Children's Voices

A review of evidence on the subjective wellbeing of children in detention in England

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Acknowledgements

This report was commissioned by the Office of the Children's Commissioner. It was written and researched by Kara Apland, Hannah Lawrence, Jeff Mesie and Elizabeth Yarrow at Coram.

Coram is the children's charity that has been supporting vulnerable children for almost 300 years, and is still finding new ways to help children in the UK and worldwide. Coram's vision is that every child has the best possible chance in life, and its mission is to develop, provide and promote best practice in the support of children and young people.

Contents

Introduction

This report explores findings from an evidence review of the views, perspectives and experiences of children in detention, on matters related to their subjective wellbeing.

This report forms part of a series of studies examining the subjective wellbeing of vulnerable groups of children in England. This series was produced as part of a larger project focused on improving evidence about childhood vulnerability.

Objectives of the rapid review

The main objectives of the rapid review were as follows:

1. To identify, appraise and synthesize published qualitative evidence on the subjective wellbeing of children in detention in England;

2. To draw out key findings and conclusions from the evidence, as well as identifying any important gaps.

Scope

The review was limited to the exploration of qualitative evidence concerning the subjective views and experiences of children in England, published from 2007 and beyond.

The review focused on studies that captured and presented the direct voices, and first-hand accounts, of children. Adult perspectives on childhood experiences, and studies with excessive mediation and intervention by the author interrupting children's accounts, were avoided or deprioritised. The team considered accounts by children of their own personal experiences, as well as their perceptions and reports of the experiences of their peers.

The review only considered literature containing evidence on the experiences and views of vulnerable children ages 17 years or under. Retrospective accounts of childhood, provided by adults from 18 years onwards, were generally avoided, due to the methodological limitations of such studies; however, decisions regarding the inclusion of studies containing retrospective accounts were made on a case-by-case basis (see Appendix 2: quality appraisal tool).

Methodological criteria for the inclusion of studies were broad and flexible (see Appendix 1 quality appraisal tool). There was no minimum sample size threshold for the inclusion of a study in the review; given the qualitative, personal and subjective focus of the research, diary studies of a single young person were considered eligible for review.

Finally, the review prioritised studies which entailed the collection of primary data. Secondary literature based on analysis of pre-existing data was generally avoided, except where this information was considered essential to filling important gaps in evidence.

Methodology

Rapid review approach

The 10 week timetable for the project demanded the use of rapid review methodology. Whilst the review aimed to be a comprehensive as possible, strict time constraints necessitated placing limits on the numbers of articles reviewed, such that either:

> 13 items/ publications were reviewed, or

> Saturation was achieved and two or more researchers agreed that continuation was unlikely to yield any new insights.

Search strategy & terms

A mixed search strategy was adopted, which included both manual and automated methods. Automated methods involved entering combinations of relevant search terms into databases, digital libraries and search engines. Given the rapid nature of the review a 'guided' approach was adopted to conducting automated searches: rather than systematically reviewing all hits resulting from a certain combination of search terms, researchers scanned search results for relevant papers to review, and ran additional targeted searches when it appeared that all relevant papers had been retained. In addition, sources were accessed through bibliographies and works cited pages of shortlisted publications. Finally, particularly given the focused nature of the literature search, an independent expert was asked to review the final list of included literature in order to vet it for any biases and ensure objectivity.

Automated searchers were conducted primarily on Campbell Collaboration, Google, Google Scholar and JSTOR. Searches included combinations of: a context related term (i.e. England), a population related term (i.e. child), a methodology related term (e.g. qualitative) and a relevant indicator (e.g. detention). Researchers experimented with different combinations of search terms to obtain the most relevant set of results. The search terms and operators used were adjusted according to the requirements and restrictions of specific databases.

Search terms used

Context related terms: England, UK, Britain

Population related terms: child*, young*, juvenile*, girl*, boy*, infant*, toddler, minor*, adolescent*, teen*, youth*, pre-pube*, pube*.

Methodology related terms: perspectives, views, voice*, qualitative

Relevant indicators: detention, "secure estate", custody, "secure accommodation", "secure training centre", "children's home", "youth offender institution", "Yarl's Wood", "immigration detention", inpatient AND "mental health", "mental health" AND "tier 4" AND CAHMS, detention AND "Mental Health Act", "high dependency unit" AND "mental health", "medium secure unit" AND "mental health", "forensic psychiatric hospital".

Researchers conducted an initial scan of titles and abstracts to discard all immediately irrelevant hits. Items which appeared to meet basic relevance requirements were retrieved as full texts, and retained for further review.

Quality appraisal

Quality appraisal criteria (Appendix 1) were developed to evaluate the relevance, coherence, methodological suitability, objectivity and ethics of each retained study. Those studies that failed to meet key quality criteria were excluded from the review.

31 studies were identified as potentially relevant, 18 of these were excluded during quality appraisal and 13 studies were finally retained. Details about retained studies are included in Appendix 2 below.

Synthesis of evidence and drafting the report

Subsequent to quality review, the team embarked on a process of extracting and coding data on children's subjective experiences and wellbeing from selected studies. This was done through the use of NVivo software.

Wherever possible, researchers prioritised coding direct quotes from children (rather than focusing on the language and analysis of study authors), in order to foreground children's own articulations, views and perspectives of relevant matters.

Ethics

The study was shared with the chair of Coram's Research Ethics Committee. The chair judged the project to be outside of the criteria for a full ethical review (for example there are no human subjects included in the study and no personal data will be accessed).

The study has been delivered in line with Coram's safeguarding and data protection policies. The staff allocated to the review have enhanced disclosure and barring service (DBS) checks.

Limitations in the literature

The literature on children in detention in England – particularly academic literature – is very limited. Whilst a number of recent studies have explored the subjective wellbeing of children in criminal detention, very little qualitative research has been conducted with children in other forms of detention or detained for other purposes. In particular there is a distinct dearth of literature exploring the subjective wellbeing of children in detention in mental health facilities. The limited research that has been conducted is quantitative and deductive in nature, and thus not suited for capturing and exploring *in-depth* information about children's subjective wellbeing.

A more detailed discussion on limitations is including in the 'profile of literature' contained in Appendix 2 below.

Children in detention: definitions/ subgroups

The group 'Children in detention' was defined as inclusive of any child held in any kind of facility in England – penal, educational, protective, or other – from which they were not permitted to leave at will.

Four specific sub-groups were identified under the broader category of children in detention; these were as follows:

Children in the Youth Justice Secure Estate

This sub-group comprised children in custody because they were on remand, or because they had been convicted of a criminal offence and given a custodial sentence. Children in this subgroup were detained in three types of institutions, which together make up the youth justice secure estate in England.

Young offender institutions (YOIs): these establishments accommodate the majority (around two-thirds in 2015) of children in the secure estate. They are the largest facilities in the youth justice estate, and have the lowest staff-to-child ratios (Children's Commissioner, 2015). YOIs accommodate children ages 15-17 years.

Youth training centres (YTCs): these are privately run institutions which accommodate children ages 12-17 years. Around 20% of children in the youth justice secure estate are detained in YTCs (Children's Commissioner, 2015).

Secure children's homes (SCH): these are the smallest institutions in the youth justice estate and have the highest staffing levels. Around 10% of children in the youth justice secure estate are accommodated in secure children's homes (Children's Commissioner, 2015). Secure children's homes, are reserved for the youngest and most vulnerable children: they accommodate children ages 10-17 years, and also take children detained for welfare grounds (see below).

