



Home Office

BUILDING A SAFE, JUST
AND TOLERANT SOCIETY

Delinquent youth groups and offending behaviour:

findings from the 2004 Offending, Crime and Justice Survey

Clare Sharp
Judith Aldridge
Juanjo Medina

Home Office Online Report 14/06

Delinquent youth groups and offending behaviour: findings from the 2004 Offending, Crime and Justice Survey

Clare Sharp
Judith Aldridge
Juanjo Medina

Online Report 14/06

Acknowledgments

We would like to extend our thanks to all those involved in the development of this report, and to those who commented on the draft. Particular thanks are due to Tracey Budd, David Matz, Debbie Wilson and Alison Patterson.

Thanks are also due to the Eurogang Network for the modified use of their survey questions.

Clare Sharp, RDS, Home Office
Judith Aldridge, School of Law, University of Manchester
Juanjo Medina, School of Law, University of Manchester

Contents

| | |
|---|------------|
| Acknowledgements | i |
| List of boxes, figures and tables | iii |
| Executive summary | v |
| 1 Introduction | 1 |
| Introduction | 1 |
| Terminology | 1 |
| Definition | 1 |
| 2 Prevalence of delinquent youth groups | 3 |
| 3 Offending in members of delinquent youth groups | 5 |
| Other research evidence | 5 |
| OCJS results | 6 |
| Individual offending by members of delinquent youth groups | 6 |
| Does membership of delinquent youth groups impact on offending behaviour once other factors are controlled for? | 10 |
| Proportion of crime accounted for by members of delinquent youth groups | 11 |
| Delinquency by groups acting together | 12 |
| 4 Factors associated with membership of delinquent youth groups | 14 |
| Other research | 14 |
| OCJS results | 15 |
| 5 Characteristics of delinquent youth groups | 20 |
| Group size and composition | 20 |
| Presence of structural features | 21 |
| Group durability | 23 |
| Concluding remarks | 24 |
| Appendix A Additional tables | 25 |
| Appendix B Definitional issues | 37 |
| Appendix C Methodology | 43 |
| Appendix D OCJS questions on membership of groups | 49 |
| References | 55 |

List of boxes

| | | |
|-----|--|----|
| S.1 | Definition of a delinquent youth group | iv |
| 1.1 | Definition of a delinquent youth group | 2 |
| C.1 | Core offences | 45 |

List of figures

| | | |
|-----|---|----|
| S.1 | Levels of offending and drug use (10- to 19-year-olds) by membership of delinquent youth groups | iv |
| 2.1 | Membership of delinquent youth groups by age and sex | 4 |
| 3.1 | Levels of offending and drug use (10- to 19-year-olds) by membership of delinquent youth groups | 9 |
| 4.1 | Membership of delinquent youth groups by number of risk factors (10- to 16-year-olds) | 19 |
| 5.1 | Areas or places the groups call their own | 22 |

List of tables

| | | |
|------|--|----|
| 3.1 | Prevalence of offending and delinquent behaviour in the last year (10- to 19-year-olds) by membership of delinquent youth groups | 8 |
| 3.2 | Factors associated with offending (10- to 16-year-olds) | 11 |
| 3.3 | Proportion of crime accounted for by members of delinquent youth groups | 12 |
| 3.4 | Group level offending (10- to 19-year-olds) by membership of delinquent youth groups | 13 |
| 4.1 | Membership of delinquent youth groups by socio-demographic and lifestyle factors (10- to 16-year-olds) | 15 |
| 4.2 | Factors associated with membership of a delinquent youth group (10- to 16-year-olds) | 18 |
| 5.1 | Group size and composition | 21 |
| A3.1 | Drug use in the last year (10- to 19-year-olds) by membership of delinquent youth groups | 25 |
| A3.2 | Prevalence of core offending in the last year (10- to 19-year-olds) by membership of delinquent youth groups | 26 |
| A3.3 | Prevalence of core offending in the last year (10- to 19-year-olds) by gender, age and by membership of delinquent youth groups | 27 |
| A3.4 | Factors associated with <i>serious</i> offending (10- to 16-year-olds) | 28 |
| A3.5 | Factors associated with <i>frequent</i> offending (10- to 16-year-olds) | 29 |
| A3.6 | Offending carried out together in delinquent youth groups by group size | 30 |

| | | |
|------|---|----|
| A4.1 | Membership of delinquent youth groups by socio-demographic and lifestyle variables (10- to 16-year-olds by gender) | 31 |
| A4.2 | Factors associated with membership of delinquent youth groups (males aged 10 to 16) | 33 |
| A4.3 | Factors associated with membership of delinquent youth groups (females aged 10 to 16) (OCJS, 2004) | 34 |
| A5.1 | Structural features present in delinquent youth groups and other groups of young people (10- to 19-year-olds) | 34 |
| A5.2 | Whether other groups are allowed into the area, and whether area is defined using force, threats or other methods (10- to 19-year-olds) | 35 |
| A5.3 | Length of time existed by membership of delinquent youth groups (10- to 19-year-olds) | 35 |
| A5.4 | Did the group exist before you joined? (10- to 19-year-olds) | 35 |
| A5.5 | Time with the group (10- to 19-year-olds) | 36 |
| B.1 | Various group definitions (10- to 19-year-olds) | 39 |
| B.2 | Proportion of the various groups who define themselves as belonging to a 'gang' | 40 |
| B.3 | Group membership by age and gender (10- to 19-year-olds) (various definitions) | 41 |
| B.4 | Group size and composition (various definitions) | 42 |
| B.5 | Core offending (10- to 19-year-olds) across various groups | 42 |
| C.1 | Honesty in answering offending and drug use questions | 47 |

Executive summary

Introduction

This report examines the extent of young peoples' involvement in 'delinquent youth groups' and the delinquent and criminal behaviour of members of such groups (both individually and as groups), who are aged ten to 19 in England and Wales in the general household population.

A set of questions to assess the level of involvement in 'delinquent youth groups' among young people was included in the 2004 Offending, Crime and Justice Survey (OCJS) based on questions developed by the Eurogang Network, a group of international experts in 'gang' research. The OCJS survey was designed to measure the level of offending in the general household population and as such is unlikely to have full coverage of more serious offenders/members of groups involved in more serious criminal activities.

The use of the term 'gang' can be problematic for a number of reasons relating to its ambiguous nature (these are discussed in the introductory chapter of this report). In order to avoid any problems of interpretation, this report has adopted the term 'delinquent youth group' to refer to the main group of interest. Where delinquent youth groups are referred to in this report, this relates to groups which meet the criteria listed in Box S.1.

Box S.1: Definition of a delinquent youth group

- *Young people who spend time in groups of three or more (including themselves).*
- *The group spend a lot of time in public places.*
- *The group has existed for three months or more.*
- *The group has engaged in delinquent or criminal behaviour **together** in the last 12 months.*
- *The group has at least one structural feature (either a name, an area, a leader, or rules).*

Extent of membership of delinquent youth groups

- Overall, an estimated *six per cent* of young people aged ten to 19 were classified as belonging to a delinquent youth group. Levels were similar for males and females (6% each).¹
- Involvement in delinquent youth groups was highest among those aged from 14 to 15 (12%) and 16 to 17 (9%). The figures were far lower in other age groups (Figure 2.1).
- Male involvement was highest in 14- to 17-year-olds (11%) whilst female involvement was highest in 14- to 15-year-olds.
- The factors most strongly associated with group membership were: having friends in trouble with the police; having run away from home; commitment to deviant peers; having been expelled or suspended from school; and being drunk on a frequent basis.²

¹ CIs for overall prevalence: 5.0 to 6.8; for males: 4.8 to 7.3; for females: 4.5 to 7.1.

Individual offending by members of delinquent youth groups

Information on personal offending, drug use and other delinquent behaviour in the last 12 months was collected. The report compares these behaviours in 10- to 19-year-olds classified as belonging to a delinquent youth group (using the definition in Box S.1) with those who do not belong to such a group. (The acts may have been committed by the individual by themselves or with others but it is *not possible to separately identify* incidents committed by individuals or by groups.)

Key findings on individual level offending:

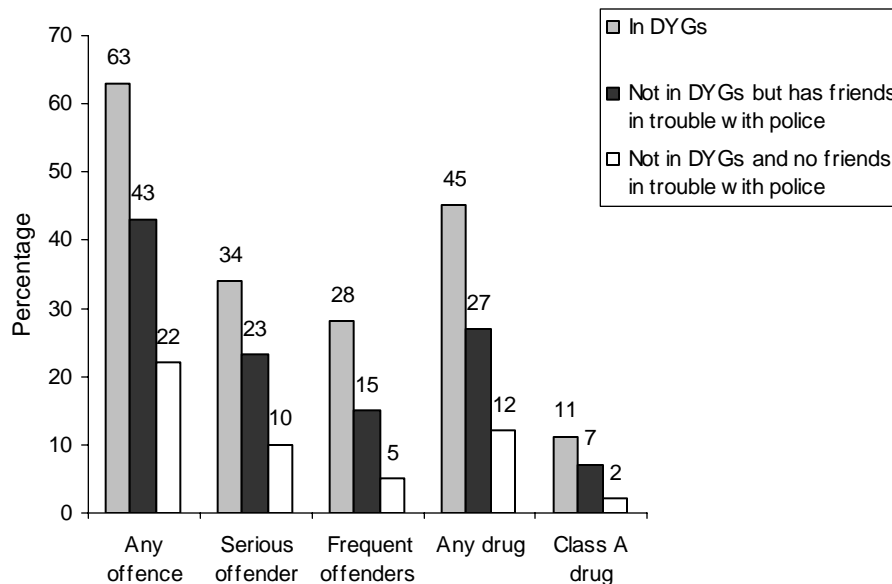
- Sixty-three per cent of those belonging to delinquent youth groups have, themselves, committed at least one 'core offence'³ in the last year. This is significantly higher than for non-members (26%). The pattern remains when examining individual offence types (the only exception to this was robbery which was low for both members and non-members at 1%).
- Only a minority of group members had committed a serious offence⁴ (34%) or had offended on a frequent basis (committed six or more offences in the last year) (28%) and seven per cent had committed a serious offence on six or more occasions. However, these figures are significantly higher compared with the equivalent in young people not classed as members (13, 7 and 2% respectively). Consequently, the six per cent of individuals who were members of delinquent youth groups were responsible for around a fifth (21%) of all core offences committed by this age group (ten to 19 years).
- A small proportion of young people belonging to a delinquent youth group said they had carried weapons (13% had carried a knife and only 1% had carried a gun). Again, these are significantly higher than for non-members at four per cent and less than one per cent respectively.
- Forty-five per cent of young people in delinquent youth groups had used an illegal drug in the last year and 11 per cent had used a Class A substance. This is significantly higher than for non-members (15% for any drug and 3% for Class A drugs).
- Offending in those who were members of delinquent youth groups was significantly higher than for non-members who had 'delinquent friends' (measured by whether the respondent had friends who had been in trouble with the police). Figure S.1 shows that members were significantly more likely to admit to committing a 'core' offence in the last year than non-members who had delinquent friends (63% compared with 43%). This pattern also held for serious and frequent offending and drug use, though the difference with regard to Class A drug use was not statistically significant.

² Based on multivariate analysis to identify which factors, independent of the effects of others, are most strongly associated with membership of delinquent youth groups. Commitment to deviant peers is based on whether the young person would continue to spend time with friends who were in trouble at home or in trouble with the police.

³ The 'core' criminal offences covered by the survey include robbery (commercial and personal), assault (with and without injury), burglary (domestic and non-domestic), criminal damage (to vehicles and other), thefts of and from vehicles, other miscellaneous thefts (from shop, person, school/college, work) and selling drugs (Class A and other).

⁴ Serious offences are theft of a vehicle, burglary, robbery, theft from the person, assault resulting in injury and selling Class A drugs.

Figure S.1: Levels of offending and drug use (10- to 19-year-olds) by membership of delinquent youth groups (DYGs) (OCJS, 2004)



Offending/delinquency in groups acting together

Part of the definition of a 'delinquent youth group' used in this report (see Box S.1) is that the group must have committed at least some criminal or delinquent acts *together*. The OCJS asked respondents about a range of behaviours that *their group* have been involved in.⁵ Although most can be classed as illegal behaviour, some may not necessarily be (e.g. 'frightening people').

- The most common delinquent group activity carried out together was using drugs. A half (51%) of those belonging to a delinquent youth group said their group had used drugs together in the last year. (The proportion of group members whose group delinquent activity is based only around drug use and no other behaviour was 13%.)
- Other common activities were threatening or frightening people (40% of those in delinquent youth groups reported that their group had done this), graffiti (36%); breaking, damaging or destroying things (31%) and using force or violence (29%).
- Although drug selling and weapons are often considered a feature of 'gangs', the OCJS shows that these were relatively uncommon among the delinquent youth groups measured in the survey. Just under a fifth of those belonging to a DYG reported that their

⁵ Respondents are asked: 'Have people in your group done any of the following things *together* in the last 12 months. The list of activities includes: threatened or frightened other people; used force or violence on other people; graffiti; broken, damaged or destroyed things; stolen things; used violence or threats to steal from someone; carried knives; carried guns; used drugs; sold drugs to other people; other crimes.

group had actually sold drugs (18%) or carried knives (17%) and four per cent had carried guns.

The level of group offending/delinquency in delinquent youth groups can be compared with that in 'other groups of young people' which are groups who do not meet all the required criteria for the definition at Box S.1.

- Levels of group offending were far lower among 'other youth groups of young people'. This is not surprising as part of the criteria for belonging to a delinquent youth group was that the group has engaged in one of the delinquent activities listed. Only 17% of young people in other groups engaged in at least one of the activities listed, most commonly drug use at nine per cent.

Characteristics of delinquent youth groups

- Most (about 90%) group members said their groups had between six and 50 members. A third (32%) had between six and ten members, 27 per cent between 11 and 19 members, 30 per cent between 20 and 50 members, and nine per cent fewer than five members. The mean size was 16 (median was 13).
- About four in ten (42%) group members described their groups as being 'half boys half girls'. Almost a half (48%) said their group comprised of all or mostly boys. Only one in ten (10%) were 'all' or 'mostly' girl groups.
- Groups tended to include individuals of similar ages. Twenty-five per cent of group members said their group only included 12- to 15-year-olds, and 27 per cent said their group only included people aged 16 to 18.
- Although the majority of members of delinquent youth groups said their group was ethnically homogeneous (60 per cent of groups were White only, three per cent Black only, and five per cent Asian only), about a third (31%) said their group included a mix of different ethnic groups.
- The majority of group members (88%) reported that the group had its own special area or place; a third (33%) said the group had a name; almost four in ten (38%) that the group had a leader and 15 per cent that the group had rules or codes for members.
- The possession of an area or place the group 'called its own' was by far the most common feature of delinquent youth groups. Of group members whose group had an area or place of their own, this was most often an open public space such a 'park or recreation ground' (mentioned by 43%) or a 'street corner or square' (mentioned by 39%). However, a quarter mentioned 'someone's home'.

1 Introduction

This report examines the extent of young people's involvement in 'delinquent youth groups' (DYGs) and focuses on examining the level of delinquent and criminal behaviour in those young people who are members of such groups. It also explores the nature and composition of DYGs, and attempts to assess the impact this type of group membership has on young people's offending behaviour.

The report is based on an analysis of the 2004 Offending, Crime and Justice Survey (OCJS). The 2004 OCJS included a set of questions⁶ to assess levels of involvement in delinquent youth groups among young people aged from ten to 19 and provides the first robust information on the extent of this problem among young people in England and Wales. The survey was designed to measure the level of offending in the 'general household population' and as such is unlikely to pick up more serious offenders/groups involved in more serious criminal activities, who may be harder to reach through this type of survey. Further details about the OCJS design are provided in Appendix C.

Terminology

The use of the term 'gang' can be problematic and, given its highly sensitive and subjective nature (Sullivan, 2005), it is advisable to use it with caution. First, research has shown the stigmatising potential of the gang label. The classic work of Malcolm Klein also suggests the dangers of strengthening gangs simply by treating them as such in intervention work (1971). Second, previous research has applied the term to many different types of groups, ranging from the informal street-based youth groups who may occasionally participate in low level delinquency to highly organised criminal networks. Third, another problem with the term 'gang' is that common understanding of what a gang is may be linked to cultural and media influences. 'Real life' gangs are very complex social networks with unclear and constantly changing boundaries (Fleisher, 2002). The problems with using the term 'gang' have also been discussed in a report recently published by the Jill Dando Institute of Crime Science, which reviewed a range of UK research projects on gangs, guns and weapon-related crimes (Marshall *et al.*, 2005).

To avoid such problems of interpretation, the term 'delinquent youth group' (DYG) is used throughout this report to represent specifically defined groups of young people who are involved in delinquent activities at a group level. It is important that the exact definition of the term is kept in mind and equally important to keep in mind that the focus is on 'delinquent groups'. Here the focus is on *youthful groups which have durability and structure and whose members spend time in public places and engage in delinquent activities together*. Even within this definition groups will vary considerably in terms of composition and structure and the extent of involvement in delinquent and criminal behaviour.

Definition

The following criteria were examined in considering the definition of a 'delinquent youth group' (DYG).

- *Durability* – the group has existed for three months or more.

⁶ These questions were based on a set developed by the Eurogang Network and were designed to allow the use of a combination of criteria to classify people as belonging to 'gangs'. See Appendix B.

- *Street-orientated* – the group spends a lot of time in public places.
- *Acceptance of delinquent activity* – the group believes it is acceptable to do illegal things.
- *Involvement in group level delinquent or criminal activity* – the group has engaged in delinquent or criminal behaviour together⁷.
- *Structure* – the group has at least one structural feature (name/place/leader/rules).

