

# Breakin' down the walls of heartache Part 2:

## A face that's asking to be punched



Figure 1 - Liverpool 0 Chelsea 2, Anfield, 27 April 2014.

*Jon Flanagan has avoided instant dismissal from Liverpool FC because the club believes it has a responsibility to help his rehabilitation after he pleaded guilty to assaulting his girlfriend. CCTV pictures showed Flanagan, of Knowsley Road, Aigburth, pushing Ms Wall into a wall twice before aiming a kick at her body when she slumped to the floor.<sup>1</sup>*

**Alan Dunn**  
**1 February 2018**

*The day after Transfer Deadline (Flanagan is sent to Bolton) and two days after Huddersfield away (Salah scores his 26th goal of the season)*

## 2013-14

We were there in April 2014 when Gerrard slipped. We remember that moment vividly but tend to forget the chances that Suárez, Coutinho, Sakho and Allen missed on that sunny Sunday afternoon at Anfield. We also overlook the fact that the number 15 for Chelsea that day was an ineffectual little Egyptian winger by the name of Mohamed Salah.

In the first half, Salah shoots and the ball clearly strikes Jon Flanagan's hand inside the box but it's not given. At kick-off, Flanagan seems to have it all, playing for his hometown club alongside Suárez and Gerrard and just a few victories

away from the first League title since 1990 and with a World Cup in Brazil awaiting. Salah is in Chelsea's reserves and Egypt haven't made Brazil, despite his six goals in qualifying. Salah gets booked and replaced by Willian after sixty minutes. Flick through any website in February 2018 and we learn about how fortunes turn in this city. One should be sacked but is sent to Bolton and one has celebratory *Egyptian King* songs penned about him.

The 2013-14 season is a bad dream about hurt and might-have-beens with absolute highs and traumatic lows. And then there was the football.

For me it begins on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013 at our big kitchen table, with Sir R, listening to the last few minutes of the Liverpool game on the radio. We are 1-0 up at home to Moyes' Manchester United with Sturridge's flicked header and we hold on for a victory. Let the season commence, we say, despite Suárez being suspended for biting another man (of which Irvine Welsh tweets: *ugly, and a strange thing for a grown man to repeatedly do in public*).



Figure 2 - Belgian fans at Glasgow Central Station, 2013.



Figure 3 - Kevin De Bruyne and Grey Hoodie, Hampden, 2013.

Meanwhile ...

He starts the season at right-back for AC Hoylake in the U-15 Eastham League, playing a blinder in a 2-1 home win against Heswall. I take him up to a rainy Glasgow to see Scotland lose to a De Bruyne-inspired Belgium with goals by Steven Burnley Defour and Kevin Mirallas. Then we're at home to last season's League Champions,

West Kirby Wasps, who are big and strong and who take the lead inside two minutes. But our boys play out of their skins and it's the best we've ever seen them perform as they thump Wasps 5-2. He is our son.

Near the end he robs the ball off their best player and strides forward, retaining perfect control on a muddy pitch, skipping between two tackles then thumping the ball from outside the box and it's arrowing into the top corner when their keeper flies up and tips it over in a remarkable save. Both sides cheer and it's one of the best cold rainy nights stood on a boggy field on the Wirral you could ever spend.



Figure 4 - David Lamelas *London Friends (Lynda Morris) (1974)*



Figure 5 - LLAWN01 (*Llandudno Arts Weekend # 1*), micro festival curated by Marc Rees.

We get away from it all in Llandudno with mirrorball-headed performers on the prom and David Lamelas' portrait of a young Lynda Morris at Mostyn.

Elsewhere, she declares her love of him all over Facebook. He is an older scumbag dealer who exploits and preys on younger people and we've just had a year of hell with him. She is our daughter.

We draw 4-4 with a poor Higher Bebington team and he is distracted and booked for a vicious tackle. It all blows up online. We attend a PEP meeting but it's all bollocks and we know it. He goes to the Tranmere game, meets Peter Crouch, then stays out too late and texts "Hey, Dad, I'm out with *him* getting stoned." If only it was Crouch he meant ...



Figure 6 - Alan Dunn *Artists' uses of the word revolution*, free CD distributed on Deptford High Street, 2013.

I head down to Deptford High Street to hand out copies of the *Artists' uses of the word revolution* CD as part of Deptford X. We beat Upton 5-1 at home in the cup. Most evenings include some abusive texts from her. Poor thing. She meets a new older dealer who goes by the name of Bad Egg. Great choice. Liverpool cruise to top of the league with another win. We are home to one of the best teams, Vauxhall, but we match them and come back to draw 4-4, even missing a last minute penalty from our poetically named playmaker Dillan

Thomas. In another world, Dillan, now 19, would be the heart of Liverpool's midfield. Philippe Emre Gini Jordan James who?

We meet some teachers to discuss deteriorating behaviour; the pupil, not them. The MST sessions start to get cancelled and the worker there, let's call her Dr T, basically pins the whole situation on me. Our heads are mush. We go to FACT to see *The pervert's guide to ideology* but I don't feel so good during it and leave the cinema and black out. I wake as my head thumps against the hard floor, just outside The Box where all those *tenantspin* shows took place. The next day is full of her shouting at him, him shouting at me, her shouting at all of us. We lose 3-5 to Blades and he shouts at Sir R to shut up on the touchline. I get atrocious headaches. I produce a new billboard for the *tenantspin* archive show at FACT, the end of a great project.

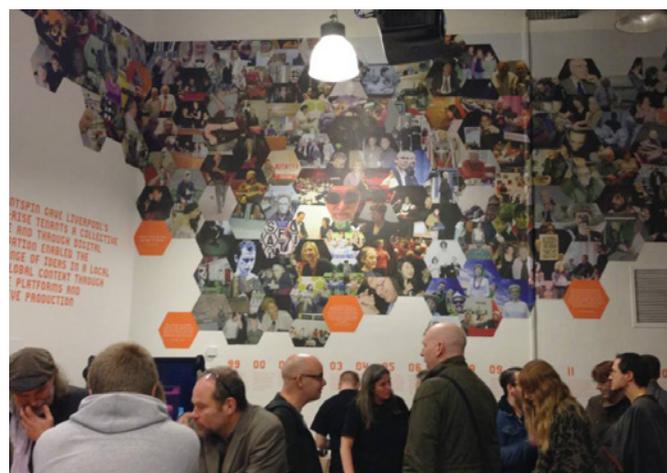


Figure 7 - Alan Dunn *tenantspin* billboard, The Incomplete Archive, FACT, Liverpool, 2013.



Figure 8 - Alan Dunn *tenantspin* billboard, with one of the many valid excuses from John Spoons McGuirk, age 70+.

