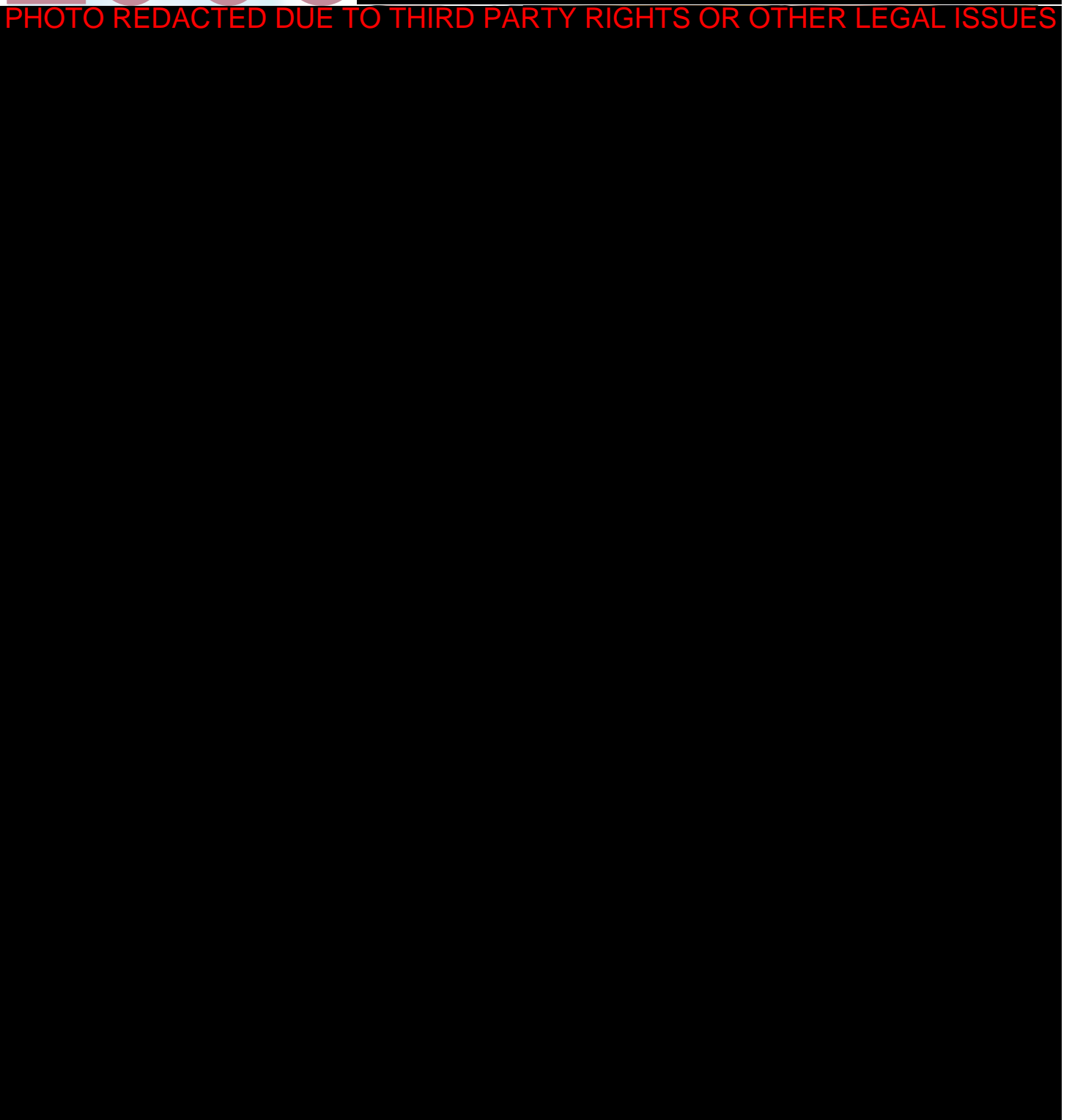


# YOUTH CRIME ACTION PLAN 2008

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## MINISTERIAL FOREWORD

**The Youth Crime Action Plan is a comprehensive, cross-government analysis of what further we need to do to tackle youth crime. It sets out a ‘triple track’ approach of enforcement and punishment where behaviour is unacceptable, non-negotiable support and challenge where it is most needed, and better and earlier prevention. It makes clear that we will not tolerate the behaviour of the minority which causes misery and suffering to others, especially their victims who, more often than not are other young people. People have a responsibility to obey the law if we are to deliver fairness and prosperity to all communities.**

On **enforcement and punishment** we will set clear boundaries of acceptable behaviour – with clear consequences for those who over-step them. This means no tolerance for carrying weapons, no tolerance for underage drinking in public, and the expansion of police action to take vulnerable kids off the streets. We will protect the public and reduce re-offending through a combination of targeted enforcement action, new sentencing framework and the development of a comprehensive package of ongoing support for those coming to the end of their sentences. While continuing to ensure custody for the most persistent serious and violent young offenders we will expand opportunities for communities to have a say in the sentencing and punishment young people receive.

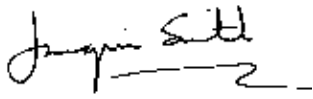
On **prevention** we will address the root causes of crime – not just by tackling unemployment, increasing opportunities, and

transforming early years services as we have done over the last ten years – but also in a much more targeted and individual way: spotting problems early and intervening to stop them getting out of control. We know that the vast majority of young people are well behaved and that it is a minority we really need to focus on – around 5 per cent who commit half of all youth crime. Increasingly we know how to identify these young people early on – in particular how they tend to come from a small number of vulnerable families with complex problems.

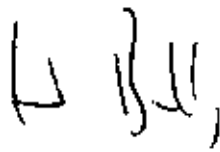
On **support**, we will offer non-negotiable intervention to the families at greatest risk of serious offending. These are the families whose children are disrupting our classrooms – or worse, roaming the streets committing crime. This Action Plan sets out a comprehensive package of measures backed by £100 million of extra funding to tackle this problem – transforming our ability to prevent young people from getting involved in crime.

The Government alone cannot tackle youth crime effectively, parents, citizens and communities must play their part. We will improve the support we offer to young people and parents to deal with problems – setting clear boundaries but offering help to those who stay on the right side of the line and make the effort to turn things around. In particular we will respond to the consequences of youth offending by supporting young people who are victims of crime. We will also listen to the views of young people themselves, ensuring that they can contribute to developing solutions not just feeling that they are seen as the problem.

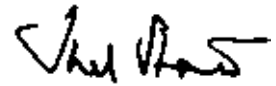
We will use every method available and work widely across Government, the third sector and society as a whole to support the majority, while also being tough on the minority who persistently cause problems for others.



Jacqui Smith  
Home Secretary



Ed Balls  
Secretary of State for  
Children, Schools and Families



Jack Straw  
Lord Chancellor and  
Secretary of State for Justice



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Tackling youth crime has been at the heart of the Government's approach to making our streets safer and to dealing with anti-social behaviour. We have made it clear that those who offend will face tough, effective penalties and at the same time we have focused greater effort than ever before on preventing young people going astray.
2. Since 1997 we have transformed outcomes for young people. Standards in schools have risen. Results at all key stages are at or about their highest levels. More young people than ever before are going on to university. We have also made a substantial investment in support for children, young people and families at risk. Last year we set out our ambition in the Children's Plan to make this country the best place in the world for children and young people to grow up. Against a background of falling crime we have ensured that young offenders are now much more likely to be brought to justice through significant transformations to the Youth Justice System. We created the Youth Justice Board (YJB) which – with Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) – have statutory duties to prevent offending by children and young people.
3. Already this year we have set out clear action on knives, young people and alcohol, anti-social behaviour and drugs – and we have made clear our intention to re-classify Cannabis to Class B. We will outline our new approach to policing and crime this month.
4. All these reforms have had positive effects on youth crime and its causes. The frequency of youth re-offending has fallen and we have halved the average time from arrest to sentence for persistent young offenders from 142 days in 1997 to 58 days in April this year.
5. The vast majority of young people make a positive contribution to society. Their success should be recognised and praised. They should be given a say in what goes on in their area, how local issues are addressed and how services intended for them are delivered.
6. But a minority of young people continue to blight their communities by breaking the law and behaving in an anti-social way. We estimate that 5% of young people are responsible for over half of youth crime. We believe that we are increasingly able to identify these young people early and can intervene to address the root causes of their behaviour, which includes supporting and challenging their parents to meet their responsibilities.
7. The public are understandably worried about a distinct set of problems including violent crime, the use of weapons and gangs. However, it is important to be clear that the number of serious offences committed is actually very small and that only a minority of young people are actively engaged in serious crime. Despite their number, we do recognise the impact of these crimes and they are a high priority. For this minority of young people who commit serious crime, our message is clear – your behaviour will not be tolerated and you can expect tough penalties. We set out details of our existing activity and plans on pages 12 and 13.
8. The emphasis we have placed on enforcement – on being tough on crime – is obviously important. But equally

crucial is a focus on both prevention and non-negotiable challenge and support. It is this 'triple track' approach which will produce significant and lasting change. From talking to young people involved in crime it was clear how important it was to have ways out of crime, with clear responsibilities but also support for those who make an effort to try to turn their lives around.

9. The proposals in this Action Plan emphasise the fundamental importance of providing services to young people and their families which have a consistent approach to assessment, early identification and targeted support. This should involve schools, health services and specialist services, sharing information and working together for young people at risk, young people already drawn into crime or anti-social behaviour and parents in need of support and challenge. Where local authorities and their partners within the Children's Trust ensure that such approaches are embedded, services will become even more effective in both preventing youth offending and other poor outcomes for young people. We will reinforce the reforms in local authorities ensuring integrated, Targeted Youth Support services. And to make sure that tough enforcement and sentences work we have to ensure that they are combined with non-negotiable support for young people so that their sentences, whether in the community or in custody, address the underlying problems with their behaviour and help to turn their lives around.
10. We are sending a clear message to parents. Most parents do a great job, and for those who are struggling we will offer more support; but for those who do not take their responsibilities seriously we will challenge them to do so. We will ensure more Anti Social Behaviour Order (ASBOs) are accompanied by Parenting Orders where needed. We plan to expand the highly effective Family Intervention Projects, so that there is more support for those families where the children are at greatest risk of offending. Families who need this support will be encouraged and challenged by key workers. There will be sanctions for families who will not engage. We will strengthen the ways that families in need are identified locally so we can be sure that services are reaching the right people.
11. We want communities to get more involved in how youth crime is tackled in their area and take collective responsibility for the behaviour of young people. This includes people working with the police to identify local priorities for action, building public confidence and improving satisfaction in how crime is dealt with. The public should be able to see how young offenders are repaying the community for the consequences of their actions. One way of doing this is by publicising better the reparation work carried out by young offenders as part of their sentence. We will build on existing initiatives in this area, and ensure that new citizens' panels, set up to identify projects for offenders to undertake, will consider schemes for young offenders.
12. In this plan we have set out principles for the use of custody for young people. It is the right response for serious or dangerous offenders or for other persistent offenders where community punishments have not worked. Children in custody are amongst the hardest to reform. But we need to continue to work to improve custody so it is as effective as

it can be in reducing re-offending and addressing underlying problems. While children are in custody the focus must be to change their behaviour, improve their educational attainment, and prepare them for their return to the community. We must also do more to help them on release so that they are equipped to lead law abiding lives. This is the right approach for offenders and it is the right approach for the community.

- 13.** We will place new duties on local authorities to lead on the education and training of young offenders in custody. We will consult on new measures to strengthen their contribution to the prevention of offending, to facilitate work with local partners on finding innovative ways to reduce youth offending, and to ensure that they take greater responsibility for reducing the numbers of young people entering custody. We will also improve the help we give to young people who are victims of crime.
- 14.** At the heart of this action plan is a recognition that the factors which contribute to many other poor outcomes for young people also contribute to offending behaviour. If we tackle those we will also prevent youth crime and cut re-offending.
- 15.** In summary, we are proposing immediate action through a package of measures to be rolled out in all areas across England and, for certain measures, Wales. It includes:
  - more searches and search equipment to help take weapons off our streets, and now for the first time, everyone over the age of 16 who is found carrying a knife can expect to be prosecuted and those under 16 can expect to be prosecuted on a second offence;
  - increasing the proportion of ASBOs accompanied by Parenting Orders;
  - expanding provision of youth centres at times when young people are likely to offend, including Friday and Saturday nights;
  - using existing police powers more, including measures to tackle anti-social behaviour and underage drinking;
  - making permanent exclusion from school an automatic trigger for a Common Assessment Framework (CAF) assessment of needs;
  - encouraging the expansion of Safer Schools Partnerships which link police officers with schools;
  - increasing the take-up of parenting support by parents of young offenders, including using parenting orders if this does not happen voluntarily;
  - giving the public the chance to identify what reparation work they would like young people on community sentences to carry out; and
  - closer working between Neighbourhood Policing Teams and young people in the local area.
- 16.** Some areas face higher levels of crime, anti-social behaviour, fear and deprivation. For these areas we will build on the existing work of the Youth Taskforce with an intensive package of measures. In these areas the precise combination and choice of activities will be determined locally which will include the following:
  - Operation Staysafe, which uses safeguarding legislation to remove young people at risk from the streets at night;
  - street-based teams of youth workers and where appropriate, ex-gang

- members to tackle groups of young people involved in crime and disorder;
  - basing Youth Offending Team workers in police custody suites so that young offenders can be properly assessed and dealt with from the start;
  - making young offenders feel the consequences of their actions by expanding reparation on Friday and Saturday nights; and
  - testing innovative ways of providing support to young victims of crime.
- 17.** Over the next two years we will offer support to all local authorities and their partners to improve family support which will help ensure that problems are addressed early. This means:
- Improving local authority systems so that we identify, engage and assess families better and join up services to meet the needs of the whole family;
  - Expanding intensive family interventions for the most vulnerable and problematic families with children at risk of offending, with non-negotiable elements and sanctions for a failure to engage; and
  - Expanding Family Nurse Partnerships to support vulnerable families in the early years, something we know has positive effects in terms of reducing crime, as well as improving life chances. We will set out next steps later this year through the Children's Health Strategy.
- 18.** Taken together these actions will radically extend the reach of the challenge and support we are offering to young people at risk of offending. All of the 110,000 families with children identifiably at risk of becoming prolific offenders will receive a targeted intervention as a result of these measures.
- 19.** We will provide additional funding to continue Intensive Fostering in existing pilot areas so that where appropriate, more children benefit from this promising approach which incorporates challenging unreasonable behaviour within a strong family framework, as an alternative to custody; and we will fund the expansion of the Resettlement and Aftercare Programme to provide intensive support for children leaving custody.
- 20.** We will work closely with the Welsh Assembly Government via the All Wales Youth Offending Strategy to implement those aspects of the Action Plan which apply both in England and Wales and to discuss equitable funding arrangements. The consultation on accountability arrangements and improving the resettlement of offenders will be taken forward jointly with the Welsh Department for Social Justice and Government and the wider Welsh Assembly. Those measures which are aimed at preventing young people committing crimes, intervening early though the involvement of other agencies and improving the education of Young Offenders will apply only in England as these are devolved matters. Similarly the support the Youth Taskforce will offer local authorities will only be available in England. The Welsh Assembly will continue to implement their own strategy which shares many of the same aims and principles as the Action Plan but is tailored to the situation in Wales.
- 21.** Over the next two and a half years there will be almost £100 million available to fund these actions on top of existing funding for mainstream services. Some elements of this package will be starting from this autumn delivering immediate change on the ground. Other elements



will take longer to achieve, with the Government and partners working together from this point to lay the foundations for these elements.

