'A Society of Captives'?
New Findings from the Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime

The Justice Strategy for Scotland (Scottish Government 2012)

'Our vision is of a justice system that contributes positively to a flourishing Scotland, helping <u>to create an inclusive and respectful society in which all people and communities live in safety and security</u>, individual and collective rights are supported and disputes are resolved fairly and swiftly.'

Key messages from the Edinburgh Study: Phase 7

- Patterns of detention indicate that the criminal justice system serves to punish poverty, social marginalisation and individual vulnerability, as much as serious offending

- For children who are identified by agencies as presenting 'the greatest risk' at an early age:

- early identification does NOT lead to desistence from offending

- RATHER, early identification 'grooms' children for later imprisonment

On the basis of these findings…

Scottish Government vision will not be realised unless and until:

(i)there is greater recognition that criminal justice systems construct, reproduce and constantly recycle their client-base

(ii)greater efforts are made to align criminal justice with social justice (an ethical approach to policy-making)

Structure of paper

Overview of the Edinburgh Study

Part 1. Punishing the vulnerable: patterns of detention within the wider cohort

Part 2. Damaging the 'at-risk' child: longer-term outcomes

Part 3. Using this research evidence to promote ethical policymaking: reflections on the Scottish case

The Edinburgh Study

The Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime: overview

- Funded by ESRC, Nuffield Foundation and Scottish Government
- Longitudinal study tracking 4,300 young people since 1998
- Aims to explore pathways into and out of offending
- Multiple data sources including self-reports; semi-structured interviews; and official records (social work, children's hearing, school, criminal convictions); GIS (police recorded crime and census data)

Phase 7

- Funded by Nuffield Foundation and undertaken in collaboration with the Scottish Government
- Aims:
  - to map the *criminal justice* careers of all cohort members (from age 8, the age of criminal responsibility in Scotland, to 22)
  - to explore transitions from the juvenile to adult system
  - to assess the impact of these careers on desistance from criminal offending.
- Includes follow up of sub-sample:

  - those with offence referral to the children's hearing system

  - two control groups (one matched to those with early history of referral; one matched to those who had a first referral at age 15).

Phase 7: study team

- Lesley McAra and Susan McVie
- Aileen Barclay and Sarah MacQueen

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Richard Withington

Bob Bonnar

Steve Kirkwood

Karen Cooper

Briege Nugent

Liz Levy

Jackie Palmer

Phase 7: achieved sample (50% response rate)

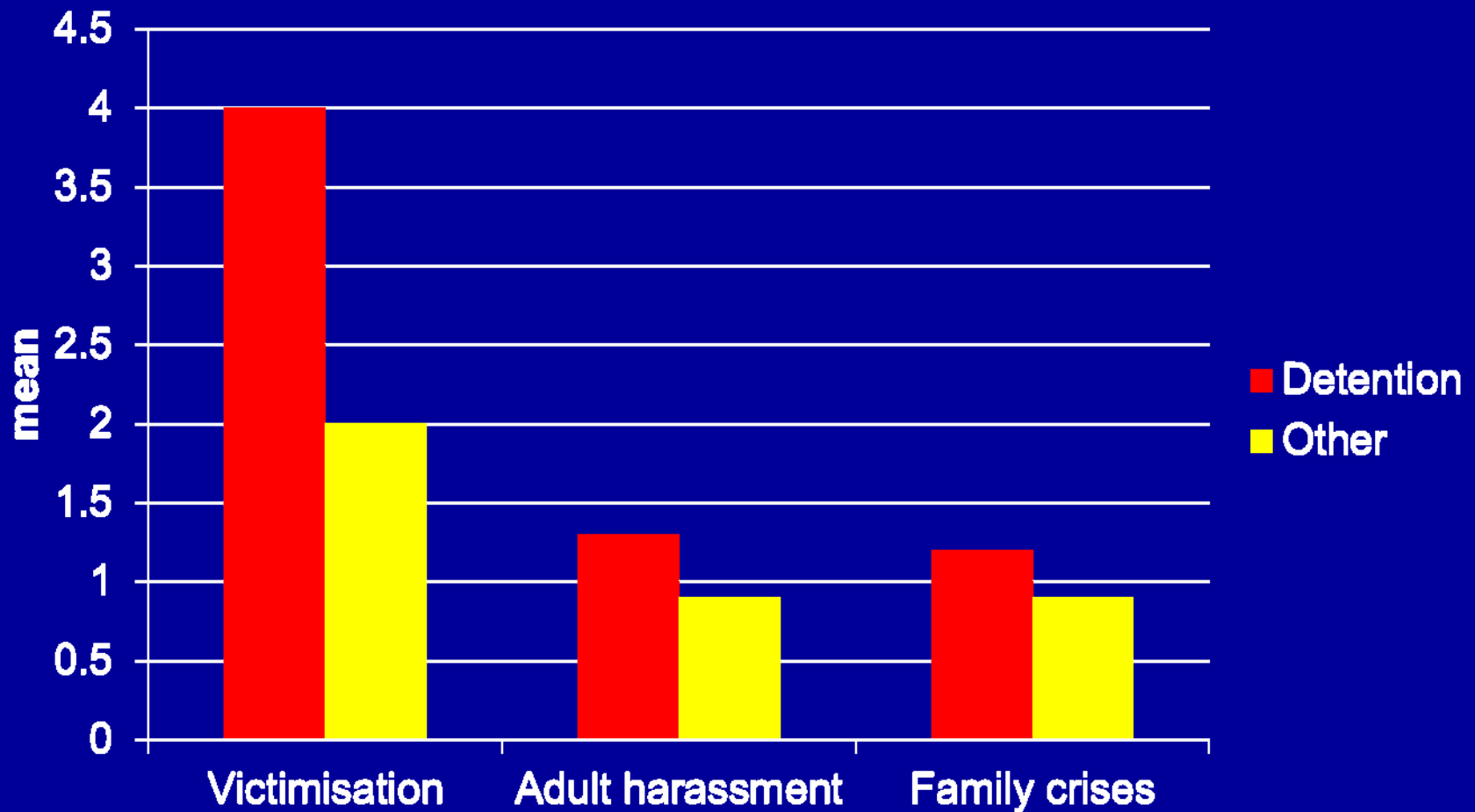| (61% male)	n=252
Early offence referral (by 12)	33
Early matched group	39
Late hearings offence referral (at age 15)	50
Late matched group	53
First offence referral at age 13 or 14	77

