



Youth Justice Board
Bwrdd Cyfiawnder Ieuenctid

Towards A Youth Crime Prevention Strategy

Draft for consultation

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Introduction

While youth crime rates have, at worst, stayed relatively steady in recent years and youth reconviction has fallen, the public perceive that their communities are getting less safe and much of their concern centres on anti-social behaviour and offending by young people.

The Audit Commission finds¹:

By most measures, the general trend of crime has been falling nationally since 1995. But the public, whose lives are affected by crime and anti-social behaviour on their local streets, often do not recognise this. In fact, nearly two thirds of people believe that crime is rising and one in three people living in more deprived areas think that antisocial behaviour is damaging their quality of life.

There is clearly still a huge amount to achieve in terms of preventing crime and anti-social behaviour among children and young people – in the interests of their victims, their families, their communities and, indeed, themselves. Early intervention is where the greatest scope for successful crime prevention lies, and it remains relatively unexplored and under-invested in.

Mainstream or universal services alone are not able to deliver the corporate aims of the youth justice system, and there is clear evidence that services are still failing to reach the most socially excluded who are particularly exposed to the risk (and absence of protective) factors associated with offending. *Reaching Out: An Action Plan on Social Exclusion*², published in September 2006, states:

A lot of money is spent through public services on the most socially excluded people. But much of this spending is directed at managing the symptoms of exclusion once problems have become entrenched.

Targeted and sustained early prevention programmes are needed to engage those most likely to be the offenders of the future. Effective partnership working between targeted and universal services at national and local level can be achieved, but the mutual advantages of doing so have to be agreed and clearly understood by each partner.

The Youth Justice Board for England and Wales (YJB) has developed a range of evidence-based, targeted youth crime and anti-social behaviour prevention models that are based on:

- the early identification of those at high risk of offending
- their effective engagement
- assessment-based interventions.

¹ *Neighbourhood Crime and Anti-social Behaviour: Making Places Safer Through Improved Local Working*. London: Audit Commission

² *Reaching Out: An Action Plan on Social Exclusion*, published by the Social Exclusion Taskforce, is co-ordinating new and existing initiatives to address the “2.5% of every generation caught in a lifetime of disadvantage and harm”.

The longest running is the Youth Inclusion Programme. The independent evaluation of the programme has identified that those engaged by it have lower rates of arrest than those not engaged.

Evidence-based, targeted prevention among 8 to 17-year-olds identified as at risk of offending is an effective means of:

- reducing the number of young people entering the criminal justice system
- reducing reoffending
- reducing anti-social behaviour
- improving the quality of life in deprived communities
- improving the life chances and employability of socially excluded children and young people, and ameliorating family circumstances.

Working in partnership with key partners such as the Home Office, Department for Education and Skills (DfES), the Department for Social Justice and Regeneration in Wales and the third sector, we have demonstrated that a combination of direct funding of youth offending teams (YOTs) and work to influence and shape the policy of other agencies can improve the number of young people engaged with and the effectiveness of youth crime and anti-social behaviour prevention activity.

We were successful in obtaining additional funding for YOTs for targeted early prevention in the 2004 Spending Review and 2005 Budget, although our spending on preventive work is still under 25% of our overall budget. We are currently overseeing a major prevention programme, through funding to YOTs, that is managed through an evidence-based performance framework that will help ensure the investment is effectively used and reduce the likelihood of failures in implementation.

The investment is being used for the delivery of services such as youth inclusion projects (YIPs), youth inclusion and support panels (YISPs), and parenting programmes, but also as a means of promoting inter-agency co-operation, drawing in partnership funding and influencing the agendas of the mainstream service providers, both local and national, where most of the resources needed to prevent youth crime and anti-social behaviour lie.

We operate under both children's services and criminal justice policy. This policy environment is complex and dynamic, and therefore this strategy has to be a living document, flexible enough to adapt to changing circumstances without compromising core principles. It considers the opportunities and challenges offered by key central and devolved Government initiatives, and sets out what our approach will be to delivering our corporate objectives, particularly with regard to our corporate target to reduce the number of first-time entrants to the youth justice system and its potential impact on reoffending and custody. There is also significant scope to influence police and criminal justice policy on Offences Brought To Justice and the proposed new pre-court interventions - this, combined with a tiered, restorative approach to anti-social behaviour and low level offending, supported by high quality preventive programmes, should contribute to achieving this challenging target.

The strategy contains a series of actions that we will take to achieve its delivery. These will feed into our corporate and business planning process, resulting in co-ordinated activity with agreed timescales.

Rationale

Our commitment to ensuring that prevention is part of a YOTs core business is based on the rationale that YOTs have:

- a statutory duty to prevent offending by children and young people
- expertise in preventing offending – the risk factors for those on the cusp of entering the Criminal Justice System are, broadly speaking, the same as for those young people who have already entered it
- the most to gain from preventing offending before young people enter the Criminal Justice System.

The fewer first-time entrants a YOT has to deal with, the more it can concentrate on improving the quality of its work on community sentences and in effectively fulfilling its responsibilities towards those in custody.

There is considerable scope for YOTs to join up their work across the youth justice system. All YOT work should be preventive - from before young people enter the Criminal Justice System, through community penalties, to custody and resettlement. The knowledge contained within YOTs of those in the Criminal Justice System can inform the work they do with those at risk of entering it to address risk factors and enhance protective factors, and vice-versa. Assessments, such as *Onset* and *Asset*, and the data systems YOTs manage can help with this.

Evidence

The reputation of programmes, such as the Youth Inclusion Programme and YISPs, and the evidence underpinning targeted prevention work, has been growing since we developed the Youth Inclusion Programme in 1999.

In 1996, the Audit Commission's report, *Misspent Youth*, found that:

Efforts to prevent offending and other anti-social behaviour by young people need to be co-ordinated between the different agencies involved; they should also be targeted on deprived areas with high crime rates, and piloted and evaluated.

By 2004, The Audit Commission reported³ that:

...we (also) found that targeted and well-managed early intervention programmes can be effective if they are properly co-ordinated both nationally and locally, such as those managed by youth offending teams.

By 2005, the value of YOT-led targeted prevention programmes devised, funded and supported by the YJB had also been recognised by the Home Affairs Select Committee Report on anti-social behaviour⁴:

We welcome the introduction of diversionary and support schemes such as YIPs and YISPs. All the indications are that these schemes are extremely successful and cost effective in terms of their impact on anti-social behaviour.

³ *Youth Justice 2004: A review of the reformed youth justice system*, London: Audit Commission

⁴ Home Affairs Select Committee Fifth Report of 2004/05. London: TSO. Available at www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/home_affairs_committee.cfm

Although, in 2004, the Audit Commission also stated that:

Better still, mainstream agencies, such as schools and health services, should take full responsibility for preventing offending by young people.

In 2007, the Social Exclusion Taskforce⁵ found that:

A lot is known about the reasons crime occurs, but more could be done to tackle this through prevention. Prevention takes many forms, including:

- *changing attitudes as to what is acceptable behaviour*
- *removing opportunities to commit crime*
- *identifying individuals at higher risk of committing anti-social behaviour and crime and intervening to reduce that risk.*

The Taskforce also commented on some of the challenges.

A number of barriers exist to risk-based prevention:

- *universal risk assessment does not exist: programmes fail to reach those most at risk of criminal behaviour*
- *funds are not allocated according to effectiveness in reducing crime*
- *crime intervention policies need to be evidence-based*
- *current policies tend to focus is on tackling those already with problems (the “stock”) rather than the preventing the flow of individuals into criminal life.*

Targeted youth crime prevention

The evidence for the effectiveness of the targeted youth crime prevention programmes we promote, fund, and monitor is set out below.

- Research⁶ conducted for the YJB, in 2001, identified the risk and protective factors associated with youth crime, and made strategic recommendations on the most effective approach to prevention.
- The models of effective practice that have been built through practitioner experience and thorough analysis by our programme managers. These models are now enshrined in YIP and YISP management guidance and the body of knowledge that we have developed on parenting and anti-social behaviour.
- Programme evaluations
 - The independent evaluation of the Youth Inclusion Programme in 2003 found that over the first three years of the programme, projects engaged 73% of targeted young people, and their arrest rates went down 65%, compared to a reduction of 44% for those young people not engaged. Gravity of offending also went down. The latest evaluation of YIP, to be published later this year, is expected to show similar results.