We agree to meet her in Manchester each Saturday. These sessions aren't great. In fact they are horrendous. We see Joy Division and Factory exhibitions and Suárez returns and gets a glorious hat-trick. We're away to Winsford in the cup and it's a tough game, but he is back up front, setting up Jonny for the first and playing a blinder in a shock 5-1 win. We all head home on cloud nine as the storms roll in. I listen to Lou Reed's still-harrowing *Berlin* and people are hitting each other. Women are being abused. Babies are crying. Lou Reed is always far more relevant and realistic than Bowie.

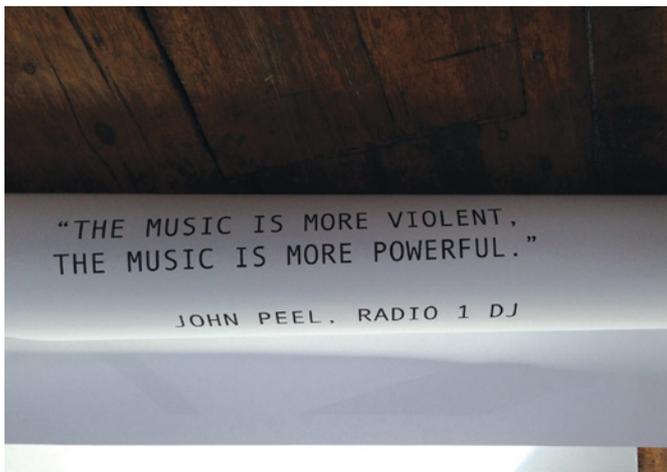


Figure 9 - student exhibition, Manchester, 2013.

We are birlin' (colloq: to whirl around rapidly and dizzily). I get my head unscrewed so much it's forwards backwards and I crack on with the final leg of writing my PhD. We persevere. We keep trying to fix things. We keep trying new things. We keep getting up every morning and we keep making mistakes. She gives Bad Egg all her bank account details. Suárez scores two and Liverpool sit nicely in second. She then gives him all her passwords which he of course changes. Your kids text you that you're xxxing useless and that there is a contract out on you, as you're sat in a meeting about a project in The Hunslet Club. Police visit her as she's been sited across the region in a 4x4 with older men and carrying large sums of cash.

We report all this to Social Services but we are drowning in MST, CAHMS, PAT, CIN, LAC, TAC, TAF, AST, EDT, YOT, PPO, NVR,

AROSE, CLT, EOCCM, RMM, PEP, IRO, CAT, EMDR and every other acronym they can invent to hide behind as being one cog in a bigger wheel: Multisystemic Therapy, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, Post-Adoption Team, Children In Need, Looked After Children, Team Around The Child, Team Around The Family, Adult Support Team, Emergency Duty Team, Youth Offending Team, Personal Protection Order, Non-Violent Resistance, At Risk Of Sexual Exploitation, Care Leaving Team, Edge Of Care Meeting, Risk Management Meeting, Personal Education Plan, Independent Reviewing Officer, Cognitive Analytic Therapy and Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing. They talk and make up new acronyms but the bigger picture is that TDFA (They Do Fuck All).

H.E.L.P.

MEPHEDRONE, MEPH, WHITE MAGIC, MIAOW, MEOW MEOW, MC, M-SMACK, M-CAT, DRONE, CHARGE, BUBBLE, BOUNCE, 4-MMC.

Rather than tackle the M-CAT pushers, the 'system' instead asks us to sign a form giving her permission to smoke cigarettes while in their care. They get defensive and tell me that young people do drugs. We live in a borough of just over 300,000 people of which only 75,000 are under-20. We provide the names to Social Services and Police of who is providing the skunk, cocaine and M-CAT but as I write in 2018 we have a friend whose daughter in the same area is going through exactly the same drug, grooming and (gang) violence-related issues as us. The local drug-awareness agency is somewhat ironically called RESPONSE. Drugs are not the only problem of course but are a huge factor when trying to keep some sense of collaboration and creativity.

The Services have no control.

In my experience, Social Services are old-fashioned, stretched and unimaginative. They arrive at your house, running late from a previous meeting within

an over-scheduled dairy, with on average sixteen cases each, and have bulging folders full of squint photocopies and typos. They get the name of our daughter wrong on numerous occasions. They have tired stationary and tired attitudes. At meetings they say "I have being doing this for thirty years" and "I have being doing this for thirty years" and "I have being doing this for thirty years" as some overwrite code. They are trained and ground down into being defensive rather than defending. We ask them to share their overall plan or programme for working with vulnerable young people over let's say a ten-year period but it turns out that there isn't one: they are adlibbing and improvising their way through various acronyms. There is an incredibly high turnaround of workers in a small borough. They burn out and you have to start from scratch. They arrive with bags of paperwork and bags under their eyes and are exhausted at a time when we need energy and hope. They are like slow sideways passing against the low-blocks of Swansea or West Brom. You know from the first minute how it's going to pan out. You lose 0-1, every time. No zing, no zest, no vigour, no spark, no energy, no twinkle.



Figure 10 - Jeremy Deller *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air*, Manchester Art Gallery, 2013.

I go see Jeff's trial run of *Bright Phoenix* and Scanner agrees to do a remix for the New York project. Sanchez's Chile give England a footballing lesson at Wembley as we try to draw creative energy from anywhere we can get it. We meet her in Manchester to see the Jeremy Deller exhibition. We lose 1-4 to Spartans and he's

only a sub. I watch the whole season of *Homeland* and they call an AROSE meeting at the request of the concerned College and they combine it with a RMM. I switch on the news and a helicopter lands on a Glasgow pub. Apocalyptic.

We meet her in Rochdale and she spends an hour describing the most violent ways to kill a man. We report it. Dr T at MST says it's because I am a bad father. In Rochdale. Aren't you listening???. The drug gangs are back hovering outside our house, every day, every evening. He kicks some poor lad in the face at rugby and is rightly suspended. We attend a WOFT meeting. Waste Of Fucking Time. We arrange to meet her at an ice hockey game in Altrincham but instead she XXXXX and XXXXX and texts us the XXXXXX during the game. Chilling. Blades. Ice. Let's have another meeting and call it LAC at which they say, and I quote, "everything is fine."

*The Call Centre* is on TV. I watch any reality TV to distract from reality. I find I need TV more and more in the evenings. Social Services do SFA. I am told it is a *lifestyle* choice for some young women. I am



Figure 11 - *Manchester Storm*, 2013.

speechless. I start a new project ten miles down the road from Rochdale, in Burnley. The work is with The Youth Zone and is about colour and hope and imagining jobs and roles that will exist for these young people in ten years but not now. I finish my PhD as they appoint a new Social Worker, worse than the last. She is out of her depth from



Figure 12 - *The Mackays (Junior on the left)*, sponsored by Scotland's National Drink.

within five seconds of being on the case. Slow sideways passing through muddy Wirral fields.