Part 1

Punishing the vulnerable: patterns of detention within the wider cohort
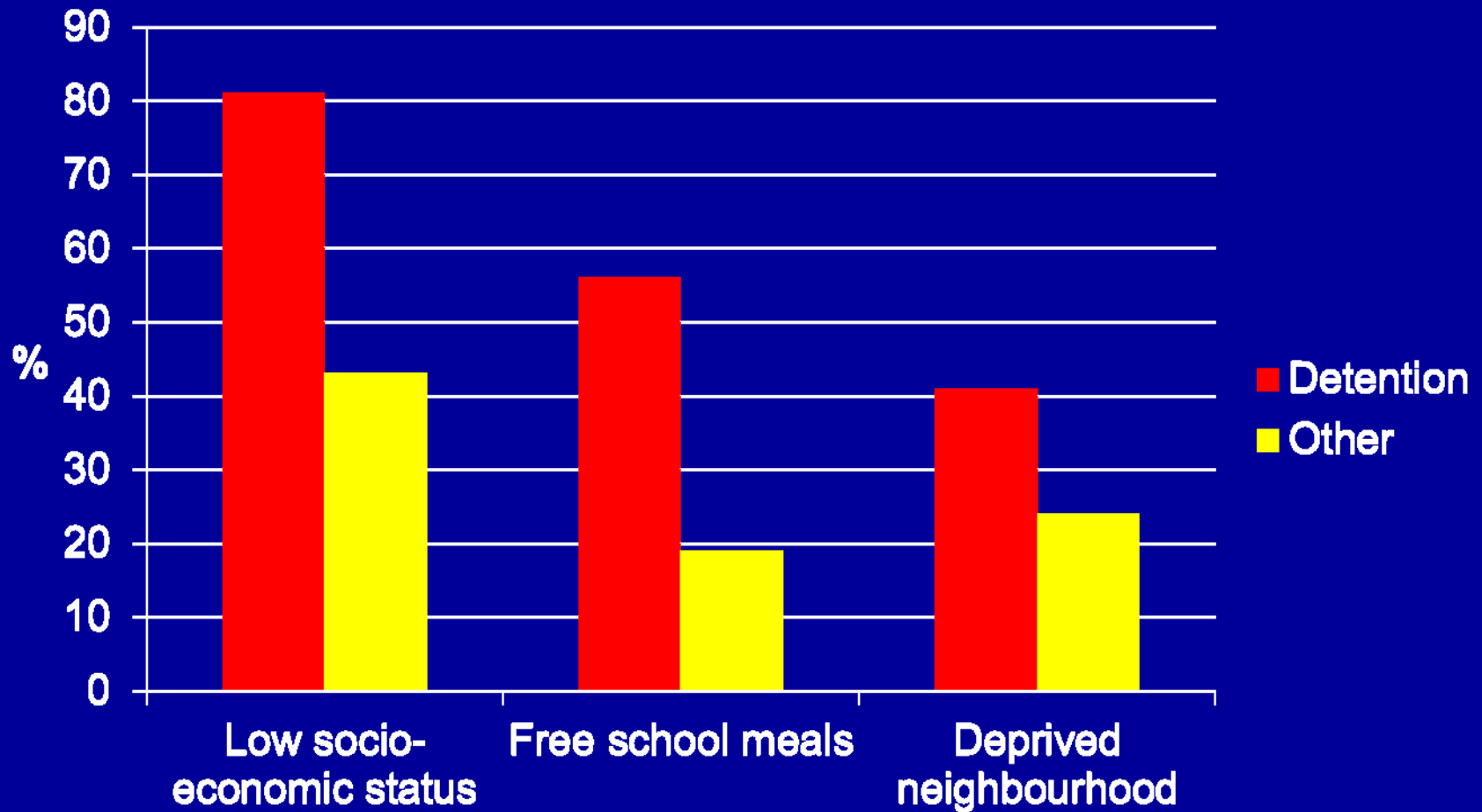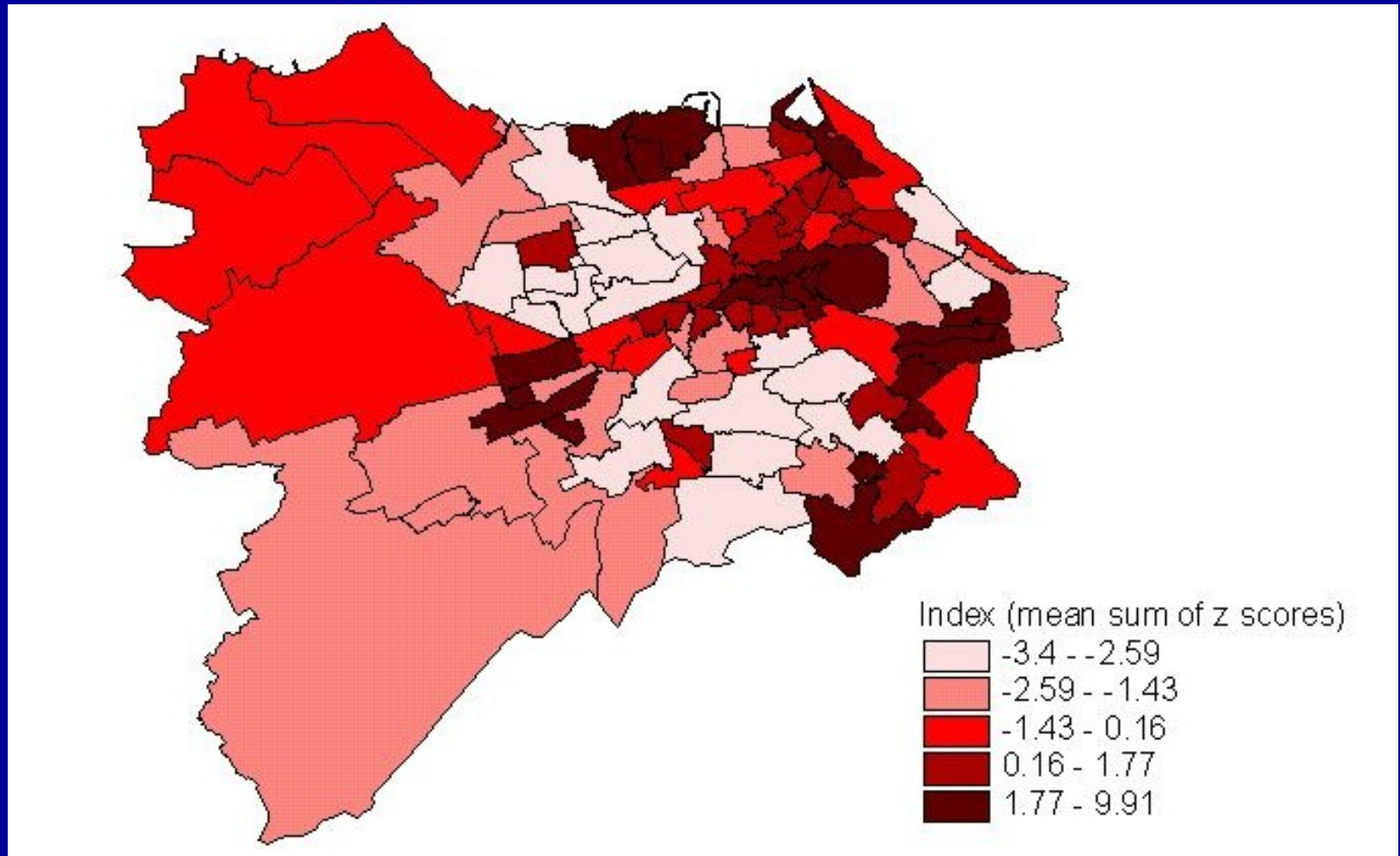
Detention by age 24
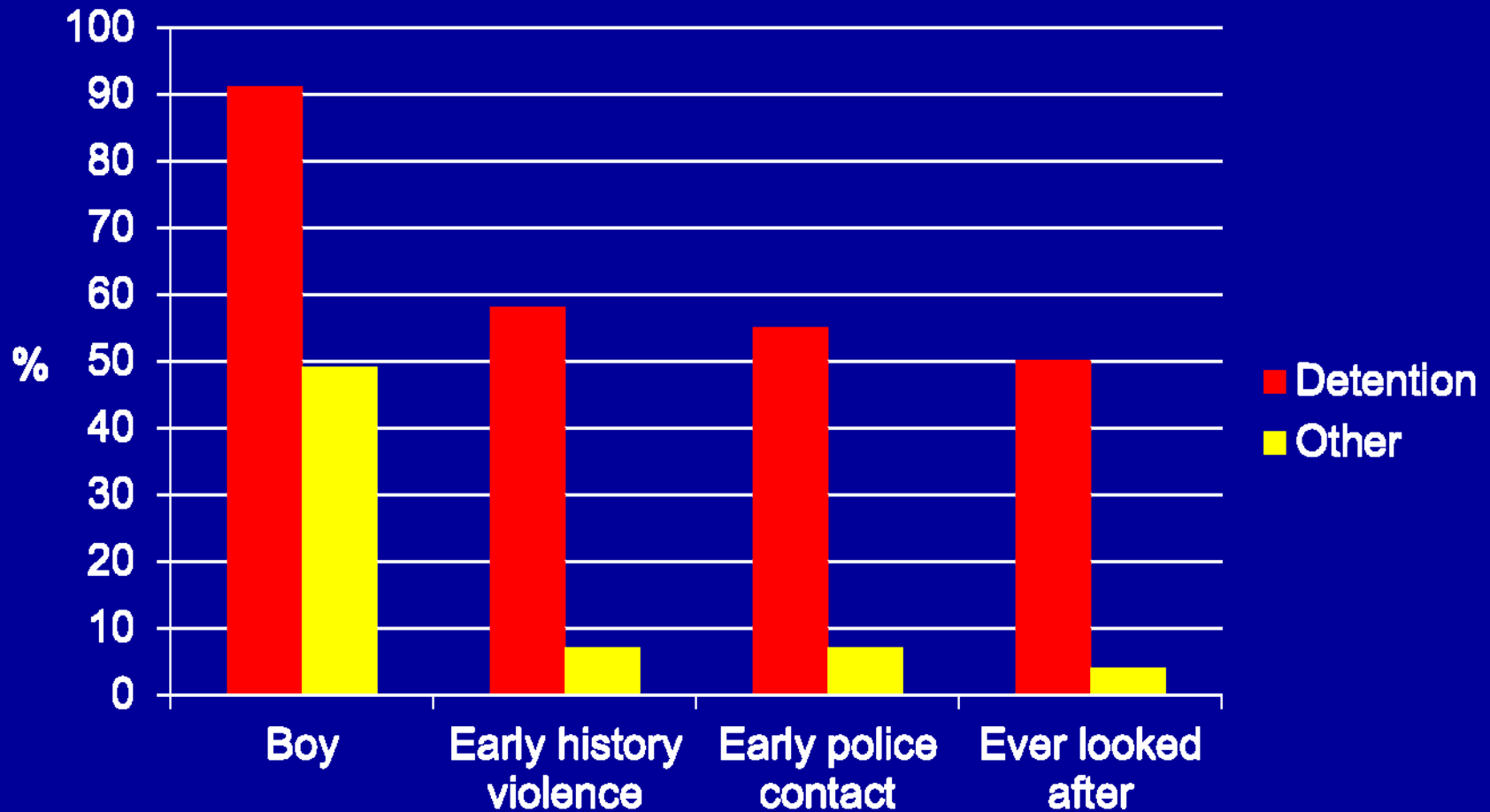
Punishing the vulnerable