Children detained for protection and welfare

As a general rule, a child may not be deprived of their liberty by any organ of the State unless there is a court order that permits them to do so. Section 25 of the Children's Act allows children to be placed in a secure children's home on welfare grounds.[1] This provision allows a local authority, a health authority, a national health services trust or an education authority to make an application to court to place a child in secure accommodation.[2] A local authority may only apply in relation to a child who is looked after by them[3], but the other authorities are not so restricted. An order will only be granted if the child has a history of running away, and/ or is likely to run away from any other type of accommodation and is likely to suffer significant harm if he or she does so or is likely to injure themselves or somebody else in any other type of accommodation. If a child is under the age of 13, the consent of the Secretary of State for Education must be obtained. The child may initially be

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[1] See the Children (Secure Accommodation) Regulations 1991, Regulation 7. There are 15 secure children's homes in England and Wales.
[2] Under the Children (Secure Accommodation) Regulations 1991, Regulation 10, the local authority may keep a child in secure accommodation for a period of up to 72 hours within a 28 day period.
[3] Under s.20 or 31 of the Children Act 1989. But note that Section 25 does not apply to children who are accommodated by the local authority under s.20(5) – those aged 16-21 who are offered accommodation to protect and safeguard their welfare. Children who are accommodated under s.20 (but not s.20(5) who are placed in secure accommodation under a court order, may discharge themselves. If the local authority wish to keep the child in secure accommodation they must seek a care order on the child.

detained for a maximum period of three months, but the detention may be renewed by the Court for a further period not exceeding six months.[4] Other forms of children's homes are prohibited from restricting a child's liberty. A guardian ad litem must be appointed for the child and the child must be legally represented

Children in (mental) health detention

Children in (mental) health detention comprise those who are detained in a medical facility, usually under Section 2 of the Mental Health Act, for the purposes of assessment and treatment of their health condition or mental disorder. In rarer circumstances an order may be made by the High Court for a child to be detained in a psychiatric or medical facility under the inherent jurisdiction of the court or under an order of wardship for the purposes of emergency medical treatment (for example, children with anorexia are often detained in this manner). Finally some children on remand or convicted of a criminal offence may be detained within mental health institutions if they have complex mental health needs which cannot be addressed in a YOI, STC or SCH.

The institutional map of (mental) health detention facilities for children in the UK is varied and complex, and it was not possible within the scope of the review to provide an exhaustive and definitive list of these. (Indeed this is an issues which is ripe for further research and review). However, the following institutions were identified in the literature as accommodating legally detained children:

Non-forensic units:

> Tier 4 Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) in-patient units, These are residential psychiatric care units which may include some children detained under the Mental Health Act;

> Adolescent eating disorder inpatient services; these may include children detained under a High Court Order;

> CAMHS High Dependency Units;

> CAMHS Psychiatric Intensive Care Units.

Forensic units:

> National Commissioning Group Medium Secure Units (NCG MSU) for young people: in-patient secure forensic units for young people (aged 12-18 years) detained under the MHA and who present a serious risk to others, or children who are under a custodial sentence for a criminal conviction and at risk of suicide or self-harm;

> Non-NCG secure inpatient services (privately run forensic services for children who don't meet the criteria for NCG MSU services, but who have unmet mental health needs that can only be met in a secure setting),

> Tier 4 custodial estate mental health services attached to YOIs; these are for young people who have additional needs and can't cope in the general YOI setting, but who do not have

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4 The Children (Secure Accommodation) Regulations 1991, Regulation 12.

mental health needs severe/ complex enough to meet the threshold for admission into MSUs.

Children in Immigration Detention

This subgroup includes children detained in immigration removal centres under the Home Office's Enforcement and Instructions Guidance for the purposes of examining their immigration status, enabling removal, or enabling deportation (Chapter 55).[5] Home Office policy states that *unaccompanied children* 'must not be detained other than in very exceptional circumstances, and must not be held in an immigration removal centre in any circumstances.'[6] However, unaccompanied children are sometimes detained in removal centres, in practice, in circumstances where they are age-disputed, and the UK Border Agency considers them an adult (a relatively commonplace experience for older adolescents who lack legal identity documents to prove their age).[7] Some unaccompanied children who are to be returned to an EU Member State under the Dublin Regulation or to their home country may also be detained for escorting purposes to affect removal, although this should not involve overnight stays at Immigration Removal Centres or Short Term Holding Facilities.

Accompanied children may be detained in removal centres with their families. The government has recently pledged to end all immigration detention of children in the UK, however, this has not happened yet in practice (The Children's Society, 2011).

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5 See Chapter 55 of the Home Office's Enforcement and Instructions Guidance, available here
6 See Chapter 55 of the Home Office's Enforcement and Instructions Guidance, available here
7 See Migrant Children's Project FACT SHEET Age disputes and immigration detention, available here.

Findings

Children's perspectives on the reasons behind their detainment

> "What have I done?"
> – child in immigration detention (The Children's Society, 2011)

Regardless of the type of institution in which they were being held, and the reasons for their detention - children considered themselves to be "locked up" in "prison", and believed that they were being held for doing something "bad", "naughty" or wrong: "everyone who comes in here is bad - they don't lock good kids up" (Ellis, 2016). Even for those children not part of the youth justice system, detention was regarded as a form of punishment, and associated with criminality and law enforcement.

Some children, particularly those within the youth justice system, felt responsible for their detainment: "it's just like summat that I've done. I've made a mistake and I don't wanna go down that route again." (Beal, 2014). In other cases, however, children appeared confused by their detention: struggling to reconcile the circumstances in which they found themselves, with their own perceptions of themselves as 'good' people who hadn't committed any offence. One mother, detained in an immigration removal centre with her two children, aged 6 and 8 years, explained: "The girls were saying 'what have we done? We haven't done anything wrong, what is happening to us?'" (The Children's Society, 2011). In another study exploring the mental and physical health of children in immigration detention, it was reported that children would continuously ask the psychologist to explain why they were "in prison" (Lorek et al., 2009). "We didn't know anything", "we didn't understand", "why are we here?", "what have we done", were consistent refrains of children held in immigration removal centres. One child told researchers:

> "They explained that we were getting 'detained'. I didn't know what 'detained' meant. They didn't really explain where we were going or what we were going to do." (Children's Commissioner, 2015).

And another girl reasoned:

> "Yarl's Wood should only be for people that are bad, who stay there for years, with proper kind of problem. [Those people] should be in there - not us. Because the people that are in there are good people and stuff like that, they really want to go home. I don't know why they keep on locking people, and locking the doors, you know everything is like closed, you can't even open one single door." (Girl, age 9) (The Children's Society, 2011).

Similarly, children detained on the grounds of social welfare and protection under the Children's Act, voiced their frustrations at being detained; linking their detention to the judgements of professionals who, they presumed, had (undeservedly) 'labelled' them a 'bad' and troublesome child: as one young person explained:

> "I was thinking about it last night when I was in bed, and I was thinking, I'm a good kid, I don't get myself into no bother, I smoke the odd spliff but I don't drink, I don't go out and start fights, I don't cause no trouble, I come in when I'm told. That doesn't make me a bad kid" (girl detained under a secure accommodation order). (Ellis, 2016).