Liverpool beat Cardiff with goals by Suárez, Škrtel and Sterling. Cardiff are managed by Malky Mackay with whom I played in defence for St. Ambrose Boys Club, despite me being the only protestant in the team (another story) and him being three years younger: weird times inside the bleak east end of Glasgow. *MO SURRENDER.* Our manager was his dad, Malky Mackay Senior, a callous bastard who made us do press-ups on gravel until our hands bled and made us train outdoors in the pitch dark to *get a feel for where the ball is.* He was a total nutter who talked like a Glaswegian Darth Vader and looked like *Rising Damp's* Rigsby. Young Malky was later sacked by Cardiff for being racist and then appointed temporary manager of Scotland ... a disgusting decision.

I help students organise a show in Wellington Street in Leeds called *Apocaloptimism.*

We try to get her to Germany for Christmas with us, but Bad Egg threatens suicide so she stays. Poor him. We go anyway. I step out onto Tomás Saraceno's *In Orbit*, a wire mesh suspended 20m above the piazza of the K21 Ständehaus and in Düsseldorf and want to feel myself falling. Back home I start jogging again around Central Park to Magazine's version of *Boredom.*



Figure 13 - *Contemporary Art Practices students - Apocaloptimism*, Wellington Street, Leeds, 2013.



Figure 14 - Tomás Saraceno *In Orbit*, K21 Ständehaus and, Düsseldorf, 2013.

*I'm living in this movie  
but it doesn't move me  
I'm the man that's waiting for the phone to ring  
Hear it ring-a-ding-a-fucking-ding<sup>2</sup>*

She rages against absolutely everything. Social Services are not proactive. Yes, they are under-paid and over-worked but they simply react to every fire and they procrastinate like hell. At times when you crave sanity, it drives you xxxing mad, for every hour, day, week, month or year that passes piles on the long-term damage. We seek private therapists. We look into CAT and EMDR. NASA perhaps? MIT? MI5? Certainly, Sir, that will be £90/ hour but it will only work if the young person engages. *Um, where is the young person?*

Leeds Tues 11th Feb, an exhibition of four of our students works, The Fenton, Woodhouse Lane, 5pm, c/o General Chairman Manni.



We have detentions and dementia in the family. I ask to see a counsellor at Uni who will admit after six sessions that the situation is way beyond her capacity or remit. We get depressing grey emails from the new Social Worker saying things like "there is no further need to continue the risk management process at this time and what I am seeing currently from her and the facility is a pattern of working together, engagement and negotiation." She wants to come home. We consider it. He shows no respect to anybody. He is suspended. I watch and feel *Outnumbered*. She threatens, late at night. She sets fire to it all. It burns. We get the phone calls. I feel the red heat down the line. People escape, just. *Apocalypse Now*. Or, if you are Social Services, *Apocalypse Within The Next Six Weeks, After A Review, But Without Any Guarantee That We Will Have Any Plan Or Quick Fix Solutions*.

The Red Fire. It's Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2014 and I am watching Liverpool-Arsenal. 1-0. 2-0. I shout for him and his mate to come through. Škrtel. Sturridge 3-0. Sterling 4-0. Twenty minutes gone! Suárez smacks one against the post and Touré misses the sitter rebound. Something big is happening; it's ablaze. We all jump up and do the Sturridge dance when the third goal goes in and cannot believe what we are seeing. She goes missing that day. I check my tally and it's the fifty-fourth Missing Log I have. *Everything is fine*. We get free tickets to see Everton but the game is cancelled by winds just as we walk through a storm to the Good Son. Peter Suchin exhibition



Figure 17 - &model Gallery, Leeds, 2014.



Figure 18 - Alan Dunn Preston and Wirral, 2014.

at &model. We get a last minute penalty to beat Fulham 3-2. WHAAM! Score more than them. It's simple, but not sustainable, and deep down we all know this. It's POP ART superficial bubblegum football with Brendandy Warhol at the helm and King Luis Reed of the velvet season doing miraculous things with English balls and we want more more more.

The next day comes the call that no daughter's dad ever wants to hear. The Night. The Park. Arrests are made, weeks after "there is no further need to continue the risk management process." She is surrounded by women, but the perpetrator will be allowed to get to her and charges will be dropped. I report Witness Intimidation to Social Services and the Police who do SFA. Instead, the headlines are of KFC attacks and nuclear reactors.

Social Services respond by extending the already useless 'Safeguarding Plan' (which is up to about forty *do's and don't's* for a young person who blatantly doesn't care about authority right now). I have an inner rage and this inner rage is blamed by Dr T on the breakdown. Not the drugs, gangs, trauma, grooming, bullying, attachment issues, blackmail, debt, sexual exploitation, older men, abuse, name-calling, inadequate care facilities or tired and ever-changing Social Workers ...

*It's a lifestyle choice for many young women they say. I speak to every agency I can find. She is moved. She goes missing. She posts on Facebook about outwitting*

the Police. Or maybe it's him, who has her passwords remember. Him. Bad Egg. She destroys another home. Then some cars. She rails against the machine like *Metal Machine Music* dragged backwards on scratched vinyl at SWANS volume. In the middle of it all, a pregnancy scare. I think of *Berlin* again. We already know they will take her children away, because

*they will say she is  
not a good mother*

He loses it and threatens me. My counsellor can't look me in the eye. She simply slides some tired photocopies towards me: *How to deal with stress*. We get locked out of our own house. They abuse us. The work in Burnley is installed. I watch *Bluestone 42* and *True Detective*. Too tame. Liverpool go to Old Trafford and get an easy 3-0 win and it's like a dream and it spurs Douglas Gordon to email from Australia: *Reds top of the league!!* We are all perplexed. Going to Old Trafford is meant to be harder than this, isn't it?



Figure 19 - Alan Dunn *SIGN UP*, The Zone, Burnley Young People's Service, 2014 (the X-Ray Social Media Job).

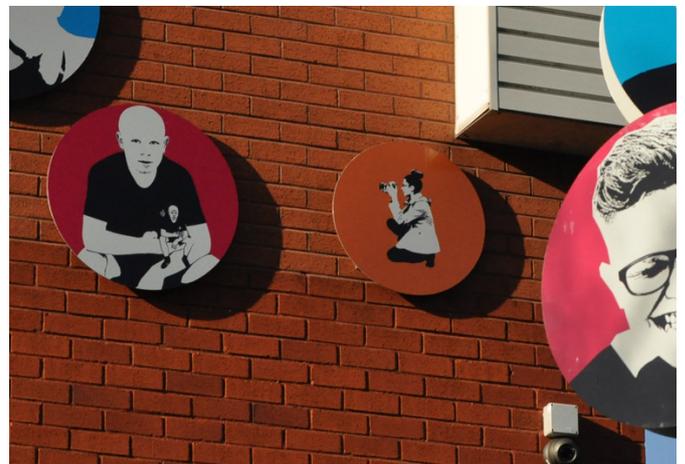


Figure 20 - Alan Dunn *SIGN UP*, (the Shrink-When-You-Are-Made-To-Feel-Small App).