Punishing the vulnerable
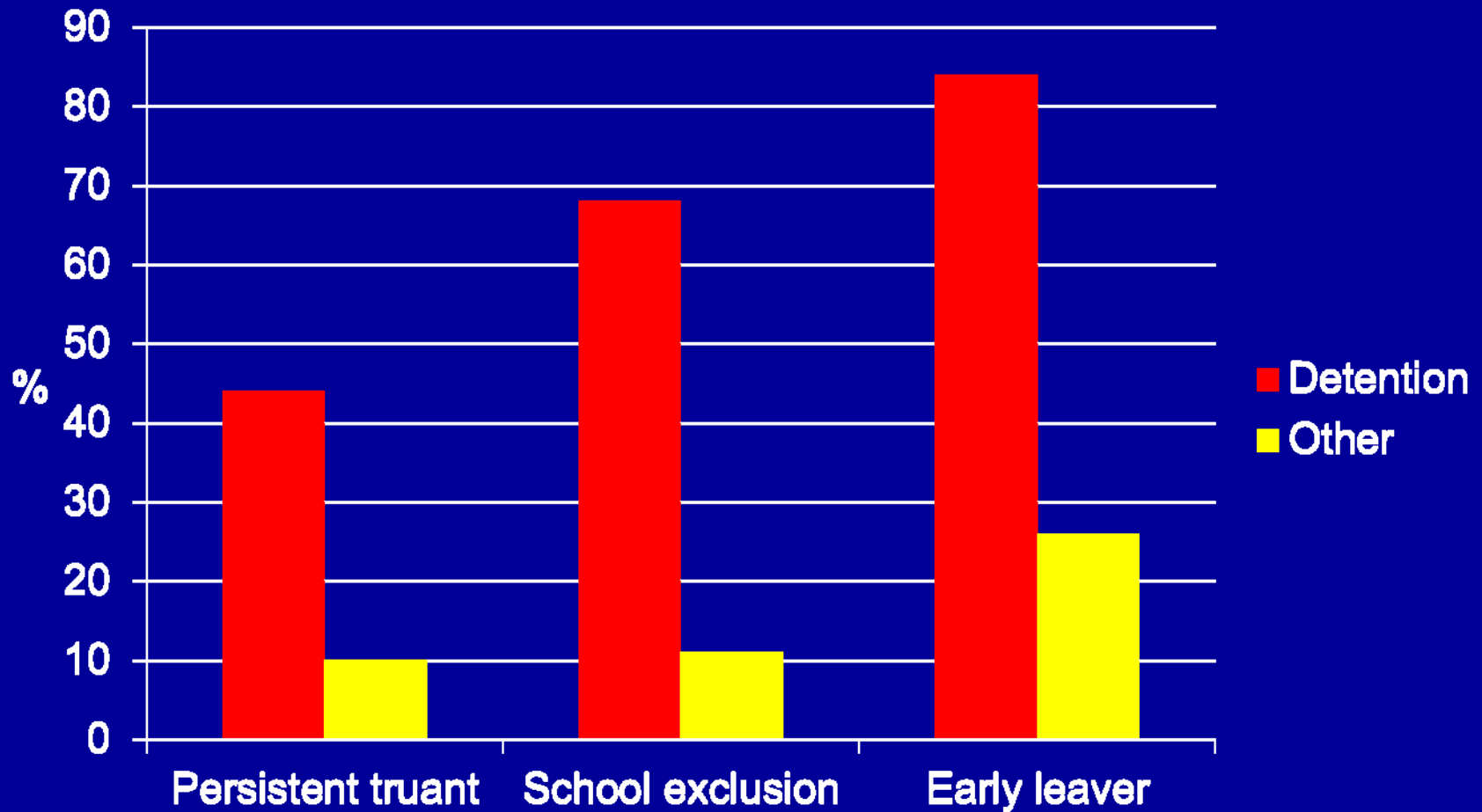
Punishing the vulnerable

Deprivation across Edinburgh

Index (mean sum of z scores)
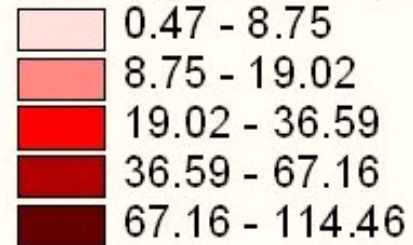
- -3.4 - -2.59
- -2.59 - -1.43
- -1.43 - 0.16
- 0.16 - 1.77
- 1.77 - 9.91

Based on data extracted from 2001 Census

Police recorded violent crime
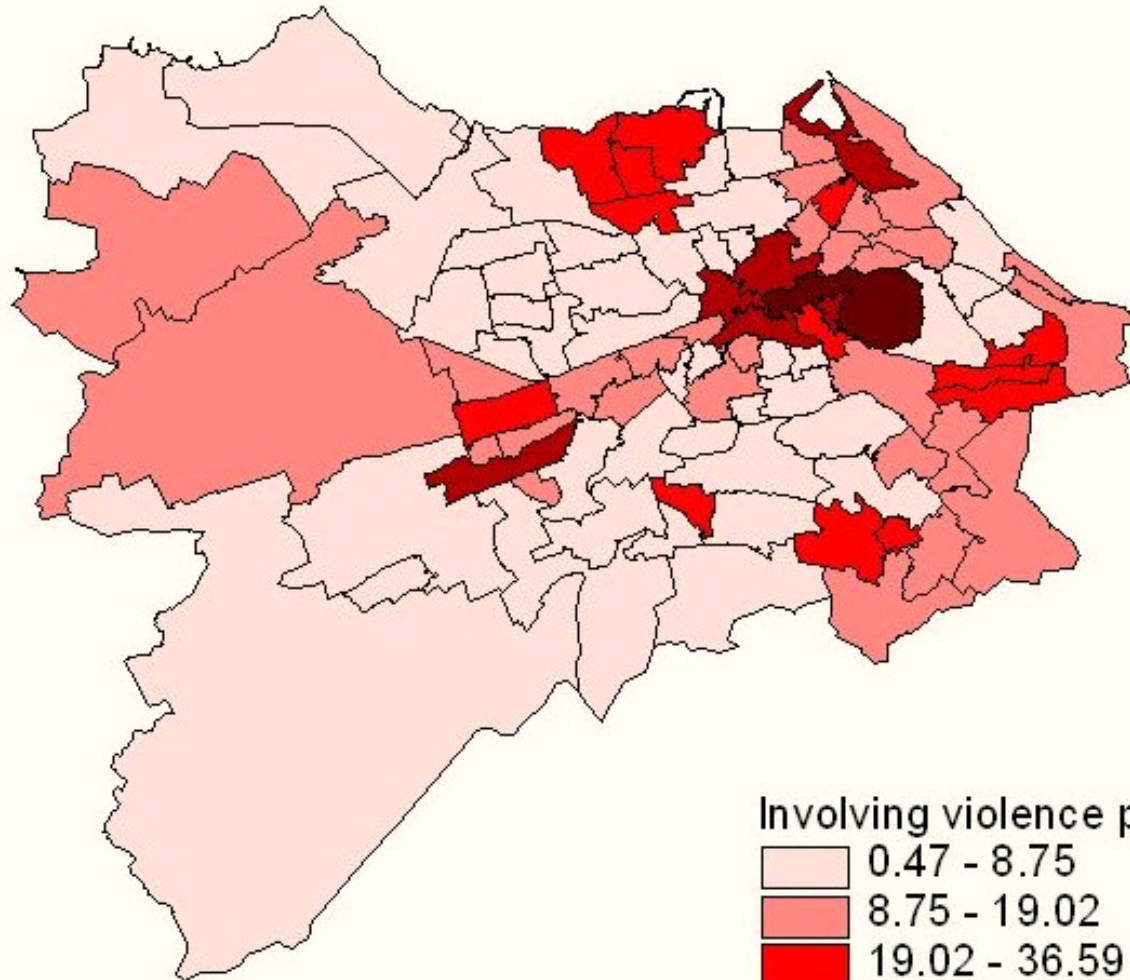
Involving violence per 1000 pop
- 0.47 - 8.75
- 8.75 - 19.02
- 19.02 - 36.59
- 36.59 - 67.16
- 67.16 - 114.46

Incivilities observed by cohort (S4)