The first four of these criteria form the provisional definition adopted by the Eurogang Network⁸ which views 'gangs' as '*any durable, street-oriented youth group whose involvement in illegal activity is part of their group identity*'. The final criterion, relating to structural features, has been identified in other research (Winfree *et al.*, 1994; Esbensen *et al.*, 2001; Smith and Bradshaw, 2005; Communities That Care, 2005).⁹

An analysis to look at the impact of using various criteria on prevalence and on group behaviour was conducted. Part of this analysis suggested that the criteria based on acceptance of delinquent activity (i.e. the group believe it is OK to do illegal things) was problematic for a number of reasons: respondents may appear to wish to demonstrate in their answer that they 'know' right from wrong¹⁰; their perceptions of 'illegality' may differ; and it may be difficult for the individual to comment on the views of the group as a whole. This requirement was therefore dropped from the definition in this report (see discussion in Appendix B for more details).

For the purposes of this report it was decided that the definition in Box 1.1 below was the most appropriate because it incorporated all the key features, while excluding the criteria that were found to be problematic. Where DYGs are referred to in this report, these relate to groups who meet the criteria listed in Box S.1.

Box 1.1: Definition of a delinquent youth group

- *Young people who spend time in groups of three or more (including themselves).*
- *The group spend a lot of time in public places.*
- *The group has existed for three months or more.*
- *The group has engaged in delinquent or criminal behaviour **together** in the last 12 months.*
- *The group has at least one structural feature (either a name, an area, a leader, or rules).*

⁷ Respondents are asked: 'Have people in your group done any of the following things together in the last 12 months. The list of activities includes: threatened or frightened other people; used force or violence on other people; graffiti; broken, damaged or destroyed things; stolen things; used violence or threats to steal from someone; carried knives; carried guns; used drugs; sold drugs to other people; other crimes.

⁸ The Eurogang Network was formed with the remit of agreeing a consistent definition, questions and methodologies to allow comparative international 'gang' research. See website: www.umsl.edu/~ccj/eurogang/euroganghome.htm

⁹ There has been some debate about the value of including such structural features in the gang definition (Decker and van Winkle, 1996). Structural features are not specified in the official Eurogangs criteria.

¹⁰ Work by Matza and others suggests that although most criminals do not think it is acceptable to commit crimes, they still go on to commit them.

2 Prevalence of delinquent youth groups

The definition of 'delinquent youth group' (DYG) used in this report is presented again below. It is based on three of the Eurogang criteria (durability, street-oriented, and involvement in delinquent activity) as well as the criteria of having at least one structural feature.

Box 1.1: Definition of a delinquent youth group

- *Young people who spend time in groups of three or more (including themselves).*
- *The group spend a lot of time in public places.*
- *The group has existed for three months or more.*
- *The group has engaged in delinquent or criminal behaviour **together** in the last 12 months.*
- *The group has at least one structural feature (either a name, an area, a leader, or rules).*

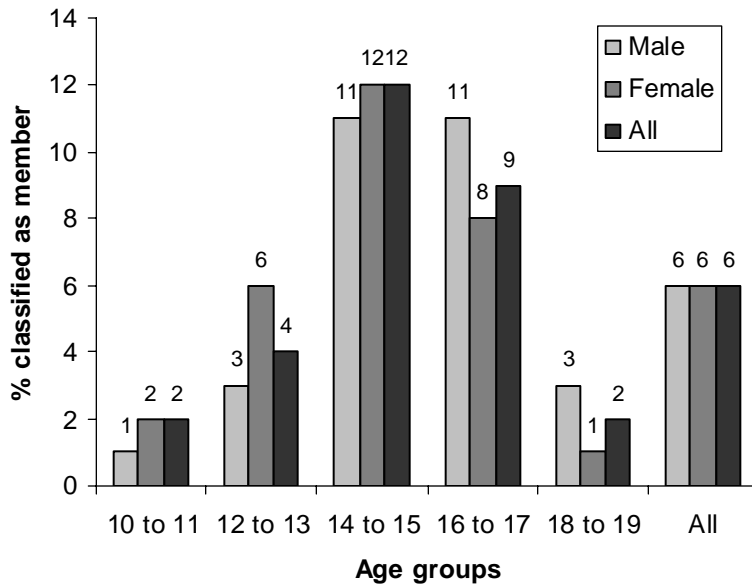
- Using this definition resulted in an estimate of *six per cent* [95% CI: 5.0%-6.8%] of 10- to 19-year-olds being classified as belonging to a DYG. Using the most restrictive definition gave two per cent and using the least restrictive definition (self-defined¹¹) gave 10 per cent. See Table B.1 in Appendix B.
- Levels were similar for males at six per cent [95% CI: 4.8% to 7.3%] and females, also at six per cent [95% CI: 4.5% to 7.1%].

[Although this seems surprising, this figure is the average across 10- to 19-year-olds. A closer look at prevalence in the different age groups shows that the level of male and female membership of delinquent youth groups is similar at younger ages, but that after the age of 15, the level of female membership falls below that for males (Figure 2.1). The ESYTC study found a similar pattern whereby at age 13 similar proportions of girls and boys were gang members (note that this was based on self-defined gangs), but at older ages, membership was consistently higher among boys. The study also found that as the definition is narrowed to include structural features, prevalence is considerably higher in males than females (Smith and Bradshaw, 2005). Other self-report studies have also found a high percentage of girls in gangs (Communities that Care, 2005; Esbensen and Huizinga, 1993)].

- Involvement in DYGs was highest among those aged from 14 to 15 (12%) and 16 to 17 (9%). The figures were far lower in other age groups (Figure 2.1).
- Male involvement was highest in 14- to 17-year-olds (11%) whilst female involvement was highest in 14- to 15-year-olds.
- Membership of DYGs across different ethnic groups was also examined. However, due to the small numbers of respondents from minority ethnic groups, it is not possible to present any results that are statistically robust.

¹¹ Self-defined is where the respondent is directly asked whether they consider their group of friends to be a 'gang'.

Figure 2.1: Membership of delinquent youth groups by age and sex (OCJS, 2004)



The remainder of this report focuses on the findings in relation to 'delinquent youth groups' as defined in Box 1.1. However, Appendix B explores other possible definitions based on various combinations of the Eurogang and other criteria, as well as those who self-defined their groups as 'gangs'.

3 Offending in members of delinquent youth groups

Other research evidence

Research from the UK and US shows that members of gangs participate in a disproportionate amount of criminal behaviour compared with non-members. Research suggests that being a member of a gang appears to be associated with greater participation in criminal activity and more pro-delinquent attitudes, and that this seems to be even more significant in more stable and organised gangs (Battin-Pearson *et al.*, 1998; Hill *et al.*, 2001; Thornberry *et al.*, 2003; Bradshaw, 2005).

Most significantly, longitudinal studies suggest that the degree of criminal participation among young people increases after they join gangs and decreases once they leave the gang (Thornberry *et al.*, 2003; Gordon *et al.*, 2004). This longitudinal research suggests that gangs, on the one hand, attract adolescents who are somewhat predisposed to delinquency (a modest selection effect), but that once in the gang, involvement in delinquency increases further and then decreases once they leave the gang (strong facilitation effect). The facilitation effect seems particularly strong for drug selling and remains even when controlling for risk factors for delinquency (Thornberry *et al.*, 2003; Gordon *et al.*, 2005).

In terms of drug selling, most US research shows that it is more of an individual activity than a gang organised enterprise, and that, although some gangs specialise in drug selling, many do not (Maxson and Klein, 1995; Howell and Gleason, 2001). In the UK, journalistic accounts as well as studies based on police data highlight the significance of drug selling for British gangs, although this appears to be just one element of a wider involvement in crime (Bullock and Tilley, 2002; Walsh, 2003).

In the UK, two studies have tried to assess the involvement in criminal behaviour of gang members. Both suggest a higher participation rate in crime for gang members. First the Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime (Bradshaw and Smith, 2005) examines levels of gang membership and links with offending among young people at three stages – when they were 13, 16 and 17 years old. This study found that gang members have a higher participation rate in delinquency than non-gang members. It also found a higher rate in gang members compared to non-gang members who had delinquent friends. It concluded that being in a gang adds something else to the simple fact of having delinquent friends.

Secondly, data on gang membership was collected through the NEW ADAM study, a survey of arrestees received into 16 custody suites in England and Wales. This found that current gang members were significantly more likely than non-gang members to report committing theft from a vehicle, handling, robbery and drug selling in the last 12 months. In addition, they were more likely to have possessed and used a weapon (Bennett and Holloway, 2004).

Studies have also examined the level of drug use in gang and non-gang individuals. The NEW ADAM study is particularly focused on drug use and drug-related offending. It found that last year use of cannabis was significantly higher in current gang members compared with non-gang members. However, gang members were no more likely than non-gang members to have used any of the other drugs asked about. Indeed, they were significantly less likely to have used heroin in the last 12 months, and significantly less likely to have injected a drug in the last 12 months (Bennett and Holloway, 2004). Conversely, other studies carried out in the US (on a sample of school students and school dropouts) have found that more serious forms of drug use were more common in gang members than non-gang members (this included heroin and cocaine use) (Fagan, 1996). These two very different results on drug use may be related to differences in the samples used in these studies. In comparing drug use across gang and non-gang youth it is

important to note that many other factors may be influential, rather than the 'gang' itself, and these may have a greater impact on drug prevalence in young people.

Research has also suggested that carrying weapons is often a feature associated with 'gangs'. A study on young people in schools reported that 39 per cent of gang members (self-defined as a gang with a name and a territory) admitted to carrying a knife in the past year compared with seven per cent of non-gang members.¹² In addition, 17 per cent of the 'gang' group said they had carried a gun in the past year. The most common reason given for carrying weapons was self-defence (Communities that Care, 2005). Other research has shown that young people who have been a victim of crime are more likely to carry a knife (Youth Justice Board, 2004).

OCJS results

The OCJS was designed to measure the level of offending in the 'general household population' and as such is unlikely to have full coverage of more serious offenders/groups involved in more serious criminal activities (see Appendix B for more details).

Definition of a delinquent youth group

- *Young people who spend time in groups of 3 or more (including themselves).*
- *The group spend a lot of time in public places.*
- *The group has existed for three months or more.*
- *The group has engaged in delinquent or criminal behaviour **together** in the last 12 months.*
- *The group has at least one structural feature (either a name, an area, a leader, or rules).*

Individual offending by members of delinquent youth groups (DYGs)

Individuals, regardless of whether they were classified as belonging to a DYG, were asked whether they had personally committed a range of offences and other delinquent acts. The acts may have been committed by the individual on their own or with others but it is *not possible to separately identify* offences committed by individuals acting alone from those committed by individuals whilst acting as part of a group. However, we can indirectly examine the impact of DYG membership on offending by examining the offending levels of group members compared with other young people who do not belong to DYGs.

Because of the very nature of the definition of DYGs considered in this report, offending behaviour is more common in group members than in non-members (given that one of the requirements for respondents being classified as belonging to a DYG (see definition in box above) is that their group has engaged in some sort of illegal activity together). Nevertheless it is useful and informative to examine the differences, including in offending, between group members and non-members.

Table 3.1 shows the percentage of young people who had reported committing a range of delinquent acts in the last year. The key findings are:

¹² This is not directly comparable to OCJS figures due to differences in the methodologies used. In addition, the survey was carried out in areas with high levels of crime.

- Sixty-three per cent of those classed as members of a DYG reported that they had committed at least one of the 'core' offences¹³ measured in the last year. This is significantly higher than for non-members (26%). The pattern remains when examining individual offence types (the only exception to this was robbery which was low for both members and non-members at 1%).
- Only a minority of group members had committed a serious offence¹⁴ (34%) or had offended on a frequent basis (committed six or more offences in the last year) (28%) and seven per cent had committed a serious offence on six or more occasions. However, these figures are significantly higher than for non-members (13%, 7% and 2% respectively).
- Group members were significantly more likely to report having been noisy or rude in public, acting in a way leading to a neighbour complaint, committing graffiti and carrying knives than non-members. Levels of racial/religious abuse/attack, joy riding and carrying guns were low for both members and non-members, with no significant differences between them.
- Forty-five per cent of group members had used an illegal drug in the last year and 11 per cent had used a Class A substance. This is significantly higher than for non-members (15% for any drug and 3% for Class A drugs).
- Twenty-eight per cent of group members reported that they had been drunk on a frequent basis and 25 per cent had been involved in alcohol-related incidents. The equivalent figures for non-members were significantly lower at 11 and 6 per cent respectively.

¹³ The 'core' criminal offences covered by the survey include robbery (commercial and personal), assault (with and without injury), burglary (domestic and non-domestic), criminal damage (to vehicles and other), thefts of and from vehicles, other miscellaneous thefts (from shop, person, school/college, work) and selling drugs (Class A and other).

¹⁴ Serious offences are theft of a vehicle, burglary, robbery, theft from the person, assault resulting in injury and selling Class A drugs.

Table 3.1: Prevalence of offending and delinquent behaviour in the last year (10- to 19-year-olds) by membership of delinquent youth groups (OCJS, 2004)

| <i>Percentage</i> | Young people in DYGs¹ | Young people not in DYGs |
|--|---|-------------------------------------|
| Core offending | | |
| Any 'core' offence | 63 * | 26 |
| Any property offence | 46 * | 15 |
| Vehicle related theft | 12 * | 2 |
| Burglary | 5 * | 1 |
| Other miscellaneous theft | 35 * | 11 |
| Criminal damage | 25 * | 5 |
| Any violent offence | 44 * | 17 |
| Assault with injury | 29 * | 12 |
| Assault without injury | 31 * | 11 |
| Robbery | 1 | 1 |
| Any drug selling offence | 12 * | 2 |
| Type of offender | | |
| Serious offender ² | 34 * | 13 |
| Frequent offender ³ | 28 * | 7 |
| Frequent serious offender ⁴ | 7 * | 2 |
| Other behaviours | | |
| Noisy or rude | 56 * | 17 |
| Neighbour complaints | 27 * | 12 |
| Graffiti | 19 * | 4 |
| Racially motivated abuse | 4 * | 1 |
| Racially motivated attack | 0 | <1 |
| Joy riding | 5 * | 1 |
| Carrying a knife | 13 * | 4 |
| Carrying a gun | 1 | <1 |
| Drug use | | |
| Any drug | 45 * | 15 |
| Any Class A drug | 11 * | 3 |
| Heroin, crack or cocaine | 4 | 2 |
| Alcohol misuse and alcohol related | | |
| Felt drunk more than once a month in last year | 28 * | 11 |
| Involved in alcohol-related incident | 25 * | 6 |
| <i>Unweighted base⁵</i> | 226 | 3,327 |

Notes:

1. DYG defined as young people who spend time in groups of 3 or more (including themselves), the group spends a lot of time in public places; the group has existed for 3 months or more; the group has engaged in delinquent or criminal activities together; and the group has at least 1 structural feature (name/area/leader/rules); those 'not in delinquent youth groups' are the remaining 10- to 19-year-olds.

2. Serious offender classed as someone who has committed one of the following in the last 12 months: Theft of vehicle, burglary, robbery, theft from the person, assault with injury, selling Class A drugs.

3. Frequent offender is someone who has committed 6 or more offences in the last year.

4. Frequent serious offender is someone who has committed a serious offence 6 or more times in the last year.

5. Unweighted bases differ slightly for each offence depending on the number of respondents answering 'Don't know' or 'Refused'.

*** indicates significant difference at 5% level.

As discussed above, previous research has distinguished between the impact of 'gang' membership and simply having 'delinquent friends'. The OCJS figures on prevalence of offending

have also been presented in a similar way to explore this issue and ‘delinquent friends’ in this case is where young people have reported that their friends have been in trouble with the police in the last 12 months. Here, levels of offending in three distinct groups of young people are compared in order to explore whether offending among group members is higher than non-members who have friends who have been in trouble with the police. The three groups are:

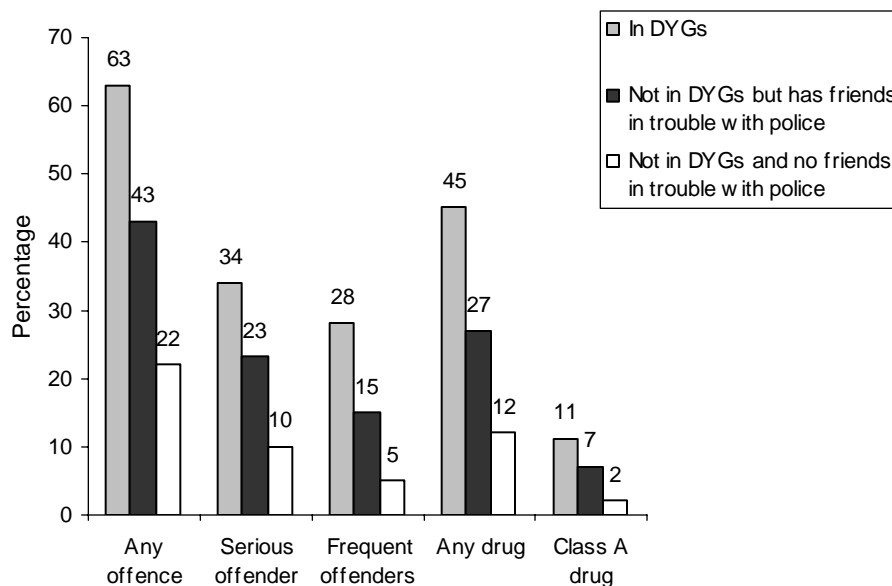
- young people aged ten to 19 who are classified as members of a DYG;
- young people aged ten to 19 who are *not* members of a DYG but *have* friends who have been in trouble with the police; and
- young people aged ten to 19 who are *not* members of a DYG and *do not* have friends who have been in trouble with the police.

Figure 3.1 shows the levels of self-reported offending and drug use across these three distinct groups. Members of DYGs were significantly more likely to admit to committing a ‘core’ offence in the last year than non-members who have friends who have been in trouble with the police (63% compared with 43%). This pattern also held for serious and frequent offending and drug use, though the difference with regard to Class A drug use was not significant. More detailed results are presented in Table A3.2.