*And all of the drugs she took,  
every one, every one*

*But my heart is overflowin' anyway  
I'm just a tired man, no words to say<sup>4</sup>*

He grabs a beer and gets up on the roof *Strangeways*-style and locks us out for hours and trashes the interior doors and and and I see my counsellor the next day and she has nothing left to say. I hand in my PhD. My Server gets breached and my provider considers me an international hacker and shuts down all my websites. For once I laugh down the phone and

# punched

after a moment's silence, they laugh back. All sorted. We thrash Cardiff again and tellingly on The Redmen TV, Paul laments "our suspect and leaky defence ... and Flanagan wasn't great."

I speak to the Police. They say .... dropped .... she ... he ... The Park ... dark .... no CCTV ..... evidence ... clothing .... DNA .... charges .... no case .... and the phone gets further away from my ear as they go on and on. I get a tour of the new Everyman and we start to chat about doing a RAY + JULIE event in 2015. Through the extraordinary writing of Jeff Young and magician turntabling of Philip Jeck, *The ballad of RAY + JULIE* will be our *Berlin*, drifting through an abusive relationship and touching upon some of the more sombre inferences of the sculpture on London Road that sits between the Turkish barbers and the EDL-frequented pub The Lord Warden.



Figure 21 (and 22 following page) - *The Ballad of RAY + JULIE*, Liverpool Everyman and Playhouse Theatre, 2015, images by Leila Romaya.

Like many, we really have to compartmentalise our lives to keep our shit together. She goes missing again and is found with him. I cough up blood. I am irritable. Social Services issue various new notices to do XYZ. Then they do a u-turn and do ZYX. Please, please tell me they know what they are doing in this country.

*When you say that I'm no good and you feel like walking*

*I need to make sure you know that's just the Prescription talking*

*When your feet decide to walk you on the wayward side*

*Up upon the stairs and down the downward slide*

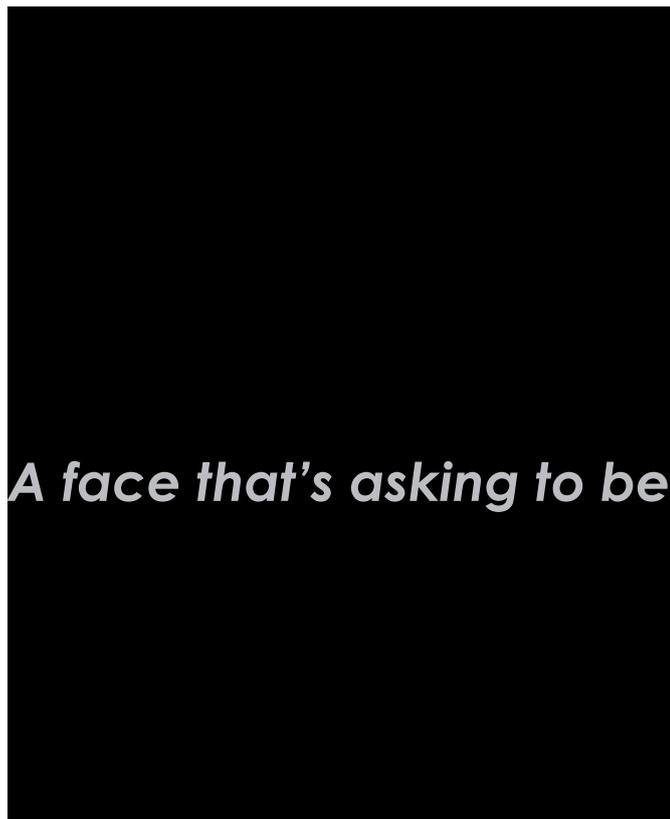
*I will, I will turn your tide*

*Do all that I can to heal you inside*

*I'll be the angel on your shoulder*

*My name is Geraldine, I'm your social worker<sup>5</sup>*

I go to Sonia Boyce's lecture and she opens it by singing *It Hurts So Good*; pop music trying to tell us that pain can be countered by the occasional high. I hear Millie singing it. I think of her. Another emergency meeting is called. I go alone but it's pointless. I leave as she is screaming at me and about to throw sharp things. I miss my train back and they're only every hour so I go into the local pub, The Deliverance Arms, and ask for a taxi but they say "Oh, he won't be able to pick you up for two hours." Not sure how but I get home five hours later, exhausted, just in time to find a dodgy stream of Liverpool 2 Sunderland 1. Gerrard and Sturridge. These late hits of adrenalin and joy are much needed, like David Cavanagh writing of the significance of John Peel's shows beginning at 10pm and "often he had the unenviable job of rounding off a turbulent or harrowing twenty-four hour period in British life."<sup>6</sup>



*punched*

Away game at Arrowse Park. He's at right-back and does ok in a 2-2 draw. In the taxi home, we hear Suárez's opening goal in the 4-0 win over Spurs. Another tricky game manoeuvred and Douglas emails again. The Turner Prize winners of the world unite behind The Reds, except maybe Gilbert & George who are busy coining phrases like *The Metropolitan Police Annual Pornographic Football Awards*.

We then lose 3-5 to Higher Bebington. The league introduce *RESPECT* banners that parents are to stand behind but often I witness Stuey's dad arguing with someone before the game about whose turn it is to put the xxxing banners up. This is a set of dads telepathically and pathetically straining for their sons to make their days lighter in the darkness, except for Glaswegian Celtic fan JJ who calmly walks his dog during each game, laughs a lot and sees the bigger picture. To think I was brought up in Glasgow to be told that *they* are somehow *different* – total and utter bollocks. Sorry, family and school, there is no *they*.

And U-15 football in this region is, I'm afraid, about winning, getting stuck in and mimicking what you see professional players do on TV (diving, moaning, demanding yellow cards, pulling shirts in the box and celebrating extravagantly). There aren't a lot of laughs except during pre-match warm-ups when you see young people doing amazing things with footballs. Sadly that all stops when the whistle blows and the dads focus on the game. Why not remove leagues and points and just play football?

Anyway, back to WINNING. We beat West Ham away with two Gerrard penalties and I spend the week with Chris Cabaret *Attenborough* Voltaire Watson in Leeds. He's known our family situation since Day 1 and it's such a relief to be able to share with someone who listens and is used to understanding different behaviours *in the wild*.

Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2014. We go early to the Anselmians rugby and he gets a try

and conversion against the tough nuts of Birkenhead, then we rush to Meols for a home game against Shafts. He starts up front and ends up getting five glorious goals as Big Tommy tunes into the game and roars as Coutinho scores (all twenty-two boys stop on the pitch to join in) and we beat Man City 3-2 at home. Good times. It's one of the best warm sunny afternoons stood on a boggy field on the Wirral you could ever spend. You've got to dream. But first you got to sleep.



Figure 23 - Everton 2 Man Utd 0, Goodison, 2014.

