships in up to six local communities around the UK.  We want to combine NSPCC resource and evidence with local resource and expertise to help realise a shared vision of keeping children safe.

Our core principles, by which the programme activities will be tested, are:

        **Co-creation** through relationships with children and families, local partners and community members

        **Continuous learning** and use of evidence to be the best we can

        **Strengths-based**, building from individual, community and service strengths, respecting and honouring what is good

        **Inclusivity and accessibility** ensuring diverse representation of community members during creation, consultation and delivery

        **In partnership**, sustaining effective partnerships at all levels

        **Sustainability** by embedding local ownership, value and capacity

We are developing a partnership with local agencies and organisations in the town, focussing on preventing abuse and neglect in families facing adversity (defined as families with one or more of the following: parental mental health problems, alcohol and substance misuse, domestic abuse). We know that to be effective we must work with the community so that they are a partner in building solutions. In particular, the NSPCC want to work collaboratively with local communities in the town to ensure that families facing adversity can access support.

1. **Our Objectives**

Insights and recommendations from this work will be considered by the NSPCC and other professionals involved in developing the place-based work. It will inform the work of existing services by providing recommendations for how they can work differently to support communities to provide more effective informal support to isolated families facing adversity, and what more formal services could be doing. It may also identify gaps in provision that will inform the development of the place-based programme as a whole.

This research is our route in to engaging with the community in the area in a new way. We want to understand what strengths they already have and what support they need from their perspective, and want community members to co-develop the recommendations arising from the research. We cannot promise that we will be able to deliver everything that the community recommend, but the insights from the research will inform the development of our approach.

We want to understand what formal and informal support socially isolated families facing adversity access currently in their local area. We also want to understand what more they need and the potential role of the wider community in meeting these needs. This will include whether they would prefer to access formal or informal support for different needs.

The sample will need to cover a range of families who are experiencing one or more of: mental health problems, alcohol and substance misuse or domestic abuse. We are particularly interested in the experiences of the most socially isolated families. We want to understand where support works well for families facing adversity, as well as where it does not.

The aims of this research are to provide:

1. An in depth look at what helps and what stops families receiving informal or formal help when they are experiencing one or more of: mental health problems, alcohol and substance misuse or domestic abuse. The research should look at a range of families across these different combinations of needs. The research should consider how the existing support (informal and formal) families receive affects the child or children in the family.
2. Recommendations co-developed with community members for how the place-based work can increase effective informal support for families facing adversity and improve engagement with formal support. This could include:
   * What individuals could do
   * The types of activities that are needed locally to catalyse informal support
   * Changes to how formal support is delivered
3. And if possible: Identify community members who will support on-going work.

Our key research questions are:

1. What needs of socially isolated families facing adversity are best met by formal support, and what by informal support?
2. What are the facilitators and barriers to socially isolated families facing adversity using informal and formal support?
3. What is an acceptable and feasible approach to increasing informal support which is helpful to children within the community?
4. How can we ensure that this informal support has a positive impact for children?
5. How can we improve formal services so that socially isolated families are more likely to engage?
6. How would the most socially isolated families like to engage with the place-based approach as it develops?
7. The Task

**Approach**

*Methods*

We would like applicants to propose a suitable methodology. We expect the fieldwork to last at least four months. We are particularly interested in qualitative methods that explore lived experiences, for example ethnographic methods[[1]](#footnote-1). We would welcome approaches that capture children’s view’s of support their parents receive, as well as views of adults.

*Research Infrastructure and support*

We are able to provide the following support:

* A contract manager and local engagement professional to work closely with the research team.
* An advisory group of local professionals to assist the researchers with local knowledge and access to research participants.
* A steering group of local partners who will have an overview of the research.

All applicants should consider the safeguarding and ethical elements of their proposals closely. The issues and how they will be addressed should be set out clearly in proposals.

We would expect any successful proposal to be reviewed through the NSPCC’s Research Ethics Committee. Further information can be found at <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/services-and-resources/impact-evidence-evaluation-child-protection/conducting-safe-and-ethical-research/>. We will also consider requests to review proposals through a recognised university-based ethics process. If applicants wish to do this they should set out in their proposals.

The successful applicant will also be required to meet with and take into account insights from members of the steering group and advisory group before finalising their approach.

The agreed cost of the work will be fixed after appointment, and any additional costs incurred due to variation or change must be fully authorised by the NSPCC. The successful applicant must adhere to the NSPCC’s Travel and Subsistence policies.