Similar to the patterns seen for offending and drug use across these three groups, feeling frequently drunk and involvement in alcohol-related incidents were more common in members of DYGs compared with non-members who have friends who have been in trouble with the police. However, the differences were not found to be statistically significant, possibly due to lower base numbers in these samples (Table A3.2).

The pattern also held for males and females and across age groups (see Table A3.3). This also shows that female members had consistently lower levels of offending than their male counterparts.

Figure 3.1: Levels of offending and drug use (10- to 19-year-olds) by membership of delinquent youth groups (DYGs) (OCJS, 2004)



Does membership of delinquent youth groups impact on offending behaviour once other factors are controlled for?

The previous analysis has indicated that offending is higher in those individuals belonging to a DYG. Moreover, it shows that this higher level of offending may not simply be related to mixing with delinquent friends, suggesting that there is something else about being in a group which is related to young peoples' offending behaviour.

What is still unknown at this stage is whether membership of a DYG by itself is connected with offending or whether it is other underlying factors related to being in such a group. We are also unable to say whether there is a causal relationship between belonging to a group and offending (e.g. are people in DYGs more likely to offend because of their being in the group or is it that offenders or potential offenders are more likely to join these groups?). However, the multivariate analysis presented below allows a more thorough analysis to identify those factors which, independent of the effect of other factors included in the model, provide the highest association with offending.

A range of socio-demographic and lifestyle variables was entered into the model, including a variable for membership of DYGs. As we are also interested in separating out the effects of being in such a group from the effects of merely having delinquent friends, the variable used in the model classifies respondents into three groups as discussed in the previous section (members, non-members who have friends in trouble with the police, and non-members whose friends have not been in trouble with the police). A forward stepwise technique was used to identify characteristics which were independently statistically associated with a higher likelihood of offending in 10- to 16-year-olds. (The model was restricted to 10- to 16-year-olds only as many of the questions related to respondents' parents and schooling were only asked of this age group. It is therefore possible that different factors may come out for older age groups.) Table 3.2 below presents the factors associated with offending and their odds ratios. Odds ratios with values above one relate to higher odds of offending and those with values below one relate to lower odds of offending (for a fuller explanation see note on logistic regression in Appendix C). The strongest associations¹⁵ in the model are: being a victim of crime, level of association with delinquent peers (i.e. having delinquent friends/ being in a DYG), having run away from home, being aged 15 to 16, attitude to criminal acts, parents have been in trouble with the police, and being male.

The model shows that the odds of being an offender are lower for non-members who do *not* have delinquent friends (i.e. their friends have not been in trouble with the police) compared with non-members who *have* delinquent friends (odds ratio of 0.6). Moreover, the odds of being an offender are higher for members of DYGs compared with non-members who *have* delinquent friends (odds ratio of 1.6).

Models were also constructed to identify factors related to 'serious' offending and to 'frequent' offending (see Appendix A Tables A3.4 and A3.5 respectively). These show a similar set of results, with the strongest associations consistently being: victim of crime, level of association with delinquent peers (i.e. having delinquent friends/ being in a DYG), and having run away from home. However, it should be noted that the higher odds (1.2) of 'serious' offending for group members compared with non-members who have delinquent friends was not statistically significant (Table A3.4).

¹⁵ The variables which have the strongest association are those where there is at least a one per cent increase in the percentage of variance explained by the model when the variable is added to the model.

Table 3.2: Factors associated with offending¹ (10- to 16-year-olds) (OCJS, 2004)

| Variables in model² | | Odds ratio |
|---|--|-------------------|
| * Age 15 to 16 | (reference: aged ten to 14) | 1.7 |
| * Males | (reference: females) | 1.7 |
| * Victim of personal crime | (reference: not been victim of personal crime) | 2.9 |
| * Attitude to certain criminal acts (more likely to agree ok) | (reference: less likely to agree ok) | 2.1 |
| * Disorder problems in local area | (reference: no disorder problems in local area) | 1.4 |
| Lives in 4 medium deprived areas | (reference: lives in 3 least deprived areas) | 1.2 |
| Lives in 3 most deprived areas | (reference: lives in 3 least deprived areas) | 1.1 |
| * Gets on badly with at least one parent | (reference: gets on well with both parents) | 2.1 |
| * Spends little or no free time with parents | (reference: spends some to all of free time with parents) | 1.4 |
| * Has run away from home | (reference: has not run away from home) | 2.0 |
| * Parents have been in trouble with police | (reference: parents have not been in trouble with police) | 1.9 |
| * Attitude to schooling (fairly or not very important) | (reference: very important) | 1.3 |
| * Perception of school (poor on teaching and discipline) | (reference: good on teaching and discipline) | 1.5 |
| * Would continue to spend time with friends who are getting you into trouble at home and/or with police (more likely) | (reference: less likely) | 1.3 |
| * Not in a DYG and no friends in trouble with police | (reference: not in DYG but has friends in trouble with police) | 0.6 |
| * In a DYG | (reference: not in DYG but has friends in trouble with police) | 1.6 |

Notes:

1. Offending is a dichotomous variable dividing respondents aged ten to 16 into those who have committed a 'core' offence in the last 12 months and those who have not.
2. Variables that did not appear in the model were: participation in formal clubs/groups; whether things to do in area; whether trust the police; housing tenure; whether being brought up by both natural parents or other arrangement; perception of parents (parenting skills); parental attitude to delinquent behaviours.
3. * indicates statistically significant effect.

Proportion of crime accounted for by members of delinquent youth groups (DYGs)

In addition to examining the prevalence of offending among young people who are classified as belonging to a DYG, it is also possible to identify the proportion of crimes measured that they account for. This has been examined in other research – the NEW ADAM survey of arrestees found that gang members (including current and past members) comprised 15 per cent of their sample of arrestees, but were responsible for 31 per cent of all offences reported (and 89% of all robberies); the Rochester Youth Development Study found that gang members accounted for a disproportionate share of delinquent and criminal acts. When the study examined periods of

'active' gang membership, it reported that gang members were on average responsible for about four times as many offences as you would expect given their share of the population (Thornberry *et al.*, 2003).

The OCJS analysis covers the 20 'core' offences for which detailed information on the number of incidents committed was collected. The OCJS estimates that the six per cent of 10- to 19-year-olds classified as members of a DYG were responsible for around a fifth (21%) of all core offences committed by this age group. Members of these groups were also responsible for a disproportionate share of serious offences (23%), violent offences (20%), and property offences (30%) committed by 10- to 19-year-olds (Table 3.3).

Table 3.3: Proportion of crime accounted for by members of delinquent youth groups (OCJS, 2004)

| <i>Percentage</i> | % of offences committed by individuals belonging to a DYG¹ | Unweighted base (offences committed by 10- to 19-year-olds) |
|----------------------------------|--|--|
| Any 'core' offence | 21 | 9,451 |
| Any property offence | 30 | 2,974 |
| Vehicle related theft | 34 | 536 |
| Burglary | 40 | 159 |
| Other miscellaneous theft | 27 | 1,836 |
| Criminal damage | 25 | 608 |
| Any violent offence | 20 | 5,276 |
| Assault with injury | 21 | 1,746 |
| Assault without injury | 20 | 3,621 |
| Robbery | - | <50 |
| Any drug selling offence | 22 | 1,972 |
| Any serious offence ² | 23 | 2,144 |

Notes:

1. DYG defined as young people who spend time in groups of 3 or more (including themselves), the group spends a lot of time in public places; the group has existed for 3 months or more; the group has engaged in delinquent or criminal activities together; and the group has at least 1 structural feature (name/area/leader/rules).

2. Serious offender classed as someone who has committed one of the following in the last 12 months: Theft of vehicle, burglary, robbery, theft from the person, assault with injury, selling Class A drugs.

These estimates make no allowance for double counting of incidents as a result of co-offending. Such double counting may be more likely to occur amongst members of groups who commit delinquent acts together.

Delinquency by groups acting together

Part of the definition of delinquent youth group (DYG) used in this report (see Box 1.1) is that the group must have committed at least some criminal or delinquent acts *together*. The OCJS asked respondents about a range of behaviours that *their group* have been involved in (listed in Table 3.4). Although most can be classed as illegal behaviour, some may not necessarily be (e.g. 'frightening people'). If respondents indicated that their group of friends had done at least one of these things together in the last 12 months (and that their group also met the other criteria specified), then they were classified as belonging to a DYG. This section describes the types of group offending/delinquency that are most common.

Table 3.4 compares the level of group delinquency for young people belonging to DYGs with young people in other groups. The latter are those who spend time with a group of friends but whose group does not meet all the required criteria for being classified as belonging to a DYG.

- The most common delinquent group activity carried out together was using drugs. A half (51%) of those belonging to a DYG said their group had used drugs together in the last year.
- Given this high proportion, it is useful to know the proportion of individuals belonging to DYGs whose group delinquent activity is based only around drug use and no other behaviour. Overall, 13 per cent fell into this category. A further 38 per cent had used drugs and committed at least one other behaviour. Almost half (49%) had not used drugs but engaged in the other behaviours.
- Other common activities were threatening or frightening people (40% of those in DYGs reported that their group had done this), graffiti (36%); breaking, damaging or destroying things (31%) and using force or violence (29%).
- Although drug selling and weapons are often considered a feature of 'gangs', the OCJS shows that these were relatively uncommon among the DYGs measured in the survey. Just under a fifth of those belonging to a DYG reported that their group had actually sold drugs (18%) or carried knives (17%) and four per cent had carried guns.
- Engagement in the illegal activities listed was generally higher among larger groups, although only significantly higher for graffiti (see Table A3.6).
- Levels of group offending were far lower among other youth groups of young people (i.e. those not classified as being in a DYG). This is not surprising as part of the criteria for belonging to a DYG was that the group has engaged in one of the delinquent activities listed. Only 17 per cent of young people in other groups engaged in at least one of the activities listed, most commonly drug use at nine per cent.

Table 3.4: Group level offending (10- to 19-year-olds) by membership of delinquent youth groups (OCJS, 2004)

| <i>Percentage</i> | Young people in DYGs¹ | Young people in other groups² |
|--|---|---|
| Threatened or frightened other people | 40 | 5 |
| Used force or violence on other people | 29 | 4 |
| Graffiti | 36 | 3 |
| Broken, damaged or destroyed things | 31 | 3 |
| Stolen things | 24 | 2 |
| Used violence or threats to steal from someone | 3 | <1 |
| Carried knives | 17 | 2 |
| Carried guns | 4 | <1 |
| Used drugs | 51 | 9 |
| Sold drugs to other people | 18 | 2 |
| Other crimes | 7 | 1 |
| <i>Unweighted base</i> | 239 | 2,376 |

Notes:

1. DYGs defined as young people who spend time in groups of 3 or more (including themselves), the group spends a lot of time in public places; the group has existed for 3 months or more; the group has engaged in delinquent or criminal activities together; and the group has at least 1 structural feature (name/area/leader/rules).

2. Other groups defined as young people who spend time in a group of 3 or more friends (including themselves), and whose group does not meet all of the required criteria for belonging to a delinquent youth group.

4 Factors associated with membership of delinquent youth groups

Other research

US research has examined the factors associated with gang membership. The contribution of the longitudinal self-report studies supported by Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention in this regard has been very significant. The data of three of these studies, the Seattle Social Development Project, Rochester Youth Study and the Pittsburgh Youth Study¹⁶, have provided the strongest evidence available about the risk factors for gang membership (Hill *et al.*, 2001; Thornberry *et al.*, 2003). The Seattle Social Development Project selected risk factors from five domains: neighbourhood, family, school, peers and individual characteristics. In particular, it identified the following childhood risk factors (at ages ten to 12) as being predictive of joining and remaining in a gang (at ages 13 to 18): antisocial influences in the neighbourhood; antisocial tendencies in families and peers; failure to perform well in school; and early initiation of individual problem behaviours. Risk factors related to remaining in the gang for longer periods were early signs of violent and externalising behaviour (aggression, oppositional behaviour, inattentive, hyperactive) and association with antisocial peers. Those who had experienced seven or more risk factors at ages ten to 12 were found to be 13 times more likely to have joined a gang by ages 13 to 18 (Hill *et al.*, 2001).

In similar vein to the findings from Seattle, the data from Rochester suggested that exposure to risk in multiple domains (school, family, peers, neighbourhood, and so on) greatly increases the person's vulnerability to gang membership. As Thornberry *et al.* (p.75) suggest, this "highlights the difficulties we face in trying to intervene with individual gang members, because they are likely to experience disadvantage in multiple developmental domains".

Some research has also raised the possibility that different risk factors may be at play for boys and girls. The Rochester Youth Study found that a much smaller number of risk factors concentrated in the school, peer relationships and prior problematic and delinquent behaviour domains were found to be significant for the girls compared with boys (nine out of a list of 40 risk factors in seven different domains as opposed to 25 out of the 40 for the boys). However, this effect may be partly due to the smaller number of female cases that could be analysed.

UK research has highlighted a similar set of risk factors as those identified in the US. Cross-sectional analysis¹⁷ of the Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime study suggests that family factors (being in care, single parent household, lower parental supervision, more frequent arguments with parents, more punishment from parents), individual factors (risk-taking, impulsivity, strength of moral beliefs), social class, lower attachment to school, and association with deviant peers seem to be associated with gang membership (Bradshaw, 2005). Other UK self-report studies (both the Youth Lifestyles Survey as well as the OCJS) have identified many of these factors as being associated with offending and antisocial behaviour (Flood-Page *et al.*, 2000; Budd *et al.*, 2005; Hayward and Sharp, 2005).

¹⁶ Seattle classified as gang members those who said they belonged to a gang and said that the gang has a name; Rochester used those who said that they were in a gang; and Pittsburgh used those who said that they belonged to a gang that was involved in delinquency.

¹⁷ Cross-sectional analysis is related to periods of active group membership. It is therefore not possible to identify whether these risk factors are antecedent to group membership or are consequences of group membership.

OCJS results

Initial bivariate analysis of the OCJS data examined the level of membership of delinquent youth groups (DYGs) across a range of different social, demographic and lifestyle characteristics. Table 4.1 shows the results for 10- to 16-year-olds (the analysis is limited to those aged from ten to 16 because many of the questions relating to parenting and schooling were only asked of this age group), and show where there is a significant difference in the level of group membership between respondents with particular attributes (e.g. membership was significantly higher among those living in areas with disorder problems compared with those living in areas with no disorder problems). Many of these 'risk' factors overlap with those highlighted in other US and UK studies. Certain factors within the 'family and friends' domain seem to be particularly associated with a higher prevalence of group membership. Thornberry and others (2003), in discussing a risk factor approach to gang membership, cite a variety of studies that have highlighted family and peer relationships as having a strong association with being a gang member. Certain characteristics under the 'lifestyle and behaviour' domain (e.g. those who have used drugs, been drunk frequently, have offended) also show a particularly high level of group membership, which is not surprising given that the DYGs in this report are partly defined by their engagement in delinquency (see definition in Box 1.1).

A similar pattern can be seen for both males and females separately (see Table A4.1).

Table 4.1: Membership of delinquent youth groups by socio-demographic and lifestyle factors (10- to 16-year-olds) (OCJS, 2004)

| | | % in DYGs ¹ | Unweighted base |
|---|---|---------------------------|--------------------|
| All 10- to 16-year-olds | | 6% (n=190) | 2,757 |
| Lifestyle and behaviour | | | |
| Being drunk | Not been drunk in last 12 months | 4 | 2,160 |
| | Been drunk in last 12 months | 20 * | 468 |
| Drug use | Not taken in last 12 months | 4 | 2,408 |
| | Taken drug in last 12 months | 24 * | 284 |
| Victim of crime | Not victim of any personal crime | 5 | 1,840 |
| | Victim of personal crime | 9 * | 917 |
| Attitude to certain criminal acts | Less likely to agree criminal acts are OK | 6 | 2,519 |
| | More likely to agree criminal acts are OK | 12 * | 221 |
| Whether ever arrested | Not been arrested | 6 | 2,633 |
| | Been arrested | 26 * | 113 |
| Whether participates in any after school clubs/activities | Participate in after school clubs/activities | 6 | 1,785 |
| | Do not participate in after school clubs/activities | 6 | 772 |
| Offender typology | Not offended in last year (reference) | 4 | 1,788 |
| | Offended but not serious or frequent | 11 * | 248 |
| | Serious or frequent offender in last year | 15 * | 258 |
| | Serious and frequent offender in last year | 18 * | 147 |

| | | | |
|--|--|------|-------|
| Whether antisocial behaviour in last year | Not committed ASB in last year | 3 | 1,825 |
| | Has committed ASB in last year | 15 * | 803 |
| Area factors | | | |
| Disorder problems in the area | No problems | 3 | 947 |
| | One or more problems | 8 * | 1,810 |
| Whether trust the police | Trust police | 5 | 2,178 |
| | Do not trust police | 13 * | 503 |
| Overall indicator of deprivation | 3 least deprived areas (reference) | 5 | 752 |
| | 4 medium deprivation areas | 6 | 1,020 |
| | 3 most deprived areas | 8 * | 783 |
| ACORN grouping | Wealthy achievers (reference) | 4 | 682 |
| | Urban prosperity | 7 | 178 |
| | Comfortably off | 6 * | 742 |
| | Moderate means | 8 * | 396 |
| | Hard pressed | 8 * | 725 |
| How much to do in the area | Quite a lot | 4 | 1,036 |
| | Not very much or nothing | 8 * | 1,715 |
| Economic | | | |
| Housing tenure | Owners | 6 | 1,984 |
| | Renters | 9 * | 767 |
| Whether receive free school meals | No | 6 | 2,259 |
| | Yes | 7 | 404 |
| Family and friends | | | |
| Whether get on with parents | Get on with parent(s) | 6 | 2,619 |
| | Get on badly with at least one parent | 20 * | 99 |
| Young person's perception of parents | Good parenting skills | 5 | 1,886 |
| | Poor parenting skills | 12 * | 153 |
| Young person's perception of parents' attitudes to delinquent behaviours | Parents perceived to have less relaxed attitude | 5 | 2,370 |
| | Parents perceived to have more relaxed attitude | 19 * | 147 |
| Free time spent with parents | Some to all of time | 5 | 2,248 |
| | Little or no time | 16 * | 405 |
| Whether has run away from home | No | 5 | 2,604 |
| | Yes | 38 * | 106 |
| Whether friends/siblings been in trouble with police in last year | No friends/siblings in trouble with police | 3 | 1,931 |
| | Has friends/siblings in trouble with police | 17 * | 701 |
| Who brings up | Both natural parents | 6 | 1,712 |
| | One natural parent (themselves/with step-parent) | 8 * | 1,007 |
| Whether parents ever been in trouble with police | No | 5 | 2,716 |
| | Yes | 14 * | 296 |

| School factors | | | | |
|---|--|--|------|-------|
| Whether ever truanted | No | | 5 | 2,368 |
| | Yes | | 21 * | 306 |
| Whether been suspended or expelled | Never | | 5 | 2,502 |
| | Have been suspended or expelled | | 20 * | 247 |
| Perception of school | School strong on teaching and discipline | | 5 | 1,940 |
| | School poor on teaching and discipline | | 15 * | 386 |
| Attitude to schooling | Very important | | 6 | 1,913 |
| | Fairly or not very or not at all important | | 8 | 777 |
| Commitment to deviant peers | | | | |
| Whether would continue to hang around with friends who got you in trouble at home | Definitely not or probably not | | 4 | 1,615 |
| | Definitely or probably | | 12 * | 901 |
| Whether would continue to hang around with friends who got you in trouble with police | Definitely not or probably not | | 5 | 2,274 |
| | Definitely or probably | | 18 * | 319 |

Notes:

1. DYG defined as young people who spend time in groups of 3 or more (including themselves), the group spends a lot of time in public places; the group has existed for 3 months or more; the group has engaged in delinquent or criminal activities together; and the group has at least 1 structural feature (name/area/leader/rules).