⁵ *Preventing Crime*, a paper for the Policy Review Security, Crime and Justice Working Group, January 2007

⁶ *Risk and Protective Factors*. London: YJB

- Our evaluation⁷, in 2002, found a reduction in the levels of offending from 4.4 offences per young person before parenting interventions were delivered to 2.1 afterwards⁸
- The University of York's evaluation of Safer School Partnerships, between 2002 and 2004, found that:
 - truancy was reduced
 - there was an improvement overall in behaviour compared to schools not in the programme
 - there was a net improvement in GCSE A–C passes compared to schools not in the programme.

This evidence is being further developed through:

- the evaluation of YISPs by the University of York that has been commissioned by DfES which is to be published in 2007
- evaluations of the DfES' Early Intervention Pathfinders and the work of the National Parenting Academy
- the evaluation of our expanded prevention programme, providing an opportunity to learn more about why young people enter the youth justice system and how they can be prevented from doing so.

Costs of youth crime – building the economic case

Crime is hugely costly in many different ways, whether it be the financial loss from acquisitive crime and criminal damage, the administrative costs of the Criminal Justice System, the opportunity costs to the economy in terms of lost productivity, or perhaps, most importantly, the impact on the lives of victims, offenders and the quality of community life.

Overall crime

Home Office Research Study 217 (2000) into the economic and social costs of crime⁹ estimated an overall cost to the UK of £60 billion a year (over £164 million per day). Of this, £19 billion is attributed to the cost of stolen or damaged property, £18 billion to the direct emotional and physical impact on victims of crime (with over £14 billion of this incurred as a result of violent crime). £12 billion is estimated as the cost of the response to crime by the Criminal Justice System, and the identifiable costs associated with the anticipation of crime¹⁰ were estimated at £5 billion. These figures do not include any financial estimate of the costs of fear, lost productivity or the opportunity costs of crime.

⁷ *Positive Parenting*. London: YJB

⁸ Although the study observed a reduction in offending, the lack of a comparison group meant that this could not be directly attributed to parenting programmes.

⁹ Home Office Research Study 217. London: Home Office. Available at www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs/hors217.pdf

¹⁰ Mainly the costs of preventive security

Youth crime

In 1996, the Audit Commission's *Misspent Youth* estimated that youth crime costs the public services £1 billion per year¹¹ and Cohen (1998)¹² estimated the monetary value of saving a single high-risk young person from a lifetime of delinquency and criminal activity at \$1.7 million to \$2.3 million (£0.91 million to £1.2 million).

The DfES' and HM Treasury's Joint Policy Review of Children and Young People (January 2007)¹³ comments that,

Estimating the costs of poor outcomes is difficult. However, looking at just four poor outcomes – being looked after, teenage pregnancy, youth offending and not being in education, employment or training (NEET) – gives some idea of their scale. Youth offending creates large costs. For example, a place in a YOI costs over £50,000 per year, and the Audit Commission estimated that if early intervention had been provided for just one in ten of those young people sentenced to custody each year, public services alone could have saved over £100 million annually.

As can be seen below in Figure 3, Scott et al assert that the costs of not intervening where a conduct disorder is present in childhood can have serious consequences and lead to significant costs to public services, with criminal justice costs forming the highest proportion of these.

¹¹ Stating that public services spend around £1 billion a year on processing and dealing with young offenders. Around £660 million of this is spent by the police, largely on identifying them.

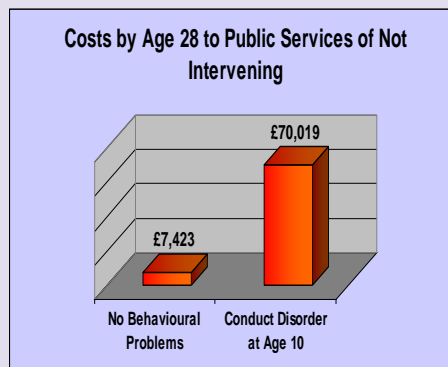
¹² Cohen, M (1998). 'The Monetary Value of Saving a High-Risk Youth', *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, Vol. 14, No. 1 1998, pp. 5–33.

¹³ The discussion paper assesses progress made to improve outcomes, and what further action needs to be taken as part of the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review and beyond.

Figure 3 – The costs of not intervening

The Cost of Non-Intervention

- Conduct disorder is the commonest psychiatric disorder in childhood
- 40% of 8 year old children with Conduct disorder are repeatedly convicted of crimes such as theft, vandalism and assault in adolescence
- 90% of repeating juvenile offenders had Conduct Disorder in childhood
- When comparing a group of children with Conduct Disorder against a group without Conduct Disorder, costs to public services were highest in the group with Conduct Disorder
- In the total cost of services, **crime was the costliest** domain in all the groups and constituted almost two-thirds of the total cost in the group with Conduct Disorder
- Antisocial behaviour at age 10 was a powerful predictor of the total cost of public services used by 28 years of age – with **criminal justice costs the highest**
- There are effective interventions for antisocial behaviour in children, but they are seldom routinely available
- Interventions for serious antisocial behaviour in teenagers are much less effective. Therefore there is a case for implementing effective early interventions with families and with children at school



Scott et al. (2001) *Financial cost of social exclusion: follow up study of antisocial children into adulthood*, Kings College London

Youth crime is a significant element of overall crime. In the financial year 2004/05, over 287,000 offences in England and Wales were committed by 10 to 17-year-olds¹⁴. This included over 42,000 offences committed by those aged between 10 and 13.

Figures below show the aggregate costs for just some crime categories based on Home Office cost estimates and the number of crimes committed by young people in 2004/05.

Costs of youth crime

Crime	No. of offences committed by 10 to 17-year-olds in 2004/05	Average cost £	Total cost £ million
Theft of vehicle	11,784	4,700	55.4
Burglary	12,347	2,300	28.4
Criminal damage	34,400	500	17.2

We have a direct interest in the costs of youth offending. Of our £372 million budget in 2004/05, we spent over £245 million (over 65%) on providing custodial accommodation for 10 to 17-year-olds.

¹⁴ *Youth Justice Annual Statistics 2004/05*. London: YJB.

Not in education, training or employment

The DfES estimates that there were 157,000 16 to 18-year-olds with not in education, training or employment (NEET) status in 1999¹⁵. The total estimated additional lifetime costs of having this status at age 16–18 (at 2000/01 prices) are £7 billion resource costs, and £8.1 billion public finance costs. As many children and young people who offend have NEET status, this is yet another example of how widely spread and multi-faceted the costs of crime are.

