

# Press release: Improved mental health support for children in care

Up to 10 pilots across the country will trial new high quality mental health assessments, that ensure young people are assessed at the right time, with a focus on their individual needs as they enter care.

Statistics show that 62 per cent of looked after children are in care due to abuse or neglect, which can have a lasting impact on their mental health and emotional wellbeing.

Currently half of all children in care meet the criteria for a possible mental health disorder, compared to one in ten children outside the care system. The pilots will identify a child's mental health and broader wellbeing needs, including whether a referral to a more specialist service is needed.

Minister for Children and Families, Nadhim Zahawi, said:

Children in care are some of the most vulnerable in society and have often experienced traumatic events, so it is vital they receive care and support that is tailored to their needs.

We want to improve support for every child in care and these pilots will help to provide high-quality mental health assessments when children enter the care system and make sure the right support is in place.

The Department for Education has awarded £240,000 to a group of organisations, led by the Anna Freud Centre, to work with Action for Children, Child Outcomes Research Consortium, Research in Practice and NSPCC, to deliver up to 10 local pilots over two years. The pilot areas will also benefit from a share of £650,000 to deliver the scheme.

The programme will look at which professionals should be involved in the assessment and develop best practice that ensures the child's unique needs are at the centre of the process.

A consortium led by SQW, an economic development and social research organisation has also been awarded £150,000 to carry out an independent evaluation to look at the effectiveness and impact of the pilots.

Sheila Redfern, Head of Specialist Trauma and Maltreatment Service at the Anna Freud Centre, said:

We are delighted to have been successful with our bid for these pilots. Looked after children are a key priority for the Specialist

Trauma and Maltreatment team here at AFNCCF and we will be working with Action for Children, Research in Practice, CORC and NSPCC to bring together a wealth of expertise and experience in this area.

Looked after children are highly vulnerable to emotional and relationship difficulties, putting them at risk of long-term mental health issues and placement breakdown with their carers, so it is vital they get the right help at the right time. The assessment process at an individual level is critical to achieving this. We are very excited to have this opportunity to support improvements through the pilots.

This announcement follows the publication of the Government's Children and Young People's Mental Health Green Paper in December 2017. Backed by £300 million in funding, this aims to improve access to mental health services for children and young people through designated mental health leads in schools and by reducing waiting times for mental health services.

Further information:

- [Statistics](#) on looked after children, including mental health.
- The Government has pledged a total of £1.7 billion to help promote, protect and improve children and young people's mental health and wellbeing. This includes an extra £300m to provide more support for school children.

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## **Press release: Foreign Secretary statement on military action in Hodeidah**

Following the start of military action by Coalition-backed forces to take Hodeidah port back from Houthi militia, I call on all parties to respect international humanitarian law and prioritise the protection of civilians.

We are in regular contact with the Coalition about the need to ensure that any military operations in and around Hodeidah are conducted in accordance with international humanitarian law, including on the protection of civilians, and do not disrupt commercial and humanitarian flows through the port. The Coalition have assured us that they are incorporating humanitarian concerns into their operational plans. It is vital to maintain the flow of food, fuel and medical supplies into Yemen. For their part the Houthis must

not compromise port facilities or hinder the humanitarian response.

The ongoing Coalition intervention in Yemen came at the request of the legitimate Government of Yemen after Houthi rebels took the Yemeni capital by force in 2014. Houthi forces have consistently failed to adhere to UN Security Council Resolutions, including by launching missile attacks against Saudi Arabia and shipping in the Red Sea. They have obstructed access for humanitarian supplies leading to significant suffering among civilians.

It remains imperative to resume work towards a comprehensive political settlement. Lasting peace and stability in Yemen will require dialogue and negotiation. UN Special Envoy Martin Griffiths is due to update the Security Council soon on his proposals for a negotiated settlement. We call upon all parties to throw their weight behind his efforts, for the sake of the Yemeni people and the security of Yemen's neighbours.

The UK is working with the UN, NGOs and the Coalition to respond to the humanitarian situation. The UK has committed £170 million to the UN's Yemen Humanitarian Appeal for the financial year 2018/2019, making the UK the 4th largest donor.

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## **Speech: Supporting UNOCA's efforts to ensure peace in Central Africa**

Thank you Mr President and may I also thank our briefers today – Ambassador Fall for your report and also for your team's work in this challenging region. And also Ambassador Allam-Mi, thank you for your comments, and also welcome to the Security Council. It's good to see you today sir because regional organizations like yours are essential and we are pleased you've been able to demonstrate today the cooperation between the regional group and UNOCA.

Mr President, the United Kingdom remains concerned by the security and political situation in Central Africa. Many of those concerns are reflected in the Secretary-General's report, including the threats from terrorist groups such as Boko Haram and other groups in the Lake Chad Basin, and the Lord's Resistance Army in Central African Republic and DRC. And we note with horror the use of women and girls as suicide bombers by Boko Haram.

As we've discussed many times before in this Council, both military and non-military action is required to address these threats. We must understand their root causes and the political, economic and humanitarian needs of the population. And it is essential that we take a coherent, "whole of UN" approach to tackle both existing problems and prevent further deterioration in this region.