**Expected results and output**

This project should generate the following:

1. Research output which provides an in depth analysis of what helped and what hindered families facing adversity accessing support in the local area, including:
   1. Output(s) to be shared with and discussed by community members at group meetings during and after the field work, to share findings and prompt discussion of solutions and recommendations. Applicants should propose an appropriate format.
   2. An in-depth report to the NSPCC to inform the development of the place-based approach and other NSPCC work, including recommendations that have been co-developed with community members. This report should include:
      1. Case studies of families facing adversity who have received informal and formal support, and if this was helpful, why, and what helped make this happen.
      2. Case studies of families facing adversity who have sought informal and formal support and, if it was not given or was not helpful, why, and what helped make this happen.
      3. Case studies of families facing adversity who did not seek or receive informal or formal support, and why they did not.
      4. Analysis of key themes arising.

Progress updates and findings will need to be shared with the partnership to inform on-going development work. We will require updates to share progress and findings via a fortnightly teleconference.

If the team identifies influential community members with an interest in the broader place-based approach, we would welcome the researcher seeking agreement to pass on their contact details, so they can be contacted about getting involved in community groups.

**Who might respond to this request for proposal?**

We would welcome:

* Bids from teams experienced in delivering this style of in-depth research
* Bids from teams that can demonstrate experience of working ethically with vulnerable people, in particular children, parents and families facing adversity.
* Bids from teams that can demonstrate experience of engaging families that do not engage with services or more formal consultation and community development processes. In particular, we would welcome bids from teams that have experience of bringing these parents’ and children’s voices and experiences to professional and community forums in a way that is empowering, ethical, authentic and engaging, while protecting anonymity where appropriate.
* This research is being conducted as part of a partnership led place-based approach. Applicants should state how they will work in partnership with us and be flexible to local needs and requirements as the work unfolds.

1. Your Response

**Important Note:** This document is your response format. You are required to follow the instructions and use the text boxes provided for your response. Any screenshots or additional information to help support your response should be appropriately cross-referenced to the relevant question and attached in Appendix D – Additional Information. **You are also required to complete the Business Questionnaire and 3rd Party Security Assessment provided as Appendix A.** Should your organisation be selected to go through to the next stage, you may be asked for further details to support the answers you provide in this section. The NSPCC also reserves itself the right to audit your responses to this request for proposal throughout the term of any resulting agreement.

**4.1 Your Project**

|  |
| --- |
| 4.1. Please describe the proposed research in simple terms in a way that could be publicised to a general audience. Please limit your response to 1 side of A4 paper with size 11 font.  *Response:*  Click here to enter text. |

**4.2 Your Approach**

|  |
| --- |
| 4.2.1Please set out a thorough description of how you propose to carry out each stage of this project. In this section we will be looking for you to set out an appropriate and feasible methodology. Please provide details on how you will engage with and empower residents during the research and in developing recommendations. Please set out how you would support the dissemination of the findings. Please specifically note if you will be using the services of the NSPCC knowledge and information service. Please limit your response to 4 sides of A4 paper with size 11 font.  *Response:*  Click here to enter text. |
| 4.2.2 Can you state why the chosen methods are the best for achieving the specified goals and producing the outputs within the time and resource constraints set for the project. Please limit your response to 1 side of A4 paper with size 11 font.  *Response:*  Click here to enter text. |
| 4.2.3. Please specify the ethical and safeguarding issues arising from your proposal and how you will address each one. Please limit your response to 2 sides of A4 with size 11 font  *Response:*  Click here to enter text. |
| 4.2.4 If you are working in partnership with another organisation that is providing funding or in-kind support, please provide detail below and attached in **Appendix D – Additional Information** any letters of support.  *Response*:  Click here to enter text. |
| 4.2.5. Can you suggest how the project might be improved and what additional work might be beneficial? If you are propose or recommend any additional work, can you detail in the text box below the cost, the resource required and any risk/benefits not previously described?  *Response:*  Click here to enter text. |

**4.3 Project Management**

|  |
| --- |
| 4.3.1 We would like you to provide a detailed timetable, showing the milestones and deliverables for each stage. Please also detail any tasks/resources you require from the NSPCC in order to achieve the deliverables. This can be provided in **Appendix D – Additional Information** if you wish to use Gantt charts or other diagrams. Please limit your response to 2 sides of A4 with size 11 font.  *Response:*  Click here to enter text. |
| 4.3.2 Please give a summary of key risks (if any) associated with this project and explain how you will assess and manage the risks that might jeopardise progress of the project. Please include details about how you will ensure compliance with data protection legislation. Please limit your response to 2 sides of A4 paper with size 11 font.  *Response:*  Click here to enter text. |
| 4.3.3 Please provide details of quality assurance processes that will be used to ensure that outputs are produced to a high standard. Please limit your response to 1 side of A4 paper with size 11 font.  *Response:*  Click here to enter text. |
| 4.3.4 This research will inform the development of a place-based approach which is led by a partnership of NSPCC and local professionals. Please set out how you will work with local partners to generate engagement with the process and findings of the research. Please limit your response to 1 side of A4 with size 11 font.  *Response:*  Click here to enter text. |