Ethnic group was also examined but the base number for some ethnic groups were below 50 and are therefore not presented.

Guidance on how to interpret the table: represents the percentage of 10- to 16-year-olds with particular attributes who are classified as belonging to a DYG e.g. 20 per cent of ten- to 16-year-olds who had been drunk in the last 12 months belong to a DYG.

*** indicates a significant difference between the categories; where more than two categories are present, a reference category has been indicated, whereby all other categories are compared with the reference category.

The results presented in Table 4.1 are based on bivariate analysis and do not take in account other confounding factors or correlations between factors. Although membership of DYGs may be relatively high for some respondents with a particular attribute, e.g. those who have run away from home, it is uncertain whether it is this attribute by itself that is connected with group membership or whether it is other underlying factors related to running away from home. Multivariate analysis enables identification of those factors which, independent of the effects of others, provide the highest association with membership of a DYG (see note on logistic regression in Appendix C).

A range of socio-demographic and lifestyle variables were entered into the multivariate model. A forward stepwise technique was used to identify characteristics which were independently statistically associated with a higher likelihood of group membership in 10- to 16-year-olds. (The model was restricted to those aged ten to 16 only as many of the questions related to respondents' parents and schooling were only asked of this age group. It is therefore possible that different factors may come out for older age groups.) Table 4.2 presents the factors associated with membership of DYGs and their odds ratios. Odds ratios with values above one relate to higher odds of being in a DYG and those with values below one relate to lower odds (for

a fuller explanation see note on logistic regression in Appendix C). The strongest association¹⁸ with group membership was found for having friends in trouble with the police; having run away from home; commitment to deviant peers; having been expelled or suspended from school; and being drunk on a frequent basis.

Table 4.2: Factors associated with membership of a delinquent youth group¹ (10- to 16-year-olds) (OCJS, 2004)

| Variables in the model ² | | Odds ratio |
|---|---|------------|
| * Age 15 to 16 | (Reference: age ten to 14) | 1.7 |
| Participated in after school club | (Reference: Did not participate in after school club) | 0.5 |
| * Been drunk more than once a month in the last year | (Reference: Been drunk once a month or less in the last year) | 2.2 |
| * Has been arrested | (Reference: Has not been arrested) | 1.9 |
| Little or nothing to do in local area | (Reference: Things to do in local area) | 1.5 |
| * Perception of parents (relaxed attitude to delinquent activities) | (Reference: less relaxed attitude to delinquent activities) | 2.2 |
| * Spends little or no free time with parents | (Reference: spends some to all free time with parents) | 1.7 |
| * Has run away from home | (Reference: has not run away from home) | 4.1 |
| * Friends been in trouble with the police | (Reference: friends have not been in trouble with the police) | 3.5 |
| * Parents have been in trouble with police | (Reference: parents have not been in trouble with police) | 1.8 |
| * Has been expelled or suspended from school | (Reference: has not been expelled or suspended) | 2.5 |
| * Would continue to spend time with friends who are getting you into trouble at home and/or with police (more likely) | (Reference: less likely) | 2.1 |

Notes:

1. The dichotomous variable to determine group membership divides respondents aged ten to 16 into those in a delinquent youth group (using definition in Box 2.1) and those not in a delinquent youth group (ie all other respondents in this age group).
2. Variables that did not appear in the model: gender, whether victim of crime; attitude to certain delinquent acts; whether problems in area; whether trust police; whether lives in area of deprivation; whether lives in rented/owned accommodation; whether being brought up by both natural parents or other arrangement; whether get on with parents; perception of parents (parenting skills); attitude to schooling; perception of school (teaching and discipline).

The model has identified ten variables as having a significant association with membership of DYGs. This is not to say that all the other variables entered into the model have no effect, as it is possible that some may have a weaker association with group membership. In addition, certain other variables, known to be associated with membership of such groups (such as offending and delinquent behaviour and drug use) were not included in the regression analysis because of their high correlation with many of the variables entered into the model.

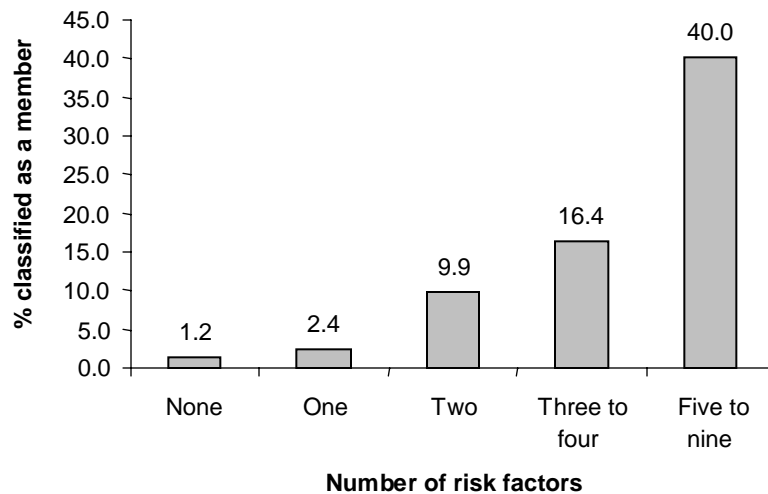
Separate models have been produced for males and females (see Tables A4.2 and A4.3 in Appendix A). Having friends in trouble with the police, having run away from home, and having been expelled or suspended display strong associations with membership of DYGs for both males and females. However, some differences in the models for males and females were found. Drinking behaviour and attitudes to certain delinquent acts were found to be associated with

¹⁸ The variables which have the strongest association are those where there is at least a 1% increase in the % of variance explained by the model when the variable is added to the model.

group membership in males, but not for females. Disorder problems in the area, whether there are things to do in the area, and perception of school in terms of teaching and discipline were found to be associated with group membership in females, but not males. (Note that some of these differences may be because certain variables were not included in the analysis for males and females due to low numbers: having been arrested (not included for females), whether get on with parents (not included for males), and perception of parents' parenting skills (not included for males)).

The impact of multiple risk factors on membership of DYGs or 'gangs' has been discussed earlier in the context of US studies. Figure 4.1 presents levels of group membership by the number of risk factors possessed by respondents. Respondents were scored on whether they possessed any of the factors highlighted as significant (excluding age) in the regression model above (Table 4.2). It shows clearly that group membership is more likely in those respondents possessing a combination of these factors. However, as also pointed out by Thornberry, even for those with a high number of factors, the majority are not in delinquent youth groups.

Figure 4.1: Membership of delinquent youth groups by number of risk factors (10- to 16-year-olds) (OCJS, 2004)



Note:

1. Unweighted sample sizes for No risk factors (1017); 1 risk factor (725); 2 risk factors (508); 3 to 4 risk factors (407); 5 to 9 risk factors (92).

The risk factor analysis presented is limited as it is based on cross-sectional data. It has allowed the authors to identify factors that are associated in some way with being in a DYG. A more in-depth assessment of risk factors would involve examining factors and characteristics that were present *before* an individual joined a DYG, in order to say that individuals with these characteristics were at higher risk of joining such a group.

5 Characteristics of delinquent youth groups

Young people who said they had a group of friends were asked various questions about the size and composition of the group and whether the group had certain characteristics. The results presented below are based on those young people in groups that were classified as being 'delinquent youth groups' (DYG) (based on the definition in Box 1.1). Comparisons are made with 'young people in other groups' (i.e. those who spend time with a group of friends but this group did not meet the definition of a DYG).

Group size and composition

Table 5.1 shows the size and the composition of the DYGs measured in the survey in terms of gender, age and ethnic group. The main patterns are shown here.

- Groups varied in size, but the majority (90%) of those belonging to DYGs said their groups had between six and 50 members. A third (32%) had between six and ten members, 27 per cent between 11 and 19 members, 30 per cent between 20 and 50 members, and nine per cent fewer than five members. The average size was 16 (median was 13).^{19 20}
- About four in ten (42%) who were classified as being in a DYG described their group as being 'half boys half girls'. Almost a half (48%) said their group comprised of 'all' or 'mostly boys'. Only one in ten (10%) were 'all' or 'mostly' girls.
- A quarter (25%) who were classified as being in a DYG said their group only included young people aged between 12 and 15, with around a further quarter (27%) only involving young people aged between 16 and 18. A further 20 per cent involved young people across these two age bands.
- Although the majority of those classified as members of a DYG said their group was ethnically homogeneous (60 per cent of groups were White only, three per cent Black only, and five per cent Asian only), about a third (31%) of members said their group included a mix of different ethnic groups.
- Compared with those in DYGs, 'other groups' of young people were more likely to be smaller (an average group size of ten, with 75% comprising less than 11 people); more likely to involve girls (30% were all or mostly girls); were more likely to involve younger people (almost a fifth involved young people under the age of 12); and were less likely than DYGs to involve a mix of ethnic groups.²¹

¹⁹ Values over 100 were excluded from the mean due to skew.

²⁰ Esbensen and Weerman (2005), comparing US gangs with those in the Netherlands' found average sizes of 34 in the Netherlands and 61 in the US. These results are not directly comparable with the OCJS as they differ on survey design and have used different measures of gang membership.

²¹ Qualitative and archival studies conducted in Manchester have suggested that English gangs tend to be young, ethnically mixed, and mostly male (Mares, 2001; Bullock and Tilley, 2002). Given the very different nature of these studies, again it is difficult to make comparisons with OCJS results.

Table 5.1: Group size and composition (OCJS, 2004)

| <i>Percentage</i> | Young people in DYGs¹ | Young people in other groups² |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|
| <i>Group size</i> | | |
| 3 to 5 | 9 | 35 |
| 6 to 10 | 32 | 40 |
| 11 to 19 | 27 | 14 |
| 20 to 50 | 30 | 10 |
| 51 to 100 | 1 | 1 |
| More than 100 | 1 | <1 |
| Mean number of group members | 16 | 10 |
| <i>Unweighted base</i> | 220 | 2,000 |
| <i>Group composition³</i> | | |
| All boys | 12 | 19 |
| Mostly boys | 35 | 21 |
| Half boys half girls | 42 | 30 |
| Mostly girls | 6 | 14 |
| All girls | 4 | 16 |
| Younger than 10 | - | 2 |
| 10 to 11 | 9 | 17 |
| Between 12 and 15 | 55 | 46 |
| Between 16 and 18 | 64 | 39 |
| Between 19 and 25 | 18 | 18 |
| Older than this | 2 | 2 |
| Between 12 and 15 only | 25 | 34 |
| Between 16 and 18 only | 27 | 23 |
| White only | 60 | 68 |
| Black only | 3 | 1 |
| Asian only | 5 | 3 |
| Mix of different ethnic groups | 31 | 24 |
| <i>Unweighted base</i> | 239 | 2,376 |

Notes:

1. DYG defined as young people who spend time in a group of 3 or more (including themselves), the group spends a lot of time in public places; the group has existed for 3 months or more; the group has engaged in delinquent or criminal activities together; and the group has at least 1 structural feature (name/area/leader/rules).

2. Other groups defined as young people who spend time in a group of 3 or more friends (including themselves), and whose group does not meet all of the required criteria for belonging to a delinquent youth group.

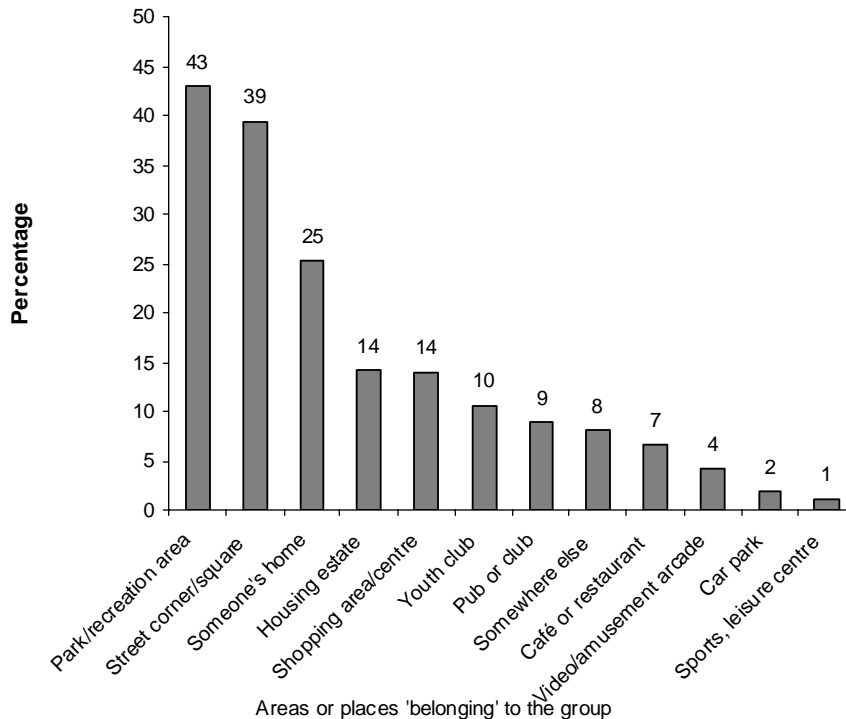
3. Group composition by age does not sum to 100 per cent as respondents could indicate more than one age category if appropriate.

Presence of structural features

OCJS respondents were asked whether their group had particular structural features: whether it had an area or place it called its own, and whether it had a name, a leader or rules (Table A5.1). By definition groups had to have at least one of these structural features to be classified as a DYG.

- The majority of young people classified as being in a DYG reported that their group had an area or place (88%); a third (33%) said their group had a name; almost four in ten (38%) that their group had a leader and 14 per cent that their group had rules or codes for members.²²
- The possession of an area or place the group 'called its own' was by far the most common feature of DYGs. Of groups who said they had an area or place, this was most often an open public space such as a 'park or recreation ground' (mentioned by 43%) or a 'street corner or square' (mentioned in 39%). However, a quarter mentioned 'someone's home' (Figure 5.1).
- Of those group members who said their group had an area or place, around a fifth (19%) reported that other groups were not allowed into this area, with 16 per cent saying their group used force, 17 per cent threats and nine per cent other means to defend the area (Table A5.1).
- Just over half (54%) of young people in DYGs said their group had only one of these structural features; 26 per cent said their group had two and 20 said their group had three or four. Structural features were more common in larger groups – 26 per cent of those belonging to DYGs with 11 or more members had three to four structural features; the equivalent for those belonging to groups comprising three to ten people was 11 per cent.

Figure 5.1: Areas or places the groups call their own (OCJS, 2004)



²² Research comparing US gangs with those in the Netherlands found that the presence of rules or leaders was reported by three-quarters of US gang members and only 40 per cent of gang members in the Netherlands (Esbensen and Weerman, 2005). The results of these studies are not directly comparable with OCJS results.

Group durability

Only groups that had existed for three or more months could be classified as a DYG according to the definition adopted.

- Around a half (47%) of respondents identified as belonging to DYGs said their group had existed for between one and five years, with a further fifth (19%) saying between five and ten years (Table A5.3).
- In 45 per cent of cases the DYG had existed before the respondent had joined it, while in 50 per cent of cases the group formed at the time the respondent joined (Table A5.4).
- A fifth of respondents in DYGs said they had been with the group for less than a year; 17 per cent had been with the group for between one and two years; 39 per cent had been with the group for between two and five years. Almost a quarter (24%) of respondents in DYGs said they had been with their group for longer than five years (Table A5.5).

Concluding remarks

This report has provided the first set of nationally representative results on the extent of membership of delinquent youth groups in young people aged ten to 19 years in England and Wales. It has shown that a minority of young people (6%) belong to such groups, and that they engage in mostly low level offending behaviour, with only a minority of those six per cent having engaged in serious or frequent offending (34% and 28% respectively). However, a higher proportion of those who are members of delinquent youth groups commit offences compared with others of the same age.

This report has focussed on the prevalence of the problem and on the offending behaviour of young people belonging to delinquent youth groups. There may be potential in the future for further analysis, for example, on reasons for joining delinquent youth groups (questions on this have been added to later waves of the OCJS). In addition, the OCJS 2004 data will be deposited in the Data Archive at Essex University.