Mean neighbourhood incivilities
- 2.75 - 4.36
- 4.36 - 6.13
- 6.13 - 7.7
- 7.7 - 10.45
- 10.45 - 14.47
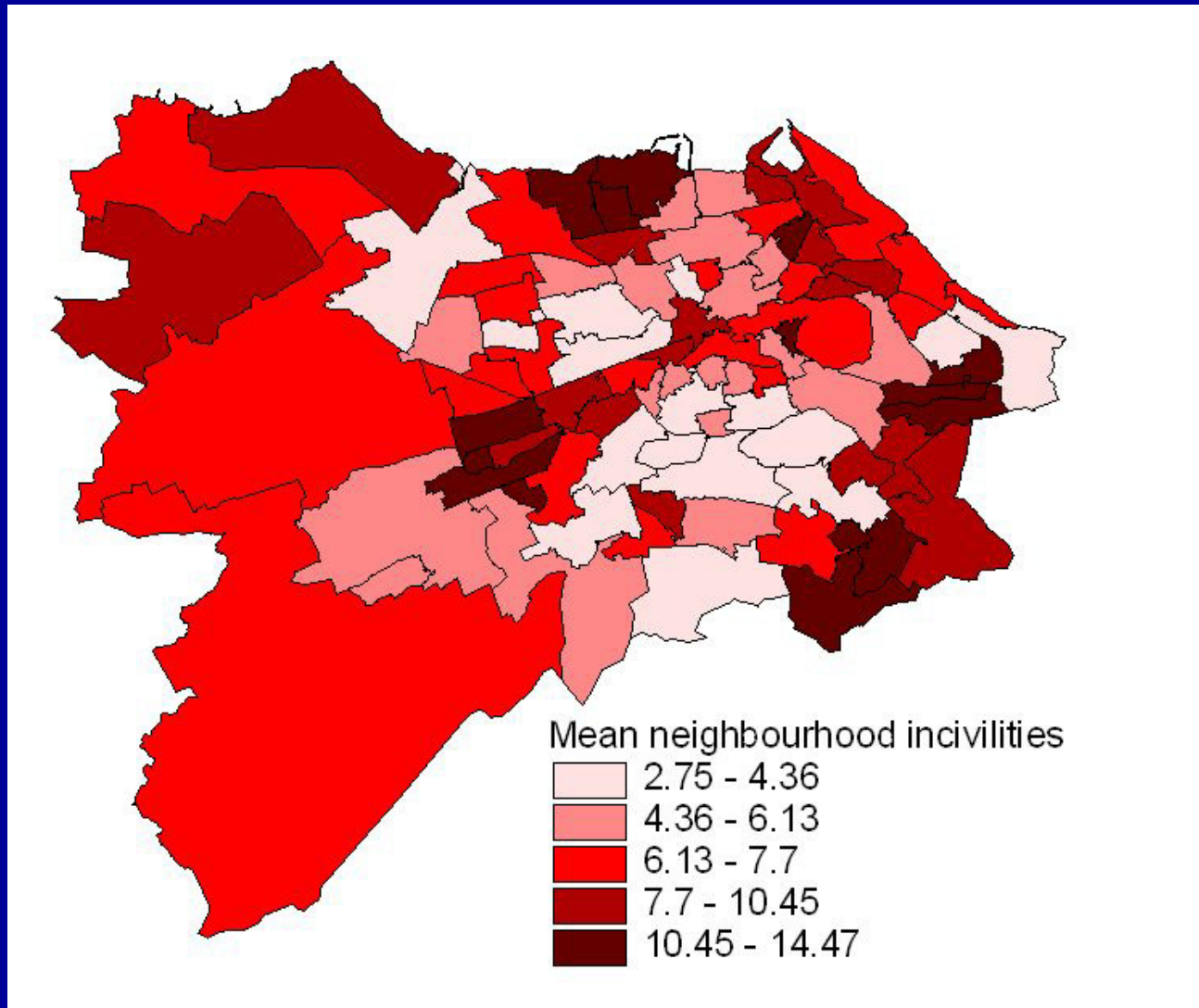
School exclusion across Edinburgh

Top 10 excluding schools

Index (mean sum of z scores)
- -3.4 - -2.59
- -2.59 - -1.43
- -1.43 - 0.16
- 0.16 - 1.77
- 1.77 - 9.91
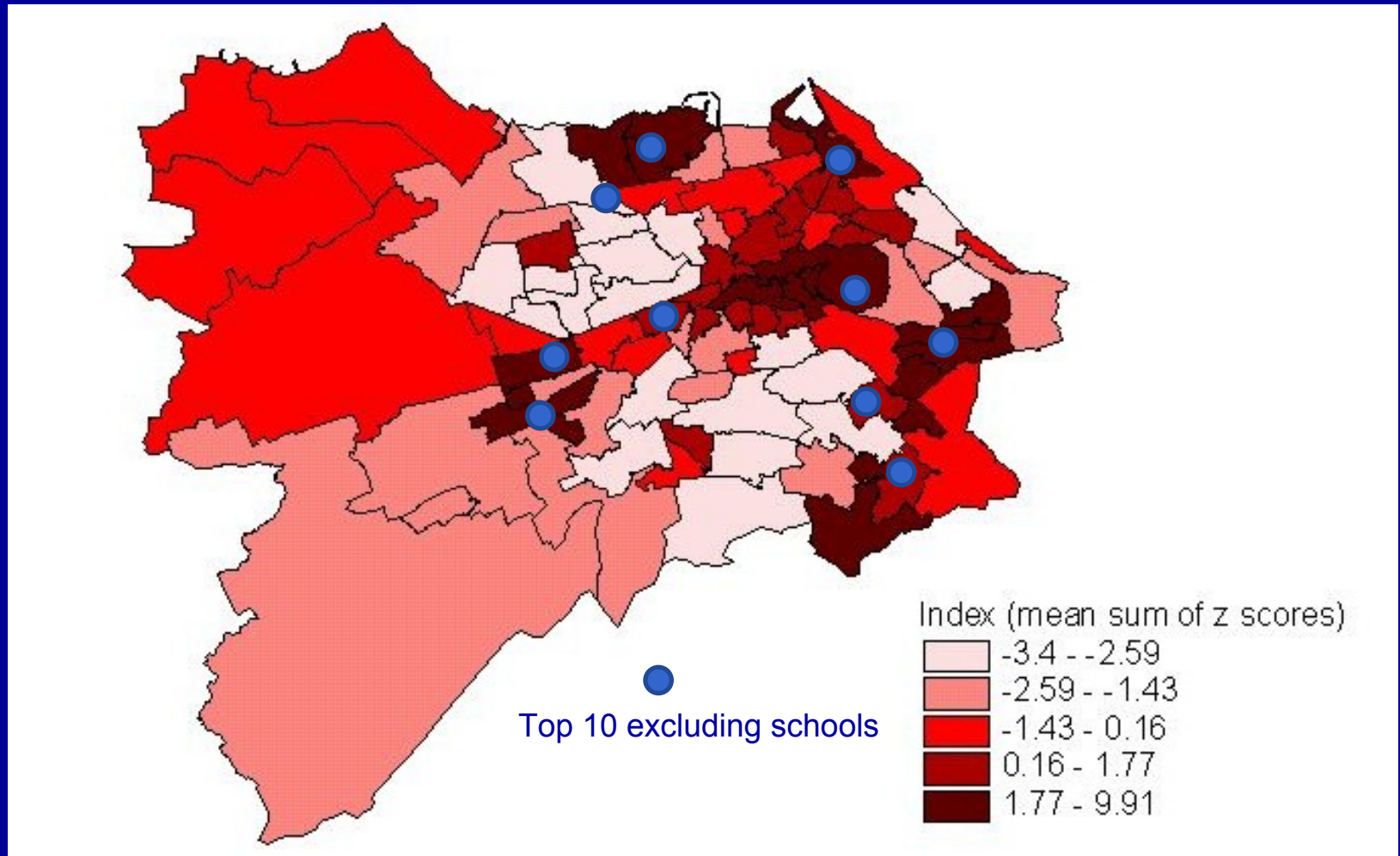
Based on data extracted from 2001 Census