**22.** Our longer term action includes:

- strengthening our approach to identifying and targeting prolific young offenders;
- improving the engagement of parents in the youth justice system including requiring them to come to court;
- rolling out the 'victims' pledge' to ensure youth victimisation is tackled;
- implementing a new sentence: the Youth Rehabilitation Order which will provide a flexible and robust community sentence;
- piloting a new Youth Conditional Caution for 16-17 year olds which can include a requirement for them to make amends to their victims and a role for the local community;
- exploring with the judiciary and magistrates whether they can use their discretion to name greater numbers of guilty 16 and 17 year olds;
- Testing bringing high risk young offenders back to court during their sentence to monitor their progress;
- Exploring how to enhance best practice in the delivery of Youth Offending Team programmes;
- Developing a more comprehensive package of care for children leaving custody; and
- Improving education and training in juvenile custody, placing new duties on local authorities to commission education and training in juvenile custody.

**23.** It is because of the reforms we have already implemented that we are now able to go further and forge a truly comprehensive integrated approach to youth crime. The transformation of youth justice and of children's services through Children's Trusts, YOTs and Every Child Matters, together with Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, provide the basis for the 'triple track' approach of enforcement, non-negotiable challenge and support, and prevention.

**24.** As set out in the Local Government White Paper, it is the responsibility of Local Authorities to join up and improve local services and through this, the quality of life of the public they serve. The YJB has a pivotal role in implementing this plan and in advising Ministers, monitoring the youth justice system, promoting effective practice and contracting and commissioning the secure estate.

**25.** We owe it to communities, and the vast majority of law abiding young people, to keep the streets safe; and we owe it to society to do all we can to stop young people wasting their lives and their talents on crime. We believe this action plan will make a significant further contribution to tackling youth crime and improving outcomes for children and young people. It builds on the improvements we have made to the youth justice system since 1997. It also builds on our efforts to bring about better integration of services for children, young people and their families. But this action plan reflects our determination that those improvements need to be pushed further if we are to deal effectively with the challenges that face young people and communities today, improving outcomes for all.



## INTRODUCTION

- 26.** The Government is committed to protecting the public and delivering fairness for communities. Our aims are:
- cutting the number of young people entering the criminal justice system for the first time by preventing youth offending;
  - reducing re-offending by young people;
  - building public confidence, supporting victims and making children and young people safer; and
  - ensuring that young people in the youth justice system achieve the five Every Child Matters outcomes to give them the best chance to turn their lives around<sup>1</sup>.
- These can only be achieved through a 'triple track' approach of tough enforcement, non-negotiable support and challenge and prevention to tackle problems before they escalate.
- 27.** Since 1997 the Government has fundamentally changed the way young people are dealt with by the Criminal Justice System. The picture painted in the Audit Commission's report *Misspent Youth* in 1996 was bleak. It identified that prosecution through the courts was slow; not enough was being done to address offending behaviour or prevent young people from offending; and the agencies involved often worked in an uncoordinated way.
- 28.** The publication of this Government's White Paper *'No More Excuses'* in 1997 marked a shift in the approach to youth crime and the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 introduced radical changes to the youth justice system. In particular the Youth Justice Board (YJB) was established to monitor the performance of the youth justice system and to advise the Secretary of State on the operation of, and standards for, the youth justice system. The Act also introduced Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) tasked with preventing offending and re-offending. These reforms to the Youth Justice System mean that young offenders are now more likely to receive an intervention to address their behaviour. The Youth Justice Board and Youth Offending Teams will continue to play a significant role in the delivery of the Youth Crime Action Plan.
- 29.** The YJB has put in place new requirements and targets for education and training for young people held in custody. The number of hours of education, personal training and development delivered for young people in Young Offender Institutions (YOIs) has increased from an average of 7 hours per week in 2000, to over 26 hours per week during 2006/07.
- 30.** We have improved the way in which justice is delivered, reducing delays from arrest to sentence for persistent young offenders from 142 days in 1997 to an average of 58 days at the end of April this year<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/publications-and-resources/> the 5 outcomes are to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic well-being

<sup>2</sup> The Persistent Young Offender (PYO) pledge aimed to halve the time taken from arrest to sentence from an average of 142 days, maintaining an average of 71 days.

- 31.** We have developed innovative prevention programmes for young people at risk of offending such as Youth Inclusion Programmes targeting high risk young people. We have strengthened the support available and improved referral to mainstream services through Youth Inclusion and Support Panels. Prevention programmes are estimated to have engaged with more than 50,000 children and young people on the cusp of offending and there are over 400 Safer Schools Partnerships, improving links between young people and the police.
- 32.** We have improved victim and community involvement in the youth justice system. There has been pioneering use of restorative justice and reparation. During 2006-7 17,728 victims participated in restorative processes and 97% of the participating victims reported satisfaction.
- 33.** We have worked with the third sector to increase their involvement in delivering effective programmes for young offenders and providing them with support during the sentencing process. For instance we have set up agreements with the Prince's Trust for employment and training opportunities, with the YMCA for accommodation and with Clubs for Young People for activities.
- 34.** We have introduced a range of new community sentences which tackle the causes of offending and ensure that young people who offend are aware of the harm they have caused. The introduction of the Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme has offered courts a robust community based alternative to custody with over 5000 offenders starting the programme in 06/07. The YJB are taking this further by piloting Intensive Fostering as a direct alternative to custody.
- 35.** We know that being a parent is not always easy. This is why we've made it simpler for parents to access help earlier by improving sources of advice and support. For example our investment through Parent Know How has ensured parents have access to a 24 hour advice and support through specialist helplines. We have also increased the availability of face-to-face support, making Parent Support Advisors linked to schools available in every local authority; and rolling out Parenting Early Intervention Pathfinders with the aim of having a project running in every local authority by 2011. However, parents also need to be accountable for the actions of their children. So we have introduced Parenting Orders which reflect that for some parents non-negotiable support, guidance and counselling is required as well as intervention with their child.
- 36.** And we continue to do more. The Criminal Justice and Immigration Act which received Royal Assent in May marks the biggest reform to the youth justice system since 1998. The Act reinforces the emphasis on out of court diversions by legislating for the Youth Conditional Caution which will reduce the number of young people being taken to court for relatively low-level offences. In addition, the Youth Rehabilitation Order provides a new generic community sentence for young people. It will replace nine existing sentences, building on their best elements and making the sentencing framework clearer and more coherent.

- 37.** We are also strengthening the role of mainstream services in preventing offending and meeting the needs of children in the youth justice system. The Children's Plan set out the Government's plans to make this country the best place in the world for children and young people to grow up. It sets the direction for schools, children's services and Government to achieve this aim, particularly in relation to young people who come from families experiencing complex and multiple problems. Our desire to see an improvement in the support services to children in, or at risk of entering, the youth justice system is underpinned by Public Service Agreement (PSA) objectives to reduce new entrants to the youth justice system and to reduce overall offending. For local authorities there are now 6 youth justice indicators in the National Indicator Set that they must use to set their priorities.
- 38.** On crime the Government published its crime strategy a year ago and we've continued to drive down overall crime. We have listened to the public, listened to the police and are taking tough action to tackle the issues that people tell us they are most concerned about. Already this year we have set out clear action on knives, young people and alcohol, anti-social behaviour and drugs – and we have made clear our intention to re-classify Cannabis to Class B. The measures outlined in these plans will complement existing action which has had a significant positive impact on crime outcomes in Britain over the past decade. We continue to support front line policing by restoring the link between police and the communities they serve – setting up dedicated teams for every neighbourhood, reducing national targets and giving local communities the power to set priorities.
- 39.** However, not only do we need to continue to make further progress, new aspects of youth crime are emerging which demand specific responses. Although overall levels of crime have fallen, self-reported rates of offending by young people have not, and anti-social behaviour and violent crime by a minority of young people remains one of the public's biggest concerns. This is fuelled in part by high profile serious crimes, especially violent incidents involving guns and knives. Many members of the public have little faith in the ability of the justice system to deal with youth crime or support victims, often young people themselves. This is often because they do not see the progress that has been made because the system is not visible enough.
- 40.** In addition, the system needs to respond to developing knowledge and research about children at risk. Only 5% of young people commit half of all youth crime and some of them can be identified very early in childhood<sup>3</sup>. Our systems for identifying and intervening early to tackle problems need to be much more robust. At present services working with young people may not always work with criminal justice agencies to provide a consistent approach, from prevention right through to rehabilitation and resettlement. This can result in young offenders not getting the vital help they need to stop offending.
- 41.** This action plan proposes a strong cross-government package of measures

3 Piquero, A.R., Farrington, D.P., & Blumstein, A. (2007). Key issues in criminal careers research

to overcome these challenges and sends a clear message that youth crime will not be tolerated. These measures are based on the 'triple track' approach of enforcement in response to offenders, non-negotiable support to those who need it and intervention to prevent problems before they spiral into criminal behaviour. We will achieve this by:

- taking tough action to keep our streets safe – dealing with gangs and young people out of control;
  - expanding the provision of the most effective early and targeted preventative interventions;
  - tough, visible and fair justice, giving local people a say;
  - ensuring strong and effective custodial sentences for the most serious and prolific offenders;
  - improving ongoing support for children following the end of their sentence and improving the education of young offenders; and
- clarifying and strengthening the collective responsibility of local authorities and local partners, including YOTs working together through children's trusts to prevent youth crime and reduce re-offending.

**42.** This document will set out the immediate actions we are going to take to address youth crime. However, we recognise that many of the problems are complex and require long term solutions. Therefore, on some issues we are looking for your views on how we should tackle the problems we face. This includes our proposals to improve the continuity of care for young people leaving the youth justice system as signalled in the Children's Plan. Consultation questions are included throughout the document and information on how to respond can be found in Annex 4.

## ACTION ON GUNS, GANGS AND KNIVES

### **Tackling Gangs Action Programme (TGAP)**

In September 2007, the Home Secretary set up a Taskforce to focus on serious gang violence in the cities of Birmingham, Liverpool, London and Manchester – which together account for over half of all gun crime. £1.5 million was allocated to the four cities for the Tackling Gangs Action Programme (TGAP), which brought together a team from across Government, the police, local authorities and regional government offices to energise and co-ordinate existing work.

The communities in the TGAP areas saw a significant increase in police activity targeting gangs and, by the end of the programme across these areas, firearms related injuries fell to their lowest level in two years. An action day in November 2007 resulted in 124 arrests and the seizure of 10 real and over 1000 imitation firearms.

## ACTION ON GUNS, GANGS AND KNIVES

### Knives

This year the Government set out a new approach to knife crime, in the cross-government Tackling Violence Action Plan (Saving Lives, Reducing Harm, Protecting the Public); sending a clear message to everyone and young people in particular – that it is unacceptable to carry a knife, and if you carry a knife you will be caught and punished. Key measures include:

- As part of the Violent Crime Reduction Action Plan 2006, we doubled the maximum sentences for possession of a knife in public without good reason from two to four years;
- increased searches, with more support to police forces including immediate provision of 100 portable knife arches and 400 search wands, with further expansion over the next three years, and reforms to cut red tape around searches;
- Since 5 June, for the first time, everyone found carrying a knife can expect to be prosecuted. This applies to everyone aged 16 and over – and applies to those under 16 on a second offence;
- Continued tough sentences: as the Lord Chief Justice has made clear, anyone caught using a knife should expect to receive a custodial sentence; and those caught carrying one are also increasingly likely to receive a custodial sentence (three times more likely than ten years ago);
- home visits and letters to parents of young people whom intelligence suggests carry weapons, bringing children's behaviour to their parent's attention and making them understand their responsibilities;
- a national three year £3 million campaign to challenge the 'glamour', fear and peer pressure that motivate young people to carry knives, and working with 'Be Safe' to offer over 1 million young people access to workshops on the dangers of weapons;

On 14th July the Home Secretary announced that eight police force areas were committed to a National Knife Crime Programme to be run by Deputy Assistant Commissioner Alf Hitchcock with access to a new £2 million fund for the police and other delivery partners.

Between 19th May 2008 and 29th June 2008 the Metropolitan Police ran Operation Blunt II to tackle youth crime on London's streets, particularly in 10 boroughs where the problem is most prevalent. The operation carried out nearly 27,000 searches. Over 1200 people were arrested for offences connected to knives and 500 knives were seized, most as a result of the greater use of officers' search powers. Others were recovered in regular searches of public places where police had been told weapons were being kept.

- 43.** Local agencies will have a crucial role to play to bring about real improvement on the ground. We are using successful local partnership arrangements – such as Children’s Trusts and Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships. Local Strategic Partnerships will continue to bring all agencies together to achieve better outcomes for local areas, as set out in Local Area Agreements, including the outcomes for reducing youth crime and improving community safety.
- 44.** All of this will result in five key, visible, improvements for the public:
- swifter action taken against young people involved in crime and disorder;
  - problems tackled before they spiral out of control, including parents taking more responsibility for their children;
  - better support for young victims;
  - more sentences that people can see and have a greater say in, and that deal with the causes of offending; and
  - effective punishment backed up by support for young offenders to ensure public protection and effective resettlement.
- 45.** We will be held accountable by the public for improvements set out in this plan. We promised in the Children’s Plan that we would commit to a long-term goal by 2020. Reductions in youth crime will principally come about if we reduce the flow of young people entering the criminal justice system. Each year around 100,000 young people aged 10–17 enter the criminal justice system for the first time. Our new goal is to reduce the rate by one fifth by 2020.
- 46.** By reducing youth crime we will also reduce the number of victims. This is crucial because many young offenders have been victims themselves. We have recently extended the British Crime Survey to under 16s which will help us to quantify the number of young victims more accurately than previously. When this has given us a clearer picture of the current situation, we will introduce a new national goal substantially to reduce the number of young victims by 2020.







# CHAPTER 1: DEALING WITH UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

Youth crime and anti-social behaviour are major sources of public concern. This behaviour can be fuelled by alcohol and peer pressure in particular so we are going to:

- Ensure the police use all the powers they have to maximum effect, including powers to tackle underage drinking
- Engage young people involved in crime and anti-social behaviour with youth workers and ex-gang members, to combat the negative influence of delinquent peer groups
- Use existing child protection legislation to ensure young people on the street at night are taken to a place of safety
- Link Youth Offending Team workers with police stations
- Increase after school police patrols
- Strengthen our approach to identifying and targeting prolific young offenders

**1.1** Crime can significantly harm the confidence of individuals and communities. We are determined to address this by taking prompt and effective action using the 'triple track' approach of enforcement, support and challenge and prevention, sending a clear message that the behaviour of the minority will not be tolerated at the expense of the majority. All young people should play by the rules and will be dealt with appropriately when they do not.

**1.2** We have already done much to deal with the unacceptable behaviour of this minority including:

- increasing the numbers of police on the streets, from 125,825 in 1997 to 139,710 in September 2007<sup>1</sup>;
- introducing and extending the powers of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs), who provide a reassuring presence on the street for communities;

- introducing Neighbourhood Policing Teams to every area in the country;
- stopping repeat cautioning, to ensure that prolific offenders go to court;
- meeting the Persistent Young Offender (PYO) Pledge to halve the time taken to get from arrest to sentence; and
- putting in place measures to tackle some of the causes of offending – such as alcohol and drug misuse – and applying tougher sanctions where offending and anti-social behaviour develops.

**1.3** We will shortly be setting out our plans for the future of policing in a separate Green Paper. Our ambition is to free up police time from bureaucratic burdens to enable them to do even more work in this area and utilise their existing powers even more effectively.