**4.4 The Team**

|  |
| --- |
| 4.4.1 Provide a short CV and experience of the project lead (as an attachment in **Appendix D - Additional Information.** CVs should be no longer than 2 pages per person). It would be helpful to have examples of previous work that demonstrates relevant experience, use the text box below to provide details of similar projects undertaken.  *Response:*  Click here to enter text.  *Use this text box to identify the attachments provided* |
| 4.4.2 Provide short CVs, details of experience, role and responsibilities for other key staff proposed (as an attachment in **Appendix D - Additional Information**. CVs should be no longer than 2 pages per person) and use the text box below to identify any supporting information and/or provide summaries to illustrate experience of similar projects.  *Response:*  Click here to enter text. |

* 1. **Your Proposed Cost and Value for Money**

|  |
| --- |
| 4.5.1. Use the spreadsheet contained within **Appendix B** to provide a detailed costing (ex VAT) of your proposal. Use the text box below to provide any commentary required to support the costs submitted. Please keep your text response to 1 side of A4 paper, font size 11.  *Response:*  Click here to enter text. |
| 4.5.2 Explain how you would ensure transparency and auditability concerning charging, invoicing and any other business matters.  *Response:*  Click here to enter text. |
| 4.5.3. Describe how you would help achieve value for money through your appointment. Please keep your response to 1 side of A4 paper, font size 11.  *Response:*  Click here to enter text. |

1. Application Evaluation Process

Proposals will be evaluated by a panel of key stakeholders and the criteria will be based on the following and looking at the overall quality of the proposal:

|  |
| --- |
| **Evaluation criteria** |
| Research design and methods |
| Expertise of the team |
| The appropriate and ethical involvement of local residents, including children and young people |
| Value for money |
| Potential impact for children; including quality of outputs and how teams have thought about potential for impact and informing the development of the place-based approach |

Proposals will be assessed against the evaluation criteria and depending on the quality, selected Applicants will be invited to discuss in more detail their proposal with the interview panel.

**5.1. Request for Proposal Timetable**

Estimated Timings for the Request for Proposal Process and Reporting

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Activity** | **Target Date** |
| Request for Proposal issued to Applicants by NSPCC via email. | 6 March |
| Final date for Applicants to raise questions with the NSPCC (“the Clarification Period”). | 16 March |
| Request for Proposal and all supporting documentation returned by email to the NSPCC | 24 March, midday |
| Internal and external review of proposals and shortlisting. | 27 March – 7 April |
| Easter break | 10 - 17 April |
| Clarification phone calls with applicants | 19 April |
| NSPCC to notify the successful Applicant, subject to relevant checks and agreement to NSPCC terms of contract. | 20 April |
| Contract finalised and signed off. | 27 April |
| Applicant to submit Research Ethics application | 5 May |
| Meeting with local stakeholders to finalise approach. | 8-12 May |
| Research Ethics Approval | 15 May |
| Work commences | 22 May |
| Report due | 22 November |

**5.2. Instructions to applicants**

One electronic PDF version of each response should be sent to the NSPCC researchresponses@nspcc.org.uk, no later than **1200hrs, 24th March 2017** (see below for contact details).

You are not required to, but if you wish, you may send a hard copy to:

RFP Discovering Communities

Procurement Department

NSPCC

Weston House

42 Curtain Road

London

EC2A 3NH

**5.3. Clarification phone calls **

If needed, we will call applicants with any additional questions on their proposals on the **19th April**.

**5.4. Confidentiality**

This request for proposal is made available on condition that its contents (including the fact that the Applicant has received this request for proposal) are kept confidential by the Applicant and it is not copied, reproduced, distributed or passed to any other person at any time except for the purpose of enabling the Applicant to submit an application.

The Applicant shall ensure that all third parties to whom disclosure is made shall keep any information, materials, specifications or other documents confidential and not disclose them to any other third party except as set out above.

Applicants must seek the approval of the NSPCC before providing third parties with any information provided in confidence by the NSPCC or its professional advisors and must maintain a register of all employees and third parties who have access to that information. If so requested by the NSPCC, Applicants must make this register available for immediate inspection by the NSPCC or its duly authorised representatives.

The NSPCC shall treat all Applicants’ responses as confidential to it and its advisors during the procurement process.