Detention across Edinburgh

Detention

○
○ (light blue)
● (blue)
● High

Index (mean sum of z scores)
- -3.4 - -2.59
- -2.59 - -1.43
- -1.43 - 0.16
- 0.16 - 1.77
- 1.77 - 9.91
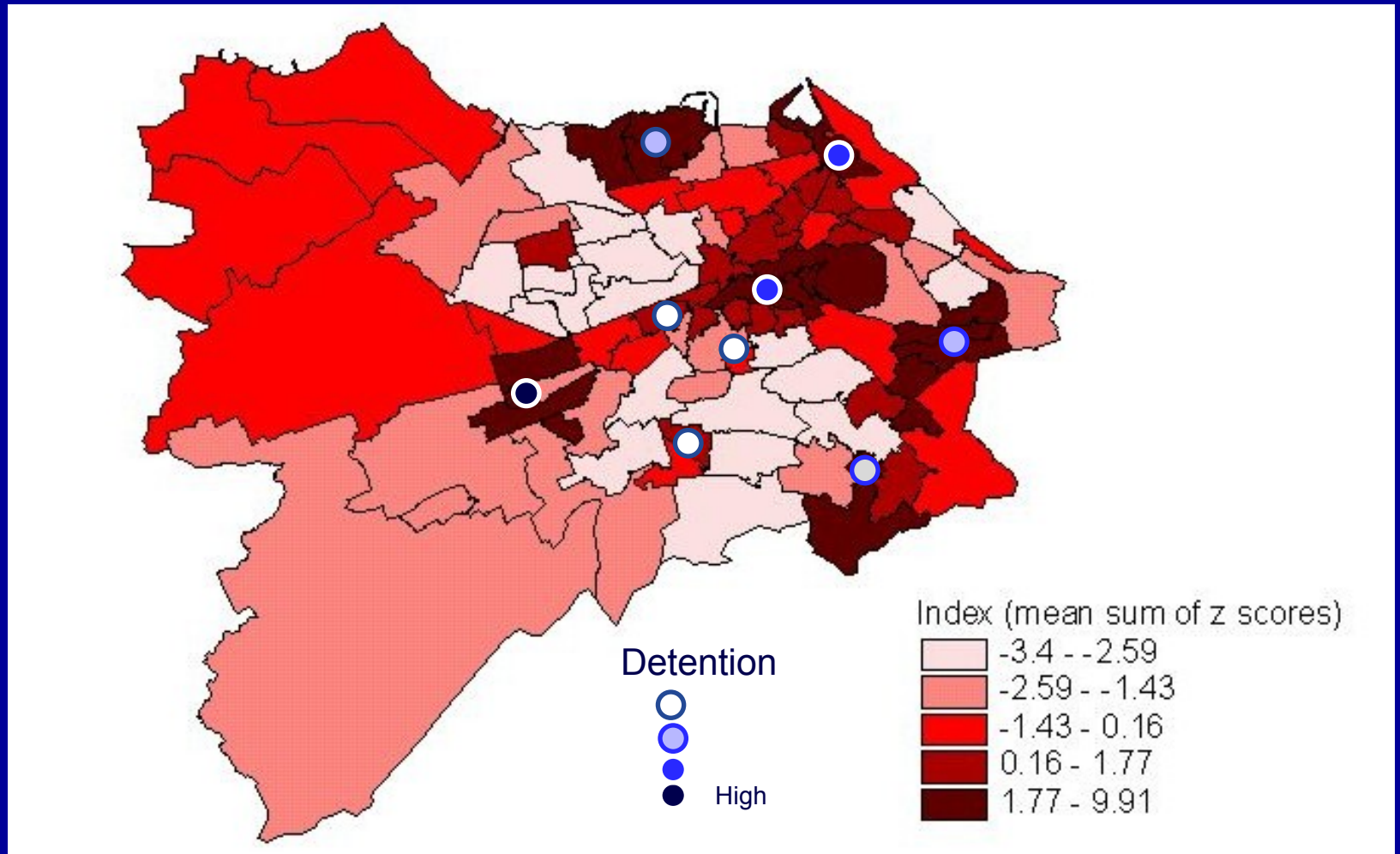
Based on data extracted from 2001 Census

Part 2: Damaging the 'at-risk' child: longer-term outcomes

(i) Early identification does not lead to desistence from offending (criminal justice careers and self-reported offending careers bear very little relation to each other)

(ii) RATHER, early identification 'grooms' children for later imprisonment

Phase 7: tracking criminal justice and self-reported offending careers

Comparing two groups:

(i) Early cases: offence referral to Reporter by age 12

(ii) Early matches: no referral (any ground) by age 12

Groups matched at age 12 on following criteria
- Gender
- Parental separation
- Family socio-economic status
- Free school meal entitlement
- Neighbourhood deprivation
- Serious offending (self-report)
- Drug use
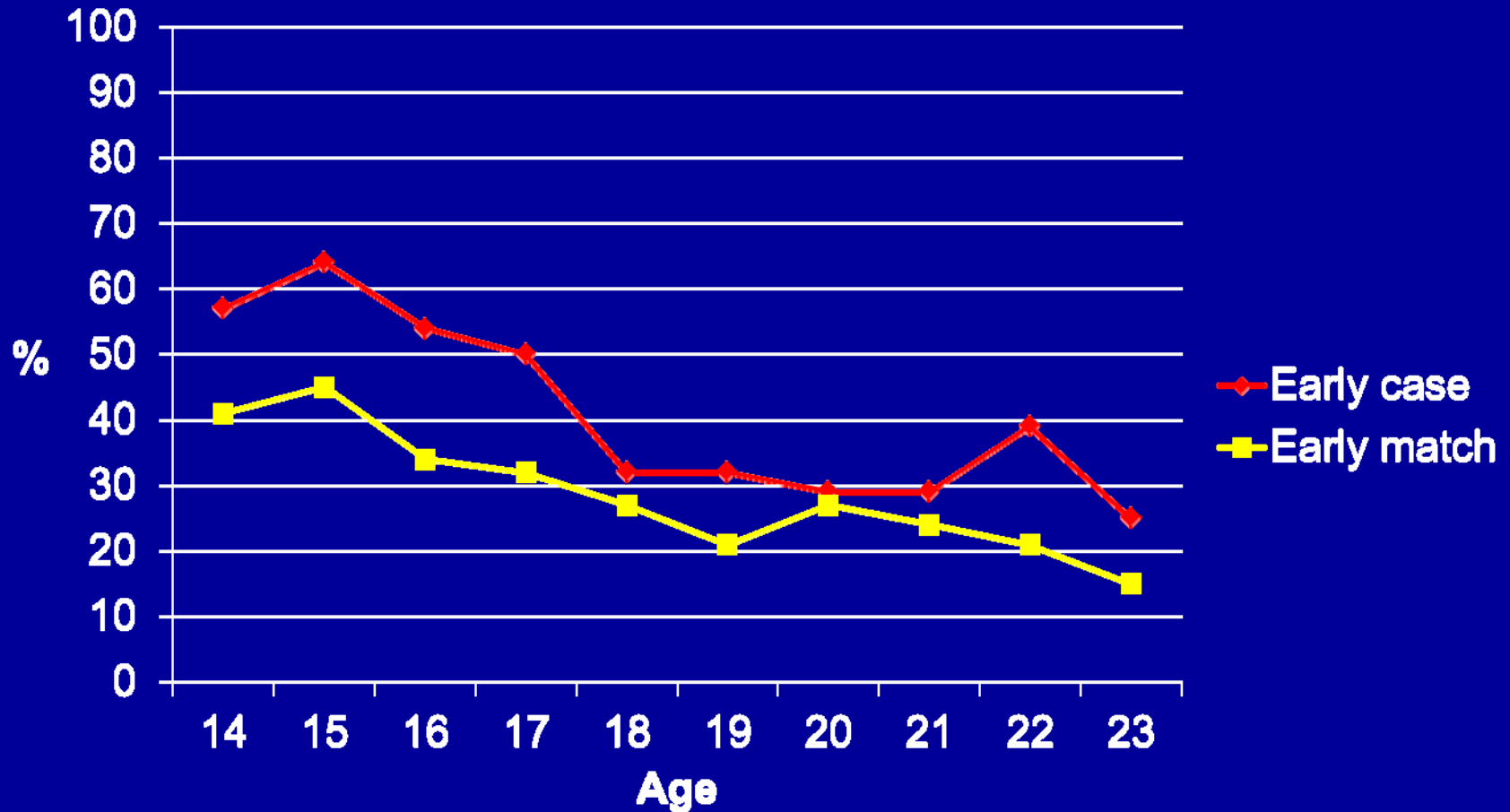- Hanging about public places
- Adversarial police contact
- Truancy
- School exclusion