## THE POLICING GREEN PAPER

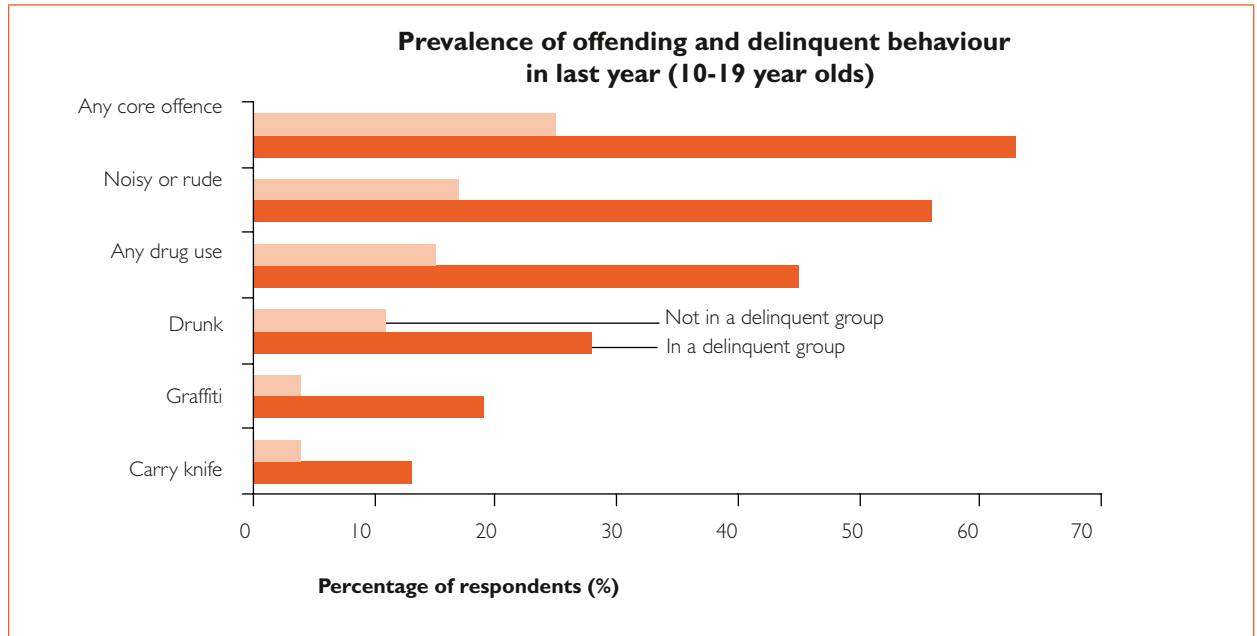
The Policing Green Paper will ensure that policing delivers for the public by giving the police greater flexibility and emphasising an ambition to see performance management that is open and robust. Amongst the proposals that have already been announced are a new Policing Pledge, setting out national and local policing standards; a stronger role for directly elected individuals on police authorities; and the establishment of a bureaucracy champion to oversee implementation of the recommendations contained within Sir Ronnie Flanagan's Review of Policing. The Government is committed to reducing the current burden of bureaucracy placed on frontline officers and is taking seriously the finding that officers currently spend 20% of their time on paperwork.

- 1.4** Despite this progress, we must go further to stop young people committing low-level crime and anti-social behaviour before their activities become more serious. This action should focus on the concerns and priorities of the community. We want to send a strong message to young people that they must play by the rules and reassure communities that youth offending is being dealt with swiftly and effectively.
- 1.5** We must also recognise that young people's involvement with delinquent peer groups and alcohol, provides a catalyst for opportunistic risk taking<sup>2</sup>. These peer groups should not be mistaken for gangs which are linked to

clear identities, territory and serious crime. Nor should all groups of young people be seen as a problem. However, some peer groups can fuel offending behaviour and even young people who view crime as wrong are more likely to offend as part of a delinquent peer group than on their own. This is not an isolated problem, with almost 12% of 14 and 15 year olds belonging to one of these groups<sup>3</sup>. In addition we know that when young people come into contact with the justice system there often isn't joined up and immediate action to tackle the causes of their offending behaviour, whether peer group related or otherwise.

<sup>2</sup> Delinquent youth groups and offending behaviour; Home Office 2004

<sup>3</sup> Delinquent youth groups and offending behaviour; Home Office 2004

Figure 1<sup>4</sup>

In the short term we will:

**1.6 Take immediate steps to tackle peer driven delinquent behaviour by ensuring the police and local partners are using all their existing powers to maximum effect.** The Government has introduced a range of powers such as Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) and Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) which, when rigorously applied, can be very effective in reducing crime and anti-social behaviour. The National Audit Office found that after receiving an intervention such as a warning letter or an ABC, 65% of people did not go on to commit further crime or disorder and 93% did not re-offend after three interventions<sup>5</sup>.

**1.7** It is also important that young people recognise that ASBOs represent the last chance to stop their anti-social behaviour before they face the full force of the criminal justice system. We will support practitioners to ensure they are deployed effectively to curtail anti-social behaviour including, where it is appropriate to the offence, banning individuals from public transport to ensure that others are more effectively protected.

**1.8** In addition to the general powers to tackle youth anti-social behaviour, the police have specific powers to tackle alcohol-related disorder, such as:

- confiscating alcohol from under-18s where they are in possession in a public place;
- directing a person aged 16 or over to leave a specified place and not return for a period not exceeding 48 hours;

<sup>4</sup> Delinquent youth groups and offending behaviour; Home Office 2004

<sup>5</sup> Home Office: Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour; December 2006

- designating an area where it is an offence to drink alcohol or not surrender it. Earlier this year the Government announced that legislation to increase the maximum fine for this offence from £500 to £2,500; and
- carrying out enforcement operations to combat young people purchasing alcohol, and people selling it to them.

## ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

The Government has introduced a range of powers, such as Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) and Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) which, when rigorously applied, can be very effective in reducing crime and anti-social behaviour. The National Audit Office found that after receiving an ABC, 65% of people did not go on to commit further crime or disorder and 93% did not re-offend after three interventions.

On 8th May we announced new initiatives to tackle anti-social behaviour committed by the small minority of perpetrators (7%) who do not respond to early interventions. These include:

- A new national Action Squad of ASB experts will troubleshoot across the country. They will focus on a) targeting areas that are not using the anti-social behaviour measures available to them or b) where the perception of ASB is high. The public must not suffer needlessly while available remedies go unused.
- A joint review by the Home Office and the Department for Transport to look at ways to tackle ASB on public transport. We will consult the public, drivers and other transport staff on their views.

- 1.9** We are also piloting the Youth Restorative Disposal which is a new approach to tackling low level first time offences. The police will use the principles of restorative justice, bringing the offender and the victim of the crime together and agreeing on steps the young person must take, including apologising for their actions. Eight police forces are involved in the pilots and are working with YOTs to examine the role the Youth Restorative Disposal can play in nipping early offending in the bud, avoiding criminalising young people for low-level crime and also as a trigger to identify any underlying problems which may lead to future more serious offending. Subject to the successful evaluation of these pilots, we will look to expand this approach.
- 1.10** We want all Neighbourhood Policing teams to work with the community to identify young offenders and to prevent their offending or anti-social behaviour from escalating. We also want to see anti-social behaviour powers fully applied

against delinquent peer groups who can draw young people into offending.

- 1.11 Deter young people involved in criminal and anti-social behaviour by engaging them with street-based teams of youth workers and ex-gang members** working in partnership with the police. To do this, we will encourage local authorities to offer street-based outreach to disaffected young people where and when it is most needed. It is important that we drive a wedge between the most hardcore serious offenders and those 'peer offenders' who go along with bad behaviour in the absence of any other positive influence. Offering young people viable and attractive alternatives to anti-social and criminal behaviour will help break the damaging cycle of negative influence and raise aspirations for future success. Where there is a failure to comply, street-teams will be able to employ increasingly tough punishments.

## NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING

There are now over 3,600 neighbourhood policing teams consisting of nearly 30,000 officers and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) dedicated to providing a highly visible presence and dealing with local crime and ASB problems.

Neighbourhood policing teams publicly meet their communities on a regular basis through a variety of mechanism such as Police and Communities Together meetings, street briefings, surgeries and door-to-door visits – as well as keeping them informed through leaflets and local press adverts.

By resolving problems that are important to their communities, neighbourhood policing aims to both tackle local crime and Anti Social Behaviour and make people feel safer.

## CAMDEN YOUTH DISORDER ENGAGEMENT TEAM

Camden's Youth Disorder Engagement Team is a street-based approach to tackling youth crime in the borough. Consisting of trained mediators (including former gang members) the team targets areas with a high level of public concern about youth disorder. The team's objective is to be known and trusted by young people, act as mediator in conflicts between them and encourage them to take part in employment schemes, such as those run by the London Fire Brigade.

The team recently identified a child who was being bullied and victimised by another young person in the area. The team visited both young men and their families and uncovered a long period of animosity. After mediation the young men patched up their differences. They signed a letter of agreement saying that any further threatening behaviour would result in police involvement for the perpetrator. There have been no further incidents.

**1.12** This approach has been successful in Camden as well as the US cities of Boston and Chicago in dealing with groups of anti-social and criminal young people. Although some Local Authorities already practice this model, we know that in many areas this will represent a significant cultural shift. Therefore, the Youth Taskforce will work with around 70 Local Authorities to ensure youth services are reconfigured so they can offer this model of outreach. We will encourage these teams to work closely with YOTs and Safer Schools Partnerships to ensure a joined-up approach to youth offending.

**1.13 Expand Operation Staysafe**, where police use existing child protection legislation to remove children and young people from the street late at night to a place of safety. Parents and, where necessary, additional services can then be contacted. Current trials of this approach suggest that it is very effective in preventing crime, with each operation

removing an average of twenty children from the streets each night. Furthermore, this approach provides the opportunity to identify any underlying reasons for the young person being on the streets. For example, if the young person has run away from home and feels it is unsafe to return, the need for emergency accommodation can be assessed and addressed.

**1.14** The Youth Taskforce will work with local partners in priority areas to develop this initiative and will provide local areas with good practice emerging from trials. In return, we expect the police and local authorities to consider this within neighbourhood policing plans, CDRP partnership plans and Children and Young People's Plans. We will also produce wider guidance for Local Safeguarding Children's Boards and other agencies on how the existing child protection system should be used to safeguard young people. We will be consulting on this guidance later in the year.

## OPERATION STAYSAFE

Operation Staysafe is a scheme piloted in Liverpool which tackles crime and anti-social behaviour in identified hotspots and protects children left to wander the streets at night without adult supervision.

It began in May 2007, since when there have been 11 operations. 316 young people have been removed from streets and parks after they had been judged to have been putting themselves at risk. Legislation states that they have to be taken to a “place of safety”, which in the case of Liverpool has often been a Church Hall.

They are met jointly there by police and staff from Children’s Services in Liverpool City Council. The team contacts parents to ask them to come and pick up their child. If a parent is unable to leave their home, the child is taken home by police and Children’s Services. Feedback from parents and communities has been positive and Children’s Services have been able to offer further support to families who need it.

**1.15 Base a Youth Offending Team worker in the police station** or put them on call to take action to tackle young people’s offending at the point of arrest if it has not been identified and tackled earlier. There are many problems that can cause a young person to commit crimes and we must address these as early as possible. At present assessment by a Youth Offending Team worker is dependent on referral by the police and will typically take place several days after the young offender has been in police contact. However, the Drug Intervention Programme Pilots for Young People showed the promising contribution that arrest referral schemes aimed at this age group can make.

**1.16** Through linking YOT workers to police stations, young offenders can be assessed immediately after arrest and directed to necessary services. If appropriate, this will provide an opportunity to divert young people from the Youth Justice System. The

Youth Taskforce will work alongside the police and the YJB in priority, high crime areas to help introduce this initiative over the next six months.

**1.17 Increase after school police patrols** to tackle anti-social behaviour and disorder at school closing time and at transport interchanges. School closing time can be a flashpoint for trouble, even if this does not occur right outside school gates. Teachers, schools, parents and the local community often know where these areas are and, using this local intelligence, we will increase police patrols to cover more of these trouble-spots. Young people in particular suggested<sup>6</sup> that an increased presence of police and PCSOs where young people congregate would help reduce youth offending. The Youth Taskforce will work with the police, Local Authorities and schools to support the roll-out of after school patrols in areas where local crime statistics, and community feedback, show that greater enforcement activity is needed.



Building on these measures, in the longer term, we will:

**1.18 Strengthen our approach to identifying and targeting prolific young offenders** so that all agencies work together to identify young people who are at the most serious risk of re-offending. To ensure this happens, the standards and guidance used by those agencies will be reviewed and updated so they share common aims and objectives. This joined-up approach will result in interventions targeted at a specific young person which should be more successful at preventing further offending by that young person.

**1.19** *Prevent* and *Deter* remain key elements of the Prolific Priority Offender (PPO) strategy and are critical to ensure young people are appropriately targeted and identified to address their offending needs with appropriate interventions and supervision.

**1.20** By consulting widely with the YJB and local Youth Offending Teams, we have made significant changes to this strategy by providing a visible distinction between *Prevent* and *Deter*. These two tiers have different target groups and purposes: *Prevent* aims to stop young people offending in the first place; *Deter* targets high risk young offenders with the potential to become PPOs in the future. There will now be a greater focus on the *Deter* group.

**1.21** The *Deter* element will be supported by a new set of performance indicators to focus on outcomes. These will be embedded within the Youth Justice Board/Communities and Local Government Counting Rules 2008/09.

The Counting Rules set out the data requirements on all YOTs in England and Wales. There will also be a greater consistency in the way YOTs select their high risk group through *Deter* (and the YJB's Scaled Approach when it is introduced) and monitor their re-offending through appropriate interventions. We will continue to work with the YJB to clarify what we should reasonably expect the PPO strategy to bring to the prevention agenda.

### What the public will see

*Swifter action taken against young people involved in crime and disorder including:*

- fewer young people on the streets unsupervised causing problems for others;
- more young people getting help from the point of arrest to stop them re-offending;
- fewer young people getting into trouble due to negative peer influences;
- a reduction in crime and disturbances caused by young people on their way home from school; and
- an increase in the use of police powers that work to reduce offending and build community confidence.

### What it will mean for practitioners

- expectation on police to use all the powers available to them;
- a seamless approach to referring young people to the services they need from the point of arrest; and
- closer working amongst the agencies involved in youth justice, in particular the police and youth workers to combat the damaging effects of delinquent peer groups.







## CHAPTER 2: INTERVENING EARLY

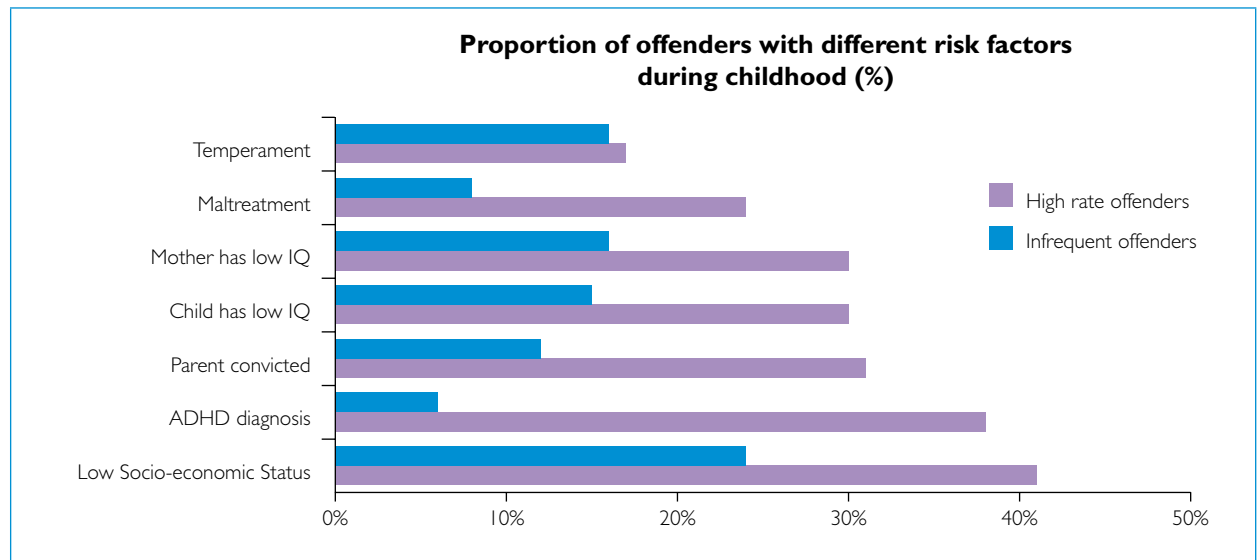
Some children are particularly vulnerable and consequently are at greater risk of offending. These children can often be identified early on. To help them we will:

- Ensure universal services such as Sure Start are better targeted at families that need them most
- Significantly expand the reach of intensive family interventions
- Make permanent exclusion from school an automatic trigger to a comprehensive assessment of needs
- Improve support in schools through Safer Schools Partnerships
- Increase the take up of parenting support and explore better ways to engage them in the youth justice system
- Invest in the capacity of the third sector to reduce youth crime
- Expand the provision of Family Nurse Partnerships

**2.1** The vast majority of young people grow up happily and successfully. As they gain their independence and develop the interpersonal skills that will carry them through adult life, they rely on opportunities to interact and to test teenage boundaries in a safe and constructive environment. That is why young people need positive and engaging activities and safe places to go, and why they often cite a lack of such facilities as fuelling disaffection with their local communities.