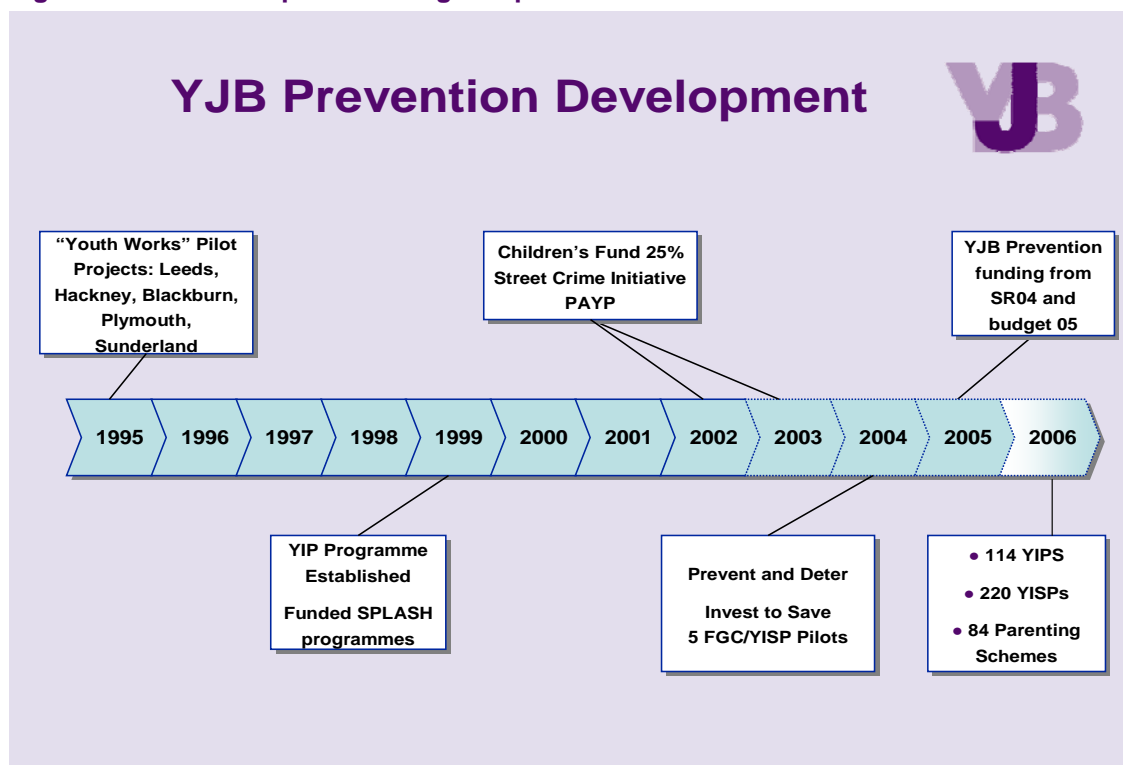
¹⁵ *Estimating the Cost of Being 'Not in Education, Employment or Training at Age 16–18'*. Social Policy Research Unit, University of York, University of Hull.

Achievements

Development of targeted prevention

Figure 1, below, illustrates the key milestones in our work to introduce evidence-based targeted youth crime and anti-social behaviour prevention programmes.

Figure 1 – The development of targeted prevention work



Until 2005, our resources were limited and the only significant medium-term funding was for the Youth Inclusion Programme (around £7 million per year between 1999 and 2005). There was a major boost to targeted prevention funding in 2002, when, in England, 25% of the Children's Fund was ring-fenced for youth crime prevention. This required children's services to work with YOTs, and resulted in the establishment of around 90 YISPs. No equivalent ring-fenced funding for youth crime prevention was available in Wales.

The limited prevention funding for YOTs, until 2005, restricted our ability to promote the involvement of YOTs in prevention work with young people prior to them entering the Criminal Justice System, and there has been an uneven development of YOTs' involvement in such work as a result.

Our prevention activity and the ringfenced 25% of the Children's Fund have not been the only forms of targeted prevention funding in previous years. However, there seems a lack of convincing evidence that all programmes are able to reach those at high risk of offending, or to clearly demonstrate youth crime and anti-social behaviour prevention outcomes. There is more work to do across government, in line with the Social Exclusion Taskforce's findings (see page 7), to develop the evidence for this work and to identify, document, and share effective practice in prevention.

Our investment since 1999

Between 1999 and 2007, we made the following grants to develop youth crime prevention work.

Financial year	Spend	Programmes delivered
1999/2000	£1,626,452	Youth Inclusion Programme
2000/01	£6,639,886	Youth Inclusion Programme; Splash and Splash Cymru
2001/02	£9,587,486	Youth Inclusion Programme; Splash/Splash Cymru; mentoring; prevention programmes delivered by voluntary organisations; Restorative Justice in Schools
2002/03	£23,367,302	Youth Inclusion Programme; Splash/Splash Cymru; mentoring; prevention programmes delivered by voluntary organisations; Restorative Justice in Schools; YISPs; Community Merit Award; Safer School Partnerships
2003/04	£15,912,739	Youth Inclusion Programme; Splash/Splash Cymru; mentoring; prevention programmes delivered by voluntary organisations; Restorative Justice in Schools; Community Merit Award; Safer School Partnerships; preventive work in Wales; parenting; anti-social behaviour
2004/05	£10,571,544	Youth Inclusion Programme; Splash/Splash Cymru; YISPs; Safer School Partnerships; preventive work in Wales; Community Merit Award; mentoring; prevention programmes delivered by voluntary organisations; Restorative Justice in Schools
2005/06	£9,175,202	Youth Inclusion Programme; Splash/Splash Cymru; Prevention Development Grants; YISPs; Safer School Partnerships; preventive work in Wales; Individual Support Orders (ISO)
2006/07	£23,681,728	Prevention grants to YOTs; Splash/Splash Cymru; YISPs
Total	£100,562,339	

A range of youth crime prevention programmes have been delivered in recent years across Government. The biggest are Positive Activities for Young People (PAYP) – holiday activity schemes in England – and the 25% of the Children’s Fund allocated to youth crime prevention. DfES hold the budgets for these programmes, so they do not apply to Wales. The investment in each is broadly as follows:

- PAYP – £160 million since 2003
- Children’s Fund – £150 million since 2003.

We were successful in winning three major funding streams from the Government’s 2004 Spending and Child Poverty Reviews, and the 2005 Budget. These totalled £45 million. The funding streams are set out below.

Category	2005/06 £ million	2006/07 £ million	2007/08 £ million	Total £ million
Parenting (2004 Spending Review)	0	2	2	4
Youth Inclusion Programme and YISPs (2004 Spending Review*)	3	5	8	16
2005 Budget	0	10	15	25
Total	3	17	25	45

* On condition that at least 50% more YIPs and YISPs were created – a target that has been met.

These funding streams were amalgamated and allocated to YOTs as one grant, in the interests of economy of scale and in order to provide YOTs with greater flexibility.

We provided a menu of evidence-based programmes from which YOTs could choose to invest their grant funding and, as a result, the current number of prevention programmes we fund and oversee is set out below.

Programme type	No. of projects
Youth Inclusion Programme	114
YISPs	220
Parenting	84
Safer School Partnerships	3
ISOs	6
Innovative projects	39

* Overall, there are over 450 safer school partnerships in England.

The third sector is playing a key role in the management and delivery of these programmes, and continues to be an invaluable partner across prevention and the wider youth justice system. The involvement of the sector is critical to the success of this strategy, and we support the principles of the Government's Compact with the third sector. The third sector is already involved in the delivery of around half of the YIPs we fund, either in the form of the larger organisations such as Nacro, Crime Concern and the Children's Society, or through small neighbourhood-based bodies.

YOTs are now required to detail their prevention strategies in their annual youth justice plans. YOT prevention programmes and strategies are monitored and supported by the YJB and, from 2008, a revised set of *National Standards for Youth Justice Services* will underpin all youth crime prevention.

Our funding has, between 2005 and 2008, attracted a significant amount of local partnership funding. In 2006/07 alone, this is estimated at over £27 million. We expect our prevention programme to engage at least 50,000 young people between 2006 and 2008.

Methodology and measuring effectiveness

To measure the effectiveness of our investment, information requirements have been developed that minimise the burden on YOTs but enable us to monitor their performance.

To support our corporate target of reducing the number of first-time entrants to the youth justice system, YOTs collect information on:

- the number of young people engaged by prevention programmes
- *Onset* scores at the start and end of activity with targeted young people
- the education, training or employment status of young people at the beginning of their engagement with the programme and at the end
- pre- and post-engagement offending rates for the targeted young people.

YOTs also collect information on the number of parenting interventions delivered, as part of our YOT performance indicator for parenting.

This data is aggregated and reported to us quarterly. It is analysed and used to inform the programme's support and performance management framework. It will help inform the University of York's independent evaluation of the prevention programme.

Our strategy

The Government's commitment to improve public services, localise responsibility and accountability, and reduce social exclusion is producing a dynamic policy environment with regard to both children's services and criminal justice. We will work flexibly within this environment to ensure that we are able to meet our corporate objectives and to capitalise on the opportunities afforded by complementary policy initiatives. There are both opportunities for and challenges to youth crime prevention stemming from current and future developments in both England and Wales.