I go to our Birkenhead studio in a happy daze and do some work for someone else with a young artist who happens to be related to Jon Flanagan. Long story. I didn't know about him at that time, maybe nobody did. After a year of asking, we finally get a report from MST. It arrives on the day that charges are dropped. Good work, professionals. It's all bollocks. I am tired and I am as angry as sin. He scores more tries, his fury dragging opponents over the line with him, but we struggle to draw 1-1 with Eastham and Johnny Cav is sent off. He gets booked again and we find a really blurry stream of Norwich 2 Liverpool 3 and our defence is getting leakier and leakier. The ship is afloat, but sinking. We go to Moyes' last game at Goodison as Everton win 2-0 and I spend the evening watching Ex-Easter Island Head at the Kazimier perform *Large Electric Ensemble For 13 Guitars and Drums*. Too tame.

*His name is Suarez and he wears the famous red,  
I just can't get enough, I just can't get enough,  
When he scores a volley or when he scores a head,  
I just can't get enough, I just can't get enough.<sup>7</sup>*

Our house is surrounded by dealers and scallies, throwing stuff and screaming and shouting for her.

For us.

We have to move house, and find somewhere hard to find. And what do Social Services suggest next? A Secure Unit for her, while the dangerous man who started all this swaggers freely in our neighbourhood, surrounded by his minors. Then Social Services change their mind. XYZ ZYX rabbit rabbit MST ZERO SFA.



Figure 24 - *Camelia the rabbit.*

We argue and decide instead to get a dog. We already have Camelia the rabbit but we go to Southport to see a little Patterdale Terrier called Millie and say we'll take her in a few days. *It hurts so good* in my head and I can feel pain coming. We head straight from Millie to Anfield. It feels odd. They bring Luis *ghost goal* García onto the field before for an ovation and we're sat near the Kop and it all feels wrong. After two minutes, Ashley Cole gets a free kick and simply walks away from the ball. The crowd bay for blood. Then ... the slip.



Figure 25 - *LFC arrive for Chelsea game, Anfield, 2014.*



Figure 26 - *YNWA pre-game, Anfield, 2014.*

I watch Gerrard receive the ball. I see him try to control it, then he is on the floor and Anfield sucks in a breath and it's Demba Ba and I watch him while realising only Mignolet is in goal but it's total silence as he scores. Horror. Then the huge communal singing of *Steve Gerrard, Gerrard ...* but it's the moment when it all changes.

With not long to go, Suárez has a chance but Schwarzer saves. Joe Allen goes close too but then Salah is taken off and suddenly *our* Torres is through alone

and everyone shakes their heads like *Four Lions* and he squares to Willian and we all close our eyes and Mourinho is running along the touchline, patting the club crest on his chest and it's all over. The bubblegum has popped. We troop out of Anfield as news starts to filter in that Dzeko has already scored for City and our title has slipped away. If only Sakho had ... or Suárez .... or Sterling ... or Stevie .... or sub Sturridge or

and I take him over the road to buy plenty of beer for their night camping (well, pushing each other through the streets of Eastham in wheelbarrows). I sit at home and cradle her and make a promise that she will never know cruelty or evil, my little Lulu Suárez.

Next day is a hellfire concoction of answering messages and out of office replies and late on I find a stream and it's 1-0, then 2-0, then 3-0 against Palace. I creep through to him and say "It's happening" but you probably know the rest. 3-3. When you walk through a Gayle, the wild season is over, over and out. Crystal Days to Crystalbul.



Figure 27 - Lulu the pup.



Figure 28 - The victorious Anselmians rugby team.

The next week is a mess of drinking in North Bar and The Vic and Millie's owner deciding not to sell her to us after all and swearing and having cider thrown at me (in a can) and over me (liquid). I ask him where that came from and he says *TOWIE*. We all pray for Everton but despite Barkley's goal, City win 3-2. Double Dzeko again. We go to some *Deliverance* farm outside Manchester and are handed a little pup that we christen Lulu. We rush back with her for the U-15 rugby final against hot favourites Chester but the lads beat them

Then you take my mind  
And play with it all night  
You take my pride and you  
Throw it up against the wall  
You take me in your arms, baby  
And bounce me like a rubber ball  
I'm not complaining  
What you're doing, you see  
Cause this hurting feeling  
Is, ooh, so good to me  
Don't you know that it  
Hurts so good<sup>8</sup>



Figure 29 - Glasgow School of Art burns, 2014.

I go and see Liz Carr upstairs at LEAF and Glasgow School of Art burns. Apocalyptically. I am watching *Mad Men* and they treat women like .... I get another *overdose ... hospital ... stomach pumped* phone call and the sun rises and we go again. I am beaten and hospitalised. I cover the bruises up at work. *Compart Mental Eyes*. It's Degree Show time. People say I look tired. She absconds on the morning of my *Viva Voce*. I look at myself in the mirror. It's a cliché moment and I am stood against a green wall and could green screen anywhere in my background and be anywhere else. *I am on the pitch, the last defender covering as I see Gerrard slip. I glide towards Ba and flick the ball away from him and plant an accurate long ball down the wing to Luis. He nutmegs Cole and curls a beauty beyond Schwarzer.* I throw up, clean up and then do it and by the end of Degree Show opening night I am a drunk Doctor in *The Fenton*.

I am talking to somebody called Mike but in my mind Gerrard's slip was a lifestyle choice. *Boredom*. Social Services look at little Lulu and don't have a clue. It's *MST LAC EDT AROSE YOT* for you, young pup! *It hurts so good*. Flanagan, you bastard. Luis Reed is crying with Heidi in *The Fenton* and Puppy Reina throws to Millie Salah and it's *poetry in motion, Cause, baby, these*

*Things you're doing to me  
It hurts so bad but  
It's worth all the misery*



Figure 30 - Brigitte Jurack *Cast Balls*, Liverpool Art Prize, Metal, Edge Hill Railway Station, 2014.

Back home, the footballs are petrified in the Liverpool Art Prize at Metal.

I think our agencies could be better set up to protect vulnerable young people. For example, no records seem to be shared as young people pass from one age range of care to another and they don't have single digitised records, as one may have for medical purposes. They recommend various forms of therapy but then don't refer to those notes as the young person passes through each new stage. Surely deep-rooted conditions don't just cure themselves on a birthday?

They are there to care for young people and hence they view parents as interfering busy bodies and God help you if you happen to be remotely educated or middle class. For then, *you are expecting too much, all the time*. But wouldn't it be useful to take into consideration the experiences of the parents who are sharing the development of these young people? As for violence against parents, it isn't openly discussed and there are no excuses, even if a parent has a face that's ...