**2.2** However, we know that a minority of young people commit crime and, of them, a much smaller minority – around one in twenty – become prolific and serious offenders, committing half of all youth crime<sup>1</sup>. People in this group are often disadvantaged by poor or indifferent parenting, and display a range of personal and family difficulties which mean they can often be identified early when problems begin to manifest themselves.

<sup>1</sup> Piquero, A.R., Farrington, D.P., & Blumstein, A. (2007). Key issues in criminal careers research

**Figure 2<sup>2</sup>**

**2.3** Involvement with delinquent groups is another factor linked to poor outcomes but which can be identified early. These factors associated with future offending are often the same factors which lead to other outcomes of poor educational attainment, disaffection and poor health. Effective early intervention to address these risk factors is not only a vital response to youth crime but also puts more young people on the path to success. That is why this plan sets out a comprehensive package to tackle this problem – transforming our ability to prevent young people from falling into a life of crime.

**2.4** Over the last decade the Government has made significant progress in improving services for children, young people and their families using early intervention and prevention as guiding principles. Children's Trusts – partnerships between local authorities, all the key

public agencies including police, schools, health, Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) and third sector organisations – are now taking the strategic lead in forging truly integrated services and, alongside Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs), have a key role in implementing this Action Plan locally.

**2.5** In response to the recognition that many poor outcomes for young people reflect lack of opportunity, the Government has made significant investments in positive activities for children and young people, including:

- ensuring that 40% of schools offer extended services, growing to all schools by 2010. Recent evaluation of full service extended schools found not only positive impacts on achievement within the case study schools but on wider social outcomes and family stability<sup>3</sup>. Additional funds have

<sup>2</sup> Odgers (2007) Predication of Differential Adult Health Burden by Conduct Problems by subtypes in males; Archives of General Psychiatry

<sup>3</sup> Evaluation of the Full Service Extended Schools Initiative. Cummings, C., June 2007 (<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research/programmeofresearch/projectinformation.cfm?projectid=14494&resultspage=1>)

accelerated the growth of extended schools in areas where the prevalence of gang culture showed a greater extent of youth disaffection;

- placing a new duty on local authorities to ensure young people can engage in positive activities in their area. This has been backed up with resources through the Positive Activities for Young People grants targeted in particular in high crime areas;
- giving young people in local areas real power to design and plan things to do and places to go through the Youth Opportunity Funds;
- transforming youth facilities throughout the country with £190m of promised Government investment through the *myplace* programme to be followed by further investment through money from the unclaimed assets funds; this will help ensure that youth facilities are open at times which suit young people such as Friday and Saturday nights; and
- investing £235m in accessible places for children to play.

And recognising the importance of supporting parents, we have:

- established around 3000 Sure Start Children's Centres providing access to services for over 2.27 million young children and their families. Outreach workers in Children's Centres in the most disadvantaged areas will extend support to the parents who need it most, focussing on the parents with children most at risk of negative outcomes. By 2010 all of the most disadvantaged areas of England will have a Centre.
- set up ten Family-Nurse Partnerships, providing intensive early support to disadvantaged young parents and their babies.
- ensured that more parents receive expert support through expanded access to Parent Support Advisors in schools and parenting experts offering effective programmes in every local authority;
- enhanced early intervention by expanding availability of Parenting Early Intervention Projects, offering effective support to families with children aged between 8 and 13 years old showing the first signs of being at risk of poor outcomes. Our aim is that every local authority should have a project by 2011;
- developed Family Intervention Projects to work with the most challenging families, stopping anti-social behaviour, improving relationships and the life chances of their children; and
- non-negotiable support for the families of young people engaged in anti-social behaviour through the work of the Youth Taskforce (see box).

## THE YOUTH TASKFORCE ACTION PLAN

The Youth Taskforce Action Plan<sup>4</sup> was launched in March 2008 and sets out a strong package of actions to do more to tackle the root causes of bad behaviour. It describes a 'triple track' approach based around tough enforcement to tackle problems, non negotiable support to tackle the causes of problems and early intervention and prevention to nip problems in the bud.

Since the launch of the Action Plan 52 local authorities have set up challenge and support projects, designed to ensure that young people involved in or at risk of anti-social behaviour and crime are identified systematically, and that support is offered alongside the use of tools like Parenting Orders and Individual Support Orders where young people or families are resistant to the help on offer. In addition, 20 local areas will be helped to establish Intensive Intervention Projects, which, building on the effectiveness of Family Intervention Projects, will tackle the most persistently anti-social young people, offering non-negotiable support backed up by sanctions if their behaviour does not change.

- 2.6** For children with special educational needs (SEN) it is important that these needs are identified early and met, to prevent the child becoming disengaged from learning and, in some cases, displaying deteriorating behaviour. In the Children's Plan we announced over £12 million to improve the skills of the children's workforce, particularly new and serving teachers, in identifying and meeting the needs of children with SEN.
- 2.7** Essential for the success of these approaches is a robust integrated approach to information-sharing, assessment, referral for appropriate services, early intervention and the focusing of support around the needs of the child or young person under a lead professional. Directors of Children's Services in local authorities have been charged with drawing together local coalitions to deliver these outcomes
- within Children's Trusts. The Children's Plan set a goal for every Children's Trust to have in place by 2010 consistent high quality arrangements to provide assessment under the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and early intervention systems for all children and young people who need additional help<sup>5</sup>. As an important milestone towards that goal, the implementation of Targeted Youth Support arrangements in local authorities by December 2008 will see integrated services following these principles being targeted at young people.
- 2.8** Good children's services are critical, but adults' services also have a crucial role to play in determining children and young people's achievements and future life chances. As the influence of the family and parents is rarely neutral, the next phase of our efforts to improve outcomes for children and reduce youth

4 Youth Taskforce Action Plan, DCSF, March 2008 (<http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=DCSF-00262-2008&>)

5 The Children's Plan: Building Brighter Futures, DCSF, December 2007 (<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/childrensplan/>)

offending must recognise the role that adults' services can play and recognise the importance of addressing the problems that parents and families face. It is therefore critical that we continue to build on the progress made by the Every Child Matters reforms by strengthening the integration of adults' and children's services around the family. PSA 16 (Increase the proportion of socially excluded adults in settled accommodation and employment, education or training) is an important marker to our commitment.

- 2.9** Prolific and persistent young offenders are responsible for around half of all youth crime<sup>6</sup>. They typically exhibit a complexity of personal and family risk factors from early childhood. We know that early intervention for such children and their families is highly effective and therefore lies at the heart of our approach to tackling offending and re-offending by young people.
- 2.10** Families with the most complex and entrenched problems tend not to look for help themselves, and can sometimes be resistant to offers of support. As a result of this Action Plan, we will therefore set in motion a step-change in the delivery of early targeted support for young people and families, encouraging the delivery of services which focus on early intervention for families with children at greatest risk of becoming the high-rate offenders of the future.
- 2.11** To increase significantly the scale of preventative intervention and support for young people and families, this action plan will:

**2.12 Increase the reach of intensive family interventions** in every local authority during the next three years. We want all children to benefit from a supportive home environment, but we know that for some families multiple difficulties such as poverty, substance misuse, or offending can mean that children and young people don't get the support they need to stay on track. It is these families that will benefit from intensive family intervention. In developing new provision, we will build on the highly successful Family Intervention Projects which provide intensive support to families in the greatest difficulty, with non-negotiable elements if families refuse to engage. We will provide funding and expert practitioner support to local authorities to help them focus on a small number of families (on average 40 in each area) where a complexity of problems place the children and young people at greatest risk of going on to become future high-rate offenders. By 2010 we aim to have reached 20,000 families across the country.

6 Piquero et al (2007)



## FAMILY INTERVENTION PROJECTS

A recent evaluation found that the level of anti-social behaviour committed by families fell considerably following Family Intervention Projects. 61% of families had committed four or more types of anti-social behaviour beforehand, only 7% afterwards.

The Jones family consist of Mum and Dad and six children aged 9 months to 16. All the children were performing badly in school for their ages. The Housing Authority referred the family to the FIP after complaints from neighbours that the 12 and 15 year old sons were abusive – police were also aware of the boys' anti-social behaviour.

The FIP team identified poor parenting, poor diets and unsuitable sleeping arrangements, and then addressed these issues. As a result complaints from neighbours are fewer, the children have higher school attendance rates and the 12 year old son has an appointment with the GP to address his Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

**2.13 Ensure that all families with children most likely to become prolific offenders benefit from better targeting of existing services.** Over the next three years, we will be providing funding and expert practitioner support to every local authority and their partners to develop more effective ways of working between children's and adult services. These will build on the learning from 15 Family Pathfinders by ensuring that the needs of the whole family are identified, assessed and addressed. Stronger partnership working will ensure that parental risk factors (for example parents in custody, high-harm drug use) trigger assessment, and where necessary additional services to ensure that children and young people

stay on track. Our principle is 'Think Family' (see box). Our aim is to ensure that, by the end of the Comprehensive Spending Review period, as a result of our work with local partners all of the 110,000 high risk families who need it will benefit from better targeting of support and services in this way. A particular focus will be to ensure that we improve services to families with primary school aged children. Evidence suggests that it is at primary age when difficulties can begin to present themselves, but precisely then – between Sure Start for the early years and targeted youth support for teenagers – that universal interventions for families are few and far between.

## THINK FAMILY

### Think Family: Improving the life chances of families at risk

The Government's *Families At Risk Review* heard the clear message that excellent children's services and excellent adults' services are not enough in isolation to meet the needs of families at risk. Multiple disadvantage can have a compounding effect and family members can have a notable impact on one another. In order to break the cycles such as offending and to transform life chances, we must 'think family'. This means establishing services and systems that:

- **ensure no wrong door:** contact with any service offers an open door into a system of joined-up support;
- **look at the whole family:** services working with both adults and children take into account family circumstances and responsibilities;
- **build on family strengths:** practitioners work in partnership with families recognising and promoting resilience and helping them to build their capabilities; and
- **provide support tailored to need:** tailored and family-centred packages of support that knit together relevant interventions are offered to all families at risk.

**2.14 Make permanent exclusion from school an automatic trigger for a Common Assessment Framework (CAF)** to ensure that children and young people receive the help they need when they are excluded from mainstream education. Permanent exclusion from school for bad behaviour is a defining moment for youth crime prevention. For some of those excluded what happens next will either accelerate them along the path to entrenched criminality or allow them to reassess and reshape their futures. The CAF should underpin the development of a personalised education plan to ensure that children and young people moving to alternative provision receive the help they need when they are excluded, including meeting any special educational needs. Where behavioural or other difficulties can be identified earlier;

we would expect a CAF to be carried out and action taken to prevent exclusion. We will make this measure clear through guidance to schools later this year.

**2.15** Persistent absence can impact on pupils' attainment at school and life-chances beyond. In some cases persistent absence leads to an increased risk of harm for children and their potential involvement in criminal or anti-social behaviour. Poor attendance and persistent absence can be an indicator of wider issues that a pupil is facing and their need for support. The Children's Plan set for all local authorities the goal of 5% or fewer secondary school pupils who miss 20% of the school year by 2011. Police officers and Police Community Support Officers may, if authorised to do so by a chief

police officer, take excluded pupils who are in a public place during normal school hours, and children who they believe are out of school without lawful authority, to a designated place established by the local authority or to the school. This power is often used during school attendance and exclusions sweeps by local authorities, police services and other agencies.

**2.16** In addition, we want to ensure that schools have the powers and support they need to maintain good behaviour and to stop problems in the wider community, such as drugs and alcohol use, from entering the school grounds. We recognise that low level behavioural issues can be a forerunner to more serious problems and want to support schools to take preventive action early on to maintain good behaviour. In response to Sir Alan Steer's latest review of behaviour in schools, published on 14 July, we have decided to extend the powers we have already given schools on searching for knives and dangerous weapons to cover drugs, alcohol and other inappropriate items.

**2.17 Expand Safer Schools Partnerships** (SSPs) which have significant benefits, improving relationships between young people and the police, promoting school safety and reducing risks of crime and antisocial behaviour. In addition, **every school will have a named police contact.** We strongly encourage the foundation of more SSPs so that more young people can benefit. SSPs can make an important contribution to the role schools now formally have to improve pupil wellbeing. Because we think that SSPs should be the norm rather than the exception, we want every school that wants to, to be able to be part of an SSP, subject to local resources. Parents and schools will be able to trigger a review of whether an SSP would be appropriate for their school. Parents who want to see an SSP in their local school should be able to raise it with the school through, for example, the Parents Council.

## METROPOLITAN POLICE SERVICE SAFER SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

In the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) area, there are 370 Safer School Partnerships (SSPs) with secondary schools, which are supported by both police officers and PCSOs attached to Safer Neighbourhood Teams. A number of priority schools and Pupil Referral Units have the option of a dedicated officer working with them on a one-to-one basis.

All SSP officers receive intensive training, covering a range of subjects including officers' roles and responsibilities, typical offences, searching of pupils, school safety, truancy, partnership working, extended schools and Youth Offending Teams. All SSP officers will also receive the five-day Safer Neighbourhoods training package.

The MPS is piloting an expansion of its Volunteer Police Cadets scheme, which is a useful tool for engagement and diversionary activity. There are currently 1,100 cadets involved in 32 cadet units across the police force area.

Many primary schools are in contact with Safer Neighbourhood officers, with particularly good engagement through PCSOs. The MPS has also provided funding to the Community Safety Education Foundation to circulate the Junior Citizens handbook, which covers issues of personal safety, to all year 6 pupils in London. A Junior Citizens DVD is available to schools which are unable to participate in live events.

### 2.18 Increase the take up of parenting support

when a child is at risk of offending, or has offended. When a young person offends, the Youth Offending Team currently considers the need for a parenting intervention. At present, around 14% of parents of young offenders who have received a Final Warning or community sentence are supported through parenting interventions<sup>7</sup>. We want to expand this provision to ensure that all parents who would benefit from this support are offered it. This will include parents of young offenders on custodial sentences. Support will be provided through existing YOT provision and through the expanded and better

targeted provision for high risk families outlined above. Where a parent has been identified as needing support and has not taken it up voluntarily, YOTs will be expected to make this support non-negotiable by recommending a Parenting Order to the court and encouraging them to seek these orders for both the mother and father, if appropriate (even if the child does not live with both parents). In parallel, we will remind sentencers of the effectiveness of making Parenting Orders in these cases. This complements our intervention to increase the proportion of ASBOs accompanied by Parenting Orders.