Even relatively young children appeared to have a sense of injustice about their detainment, theorising about whether it was legitimate or even legal. For example, a 9-year old girl in an immigration removal centre asked researchers: "are they allowed to lock people up in some detention centre? I don't know. The Queen might solve it or something - I don't know" (The Children's Society, 2011). A professional working with children and families in the same institution explained:

> "For the children a big question is - why are we here? What have we done wrong? And the simple reason for a lot of children is: 'we must have done something wrong, we must be bad people, bad people go to prison, evil people go to prison'" (The Children's Society, 2011).

In some cases the children's confusions about why they were in detention, and the nature of the institution in which they were being held, appeared to have been reinforced by staff. One study conducted in a secure children's home included the following, illuminating, exchange between some children and a support worker (staff):

> **Abbie**: I don't want to stay in, I want to go outside.
>
> **Oliver**: Well don't get locked up and you can go out when you want.
>
> **Abbie**: We're in a Secure Children's Home Oliver.
>
> **Oliver**: Where are we Holly (staff)?
>
> **Holly (staff)**: In a secure unit.
>
> **Oliver**: See! I told you.
>
> **Abbie**: but it is called a Secure Children's Home!
>
> **Holly (staff)**: We call it that but officially it is a secure unit.

Children detained on welfare grounds in secure children's homes drew inferences from the fact that they were detained together with children who had been convicted of serious criminal offences, confirming their view that they were perceived as being a "bad kid" (Ellis, 2016). The author writes: 'the double purpose of these units was found to make it difficult for "welfare girls" to separate their view of the home from its penal purpose. Whilst professionals regarded secure accommodation to be a last resort for young people at risk of serious harm, for the girls, being taken forcibly and placed in a secure setting triggered an angry reaction and reinforced their feelings of being punished'. (Ellis, 2016).

In some cases children appeared to internalise these perspectives that they presumed others had of them, considering themselves to be 'criminals' deserving of being detained, even in cases where they were in detention for other reasons. For example, one girl explained: "actually I've committed loads of crimes—I've just not been caught for them. I've been put here on welfare grounds, but it could be seen from either side." The author in this study went on to describe how the infringements the girl was referring to, noting that, although the girl had indeed appeared to have broken the law a number of times, her crimes were minor, and not the serious or unusually violent crimes that would have justified her detention under criminal justice grounds (Ellis, 2016).

Children's experiences of detention

Feeling "locked up"

Across all studies, children spoke of their circumstances in blunt and direct terms; despite the sanitised policy language used to describe institutions in which children are detained (e.g. "secure children's homes", "training centres", "immigration removal centre) children regularly referred to themselves as "locked up", or "banged up" in a "jail", or "prison", and described themselves as "prisoners". "You're just being rotting away in prison", "living a prisoner's life" were some of the ways that children characterised their experiences (Dubberley, 2010). Another child explained:

> "You're banged up, nothing you can do about it, makes you start thinking. You can't use the phone, can't talk to your family, makes you feel alone. Alone and scared" *(Young People's Views on Safeguarding in the Secure Estate, 2011)*

This experience - of feeling "locked up" in "prison" - was as real for children under secure accommodation orders, within immigration detention, or within mental health detention, as it was for children in the youth justice system; as one girl, detained under a secure accommodation order explained:

> "It's a prison... because you're locked in, you can't smoke, you can't do anything...you can't willingly leave. The staff might be nice and it might be for kids, but it's still a prison" (Ellis, 2016).

Similarly the feeling of being "locked" up was a consistent theme across young people's testimonies of their experiences in immigration and mental health detention. For example:

"They locked us in one room. With small beds. We couldn't have fresh air because they locked the windows;" "All the doors are locked everywhere, you can't go outside, you can't go upstairs to anyone else's bedroom, they lock it. If you get locked [out], you have to sleep on the floor" - Children in immigration detention; (The Children's Society, 2011)

"They told us we were going to a hotel not a prison and then they locked us up." (Girl aged 6) (The Children's Society, 2011).

> "I have never been in prison but I can imagine prison being similar - a place where you have to keep your mouth shut and get on with it. You come across people who are pretty frightening in there and you are scared of saying anything. It was like keep your head down, say nothing, do your time and get out." – Child in mental health detention (Lavis & Hewson, 2010).

One mother interviewed in a study undertaken at Yarl's wood noted that even her three-year-old understood that they were "living in a condition with police"; she explained:

> "My child knows we are living in a bad situation. She will say 'mummy I know if they are coming to get us, mummy don't cry'. It is painful. It is painful for a three year old. She knows everything." (The Children's Society, 2011)

Feelings of safety

Not all experiences in detention were found to be negative, however. For some young people, detention appeared to provide a sense of security and safety that they had not experienced in their chaotic lives outside the facility.

Children included in one study, conducted on a psychiatric in-patient ward, reported feeling so safe that it was as if they were "wrapped in cotton wool". One young person explained: "we're being watched quite a lot of the time... I think it's quite good because I don't have a chance to hurt myself and I know I'm safe." As well as feeling physically safe, young people in this study reported feeling emotionally secure: "I feel like this is my safe zone where I can talk and I won't sound silly... when I say something people won't laugh at me." (When interpreting these findings, however, it is important to note that this study was conducted on a Tier 4 CAHMS in-patient ward, and it is unclear how many, if any, of the children had been formally detained).

These findings stand in sharp contrast to those concerning the experiences of children in immigration detention, who universally reported feeling unsafe and insecure. A study in Yarl's Wood conducted by the Children's Society noted that over half of the children in the sample reported experiencing sleeplessness and nightmares, and were constantly crying. A young person, aged 18 years said that detention "messes up your mind", and noted he was trying to "keep his spirits up", and another, aged 17 years, said she was anxious and "could not think straight" (The Children's Society, 2011). According to the authors, three of children in their sample became so severely traumatised that they were suicidal;

> 'One boy aged 15 refused to eat and said he was trying to starve himself; another child, aged 12, was on suicide watch for self-harming behaviour, threatening to kill herself and refusing to eat. One girl, aged 10, who had been suffering from nightmares and anxiety since a previous period in detention, cried all the way to Yarl's Wood Immigration Centre and arrived with her eyes swollen. The next day she attempted to strangle herself'. (The Children's Society, 2011).

Access to opportunities

For a minority of children, entering detention reportedly provided them with new and positive opportunities; that they wouldn't normally have access to in the course of their lives outside the facility. In one study, children explained their experiences participating in the Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) programme while in detention:

> "**YP1**: On the expedition, you have to walk 21 miles. We jumped off a waterfall, it was serious. None of us had done that before, I'd never seen a waterfall before.

> **YP2**: I'd never seen a sheep before, it is not a common sight. There was no fence and a sheep was in the middle of the floor. It was chucking it down, we went on the walk and it was raining but it was nice rain, it was warm". (Dubberley, 2010)

> "[Camping] was something I have never done before. We have come to prison and we are being given opportunity to do something like this. It has really opened my eyes..." (Dubberley, 2010)

Experiences of violence

Children's testimonies contain indications that detention institutions can be highly violent places. Children often spoke of outbreaks of "fighting", in an off-hand, casual manner, suggesting that these types of incidents form part of children's everyday experiences. This was particularly true of children detained in YOIs and STCs, where the off-hand manner in which children spoke of experiences of violence appeared indicative of a culture in which violence is normalised, tolerated and justified: "if a fight's going to happen it happens...It's just jail, you've got to fight" (Dubberley, 2010).