This year, 10 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance in the Lake Chad Basin. The United Kingdom has committed £300 million to tackling the crisis over the next five years. And we call upon other international donors to help make up funding shortfalls for humanitarian operations across the region.

Mr President, we are also concerned by the situation in Cameroon and the number of casualties that have resulted amongst both civilians and Cameroon's security forces. Citizens have the right of peaceful protest. It is the government's responsibility to protect demonstrators while also protecting the safety and security of all citizens. We call for all parties to reject violence, pursue dialogue and urgently take action to reduce tensions. Failure to do so will only cause the already concerning situation to deteriorate further. In this regard, we welcome President Biya's New Year's announcement to pursue dialogue, decentralisation and restraint. And we strongly encourage the government to take further steps to give effect to this announcement. We commend UNOCA's support as part of broader international efforts to find a lasting solution to the current crisis, and we would encourage intensification of these efforts and ask that we are kept regularly informed on progress.

Mr President, we recognise UNOCA's efforts elsewhere in the region, including the mobilisation of support for the African Peace Initiative in the Central African Republic with regional partners and we encourage this to continue. UNOCA also has a crucial role supporting states in the subregion to hold timely, transparent and inclusive elections and supporting ECCAS's efforts to lay the groundwork for structural prevention of election-related violence.

We are concerned by the threat of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea and we appreciate UNOCA's reporting on this matter. Further, more detailed reporting on the problem and the work being done to combat it should be carried out, given the heightened and significant threat to international shipping and regional prosperity.

In addition to regional governments, regional organisations – including the African Union, ECCAS, CMAC, the Gulf of Guinea Commission and the Lake Chad Basin Commission – are essential to address the challenges to peace and security, promote democratic governance and enhance regional cooperation. Inter-regional cooperation, particularly on issues like the Sahel, are also crucial, and we welcome the announcement that ECCAS and ECOWAS will hold a joint summit in July. We encourage UNOCA and UNOWAS to continue to support this inter-regional approach.

Mr President, UNOCA has demonstrated that it can be a valuable partner for regional governments and organisations. In order to make the best use of the resources available, UNOCA should focus on building the capacity of regional entities to deliver crisis prevention work, such as preventative diplomacy, early warning mechanisms and mediation, and support UN agencies in priority thematic areas including gender.

Mr President, the United Kingdom appreciates UNOCA's efforts in the region and we encourage UNOCA to improve its communication of this good work. This

will ensure those outside the UN system can better understand UNOCA's ongoing work and support it whenever possible.

Thank you Mr President.

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## **Press release: World's Fastest 3D Microphone Array Simulation Software**

Based on technology originally developed for the UK Home Office, A3S gives developers the ability to dramatically reduce audio array simulation times, improve the fidelity of results, and increase performance using fewer components. Significantly decreasing simulation times during product development from eight hours to 30 seconds\* (a reduction of 99.9 per cent), A3S calculates in near real-time the physical configuration of the audio array in order to achieve optimum performance.

For the first time manufacturers will be able to fully exploit the potential of audio arrays, and deliver microphone/speaker-based products which:

- Require fewer audio components and reduce device size – tests of an off-the-shelf product reduced the number of microphones by two-thirds, while improving audio performance.
- Minimise development costs – less product development time can be spent simulating and prototyping arrays. It also allows the modelling of more frequencies, resulting in a product with greater confidence in its performance, and potentially removing the need for costly redesigns.
- Are smarter – products can be optimised to cope with changing environments, as near real-time characterisation allows beamforming to be conducted on-the-fly to dynamically focus microphones and cancel out noise.
- Are less power hungry – less processing power required by fewer microphones.

Gerry Scott, Commercialisation Manager at Ploughshare Innovations, said:

A common development approach is to deploy multiple microphones and speakers in a product to achieve an acceptable level of performance. However, without full optimisation, they will still under-perform. The developers of A3S have proven that simulations can be conducted 1,000 times faster than current approaches, allowing developers to create high performing products with more confidence. Reducing the number of components also means that high-end audio products can be created with a smaller form factor and at less overall cost, giving manufacturers potentially significant cost savings. A high-end audio experience will become more widely

available to us all.

Examples of what applications could use A3S to improve audio product performance include voice recognition, smartphones, automotive, immersive audio and gaming/home cinema.

- In tests, the simulation time of a 16 microphone array was reduced from eight hours to 30 seconds. In addition, A3S simulated hundreds of frequencies – significantly more than the eight frequencies managed by the conventional method.

About Ploughshare Innovations ([www.ploughshareinnovations.com](http://www.ploughshareinnovations.com))

Ploughshare Innovations is the technology transfer organisation for the UK Ministry of Defence (MOD). It turns 'swords into ploughshares' by enabling businesses to gain access to defence and security technology developed by leading government laboratories. Ploughshare ensures Government technology is put to good use and benefits the UK, society as a whole, and humanity by applying innovative technology to improve people's lives. Since its creation in 2005, the company has licensed 120 technologies and attracted £140 million of investment.

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