<sup>7</sup> Youth Justice Annual Workload Data 2006/07, Youth Justice Board

**Invest in the capacity of the third sector to reduce youth crime.** The engagement and innovation of third sector organisations is crucial for reaching the most disaffected young people in local communities. Our 10 Year Youth Strategy<sup>8</sup> made available up to £100m funding and support through the Youth Sector Development Fund (YSDF), for successful

third sector youth organisations to expand their working with young people. Early pathfinder grants are already supporting organisations which include Fairbridge and Kids Company, who work with the most disadvantaged young people at risk of a life of crime, and Leap Confronting Conflict.

## LEAP CONFRONTING CONFLICT

### What's the real impact of Leap's confronting conflict programmes?

Anna's story – 'In January 2005 I was 17 years old and was homeless and penniless, life wasn't going to plan and was not treating me well at all. Taking my anger out on the world, I was ready to fight everyone if they so much as raised an eyebrow at me! Quarrel shop programme showed me ways of dealing with my anger... from getting so wound up and angry to managing my emotions. I passed the Course and gained my level 3 in conflict, mediation and facilitation! I became a volunteer peer trainer on the next Quarrel shop after I finished, I loved the work so much, it was so different seeing it from a trainer's point of view...

In January 2007, 2 years on, I became a paid Youth Development Worker for Leap, I earned a living doing what I love and helping young people going through what I went through. I wanted to help them make a difference in their lives and see that there are so many more ways to deal with the madness that life throws at them. Leap has seen me grow up and go through it all and has supported me right from the start, from being an angry young person ready to fight everyone, to a confident and able young woman who is ready to support others.

Now, in July 2008, my time as a Leap apprentice is finished. I have delivered workshops to over 600 young people. I have my own young family now and I still work for Leap when I can as a paid freelance trainer. With Leap's support, I've come a very long way.

**2.19** The first full wave of grants from the YSDF will have preventing youth crime and re-offending as a key thematic focus. An invitation to bid will be issued shortly.

Supporting families to prevent youth crime will also feature in new criteria being developed for the Children and Young People's Grant and Parenting Fund.

## REDUCING SUBSTANCE MISUSE

Drug use by young people aged 11-15 has fallen from 7% in 2003 to 4% in 2006. This has fallen more sharply for vulnerable young people from 21% in 2003 to 11% in 2006. Building on this success, the Government has recently renewed its efforts to reduce substance misuse by young people.

### Drug Strategy

In February 2008, the Government launched a new 10 year Drug Strategy, *Drugs: Protecting Families and Communities*. This continues to focus on young people and introduces families as a priority for the first time, demonstrating the Government's commitment to reducing the harm that children experience from either their own or a parent's misuse of substances.

Key actions of this strategy include:

- taking a long term view of prevention by intervening early with families at risk, improving treatment for parents with drug problems and protecting their children;
- improving drugs education and strengthen the role of schools and children's services in identifying problems and intervening early; and
- integrating substance misuse issues within mainstream children's services and targeted youth support, improving access to positive activities and ensuring effective specialist treatment for under 18s.

Our commitment is demonstrated by our intention to re-classify cannabis as a Class B substance.

## REDUCING SUBSTANCE MISUSE *(continued)*

### Youth Alcohol Action Plan<sup>9</sup>

The recently published Youth Alcohol Action Plan outlines our aim to fundamentally influence young people's behaviour and attitudes towards alcohol.

This Plan balances the need to educate and inform with firm action to tackle unsupervised drinking by young people in public and secure higher standards from the industry.

New measures include:

- new police powers to disperse under-18s who are drinking in public;
- making it an offence for under-18s to possess alcohol persistently in public places through a scaled approach including confiscation, notification to parents, ABCs, Parenting Contracts and Orders, ASBOs and finally prosecution;
- extending alcohol arrest-referral pilots so that under-18s arrested for alcohol-related offences may benefit from a brief intervention from a trained worker;
- prompt roll-out of 'Challenge 21' scheme;
- asking the Chief Medical Officer to develop guidelines on young people and alcohol – including when parents might best introduce children to alcohol;
- completing a review of alcohol education in schools to improve the information young people receive and increase involvement of external agencies; and
- implementing a marketing campaign (£12.5m over three years) aimed at young people later this year on the harms of drinking.

Building on these measures, in the longer term, we will:

**2.20 Transform the quality of education provided to young people through Pupil Referral Units** and drive up the quality of other alternative provision, ensuring that local authorities in their commissioning of services look to a range of new providers. These improvements are vital because children who are disengaged from school for whatever reason, but particularly those excluded

from school because of their behaviour, all too often receive education of a poorer quality, further damaging their prospects in later life.

**2.21 We will expand Family Nurse Partnerships to support vulnerable families in the early years.** The Family Nurse Partnership offers intensive home visiting for vulnerable first time parents, from early pregnancy until their child is two. The nurses build close, supportive relationships with families and guide them

<sup>9</sup> Youth Alcohol Action Plan, DCSF, June 2008 ([www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications/youthalcohol/](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications/youthalcohol/))

to adopt healthier lifestyles for themselves and their babies, to provide good care for their babies and to plan their future life goals. We know that in the US, Family Nurse Partnerships have been shown to reduce arrests in both mothers and their children by 50%<sup>10</sup>. We are currently piloting Family Nurse Partnerships across ten sites in the UK, with plans to test in a further twenty by 2009. We want to use these pilots to demonstrate the benefits of Family Nurse Partnerships including the prevention of crime and anti-social behaviour, and over the longer-term to increase coverage of this key service to first time mothers where there is a risk of a child offending in later childhood. Research suggests that the risks are greater for families where a parent is in prison; parents misuse drugs or alcohol; or there is evidence of domestic violence. We will set out in more detail our plans to expand Family Nurse Partnerships later this year through the children's health strategy.

**2.22 Explore better ways to engage parents in the Youth Justice System.** We are interested in views on how we can increase the engagement of parents with children in the youth justice system, including requiring them to take more responsibility for their children. This could include giving parents a legal responsibility for their child completing a sentence (akin to their current duty to ensure their child goes to school) and issuing parents with a court summons when their child appears in court.

## Consultation Questions

- Building on what we have set out here, what are the most effective ways for local agencies to increase further their focus on prevention and early intervention?
- How can government ensure that parents are engaged when their children are in court and are completing sentences? Should measures of compulsion be used and what should these measures be?

## What the public will see

*Problems tackled before they spiral out of control including:*

- Children and young people at risk of offending identified and helped as early as possible;
- Focused action to target problems experienced by the most vulnerable families;
- Parents receiving the support they need to tackle their child's offending behaviour;
- Parents taking more responsibility for their children, particularly within the Criminal Justice System.

## What it will mean for practitioners

- A greater focus on youth crime prevention within the broader context of Every Child Matters.
- Stronger links and better information sharing between services, so that the needs of the whole family are taken into account.
- An increased focus on prevention and early intervention before problems spiral out of control, with much earlier support to parents.

<sup>10</sup> Olds DL et al (1997), Long-term Effects of Home Visitation on Maternal Life Course and Child Abuse and Neglect: Fifteen-year follow-up of a randomized trial. *Journal of the American Medical Association* 278, 637–643







## CHAPTER 3: SUPPORTING YOUNG VICTIMS

Young people are more likely to be victims of crime than adults but are less likely to report crime to the police. To improve this situation we will:

- Pilot innovative ways to support young victims and ensure good practice is taken forward from these pilots
- Improve support for witnesses to attend court
- Provide young people with better information on dangers and risks
- Be responsive and accountable to young people as well as the wider community
- Work with partners to develop innovative design solutions to help prevent youth victimisation

**3.1** Youth crime can have devastating consequences for victims and their families. In recent years the Government has improved significantly the services for all victims of crime:

- giving them statutory rights to information through the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime<sup>1</sup>;
- improving how their voice is heard in the system through innovations such as the Victims Personal Statement; and
- enhancing support including increasing spending on Victim Support from £11.7m in 1997 to £37m today.

We are committed to improving the safety of children and young people and the cross-government 'Staying Safe Action Plan' published in February 2008 supports this.

**3.2** We know that young people are more likely to be victims of crime than adults and that they are overwhelmingly likely to be victims of other young people<sup>2</sup>. However, young people tell us that they are often too afraid to come forward to report criminal activity. It is vital that we support young victims, taking back

control from the minority and ensuring they receive the very best support from the police and other bodies.

**3.3** We have already introduced measures to help young victims:

- the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime sets out services victims can expect from the Criminal Justice System. Victims under 17 are automatically considered to be vulnerable and therefore entitled to an enhanced service;
- embedding restorative justice in the Youth Justice System. When dealing with young offenders, Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) will consider whether restorative justice is a suitable approach to use with victims in appropriate cases;
- supporting young witnesses, including special measures in courts to help young witnesses to give their best evidence;
- announcing our plans to extend the British Crime Survey (BCS) to include young people to provide national data on how well we are preventing victimisation and supporting young victims of crime; and

<sup>1</sup> [cjsonline.gov.uk/downloads/application/pdf/Victims%20Code%20of%20Practice.pdf](https://www.cjsonline.gov.uk/downloads/application/pdf/Victims%20Code%20of%20Practice.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> 89% of assaults with injury on 10-15s were perpetrated by young people aged 15 or under. OCSJ 2005

- preventing and tackling school bullying, including cyberbullying and working with the Anti-Bullying Alliance to embed effective practice in schools.

**3.4** Local agencies already have an obligation under the Every Child Matters agenda to keep young people safe, healthy and able to make a positive contribution. When young people become victims these outcomes are compromised and made worse if they do not receive the support they need. The extension of the BCS to under-16s and the new national objective to reduce the numbers of young victims of crime will focus attention on this issue. There also needs to be a more united approach between local authorities,

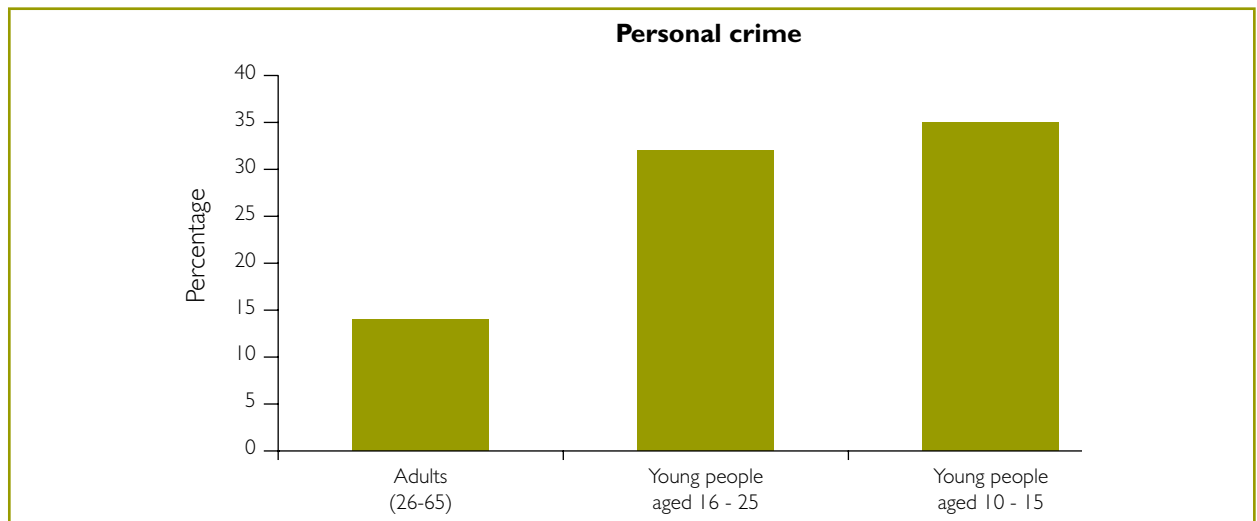
criminal justice agencies and the third sector to agree a local understanding of how they can work together better to meet the needs of young victims.

**3.5 For young victims of crime** our ambition is that they:

- feel safer;
- understand what crime is, and that it is not acceptable and not just part of growing up;
- know how to get help if they need it;
- do not turn to crime in response to being a victim; and
- have a voice locally to influence decisions that affect them.

**Figure 3**

Young people are more likely to be victims of crime<sup>3</sup>.....



...But are less likely to report to the police<sup>4</sup>

The British Crime Survey (BCS) 2006/07 shows that 35% thefts from adults were reported to the police while the Offending Crime and Justice Survey (OCJS) 2005 shows that only 4% of thefts from young people had come to the attention of the police

<sup>3</sup> The OCJS 2003 included adults and children, enabling a comparison to be made. The 2006 OCJS show that 30% of 10-15s and 24% of 16-25s were victims of personal crime.

<sup>4</sup> Although not directly comparable, figures from the BCS 2006/07 show that just over a third (35%) of incidents of theft from the person experienced by adults aged 16 and over had been reported to the police in the past 12 months while according to figures from the OCJS 2005, only four per cent of incidents of theft from the person experienced by young people aged 10 to 15 had come to the attention of the police.

## WORKING WITH THE POLICE

The Government, Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and the Association of Police Authorities (APA) are all committed to engaging young people through partnership and consultation, recognising it is an essential part of understanding our communities and involving them more in fighting crime. Working together will deliver more effective responses to the issues of youth crime and subsequently improve relationships and public perceptions.

We encourage all aspects of youth engagement and encourage all police authorities and forces to make every effort to consult with and work in partnership with young people, both through adapting existing examples of good practice and developing new ones. We recognise that approaches will differ according to local circumstances and support partnerships between the police and other agencies where there is a coordinated approach to engaging and involving young people.

ACPO is working with the UK Youth Parliament to convene a series of nine regional conferences in summer and autumn 2008 to provide safe spaces for young people from all backgrounds to come together to discuss extremism and terrorism. This will enable young people to influence local police work in their areas and provide an opportunity for them to feed into Government policy in this area.

The Government, ACPO and the APA will support police authorities and forces to continue to develop and spread good practice and will monitor the extent of any engagement.

Our immediate measures will be to:

**3.6 Test innovative ways of supporting young victims** by building our knowledge of how best to deliver services for young victims of crime. We will commission four local projects in areas where agencies are already providing some services and build on these to test how the statutory and third sector can provide a more complete service to victims of crime, meeting all parts of our national ambition.

**3.7** These pilot areas will articulate the outcomes and learning from their projects in the form of a public pledge which will set out how that area will meet our national ambition. The best practice identified from these sites will help other areas develop their own local models.

**3.8 Improve support for young witnesses** by issuing good practice guidance on how to develop services to support them before they attend court, which will contribute to reducing the number of ineffective trials.

### 3.9 Provide young people and parents with information about dangers and risks

so that they can protect themselves from crime and feel safer. The Government, in partnership with young people, has developed a hard-hitting education campaign on the risks of carrying knives including a Bebo page and YouTube advert. In addition, we want all schools to be able to access support and advice from their local police forces specifically to tackle the dangers and risks associated with knife crime. We will support parents who are concerned about their children carrying knives by encouraging them to call a helpline such as 'Parentline Plus' to get confidential advice.



### 3.10 Be responsive and accountable to young people and the wider community

to ensure they are involved in tackling youth crime and decisions that affect them, and to improve the relationship between young people and the police. To help tackle knife crime, youth forums will be set up to enable young people to engage with local police and policy makers.

#### 3.11 To further strengthen existing arrangements to engage communities and young people we will:

- make it clear in the Policing Green Paper that neighbourhood policing teams should always include young people in their consultations about policing priorities and also make every effort to engage hard to reach groups;
- support YOTs and Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) to engage with young people by sharing good practice and piloting ways that a young person might work with a CDRP;
- support Local Criminal Justice Boards (LCJBs) to engage with young people such as recent funding for a junior LCJB to advise the main board on issues affecting young people's confidence; and
- use the Youth Taskforce to identify and spread good practice to all agencies and boards and monitor the extent to which they are engaging with young people.