Subsequent offending careers: violence
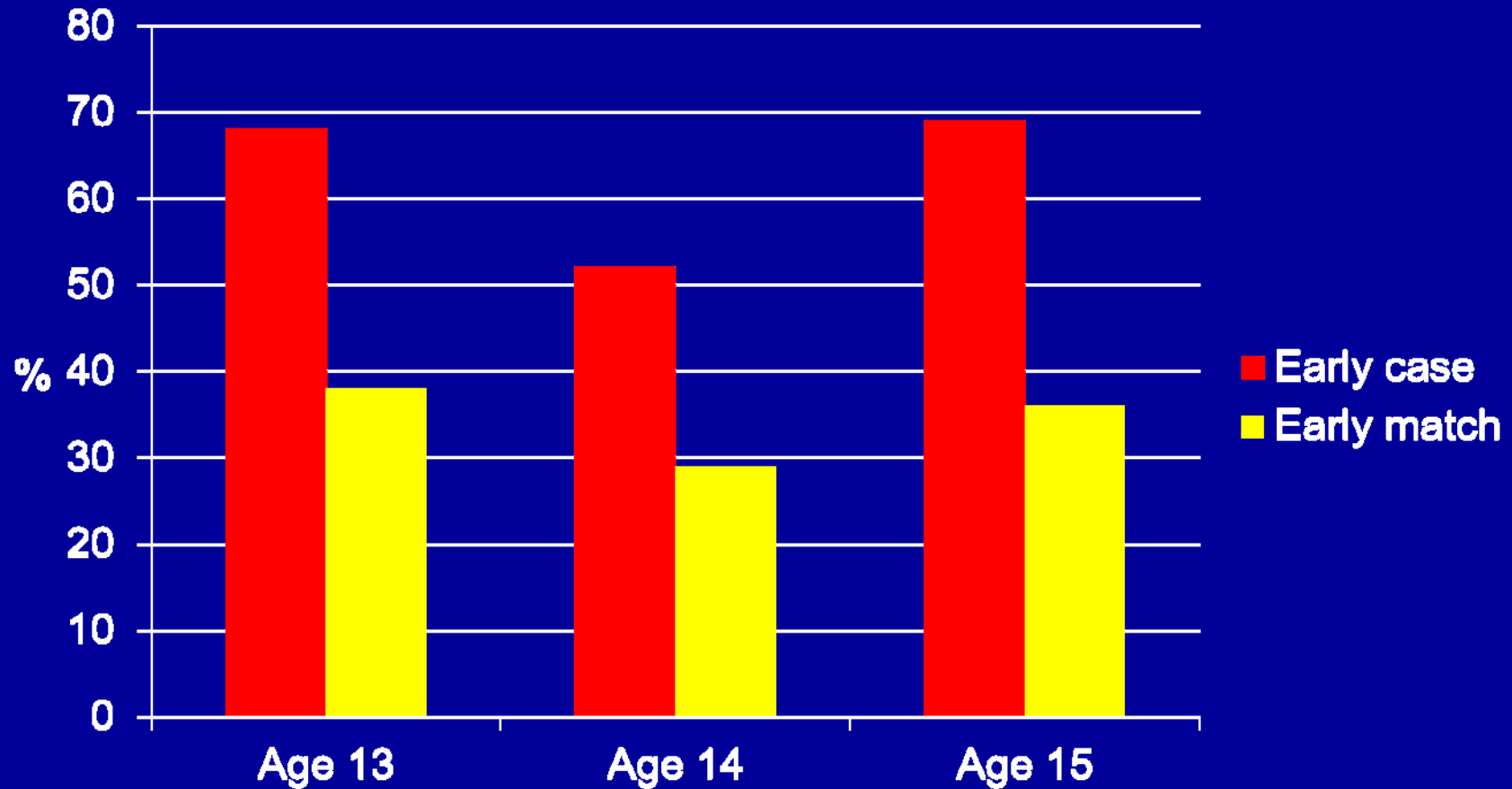(robbery, weapon carrying, assault)
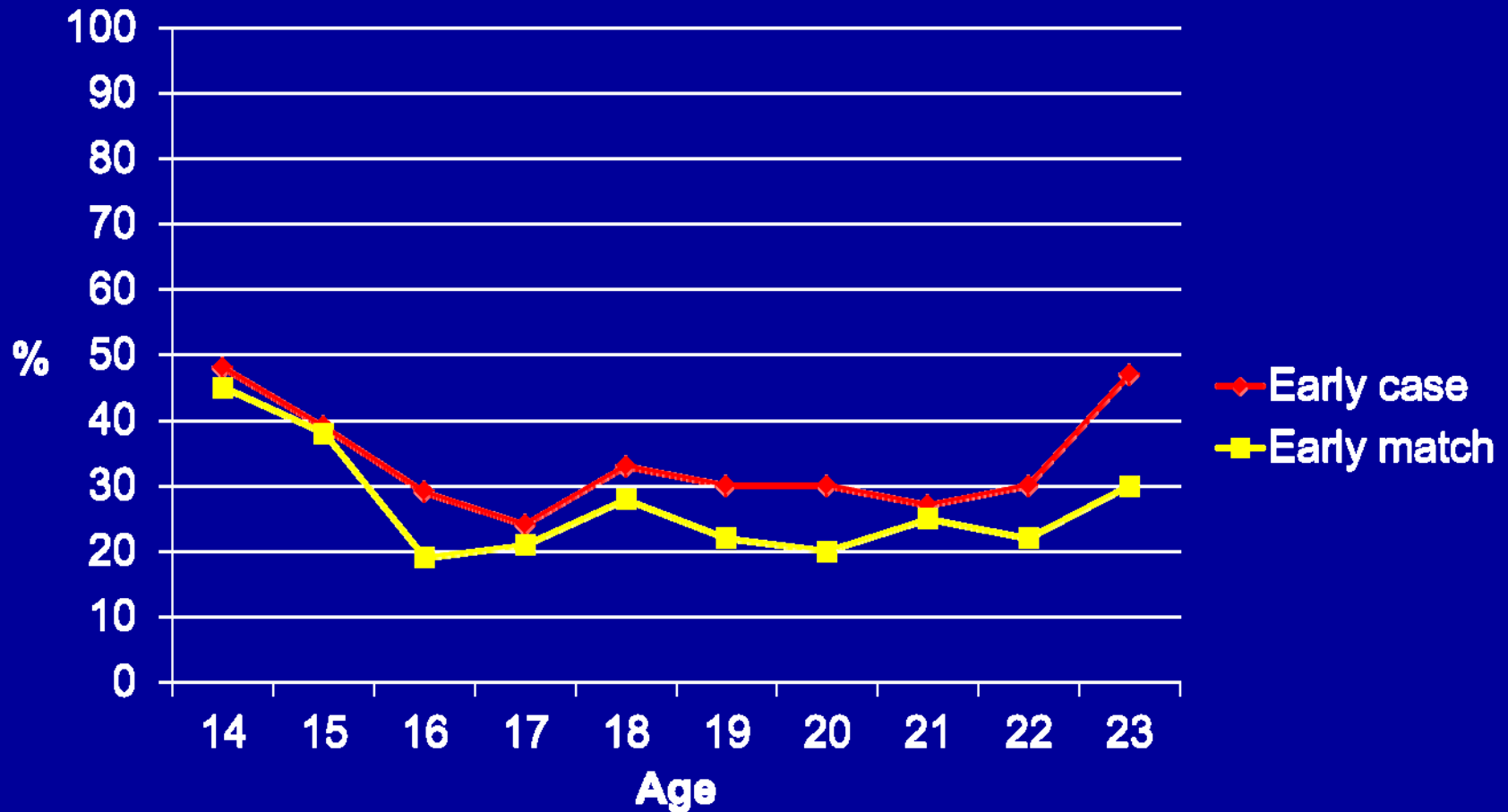
Subsequent offending careers: 'serious' offending