Our policy interests straddle those of children's services and the Criminal Justice System. Our approach to prevention reflects both the welfare of socially excluded and vulnerable young people and the interests of safer communities. It is aligned with the objectives of both Every Child Matters in England, the Seven Core Aims for Children in Wales, and the Respect agenda.

Targeted prevention is necessary to improve the life chances for individuals at risk of offending, as well as addressing the fact that many communities feel blighted by youth crime and anti-social behaviour. We promote a voluntary approach to early prevention through our schemes such as YIPs and YISPs, but we are also clear that some interventions have to be reinforced by sanctions. We support Parenting Orders, Anti-social Behaviour Contracts and Anti-social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs), but advocate a tiered approach to their use. The programmes that we fund support the delivery of this tiered approach.

We have, over recent years, achieved considerable success in influencing wider policy development and have raised the profile and awareness of youth crime prevention issues.

From both a central and regional perspective, we work to advise and influence a range of English and Welsh departments and agencies such as:

- the Home Office
- Department of Constitutional Affairs
- Department of Social Justice and Regeneration
- Department of Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DELLS)
- Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) in Wales
- DfES
- Department of Health in England
- as well as professional bodies such as the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and Welsh Association of Chief Police Officers (WACPO), and the Local Government Association (LGA) and Welsh Local Government Association.

We form alliances with many partners in order to exert more influence over key policy areas.

The Audit Commission's aspiration of mainstream agencies taking full responsibility for prevention does, at least for now, seem some way from being achieved – as evidenced

by the large number of young people who enter the youth justice system and, most worryingly, end up in custody. For example, an audit conducted by the National Children's Bureau revealed about 40% of children in custody had a history of being looked after, of whom 7% were subject to Care Orders. Of those in custody, 31% have mental health problems, three times higher than the general population¹⁶. While agencies such as children's services are not fulfilling their statutory responsibilities to children under the Children Act 1989, the Audit Commission's aspiration for mainstream services seems unlikely to be realised at present.

Research by MORI, in 2004, found that 60% of excluded young people had committed a crime, compared to 26% of young people in mainstream education. Between July and September 2006, only 66% of children and young people supervised by YOTs were in suitable full-time education, training or employment.

What we want to achieve in the medium to long term

Our remit is to prevent offending by children and young people. Included among our challenging corporate targets are targets to:

- support the youth justice system to reduce the number of first-time entrants to the youth justice system by 5% by March 2008 compared to the March 2006 baseline
- support the youth justice system to protect victims and communities by reducing reoffending by young offenders by 5% by March 2008 compared with the 2002/03 baseline, working towards a 10% reduction by the end of the decade.

We aim to reduce the numbers of 10 to 17-year-olds in the Criminal Justice System and to reduce the demand for custody, thereby freeing up resources for higher quality work with those who are in the system and for more preventive investment. Equally, more effective prevention services stem the initial supply of offenders in the system and reduce the scale of the challenge of reducing reoffending.

Long-term sustainable reductions in offending by children and young people are largely dependent on all relevant agencies, young people, parents/carers and the community working in partnership to tackle the risk factors associated with offending, while seeking to strengthen the factors that protect young people from it. We aim to incentivise, enable and increase accountability among all relevant agencies in order that they reach and deliver services to those at highest risk of offending.

We aim to make prevention work part of core YOT business. In particular, we work to influence mainstream provision at both a national and regional level, to lever better access to services through strategic partnership work.

In order to do this, we must:

- influence and shape policy at national, regional and local level in England and Wales
- ensure our prevention strategy is embedded within our and the Home Office's reducing reoffending strategies and supports our vision of an end-to-end youth justice system

¹⁶ Harrington R, Bailey S et al (2005), *Mental Health Needs and Provision*, London: YJB

- secure additional ringfenced funding from central and devolved Government for the specific purpose of youth crime prevention, and ensure it is invested in effective practice.

In order to be able to influence, shape and fund prevention work, we must:

- forge strong partnerships and ensure there is increased awareness of, and involvement in, policy development
- maintain the programme integrity of the evidence-based models we support, and demonstrate their role in reducing the number of first-time entrants to the youth justice system
- build the evidence and economic case for further investment in prevention work
- communicate our strategy and effective practice to a wide range of audiences, including the general public.

Reducing first-time entrants

In 2005/06, there were 85,467 first-time entrants to the youth justice system. This has been established as the baseline figure for our corporate target to reduce the number of first-time entrants to the youth justice system. Consequently, to achieve our 5% reduction target by March 2008, we must support YOTs to reduce the total number of first-time entrants by at least 4,273. Some local areas have agreed to stretch this target under local area agreements (LAAs), resulting in a higher reduction target.

There are several influences on the number of first-time entrants to the youth justice system. These include the effectiveness of prevention measures, and the effect of national policy in England and Wales to bring more offences to justice. Though it is difficult to estimate the precise combination of measures required to achieve the reduction, a number of factors are clearly influential, including:

- the strength of partnership, multi-agency approaches to dealing with the onset of offending
- the ability to accurately assess risk and protective factors in order to design and deliver appropriate interventions¹⁷
- ensuring that programmes successfully engage the targeted young people and that the quality of the preventive interventions provided to them is high
- the effectiveness with which schools embrace early prevention strategies
- the extent to which anti-social behaviour and low-level offending is dealt with through constructive, non-judicial approaches that satisfy victims without criminalising young people.

Offences Brought To Justice

Prevention programmes face the challenge of ensuring that the right incentives are in place to enable youth justice agencies to co-operate fully. Although not mutually exclusive, there is some tension between the target for justice agencies to increase the

¹⁷ The development of the YJB's Onset assessment tool is a significant step towards improving identification of the most at risk.

number of offences brought to justice and our corporate target of reducing the number of first-time entrants to the youth justice system. Minor offences are disproportionately committed by the young. Therefore, as greater volumes of lower order offences are detected, so the number of young people who offend who are brought to justice increases. While performance data shows a continuing improvement in the Offences Brought To Justice target (14% above the expected trajectory), ACPO shares our concern about the increasing percentage of children and young people making up these statistics.

There is evidence, noted by the National Criminal Justice Board, that lower order offences are making up the greater proportion of detections, such as penalty notices for shoplifting and minor public order offences. This has led to proposals to supplement the headline measure of the sanction detection rate with additional measures of sanction detection for serious violence, sexual offences, and acquisitive crime to provide a focus on investigating these types of crimes.

ACPO has researched the factors contributing to the increasing performance yield in Offences Brought To Justice. There is a trend of increasing numbers of offenders being processed by the police who are under 18 years old. This conclusion is supported by an Office for Criminal Justice Reform (OCJR) study (January 2007) that identified increasing numbers of cautions, formal warnings and Penalty Notices for Disorder (PNDs). The offence types include those for which young people are disproportionately represented, such as shop theft and minor disorder.

To address this concern, we are seeking, with ACPO, a refocusing of the Offences Brought To Justice reward on the more serious offences, and the introduction of a restorative disposal for minor offences. The later initiative is contained in the Government's consultation on *Strengthening Police Powers to Tackle Anti-social Behaviour*. Following this consultation, a number of new tactics are being developed, and we are working with ACPO to support and integrate the most appropriate. These proposals include an increased emphasis on restorative and reparative interventions, and looks to ways that they may be recognised and rewarded as police performance targets. There is an expectation that contact with young people involved in low level offending will result in a referral to the YOT in order that preventive interventions can be delivered.

Potential solutions

OCJR conducted a public attitude survey this year to establish views on appropriate penalties for minor offenders who admitted what they had done. Overall, there was a preference for making amends for minor acts of criminal damage and theft. Only 10% of those asked thought court was the correct outcome; 18% favoured fixed penalties, 28% rehabilitation and 44% reparation.

This recent information about public attitudes strengthens the argument to divert a range of lower-level offences out of disposals that accelerate individuals towards redress in court. Easing pressure on courts would also provide more court time for more serious offences and help to remove court backlogs.