Appendix A: Additional tables

The definition of 'delinquent youth groups' (DYGs) in the following tables relates to:

- young people who spend time in groups of three or more (including themselves);
- the group spend a lot of time in public places;
- the group has existed for three months or more;
- the group has engaged in delinquent or criminal behaviour together in the last 12 months;
- the group has at least one structural feature (either a name, an area, a leader, or rules).

Comparison groups are either:

- 'young people not in DYGs' i.e. all other young people aged ten to 19
- 'young people in other groups' i.e. young people who spend time with a group of two or more others but their group does not meet all the criteria required for being classed as a DYG.

Table A3.1: Drug use in the last year (10- to 19-year-olds) by membership of delinquent youth groups (OCJS, 2004)

| Percentage | Young people in DYGs ¹ | Young people not in DYGs |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Amphetamines | 7 * | 1 |
| Cannabis | 44 * | 14 |
| Cocaine | 4 | 2 |
| Crack | - | - |
| Ecstasy | 7 * | 2 |
| Heroin | - | - |
| Acid | 6 * | 1 |
| Amyl Nitrite | 10 * | 2 |
| Glue | 3 | 1 |
| Any Drug | 45 * | 15 |
| Class A | 11 * | 3 |
| Heroin/Cocaine/ Crack | 4 | 2 |
| <i>Base n</i> | 231 | 3,503 |

Notes:

1. DYG defined as young people who spend time in groups of 3 or more (including themselves), the group spends a lot of time in public places; the group has existed for 3 months or more; the group has engaged in delinquent or criminal activities together (which may include drug use); and the group has at least 1 structural feature (name/area/leader/rules); 'other young people' are those who have not been classified as being in a delinquent youth group.

'**' indicates significantly different from 'young people not in DYGs'.

Table A3.2 Prevalence of core offending in the last year (10- to 19-year-olds) by membership of delinquent youth groups (OCJS, 2004)

| <i>Percentage</i> | Young people in DYGs | Young people not in DYGs but have friends in trouble with police | Young people not in DYGs and do not have friends in trouble with police |
|---|-------------------------|---|---|
| CORE OFFENDING | | | |
| Any 'core' offence | 63 * | 43 | 22 |
| Any property offence | 46 * | 28 | 11 |
| Vehicle related theft | 12 * | 5 | 1 |
| Burglary | 5 | 2 | 1 |
| Other miscellaneous theft | 35 * | 20 | 9 |
| Criminal damage | 25 * | 11 | 3 |
| Any violent offence | 44 * | 29 | 15 |
| Assault with injury | 29 * | 21 | 10 |
| Assault without injury | 31 * | 19 | 9 |
| Robbery | 1 | 1 | <1 |
| Any drug selling offence | 12 * | 6 | 1 |
| TYPE OF OFFENDER | | | |
| Serious offender | 34 * | 23 | 10 |
| Frequent offender | 28 * | 15 | 5 |
| Frequent serious offender | 7 * | 3 | 1 |
| OTHER BEHAVIOURS | | | |
| Noisy or rude | 56 * | 34 | 13 |
| Neighbour complaints | 27 * | 18 | 11 |
| Graffiti | 19 * | 8 | 3 |
| Racially motivated abuse | 4 | 2 | 1 |
| Racially motivated attack | - | <1 | <1 |
| Joy riding | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| Carrying a knife | 13 * | 7 | 3 |
| Carrying a gun | 1 | <1 | <1 |
| DRUG USE | | | |
| Any drug | 45 * | 27 | 12 |
| Any Class A drug | 11 | 7 | 2 |
| Heroin, crack or cocaine | 4 | 5 | 1 |
| ALCOHOL MISUSE & ALCOHOL RELATED | | | |
| Felt drunk more than once a month in last year | 28 | 21 | 9 |
| Involved in alcohol-related incident | 25 * | 16 | 4 |
| <i>Unweighted base</i> | 226 | 724 | 2600 |

Notes:

1. DYG defined as young people who spend time in groups of three or more (including themselves), the group spends a lot of time in public places; the group has existed for three months or more; the group has engaged in delinquent or criminal activities together; and the group has at least one structural feature (name/area/leader/rules); those 'not in DYGs' are the remaining 10- to 19-year-olds.
2. Serious offender classed as someone who has committed one of the following in the last 12 months: Theft of vehicle, burglary, robbery, theft from the person, assault with injury, selling Class A drugs.
3. Frequent offender is someone who has committed six or more offences in the last year.
4. Frequent serious offender is someone who has committed a serious offence six or more times in the last year.
5. Unweighted bases differ slightly for each offence depending on the number of respondents answering 'Don't know' or 'Refused'.

** indicates significantly different from 'young people not in delinquent youth groups who have friends in trouble with police'.

Table A3.3: Prevalence of core offending in the last year (10- to 19-year-olds) by gender, age and by membership of delinquent youth groups (OCJS, 2004)

| <i>Percentage</i> | Young people in DYGs ¹ | Young people not in DYGs but have friends in trouble with police | Young people not in DYGs and do not have friends in trouble with police |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| Males | | | |
| Any offence | 71 * | 49 | 28 |
| Serious offender ² | 40 * | 27 | 14 |
| Frequent offenders ³ | 37 * | 19 | 7 |
| Any drug | 48 * | 29 | 13 |
| Class A drug | 13 | 8 | 2 |
| <i>Base n</i> | 104 | 388 | 1,253 |
| Females | | | |
| Any offence | 53 * | 36 | 16 |
| Serious offender | 27 | 18 | 7 |
| Frequent offenders | 20 | 10 | 3 |
| Any drug | 41 * | 25 | 11 |
| Class A drug | 9 | 7 | 2 |
| <i>Base n</i> | 103 | 291 | 1,254 |
| 10 to 14 | | | |
| Any offence | 57 * | 36 | 19 |
| Serious offender | 31 | 18 | 10 |
| Frequent offenders | 24 * | 9 | 5 |
| Any drug | 22 * | 6 | 2 |
| Class A drug | 3 | <1 | <1 |
| <i>Unweighted base</i> | 87 | 236 | 1,356 |
| 15 to 19 | | | |
| Any offence | 66 * | 47 | 25 |
| Serious offender | 36 | 26 | 11 |
| Frequent offenders | 31 * | 18 | 5 |
| Any drug | 58 * | 38 | 24 |
| Class A drug | 16 | 11 | 5 |
| <i>Unweighted base⁴</i> | 120 | 443 | 1,151 |

Notes:

1. DYG defined as young people who spend time in groups of three or more (including themselves), the group spends a lot of time in public places; the group has existed for three months or more; the group has engaged in delinquent or criminal activities together; and the group has at least one structural feature (name/area/leader/rules); those 'not in DYGs' are the remaining 10- to 19-year-olds.

2. Serious offender classed as someone who has committed one of the following in the last 12 months: Theft of vehicle, burglary, robbery, theft from the person, assault with injury, selling Class A drugs.

3. Frequent offender is someone who has committed six or more offences in the last year.

4. Unweighted bases differ slightly for each offence depending on the number of respondents answering 'Don't know' or 'Refused'.

** indicates significantly different from 'young people not in delinquent youth groups who have friends in trouble with police'.

Table A3.4: Factors associated with serious offending¹ (10- to 16-year-olds) (OCJS, 2004)

| Variables in the model ² | Odds ratio |
|---|--|
| * Age 15 to 16 | (reference: aged ten to 14) 1.5 |
| * Males | (reference: females) 1.9 |
| * Victim of personal crime | (reference: not been victim of personal crime) 2.8 |
| * Attitude to certain criminal acts (more likely to agree OK) | (reference: less likely to agree OK) 2.0 |
| * Little or nothing to do in local area | (reference: things to do in area) 1.4 |
| * Does not trust the police | (reference: trusts the police) 1.7 |
| * Gets on badly with at least one parent | (reference: gets on well with both parents) 2.1 |
| Lives in four medium deprived areas | (reference: lives in three least deprived areas) 1.2 |
| Lives in three most deprived areas | (reference: lives in three least deprived areas) 1.1 |
| * Perception of parents (poor parenting skills) | (reference: good parenting skills) 1.9 |
| * Spends little or no free time with parents | (reference: spends some to all of free time with parents) 1.6 |
| * Has run away from home | (reference: has not run away from home) 2.1 |
| * Parents have been in trouble with police | (reference: parents have not been in trouble with police) 1.7 |
| * Not in a DYG and no friends in trouble with police | (reference: not in DYG but has friends in trouble with police) 0.7 |
| In a DYG | (reference: not in DYG but has friends in trouble with police) 1.2 |

Notes:

1. Serious offending is a dichotomous variable dividing respondents aged ten to 16 into those who have committed a 'serious' offence in the last 12 months and those who have not. Only 10- to 16-year-olds were used in the model as a wider range of variables (e.g. schooling and parenting) were only asked of this age group.

2. Variables that did not appear in the model were: participation in formal clubs/groups; whether disorder problems in area; housing tenure; whether being brought up by both natural parents or other arrangement; perception of parents (attitudes to delinquent behaviours); attitudes to schooling; perception of school (teaching and discipline); commitment to deviant peers.

** indicates statistically significant effect.

Table A3.5: Factors associated with frequent offending¹ (10- to 16-year-olds) (OCJS, 2004)

| Variables in the model² | | Odds ratio |
|---|--|-------------------|
| * Age 15 to 16 | (reference: aged ten to 14) | 1.7 |
| * Males | (reference: females) | 2.1 |
| * Victim of personal crime | (reference: not been victim of personal crime) | 2.2 |
| * Attitude to certain criminal acts (more likely to agree OK) | (reference: less likely to agree OK) | 2.0 |
| Lives in four medium deprived areas | (reference: lives in three least deprived areas) | 1.4 |
| * Lives in three most deprived areas | (reference: lives in three least deprived areas) | 1.6 |
| * Lives in rented accommodation | (reference: lives in owner-occupied accommodation) | 0.7 |
| * Perception of parents (poor parenting skills) | (reference: good parenting skills) | 2.6 |
| * Has run away from home | (reference: has not run away from home) | 2.7 |
| * Parents have been in trouble with police | (reference: parents have not been in trouble with police) | 2.7 |
| * Attitude to schooling (fairly or not very important) | (reference: very important) | 1.7 |
| * Would continue to spend time with friends who are getting you into trouble at home and/or with police (more likely) | (reference: less likely) | 1.8 |
| Not in a DYG and no friends in trouble with police | (reference: not in DYG but has friends in trouble with police) | 0.7 |
| *In a DYG | (reference: not in DYG but has friends in trouble with police) | 2.3 |

Notes:

1. Frequent offending is a dichotomous variable dividing respondents aged ten to 16 into those who have committed an offence 6 or more times in the last 12 months and those who have not. Only 10- to 16-year-olds were used in the model as a wider range of variables (e.g. schooling and parenting) were only asked of this age group.

2. Variables that did not appear in the model were: participation in formal clubs/groups; whether disorder problems in area; whether things to do in area; whether trust police; whether being brought up by both natural parents or other arrangement; whether get on with parents; perception of parents (attitude to delinquent behaviours); whether spend free time with parents; attitude to schooling.

** indicates statistically significant effect.

Table A3.6: Offending carried out together in delinquent youth groups (DYG)¹ by group size (OCJS, 2004)

| <i>Percentage</i> | 3 to 10 members | 11 or more members |
|--|------------------------|---------------------------|
| Threatened or frightened other people | 33 | 47 |
| Used force or violence against other people | 23 | 34 |
| Graffiti (written things or sprayed paint on things) | 25 | 42 * |
| Broken, damaged or destroyed things | 28 | 32 |
| Stolen things | 24 | 23 |
| Used violence or threats to steal from someone | 2 | 5 |
| Carried knives | 15 | 17 |
| Carried guns | 3 | 4 |
| Used drugs | 43 | 57 |
| Sold drugs to other people | 15 | 22 |
| Other crimes | 8 | 7 |
| <i>Unweighted base</i> | 98 | 123 |

Notes:

1. DYG defined as young people who spend time in groups of three or more (including themselves), the group spends a lot of time in public places; the group has existed for three months or more; the group has engaged in delinquent or criminal activities together; and the group has at least one structural feature (name/area/leader/rules).

** indicates statistically significant at five per cent level.

Table A4.1: Membership of delinquent youth groups (DYG)¹ by socio-demographic and lifestyle variables (10- to 16-year-olds² by gender) (OCJS, 2004)

| | | % in DYG (males) | % in DYG (females) | Unweighted base males | Unweighted base females |
|---|---|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Lifestyle and behaviour | | | | | |
| Being drunk | Not been drunk in last 12 months | 4 | 5 | 1,153 | 1,007 |
| | Been drunk in last 12 months | *22 | *18 | 225 | 243 |
| Drug use | Not taken in last 12 months | 4 | 5 | 1,278 | 1,130 |
| | Taken drug in last 12 months | *24 | *25 | 138 | 146 |
| Victim of crime | Not victim of any personal crime | 5 | 5 | 878 | 962 |
| | Victim of personal crime | 7 | *10 | 572 | 345 |
| Attitude to certain criminal acts | Less likely to agree criminal acts are OK | 5 | 7 | 1,307 | 1,212 |
| | More likely to agree criminal acts are OK | *12 | 11 | 131 | 90 |
| Whether participates in any after school clubs/activities | Participate in after school clubs/activities | 6 | 7 | 954 | 831 |
| | Do not participate in after school clubs/activities | 6 | 6 | 382 | 390 |
| Offender typology | Not offended in last year (reference) | 3 | 4 | 870 | 918 |
| | Offended but not serious or frequent | 7 | *15 | 142 | 106 |
| | Serious or frequent offender in last year | *12 | *21 | 161 | 97 |
| | Serious and frequent offender in last year | *18 | — | 101 | <50 |
| Whether antisocial behaviour in last year | Not committed ASB in last year | 2 | 3 | 928 | 897 |
| | Has committed ASB in last year | *13 | *18 | 457 | 346 |
| Area factors | | | | | |
| Disorder problems in the area | No problems | 3 | 3 | 494 | 453 |
| | One or more problems | *8 | *9 | 956 | 854 |
| Whether trust the police | Trust police | 5 | 5 | 1,129 | 1,049 |
| | Do not trust police | *12 | *15 | 280 | 223 |
| Overall indicator of deprivation | 3 least deprived areas (reference) | 5 | 5 | 414 | 338 |
| | 4 medium deprivation areas | 5 | 7 | 531 | 489 |
| | 3 most deprived areas | 8 | 8 | 408 | 375 |
| ACORN grouping | Wealthy achievers (reference) | 4 | 3 | 359 | 323 |
| | Urban prosperity | 5 | 8 | 95 | 83 |
| | Comfortably off | 5 | *7 | 388 | 354 |
| | Moderate means | 6 | *11 | 204 | 192 |
| | Hard pressed | *9 | *7 | 383 | 342 |
| How much to do in the area | Quite a lot | 5 | 2 | 583 | 453 |
| | Not very much or nothing | 7 | *9 | 863 | 852 |
| Economic | | | | | |
| Housing tenure | Owners | 5 | 6 | 1,050 | 934 |
| | Renters | 8 | 9 | 398 | 369 |

| | | | | | |
|---|--|-----|-----|-------|-------|
| Whether receive free school meals | No | 6 | 6 | 1,176 | 1,083 |
| | Yes | 6 | 9 | 221 | 183 |
| Family and friends | | | | | |
| Young person's perception of parents | Good parenting skills | 5 | 6 | 1,012 | 874 |
| | Poor parenting skills | 8 | 15 | 76 | 77 |
| Young person's perception of parents' attitudes to delinquent behaviours | Parents perceived to have less relaxed attitude | 5 | 6 | 1,237 | 1,133 |
| | Parents perceived to have more relaxed attitude | *19 | *18 | 79 | 68 |
| Free time spent with parents | Some to all of time | 5 | 5 | 1,168 | 1,080 |
| | Little or no time | *14 | *18 | 215 | 190 |
| Whether has run away from home | No | 5 | 5 | 1,364 | 1,240 |
| | Yes | *30 | *47 | 56 | 50 |
| Whether friends/siblings been in trouble with police in last year | No friends/siblings in trouble with police | 2 | 3 | 727 | 690 |
| | Has friends/siblings in trouble with police | *16 | *18 | 363 | 338 |
| Who brings up | Both natural parents | 6 | 5 | 890 | 822 |
| | One natural parent (themselves/with step-parent) | 7 | *10 | 536 | 471 |
| Whether parents ever been in trouble with police | No | 5 | 5 | 1,135 | 1,041 |
| | Yes | 11 | *17 | 156 | 140 |
| School factors | | | | | |
| Whether been suspended or expelled | Never | 5 | 6 | 1,283 | 1,218 |
| | Have been suspended or expelled | *17 | *25 | 162 | 85 |
| Perception of school | School strong on teaching and discipline | 6 | 4 | 1,019 | 821 |
| | School poor on teaching and discipline | 10 | *21 | 206 | 180 |
| Attitude to schooling | Very important | 5 | 6 | 959 | 954 |
| | Fairly or not very or not at all important | 8 | 9 | 448 | 329 |
| Commitment to deviant peers | | | | | |
| Whether would continue to hang around with friends who had got you in trouble at home | Definitely not or probably not | 5 | 3 | 826 | 789 |
| | Definitely or probably | *10 | *15 | 484 | 417 |
| Whether would continue to hang around with friends who had got you in trouble with police | Definitely not or probably not | 4 | 6 | 800 | 1,116 |
| | Definitely or probably | *10 | *20 | 513 | 122 |

Notes:

1. DYG defined as young people who spend time in groups of three or more (including themselves), the group spends a lot of time in public places; the group has existed for three months or more; the group has engaged in delinquent or criminal activities together; and the group has at least one structural feature (name/area/leader/rules).

2. Only data for 10- to 16-year-olds is presented as many of the variables on schooling and parenting were only asked of this age group.

** indicates a significant difference between the categories; where more than two categories are present, a reference category has been indicated, whereby all other categories are compared with the reference category.

