Action Points and Recommendations

- Greater awareness and training of Police, Prison, Probation, Lawyers, Magistrates, Judges of how YP may have delayed maturity due to adversity and neurodisability
- Screening for adversity and neurodisability issues at key points in Criminal Justice pathway
- Explore use of Trauma Recovery and Neuro-developitionally informed approaches
- Agencies and systems need to work towards meaningful “Goals” in education, employment, wellbeing, pro-social activity as well as crime reduction

Prevention through Public Health initiatives

- Identification of Neuro-developmental factors in children and young people that may lead to social exclusion (eg. from school/college/work)
- Provision of Neurorehabilitation linked to education and training
- Critical when the child and/or YP may be facing transition from structured to less structured environments

Ensure sentencing, rehabilitation and resettlement takes account of such factors: how to manage memory, communication and attention problems by modifying how one asks a YP with TBI to follow instructions; manage impulsivity & socialising etc.
- Where to access advice and support if problems are more extensive; and who to refer to the individual on if to necessary
- Commissioners of social and health care & educational and employment agencies for offenders to ensure that packages of care & rehabilitation are developed and delivered that addresses the range of issues related to maturity and neurodisability factors

Neurodevelopmental Maturity and Crime

The Need to Account for Adversity and Brain Injury in the Criminal Justice System

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Typical Neurodevelopment
- The brain has 100 Billion neurons from birth
- Develops by strengthening & pruning connections
- With vital periods for cognitive and emotional functions to be expressed over childhood and teenage years

Brain Differences associated with Adversity
- Adversity linked to smaller corpus callosum (the bridge between hemispheres) & less activity in pre-frontal (control) and limbic (drive area) systems (McCrosky 2010)
- Greater reduction in corpus callosum in boys than girls
- Age of exposure plays a role, across childhood and adolescence (Teicher & Samson, 2016)
- May be due to ‘adaptive’ response of hyper-vigilance for threat in ‘unpredictable’ home environments.

Factors affecting early Brain Development
“The role of early experience, especially of family and caregivers is being identified as foundational basis for later executive function maturation.”
-Barnes-Cetantaro and Eslinger, 2016

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) alters developmental trajectory
- Caused by a blow to the head, such as in a fall, assault, road traffic accident etc.
- FRONTAL and TEMPORAL lobes usually injured
- Connections being sheared or compromised across the brain
- Problems with attention, memory, impulse control, social reasoning and Theory of Mind (ToM).

Re-offending rates
- The most prolific offenders (PO) tend to be early starters and go on to commit around 77% of crime

Key Facts: TBI and Crime
- TBI is linked to earlier, more violent and persistent offending.
- 4x increased risk of developing mental health disorder with co-existing offending after TBI.
* Timonen et al. 2002

Spike in Crime
- About a quarter of inmates are between 15-24 years of age
- Teenage brain has adult-like ability to reason, but falters when “in the heat of the moment” (*).

Knock out history in teenage years is a risk factor for offending to carry over into adulthood.
* Raine, 2005

Violent offenders have more lesions in frontal lobes
Schildt et al. 2013

Young offenders with a history of TBI are at greater risk of self-harming and committing suicide.
Chitsabesan, 2015

The Economic Cost
“Re-offending costs the UK between nine and thirteen billion pounds a year.”
The taxpayer has so far got a poor return for the money invested in rehabilitation... need a new way of approaching the problem...
(ex.Secretary of State for Justice Chris Grayling MP)

Re-offending: £155,000 for a 15-year-old in the general population ($95,000 non-crime costs and $60,000 crime costs)
and £345,000 for a 15-year-old young offender ($95,000 non-crime costs and £250,000 crime costs)

Prevalence of TBI
- Around 60% of prisoners report a history of head injury. 1-2 out of 10 have had moderate-severe TBI.

Brain Development
- Dynamic mapping of human cortical development during childhood through early adulthood. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America 101 (21), 2004. 45% 1 year post release 45%
- Reduced Trajectory
- Plateau
- Recovery

The role of early experience, especially of family and caregivers is being identified as foundational basis for later executive function maturation.
-Barnes-Cetantaro and Eslinger, 2016

See forthcoming report from “Centre for mental Health”
www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/