We welcome the opportunity to work up practical guidance for on-street reparation as a means of getting recognition for much that police currently do to deal with lower-level offending. This may be the best way to incentivise police teams to address the nuisance behaviour identified as a local priority.

The recommendation to provide the police with recognition for alternative approaches to minor crime would help achieve a more proportionate outcome and reduce the number of first-time entrants to the youth justice system.

Any new tactics to address anti-social behaviour on the street should provide a ready referral, if appropriate, to the YOT or children’s services in order to maximise the benefit of early action resulting in a quick remedy to the causes of the behaviour. In this strategy, we seek greater co-ordination at operational level between YOTs, police and children’s services.

The policy context

The policy contexts in England and Wales have some commonalities but many differences flowing from the powers devolved to the Welsh Assembly Government, as summarised in the table below.

Policy initiative	England	Wales
Neighbourhood Policing	✓	✓
Offences Brought To Justice	✓	✓
Prevent and Deter	✓	✓
Respect	✓	✓
Children’s Trusts	✓	
Every Child Matters	✓	
Integrated Targeted Youth Support	✓	
Local Area Agreements	✓	
Social Exclusion Action Plan	✓	
Seven Core Aims for Children		✓
All Wales Youth Offending Strategy		✓
Children and Young People’s Partnerships		✓
Communities First		✓
Extending Entitlement		✓

There is, however, no difference in the outcomes that we wish to promote for children and young people at risk of offending in both countries. It is essential, therefore, that the strategic approach recognises and adapts to the relevant child and youth policy issues.

The formation of a more integrated Strategy Directorate within the YJB, in 2007, offers the opportunity for us to work more effectively with our stakeholders across the youth justice system.

Our actions

- Build on and enhance our partnership work with all relevant agencies in England and Wales.
- Work in alliance with our stakeholders and partners to understand and influence better the youth justice system.

Major policy issues and initiatives common to England and Wales

While most areas of social policy that affect the lives of children and young people are separated between England and Wales. Criminal justice and anti-social behaviour policy, and the police provide a common thread to the strategic position of youth crime prevention in both countries.

Anti-social behaviour and Respect

We have been closely involved in the development and implementation of the work of the Respect Taskforce. Our programmes and policies, especially around parenting, are an important means of delivering Respect outcomes. The engagement of young people on targeted youth crime prevention programmes is a key element of the wider Respect project, and our portfolio of programmes is playing a significant role in delivering that, and in preventing anti-social behaviour in England and Wales. We promote a tiered approach to anti-social behaviour, which has been successfully implemented in areas such as Essex and South Wales, where Anti-social Behaviour Contracts have been used widely in conjunction with preventive support, with relatively few young people progressing on to receive Anti-social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs).

Our actions

- Continue to work closely with the Respect Taskforce in order to help deliver its aims.
- Promote and support a tiered approach to anti-social behaviour, under which prevention is fully integrated and YOTs fully involved.
- Work collaboratively to develop the evidence for parenting interventions.

Neighbourhood policing

The development of neighbourhood policing presents a significant opportunity for youth crime prevention. Both WACPO and the ACPO Youth Issues Group strongly support greater police involvement in preventive work, and our prevention strategy shares the ethos of the Neighbourhood Policing Programme in terms of accountability and engagement with local communities. This initiative has the potential to make YOT-led targeted prevention more accountable and responsive to communities and victims.

The ACPO Youth Issues Group has developed a ‘youth toolkit’ aimed at improving the awareness and practice of youth crime prevention among the police, and involving them more in local youth crime prevention programmes. The Association of Police Authorities’ (APAs’) Children and Young People Subgroup are developing guidance for police authorities about how to work with children and young people in support of the ACPO youth strategy and to assist police authorities in meeting their duties under the Children Act 2004.

The neighbourhood policing implementation team are arranging for the best practice in youth crime prevention to be available as a national guide. Police training providers

support the introduction of youth issues into the core training for police community support officers (PCSOs) and police officers.

The introduction of neighbourhood policing has seen a welcome emphasis upon the issues that concern the public at community level. What is emerging is a strong desire for more to be done to prevent young people misbehaving. One clear indicator comes from the Metropolitan Police survey in July 2006 of over 1,400 wards. 60% of wards indicated anti-social behaviour by young people was their first concern, and all wards has it in their top three concerns. Clearly anti-social behaviour needs to be tackled, but often a proportionate approach that does not start with a criminal justice intervention can be the most effective.

Our actions

- Work collaboratively to identify and promote effective practice in youth crime prevention through neighbourhood policing.
- Work with the Home Office, Welsh Assembly Government, the police and DfES to provide a practical 'youth toolkit' for neighbourhood policing in order to lead to more effective prevention and to identify clear pathways into effective practice with partners.
- Work with ACPO and WACPO, the APA and other bodies to promote the involvement of neighbourhood police teams in youth crime prevention.
- Work to exploit the potential of using neighbourhood policing to deal with low level offending without bringing more young people into the youth justice system.

Groups disproportionately represented in the youth justice system

Children in care are three times more likely than others to be in trouble with the police. Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) young people are over represented at every stage of the youth justice system. In order to address the disproportionate representation of these groups and others, work is required across the youth justice system.

Our actions

- Assist in shaping and taking forward proposals for cared for children in policy and legislation in England and Wales.
- Lobby for and, if funding is secured, invest in initiatives to reduce the inappropriate criminalisation of looked-after children.
- Develop and implement a diversity strategy for the youth justice system, supporting our corporate target.

Accountability to communities

It is essential that youth justice is accountable to local communities and fully exploits the opportunities to involve community volunteers in youth crime prevention.

Prevention programmes are likely to be more effective if they are embedded in effective neighbourhood crime and anti-social behaviour management strategies. There is a current drive for greater local accountability and responsiveness, demonstrated by:

- the development of the Neighbourhood Policing Programme
- the drive to reshape the balance between perpetrator and victim, with an emphasis on community and summary justice

- concern about the growing prevalence of gangs, guns, and knives in some communities
- devolution from central to local government, and then to local communities.

The findings of the Audit Commission’s report *Neighbourhood Crime and Anti-social Behaviour: Making Places Safer Through Improved Local Working* (May 2006) observed that:

The achievement of national targets to reduce crime and to reassure the public by reducing the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour depends upon the police, councils and other local services working effectively together at the neighbourhood level.

Councils and the police do understand people’s concerns but are not fully exploiting their combined intelligence and the knowledge and skills of frontline workers to analyse and respond to local issues. These frontline workers include those from YOTs.

Solutions may be at hand since local agencies collectively hold a great deal of information, about crimes, incidents, victims, offenders and problem locations. They could create a detailed profile of crime and anti-social behaviour in their local neighbourhood and devise long-term solutions.

Our actions

- Support, encourage, and enable YOTs and local partners to develop local strategies to tackle neighbourhood crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Promote and support the use of restorative justice as a means of greater community accountability.

Community participation

Although there are already an estimated 10,000 volunteers working in the youth justice system, research by MORI to assess the public interest in voluntary work with young people who offend found that 8% of respondents described themselves as “very interested”. This suggests around 3.4 million people aged over 16 in England and Wales are potential volunteers, many of whom could be engaged to work in prevention, building on good practice from programmes such as the Youth Inclusion Programme in which volunteers have played a key role.

Our actions

- Work to develop and promote effective practice in engaging community volunteers in youth crime prevention, for example through restorative justice.
- Contribute to the Government drive, following the Russell Commission, to recruit more young volunteers.
- Exploit interest and availability among the older population to engage them as volunteers in youth crime prevention.

The third sector

The involvement of the third sector and alliances in preventing youth crime is critical. The management and delivery of youth crime prevention can benefit hugely from the

involvement of the non-statutory sectors, whose expertise, capacity, and ability to reach out to socially excluded groups is vital.

The national Compact is an agreement between the voluntary and community sector and Government to improve their relationship for mutual advantage. Local compacts aim to do this locally between the sector, councils, and other local public bodies. Codes of good practice are designed to turn the Compact's principles and values into practice. These include codes for:

- community groups
- BME groups
- volunteering
- consultation
- funding.