Ethnic group was also examined but the base number for some ethnic groups were below 50 and are therefore not presented.

Guidance on how to interpret the table: represents the percentage of males and females with particular attributes who are classified as belonging to a delinquent youth group e.g. 22 per cent of males who had been drunk in the last 12 months belong to a DYG.

Table A4.2: Factors associated with membership of delinquent youth groups (males aged from ten to 16¹) (OCJS, 2004)

| Variables in the model ² | Odds ratio |
|---|---|
| * Aged 15 to 16 | (reference: aged 10 to 14) 3.1 |
| Does not participate in after school clubs | (reference: does participate in after school clubs) 0.6 |
| * Been drunk in the last year | (reference: not been drunk in the last year) 6.7 |
| * Has been arrested | (reference: has not been arrested) 2.8 |
| * Attitude to certain criminal acts (more likely to agree OK) | (reference: less likely to agree) 2.4 |
| * Has run away from home | (reference: has not run away from home) 2.8 |
| * Friends have been in trouble with the police | (reference: friends have not been in trouble with the police) 3.9 |
| * Has been expelled or suspended from school | (reference: has not been expelled or suspended from school) 3.5 |
| * Would continue to spend time with friends who are getting you into trouble at home and/or with police (more likely) | (reference: less likely) 1.6 |

Notes:

1. Only 10- to 16-year-olds were used in the model as a wider range of variables (e.g. schooling and parenting) were only asked of this age group.

2. Variables that did not appear in the model were: whether victim of crime, whether problems in local area; whether things to do in area; whether trust police; whether lives in deprived area; whether lives in rented/owned accommodation; whether being brought up by both natural parents or other arrangement; perception of parents (parenting skills); perception of parents (attitude to certain delinquent acts); whether spend free time with parents; whether parents ever in trouble with police; attitude to schooling; perception of school (teaching and discipline).

* indicates statistically significant effect.

Table A4.3: Factors associated with membership of delinquent youth groups (females aged from ten to 16¹) (OCJS, 2004)

| Variables in the model² | | Odds ratio |
|---|---|-------------------|
| * Disorder problems in local area | (reference: no disorder problems in local area) | 1.9 |
| * Little or nothing to do in local area | (reference: things to do in local area) | 2.6 |
| * Has run away from home | (reference: has not run away from home) | 6.8 |
| * Friends have been in trouble with the police | (reference: friends have not been in trouble with the police) | 2.6 |
| * Has been expelled or suspended from school | (reference: has not been expelled or suspended from school) | 3.4 |
| * Perception of school (poor on teaching and discipline) | (reference: good on teaching and discipline) | 3.1 |
| * Would continue to spend time with friends who are getting you into trouble at home and/or with police (more likely) | (reference: less likely) | 3.2 |

Notes:

1. Only 10- to 16-year-olds were used in the model as a wider range of variables (e.g. schooling and parenting) were only asked of this age group.

2. Variables that did not appear in the model were: age group; whether participates in after school club; whether been drunk; whether victim of crime; attitude to certain delinquent acts; whether trust police; whether lives in deprived area; whether lives in rented/owned accommodation; whether being brought up by both natural parents or other arrangement; whether get on with parents; perception of parents (parenting skills); perception of parents (attitude to certain delinquent acts); whether spend free time with parents; whether parents ever in trouble with police; attitude to schooling.

* indicates statistically significant effect.

Table A5.1: Structural features present in delinquent youth groups and other groups of young people (10- to 19-year-olds) (OCJS, 2004)

| <i>Percentage</i> | Young people in DYGs¹ | Young people in other groups² |
|---|---|---|
| Group has an area or place | 88 | 18 |
| Group has a name | 33 | 9 |
| Group has a leader | 38 | 10 |
| Group has rules/codes | 14 | 7 |
| Groups has at least one of these features | 100 | 28 |
| Group has no features | - | 73 |
| Group has 1 feature only | 54 | 18 |
| Group has 2 features only | 26 | 4 |
| Group has 3 or 4 features | 20 | 5 |
| <i>Unweighted base</i> | 237 | 2,211 |

Notes:

1. DYG defined as young people who spend time in groups of three or more (including themselves), the group spends a lot of time in public places; the group has existed for three months or more; the group has engaged in delinquent or criminal activities together; and the group has at least one structural feature (name/area/leader/rules).

2. Other groups defined as young people who spend time with a group of three or more friends (including themselves), and whose group does not meet all of the required criteria for belonging to a DYG.

Table A5.2: Whether other groups are allowed into the area, and whether area is defended using force, threats or other methods (10- to 19-year-olds) (OCJS, 2004)

| <i>Percentage</i> | Young people in DYGs ¹ | Young people in other groups ² |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| Others not allowed in area | 19 | 12 |
| Defended using force | 16 | 11 |
| Defended using threats | 17 | 5 |
| Defended using other things | 9 | 6 |
| <i>Unweighted base</i> | 209 | 407 |

Notes:

1. DYG defined as young people who spend time in groups of three or more (including themselves), the group spends a lot of time in public places; the group has existed for three months or more; the group has engaged in delinquent or criminal activities together; and the group has at least one structural feature (name/area/leader/rules).

2. Other groups defined as young people who spend time with a group of three or more friends (including themselves), and whose group does not meet all of the required criteria for belonging to a DYG.

Table A5.3: Length of time existed by membership of delinquent youth groups (10- to 19-year-olds) (OCJS, 2004)

| <i>Percentage</i> | Young people in DYGs ¹ | Young people in other groups ² |
|---|-----------------------------------|---|
| Less than three months | - | 6 |
| From three months to less than one year | 12 | 12 |
| From one year to less than five years | 47 | 40 |
| From five years to less than ten years | 19 | 15 |
| From ten years to less than 20 years | 10 | 4 |
| 20 years or more | 1 | 1 |
| Don't know | 11 | 20 |
| <i>Unweighted base</i> | 239 | 2,376 |

Notes:

1. DYG defined as young people who spend time in groups of three or more (including themselves), the group spends a lot of time in public places; the group has existed for three months or more; the group has engaged in delinquent or criminal activities together; and the group has at least one structural feature (name/area/leader/rules).

2. Other groups defined as young people who spend time with a group of three or more friends (including themselves), and whose group does not meet all of the required criteria for belonging to a delinquent youth group.

Table A5.4: Did the group exist before you joined? (10- to 19-year-olds) (OCJS, 2004)

| <i>Percentage</i> | Young people in DYGs ¹ | Young people in other groups ² |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| Yes | 45 | 31 |
| No | 50 | 57 |
| Don't know | 5 | 12 |
| <i>Unweighted base</i> | 239 | 2,376 |

Notes:

1. DYG defined as young people who spend time in groups of 3 or more (including themselves), the group spends a lot of time in public places; the group has existed for 3 months or more; the group has engaged in delinquent or criminal activities together; and the group has at least 1 structural feature (name/area/leader/rules).

2. Other groups defined as young people who spend time with a group of 3 or more friends (including themselves), and whose group does not meet all of the required criteria for belonging to a delinquent youth group.

Table A5.5: Time with the group (10- to 19-year-olds) (OCJS, 2004)

| <i>Percentage</i> | Young people in DYGs¹ | Young people in other groups² |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| Less than one year | 20 | 24 |
| One year to less than two years | 17 | 20 |
| Two years to less than five years | 39 | 38 |
| Five years to less than ten years | 15 | 13 |
| Ten years or more | 9 | 4 |
| <i>Unweighted base</i> | <i>229</i> | <i>2,157</i> |

Notes:

1. DYG defined as young people who spend time in groups of three or more (including themselves), the group spends a lot of time in public places; the group has existed for three months or more; the group has engaged in delinquent or criminal activities together; and the group has at least one structural feature (name/area/leader/rules).

2. Other groups defined as young people who spend time with a group of three or more friends (including themselves), and whose group does not meet all of the required criteria for belonging to a DYG.

Appendix B: Definitional issues

Definitional issues

Traditionally researchers have measured gang involvement using a self-definition approach. Some have relied solely on the self-definition criteria alone, by simply asking survey participants to report if they belong to a gang. This approach has commonly been used in self-report offending surveys in the United States (eg. Esbensen *et al.*, 2001; Hill *et al.*, 2001; Thornberry and Burch, 1997) but it is problematic in that it relies on respondents' understandings and perceptions of 'gangs' which may vary considerably. For example, a respondent may participate in low-level delinquency with a group of friends but not consider this to be a 'gang' if they view gangs as more highly organised criminal networks. Conversely, some young people may call their group of friends a 'gang' even if they do not participate in any delinquent activities.

Other researchers have employed various techniques to help overcome the subjective nature of the self-definition approach. For example, they have provided respondents with a definition to use when answering the question. Alternatively, some have used 'additional filters' in conjunction with a self-definition question. So survey participants who say that they belong to a gang are also asked additional questions to validate their classification as gang members. The precise nature of the additional criteria employed has varied among research projects: being in a gang that has a name (in the Seattle Social Development Project), being in a gang with a name and a territory (in the New Adam Evaluation), being in a gang that participates in fights or illegal activities (in the Denver Youth Study), being in a gang that has a name, participates in illegal or illicit activity, and exhibits some of a list of cultural elements e.g. leaders, initiation, tattoos (Winfrey *et al.*, 1994).

The extent to which some of these additional filters are necessary has also been debated. Some gang researchers seem to accept that, at least in the US – where the term 'gang' perhaps has a more precise cultural meaning - the self-definition measure on its own, although imperfect, is not much worse from a construct and discriminant validity point of view than the use of self-definition measures in companion with additional filters specifying behavioural, cultural or structural features of gangs (Esbensen *et al.*, 2001). In addition, since many researchers use additional criteria that vary from one study to the next, prevalence figures become difficult to compare once these additional criteria are taken into account.

Nevertheless, the utility of incorporating additional filters rather than relying solely on self-definition alone is clear, especially outside of the US context, where there may be more ambiguity about the term 'gang'. The estimate of the size of the problem will vary considerably for definitions using only self-defined 'gang' groups compared with those which also apply additional filters and will therefore have implications "in terms of resource allocation, not to mention public hysteria" (Esbensen *et al.* 2001, p. 124).

The approaches described above are those in which 'self-definition' is a key theme. However, the approach adopted by the Eurogang Network (an influential group of international experts in gang research²³) does not use self-definition, but rather allows the use of a combination of criteria (similar to the 'additional filters' described above) to classify people as belonging to gangs. Respondents are asked a range of questions about their group, four of which are used in the construction of a definition: that the group has existed for three months or more; that it is street-based; that the group thinks it is OK to do illegal things; and that the group has done illegal things together.

²³ The Eurogang Network was formed with the remit of agreeing consistent definition, questions and methodologies to allow comparative international gang research. For more information see website at: <http://www.umsl.edu/~ccj/eurogang/euroganghome.htm>

Definition used in UK research

The few pieces of British research that have tried to quantify the extent of gangs by means of self-report surveys have, for the most part, relied on self-definitional measures in companion with some additional filters.²⁴ Bennett and Holloway (2004) used data from the NEW-ADAM (New English and Welsh Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring) self-report survey to provide prevalence data on gang membership. The study used a sample of 2,725 arrestees aged 17 and over in 14 different sites throughout the country. They asked the following question to the participants in the study: 'In some areas, there are local gangs that sometimes have names or other means of identification and cover a particular geographic area or territory. Do you belong to, or have you ever belonged to, a local gang of this kind?'. Four per cent of arrestees said that they were currently members of a gang and 11 per cent said that they had been members of a gang in the past.

The charity Communities that Care (2005) recently published the 2004 Safer London Youth Survey. This self-report survey used a sample of 11,400 young people aged 11 to 15 living in six areas of London. The data were gathered through group-administration in secondary schools and pupil referral units. The survey asked young people how many friends they usually 'hang around with'; whether they would call their group of friends 'a gang'; whether the group/gang has a name of its own; and whether the group/gang has a territory or turf of its own. Considering membership of a gang as belonging to a gang with a name and territory, about four per cent of the young people that participated in the study were classified as gang members.

Another study that has tried to quantify the extent of youth gang involvement is the Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime (ESYTC). This longitudinal self-report offending study covers a full cohort including approximately 4,300 children who were due to start secondary schools in Edinburgh in 1998. Data on gang membership have been reported from sweep two, when the participants were approximately 13-years-old. The ESYTC first asked participants, "How many friends do you usually go about with at once?" with three set of responses 'one or two', 'a group of between three and five', and 'a group of six or more'. Those who answered with either of the last two responses were then asked if they would call their group of friends a gang, whether this gang had a name and whether it had any special signs or sayings. About 13 per cent of the cohort considered their group of friends to be a gang, 3.5 per cent were in a gang that either have a name or have special signs or sayings, and 3.3 per cent were in gangs that have both a name and special signs or sayings (Bradshaw, 2005).

It is important to note that none of the British self-report surveys discussed above use 'participation in illegal activities' as an additional filter to define their gang groups. Therefore, their findings do not necessarily relate to 'delinquent' groups, and cannot be directly compared with OCJS findings.

Constructing the definition for analysis of OCJS data

As discussed in the preceding chapter, the OCJS data provides the opportunity to define delinquent youth groups or 'gangs' in different ways. First, the many criteria relating to group nature, structure and activities can be used to construct different definitions of such groups. Second, the self-defined measure (whether respondents themselves considered their group to be a 'gang') can be examined.

²⁴ An earlier attempt to quantify gangs in the UK was based on a survey of police practitioners. Stelfox (1996) conducted a postal survey of all police forces in the UK with the exception of the RUC. Out of the 51 forces identified, 16 reported a gang problem in their territory. Stelfox (1998, p. 398) defined gangs as "any group who uses violence or the threat or fear of violence to further a criminal purpose, but excluding football hooligans and terrorists".

Analysis was undertaken to examine the impact that changes in definition had on the percentage of young people who were identified as belonging to a 'delinquent youth group' (DYG) and any potential problems with the criteria employed. This showed that the proportion of young people classified as belonging to a group varied depending on the definition adopted. However, the broad patterns in terms of the types of young people most likely to belong to a group and the types of activities they engaged in are similar regardless of the definition used.

Table B.1 shows the various definitions that can be constructed using the OCJS data. The first five are constructed using a range of criteria. Group 1 is the original definition derived by the Eurogang Network, whilst Groups 2 to 5 are variations on this (the shaded column Group 3 is the definition used in the main text of this report). All five groups are similar in that they require the group to have been involved in at least one of the delinquent or criminal behaviours asked about in the last 12 months.²⁵ Finally, the Self-Defined group comprises those who have answered yes to the question 'do you consider your group to be a gang'?

Table B.1: Various group definitions (10- to 19-year-olds) (OCJS, 2004)

| Criteria for gang | Group 1 ¹ | Group 2 | Group 3 | Group 4 | Group 5 | Self Defined |
|--|----------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------------|
| Spend lot of time together in public | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| Group existed for three months or more | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| Group considers it OK to do illegal things | ✓ | | | | ✓ | |
| Group has done an illegal thing together in last 12 months | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Group has at least one structural feature (name/area/leader/rules) | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Respondent considers the group to be a 'gang' | | | | | | ✓ |
| <i>Number in group</i> | 133 | 414 | 239 | 327 | 96 | 426 |
| <i>% of 10- to 19-year-olds</i> | 3 | 10 | 6 | 8 | 2 | 10 |

Notes:

1. Official Eurogang criteria used to define a 'gang'.

Impact on prevalence

The most stringent definition, including all of the five criteria (but not including the self-definition), resulted in an estimate of two per cent of young people aged ten to 19 belonging to a delinquent youth group (see column five in the table above). Further analysis, however, indicated some problems with the criteria relating to acceptance of delinquent activity. Seventeen per cent of those who said that their group did *not* believe it was OK to engage in illegal activities then went on to admit that the group had in fact committed illegal activities together when presented with a list of various activities.²⁶ This may suggest that respondents have different perceptions of illegality, and perhaps did not consider some of the activities listed when answering the first question. In addition, respondents may find it difficult to comment on the views of the group as a

²⁵ Respondents were asked whether their group had done any of the following together in the last 12 months: threatened or frightened other people; used force or violence against other people; graffiti; broken, damaged or destroyed things; stolen things; used violence or threats to steal from someone; carried knives; carried guns; used drugs; sold drugs to other people.

²⁶ The equivalent figure for those answering 'Don't know' to this question was 47 per cent.

whole. Moreover, respondents may appear to wish to demonstrate in their answer that they 'know' right from wrong.²⁷ The requirement that the group considers it 'OK' to do illegal things was therefore dropped in the definition of 'delinquent youth group' that was used in the main text of this report (Group 3 in the table above).

As discussed earlier in this section, many previous self-report offending surveys have used the self-definition approach (directly asking respondents whether they considered their group to be a 'gang') to identify the extent of 'gang' membership. Using this measure, the OCJS estimates 10 per cent of 10- to 19-year-olds as belonging to a 'gang'.²⁸ This figure is higher than that obtained by using the definition of 'delinquent youth groups' adopted throughout this report (6%), which is not surprising given the more restrictive criteria used for defining these groups. Given the problems with the self-definition approach discussed earlier, it has not been used in the main text of this report.

The various groups constructed from the criteria outlined in Table B.1 were examined to discover what proportion of their members actually self-defined their group as a 'gang' (self-definition). Table B.2 shows that half or less than half of each group have defined themselves in this way. Moreover, 45 per cent of the self-defined gang group said their group had not engaged in any illegal activities together. These highlight the problems of using the subjective self-defined approach. As discussed below and shown in Table B.3, young girls aged from ten to 13 are particularly more likely to say their group is a 'gang' when asked, and self-defined 'gangs' tend to be younger with more female members compared with groups which meet the criteria listed under Group 3 of Table B.1.