*Oh, don't you know  
We come together when Saffiyah smiles  
All around the world  
People come together when Saffiyah smiles?*

They definitely frown upon any left-field suggestions, for their remit seems to be to normalise behaviour. One Social Worker inferred that young women 'in this area' *do tend to get pregnant quite young and do tend to choose bad men*. Any aspirations beyond that are met with defensive stances. What might alternatives be? There are precise and proven forms of therapy and family support that are readily available if you live in London but not in the regions. There also needs to be open discussions about volunteering, charity work and experimental educational approaches. And there needs to be a larger umbrella plan that is already populated with known pitfalls, to avoid *under-reacting*.

We are told that Multisystemic Therapy has a 99% success rate over its twenty-week programme. Developed in America to intervene when young people are at risk of serious gun or gang crime, it has been adopted in some UK boroughs and when it is, all other agencies (eg school, Police, Social Services) drop away and you work intensively just with the one MST team. In principle this is fantastic news but the reality is, again, overworked and under-imaginative workers with bad photocopies (on the first day we are given worksheets with the name of another young person on them in an enormous breach of confidentiality). They draft up an incentive scheme with you, offering £1 for each time the young person stays at home in the evening. Oh, I say, the reason you are here is because our young person is out cruising with drug dealers who are buying her £200 necklaces, can we not adapt this MST chart a little?

NO!

The problems with MST are not only its inflexibility but, crucially for some, its self-confessed ignorance of adoption issues and thirdly, the small print that says

MST will only work if there is a strong attachment with the parents and that the parents commit fully to the programme.

Wait a minute, you need a secure attachment with someone who is falling

down the rabbit hole before help is sent down into the rabbit hole which the young person has tumbled down or been pulled down partly because of weak attachments?

I'm in a meeting with said MST worker Dr T, and she's discussing the importance of *empathy* in all this and I'm getting a little exasperated at their lack of progress which is putting young people at serious risk. She explains her rationale behind some of the violence and threats we had been the victims of ...

it's because, she says directly to me, *you've got a face that's asking to be punched*.

This is a professional employed by our local authority to deliver a specialist twenty-week programme that fails after eleven. And eleven is being kind when in reality the figure is nearer six weeks for even by then it is clearly floundering. Working within such a rigid (and 99% *successful!*) system, when they do try to improvise, they get in a complete muddle and end up suggesting a series of increasingly ridiculous and ultimately damaging strategies.

*Um, we have a new idea, let's send the young person out of the country for five days at a time! Um, maybe you should invite the skinhead drug dealing groomer to go bowling with you all. Work with him! Um, no, instead let's arrest him and get him into a Secure Unit. Um, ok, we did that, but he returned and nothing changed. Um, let's tell all the Police in the region that when you do press charges against your children, they have notes saying not to proceed and that it's just part of an MST plan and, oh, that officer has left and ... yes, you can start to see the fine mess they got us into with their surgically precise tinkering.*

# Multisystemic therapy

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

**Multisystemic therapy (MST)** is an intensive, family-focused and community-based treatment program for chronically violent youth.

Since a 2005 Cochrane review found no conclusive evidence of MST performing better than other therapies, later reviews have consistently reported that MST and other family-based treatments produce varying levels of reductions in antisocial behavior and other desirable outcomes.<sup>[1][2][3][4]</sup> There is no evidence of harm.<sup>[1]</sup>

## Contents

- 1 Medical uses
- 2 Adverse effects
- 3 Method
- 4 History
- 5 References

## Medical uses

A 2005 Cochrane review found inconclusive evidence as to whether MST is more effective than other services for young people.<sup>[1]</sup> A meta-analysis of MST in 2014 reported small improvements in delinquency, psychological problems, and substance use, particularly with younger juveniles.<sup>[2]</sup> A 2017 meta-analysis of family-based treatments for serious juvenile offenders found "modest, yet long-lasting, treatment effects" in reducing antisocial behavior and improving other outcomes when compared with conventional community services.<sup>[5]</sup>

In 2012 a literature review compared common treatments including cognitive behavioral therapy, 12-step facilitation, multisystemic therapy, psychoeducation, and motivational interviewing in an attempt to identify the best treatments for substance-abusing adolescents with conduct problems. The authors concluded that family-based interventions produced superior outcomes, and that MST had "the most compelling evidence", noting that the providers are often well trained and supervised.<sup>[4]</sup>

MST later admit to making fundamental mistakes in our case but by that time, the damage has well and truly been done and they simply wash their hands of us. As do the Mental Health unit at the precise moment you are entering another two years of difficult relationships. Basically, if the problem doesn't fit the neat system, one powered by workers stretched to absolute capacity, the system fails and they blame the parents. You get blamed for being *anti-system*, or wanting support that *doesn't exist* (actually, it does, in London) or having a *Backpfeifengesicht*.

*a face that's asking to be punched.*

Of course that is but one line spoken within a series of understandably heated meetings and perhaps she was trying to be humorous. However, it demonstrates the thin veneer of control and responsibility that people tasked with caring for our vulnerable young people have, especially in smaller boroughs with the increased availability of skunk, cocaine, heroin and M-CAT and increased mental health issues. We point out a correlation between these but they balk at such a big word. *Apocalypse Now* is literally burning us to the ground as a family unit when MST come in and hold out a £1 thimble of water while squinting in low light at the wrong country's name scribbled on a crumpled photocopy. Sorry, but it's true. Totally useless, and dangerously so.

*And I said, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, what a feeling  
And I said, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, what a feeling<sup>10</sup>*

Gerrard's *We go again* became the mantra of 2013-14 but I'm sure he must lay in bed thinking of that slip. And I'll say it now, *I resent him for it*. For all the great things he did, he took away from me, and from us, a colossal achievement that would have been the power we needed to combat some of the dark forces against us during 2013-14.



Figure 31 - *The Chris Watson Sound Recording Master Class, Leeds Beckett University, 2014.*