Our actions

- Work jointly with the third sector to inform and enhance youth crime prevention.
- Take full advantage of voluntary sector expertise, capacity, and ability to innovate and engage the socially excluded.
- Work in line with the national Compact and the codes of good practice.
- Support the public service delivery action plan for third sector involvement.

Major policy issues and initiatives in England

Every Child Matters, Youth Matters, and integrated targeted youth support

The implementation of Every Child Matters, Youth Matters and the development of integrated targeted youth support are critical to the achievement of our corporate objectives. We have been closely involved in the development of each. Ministers have agreed to the national implementation of targeted youth support from 2007. We are currently engaged with DfES on the implementation of the overall policy, as well as specific developments, including pilots for targeted youth support and budget-holding lead professionals, on a national, regional and YOT level.

Our actions

- Continue to ensure its policies and programmes contribute to the core outcomes of Every Child Matters.
- Work to ensure that those at high risk of offending or reoffending are able to achieve the aspirations of the five key outcomes .
- Continue to influence and shape the development and implementation of integrated targeted youth support, and ensure appropriate linkages with YOTs in progressing this strategy.

Localisation

The move, outlined in the Local Government White Paper, towards greater local autonomy, through initiatives such as local area agreements (LAAs), presents challenges to, and considerable opportunities for, the delivery of our corporate targets.

Our actions

- Continue to monitor the impact of greater localisation and devolution of funding on the youth justice system. Work to ensure that any proposed changes do not inhibit a focus on and prioritisation of youth crime.
- Work to ensure local public service agreement (PSA) performance indicators and cross-Governmental delivery agreements enhance the ability of local areas to focus on and prioritise youth crime prevention.

Social exclusion

The objectives of reducing social exclusion are complementary to those of preventing offending, and vice-versa, and an extremely important policy area for youth justice. Youth crime prevention programmes aim to reduce social exclusion.

In September 2006, the Government's *Reaching Out: An Action Plan on Social Exclusion* stated its intention to focus on the "2.5% of every generation caught in a lifetime of disadvantage and harm".

The Social Exclusion Taskforce will be promoting:

- better identification and earlier intervention
- systematically identifying what works
- multi-agency working
- tailored programmes of support built around strong and persistent relationships with those at risk.

Our actions

- Work to influence and shape the work of the Social Exclusion Taskforce and identify how the youth justice system can benefit from and help its work.

Education

The strong correlation between poor educational attainment and school absence, and offending means that close links between youth crime prevention programmes and educational services are vital. Many YOTs and local prevention programmes have developed strong relationships with education which have enabled strong, joined up, and integrated approaches where information, knowledge and resources are shared. The rapid growth in the number of safer school partnerships in England has provided an additional opportunity for schools to work more closely with YOTs.

The DfES intends to revise guidance to prevent truancy so that it takes account of significant changes in children's services and policing. This provides a key opportunity for us to influence and shape relevant policy. ACPO and the YJB wish to see a change in approach from sweeps and days of action to a targeted, intelligence-led and Every Child Matters-compliant application. A strategy on a partnership approach towards tackling truancy is in development.

Our actions

- Work with the DfES and other educational agencies to influence all relevant policy.
- Work with the DfES and other educational agencies to promote closer collaboration between schools and local youth crime prevention strategies and services.
- Work to develop and promote restorative justice in schools.

Tackling youth homelessness

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has pledged to tackle youth homelessness through three key areas, by:

- ending the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for young homeless people by 2010
- establishing a network of supported lodging accommodation
- increasing availability and access to family mediation workers.

Our research on the accommodation needs of children and young people who offend (2004) found that family breakdown frequently leads to homelessness, which is linked to a higher risk of offending or reoffending.

As a result of this link, prevention work can be targeted to reduce the incidence of family breakdown, and the consequent demand for alternative and supported accommodation.

Our actions

- Encourage YOTs and local partners from both the statutory and voluntary sectors to identify the risk of homelessness due to family breakdown. This can be achieved through a number of existing prevention strategies and partnerships, including local crime prevention strategies, local homelessness and housing strategies, and enhanced YOT prevention capacity.
- Work to introduce interventions to prevent family breakdown, including parenting support/skills, mediation and restorative justice, holistic interventions (such as family conferencing and multi-systemic therapy), YISPs, YIPs and mentoring.

Structural changes

In England, the emergence of children's trusts has presented an important structural change affecting YOTs. The transfer of Connexions to local authority control also represents a significant change.

Our actions

- Promote co-ordinated and effective partnership working in line with YJB policy outlined in *Sustaining the Success*.
- Promote the role of children's trusts as a full partner in the principal aim of the youth justice system – preventing offending by children and young people.
- Promote YOTs as a full partner with children's trusts in helping to deliver the Every Child Matters five key outcomes.
- Use the findings of our commissioned research to inform future policy on children's trusts.

- Ensure that information, advice and guidance continue to be provided sufficiently following the transition of Connexions into local authority control.

Major policy issues and initiatives in Wales

Services for children and young people in Wales are underpinned by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Seven Core Aims for children aged 0–10, and Extending Entitlement for young people aged 11–24. Children and young people who can access these entitlements and benefit from the aims are protected from, and at less risk of, offending.¹⁸

Our actions

- Continue to ensure our policies and programmes contribute to the Seven Core Aims for Children in Wales.
- Work to ensure that those at high risk of offending or reoffending are able to achieve the aspirations of the Seven Core Aims.
- Promote the role of our prevention programmes in ensuring access to the ten outcomes of Extending Entitlement for those at risk of offending.

Children and Young People's Partnerships

As a result of the Children Act 2004, and in line with the recommendations of the Beecham Review, each local authority in Wales will establish a Children and Young People's Partnership. Partnerships will develop a Children and Young People's Plan for joint commissioning and pooling of resources to enable a unified approach to children's services. Central to this will be mechanisms by which vulnerable and at risk children and young people can receive co-ordinated multi-agency preventive interventions.

Our actions

- Work with the Children's Strategy Unit in the Welsh Assembly Government and other Welsh Assembly Government departments, such as the Department of Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills, to influence and shape the development of Children and Young People's Partnerships and other key policies, such as education.
- Work to promote YISPs as the most suitable mechanism for co-ordinating prevention under the Children and Young People's Plans.
- Continue to promote the YOTs' status as statutory partners in the Children and Young People's Partnerships.
- Continue to work with the All Wales Young Offender Learning Project to maximise the input of education services in Wales.

All Wales Youth Offending Strategy

In response to the objectives of the joint YJB and Welsh Assembly Government's *All Wales Youth Offending Strategy*, the Department for Social Justice and Regeneration has ringfenced its Safer Communities Fund for the prevention of offending and reoffending by children and young people aged 8–18. In 2006/07, targeted YOT prevention

¹⁸ Haines et al (2004). *Extending Entitlement: Making it Real*. Cardiff: Welsh Assembly Government. www.learning.wales.gov.uk/pdfs/extending-entitlement-making-it-real-e.pdf

programmes received around 26% of this fund, which almost equals the amount invested in these programmes by the YJB.

Our actions

- Work with the Welsh Assembly Government to develop a policy pathway for the prevention of youth crime and anti-social behaviour in Wales, to sit below the *All Wales Youth Offending Strategy*.
- Lobby the Welsh Assembly Government to promote the adoption of *Onset* by all prevention programmes financed by the Safer Communities Fund.

Communities First

The Communities First initiative aims to improve the lives of those living in the most economically and socially deprived areas in Wales. The Welsh Assembly Government funds Communities First teams to help establish community partnerships between residents, voluntary organisations, the public sector, and business in order to effect positive change in their neighbourhoods. Most of the prevention programmes we fund operate within Communities First areas.

Our actions

- Continue to work with the Department for Social Justice and Regeneration to align the objectives of the *All Wales Youth Offending Strategy* and Communities First teams.
- Continue to work with the Local Government Data Unit – Wales to develop a Community Safety domain for the 2008 Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation.
- Promote the role of prevention programmes and their service users as key members of Communities First partnerships.