The NSPCC may, at its request, require unsuccessful respondents immediately to return or destroy all documents and other materials and working papers relating to this project and all copies of them, and to destroy all electronic copies. The respondent may, at the NSPCCs request, be required to confirm in writing that all this information has been returned or destroyed.

**5.5. Late Applications**

Any response received after the deadline without prior agreement will be rejected by the NSPCC.

**5.6. Terms & Conditions**

The draft Contract that the NSPCC proposes to use is attached at Appendix C.

The following documents shall form part of the Contract between the NSPCC and the successful Applicant(s):

1. the Contract;
2. its Schedules;
3. the task and rate card

**Applicants are asked to indicate with their submission if there is any part of this contract they would not be able to comply with. It will be very important to raise any issues at this stage since this Contract will bind the parties should the application be successful.**

**5.7. The NSPCC’s right to accept or reject any or all applications**

The NSPCC reserves the right to accept or reject any application and to annul the application process and reject all applications at any time prior to award and acceptance without incurring any liability.

**5.8. Corporate Social Responsibility**

Your application response provides an opportunity to support us as a potential client with the important work we do and possibly satisfy any CSR reporting requirements you may have under section 417 of the Companies Act 2006 (dependant on the level of support provided).

**5.9. Notification of Award**

The NSPCC will notify acceptance in writing to the successful Applicant. If agreement is reached with the successful Applicant, then the NSPCC will notify the unsuccessful Applicant as soon as is reasonably practical.

**5.10. Disclaimer**

The NSPCC shall not be liable for or pay any expenses or losses whatsoever, which may be incurred by any Applicant in preparation of the application submission or presentation.

The Applicant shall be responsible for obtaining, at his own expense, all information necessary for the preparation of the application, and will be deemed to have satisfied himself as to the size, scope and complexity of the tasks required to be performed, under any Contract awarded as a result of this application. Claims arising from any neglect on the part of the Applicant in this respect will not be entertained.

**5.11 Enquiries (Clarification Period)**

Queries regarding this request for proposal should be addressed within the Clarification Period to the Procurement department via email at [researchresponses@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:researchresponses@nspcc.org.uk)

The last date for such requests is no later than **17:00 on 16th March 2017**. All enquiries will be answered promptly in writing. Applicants should note that although the source of any questions will be “in confidence” both the enquiry itself and the NSPCC’s written response will be shared with all Applicants.

# Appendix A - Business Questionnaire



**Appendix B – Rate & Task Card Matrix**



**Appendix C – Draft Contract**



**Appendix D - Additional Information**

Please include any further information to support your application.

*We are committed to acting ethically and with integrity both internally and in our business relationships, and we expect the same high standards from the organisations we work with.*

*Our procurement process not only aims to ensure NSPCC achieves value for money, but seeks suppliers that meet or exceed our requirements in respect of ethical procurement. Therefore suppliers are asked to demonstrate that they embrace diversity, understand the risks within their own supply chain and remunerate their staff fairly.*

## Appendix E - Social isolation and lack of support is linked with abuse and neglect

Several studies have reported that maltreating parents have fewer contacts with relatives and smaller networks of supportive individuals than non-maltreating parents and report more isolation[[2]](#footnote-2).

The primary research conducted by Coohey (1996) showed that social isolation, that is, smaller social networks, lower levels of contact with social support, perception of support as inadequate and receipt of fewer instrumental and emotional supports were risk factors for child maltreatment. Perceived lack of support, and actual lack of emotional support, correlated with both neglect and physical abuse[[3]](#footnote-3).

There has been some emphasis on the protective nature of social supports. A meta-analysis undertaken by Stith et al (2009) found that an increase in social supports was associated with a reduction in child physical abuse and a reduction in child neglect. There is also a growing body of evidence showing the importance of safe, stable and nurturing relationships (SSNRs) to protect against abuse. As well as the parent-child relationship, positive relationships with romantic partners, co-parents and adult social supports have been shown to be important protective factors[[4]](#footnote-4). There has been a particular interest in the ability of SNNRs to break the cycle of intergenerational continuity of abuse[[5]](#footnote-5). This body of work adds weight to the value of the approach of intervening to improve the quality of relationships rather than merely addressing social isolation in terms of the size of social networks.

There is also some evidence suggesting that social support can be a moderator between stress and physical abuse risk to a greater extent than relationships within the family[[6]](#footnote-6).

**Families report feeling more isolated.**

A survey from Action for Children found that 24% of families felt lonely, isolated from friends and cut off from sources of support[[7]](#footnote-7). This is supported by other research with parents, which found that most parents believed they received less support from their family than parents did in the past[[8]](#footnote-8). Reasons included families not being as close-knit as they used to be, more divorces and single parenthood and families living further apart geographically.