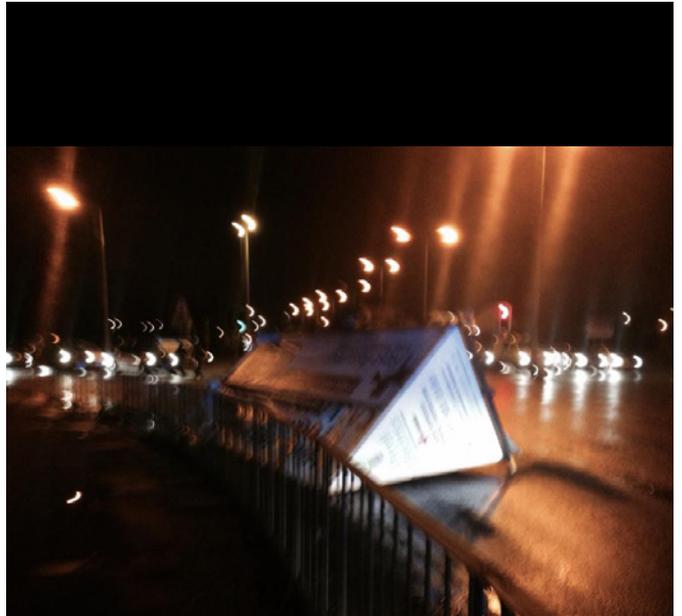


Figure 32 - *The storm on the way to Goodison, 2014.*



Figure 33 - *Ex-Easter Island Head Large Electric Ensemble, Liverpool, 2014.*



Figure 34 - *Glasgow east end, by Bellgrove, 2013.*



Figure 35 - *Glasgow to Liverpool train, 2013.*



Figure 36 - *Saffiyah Khan, 2017, Joe Giddens/PA Wire/AP, 2017.*

In my version of the game, it is the ineffectual Social Services that are booked and subbed after sixty minutes, replaced by the Salah of 2017-18: surgically precise, direct, problem-solving, humble, joyous and showing us a face that's asking to be smiled at. Flanagan is dismissed for violent conduct and MST sacked as the governing body for failing to see it all coming. Gerrard stays on his feet and Suárez and Sturridge score in a 2-0 win. Crystal Day is 3-0. Newcastle 2-1 and the trophy presented. The Title. King Luis Suárez is drunk on The Redmen TV. He is happy and doesn't bite Chiellini and stays at LFC another seven years. Our two young people wake from the bad dream and smile over at us, raising their champagne glasses for a Facebook pic. All the parents that have ostracised you give the pic a thumbs up. All the friends and colleagues who stop asking *how it is going* all comment on how well we all look.

Suárez and Salah and Dillon Thomas. Champions League. The new Barca, Bayern and Milan. The new Liverpool. Dominance.

People come together when Salah smiles  
and

*I just can't get*

*enough is enough*

*Mo mo Salah*  
*Mo mo Salah*

Zero Tolerance. It's *not* a lifestyle choice, Dr T. It's not about accepting violence towards women because you have a huge caseload or they have been removed out of borough by the Police for their own safety. And there is no such thing as *having a face that's asking to be punched*.

There is never ever ever an excuse for it, Jon Flanagan or Social Services. Never ever.

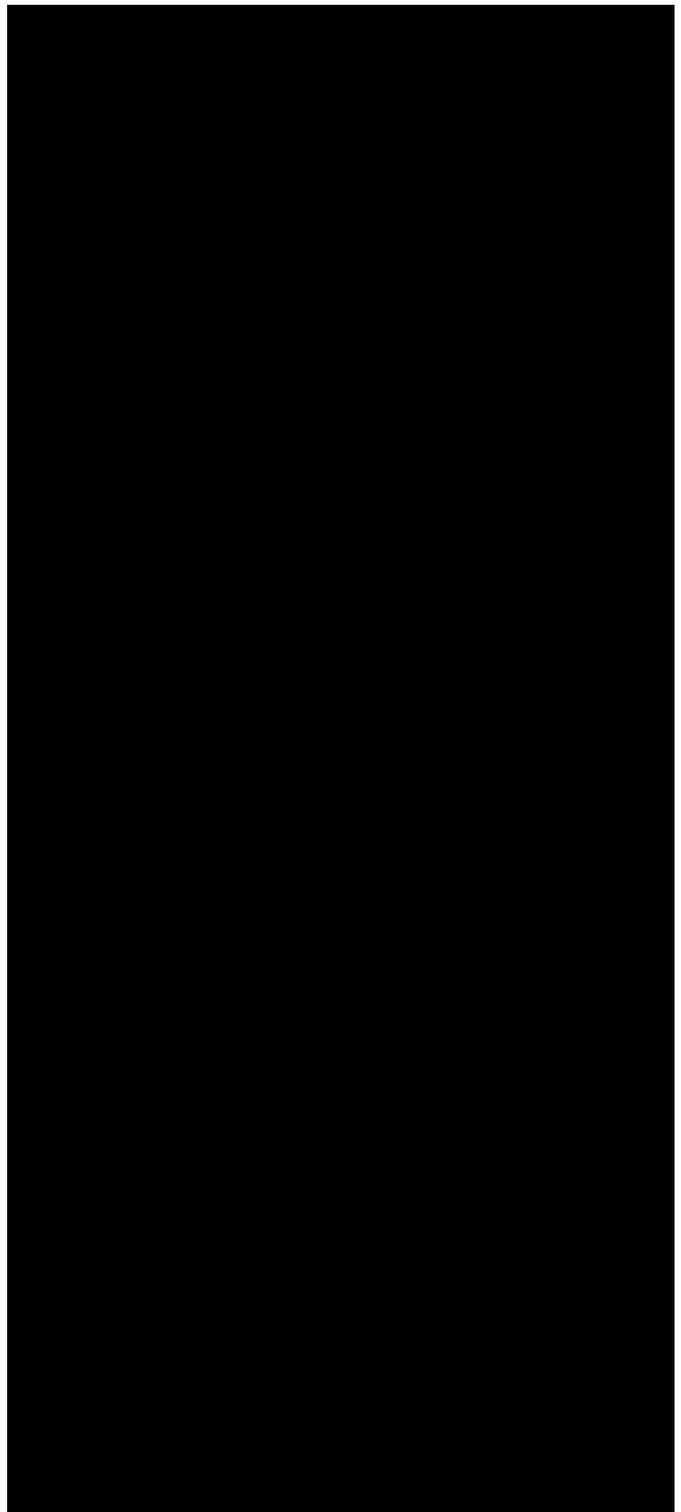


Figure 37 - Lulu.

 News ▸ Liverpool News ▸ Wirral

# Why Ofsted branded Wirral's children's services "inadequate"

Council comes under fire after damning report by watchdog



SHARE



1

COMMENT

By Liam Murphy  
12:22, 20 SEP 2016

NEWS

A devastating report by watchdog Ofsted says services have got worse for children and young people in [Wirral](#).

Following a four week inspection earlier this summer Ofsted inspectors say much of [Wirral's](#) children's services are [inadequate while others require improvement](#).

The Ofsted report has charted a decline in the quality of the help and protection provided to the borough's most vulnerable youngsters – and the council says it is now acting urgently to improve the service.

#### Here are the key criticisms:

- Due to high turnover of staff children have too many changes of social workers and they and families do not get the chance to get to know them well.
- Although no children were seen to be at immediate risk of significant harm, in too many cases children experience unacceptable levels of risk that is gradual and increases over time, particularly those living in neglectful and domestic abuse situations.
- Some of those leaving care do not get as much support as they need and services for care leavers are inadequate, because the local authority does not know where many of its care leavers are living or what they are doing.
- The inspectors found that when children are subject to allegations of abuse by professionals or in their homes investigations are not always compliant with statutory guidance.
- The council was criticised by inspectors for delays in making improvement and plans to restructure services to respond better to children's were delayed for a year due to competing council priorities.
- Families who need help usually get it quickly but sometimes there are waiting lists for important services like help with parenting and domestic abuse.
- Recording of some cases was so poor that it is not possible to tell how decisions have been reached.