Table B.2: Proportion of the various groups who define themselves as belonging to a 'gang' (OCJS, 2004)

| Percentage | Group 1 | Group 2 | Group 3 | Group 4 | Group 5 |
|-----------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| % who say their group is a 'gang' | 38 | 33 | 44 | 39 | 50 |
| Base n | 133 | 414 | 239 | 327 | 96 |

Table B.3 shows group membership by age and gender across the range of possible group definitions. The analysis highlighted several issues.

- Overall prevalence based on the original Eurogangs definition (Group 1) was three per cent. However, further exploration of the criteria and the impact on the numbers defined as a gang resulted in dropping 'the group believes it is OK to do illegal things'. This had the effect of increasing the number of young people classified as belonging to a gang (from 133 to 414).
- The inclusion of structural features, in addition to the three remaining Eurogangs criteria (existed for three months or more; spends a lot of time in public places; has engaged in delinquent behaviour) reduced the proportion of young people who were classified as belonging to a gang (from 414 to 239).
- Prevalence for males and females is fairly similar across Groups 1 to 5. However, for the self-defined group, a significantly higher proportion of females believed their group to be

²⁷ Work by Matza and others (1964) suggests that although most criminals do not think it is acceptable to commit crimes, they still go on to commit them.

²⁸ This figure is slightly lower than that obtained in other self-report surveys such as the ESYTC, the Denver Youth Survey, the Seattle Social Development Project and the National Evaluation of G.R.E.A.T. (13.1%, 14%, 15% and 17% respectively) and considerably lower than that reported in the Rochester cohort (30%). However, these differences are likely to stem from important methodological differences relating to sample design and population.

a 'gang'. The self-defined group also differed on age, and shows that younger respondents are more likely to define their groups as 'gangs'.

Table B.3: Group membership by age and gender (10- to 19-year-olds) (various definitions) (OCJS, 2004)

| <i>Percentage</i> | | 10 to 11 | 12 to 13 | 14 to 15 | 16 to 17 | 18 to 19 | 10 to 15 | 16 to 19 | All 10 to 19 |
|----------------------------|------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Group 1 | M | <1 | 1 | 5 | 7 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 3 |
| | F | 1 | 3 | 8 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 3 |
| | All | <1 | 2 | 6 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 3 |
| Group 2 | M | 4 | 7 | 18 | 16 | 7 | 10 | 12 | 10 |
| | F | 2 | 10 | 20 | 12 | 4 | 11 | 8 | 10 |
| | All | 3 | 9 | 19 | 14 | 6 | 10 | 10 | 10 |
| Group 3 | M | 1 | 3 | 11 | 11 | 3 | 5 | 7 | 6 |
| | F | 2 | 6 | 12 | 8 | 1 | 7 | 5 | 6 |
| | All | 2 | 4 | 12 | 9 | 2 | 6 | 6 | 6 |
| Group 4 | M | 2 | 5 | 14 | 15 | 10 | 7 | 13 | 9 |
| | F | 2 | 7 | 15 | 9 | 2 | 8 | 6 | 7 |
| | All | 2 | 6 | 14 | 13 | 6 | 8 | 9 | 8 |
| Group 5 | M | <1 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| | F | 1 | 3 | 6 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| | All | <1 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| Self- defined | M | 9 | 11 | 14 | 8 | 3 | 11 | 5 | 9 |
| | F | 14 | 21 | 16 | 8 | 1 | 17 | 5 | 12 |
| | All | 12 | 16 | 15 | 8 | 2 | 14 | 5 | 11 |
| <i>Unweighted base</i> | | | | | | | | | |
| | <i>M</i> | 268 | 478 | 469 | 434 | 335 | 1,215 | 675 | 1,984 |
| | <i>F</i> | 256 | 408 | 440 | 419 | 320 | 1,104 | 739 | 1,843 |
| | <i>All</i> | 524 | 886 | 909 | 853 | 655 | 2,319 | 1,508 | 3,827 |

Impact on group size and composition

Table B.4 shows that groups 1 to 5 were fairly similar on group size and composition. However the self-defined group were more likely to have fewer members, to say their group were 'all girls' and to be younger. This is not surprising given that this group has not been defined using any 'illegal activities' criteria.

Table B.4: Group size and composition (various definitions) (OCJS, 2004)

| <i>Percentage</i> | Group 1 | Group 2 | Group 3 | Group 4 | Group 5 | Self-defined |
|------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------|
| 3 to 5 | 15 | 17 | 9 | 13 | 8 | 24 |
| 6 to 10 | 27 | 34 | 32 | 33 | 27 | 32 |
| 11 to 19 | 22 | 23 | 27 | 26 | 25 | 23 |
| 20 to 50 | 35 | 24 | 30 | 26 | 39 | 20 |
| 51 to 100 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| More than 100 | - | <1 | 1 | <1 | - | - |
| Mean number of group members | 16 | 14 | 16 | 15 | 17 | 13 |
| <i>Unweighted base</i> | <i>125</i> | <i>374</i> | <i>220</i> | <i>299</i> | <i>91</i> | <i>357</i> |
| All boys | 16 | 14 | 12 | 16 | 14 | 14 |
| Mostly boys | 36 | 34 | 35 | 37 | 35 | 23 |
| Half boys half girls | 40 | 37 | 42 | 38 | 46 | 35 |
| Mostly girls | 6 | 10 | 6 | 6 | 4 | 14 |
| All girls | 1 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 14 |
| Younger than 10 | - | <1 | - | 1 | - | 2 |
| Between 10 and 11 | 7 | 9 | 9 | 7 | 9 | 22 |
| Between 12 and 15 | 46 | 56 | 55 | 50 | 50 | 64 |
| Between 16 and 18 | 69 | 58 | 64 | 61 | 69 | 35 |
| Between 19 and 25 | 18 | 16 | 18 | 22 | 18 | 9 |
| Older than this | 0 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | - |
| <i>Unweighted base</i> | <i>133</i> | <i>414</i> | <i>239</i> | <i>327</i> | <i>96</i> | <i>425</i> |

Note: the %s for the age bands do not sum to 100% as more than one answer could be given.

Impact on individual offending behaviour

Table B.5 shows the offending reported by individual members of each group. The self-defined 'gang' group were less likely to have committed an offence compared with all other groups (40% compared with 59% to 69% in the other groups). This pattern holds for different offence groups. The self-defined group were also less likely to be classified as serious or frequent offenders, and less likely to have committed three or more different types of offence group.

Table B.5: Core offending (10- to 19-year-olds) across various groups (OCJS, 2004)

| <i>Percentage</i> | Group 1 | Group 2 | Group 3 | Group 4 | Group 5 | Self-defined |
|--------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Any offence | 67 | 59 | 63 | 62 | 69 | 40 |
| Drug offence | 20 | 9 | 12 | 12 | 22 | 6 |
| Vehicle theft | 15 | 10 | 12 | 11 | 16 | 6 |
| Criminal damage | 31 | 21 | 25 | 22 | 34 | 11 |
| Burglary | 8 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 11 | 4 |
| Other theft | 40 | 32 | 35 | 33 | 44 | 17 |
| Violent offence ¹ | 50 | 41 | 44 | 43 | 53 | 29 |
| Serious offence ² | 43 | 34 | 34 | 34 | 44 | 23 |
| Frequent offender ³ | 39 | 26 | 28 | 30 | 42 | 16 |
| 3 or more offence groups | 30 | 18 | 21 | 18 | 34 | 9 |
| <i>Unweighted base</i> | <i>124</i> | <i>387</i> | <i>226</i> | <i>310</i> | <i>90</i> | <i>398</i> |

Notes:

1. Violent offences: assault with and without injury, robbery.

2. Serious offence: theft of vehicle, burglary, robbery, theft from the person, assault with injury, selling Class A drugs.

3. Frequent offender is someone who has committed six or more offences in the last year.

Appendix C: Methodology

The Offending, Crime and Justice Survey is conducted jointly by National Centre for Social Research and BMRB Social Research. Both agencies collaborate with the Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Directorate in its design. The methodology is outlined below. Further details can be found in the Technical Reports for the 2003 and 2004 sweeps (Hamlyn *et al.*, 2004; Hamlyn *et al.*, 2005).

Further details about the OCJS and published reports can be accessed at:
http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/offending_survey.html

OCJS design

This report focuses on the results from the 2004 OCJS, the second wave of the survey. 4,259 people aged ten to 25 who were interviewed in 2003 said they were willing to be re-contacted in the future (representing 93% of the original 2003 sample). They were approached about 12 months after their first interview to see if they were willing to participate in the 2004 survey.²⁹ Eighty-two per cent of them were interviewed in 2004 giving a total 'panel' sample of 3,489 people (3,363 were aged ten to 25 at the time of the 2004 interview). This sample was supplemented with a total of 1,842 new respondents aged ten to 25. The 'fresh' sample was introduced to ensure that the achieved sample was at least 5,000 respondents and to keep the sample nationally representative.³⁰

The OCJS was also conducted in 2005 and 2006 using the same design as in 2004. About 5,000 young people are interviewed in each sweep. Each year those aged from ten to 25 at the time of their first interview are followed up, while new respondents aged from ten to 25 are introduced to 'top up' the sample. The questions on membership of delinquent youth groups (DYGs) are also included in 2005 and 2006.

Questions on membership of groups

Young people aged from ten to 19 were asked the questions relating to membership of groups (n=3,827).

The OCJS provides the first national measure of young people in 'delinquent youth groups' (DYGs) for England and Wales. It is based on questions developed by the Eurogang Network (a network of researchers with expertise in 'gangs' research), which are designed to provide a sophisticated measure of 'gang' involvement.³¹ Respondents are asked a series of questions about their group of friends, covering the characteristics of the group, where they meet, and what things they do together, including delinquent and criminal activities. The term 'gang' itself is not used until the end of the set of questions when respondents are asked the 'classic' self-definition

²⁹ Panel respondents were interviewed, where possible, in the same month as their 2003 interview. If this was not possible, for example because they were unavailable, they were interviewed in subsequent months to ensure no overlap in recall.

³⁰ A total of 16,830 addresses were issued to identify sufficient households containing those aged from ten to 25. The response rate was 69 per cent – this is a 'best' estimate.

³¹ The questions were thoroughly tested by the Eurogang Network (on youth samples in the US, Netherlands and Norway) and were then tested again for use in the OCJS through cognitive piloting. The cognitive piloting resulted in a few minor changes to the original questions to ensure they were relevant and understandable in the UK context. An early version of the Eurogangs questions has already been used in a study in the Netherlands (Esbensen and Weerman, 2005).

question 'Do you consider this group of people we have been talking about to be a gang?' The full set of questions used in the OCJS are included at Appendix D.³²

This approach allows researchers to assess the extent to which the group (regardless of whether the respondent thinks the group is a 'gang') meets various objective criteria that might be considered as elements required for the group to constitute a gang. It also means that there is no need to use the self-definition criteria as part of the operational definition of a gang. This is particularly helpful from a comparative perspective since in many languages there is not a straightforward translation of the term 'gang'. The criteria that are used to construct the definition of 'delinquent youth group' used throughout this report are listed below.

- Durability of the group (i.e. the group has existed for three months or more).
- The group is street-orientated (spends a lot of time in public places).
- Involvement in group level delinquent or criminal activity.
- The group has features of being organised or structured (has at least one structural feature from name/place/leader/rules).

Methodological considerations

The OCJS was designed to take on board lessons from previous self-report offending surveys and incorporates some innovative techniques to improve the quality of the data collected. However, several methodological issues warrant discussion as they bear on how the results presented in this report are interpreted.

Sample coverage

The 2004 OCJS covered young people resident in private households in England and Wales. It omitted those living in communal or institutional establishments, such as custodial institutions, residential homes, hospitals and hostels, and the homeless. A feasibility study commissioned by the Home Office concluded that the inclusion of such establishments would not significantly impact on overall offending and drug use estimates because these groups form such a small proportion of the overall population. Furthermore to be implemented successfully in some establishments the OCJS questionnaire and procedures would have required substantial modification (the feasibility study report can be accessed at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/offending_survey.html). It was therefore concluded that a full-scale communal establishment survey was not warranted, and that consideration should instead be given to bespoke surveys with specific groups of interest.

The results therefore relate to the general household population aged from ten to 25 only. As such, and because of the limited sample size, it is likely to under-represent more serious offenders/members of groups involved in more serious criminal activities, and is best seen as providing a measure of 'delinquent youth groups'.

Offence coverage

The survey does not cover all legal offences. In particular very serious offences including homicide and sexual offences are omitted. The main focus of the OCJS was on 20 core offences, and the wording of questions on these was carefully considered to reflect legal definitions in simple, understandable language (see Box C.1 for list of offences covered). However, it should

³² Some of the questions used for the OCJS slightly depart from the Eurogangs officially sanctioned questions.

be recognised that within any of these legal categories the nature of the incident could vary greatly.

The survey also covered some other offences - for example, fraud and handling stolen goods, but in less detail.

Box C.1: Core offences

| | |
|--|---|
| Vehicle-related thefts Theft of a vehicle Attempted theft of a vehicle Theft of parts from outside of vehicle Theft of items inside a vehicle Attempted theft from vehicle | Other thefts Theft from the person Theft from place of work Theft from school Theft from shop Other theft |
| Criminal damage Criminal damage to a vehicle Other criminal damage | Assaults Assaults resulting in injury Assaults not resulting in injury |
| Burglary Burglary of a dwelling Burglary of commercial premises | Selling drugs Selling Class A drugs Selling other drugs |
| Robbery Personal robbery Commercial robbery | |

Sampling error

This report is based on a sample of the general household population aged from ten to 25, and estimates are therefore subject to sampling error. That is, the results obtained may differ from those that would be obtained if the entire population of interest had been interviewed. Statistical theory enables us to calculate the degree of error. Throughout this report tests at the five per cent significance levels have been applied (the level at which there is a one in 20 chance of an observed difference being solely due to chance), unless otherwise specified.

Non-response bias

Despite the high response rates achieved, it may be that non-respondents differ in key respects from those who took part. For example, young people with particularly chaotic or active lifestyles are less likely to be at home, making contact more difficult and refusal more likely. There is evidence from other research that non-respondents tend to be more antisocial than respondents (see Farrington *et al.*, 1990). Not much is known about those who did not respond to the 2003 OCJS. However, a comparison of offending behaviour in those who dropped out from 2003 to 2004 with those who took part in both years was possible. This found little difference in their 'last year' offending profile (as measured in 2003). The only significant difference was that 'drop-outs' were less likely to have admitted an assault in the 2003 sweep than panel participants.

A non-response model was developed and used in the construction of weights. For both the fresh and panel sample this involved weights to adjust the distribution to that of the 2003 OCJS. In addition for the panel sample a model was constructed to identify characteristics associated with attrition between 2003 and 2004 and this was used to compute non-response weights.

Weighting

Given the complex sample design, a sophisticated weighting system was adopted to restore the representativeness of the sample. Initially separate weights were constructed for the panel and fresh samples respectively. For both samples the first stage was to apply weights for known unequal selection probabilities (relating to the selection of addresses, households and individuals within households) and then for non-response. The panel sample required a further stage of weighting to account for the attrition between sweeps 1 and 2. The samples were then combined and calibration weighting applied to ensure that the sample distributions on age, sex and Government Office Region matched population distributions. For more details on weighting see Technical Reports for the 2003 and 2004 sweeps (Hamlyn *et al.*, 2004; Hamlyn *et al.*, 2005).

Accuracy of responses

A key issue is whether respondents give truthful and accurate answers when asked about their offending. Some may deliberately conceal their involvement in offending, while some may choose to exaggerate. Others may be unable to remember whether incidents fell within the defined recall period, or may find it difficult to recollect exactly how many times they had offended. Despite these potential problems, it is generally accepted that self-reports are reliable and valid indicators of delinquency and offending (Farrington *et al.*, 1996; Hindelang *et al.*, 1981).

Several measures were taken in the OCJS to encourage respondents to provide truthful and accurate answers. Interviewers reminded respondents of the confidentiality of their answers and CASI and Audio CASI were used to reinforce this. The questionnaire was designed to encourage respondents to admit to behaviours and the importance of the recall period was impressed upon them. While these measures cannot guarantee all respondents provided accurate and truthful answers, the evidence is encouraging. At the end of the interview 96 per cent of respondents said they answered all questions on offending truthfully with a further three per cent saying they had answered most truthfully. The figures are similar for drug use. Looking at those classed as belonging to 'delinquent youth groups' (DYGs), these figures were 88 per cent and ten per cent respectively (Table C.1).

The analysis presented in this report is based on all respondents regardless of whether they said they answered all offending questions truthfully or not. Analysis was undertaken excluding those who said they had not been completely truthful. However, this did not affect the overall last year prevalence rates or alter the age related patterns.

Table C.1: Honesty in answering offending and drug use questions (main sample)

| Percentages | Offending questions | | Drug use questions | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|---------------|--------------------|---------------|
| | All truthful | Most truthful | All truthful | Most truthful |
| Males | | | | |
| 10-to 11-year-olds | 100 | - | 99 | 1 |
| 12-to 13-year-olds | 93 | 3 | 93 | 3 |
| 14-to 15-year-olds | 91 | 6 | 92 | 6 |
| 16-to 17-year-olds | 93 | 4 | 92 | 5 |
| 18-to 19-year-olds | 94 | 4 | 94 | 5 |
| 20-to 21-year-olds | 94 | 5 | 93 | 6 |
| 22-to 23-year-olds | 97 | 2 | 96 | 2 |
| 24-to 25-year-olds | 97 | 3 | 93 | 6 |
| Females | | | | |
| 10-to 11-year-olds | 99 | 3 | 98 | 1 |
| 12-to 13-year-olds | 96 | 4 | 97 | 2 |
| 14-to 15-year-olds | 95 | 4 | 95 | 4 |
| 16-to 17-year-olds | 96 | 3 | 95 | 5 |
| 18-to 19-year-olds | 97 | 1 | 97 | 2 |
| 20-to 21-year-olds | 98 | 1 | 96 | 3 |
| 22-to 23-year-olds | 99 | - | 97 | 3 |
| 24-to 25-year-olds | 99 | 1 | 97 | 2 |
| In DYGs (10- to 19-year-olds) | 88 | 10 | 87 | 12 |
| Not in DYGs (10- to 19-year-olds) | 97 | 3 | 97 | 3 |

Note on logistic regression

Logistic regression is a multivariate statistical technique which examines whether an underlying factor (e.g. age, sex, socio-economic status) that is thought to be linked with the dependent variable of interest (e.g. being an offender) is statistically important once other underlying factors are controlled for. A whole range of factors may be predictors of whether someone is an offender, but these factors may also be related to each other. Logistic regression allows one to examine whether an underlying variable has a significant effect in its own right on the variable of interest.