## POLICE ENGAGEMENT WITH YOUNG PEOPLE IN NORFOLK

In Norfolk, young people and police community support officers (PCSOs) have taken part in training projects designed to give the two groups a better understanding of each other and build relationships between them. During the training, young people ran sessions to help the PCSOs understand more about life as a young person.

When the PCSOs and young people reversed roles during role plays a significant change took place. It was this process which made young people appreciate the difficulties and complexities of being a PCSO.

Before the session young people were sceptical of the police with 70% saying that the police didn't understand the things that matter to young people. However, after the training many had positive comments about PCSOs saying that 'most' understood young people. They were also less worried about crime in their area by the end of the day.

PCSOs also reported that the sessions gave them more confidence when dealing with young people, and that their attitude towards young people was more positive.

Building on these measures, in the longer term we will:

**3.12 Ensure all local areas take forward good practice** emerging from young victim support pilots. All areas will be expected to pledge publicly how they will take forward the good practice. We will support areas making pledges through the Youth Taskforce.

**3.13 Continue to provide information to young people and parents** that clearly sets out the risks involved in crime, and which provides advice on staying safe and avoiding dangerous situations. For example, the Parent Know-How programme will provide information and advice to support parents in their role, including information on child safety. We will explore how to build on social and emotional aspects of learning to help prevent young people becoming victims.

**3.14** We will distribute a new interactive online resource called "Your Justice Your World" through the Citizenship curriculum enabling young people to learn about law and justice and to explore the role of the police, criminal justice system and consequences of crime.

**3.15 Work with stakeholders to use innovative design solutions** to help prevent young people becoming victims of crime. A Design and Technology Alliance of key independent experts will focus on this. It will work with young people to help identify ways in which design can prevent children from becoming victims of theft and bullying while at or on the way to and from school, looking at innovative solutions such as designing mobile phones so they can be more effectively blocked if they are stolen.

### What the public will see

*Better support for young victims including:*

- better relationships between young people and the police so that young people are more likely to report crimes and provide information to solve them;
- clear information for young people on how to get help if they are victim of crime; and
- more effective practices to help young victims and ensure they get support if they need it.

### What it will mean for practitioners

- a clearer message on the support we are offering young victims of crime and what we expect local areas to provide;
- an opportunity within pilot areas to contribute to the design of a model of delivering services to young victims that meets their individual needs; and
- greater support to establish local models of support for young victims of crime through good practice guidance and support from the Youth Taskforce.









## CHAPTER 4: SENTENCING AND CUSTODY

Sentences must protect the public whilst tackling the underlying causes of offending. To ensure this we will:

- Give the public a chance to identify what reparation work they want young people on community sentences to carry out
- Promote alternatives to custody including continuing the pilots of intensive fostering
- Ensure young people have things to do when they are likely to offend and that young offenders carry out reparation during their leisure time
- Increase feedback between the courts and Youth Offending Teams
- Commit to a set of principles for the use of custody
- Pilot court reviews of high-risk young offenders on community sentences
- Explore how to enhance best practice in the delivery of Youth Offending Team programmes

**4.1** When young people are found guilty of crime, they should receive a sentence which protects the public and punishes the offender but which also tackles their offending with the aim of preventing them doing it again. The public are entitled to expect that young people who are dangerous or commit serious offences should go into custody. So should the small number of those who offend persistently and have not responded to community penalties. But for the small number of young people who do end up in custody we must ensure that what happens to them during their sentence reduces the chances of them committing another crime when they come out.

**4.2** A key principle of sentencing is that no young person should be sent into custody unless the court is able to specify why dealing with him or her within the community is not appropriate. Most

young offenders can be punished and dealt with effectively in the community. We therefore need to be sure that magistrates and the public are confident that non-custodial sentences will address offending behaviour and protect the public. At the moment this is not always the case. Research has found that magistrates in high custody areas are less satisfied by the quality of local services to support community sentences, than magistrates in low custody areas<sup>1</sup>. We are, therefore, working hard to build confidence in the delivery of community sentences.

**4.3** In addition, we must tackle perceptions that the youth justice system is too lenient<sup>2</sup>. When members of the public are given the full facts of a case and asked to choose their own sentence, they tend to be less severe than sentencers<sup>3</sup>. This suggests that improved information to communities on what happens to young

<sup>1</sup> 2002; Patterns of Sentencing, Differential sentencing across England and Wales; NACRO/YJB

<sup>2</sup> 2004; Youth crime and youth justice; Public opinion in England and Wales; Mike House and Julian V Roberts

<sup>3</sup> Roberts J and Hough M (2005) 'Sentencing young offenders: public opinion in England and Wales' in Criminal Justice 5 (3), 211-232

people in the justice system could improve their confidence. In particular, the public should be able to see how young offenders are repaying the community for the consequences of their actions.

**4.4** The Government has already introduced a range of new and innovative community penalties to address offending behaviour and meet the needs of the young offender including:

- the Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme and the increased use of curfews and electronic tagging;
- pilots of Intensive Fostering, to offer serious and prolific offenders intensive support to stop them from re-offending, based on a successful programme in the USA;
- extending the use of restorative justice (which brings together victims and offenders) as part of a range of community orders; and
- the Youth Restorative Disposal which is being piloted in 8 areas of England and Wales.

**4.5** For children who have to go to custody, significant improvements have been made over the past few years to the juvenile secure estate. The YJB, which has responsibility for children in the secure estate has:

- provided more accommodation in the South East for boys aged 15-17; and
- built a new unit for more vulnerable 15-16 year olds boys at Wetherby Young Offenders Institution (YOI) which is due to open in October to ensure they receive the specific support they need.

- announced plans for a new YOI at Glen Parva in Leicestershire which will increase provision in the Midlands and enable young people to be accommodated in smaller living units.

**4.6** Building on progress already made, we want to take further steps to tackle youth crime by strengthening community involvement in the delivery of justice to young offenders, promoting alternatives to custody and ensuring young people are kept occupied when there is a risk of offending.

**4.7 We will give the public the chance to identify what reparation work they would like young people on community sentences to carry out** and tell the community when this has taken place, so they can see that something challenging and constructive has been achieved.

**4.8** The Probation Service has had some success in increasing the visibility of community sentences for over-16s, through 'Community Payback'. Under this programme, local communities are asked to propose unpaid work projects for offenders, which can benefit the community in which the offence was committed. We want to extend this approach to young people, including through the new citizens' panels, set up to identify projects for offenders to undertake. We also want to publicise other forms of community punishment, so that local people have more opportunity to see that action is being taken to tackle youth offending. This will require Youth Offending Teams to work in partnership with other criminal justice agencies, in particular Neighbourhood Policing Teams, to establish co-ordinated

and meaningful community engagement. This approach links closely to the steps announced by the Government in response to the Casey Report.

**4.9 Improve the use of reparation.** We recognise the value of reparation in tackling youth offending and the positive outcomes that can result from making young offenders face up to the consequences of their criminal behaviour. This is shown in the effectiveness of the Referral Order which requires young offenders to attend a Youth Offender Panel of community volunteers, to answer for their actions and make amends to their victims. The Referral Order has the lowest reconviction rate of any juvenile community sentence at 44.7%.

**4.10** We will build on this success in preventing re-offending by introducing the measures in

the Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008 that will allow greater use of the Referral Order. In addition the Act will establish a sentencing structure firmly based on reparation. This will provide a clear steer to the courts and YOTs that reparation should be a fundamental part of any community sentence for a young offender.

**4.11 Strengthen alternatives to custody by providing additional funding to continue the pilots of intensive fostering.** These provide a specialised, highly intensive and structured programme with trained foster carers backed up by a team of professionals. This option is for serious and persistent young offenders whose home environment directly contributes to their offending behaviour and who might otherwise face custody.

## INTENSIVE FOSTERING

Intensive Fostering can be offered to children on remand, as an alternative to a custodial sentence, or as part of resettlement after custody. The young person joins a foster family and simultaneously undergoes an intensive behaviour modification programme. The aim is to ensure a smooth return back to his or her original family circumstances.

Becky's mother complained of not being able to control her daughter. Becky, 14, had rebelled against her mother's alcoholic new partner by mixing with delinquent friends and taking drugs. She committed a street robbery and ended up in court. Mother and daughter told the court they couldn't live together and Becky was placed with a foster carer across town.

Her foster parents restricted Becky's access to her mobile phone and did not allow her to go out unsupervised. At the same time, she received training from an individual therapist and Becky's mother received parenting support. Becky's behaviour gradually improved and she began to receive more privileges including visits to her mother at weekends. After 6 months Becky returned home where she continued to receive specialist follow-up.

**4.12 Make young offenders feel the consequences of their actions by expanding reparation during their leisure time, including on Friday and Saturday nights.** It is right that young offenders should carry out court sentences during their leisure time so that they feel the impact of their sentence. This also helps keep young offenders occupied when crime or anti-social behaviour is likely to occur. Many YOTs already require young offenders to attend programmes at evenings and weekends and we want to extend this good practice. In particular we expect YOTs to increase the provision of reparative and rehabilitative sessions at these times, including Friday and Saturday nights. Advice and support will be available to local areas to help them configure provision to meet this aim.

**4.13** In addition, to respond to the needs of the law-abiding majority, we will work to **ensure that more youth centres stay open late at weekends and evenings, particularly on Fridays and Saturdays when young people say they need access the most.** We are investing significantly to improve the quality of youth facilities over the next three years. In addition to ongoing and increased investment through the Youth Capital Fund, *myplace*, which was launched on 3rd April 2008, will deliver £190m of government capital investment over the next 3 years to deliver world class youth facilities. *myplace* is being delivered by the Big Lottery Fund on behalf of DCSF and will only fund projects that demonstrate evidence of participation by young people in the development, design and future running of the project – including decisions about

opening hours. Guidance to bidders makes clear that all projects will need to be open at times that suit young people for example on Friday and Saturday nights and at weekends.

**4.14 Increase feedback between the courts and the Youth Offending Teams.** Magistrates and District Judges have told us they would value greater information on the outcomes from youth sentences. We are working with the YJB to develop and trial methods for information sharing between sentencers, YOTs and Youth Offender Panels about Referral Orders. We will also explore providing feedback on outcomes from other sentences.

**4.15** More widely, we will promote measures to strengthen local relationships between youth court magistrates, prosecutors, legal advisers and YOTs, to share feedback, particularly regarding engagement with young people.

**4.16** Building on these measures, we will implement the new **Youth Rehabilitation Order (YRO)** from Autumn 2009. This will replace nine existing sentences, building on their best elements and making the sentencing framework clearer and more coherent. Based on the young offender's assessed needs and risk, courts will be able to add different requirements to an Order, with which the offender must comply. The available requirements for a young offender include:

- undertaking reparation and restoration to their victims;
- undertaking constructive activities;
- undertaking unpaid work (if aged 16 or 17);

- attending education;
- going to an attendance centre on a Saturday to do group work;
- undertaking treatment for drug or substance abuse;
- undertaking treatment for mental health issues;
- being subject to a curfew which is electronically monitored;
- banning them from taking part in specified activities; and
- requiring them to reside in accommodation specified by a local authority.

**4.17** In addition, as a direct alternative to custody, the court can impose a YRO with fostering in the intensive fostering pilot areas, or a YRO with intensive supervision and surveillance. Intensive supervision and surveillance provides a high intensity programme of activities and supervision for the young offender starting at 25 hours a week for the first 3 months supported by an electronically monitored curfew.

**4.18** Pilot the new **Youth Conditional Caution (YCC)** from April 2009 for 16-17 year olds to reduce the number of young people being taken to court for relatively low-level offences whilst providing a robust response to their offending. The YCC can include a requirement for the young offender to make amends to their victims, and a role for the local community.

**4.19** Explore with the judiciary and magistrates how far their use of **discretion to remove reporting restrictions** for convicted 16 and 17 year olds can be encouraged, to improve the transparency

of the youth justice system.

**4.20** Pilot **court reviews of high-risk young offenders** on community sentences. High-risk young offenders on the Youth Rehabilitation Order will be brought back before the court at intervals during the sentence to make sure they are carrying out the order as directed and to encourage them to fulfil the requirements of their sentence. This will increase feedback to sentencers, building their confidence in alternatives to custody. It will also strengthen monitoring of young offenders on community sentences, which may increase compliance and reduce re-offending.

**4.21** **Explore how to enhance best practice in the delivery of Youth Offending Team programmes.** The YJB has a statutory duty to disseminate effective practice. There is an increasing volume of research into what is most effective and promising in reducing offending and the YJB has recently published guidance for YOTs based on the latest and most robust available evidence, to help local areas deliver evidence-based interventions. This guidance allows YOTs to deliver programmes according to local need, giving flexibility for innovation while describing the features of the most effective programmes. However, outcomes could be improved further through enhanced sharing of best practice and more evaluation of programmes to give YOTs further practical examples to draw on. We would welcome views on steps that could be taken to achieve this.

**4.22** In this chapter we have set out measures which will both increase the effectiveness

of non-custodial options and give the public confidence in their impact on young offenders. In the next chapter we set out how we will break the cycle of offending for young people in custody, especially by improving education provision and resettlement services for young offenders. Taken together these proposals confirm what young people and the public more generally should expect about the use of custody. We set out for the first time the principles on which current and future development of custodial provision should be assessed. These are:

- custody is for serious, violent and persistent offenders;
- custody will be used when other interventions would not adequately protect the public from harm or where they have not worked;
- young people will as far as possible be accommodated in small living-units (which may form part of a larger establishment);
- promoting the positive development of young people in custody and ensuring that their local authority is involved. In particular, we will address under-achievement in education and the development of relevant skills and qualifications;
- we will also prepare young people for their return to the community from the very beginning of their sentence;
- we will promote the well-being of young people in custody, keeping them safe and protecting them from harm;
- young people should be supervised and cared for by staff who are committed to working with under-18s and who are properly trained for that role; and
- to promote family links and a stable environment for young people in custody, we will seek to avoid unnecessary transfers between establishments.

### Consultation Question

What is the best mechanism for enhancing good practice in the delivery of evidence-based interventions by YOTs?

### What the public will see

*More sentences that people can see and have a say in and that deal with the causes of offending including:*

- more young offenders facing up to the consequences of their crime and making amends;
- offenders undertaking work and reparative activities which the community has a say in;
- reduced re-offending through more tailored sentencing; and
- serious young offenders receiving the intensive support they need to stop offending.

### What it will mean for practitioners

- agencies working together to increase community engagement in the response to youth offending;
- greater emphasis on reparative work with young offenders which makes a real difference to local people;
- enhanced relationships between criminal justice agencies working with young people; and
- greater flexibility to tailor interventions to respond to the risks and needs of young offenders.







## CHAPTER 5: BREAKING THE CYCLE OF OFFENDING

Many young offenders do not re-offend because they fear more serious consequences and sufficient alternatives to crime. However, a small number of offenders require more support to ensure they do not offend. To help them we will:

- Improve education and training for young offenders by giving local authorities a statutory duty to fund and commission education services
- Reinforce the role of Children's Services in overseeing resettlement provision
- Develop a more comprehensive package of support for young people leaving custody backed, in the future, through legislation
- Expand Resettlement and Aftercare Provision

**5.1** Children who commit minor offences often stop offending because they fear more serious consequences and they have sufficient support from their parents, peers and mainstream services (such as their school) to find alternatives to offending. However, young offenders further into the criminal justice system find it harder to stop offending<sup>1</sup>. They are frequently well known to local services through instability at home or in education and have needs that have not been met earlier. By the time these children receive community or even custodial sentences, they tend to be disengaged from mainstream services and lack positive links to their communities, resulting in high rates of re-offending.