Some of the YOIs were described as having serious gang issues, with young people affiliated on the outside, and also forming their own gangs whilst in custody (*Young People's Views on Safeguarding in the Secure Estate*, 2011). In contrast, violence was thought to be comparatively reduced in secure children's homes, which one young person attributed to the fact that they tended to house younger children (*Young People's Views on Safeguarding in the Secure Estate*, 2011).

In one study a young person explained how the environment in the YOI in which he was detained made him feel angrier, and increased is involvement in violence, which had also led to him being restrained multiple times *(Young People's Views on Restraint in the Secure Estate, 2011).*

Use of force by staff

Findings on the use of force by staff in detention institutions indicate that the use of these practices are concerningly commonplace. Children in youth justice facilities described being "twisted" and "bent up" by staff (the language children use to describe, what practitioners call "restraint"), as one boy explained: "the first time it happened...I never really knew about prison so it came as a bit of a shock when they started to twist me up."

Some young people appeared accustomed to the practice, regarding it a necessary and inevitable part of the routine of "prison" life. Others spoke of how being "twisted up" made them feel "frightened", "lonely", "helpless", "confused" and "unsafe"; some said that it increased their feelings of anger, violence and aggression, for example:

> "I felt angry....I felt helpless;" "[I felt] pissed off, unsafe, they jump on you;" "[it] leaves you even more angry, making you violent;" "On the unit, I felt angry, I didn't feel safe."
> (Young People's Views on Restraint in the Secure Estate, 2011).

Girls, in particular, spoke of feeling "violated", and traumatised by being "jumped on" by staff, particularly adult men. One young girl commented: "twenty men to restrain a five foot woman. Joke", and another said: "I felt embarrassed, it was painful and I felt helpless. It made me angry." These findings are particularly pertinent given that many girls in the youth justice system have past experiences of sexual violence and rape. Girls that had been victimised in the past, spoke of how being restrained was re-traumatising for them, triggering them into reliving previous experiences of violence:

> "It made me feel scared like I was going to be hurt again. I panic when people touch me, it reminds me of when I was raped."
> (*Young People's Views on Restraint in the Secure Estate*, 2011).

On the other hand the casual and dismissive manner in which boys sometimes spoke of being

restrained may have been influenced by a desire to display "bravado" and appear tough (*Young People's Views on Restraint in the Secure Estate*, 2011).

The experiences of children in immigration detention were also found to be characterised by violence, particularly during arrest. Children commented on the loud and/or violent way in which homes were entered, "They broke our house;" "They were bashing and kicking the door;" "They were disrespectful and shouted loudly", and described "being gripped by the arms" and escorted into vans (Children's Commissioner, 2010). One parent described how her 10 year old child had her head banged against a wall by an officer, "to wake her up". (Children's Commissioner, 2010).

There were accounts of officers "shadowing" children while they were getting dressed, or using the bathroom or toilet, which, again, was found to have a particularly negative impact on girls: "It's not nice going to the toilet in front of an officer." "I don't like people seeing me when I'm getting dressed." (Girl, aged 9) (Children's Commissioner, 2010).

There is a significant gap in the literature exploring children's experiences of violence, as well as their experiences of "restraint", "isolation" and other institutional practices, within psychiatric units, and there is an urgent need for more evidence and research in this area.

Indicators of wellbeing

Self-esteem and feelings of stigma

Children's perceptions of having being labelled "bad kids" and "criminals" appeared to have a significant impact on young people's sense of self-worth and self-esteem. Many children in detention expressed negative and self-critical images of themselves (for example, "[it's] just like you're wasting your life and not making no good of your life" (Beal, 2014)) as well as a sense of helplessness that they could ever turn their lives around, or indeed that others would ever come to see them as more than just "criminals"; as one boy explained:

"You've obviously committed all these crimes and that, you've hurt a lot of families with this, you've come in jail....your past creeps up on you it's never gonna go away is it? Definitely" (Beal, 2014).

Children's negative sense of themselves appeared to be continuously reinforced by their perceptions of how other people viewed them, as little more than a "nuisance", "trouble", or "waste", to be discarded from society and forgotten about. The following extracts are illustrative of how children thought that others perceived them:

> "He's [staff member] got some nasty impression of me, he has"; "[They think of me] 'she's just causing trouble all the time....she's a pain in the bum'" (girls in a children's home detained under welfare grounds) (Ellis, 2016);

> "I don't know – well some people think... Cos obviously I've committed that much crime – they'll be thinking he'll be back on it in no time" (boy in a YOI) (Beal, 2014).

One child in a youth offending institution explained that he could understand why others saw him in such a negative light, and would likely feel the same if he were standing from others' viewpoints, reflecting the extent to which he had internalised is own lack of self-worth: "I'd just think 'oh well he's got no, he ain't got no grades he can't go back to school, so he's just gunna be in and out of

prison'". Similarly another child expressed ownership over what he perceived to be an 'outsiders' perception of him (and other children in his situation): "but criminals, that's what you think – but criminals.." (Beal, 2014).

Some children appeared to have an exaggerated sense of their "infamy", presuming that others felt more negatively about them than they did (Ellis, 2016), and even assuming that their name would be all over the press:

> "Cos, what I mean, when people do quite a serious offence, it goes on the news and that dunnit, cos like it's like - it's out there innit. They let people know basically what you've done and that…TV ads and that;"

> "That's what I mean I don't want people reading the papers 'young lad mister…committed this crime' did that - just I'll be in that traded paper"(Beal, 2014).

Children in "welfare" detention often worried that their "reputation" was following them around from placement to placement, through the use of case files, which they presumed (often wrongly) contained negative thoughts and comments about them (Ellis, 2016).

Many children spoke of just wanting to feel like a "normal" person, and expressed feelings of being "singled out" and separated from the rest of society; as one boy explained: "[I want to] be known for summat good instead of having a fucking ASBO book or summat". One child who had spent time on an inpatient psychiatric unit stated: "I'd chop off my right arm to be normal" (Gill, Butler, & Pistrang, 2016). Some children in the youth justice secure estate discussed what it would be like not to have to carry around the stigma of being a youth offender, which they appeared to see as a permanent blemish and mark on their character. One boy imagined: "I'd be a normal person. People wun't look at me and say – 'oh he's been in prison before," and another wished: "just to know what it's like being a normal person. Wish I could have already gone down that route instead of being in here" (Beal, 2014).

Children's associations of institutionalisation with personal failure was evident in studies across all types of detention. Children blamed themselves for their internment, and regarded their detention as a state of being at "rock bottom", "square one"; something that they needed to overcome, "forget", and leave behind in order to reintegrate themselves back into a normal life. For example, one adolescent (included in a study conducted on an in-patient psychiatric ward) explained:

> "[if] things… deteriorate and I end up back here, I'd see that as such defeat because you've battled for such a long time to get out and then you just ended up back, it's like you're starting back from square one" (Gill et al., 2016).