(Robbery, weapon carrying, assault, fire-raising, house-breaking, riding in stolen car, theft from mv)
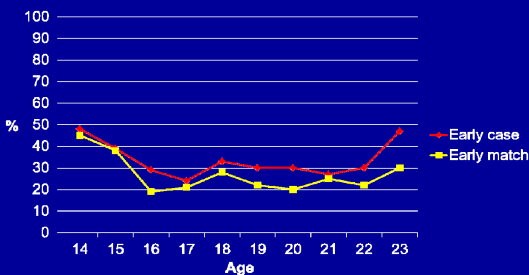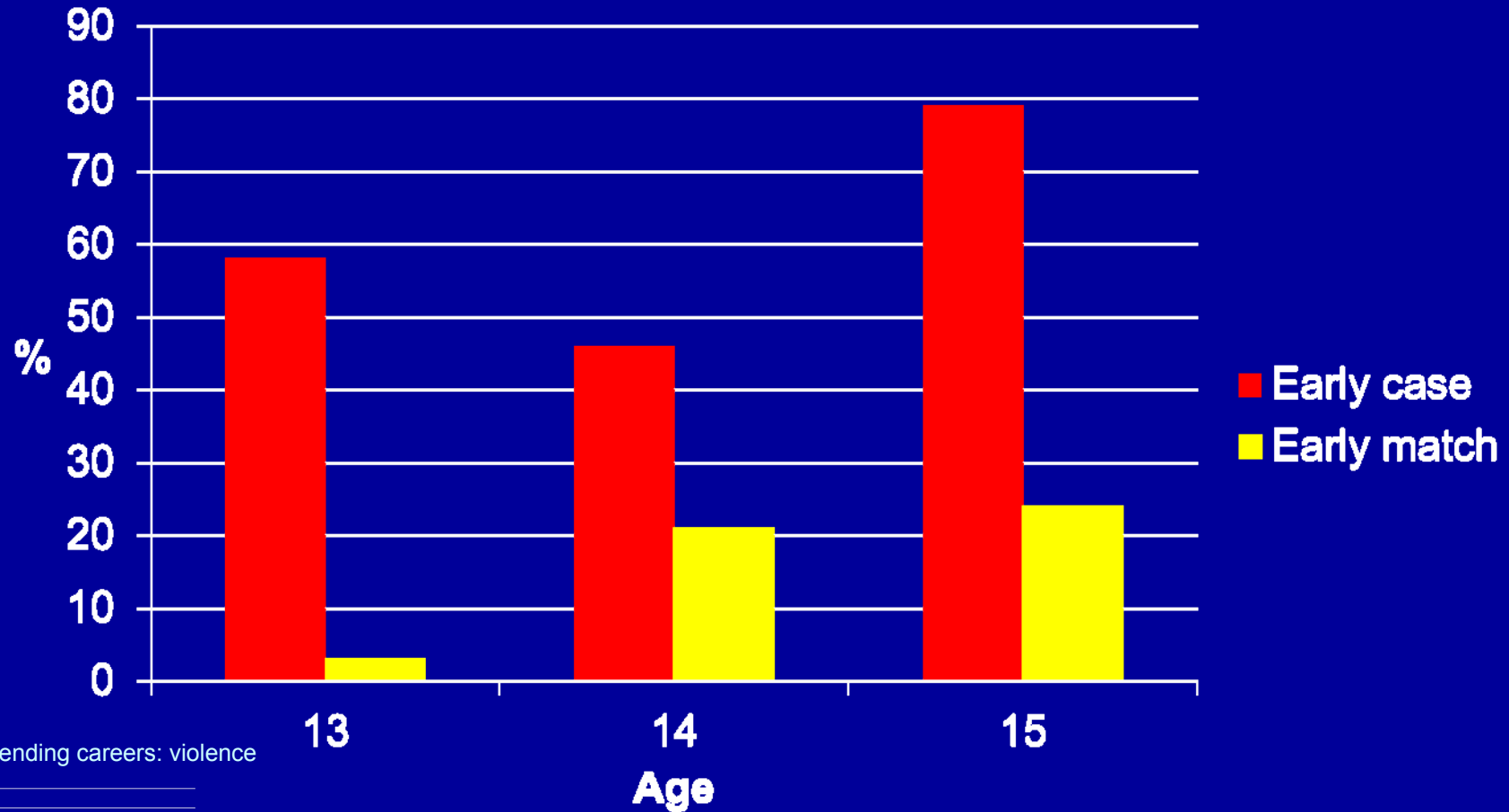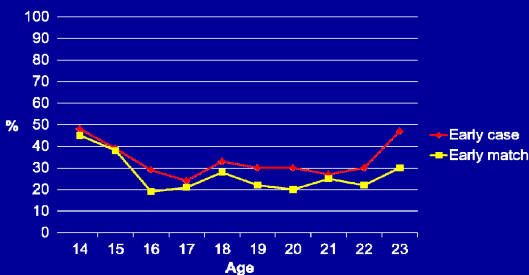
Subsequent police warnings/charges

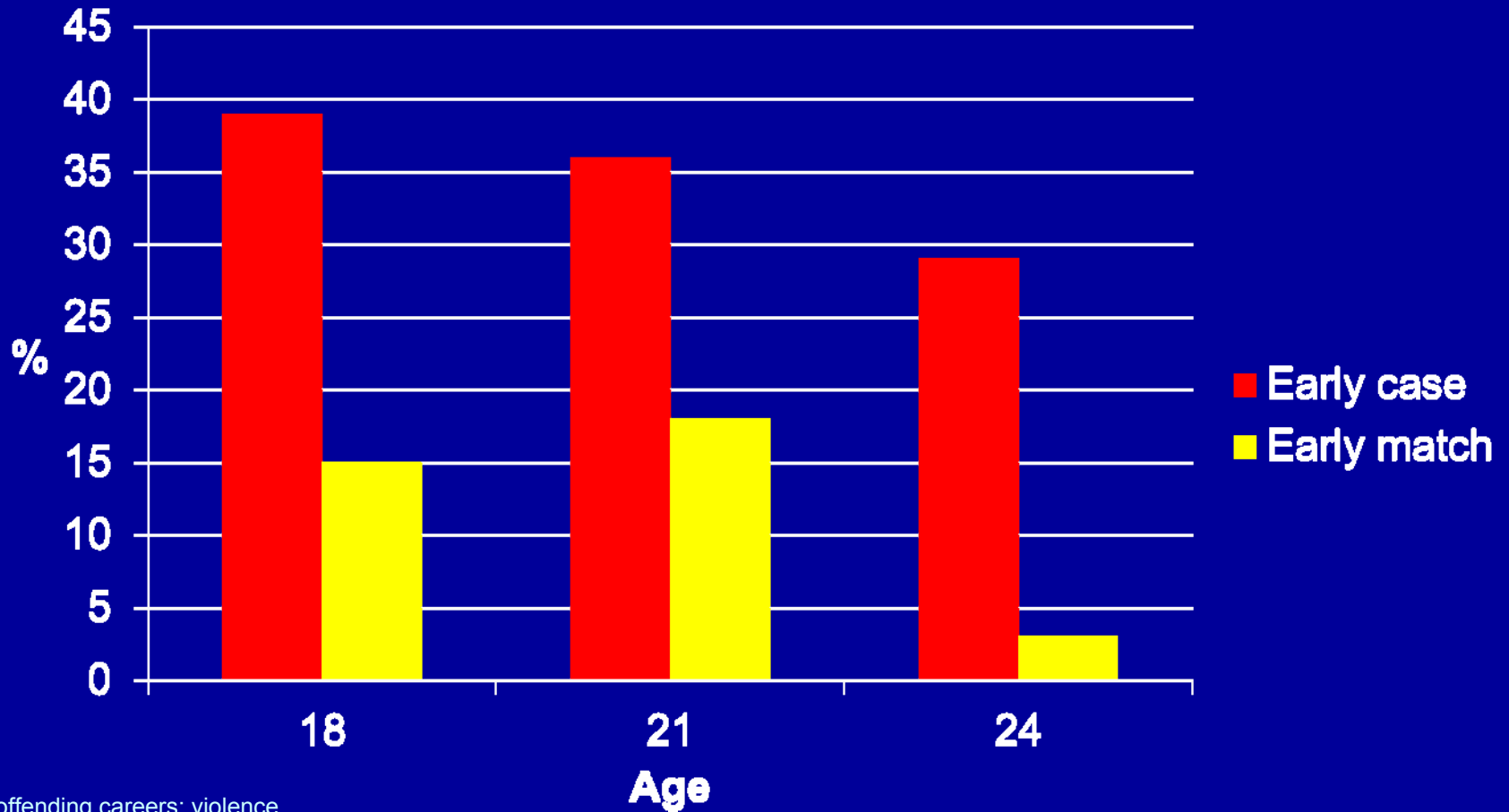Subsequent offending careers: violence

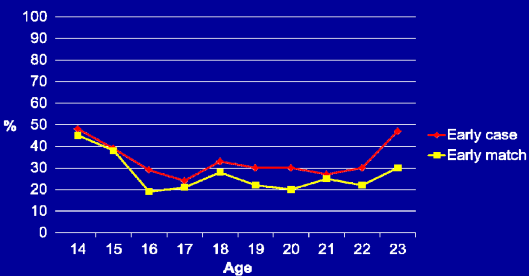# Subsequent offence referrals to Reporter

Subsequent offending careers: violence

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Court appearance

Subsequent offending careers: violence

Earlier analysis (Phase 6): conviction trajectories
(McAra and McVie 2010)

- At age 12 no significant differences between the early onset groups on all study measures of poverty, school problems, moral attitudes, peers, family problems, personality

- Key change between 13-15 is chronics experience increased rates of truancy, school exclusion and police adversarial contact