**5.2** The social context of these young people needs to change if they are not to re-offend. We must ensure that their underlying problems and needs are tackled through a joint approach between mainstream Children's Services and those working in the youth justice system. We must ensure that children in the youth

justice system achieve the five Every Child Matters outcomes<sup>2</sup> in the same way as any other child.

**5.3** We have already made significant progress in improving outcomes for young offenders including:

- improving the amount and range of education and training for young people in custody;
- introducing a case-based approach to rehabilitation to make the management of offenders more efficient;
- offering personalised support to young offenders through models such as Resettlement and Aftercare Provision; and
- Targeted Youth Support arrangements provide a local mechanism for different services to identify and assess children at risk and to agree how their needs should be addressed. These arrangements are also important when considering the ongoing support needed as children leave the youth justice system.

<sup>1</sup> MORI Youth Offending Survey 2004; Graham and Bowling (1999) Young People and Crime; Barry (2007) Youth Offending in Transition

<sup>2</sup> Section 10 (2) of the Children Act 2004

- 5.4** But we know there is more that can be done. Education and training can play a critical role in effective resettlement for young offenders, and in reducing re-offending<sup>3</sup>. Yet many young offenders have disengaged from learning and struggle to progress and achieve<sup>4</sup>. In addition, a criminal conviction limits opportunities for stable employment and earning potential.
- 5.5** Also important to reducing re-offending is a stable lifestyle, especially having strong family support and suitable housing and ensuring health needs (including mental health or substance misuse problems) are addressed. A significant proportion of children leaving custody do not have anywhere suitable to live on release and many have wider family, health and personal needs.
- 5.6** The Children's Plan said we would explore how to improve the continuity of care when a child leaves the youth justice system, through a Green Paper<sup>5</sup>. We have used instead this Action Plan to set out our proposals to develop a long term package of reforms, because of the significant overlaps with other wider issues covered within this plan. This chapter sets out proposals to develop a comprehensive, long term package of reforms including:
- 5.7 Improve education and training for young offenders** to ensure that they receive education and training which is consistent, tailored to meet their personal needs and underpinned by high quality teaching. We will do this through:
- placing new duties on local authorities to fund and commission education and training in juvenile custody. This will mean that for the first time, young offenders in custody will be brought under the education legislative regime. We will set out further detail on how this new funding and delivery model will operate, and timescales for implementation within our response to the consultation on the White Paper, *Raising Expectations: Enabling the System to Deliver*, to be published later this year;
  - developing new performance management arrangements to reflect the new roles of local authorities and partner agencies, which place greater focus on young offenders' progression and achievement in education and training. This will be developed in the light of the wider local performance framework for local authorities and their partners;
  - considering how we best meet young offenders' Special Educational Needs as part of the new funding and delivery model. It will be important that arrangements are clear on how needs identified during custody will continue to be addressed after release. Plans should be developed in the context of the evidence and recommendations from the Bercow Review of provision for speech, language and communication needs, and Sir Jim Rose's recommendations on the identification and teaching of children with dyslexia;

3 Young people and offending: Education, youth justice and social inclusion, Martin Stephenson 2007 and MORI Youth Survey (2004)

4 Barriers to engagement in education, training and employment, YJB 2006

5 The Children's Plan 2007

- developing a National Delivery Framework for education and training in juvenile custody which sets out roles and responsibilities and a core curriculum which is aligned to the 14-19 curriculum reforms whilst also meeting the diverse needs of young offenders. Local authorities, custodial establishments, learning providers and other local partners will be required to develop local agreements for how this will be implemented;
- developing guidance for local authorities and partners setting out requirements for young offenders' education in custody and the community. It will include guidance on working within existing local authority area partnership arrangements with wider services and partners, including custody operators and learning providers; and
- developing and implementing a quality improvement strategy for education in juvenile custody, which is based on arrangements for quality improvement in the mainstream education sector.

**5.8 Ensure access to health services for all young offenders.** It is clear that access to appropriate healthcare provision is key to supporting young people at risk of offending or reoffending. The Department of Health intends to publish a Young Offenders Health Care Strategy shortly which will set out in detail their plans for improving the quality of provision and the accessibility to it.

**5.9** Effective early intervention on mental health issues can help prevent both offending and re-offending. The

independent Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) review is looking at the accessibility and quality of mental health services for vulnerable groups including those at risk of becoming young offenders and those within the youth justice system. The review will publish an interim report in the summer and a final report in the autumn, making recommendations to Government about how the needs of vulnerable young people can better be met.

**5.10 Reinforcing the role of Children's Services in overseeing resettlement provision** as part of their ongoing responsibility for assessing and meeting all children's needs. This should include ensuring adequate plans are in place prior to young people's release from custody. It should also include having a nominated senior officer in every local authority to ensure there is continuity of provision through Targeted Youth Support and mainstream services.

**5.11 Consulting on a more comprehensive package of support for children leaving custody.** The key elements should include:

- identifying a lead professional to take responsibility for each child during and after their sentence;
- conducting ongoing assessments of a young person's risk of re-offending and of their underlying needs – including family factors – to shape the provision they receive;
- developing a 'pathway plan' that is reviewed regularly and sets out all aspects of provision that will be made

during the sentence, for immediate resettlement and their longer term success. This could be similar to the care plan for looked after children, with the child's views contributing to shaping provision. This would also include a Personal Education Plan which sets out a young person's short and long term learning and employment goals. It will also help foster improved information sharing and planning. This will mean that young people receive consistent education and training based on their personal needs and aspirations, resulting in better outcomes; and

- providing more intensive support immediately following release from custody and at other key points of their lives (such as leaving school), through the use of mentoring.

**5.12** We welcome views on the key elements of this package, how this could best be delivered and how long any support should last for. Subject to views from this consultation, and future decisions on resourcing, it is the Government's ambition to underpin such a package through legislation.

**5.13** Alongside this, we will **explore ways to expand existing resettlement provision for young people leaving custody**. The evaluation of the current Resettlement and Aftercare Provision is due in the summer and, responding to specific lessons from the evaluation, we will extend the programme to provide more intensive, specialist support for the immediate period following custody. We have made available £6 million to ensure the expansion of the programme and welcome views on how this programme

might fit with a longer-term package of support set out above.

**5.14 Exploring with employers how to improve the employability of young people with criminal records.** While employers must have the confidence in the qualities of people they employ, we intend to work with employer organisations on the approaches they take to employing young people with a criminal record in order to further improve longer-term resettlement.

**5.15 Ensure suitable accommodation for all young offenders leaving custody.** Local authorities already have responsibility to ensure accommodation for children in need under sections 17 and 20 Children's Act 1989. The recent good practice guidance<sup>6</sup> sets out how Children's Services and housing services should work together to ensure suitable accommodation is in place for all 16 and 17 year olds. We will build on this by:

- ensuring that all assessments of children in custody consider the family need and the support required to enable the child to return to their family on release;
- consulting on the best way to promote housing authority representation on the Youth Offending Team (YOT) management board and provide clear guidance on their role to improve young offenders' access to accommodation; and
- preventing youth homelessness by improving support for children living with their families and the assessment, support and accommodation offer for 16 and 17 year olds who cannot live at home.

6 "Joint working between Housing and Children's Services: Preventing homelessness and tackling its effects on children and young people." <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/goodpracticeguide>

### 5.16 Ensure financial support is available for those who need it.

We have already put in place new arrangements so that young people can apply for Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) before they leave custody. This allows them to receive the maximum £30 EMA weekly payment once they leave custody incentivising them to enrol on a valid learning programme. The Learning and Skills Council is continuing to work with YOTs and the secure estate to provide training so that they are familiar with the process and can support young people with their EMA application.

### 5.17 Further measures to support offenders after their sentence.

There are further steps that we think local authorities, the secure estate and wider partners should consider to improve resettlement which include:

- use of Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL): prisoners may be released temporarily on licence under the provisions of Prison Rule 9 and YOI Rule 5 for resettlement purposes. Greater use of ROTL could assist in the realisation of resettlement plans, such as helping a young person to attend college interviews, family meetings or accommodation interviews, subject to him or her meeting the eligibility criteria and passing the risk assessment;
- considering the timing of a release from custody. Release on a Friday sometimes means a significant window without access to support. It is possible to avoid this by using ROTL so that

the young person spends the last day or two on temporary release in the home environment at a time when support services are more widely available. Each case must be considered on the individual circumstances and establishments must ensure that all the usual pre-release discharge arrangements are in place before temporary release is granted; and

- making suitable arrangements for release by for example ensuring that an appropriate adult meets the young person on release.

### 5.18 Many of these proposals will be better delivered where local authorities work together. We will invite the Youth Justice Board to:

- develop a pilot which establishes a regional or sub-regional consortium to provide co-ordinated resettlement solutions for local authorities in a single area. This can potentially foster greater links between the secure estate and local authorities, ensure the development of consistent approaches and make the best use of resources.

### Consultation Questions

- Should there be a requirement for local authorities to have a senior official responsible for overseeing resettlement and what should this role cover?
- What should the key elements of a package of support for children leaving custody include? How can this best be delivered and how long should the support last for?

- Should housing authorities be represented on YOT Management Boards?
- What measures could be taken to improve the employability of young people with criminal records?

### **What the public will see**

- better services for children leaving custody including ongoing education and training resulting in a reduction in re-offending;
- a named person with responsibility for overseeing provision for young people leaving custody and taking responsibility for ensuring their needs are assessed and addressed; and
- higher quality education and training for ex-offenders meaning they are better able to access employment and less likely to be drawn back into crime.

### **What it will mean for practitioners**

- a clearer expectation on how children leaving custody should be supported and by whom and how support should continue past the end of the sentence;
- agreements locally on how children in the Youth Justice System should be supported when their sentence has finished to ensure they receive ongoing support where needed; and
- children in the Youth Justice System receiving education of a comparable standard to other children.









## CHAPTER 6: MAKING IT HAPPEN

All services and local agencies need to work together to reduce youth crime. To support this we will strengthen the response to youth crime at a local level, by enhancing the role of Children's Trusts. In particular we will:

- Ensure services and agencies take a joined up approach to individual children, young people and their families
- Ensure there are robust mechanisms for improving the performance of local areas in reducing youth offending
- Consult with local authorities on new measures to support a strengthening of their contribution to the prevention of offending
- Ensure the entire children's workforce, including those working in the youth justice system, have the capacity and skills to help prevent youth offending

**6.1** Reductions in youth crime and the improvement in outcomes for children and young people will only happen through the integrated effort of all local agencies and services working together in partnership to achieve the 'triple track' approach of enforcement, non-negotiable support and prevention. Our aims are captured in the Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets set out in Annex 1.

**6.2** Since 1997 the Youth Justice landscape has changed dramatically:

- Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) were established in 1998 to provide a joined-up local response to preventing youth offending and re-offending;
- the introduction of Every Child Matters reforms have brought radically improved co-ordination of services around the child, under the Director of Children's Services and the Lead Member for Children's Services who together champion the delivery of improved outcomes for children; and

- Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) have been introduced to take a more focused approach to reducing crime and disorder at a local level.

An explanation of the roles of individual services is set out in Annex 3.

**6.3** These developments have taken us a long way towards achieving the best outcome for children and young people, but there is still work to do. The evolution of services has led to several different agencies having responsibility for different aspects of tackling youth crime. In some areas this can mean there is not a single joined up approach, and information on children and families at risk is not always shared between agencies, leading to a disjointed picture of the child's needs. Both are essential to underpin an approach that successfully combines enforcement where appropriate, support where needed, and effective prevention.

**6.4** The variety of services involved means it can be difficult to establish who has overall responsibility for the outcomes of individuals who are at risk of offending, or for those who have left the Youth Justice System. In addition, children within the youth justice system can often be treated differently from other children and it can be difficult to ensure they receive the support they need where they are disengaged from mainstream services or when they leave the youth justice system.

In order to address these issues, we need to:

**6.5 Strengthen the strategic response to youth crime at local level.**

Directors of Children's Services have a key role in preventing and reducing youth offending by bringing together relevant partners to improve outcomes for children in the local area. They are currently required to make arrangements to promote co-operation to improve the well-being of children within a Children's Trust. The police, the Probation Service and YOTs, together with partners from health and other services, have a duty to co-operate within these arrangements. We now want to reinforce the Children's Trust's role so that the partnership secures prevention objectives more effectively.

**6.6** We have already made a commitment to legislate to strengthen the effectiveness of Children's Trusts and are now consulting on proposals. These include setting specific responsibilities on the Children's Trust for improving outcomes, including the prevention of youth crime and re-offending. The duty to co-operate within a Children's Trust would be extended to include schools, PRUs and

Sixth Form Colleges. Their active involvement would support better strategies for early identification and referral of vulnerable young people at risk of crime.

**6.7** In the proposals, the Children's Trust, rather than just the local authority as currently, would be required to develop a Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP). Each CYPP would include specific details of the agreed local system to provide early identification and intervention for young people needing additional help, including those who exhibit the risk factors associated with future offending. CYPPs would contain details of the roles and responsibilities of the partners involved in this work. They would also consider implications for development of the local children's workforce, including those working in the criminal justice system. They would also set out the arrangements for local commissioning of services, including those for crime prevention and the financial contribution of each local partner.

**6.8** There are currently some powers for local agencies to pool funds, staff and services within a Children's Trust. We are already experimenting with the pooling of prevention budgets of YOTs and youth services to examine whether this leads to better outcomes for young offenders. Some of our existing Family Pathfinder authorities are also looking at how budgets between adults and children's services might be pooled to ensure better working with families at risk. We would welcome views within the consultation on Children's Trusts on whether pooling of budgets would further support prevention work.

- 6.9** These proposed changes are designed to strengthen the contribution of local authority children's services and their partners to prevent youth crime and re-offending. The proposals to ensure a named lead for overseeing resettlement, as discussed in chapter 5, would also strengthen the role of children's services and their partners in overseeing resettlement and preventing re-offending. They are not designed to change the current responsibilities of CDRPs and LCJBs whose responsibilities go beyond youth crime. The Children's Trust will need to integrate its strategy with these partnerships through the accountability arrangements of the Local Strategic Partnership which is normally chaired by the local authority leader or chief executive.
- 6.10** It is vital that the YOT supports young people in the criminal justice system. Indeed we believe that the YOT Management Board should be strengthened through new specifications in statutory guidance, in particular to ensure the additional involvement of housing authorities. The guidance will set out an expectation of the benefits to be gained by cross-membership with the other local partnerships.
- 6.11** As part of the 'triple track' approach we must take a joined up approach for the individual child and their family to ensure that those who are at risk of offending receive the support they require. This support will cover their risk of offending, and other risks which can contribute to offending behaviour and poor outcomes.
- 6.12** The 'Think Family' work and reforms to Targeted Youth Support will help achieve this by putting in place measures to share information about children and families at risk, providing early support to those children and ensuring access to the services they need. As part of these reforms local areas should be clear on how data is shared between agencies, how decisions are made to identify the young people in need and who then takes responsibility for these young people at different points in the Youth Justice System. We will work with local areas to deliver these reforms in full.
- 6.13** As part of ensuring that young people's needs are identified quickly and accurately we will review the existing assessment procedures within the youth justice system to establish how they and the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) can best be aligned to ensure thorough assessment of risk and need. We welcome views on this. In addition, the YJB is rolling out a training programme for YOTs which will include training and assessment skills in the round. Through the Family Pathfinder work we will also explore if a family needs assessment framework can be developed to include regular reviews with the family (including young people where appropriate) and other agencies.

## TARGETED YOUTH SUPPORT

Dee faced multiple problems and had started hanging around on the streets, not going home at night, and getting into trouble with a group of older boys. One night their activities led to the police arresting Dee after the group she was with had damaged an abandoned house.