Other children included in the same study said that they wanted to completely forget about their inpatient experience and "pretend as if it never happened" (Gill et al., 2016). Similarly a child detained in a YOT imagined: "forgetting what it's like in here. Forgetting how it is. I don't wanna remember being in here". (Beal, 2014) And study exploring immigration detention of children explained how many children are so "traumatised" that they see no option but to try and forget what has happened to them (Peirce & Et Al., 2008)

Efficacy, coping and resilience

Young people's negative opinions of themselves and feelings of judgement from others was found to affect their self-efficacy and coping. For example, one child explained how there was a direct relationship between how others saw and treated him, his ability to cope and his likelihood of reoffending:

> "You can only take so much can't you? Like people saying stuff to you an' that – you can only take so much. So you can be good for so long and then you just snap don't you? I know I'd end up – end up reoffending if summat went wrong" (Beal, 2014).

A number of children in detention expressed doubt about their ability to control their behaviour, or "turn their lives around", especially after leaving the institutions in which they were detained. For example, one boy described what his life might be after he served his sentence, and expressed doubts where it might lead:

> "[It] could be straight back into college but obviously I've got to like avoid being tempted to commit crime again ant I? Obviously I stopped cannabis an' that sort of stuff as well so just get what, I suppose I'm not. Hopefully… anyway all you can do you try innit? Can't guarantee nowt but as long as you try innit" (Beal, 2014)

In some cases, children's doubts about whether they could cope in the "outside world" appeared to be linked to experiences of institutionalisation. Children expressed that it would be hard to adjust, given the significant differences between the unit in which they were detained and their outside lives. Some talked about their detention as providing a "false sense of security":

> "[When] I go back I've got no one who's really close to me…You go from here where you see young people every single day, to back home and it's just you basically… then you're gonna start feeling a bit crap." (child in a psychiatric inpatient unit) (Gill et al., 2016).

Others reported feeling disconnected from the "real world": describing experiencing an almost existential state of limbo whilst being held detention: "I didn't think it was real, not real life" (The Children's Society, 2011).

For some young people, the secure environment was experienced as reinforcing their dependence on others: one young person in a mental health ward explained: "I was quite an independent person… but here you got to rely on people because everything you do has got to be checked with staff members." (Gill et al., 2016) This increased reliance on others left some children feeling unconfident about how they would manage on their own when they did not have the support of the staff at the unit. A few children in internment even expressed the view that they would miss their experience of the unit so much that they were likely to engage in behaviours, such as attempting suicide, in order to obtain readmission to the facility (Gill et al., 2016).

Whilst some children expressed that they were struggling to cope, others perceived themselves to be coping comparatively well, albeit in adverse circumstances, firmly rejecting the notion of vulnerability ascribed to them by professionals: "I can look after myself" (Ellis, 2016). Particularly, in cases where children were detained for reasons of protection and welfare, children often found it difficult to accept the professional reasoning behind their incarceration: seeing actions such as absconding as rational coping strategies, as opposed to harmful and risky behaviours. For example, one girl ("Abbie") who was placed in a secure children's home after absconding from her previous care placement explained:

> "I ran away from my children's home and I wouldn't go back because people in the home were threatening to burn me alive and beat the fuck out of me." (Ellis, 2016)

Abbie's social worker, on the other hand, identified Abbie's absconding as the main justification for her placement in the secure home, revealing of the frequent disconnect between young people's understandings of their situation, and those of professions. Abbie's case file read: "[Abbie] continues to put herself in risky positions and frequently absconds from her current placement" (Ellis, 2016). The authors of this study conclude that one of the main reasons that children absconded before being placed in a secure home was because they were unhappy in care, and did not feel that their concerns were taken serious or listened to. (Ellis, 2016). They also note how young people's accounts of their placements in detention often revealed a very different perspective than those of the professionals who placed them there, concluding: 'even those who were experiencing serious abuse at the time their placement felt that they could have cared for themselves if they had been left alone' (Ellis, 2016).

This analysis is supported by other evidence: the strategies that young people reported using to cope and take control over difficult situations often included behaviours that professionals would brand as 'risky' or harmful, including absconding from care, engaging in physical fights, taking drugs and selling sex: "I lived everywhere. Everywhere. Everywhere. Everywhere…with everyone. Anyone who would have me. Did prostitution" (Ellis, 2016).

Furthermore, after being admitted to the unit, poor behaviour was seen as a mechanism for ensuring the attention and concern of staff, as professionals were not perceived as prioritising the needs of 'good kids'. One child explained:

> "I show that I'm being good and tell them that I'm being good but they're not bothered. When I'm naughty they're always on the phone and always coming, but when I'm being good, they're never really bothered" (Ellis, 2016).

Acting out through physical violence also appeared to be used by children as a means of taking control and coping with feelings of being ignored and otherwise powerless. One girl explained how she saw violence as a useful method for avoiding a bad placement:

> "I didn't want to be in the care home and social services were taking their time to move [me] out of the care home. I didn't like it. I didn't think they treated us right. I didn't want to be there and I knew that the only way that I wouldn't have to go back in that care home would be if I beat her up. They wouldn't want me there." (Ellis, 2016).

In other cases, however, there were examples of children expressing more positive methods of coping, which also tended to be related to some of the therapeutic opportunities or activities that children sometimes had access to in their various institutions. For example one boy in immigration detention explained how playing football helped him to overcome distressing thoughts:

"I play basketball, I really like playing. Sometimes I just go out on a Saturday and stay in the park most of the afternoon. For a couple of hours, you forget about everything, then you snap back and everything comes back. I just try and keep myself as busy as possible so I don't have to think about it much." (Patrick, 15 years) (The Children's Society, 2011).

Another boy, detained in a YOI, explained how being in detention had provided him new education opportunities: "I had a bereavement. My brother had passed away so I couldn't actually concentrate in school but coming into prison has given me a chance to do my GCSEs again" (Khan, 2010). In the mental health study several participants described having learnt strategies on the ward to manage their difficulties, with one referring to her newly acquired coping strategies as "survival skills" (Gill et al., 2016)

The doctoral study (Dubberley, 2010) focused on young offenders' experiences of the DofE programme, contains particularly useful evidence on the sorts of activities that children in detention are likely to find therapeutic. The following extracts are illustrative:

"This is the best bit of education in this jail, if I'm honest. You haven't got to sit there for three hours; I can come here (DofE) **and I can right get rid of some of my energy and with people who know me. I come here and I can actually do something**. I can write and learn to spell as well." (Dubberley, 2010)

"I have learnt how to deal with things a lot better. It has opened your eyes to a different kind of life, camping and that. It was something I have never done before. We have come to prison and we are being given opportunity to do something like this. **It has really opened my eyes and thinking that we could progress** on that. You could go camping with your family and that". (Dubberley, 2010)

"You get to get out, walk about and keep your head clear for a while. It takes you away from this prison environment. Even though we are in prison, you are staying outside. I remember the first time I got to go out, it was a cold night but I stayed awake all night just looking up at the stars. I haven't been out for almost five years you see, it was a shock. I got to feel free for that one day; it was nice". (Dubberley, 2010).

These extracts highlight the importance and value of outdoor and physical activities for promoting wellbeing amongst youth in detention.

Relationships

Young people consistently emphasised the importance of relationships, particularly peer and family relationships, in influencing their behaviour, feelings of coping, hope for the future, and confidence about "reintegrating" into society. Children who had spent time in internment expressed concern about whether they would be accepted back by their friends, family, and others in the community, or whether spending time in secure accommodation, a youth justice facility, or a psychiatric inpatient unit would negatively affect family and friends' perceptions of them: "people might get worried in the sense that I'm not the same person anymore, that I'm different" (Gill et al., 2016).