 READ MORE

▸ [Wirral children's services branded 'inadequate' by watchdog](#)

In response Council chief executive Eric Robinson said "It's quite clear to me that mistakes have been made in terms of our lack of ability to make things happen at sufficient pace, for them to have effect.

"Linked to that is this issue of the turnover of staff as being a major problem here and what is recognised by Ofsted is we may have been in a better position in 2011 but when you have such high staff turnover, particularly in senior jobs, you don't then have the consistency of message to the frontline about good practice and what people need to do."

Opposition groups have slammed the council leadership for allowing the service to deteriorate and Tory group leader Jeff Green's calls for a special council meeting have been agreed by the authority's Labour leadership.

## Ofsted rates Wirral Council children's services 'inadequate'

© 20 September 2016

[f](#) [t](#) [m](#) [e](#) [Share](#)



Children's services in Wirral have been rated "inadequate" after "widespread and serious failures" were found.

Ofsted found investigations into abuse "are not always compliant" with guidelines, poor record management and inadequate services for care leavers.

Inspectors said senior leaders were aware of issues but a "corporate failure" over recruitment meant they were not addressed.

Wirral Council said £2m was being invested to improve the service.

### 'More with less'

**In the report**, Ofsted rated leadership and management, the experiences and progress of care leavers and the services provided to children who need help and protection as inadequate.

The council performs well with children most at risk, but does not react as quickly to those at a "lower risk".

It found staff turnover was high, there has been a failure to recruit a permanent head of services and social workers' caseloads, though not excessive, are often complex.

The watchdog said the authority does not know where many of those who leave care are or what they are doing.

Julia Hassall, director of children's services said: "Social workers are constantly being asked to do more, with much less... but we need to create the right environment for our staff, and give them the right tools to do their jobs well."

The improvement plan, with the additional £2m investment from council reserves, includes more effective training and development for staff and recruiting and retaining social workers.

Eric Robinson, chief executive of the council, said: "These failings are unacceptable... It is absolutely vital we put them right as quickly as possible."

The Department for Education said it takes "tough action where councils are failing children" and expects Wirral Council to improve as a matter of urgency.

It added it would review the authority's progress in six months.

Ofsted rated the council's fostering and adoption services as good in 2011.

20th September 2016

## Updated: Ofsted report into child safeguarding failures sends shockwave through Wirral Council

Leigh Marles and Craig Manning



The 44-page Ofsted inquiry published today sent shock waves through the authority

[f](#) [t](#) [G+](#) [e](#) 38 comments

AN Ofsted inspection of children's services in Wirral has brought to light a devastating catalogue of serious and widespread failings.

The report says since the last Ofsted inspections in 2011 and 2012, services have "got worse" for children and young people.

Youngsters have had too many changes of social workers, who sometimes do not listen closely enough to what the children are telling them.

Many children experience "unacceptable drift and delay" at every stage with the increasing and progressive risks to them unrecognised.

This is particularly true for children living in neglectful and domestic abuse situations, and there is "inappropriate delay" in notifying police about youngsters who witness and experience violence in the home.

Sometimes these delays can be up to four weeks.

The inspection found senior managers and political chiefs have not provided effective and stable leadership of services for children and young people over the last three years.

 News ▸ Liverpool News ▸ Wirral Council

# Five years of shame: How Wirral Council failed its most vulnerable

Ofsted report - backed by series of shocking cases - highlights how council's children's services failed vulnerable childrer

By [Joe Thomas](#)

07:11, 29 NOV 2017

UPDATED 07:30, 29 NOV 2017

NEWS

The ECHO can today expose how [Wirral Council](#) failed to protect its most vulnerable.

Last year the authority's children's services department was slammed as "inadequate" in a damning report carried out by Ofsted.

That view was influenced by a catalogue of problems that included, but were not limited to, the authority's failure to halt a campaign of child sexual exploitation carried out by two brothers in Birkenhead.

Ofsted rated the department as "Good" in 2011 but a host of issues identified last year left inspectors with no choice but to call for dramatic improvements to Wirral's children's services.

The no-holds-barred report slammed [Wallasey](#) town hall for not adequately supporting social workers, not giving vulnerable children the "right levels of support to keep them safe" and failing to address the "underlying causes" leaving some at risk of sexual exploitation.

The scathing Ofsted report concluded there were "widespread and serious failures in the services provided to children who need help and protection in Wirral".

Pointing to a "significant deterioration in the quality of all services that children and young people receive", inspectors found: "Inconsistent and sometimes poor application of thresholds by both the local authority and partner agencies is evident at every point that children and young people come into contact with children's social care.

"This leads to drift and delay for children who need help and protection, with insufficient recognition that action taken has failed to reduce risk in too many cases."

It went on to add that "almost all of the deficits identified in this inspection were known by senior leaders".

Throughout that period, the children's services department was headed by Julia Hassall.

## Endnotes

1 <https://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/sport/football/football-news/revealed-disgraced-jon-flanagan-avoided-14175699>.

2 Buzzcocks' *Boredom* (1977) performed by Magazine as part of John Peel Session (1978).

3 *In Heaven (Lady in the Radiator Song)* composed by Peter Ivers with lyrics by David Lynch and featured in *Eraserhead* (1977).

4 *The Kids* (1973) composed by Lou Reed, from the *Berlin* album.

5 *Geraldine* (2008) by Glasvegas, composed by James Allen about a Social Worker that gives up her job to follow the band.

6 *Good Night and Good Riddance: How Thirty-Five Years of John Peel Helped to Shape Modern Life* by David Cavanagh, Faber & Faber (2015).

7 *The Suárez Song* based on Depeche Mode's *Just can't get enough* (1981).

8 *It Hurts So Good* (1973) composed by Phillip Mitchell and sung by Millie Jackson in the blaxploitation action film *Cleopatra Jones*. One of Sonia Boyce's lecture versions is at 2'49" here - <https://tinyurl.com/y8sagdvt>.

9 *Saffiyah Smiles* (2017) composed by Billy Bragg after seeing the photograph of activist and artist Saffiyah Kahn standing up to an EDL member.

10 *The Bed* (1973) composed by Lou Reed, from the *Berlin* album:

*And this is the room where she took the razor  
And cut her wrists that strange and fateful night  
And I said, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, what a feeling  
And I said, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, what a feeling*

## Read, heard, seen and been while writing this

Irvine Welsh *A Decent Ride* and *The Blade Artist*.

Guided By Voices *Alien Lanes* and *Selective Service* (*Guided by Voices & Airport 5*).

Swansea away 0-1, Huddersfield away 3-0.

*Black Mirror* Seasons 1-3.

Diane Arbus *Identical Twins*, Roselle, New Jersey, 1967.

Emails with Bill Drummond and The Band of Holy

Joy about Paris, May 1968.

The fall of Mark E. Smith.