Regression models based on social survey data will only explain a small part of the variance in the dependent variable, because it is not possible to capture all of the possible relevant information. Where the attribute to be predicted (e.g. offending in the last year) is rare in the population, the model often predicts that no-one will have the attribute. Such models are still useful, however, as they can show the extent to which having one attribute (e.g. being male) appears to increase the chances of having another attribute (e.g. having offended in the last year).

The forward stepwise logistic regression described in this report selects those variables, in order of their strength of prediction, that are statistically associated with the dependent variable independently of the other variables included in the model. This does not imply a causal relationship, and care is needed in selecting variables for inclusion.

The odds ratios that are produced show the change in relative odds of experiencing a particular event (e.g. offending in the last year) if the value of the variable under consideration is increased by one unit (controlling for all other independent variables). Where odds ratios are higher than one, respondents with that particular attribute have relatively higher odds of offending in the last year, for example, than those who do not have this attribute. Conversely, odds ratios of less than

one indicate relatively lower odds of offending in the last year for the group with that particular attribute.

As the odds ratio increases the relative risk of the event also increases. However, the change in odds should not be interpreted as the change in the relative risk (e.g. an odds ratio of two does not mean that the relative risk of an event is doubled). For example, if two groups, having respective risks of 75 per cent and 60 per cent for a particular outcome, have an odds ratio equal to two (i.e. the respective odds are 3:1 and 6:4 and the odds ratio is $(3/1)/(6/4)=2$). Similarly, two groups with respective risks of 33 per cent and 20 per cent also have an odds ratio equal to two (i.e. $(1/2)/(1/4)=2$; the respective odds are 1:2 and 1:4).

Appendix D: OCJS questions on membership of groups

- H2Hng1* [ASK IF L1Age=10-19 AND H1Mate=1-3]
Now thinking about your friends. If your friends were getting you into trouble at home, would you still hang out with them?
1. Definitely
 2. Probably
 3. Probably not
 4. Definitely not
 5. Don't know
 6. Don't want to answer
- H2Hng2* [ASK IF L1Age=10-19 AND H1Mate=1-3]
And if your friends were getting you into trouble with the police, would you still hang out with them?
1. Definitely
 2. Probably
 3. Probably not
 4. Definitely not
 5. Don't know
 6. Don't want to answer
- H2Club* [ASK IF L1Age=10-19 AND H1Mate=1-3]
{H2Club01, H2Club02, H2Club03, H2Club04, H2Club05, H2Club06, H2Club07, H2Club08}
Are you a member of any of the following? You can choose more than one answer if you want to
1. Sports teams
 2. Youth group/youth club
 3. School clubs
 4. Scouts/guides/cubs/brownies
 5. Any other formal team or group
 6. None of the above
 7. Don't know
 8. Don't want to answer
- H2Grop* [ASK IF L1Age=10-19 AND H1Mate=1-3]
As well as formal groups like these, some people have a certain group of friends that they spend time with, doing things together or just hanging out. Do you have a group of friends like that?
1. Yes
 2. No
 3. Don't know
 4. Don't want to answer

H2Num [ASK IF H2Grop=1]
Including yourself, about how many people belong to this group?
ENTER NUMBER

TYPE IN 999 FOR DON'T KNOW
TYPE IN 888 FOR DON'T WANT TO ANSWER

H2Gend [ASK IF H2Num>=3]
Which of the following best describes this group?
1. All boys
2. Mostly boys
3. About half boys, half girls
4. Mostly girls
5. All girls
6. Don't know
7. Don't want to answer

H2Ages [ASK IF H2Num>=3]
{H2Ages01, H2ages02, H2ages03, H2ages04, H2Ages05, H2Ages06,
H2Ages07, H2Ages08}
Thinking of all the people in the group, how old are they?
You can choose more than one answer if you want to.
1. Younger than 10
2. Between 10 and 11
3. Between 12 and 15
4. Between 16 and 18
5. Between 19 and 25
6. Older than this
7. Don't know
8. Don't want to answer

H2Ethn [ASK IF H2Num>=3]
{H2Ethn01, H2Ethn02, H2Ethn03, H2Ethn04, H2Ethn05, H2Ethn06, H2Ethn07,
H2Ethn08}
Which of the following categories describe the members of the group.
You can choose more than one answer if you want to.
1. White
2. Black
3. Asian
4. Or from another ethnic group
5. Don't know
6. Don't want to answer

H2Tog [ASK IF H2Num>=3]
Does this group spend a lot of time together in public places like the park, the
street, shopping areas or the neighbourhood?
1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know
4. Don't want to answer

- H2Area* [ASK IF H2Num>=3]
Does this group have any areas or places that it calls its own?
1. Yes - one area/place
 2. Yes - more than one area/place
 3. No
 4. Don't know
 5. Don't want to answer
- H2Wher* [ASK IF H2Area=1,2]
{H2Whe01, to H2Whe12}
How would you describe [IF H2Area=1: this area or place? Please choose one of the following / IF H2Area=2: these areas or places? You can choose more than one answer if you want to]
1. A street corner/street/square
 2. A housing estate
 3. Park/recreation ground
 4. A pub or nightclub
 5. A shopping area or centre
 6. A café or restaurant
 7. Someone's home
 8. A video/amusement arcade
 9. A youth club
 11. Somewhere else
 12. Don't know
 13. Don't want to answer
- Codes added:*
10. Sports/leisure centre
 11. Car park
- H2WherX* [ASK IF H2Wher=10]
[IF number of answers at H2Wher>1: You said that some of these areas or places were somewhere else. Where was this? / IF number of answers at H2Wher=1: You said this area or place was somewhere else. Where was this?]
Please type in your answer
- TYPE 99 FOR DON'T KNOW
TYPE 88 FOR DON'T WANT TO ANSWER
- H2Def1* [ASK IF H2Area=1 or 2]
Does your group let other groups come into [IF H2Area=1:this area or place/IF H2Area=2: these areas or places]?
1. Yes, always
 2. Yes, sometimes
 3. No
 4. Don't know
 5. Don't want to answer

H2Def2 [ASK IF H2Area=1 or 2]
{H2Def21, H2Def22, H2Def23, H2Def24, H2Def25, H2Def26}
Does your group defend [IF H2Area=1 this area or place / IF H2Area=2 these areas or places] against other groups by using force or threats or other things?
You can choose more than one answer if you want to

1. Yes - force
2. Yes - threats
3. Yes - other things
4. No
5. Don't know
6. Don't want to answer

H2Memb [ASK IF H2num>=3]
And how long have you been hanging about with this group?

1. Less than 3 months
2. From 3 months, less than 6 months
3. From 6 months, less than a year
4. From 1 year, less than 2 years
5. From 2 years, less than 3 years
6. From 3 years, less than 5 years
7. From 5 years, less than 10 years
8. Ten years or more
9. Don't know
10. Don't want to answer

H2Join [ASK IF H2num>=3]
Did this group exist before you joined?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know
4. Don't want to answer

H2Exis [ASK IF H2num>=3]
As far as you know, how long has this group existed as a group?

1. Less than 3 months
2. From 3 months, less than a year
3. From 1 year, less than 5 years
4. From 5 years, less than 10 years
5. From 10 years, less than 20 years
6. Twenty years or more
7. Don't know
8. Don't want to answer

- H2Name* [ASK IF H2num>=3]
Does this group have a name for itself?
1. Yes
 2. No
 3. Don't know
 4. Don't want to answer
- H2Sect1* [ASK IF H2num>=3]
Does your group have a recognised leader or leaders?
1. Yes
 2. No
 3. Don't know
 4. Don't want to answer
- H2Sect2* [ASK IF H2num>=3]
Does your group have rules or codes for group members?
1. Yes
 2. No
 3. Don't know
 4. Don't want to answer
- H2Off1* [ASK IF H2num>=3]
Is doing illegal things seen as being OK by your group?
1. Yes
 2. No
 3. Don't know
 4. Don't want to answer
- H2Off2* [ASK IF H2num>=3]
Do people in your group actually do illegal things together?
1. Yes
 2. No
 3. Don't know
 4. Don't want to answer
- H2Done* [ASK IF H2num>=3]
{D2don01 to D2don14}
Have people in your group done any of the following things together in the last 12 months. You can choose more than one answer if you want to.
1. Threatened or frightened other people
 2. Used force or violence against other people
 3. Graffiti (written things or sprayed paint on things)
 4. Broken, damaged or destroyed things
 5. Stolen things
 6. Used violence or threats to steal from someone
 7. Carried knives
 8. Carried guns
 9. Used drugs
 10. Sold drugs to other people
 11. Other crimes

12. None of the above
13. Don't know
14. Don't want to answer

H2FrG

[ASK IF H2num>=3]

Do you have other friends who are not part of this group?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know
4. Don't want to answer

H2Gang

[ASK IF H2num>=3]

Do you consider this group of people we have been talking about to be a "gang"?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know
4. Don't want to answer

References

Alexander, C. (1996) *The Art of Being Black. The Creation of British Black Youth Identities.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Alexander, C. (2000) *The Asian Gang. Ethnicity, Identity and Masculinity.* Oxford: Berg.

Atkinson, R. and Flint, J. (2003) *Understanding Crime and the Neighbourhood: Concepts, Evidence and Policy Direction.* Paper presented at the ESRC Centre for Neighbourhood Research Conference. June 2003.

Battin-Pearson, S., Thornberry, T., Hawkins, D. and Krohn, M. (1998) Gang membership, delinquent peers and delinquent behaviour. *Juvenile Justice Bulletin.* Washington DC: US Department of Justice.

Bennett, T. and Holloway, K. (2004) Gang membership, drugs and crime in the UK. *British Journal of Criminology* 44:305-323

Bradshaw, P. (2005) Terrors and Young Teams: Youth Gangs and Delinquency in Edinburgh. (pp.241-274 of Decker, S.H. and Weerman, F.W.'s *European Street Gangs and Troublesome Youth Groups.* Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press.

Budd, T., Sharp, C., Weir, G., Wilson, D. and Owen, N. (2005) *Young people and crime: findings from the 2004 Offending, Crime and Justice Survey.* Home Office Statistical Bulletin 20/05. London: Home Office.

Bullock, K. and Tilley, N. (2002) *Shooting, Gangs and Violent Incidents in Manchester.* Crime Reduction Research Series Paper, 13. London: Home Office.

Communities that Care (2005) *Findings from the Safer London Youth Survey 2004.*

Davison, J. (1997) *Gangsta.* London: Vision.

Decker, S. and van Winkle, B. (1996) *Life in the Gang.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Esbensen, F., and Huizinga, D. 1993. Gangs, drugs, and delinquency in a survey of urban youth. *Criminology* 31:565-589.

Esbensen, F-A., Winfree Jr., L.T., He, N. and Taylor, T.J. (2001) Youth gangs and definitional issues: when is a gang a gang, and why does it matter? *Crime and Delinquency* 47(1):105-130.

Esbensen, F-A. and Weerman, F.M. (2005) Youth Gangs and Troublesome Youth Groups in the United States and the Netherlands: A Cross-National Comparison. *European Journal of Criminology* Volume 2(1):5-37.

Fagan, J. (1996) Gangs, Drugs and Neighbourhood Change. In Huff, R.C (Ed). *Gangs in America.* 2nd Ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Farrington, D., Gallagher, B., Morley, L., St. Ledger, R. and West, D. (1990) Minimising Attrition in Longitudinal Research: Methods of tracing and securing cooperation in a 24-year follow-up study. In Magnusson, D. ad Bergman, L. (eds) *Data Quality in Longitudinal Research.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (pp 122-147).

Farrington, D., Loeber, R., Stouthamer-Loeber, M., Van Kammen, W. and Schmidt, L. (1996) Self-Reported Delinquency and a Combined Delinquency Seriousness Scale Based on Boys, Mothers and Teachers: Concurrent and Predictive Validity for African-Americans and Caucasians. *Criminology* 34:501-25.

Fleisher, M.S. (2002). 'Doing field research on diverse gangs: interpreting youth gangs as social networks' (p 199 - 218) In Ronald Huff (Ed.) *Gangs in America III*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Flood-Page, C., Campbell, S., Harrington, V. & Miller, J. (2000). *Youth Crime: Findings from the 1998/99 Youth Lifestyles Survey*. Home Office Research Study 209. Home Office: London.

Gordon, R. A., Lahey, B.B., Kawai, E., Loeber, R., Stouthamer-Loeber, M. and Farrington, D. (2004) Antisocial behavior and youth gang membership: selection and socialization. *Criminology* 42(5):55-88.

Gunst, L. (1995). *Born fi' Dead*. Edinburgh: Canongate Books.

Hagedorn, J. (1998a) *People and Folks: Gangs, Crime and the Underclass in a Rustbelt City*. 2nd Ed. Chicago: Lakeview Press.

Hagedorn, J. (1998b) Frat Boys, Bossmen, Studs and Gentlemen. A Typology of Gang Masculinities. In Lee H. Bowker (Ed). 1998. *Masculinities and Violence*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Hagedorn, J. (2000) Gang and the Informal Economy. In Huff, C. Ronald (Ed). 2002. *Gangs in America*. 3rd Ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Hamlyn, B., Maxwell, C., Hales, J. and Tait, C. (2004) *2003 Crime and Justice Survey (England and Wales)* Technical Report. London: National Centre for Social Research/BMRB Social Research.

Hamlyn, B., Maxwell, C., Phelps, A., Anderson, T., Arch, J., Pickering, K. and Tait, C. (2005) *2004 Crime and Justice Survey (England and Wales)* Technical Report. London: National Centre for Social Research/BMRB Social Research.

Hayward, R. and Sharp, C. (2004) *Young people and anti-social behaviour: findings from the 2003 Crime and Justice Survey*. Home Office Findings No. 245. London: Home Office.

Hill, K.G., Lui, C., Hawkins, J.D. (2001) Early Precursors of Gang Membership: A Study of Seattle Youth. *Juvenile Justice Bulletin December 2001*. US Department of Justice.

Hindelang, M., Hirschi, T. and Weis, J. (1981) *Measuring Delinquency*. Beverley Hills: Sage.

Hobbs, D., Hadfield, P., Lister, S. and Winlow, S. (2003). *Bouncers*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Howell, J. and Gleason, D.K. (2001) Youth Gang Drug Trafficking. In Miller, J., Maxson, C. and Klein, M. (Eds) (2001) *The Modern Gang Reader*. Los Angeles, CA: Roxbury Press.

Klein, M. (1971) *Street Gangs and Street Workers*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.

Mares, D. Gangstas or Lager Louts? Working Class Street Gangs in Manchester. In Klein, M.W., Kerner, H.J., Maxson, C. and Weitekamp, E. (Eds) (2001). *The Eurogang Paradox*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Press.

Marshall, B. Webb, B. and Tilley, N. (2005) *Rationalization of current research on guns, gangs and other weapons: Phase 1*. Jill Dando Institute of Crime Science.

- Matza, D.** (1964) *Delinquency and Drift*. New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- Maxson, C. and Klein, M.** (1995) *Investigating Gang Structures*. *Journal of Gang Research* 3 (1):33-40.
- Moore, J.W.** (1991). *Going down to the Barrio*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Padilla, F.** (1996) *The Gang as an American Enterprise*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Parker, H., Williams, L. and Aldridge, J.** (2002) The Normalisation of 'Sensible' Recreational Drug Use: Further Evidence from the North West England Longitudinal Study. *Sociology* 36(4):941-964.
- Sanders, W.** (2002) Breadren: Exploring the Group Context of Young Offenders in an Inner City English Borough. *The International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice*. 26(1):101-113.
- Short, J.** (1974) *Groups Process and Gang Delinquency*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Smith, D.J and Bradshaw, P.** (2005) Gang Membership and Teenage Offending. The Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime. Centre for Law and Society, University of Edinburgh.
- Stelfox, P.** (1996) *Gang Violence: Strategic and Tactical Options*. London: Home Office Police Research Group.
- Stelfox, P.** (1998) Policing Lower Levels of Organised Crime in England and Wales. *Howard Journal of Criminal Justice* 37(4):393-406.
- Sullivan, M.** (2005) Maybe we shouldn't study "gangs". *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice* 21(2): 170-190.
- Thornberry, T.P. and Burch, J.J.** (1997) Gang Members and Delinquent Behavior. *Juvenile Justice Bulletin*, June 1997. US Department of Justice.
- Thornberry, T.P., Krohn, D., Lizotte, A.J., Smith, C.A. and Tobin, K.** (2003) *Gangs and Delinquency in Developmental Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Thrasher, F.** (1927) *The Gang: A Study of 1313 Gangs*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Walsh, P.** (2003) *Gang Wars*. Bidford on Avon: Milo Books.
- Warr, M.** (2002) *Companions in Crime. The social aspects of criminal conduct*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Winfrey, T., Backstrom, T.V. and Mays, G.L.** (1994) A new twist on a general theory of crime and delinquency. *Youth and Society* 26(2):147-177.
- Wood, J. and Adler, J.** (2001) Gang Activity in English Prisons: The Staff Perspective. *Psychology, Crime and Law* 7(2):167-192.
- Youth Justice Board for England and Wales** (2004) *MORI Youth Survey 2004*.

Produced by the Research Development and Statistics Directorate, Home Office

This document is available only in Adobe Portable Document Format (**PDF**) through the RDS website

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds>

Email: public.enquiries@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

ISBN 1 84473 924 4

© Crown copyright 2006