Children who had spent time in a psychiatric facility reported fearing labels from their school peers, such as "mental" or "psycho" (Gill et al., 2016). For those in justice detention, influence of peers on the "outside" was seen as a major risk factor that could lead them into reoffending: "I don't know, me mates peer pressure really...They'll be thinking oh we'll get him back into trouble" (Beal, 2014). Another boy described his experience:

> "That's what, me best mate ___, I got out last time I rung him up the day I got out. He's like where are you? When did you get out? I goes – 'oh I got out today'. And he goes 'oh you got any weed?' I says yeah. So he came down and seen me and like bought some off me and I bought some. And he was helping me sell some of it and we were going out on our bikes to go drop it off and then he was like 'you're gonna end up back in soon you' cos I breached me tag. And I came back in and I got out again. And I seen him the day I got out and he's like 'you're not are you going back again you?' I goes nah. And he said er, what was it, he said 'you're gonna end up back in again'. And then all me mates were saying you're gonna end up back in and then I did" (Beal, 2014)

This extract highlights the central role that peer groups were found to play in normalising young people's transitions in and out of detention. In fact, for some young people, repeated transition appeared to be a shared behavioural norm with peers, and ensuring transition in and out of the secure estate was one way that young people appeared to be maintaining relationships; as one boy explained:

> "It was alright [in detention] cos one of me mates from on the out and that just came back in and he's next door to me so I just talk to him cos he's on bang up as well" (Beal, 2014).

> Indeed, for some young people, relationships with peers seemed more important than their location, whether in detention or in the community. (Beal, 2014)

These findings were also born out in the study which focused on the experience of children within mental health interment. Young people contrasted their experiences of having people around supporting them, to the isolation that they felt prior to admission on the ward: "I didn't really have anyone to talk to. I couldn't even talk to my mum. I couldn't even talk to my friends;" "[we] became friends and things have been on any upward cycle since… Everybody needs someone like that". (Ellis, 2016). Some young people spoke of wanting to replicate the supportive environment that they had experienced on the ward on the outside, through - for example - joining youth-based groups in the community (Ellis, 2016).

On the other hand, some young people reported feeling smothered by the intensity of relationships they formed in detention, and the constant presence and company of others in the facility, feeling that it was "too much" and that they needed more personal space and time on their own. These feelings were exacerbated by the 'closed' nature of the institution. One young person explained:

> "No one has time to spend alone, because as you can see all these doors are locked. You can't go into your bedroom… the only place you could possibly have all by yourself is the loo." (Gill et al., 2016)

A number of young people also spoke about feeling worried that they had become "too attached" to the other young people and staff, and that this would make it harder for them to leave the inpatient unit and return home to their families: "I don't want to get comfortable because one day I will have to leave…" (Gill et al., 2016).

Family relationships were consistently emphasised by young people as being pivotal to their successful transition from detention into the community: "I don't know, it's gonna go easy for me cos I've obviously got my family support and that so…" (young person on a YOI) (Beal, 2014); "your family can pick up on difficulties quicker because they now know you better." (young person on a psychiatric facility) (Gill et al., 2016). One young person in a youth detention facility explained why he felt he had a good chance of being able to reintegrate into society, without being tempted to reoffend:

> "And obviously the other luck as well is when – I obviously – I've got people supporting me and that. Other people they're not as luck are they? To have people supporting them and stuff". (Beal, 2014).

> And another young person on a psychiatric unit similarly explained that it was a comfort "knowing that I've got a good support network out there waiting for me." (Gill et al., 2016)

Being able to maintain contact with families was found to be very important to children in detention, and a significant factor affecting their wellbeing. Given this, practices such as refusing children physical contact with their parents (on youth justice facilities) appear to be particularly problematic and harmful. Young people explained: "I think we should be able to hug our families when they come and visit us because it is bad enough being away from them for a year and a half. It's awful;" "[we should] have more time outside and be able to hug our parents, it hurts so much not being able to hug my mum, fiancé or little brother." *(Young People ' s Views on Safeguarding in the Secure Estat>*, 2011). Furthermore, those children detained in institutions far from their families, were found to experience intensified feelings of isolation and unhappiness. One study included in the review focused on the circumstances of Welsh girls detained in England: when asked what was most important to them while incarcerate, all girls included in the study stated they wanted to be closer to their family: "[the most important thing for me is] that I'm close enough to home to enable visits from family." (Hughes, Dubberley, & Buchanan, 2012).

Emerging themes

Several key findings and themes emerged from the literature on the subjective wellbeing of children in detention:

The literature– particularly academic literature – is very limited. Whilst a number of recent studies have explored the subjective wellbeing of children in criminal detention, very little qualitative research has been conducted with children in other forms of detention or detained for other purposes. In particular there is a distinct dearth of literature exploring the subjective wellbeing of children in detention in mental health facilities. The limited research that has been conducted is quantitative and deductive in nature, and thus not best suited for capturing and exploring in-depth information about children's subjective wellbeing. Further it is notable that (with the exception, perhaps, of the User Voice research) the samples of children included in studies appear to comprise those who are the least vulnerable and least excluded within the population of detained children.

Regardless of the type of institution in which they were being held, and the reasons for their detention, children considered themselves to have been "locked up" in "prison" for bad behaviour. Even for those children not part of the youth justice system, detention was regarded as a form of punishment, and associated with criminality and law enforcement.

Despite the sanitised policy language used to describe institutions in which children are detained, children referred to the units in which they were held as "jails" or "prisons" and referred to themselves as "prisoners".

Being in detention appears to have a significant effect on young people's perceptions of self, and self-esteem. Many children expressed highly negative, and self-critical images of themselves, as well as a sense of despondency about their future. Children expressed concern about whether they would be accepted back by their friends, family, and others in the community, after spending time in secure accommodation, a youth justice facility, or a psychiatric inpatient unit. Children feared the stigma of detention and emphasised their desire to be 'normal'. They also consistently emphasised the importance of relationships, particularly peer and family relationships (both 'inside' and 'outside' the facility), to their sense of wellbeing.

Young people's negative opinions of themselves and feelings of judgement from others was also found to affect their self-efficacy and coping. A number of children in detention expressed doubt about their ability to control their behaviour, or "turn their lives around", especially after leaving the institutions in which they were detained.

In some cases, children's doubts about whether they could cope in the "outside world" appeared to be linked to experiences of institutionalisation. Children expressed that it would be hard to adjust, given the significant differences between the unit in which they were detained and their outside lives, and reported feeling disconnected from the "real world":

Other children, however, perceived themselves to be coping well in adverse circumstances, firmly rejecting the notion of vulnerability ascribed to them by professionals. The strategies that young people reported using to cope, and take back power and control, often included behaviours that professionals would brand as risky or harmful, including absconding from care, engaging in physical fights, taking drugs and selling sex.

Children's testimonies contain indications that detention institutions can be highly violent places. Some children spoke of experiences of violence in an off-hand and casual manner; others explained that it made them feel "frightened", "angry" and "unsafe". Use of force by staff against children in detention appears to be commonplace, and can be a highly distressing and confusing experience for children. Girls, in particular, spoke of feeling "violated", and re-traumatised by being "twisted up", "bent up" and "jumped on" by adult male members of staff, particularly when they had past histories of being subject to sexual violence: "I panic when people touch me, it reminds me of when I was raped."