Other agencies and agendas

We will work to influence, shape, and undertake joint work with a range of other key bodies and initiatives, including the:

- **Prolific and Other Priority Offenders Strategy**
Our prevention strategy and programmes will continue to support the drive to reduce numbers of prolific offenders in the future. Home Office research identifies a number of key characteristics of prolific and other priority offenders that includes the finding that they tend to start their criminal careers earlier.
- **Home Office's Crime Reduction Model**
YIPs, YISPs, and parenting programmes are included as part of a wider bundle of interventions in the Home Office's Crime Reduction Model that is used to model the impact of targeted interventions on offender behaviour and crime.
- **neighbourhood management strategies**
These include the DCLG's Neighbourhood Renewal programme and the work of neighbourhood wardens, and housing policy.
- **local school behaviour and attendance improvement strategies**

- **drive to eliminate child poverty by 2020**
 The Child Poverty Review provided some of the funding for our prevention programme, and its aim is conducive to preventing youth crime, and vice-versa.
- **fire and rescue services**
 We have launched a joint strategy with the Association of Chief Fire Officers and we will work to take full advantage of the fire service's interest in and enthusiasm for preventive work. We have also contributed to the development of the Wales Arson Reduction Strategy.
- **sport and the arts**
 We have developed positive relationships with bodies such as the Arts and Sports Councils for England and Wales, and will continue to work jointly with these and other agencies in order to help support, inform, and develop youth crime prevention.

Group and gang offending and the use of weapons

We share the widespread concern around young people involved in group and gang-related criminal activity, and the separate but related issue of the use of weapons, particularly knives and firearms. Among other negative outcomes, this increases the likelihood of young people entering the criminal justice system for the first time through a serious offence.

It is important to draw a distinction between group membership, which is generally a natural and positive form of social bonding and protection for young people, low-level offending carried out in groups, and serious group and gang-related crime that can be related to adult offending, for example drug crime involving the use of weapons. While a significant proportion of offending by children and young people is connected to group association, and while it is important not to exaggerate its level, the link between the membership of gangs and serious criminality involving the use of weapons is causing particular concern in some areas of the UK.

This issue is being tackled by Government through a three-strand approach that includes:

- ensuring the police are equipped to tackle gun crime
- giving the police and courts the powers to deal with offenders
- empowering communities to take action themselves to prevent gun crime and gang culture and offering support to parents to challenge their children's behaviour.

The youth justice system has a key role to play in addressing group and gang-related crime, and we are working with Government and local areas to ensure the youth justice system contributes, wherever possible, to tackling this serious issue. This is an area where early preventive intervention can play an important role.

Some YOTs have already built up considerable experience in addressing group and gang-related offending, and prevention work will form part of a package of actions across the youth justice system that centre on the collation and promotion of effective practice.

Our actions

- Use our programme funding and influence to ensure the risk factors associated with crime-related group and gang membership are addressed.
- Identify, analyse, and share emerging and effective practice in preventing group and gang-related crime.
- Work across Government to support targeted prevention work focussed on group and gang-related crime.
- Work in partnership with Government and youth justice services to help prevent the possession and use of bladed weapons and firearms by young people.

Technology

The development of ICT capacity and capability across the youth justice system represents a number of opportunities for better knowledge management, including the relatively undeveloped area of youth crime prevention. The development of new prevention counting rules in 2006 has brought preventive data into the YOT performance management framework. Adaptation of YOT case management systems has been made accordingly, and work is under way to improve the way prevention data is captured, stored and analysed, particularly with regard to our corporate target for reducing the number of first-time entrants to the youth justice system.

Our actions

- Work internally and with software suppliers to continue to develop assessment and case management systems.
- Make optimum use of the prevention data recorded by YOTs.

Cost benefits

There is a clear opportunity to use the estimated economic benefits of preventing offending to make a strong case to the Treasury for further investment.

Our actions

Use research from targeted youth crime prevention programmes and wider data to build a robust cost benefit analysis case to Government.

Appendix 1 – Communications plan

We have developed a communications plan for our prevention strategy that aims to:

- increase the public's and practitioners' confidence in prevention programmes
- demonstrate that more socially excluded young people and their families are being engaged by prevention programmes
- lobby for further and increased funding for prevention programmes
- increase collaboration/partnership in providing prevention programmes, especially with local communities
- support the Government's anti-social behaviour and social exclusion strategies
- make the case for maintaining targeted prevention provision and the YOTs' role in delivering this
- promote research findings and effective practice
- reduce the 'demonisation' of young people.

As well as the key stakeholders already mentioned in this strategy, the key stakeholders we need to influence include:

- Government offices – regional crime directors and change for children advisers
- crime and disorder reduction partnerships
- children's services
- community safety teams
- neighbourhood renewal units
- anti-social behaviour units
- YOTs, in particular prevention managers, YOT managers and management board chairs
- local criminal justice boards.

There are also third parties that, although not directly involved in funding or service provision, need to be kept informed of developments in this area of work as the programme develops. Examples of third parties include:

- primary care trusts
- MPs
- local authority executive members with lead responsibility for community engagement, social inclusion, housing, social services, education, and community safety
- the general public.

The communications channels at our disposal include:

- e-communication:
 - YJBulletins
 - website and email
- publications:
 - training materials
 - marketing brochures
 - practice guidance
 - research reports
- events and corporate marketing:
 - conferences and seminars
 - regional fora
- ministerial and officials' briefing
- public affairs:
 - All Party Youth Affairs Group
 - All Party Parliamentary Group for Children
 - Home Affairs Select Committee.
- the local and national media, especially with regard to:
 - increasing public confidence that prevention programmes are effectively addressing the behaviour of young people that blights the lives of communities
 - challenging the demonisation of young people by the media
- working with partners such as:
 - Confederation of Directors of Children's Services (Confed)
 - Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE)
 - Local Government Association (LGA)
 - consortium for youth justice.

The role of our board members in communicating and promoting the prevention strategy, whenever possible, is also critical.

The wider penetration of our key messages will be captured as part of our stakeholder relationship evaluation.

Our actions

Use all our communications channels, as well as those of relevant partners, to support the work overseen by our Prevention Programme Board, and to communicate effectively the relevant messages to the identified stakeholders.

Appendix 2 - Prevention in Action: Case Studies

Youth Inclusion and Support Panel

John (14) was regularly joy-riding with a group of young people on his estate. He was beginning to miss school and was not joining in with his lessons when he was there. In the evenings John was hanging around the streets and getting involved in petty crime such as shoplifting and vandalism. The YISP worker worked with John to look at the impact of offending on the community, specific victims and what would happen to him if he continued offending. This included a visit to YOI Glen Parva, where prison officers and inmates showed him the reality of prison life. The YISP worker went to John's school and agreed a plan to manage his behaviour in the classroom and improve his attendance at school.

John began to settle into school, developed more positive relationships with teaching staff and his attendance increased. He completed a successful period of work experience and has been offered a job for when he leaves school. John stopped hanging around on the street and returned to the local youth club. He has not offended since the work with the YISP and his father believes this is due to the fact that he has a better awareness of the impact of his offending on the community.

John's *Onset* assessment score at the beginning of the YISP intervention was 21. He scored particularly highly with regard to living arrangements, family and personal arrangements, statutory education and neighbourhood. At the end of the intervention his *Onset* score was a much lower 9.

John and his parents said the YISP had been explained very well to them and that they felt fully involved in planning the interventions. His parents noticed an improvement in John's confidence and felt that the one-to-one support for John and for them had been the most beneficial element of the programme.

Youth Inclusion Programme

Ian was referred to the YIP in October 2005 at the age of 13. With lax parental supervision and an older sibling heavily involved with robberies and vehicle thefts, he was assessed as high risk. Ian had been involved with various weekly activities with the YIP, but still continued to be involved with low level offending and anti-social behaviour. In September 2006 he was chosen to take part in a scuba diving course where he would learn how to dive and about the physics of diving, and complete two dives into open water. As the course progressed his behaviour changed and the feedback from community wardens, PCSOs and the police was very positive - he was not hanging around with his usual group, he was home at regular times and his anti-social behaviour had lessened. His improved behaviour was confirmed by feedback from the local community and his pupil referral unit. He completed academic exams and an open water dive of six metres. The project motivated Ian and the other participants to engage and improve their behaviour through the excitement of scuba, coupled with a firm, low tolerance attitude to bad behaviour and regular home visits to parents to provide updates on their child's behaviour and progress.