- Variant trajectories NOT explained by self-reported offending – no significant differences between groups at any study sweep
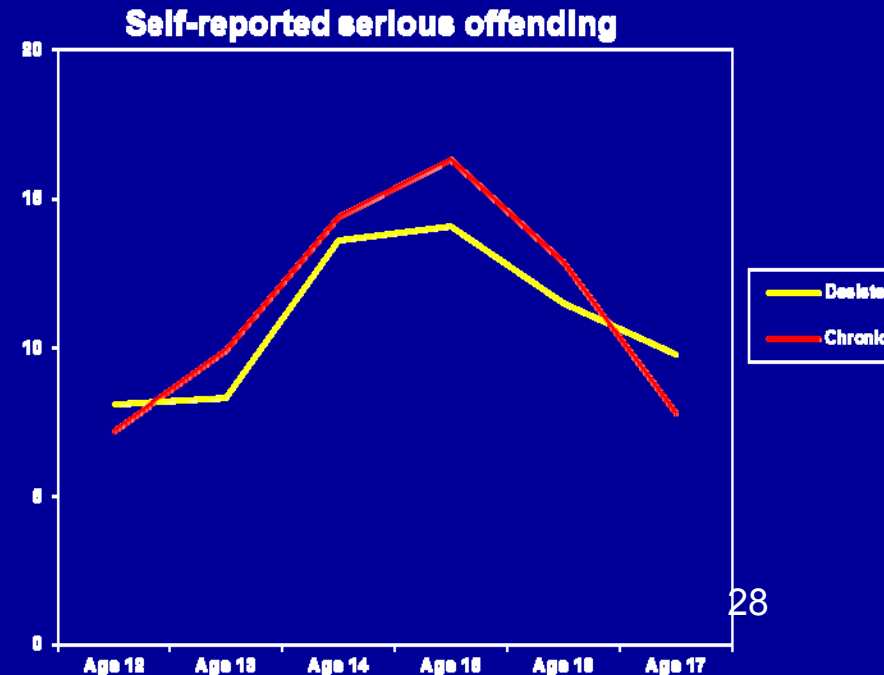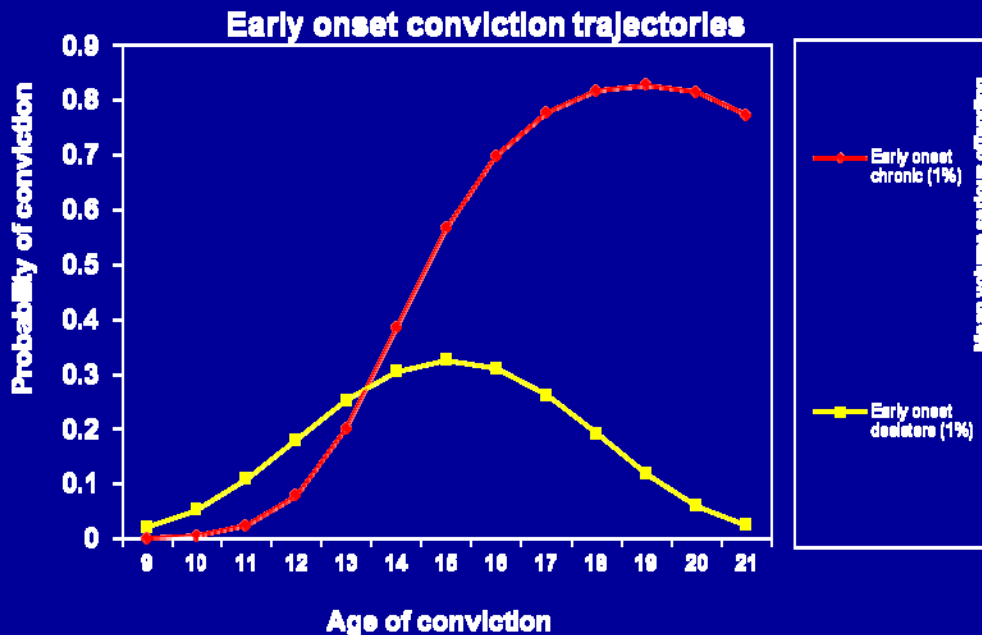
Part 2 cont.

(ii) Early identification 'grooms' children for later imprisonment

Outcomes poorer on all criminal justice measures

	Early cases	Early matches	Late cases	Late matches
% conviction in adult system by 18	55	26	29	22
% conviction in adult system by 22	64	27	37	31
% custody at 18	26	9	0	2
% custody at 21	32	9	0	1
% custody by 24	42	9	0	2

Predicting custody and exclusion

Predicting custody by age 24 (amongst those with a hearings referral by age 12)	Odds ratio
Excluded from school by age 12	4.0
Boy	3.5
Residential care by age 12	4.0
Offence history includes violence by age 12 (self report)	2.9

Predicting custody and exclusion

Predicting custody by age 24	Odds ratio
Excluded from school by age 12	4.0
Boy	3.5
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Offence history includes violence by age 12 (self report)	2.9

| Predicting school exclusion at age 15	Odds ratio
Boy	2.4
Single parent or non-parental carer	1.6
Low socio-economic status	1.5
Live in top 25% most deprived neighbourhoods	2.3
Excluded in first year secondary school	2.8
Rated by teachers as disruptive at age 13	3.2
High volume of bad behaviour at age 15	1.6

The revolving door

Residential care by 16th birthday % criminal conviction by age 22	77
Residential care by 16th birthday % imprisonment by age 22	31
Period of imprisonment by age 18 % further criminal conviction by age 22	80
Period of imprisonment by age 18 % further period of imprisonment by age 22	70
Cohort members with no care history by 16th birthday % criminal conviction by age 22	9
Cohort members with no care history by 16th birthday % period of imprisonment by age 22	0.3

Part 3

Using this research evidence to promote ethical policymaking: reflections on the Scottish case

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Bronfenbrenner/Martens (1993)

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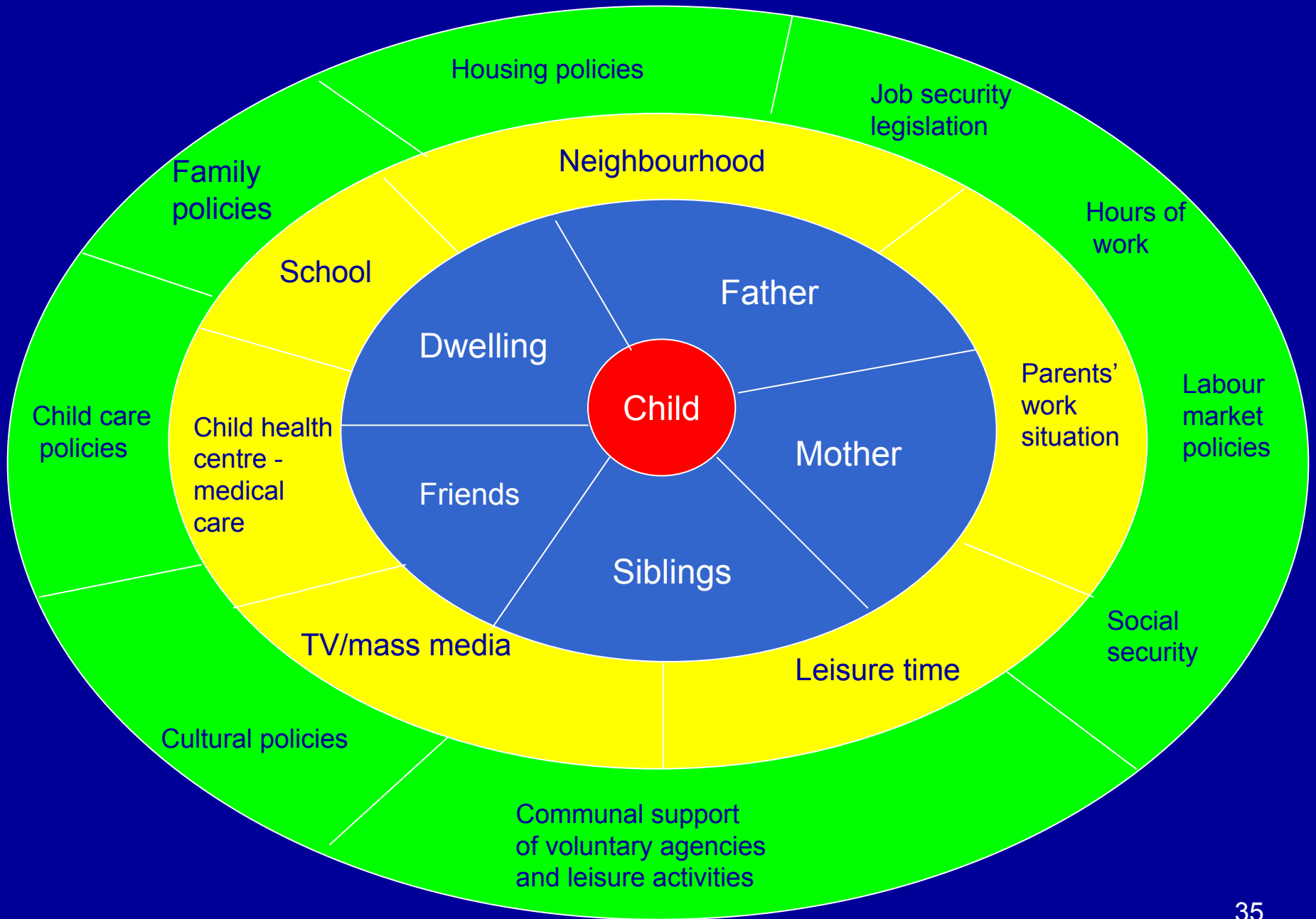
Key publications

McAra and McVie, 2005, The Usual Suspects? Young People, Street Life and the Police, *Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 5 (1):1-36

McAra and McVie, 2007a, Youth Justice? The Impact of System Contact on Patterns of Desistance from Offending, *European Journal of Criminology*, 4 (3)

McAra and McVie, 2007b, Criminal Justice Transitions, *Research Digest,* no. 14

McAra and McVie, 2010, Youth Crime and Justice: Key Messages from the Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime, *Criminology and Criminal Justice,* 10 (2)

McAra and McVie, 2012, Negotiated Order: The Groundwork for a Theory of Offending Pathways, *Criminology and Criminal Justice, Special Edition on Negotiated Orders*

Find out more about the Edinburgh Study at:

www.law.ed.ac.uk/cls/esytc/