On the other hand, not all experiences of detention were negative. For some young people, detention appeared to provide a sense of security and safety that they had not experienced in their chaotic lives outside the facility. For a minority of children, entering detention reportedly provided them with new and positive opportunities; that they wouldn't normally have access to in the course of their lives outside the facility.

The literature contains some important evidence on the types of opportunities and activities that can be particularly therapeutic and helpful for children in detention, including physical outdoor activities, as well as creative and interactive educational opportunities.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Quality appraisal tool

Summary Information	Criteria	Possible fields	Inclusion criteria (where applicable)
	Citation	Author, year, title, publisher, journal & issue, page numbers.	n/a
	Is the source publically available (published)?	Yes/No	Exclude if not publically available
	Publication year		Exclude if published before 2007
	Peer reviewed	Yes/No	n/a
	Did the study involve the collection of primary data?	Yes/No	Exclude if no
	Does the study contain information about children within England?	Yes/No	Exclude if no (unless the study contains information of significant relevance that is not identified elsewhere. If study is to be retained state reason.)
	Geographical scope of study	Multi-country; national; regional; sub-regional; single case	n/a
	Study type	Qualitative/quantitative/mixed methods	Exclude if study is exclusively quantitative

Relevance	What is the research question/purpose of the research?	[Open]	n/a
	Does the study/ source include information about the subjective wellbeing of one of our 'primary groups'?	Yes/No	Exclude if no
	Which primary group does the study address?	List primary group	n/a
	Does the study capture and present the views and experiences of children under the age of 17 years?	Yes/No	Exclude if no
	What is the age range of vulnerable children participating in the study?	[Open]	Exclude if none were 17 or younger Proceed with caution if studies include a mixed age group above and below 18 and comments are not attributed to ages
Methodology & methods	Are there any potential conflicts of interest? (I.e. related to the funding interests?)	Yes/No [Provide details]	Consider exclusion if yes
	Is it clear from the data source through what means evidence/ information/ data about children's views were collected?	Yes/No	Consider excluding if no
	Are the study design/ methods used appropriate to support the evidence, analysis and	Yes/No	Consider exclusion if no (unless there is a compelling

conclusions presented in the source?		reason to retain the article and state the reason for this.)
Does the methodological approach appear to have been consciously adopted with awareness about the methodological choices made, and the implications of these?	Scale 1-5 with 5 being highest level of awareness	Consider excluding if score is 2 or below.
How inductive/observation-based is the methodological approach?	Scale 1-5 with 5 being the most inductive approach (e.g. grounded theory), and 1 being highly deductive.	Consider excluding if score is 2 or below.
Were the methods of data collection used appropriate to ensure that children were given an opportunity for genuine self-expression, (e.g. non-directive opportunities to say what is on their mind, free from pressure/ coercion etc.)	Yes/ No/ not enough information about methods	Exclude if no Consider exclusion if 'not enough information about methods'
What is the mechanism through which the views of children have been documented and recorded?	[Provide details]	N/A
What is the context in which children were expressing their views, and the purposes for which the views were expressed?	[Provide details]	N/A (see inclusion criteria below)

	How direct and authentic do you consider the presentation of children's voices to be?	(score from 1-6, 6 being the most direct presentation of children's views) Scoring criteria: 6. verbatim narrative 5. edited account 4. question and answer 3. use of selected quotations 2. paraphrasing/ interpretation of children's views 1. children's views are implied through secondary accounts, theoretical analysis and other means	Consider excluding if score is 2 or below.
	How were children accessed for the study?	[Open]	N/A
	What is the population from which children are drawn	[Open]	N/A
	Was the sample method appropriate to the purpose of the study	Yes/ No/ unclear	Exclude if no or unclear
	Is the study based on retrospective accounts of childhood by adults?	Yes/No [Provide details]	Consider exclusion if yes

	How many children are included in the study? (Sample size)	[Open]	N/A
	Are limitations discussed?	Yes/No [provide details]	Exclude if limitations are so significant that the evidence becomes highly questionable.
Ethics	Did the article undergo an ethical approval process? And was this approval granted?	Yes / no	Consider exclusion if no (and there is reason to believe there are ethical concerns)
	Do you have substantial concerns about the ethical implications of the research (effects on participants, researchers, etc.)?	Yes / no	Exclude if yes

Appendix 2: Profile of included literature

After an initial scan, 31 papers were shortlisted as potentially relevant. These were assessed using the screening quality appraisal process (Appendix 2), 18 papers were excluded:

> **11** were excluded due to **relevance**, as although they contained information about children in detention, they did not include information about the subjective wellbeing children specifically;

> **5** were excluded[8] because they contained only quantitative information (and therefore were outside of the scope of this review, which was designed to only consider qualitative and mixed methods studies);[9]

> **1** was excluded as although the study was qualitative, the methodological approach was thought to be too deductive and not sufficiently grounded in the direct and authentic voices of children;

> **1** was excluded due to methodological weakness/ lack of scientific rigour.

13 studies remained, and data was extracted from these. Of the 13 studies that remained, 9 were solely qualitative, 3 were mixed methods and 1 was a secondary literature review. The included studies drew on a range of techniques for gathering primary qualitative data including semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, case file reviews, open-question surveys and participant observation/ ethnography.

6 studies were peer review studies, and 7 were grey literature. Of the 6 peer review studies 2 were PhD theses and 4 were journal articles. Of the 6 grey literature reports, 2 were User Voice Children's Commissioner studies, which were found to be especially rich, inductive and grounded in the voices of the child (and therefore of particular use for the purposes of this review); the other 5 studies were research reports compiled by the Children's Society, the Centre for Mental Health, the Youth Justice Board, the Children's Commissioner and the National Advisory Council for Children's Mental Health and Psychological Wellbeing.

Of the 13 included studies, 7 were about children in criminal detention, 1 was conducted in a children's home, and included information on children in custody for the purposes of welfare and protection, 3 were about children in immigration detention, and the final 2 pieces included information about children's experiences on adolescent mental health in-patient units. 1 of these was a secondary literature review of (relatively old) evidence, but was included due the lack of available evidence on children in mental health detention. And the final piece was primary data collection study focused on residential child and adolescent mental health services, which *may* have included children detained under the Mental Health Act, although this was not made clear within the study sample justification, findings or analysis.[10]

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8 The five quantitative studies included: Simmonds, J. (2016) 'Children in custody 2015-16: an analysis of 12–18-year-olds' perceptions of their experiences in secure training centres and young offender institutions'. HM Inspectorate of Prisons; Gyateng, T., Moretti, A., May, T., Turnbull, P.J. (2013) 'Young People and the Secure Estate: Needs and Interventions'. Institute for Criminal Policy Research; CAMHS Tier 4 Steering Group (2014) 'Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Tier 4 Report'; Viner, R. M. (2007). Do Adolescent Inpatient Wards Make a Difference? Findings From a National Young Patient Survey. Pediatrics, 120(4); Ayton, A., Keen, C., & Lask, B. (2009). Pros and cons of using the mental health act for severe eating disorders in adolescents. European Eating Disorders Review, 17(1), 14–23.