Youth Inclusion Programme

Bolton YIP operates in the Farnworth and Harper Green wards of the town, both of which are in the top 10% in the national indices of deprivation and have higher than borough average levels of crime, anti-social behaviour and unemployment. The number of young people classed as NEET (not in employment, education or training) is around 30% higher than the borough average. The programme uses a multi-agency partnership approach to identify a core group of young people at high risk and has been successful in achieving consistently high engagement rates. By early 2005 the YIP was achieving a 73% reduction in arrest rates, exceeding the national target for the programme.

Bolton YIP is based in the Sport Health and Inclusion section of the local authority, and works closely with a number of key partners who support the delivery of services to YIP young people. These include Greater Manchester Police, Bolton at Home (housing), Bolton Connexions Service, Education Social Work Team, local schools, Bolton College, Community Safety Services and Project 360 (a young peoples' drugs project). The YIP is a key element of the local Community Strategy and is part of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy through the Safer Bolton Young People's Action Plan and the Prevent and Deter Action Plan. It is part of Bolton's Sport and Physical Activity strategy and directly contributes to the Neighbourhood Renewal strategy. It is overseen by the youth offending service, which works closely with the project to address local offending / anti social behaviour issues.

The YIP has a positive relationship with a wide variety of initiatives within the education system. It develops joined-up responses with local schools, Pupil Referral Units, Education Social Workers and the Connexions Service. The YIP contributes to school exclusion and truancy reduction by working with schools to support young people who are struggling, seeking to get them back into education. Education services are involved in developing multi-agency support plans alongside the YIP to address educational, anti social behaviour and child protection concerns.

The YIP provides vital support to marginalised young people to help improve their life chances. YIP staff engage young people through an induction process. This involves assessing their needs and developing short, medium and long term action plans which are owned by staff and parents. Activities and interventions include:

- offence-focused work: for example, the Impact Roadshow which examines the consequences of car crime on offenders, victims, families and the wider community
- the BLAGG project: using role play and video work to support young people in understanding the risk factors which lead to crime and the impact of offences on the wider community
- vocational training: providing young people with skills and qualifications which motivate them to find future employment
- detached work: engaging YIP young people and their peers in group work to challenge anti-social behaviour on estates and areas where they congregate
- community merit: providing young people with rewards for completing community projects, such as gardening projects for the elderly/disabled
- supporting young people through individual action plans
- developing anger management techniques and addressing other issues

- leisure and diversionary activity work: for example, health and fitness improvement programmes within the gym at the local leisure centre, arts (video, pottery, fine art, music) and sports activities (swimming, dance, football, amateur boxing)
- one-to-one coaching.

Youth Inclusion and Support Panel

Amanda (15) was at risk of exclusion from her school, hanging around the streets in the evenings and drinking alcohol heavily. Her relationships with her family were very poor and she was unhappy. The YISP worker worked with the Connexions Service, the school and Amanda to develop an education package that would suit her needs. The YISP worker helped Amanda to identify her positive attributes in order to raise her self-esteem, and to access counselling and anger management. Amanda's parents attended a parenting group where they learned a number of ways of dealing with her behaviour.

Amanda now has a much more positive relationship with her parents and younger brother. She is fully engaged in her education programme and as a result of her increased self-esteem, she has reduced her alcohol consumption and is using her time more constructively in the evenings. Her parents have noticed a positive change in her outlook and an improvement in the relationships at home.

Amanda's *Onset* assessment score at the beginning of the intervention was 26, with particularly high risks around family and personal arrangements, statutory education, neighbourhood and substance misuse. At the end of the intervention her *Onset* score had reduced to 15.

Amanda's parents noticed that she was calmer at home and had better relationships with her sister and the rest of her family. They praised the YISP worker who had supported Amanda. Amanda said she felt that the YISP interventions had helped her stop getting into as much trouble at school and forge better relationships at home. She was also drinking less and felt stronger in her relationships with friends and boyfriends.

Youth Inclusion Programme

In April/May 2005 young people from Portsmouth YIP (run by Motiv8) were involved in a 'gang battle' with other youth groups. The situation arose after a member of the YIPs 'core 50' (highest risk individuals) was assaulted on the way home from one of Motiv8's diversion projects by another group of young males.

Portsmouth has four main youth 'gangs'. They are:

- The Asda Park Crew: predominantly Albanian, Iraqi, Romanian and Congolese refugees
- The Burberry Boys: from outside the city centre
- The Somerstown Crew: from a city centre area with high levels of crime and anti-social behaviour
- The Portsea Boys: from the YIP area.

These are all large groups of young people who hang out, make a lot of noise and are seen as anti-social.

Traditionally these groups had remained territorial and had not mixed or fought. However, following the assault, tensions rose dramatically within a week, to the point where 40 young people from the Asda Park Crew tried to infiltrate the Portsea YIP. YIP staff defused the immediate situation, but later that evening around 80 young people began gathering for a fight – some armed with knives, blocks of wood and other weapons. YIP staff worked the police to defuse the situation before it escalated further.

The following day the police and the YIP arranged an emergency meeting attended by Portsea YIP, the police, Immigration, Social Services, Portsmouth City Council Youth Service and Race Relations, other voluntary organisations and community wardens. Intelligence was shared and solutions discussed. The YIP, in partnership with the Youth Service and community wardens, diverted their resources into outreach and one-to-one work with the primary instigators of the trouble from each group of young people. It worked in partnership with the Youth Service and wardens to prevent a further three planned fights and to gather a number of weapons. The intervention of the YIP culminated in a meeting arranged with the ring leaders of the trouble, mediated by the Youth Service, supported by the YIP. Since then the groups have, for the most part, held off their hostilities and the YIP continues to monitor the situation and intervene where necessary.

Youth Offending Service Prevention Strategy

As part of their local public service agreement, Staffordshire has a target to reduce first time entrants by to the youth justice service by 10%. Their strategic priorities, in line with *Every Child Matters*, are to:

- raise awareness of the impact of crime and anti-social behaviour through education
- provide access to positive activities
- provide a single point of referral and assessment
- engage with the community to help resolve conflict
- achieve a reduction in the number of looked after children being prosecuted
- develop targeted parenting and family support in line with the Respect Agenda and PPO strategy.

The aims and objectives of the strategy are:

- early identification and assessment of children and young people between the ages of 8 and 17 who are identified as at high risk of committing crime or anti-social behaviour
- better co-ordination of the delivery of services and programmes between agencies linked to assessment
- the development of effective partnership working that builds on the skills, resources and strengths each agency can provide to youth crime prevention

- the provision of economies of scale and best value and cost effectiveness through joint investment in prevention.

In order to:

- reduce the number of first time entrants to the youth justice system and civil courts for anti-social behaviour
- reduce levels of re-offending of young people aged 10 to 17 years
- improve the life chances of young people identified as at high risk of offending or committing anti-social behaviour
- reduce the number of victims of youth crime and reports of anti-social behaviour within communities.

Staffordshire has established six key areas for delivery between 2006 and 2009.

- Work with within the Citizenship agenda and Community and Learning Partnerships to raise awareness and provide information to young people on the consequences of their involvement in crime and anti-social behaviour and to address the impact on the victims of crime and their communities.
- Provide constructive positive activities and programmes to divert young people from crime and anti-social behaviour and access to mainstream services.
- Establish and implement a model for identification and provision of assessment and service delivery for those at high risk of committing crime or anti-social behaviour, identified for 'Prevent and Deter'.
- Encourage community engagement to help resolve conflict at an early stage and build respect and strengthen communities.
- Ensure the number of looked after children prosecuted for criminal and anti-social behaviour is reduced.
- Develop a targeted parenting and family support service to respond to the Respect Action Plan.