**How does social support help?**

Families who are struggling will turn to friends and family before professional support – and friends and family are often well placed to identify when there are challenges and provide early support.

In a survey of parents, most (86%) agreed that family and friends are the most appropriate source of support for parenting issues[[9]](#footnote-9). This also holds true in evidence around vulnerable groups of interest to us. A study found that couples experiencing relationship problems are most likely to turn to family and friends for support (after trying to solve the problem themselves), and would not seek relationship counselling or other professional support until problems were severe[[10]](#footnote-10).

**Research has been done into barriers and facilitators of communities providing informal support**

The Joseph Rowntree conducted a 3 year research project into how informal help works in the UK, identifying some of the key elements that allow communities to be there for each other and offer effective informal help[[11]](#footnote-11). Key facilitators to provision of informal help include: having shared myths and narratives that support informal help, having a common cause or interest that can communities can form around, and steering away from describing the action as ‘help’ or ‘support’. Key barriers include being unable to reciprocate, the hierarchy to informal help (certain forms of support are seen as something that family should provide before friends are asked), and judgements made when deciding whether or not to offer help (need for help should be ‘genuine’ and should not result from ‘reckless’ actions). Close knit groups in some communities can leave those not part of the group feeling isolated and unwilling to participate in community life[[12]](#footnote-12).

**We know less about what is effective for parents with mental health problems, alcohol and substance misuse and domestic abuse.**

The barriers and facilitators identified by JRF (above) could affect parents with mental health problems, alcohol and substance misuse and domestic abuse disproportionately, however this has not yet been explored in detail. There has been some research into how social support can be a risk or protective factor where these problems exist. On the one hand, social networks can provide much needed support, but on the other they can reinforce unhelpful social norms. There are also additional barriers that vulnerable families might face when building social networks.

***Mental health problems***

A study looking at mothers with serious mental illness found that wider and more established social networks correlated with greater parenting competence, but did not identify causation[[13]](#footnote-13).

***Alcohol use***

Research has looked at correlations between social support, alcohol use and aggression (intimate partner violence or child physical abuse).

A study looking at child physical abuse found that proximity of the social network group can enhance drinking behaviour (particularly in areas where the social hubs are bars or restaurants that serve alcohol)[[14]](#footnote-14). The study found that when comparing drinkers with non-drinkers, drinkers had higher levels of social support and used child physical abuse more often. There was no difference between drinkers and non-drinkers on average size of the social network. Of drinkers, respondents who received more ‘tangible’ and ‘emotional’ support used physical abuse less often. Those who had more network members who provided ‘social companionship’ support used physical abuse more often.

A study looking at partner aggression had similar findings[[15]](#footnote-15). For men, support which focussed on ‘belonging’ and ‘tangible’ support moderated the link between alcohol use and partner aggression. Those who consumed alcohol also demonstrated higher levels of partner aggression if they also had ‘appraisal’ support. None of the subtypes of social support were significant moderators for women, who showed more partner aggression overall.

***Vulnerable families***

A literature review into vulnerable families, and those where there are emerging child protection concerns notes the following barriers[[16]](#footnote-16):

* Longstanding character disorders, exacerbated by distrust of others, that contribute to social marginality and which may ‘repel’ family or neighbours
* Deliberate efforts to avoid detection of dysfunctional family or personal practices
* Exhausted by their financial and personal difficulties that they do not extend the time and energy to make contacts with others in their social networks
* Their network associates may also be drained by the same stressors and have little capacity for providing social support.



1. Examples include Anderson, S. et al. ‘Understanding everyday help and support.’*Joseph Rowntree Foundation* (2015); Allen, M. et al ‘Landscapes of Helping: Kindliness in Neighbourhoods and Communities’ ’*Joseph Rowntree Foundation* (2015) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Starr 1982, Zuravin and Grief 1989, Whimple and Webster-Stratton 1991, all cited in Gracia 2003 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Coohey (1996) ‘Child maltreatment: testing the social isolation hypothesis’ [Child Abuse Negl.](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/8734555) 1996 Mar;20(3):241-54  
   <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0145213495001433> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. See for example Thornberry and Schoffield in the Merrick et al 2013 special issue [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Merrick et al 2013 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Tucker and Rodriguez ‘Family Dysfunction and Social Isolation as Moderators Between Stress and Child Physical Abuse Risk’ Journal of Family Violence (2014) 29:175-186. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Action for Children press release 25 August 2015 <https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/news-and-opinion/latest-news/2015/august/quarter-of-parents-feel-cut-off-and-lonely/> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
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