9 The reasons for the focus on qualitative literature were due to the rapid time frame and the scope and nature of the review, which was designed to draw out in-depth, rich, inductive and descriptive information about children's subjective wellbeing.

10 Reasons for the inclusion of this study are discussed in more detail below.

Literature on children in the Youth Justice Secure Estate

> **Beal (2014)** was a doctoral thesis undertaken at the University of Sheffield, comprising an in-depth, qualitative study of 3 young people's (all boys) perceptions of their transition from the secure justice estate into education, training or employment.

> **Dubberley (2010)** was a doctoral thesis undertaken at Glyndŵr University. The study examined young offenders' perceptions of, and engagement with, the DofE programme whilst in the secure estate, and explored the implications of these perceptions for young people's experiences within the secure estate and following release. The sample included interviewing boys in 5 YOIs, 1 Secure Children's Home, and 1 Secure Training Centre.

> **Hughes et al. (2012)** was a peer review journal article drawing on secondary literature along with a small-scale (qualitative/ open) survey that explored the perceptions and experiences of girls from North Wales, detained in youth justice facilities in England. 4 girls and 12 front-line staff were surveyed.

> **Khan et al. (2010)** was an audit review study carried out by the Centre for Mental Health, exploring mental health services for young people in secure justice settings. The study was initially excluded as most of the data was collected from (70) members of staff, rather than from young people themselves. Nonetheless, a couple of points of analysis from this study were ultimately judged to be useful and relevant during the write up of the report, and therefore the study was re-included. In addition to interviews with 70 members of staff, researchers sat in on multidisciplinary meetings and observed interactions between mental health teams and their colleagues and between staff and young people. A small (unspecified) number of young people and family members with experiences of mental health difficulties and the youth justice system were consulted throughout the review and invited to discuss the findings and contribute to service user experiences and perspectives.

> **User Voice, the Office of the Children's Commissioner (2011)**, 'Young People's Views on Restraint in the Secure Estate' was a grey literature report based on data collected from 89 young people across 3 YOIs (2 for boys and 1 for girls), 1 STC, 1 SCH, and 3 Youth Offending Teams (YOTs). Data was collected through survey questionnaires, semi-structured focus group discussions, audio recordings and diary reflections from facilitators.

> **User Voice, the Office of the Children's Commissioner and the Youth Justice Board (2011)**, 'Young People's Views on Safeguarding in the Secure Estate' was a grey literature report based on data collected from the same sample: 89 young people across 3 YOIs (2 for boys and 1 for girls), 1 STC, 1 SCH, and 3 Youth Offending Teams (YOTs). Data was collected through survey questionnaires, semi-structured focus group discussions, audio recordings and diary reflections from facilitators.

Literature on children detained for protection and welfare

> **Ellis (2016)** was a peer review journal article exploring qualitative data from an ethnographic study in a Children's Home in England. The research used participant observation and in-depth interviews with 13 young people, all girls, ages 10-15 years, to explore their experiences of being secured. The study also included a review of young participants' case files, to compare young people's own testimonies with information included in case files.

Literature on children in mental health detention

> **Gill (2016)** was a peer review journal article comprising information from a qualitative study undertaken on an adolescent in-patient CAMHS ward in 3 London hospitals. The study was based on 12 individual interviews conducted with adolescents aged 13-18 years, who had spent a minimum of 2 months in the unit. The study did not include any young people with psychotic symptoms or learning/ development disorders. It is also unclear how many, if any, of the young people included in the study had been sectioned, or otherwise legally detained. Therefore findings from this study are limited for the purposes of this research and should be treated with caution.

> **Lavis et al. (2010)** was a briefing prepared by the National Advisory Council for Children's Mental Health and Psychological Wellbeing, exploring young people's view on mental health services. The study was initially excluded given that it is based on secondary evidence collected prior to 2007, however, a decision was ultimately made to include the briefing, as it contained the only available testimony from children clearly detained under the Mental Health Act, exploring their experiences of being detained in a secure facility.

Literature on children in immigration detention

> **Children's Commissioner (2010)**, 'Follow up report to: the arrest and detention of children subject to immigration control', contains evidence on children's perspectives of their experiences in an Immigration Removal Centre visited by Children's Commissioner Professor Sir Al Aynsley-Green in 2009.

> **Lorek et al. (2009)** was a peer review journal article containing evidence on the mental and physical health difficulties of children held within an immigration detention centre in England. The study was initially excluded due to its inductive methodological approach, however, a couple of points of analysis from the study were ultimately judged to be of use and relevance during the write up of the report, and therefore the study was re-included. The study is based on clinical diagnostic interview, observations with children ages 3-11 years, and self-report questionnaires filled out by children ages 6-11 years. A total of 11 children were included in the study.

> **Peirce et al. (2008)** was a grey literature report by the Medical Justice and the National Coalition of Anti-Deportation Campaigns, containing some evidence from children on the use of force during the arrest and deportation of migrants.

> **The Children's Society (2011)** was a grey literature report exploring the experiences of children and families in immigration detention in the UK. The research is based on qualitative interviews, and case files, containing information about the views and experiences of 34 children ages 0-17 years in immigration detention with their parents.

Limitations in literature

The literature on children in detention in England – particularly academic literature – is very limited. Whilst a number of recent studies have explored the subjective wellbeing of children in criminal detention, very little qualitative research has been conducted with children in other forms of detention or detained for other purposes. In particular there is a distinct dearth of literature exploring the subjective wellbeing of children in detention in mental health facilities. The limited research that has been conducted is quantitative and deductive in nature, and thus not suited to capturing and exploring *in-depth* information about children's subjective wellbeing.

(With the exception, perhaps, of the User Voice studies) the samples of children included in studies appear to comprise those who are the least vulnerable and least excluded within the population of detained children. For example, one of the studies focused on exploring young offenders' engagement in the Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) Programme. This study was included as, despite its focus on DofE, it contained interesting and in-depth testimony from children about matters related to their subjective wellbeing more broadly. However, it is worth noting that participating in DofE is only available to a minority of young offenders, and selection for the programme is conditional on 'good behaviour' (Dubberley, 2010). By way of another example, the only study including primary data collection on the subjective wellbeing of children in mental health detention, was conducted within institutions from the lowest 'Tier'/ level of security of residential mental health services. CAHMS Tier 4 in-patient units tend to include only a minority of children who are legally detained, and those who are legally detained constitute children with the lowest level of need/ risk in the secure mental health estate. Further the sample for this study explicitly excluded children with particularly complex mental health needs, including those with symptoms of psychosis, and those with learning/ development disorders.

In all studies, participating children were (inevitably) accessed through institutions. Included studies did not tend to contain detailed and explicit information about the process for selecting participants for inclusion in the study, leaving open the question as to how much influence and input staff at institutions had in the selection process of participants. In one study children were interviewed in the presence of a support worker; although the authors noted '*there was no evidence that this affected the responses of young people*' (*Young People's Views on Restraint in the Secure Estate*, 2011) it is hard to see how the presence of staff wouldn't have affected responses at all.

Finally, only one of the studies (Ellis, 2016) included in the review utilised ethnographic methods, which when utilised, tend to provide some of the most in-depth, inductive, and descriptive data. The lack of ethnography is undoubtedly due to limitations in access in institutions, and ethical considerations. Nevertheless, this necessarily limits what is known and understood about the subjective experiences and wellbeing of young people in detention in England.

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