Dee was referred to the local Youth Inclusion Team, who completed an assessment of her needs. A lead professional was allocated to provide support for Dee and agree with her and other agencies the package of activities and support that could help her move forward. This included positive activities including an arts based project with positive health as a focus; a women and girls counselling service and an accredited awards scheme. The lead professional created a relationship of trust with Dee and negotiated her readmission to school.

- 6.14** To support young people in the justice system we will remind sentencers of the statutory levers they can use to hold local authorities to account. This will reinforce the role of local authorities in providing services to address the needs of young offenders.
- 6.15 Improving the performance of local areas.** In the light of the 2006 Local Government White Paper there have been significant changes to the framework for performance managing local authorities and their partners. These changes will help to deliver a more joined up focus on issues such as youth crime, and help improve outcomes for all children and young people.
- 6.16** There are six national indicators on youth crime and youth justice available for inclusion in Local Area Agreements (LAAs) where these are an agreed priority for the local area. These indicators cover: the number of first time entrants to the youth justice system aged 10-17; the proven rate of re-offending by young offenders; the percentage of young people within the youth justice system receiving a conviction in court who are sentenced to custody; the ethnic composition of offenders on youth justice system disposals; young offenders engagement in suitable education, employment or training; and young offenders' access to suitable accommodation.
- 6.17** These indicators will be reported annually in all areas through the multi-inspectorate Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) led by the Audit Commission. It will be the role of the local partnerships to oversee performance and reporting against the national indicators, which will also form part of the evidence base for CAA. The inspectorates will work together to assess the prospects for the local area and the quality of life of local people, including how well partnerships work together to deliver key national and local priorities, including the prevention of youth crime and re-offending. CAA will be reported annually, although the

evidence for CAA will be gathered and analysed by the inspectorates throughout the year.

**6.18** In addition, the capacity and capability of the Youth Offending Team to improve its performance will be monitored by the Youth Justice Board with regional teams validating assessment and agreeing priorities for the year through the continuation of multi-agency inspections.

**6.19** Using the information from local monitoring, national indicators and independent assessment, we will identify the areas that do not have adequate systems in place to improve the outcomes for children and young people, or where outcomes fail to improve. The Government and local delivery partners will shortly be setting out more information about performance management, including the options for action where there is a risk to delivery or under-performance and the roles for the different local and national agencies. We envisage a proportionate escalation of involvement from improvement support and exchange of good practice to targeted inspection, improvement notices from Government departments and, where necessary, formal intervention.

**6.20 We will also consult with local authorities on new measures to support a further strengthening of their contribution to prevent offending:** to facilitate work with local partners on finding innovative ways to reduce youth offending; and to ensure that they take greater responsibility for reducing the number of young people entering custody. Our central objective in tackling youth crime is to reduce both

the number of children entering the youth justice system and levels of re-offending in order to improve outcomes for children and to reduce crime. The new focus on youth offending in local area agreements should provide a good context for this. Ultimately this should lead to fewer children receiving custodial sentences; since custodial provision is very expensive, lower use would result in savings that could be used for earlier intervention.

**6.21** While sentencing is of course the responsibility of the courts, local authorities and their partners can help reduce the numbers of young people entering the criminal justice system and the demand for custodial places. Courts can also help shape local provision and improve outcomes by requesting welfare assessments and requiring information on the services and support they have in place locally.

**6.22** In order to achieve these reductions, local authorities and their partners will need to ensure they have joint strategies in place to identify children at risk, share information and intervene early and effectively. To support this we would like to consult on the following measures:

- **making local authorities responsible for the full cost of court-ordered secure remand.** They are already responsible for the placement and for one-third of the costs where the secure estate is used. This approach would help local authorities make the case for investment locally in alternative forms of remand such as use of fostering;

- **making the costs of custody more visible.** This would demonstrate the savings that are made where local areas reduce the use of custody and conversely the costs incurred when custody use increases to help inform debate on whether, in the long-term, local authorities should be responsible for the placement and funding of custodial placements;
- **developing a formal review process for children who go into custody.** This would ensure that lessons could be learned locally for how earlier interventions might have prevented this outcome and facilitate a joint cross-agency approach to putting greater preventative measures in place. It would also allow a focus on what is needed for the child in the future, which could support resettlement planning. This review could become a formal duty on local authorities;
- **strengthening expectations for robust resettlement planning.** The secure estate could have a stronger role in ensuring adequate resettlement plans are in place prior to release through notifying the named person in the local area responsible for overseeing resettlement where plans are not satisfactory; and
- **recognising and sharing best practice** in developing alternatives to custody and early interventions.

**6.23 Ensure the workforce has the capacity and skills to deliver positive outcomes.** The role of professionals who work with children both in the YJS and in other services are vital to improving outcomes. We want to

ensure that all professionals working with children and young people, either wholly or as part of their job, have the right skills and knowledge to help prevent youth offending, improve outcomes and work effectively together.

- 6.24** We will set out our plans to tackle these issues through the 2020 Children's Workforce Strategy, to be published in the Autumn. The strategy is being developed in close collaboration with an Expert Group of professionals drawn from right across the Children's Workforce, including the youth justice system and the police.
- 6.25 Supporting delivery at local level.** Local partners, especially the police, local authorities and their strategic partners in Children's Trusts and CDRPs have the leading role in taking responsibility for reducing youth crime. It is right that in doing so they respond to local priorities and need. The Youth Crime Action Plan presents a challenge to these agencies, asking them to focus their efforts on this major priority to make communities safer and improve the lives of children. The Government is therefore committed to giving local partners the right support to do this.
- 6.26** The Youth Taskforce, which has already had success in tackling anti-social behaviour, will drive delivery of these new measures to prevent youth crime, including enhanced family and parenting support. It will give tailored support to local areas to deliver new commitments as well as ensuring full benefits are realised from existing reforms such as: the co-location of services; Sure Start children's centres; extended schools; the roll-out of positive activities for young

people; and the implementation of integrated and Targeted Youth Support services.

**6.27** The taskforce will work with and complement other forms of support to local areas as they start operating within the new Local Area Agreements. This includes support from new Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships, the local government's own improvement bodies, Government Offices and the new Joint Improvement Support Plan arrangements.

**6.28** Across the 'triple track' of enforcement, non negotiable challenge and support, and prevention we are proposing immediate action through a package of measures, to be rolled out in all areas across England and, for certain measures, Wales. This package includes:

- more searches and search equipment to help take weapons off our streets, and now for the first time, everyone over the age of 16 who is found carrying a knife can expect to be prosecuted, and those under 16 can expect to be prosecuted on a second offence;
- increasing the proportion of ASBOs accompanied by Parenting Orders;
- expanding provision of youth centres at times when young people are likely to offend, including Friday and Saturday nights;
- using existing police powers more, including measures to tackle anti-social behaviour and underage drinking;
- making permanent exclusion from school an automatic trigger for a Common Assessment Framework (CAF) assessment of needs;

- encouraging the expansion of Safer Schools Partnerships which link a police officer with schools;
- increasing the take-up of parenting support by parents of young offenders, including using parenting orders if this does not happen voluntarily;
- giving the public the chance to identify what reparation work they would like young people on community sentences to carry out;
- closer working between Neighbourhood Policing teams and young people in the local area;
- improving local authority systems so that we identify, engage and assess families better and join up services to meet the needs of the whole family; and
- expanding intensive family interventions for the most vulnerable and chaotic families with children at risk of offending, with non-negotiable elements that may carry sanctions for a failure to engage.

**6.29** Other priority actions will be on offer in priority, high youth crime areas, in addition to the short-term programme. These areas will receive pump-priming money to support implementation, and will be expected to re-focus their own resources to maintain delivery:

- operation Staysafe, which uses safeguarding legislation to remove young people from the streets at night and take them to a safe place;
- encouraging the use of street-based teams of workers to tackle groups of young people involved in crime and disorder;



- placing Youth Offending Team workers in police custody suites so that young offenders can be assessed and directed to appropriate services at the earliest opportunity;
- testing innovative ways of providing support to young victims of crime, through pilot sites that can develop and spread best practice;
- continuing the Intensive Fostering pilots in some areas; and
- expanding Resettlement and Aftercare Provision to provide intensive support for children leaving custody with substance misuse and mental health needs subject to evaluation and consultation.

**6.30** In these areas the precise combination of activities will be determined locally and tailored to need based on ongoing local intelligence whilst maximising the benefits of existing provision. However, in order to ensure that there is an appropriate balance of activity in each priority area plans will have to be approved by both the Chair of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership and the Director of Children's Services.

**6.31** We will work closely with the Welsh Assembly Government to implement those aspects of the action plan which apply both in England and Wales, including those policies which cover sentencing and police led initiatives, pilots for increased support for victims; youth offending team workers being available in police stations to identify problems early; and police officers taking young people who are putting themselves in danger to a place of safety. Similarly the principles for the use of custody cover both

England and Wales. The consultation on accountability arrangements and improving the resettlement of offenders will be taken forward jointly with the Welsh Assembly Government. Those measures which are aimed at preventing young people committing crimes, intervening early through the involvement of other agencies and improving the education of young offenders will apply only in England as these are devolved matters. Similarly the support the Youth Taskforce will offer local authorities will only be available in England. The Welsh Assembly Government will continue to implement their own strategy which shares many of the same aims and principles as this action plan but is tailored to the situation in Wales.

### Consultation Questions

- Do you agree that Children's Trusts should be given a formal role to prevent offending by children and young people?
- Do you agree that YOT management boards should be placed on a statutory basis? How else could their role be strengthened?
- How can the youth justice system assessment procedures and CAF be best aligned to ensure thorough assessment of risk and need?
- Do you agree with the proposals set out to further strengthen the contribution of local authorities in the prevention of offending?

### What it will mean for Practitioners

- A joined up strategic response to tackling youth crime from all partners in the local area covering prevention of offending through to rehabilitation.
- Clarity about who is responsible for individuals within the YJS.
- Measures to improve joint working and a wider focus on the skills required to work with children in the YJS for all those who are involved in the YJS.

PHOTO REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES



# ANNEX I

Dealing with unacceptable behaviour	PSA23	Perceptions of anti-social behaviour
		Perceptions of how local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime are dealt with by the local council and police
	PSA25	Perceptions of drug use or dealing as a problem
		Perceptions of drunk or rowdy behaviour as a problem
	HO DSO	Perceptions of parents taking responsibility for the behaviour of their children in the area
	Intervening early	PSA14
The number of 16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, training or employment		
The level of young people's participation in positive activities		
The level of substance misuse by young people		
DCSF DSO		The rate of permanent exclusions from school
PSA 13		Improve Children and Young People's Safety
Supporting young victims	PSA 24	A more effective, transparent and responsive CJS for victims and the public
	PSA23	The serious violent crime rate
		The serious acquisitive crime rate
		The rate of proven re-offending by young offenders
		The rate of assault with injury
		The gun crime rate
	PSA14	The number of 16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, training or employment
		The level of young people's participation in positive activities
	DCSF DSO	The rate of permanent exclusions from school
	PSA14	The number of first-time entrants to the Youth Justice System
	PSA 13	Improve Children and Young People's Safety

Credible sentencing	PSA23	The serious violent crime rate
		The serious acquisitive crime rate
		The rate of proven re-offending by young offenders
		The rate of assault with injury
		The gun crime rate
	PSA25	The drug-related offending rate
	PSA14	Substance misuse by young people
	HO DSO	The serious knife crime rate
	Moj DSO	Young people within the youth justice system receiving a conviction in court who are sentenced to custody
Breaking the cycle of offending	Moj DSO	The number of young offenders engaged in suitable education, employment or training
		Young offenders' access to suitable accommodation
	PSA23	The rate of proven re-offending by young offenders
	PSA14	The number of 16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, training or employment



## ANNEX 2

### How the Youth Crime Action Plan was put together

The Youth Crime Action Plan has been informed by the views of young people themselves, the public, frontline practitioners, the third sector and academic research. The evidence gathering has involved:

- detailed field visits to local areas to establish how youth crime is currently tackled;
- a series of workshops with frontline practitioners and third sector representatives;
- desk research of key academic work in the criminal justice field and consultations with leading academics;
- consultations with young people (in conjunction with Rainer Crime Concern); and
- research into public views on youth crime and perceptions of young people.

This has built on recent research and consultations with young people about crime, including:

- The Metropolitan Police Authority's "Youth Scrutiny Report", May 2008;
- NCH: "Step Inside our Shoes: Young people's views on gun and knife crime", April 2008; and
- Victim Support: "Hoodie or Goodie? The link between violent victimisation and offending in young people", September 2007.

Our work has also drawn on the research undertaken for recent government publications on young people and crime, including:

- *Engaging Communities in Fighting Crime: A review* by Louise Casey, June 2008;
- The Youth Taskforce Action Plan, March 2008;
- The Children's Plan, December 2007;
- *Aiming high for young people: a ten year strategy for positive activities*, July 2007; and
- The Staying Safe Action Plan, February 2008.



## ANNEX 3

### Making it happen: where responsibility for tackling youth crime sits locally:

#### Local Partnerships and Services

Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs)	These partnerships are the means by which different agencies within a local area carry out their functions to deliver improved public services and address agreed priorities in the local area. All other partnerships need to have a clear relationship with the LSP, and understand how all are held to account within this arrangement
Children's Trusts	Children's Trust arrangements refer to the duty on local authority children's services to bring together relevant partners to improve outcomes for children. The Government is currently consulting on making CT Boards statutory. They could be given responsibility for the prevention of offending and re-offending, whilst retaining and clarifying the current roles of other local agencies.
Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs)	Coordinating a local approach to tackling crime and disorder.
Local Criminal Justice Boards	These boards co-ordinate activity between different criminal justice agencies and share responsibility for delivering criminal justice in their areas.
Local authority children's services	Responsible through the lead officer (the Director of Children's Services) for improving the well-being of children in their area and for bringing relevant partners together through the Children's Trust.
Police	Responsible for investigating offences and enforcing the law.
Youth Offending Teams (YOTs)	Multi-agency teams with the principal aim of preventing offending. They also carry out the case management function for the administration of justice for young offenders. Children's services, police, probation and health are all represented within the YOT.



## ANNEX 4

### Consultation Questions

The Government would welcome responses from interested parties on the following consultation questions from the Youth Crime Action Plan

#### Chapter 2

- Building on what we have set out here, what are the most effective ways for local agencies to increase further their focus on prevention and early intervention?
- How can government ensure that parents are engaged when their children are in court and are completing sentences? Should measures of compulsion be used and what should these measures be?

#### Chapter 4

- What is the best mechanism for enhancing good practice in the delivery of evidence-based interventions by YOTs?

#### Chapter 5

- Should there be a requirement for local authorities to have a senior official responsible for overseeing resettlement and what should this role cover?
- What should the key elements of a package of support for children leaving custody include; how can this best be delivered and how long should the support should last for?
- Should housing authorities be represented on YOT management boards?
- What measures could be taken to improve the employability of young people with criminal records?

#### Chapter 6

- Do you agree that Children's Trusts should be given a formal role to prevent offending by children and young people?
- Do you agree that YOT management boards should be placed on a statutory basis? How else could their role be strengthened?
- How can the youth justice system assessment procedures and CAF be best aligned to ensure thorough assessment of risk and need?
- Do you agree with the proposals set out to further strengthen the contribution of local authorities in the prevention of offending?

Responses should be sent by 17 October 2008 to [childrenyoungpeople@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:childrenyoungpeople@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk) or to Natalie Brazil, Children and Young People Team, Anti-Social Behaviour and Crime Prevention Unit, Home Office, 2 Marsham Street, London SW1P 4DF



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A commitment from the Children's Plan

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