

# Less Crime, Lower Costs



Implementing effective early  
crime reduction programmes  
in England & Wales

Max Chambers, Ben Ullmann  
and Professor Irvin Waller  
edited by Gavin Lockhart



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Professor Waller developed the Safer Cities program with UN Habitat and has participated with the World Health Organisation in the implementation of their Health and Violence report. He was also a key adviser to the group of experts that prepared the UN Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime accepted in 2002. He has worked on national commissions in Canada, South Africa and the United States. Professor Waller has been President and Secretary General of the World Society of Victimology. He was on the Board of the International Bureau of Children’s Rights which spearheaded the adoption of UN Guidelines on Justice for Child Victims and Witnesses in 2005. He has won prizes internationally for his contributions, particularly to the United Nations standards on crime victims.

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# Executive Summary

The estimated cost of crime to the UK is around £78 billion a year.<sup>1</sup> This equates to £3,000 per household every year – an extra 20p on the basic rate of income tax. There is also untold pain, suffering and damage caused to an estimated 10 million victims of crime and their families each year.<sup>2</sup>

While there have been some falls in certain categories of crime in the last decade, the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit itself estimates that 80% of these reductions have been caused by wider economic factors, rather than any successful government crime reduction strategy.<sup>3</sup> Now the country is in recession, this report argues that, more than ever, policy should be based on the best available evidence about what works in preventing crime.

New Labour promised to be tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime. However, government spending and policy have been overwhelmingly focused on

enforcement measures (such as police, courts and prisons) rather than on tackling the causes. This is reflected in the huge increases in spending on the criminal justice system – a rise of over a third in real terms since 1997 to around £23 billion a year. Britain now spends a higher proportion of GDP on security and tackling

“ Britain now spends a higher proportion of GDP on security and tackling crime than most other EU countries, and any other country in the industrialised nations of the OECD. But it isn't working ”

crime than most other EU countries, and any other country in the industrialised nations of the OECD.<sup>4</sup> But it isn't working. There are still almost 100,000 new young entrants to the criminal justice system every year (children receiving a reprimand, a final warning or a conviction). Until the Government has a strategy to tackle crime at its root causes, in conjunction with enforcement measures, little progress can be made. Polling conducted for this report shows a clear appetite among the public for a reallocation of crime reduction resources: 80% are in favour of matching increases in spending on policing and prisons with spending on programmes likely to prevent crime.<sup>5</sup>

In 1997 there was already solid international evidence base about the most effective methods for preventing crime. In particular, there were encouraging strategies for preventing youth offending in a cost-effective way by tackling the risk factors that predispose young people to criminality. There was also evidence about “what worked” in terms of operational policing methods and deterring potential offenders from committing a crime at particular places or times (“situational” crime prevention). This evidence was strong enough for the Home Office to invest £250 million in a crime reduction strategy from 1999 to 2002. However, the Government's desire to control how the money was spent locally, through central

1 The Economic and Social Costs of Crime, (adjusted for inflation) Home Office Research Study 217, 2000

2 Crime in England and Wales 2007-08, Home Office

3 Prime Minister's Strategy Unit, 2006

4 Building on Progress: security, crime and justice, Prime Minister's Strategy Unit, 2007

5 PoliticsHome/Policy Exchange poll, 1058 adults nationally weighted between 1-5 May 2009.

targeting and performance management, contributed to widespread failure of implementation – which then led to the money supply being cut off. The delivery vehicles for the programme (crime and disorder reduction partnerships) remain in place, but are largely focused on situational crime prevention and policing methods, rather than the causes of crime. At the same time, the Youth Justice Board has been hamstrung in its prevention activities because its first priority must be the provision of youth custody places, which swallows the vast majority of its budget.

Since 2007 there has been a shift in government policy: new initiatives have focused on social exclusion and families at risk. Encouraging as this is, the Government's most recent attempt to set out a strategy for tackling crime – the youth crime action plan – announced unsustained ad hoc funding, did little to clarify responsibility for cutting crime and increased pressures on departmental budgets. The lack of knowledge as to what to do next persists – there is little understanding of how to extend successful pilot trials, how to deliver the right interventions to the right people, or how to encourage and train local practitioners to use evidence-based interventions to prevent crime. A number of structural, financial and political barriers remain:

**1 There is no leadership.** The Government has made a limited effort to lead prevention efforts through the National Crime Reduction Board, set up in 2007. But it has no budget, no secretariat driving delivery and no monitoring or evaluation tools. Its status as the “key high-level forum” must be questioned, given that two secretaries of state who are central to the crime reduction agenda have been regularly absent from meetings – the Secretary of State for Justice has been present for only one and the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families for two. In total, there have been 29 ministerial absentees from the five meetings – and early prevention programmes have been discussed only once according to the minutes of the board's five meetings, when the Home Secretary gave a presentation on the youth crime action plan.<sup>6</sup> There is also no effective co-ordination of prevention programmes. The action plan itself concedes that “the evolution of services has led to several different agencies having responsibility for different aspects of tackling youth crime. In some areas this can mean there is not a single joined up approach, and information on children and families at risk is not always shared between agencies, leading to a disjointed picture of the child's needs.”<sup>7</sup>

**2 There is no effective vehicle for evaluating programmes or establishing an evidence base.** In England and Wales, responsibility for interventions lies with many different agencies, programmes are evaluated in different places, with different criteria and different desired outcomes. Without an effective vehicle, the evidence base needed to make the case for early intervention at a national level cannot be established. In the United States, the Justice Department tasked the University of Colorado's Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence with reviewing hundreds of prevention programmes operating across the country, focusing on the evidence base, sustainability, value for money and local applicability. They identified the top 11 model programmes, which became known as “blueprints”. No equivalent body has yet been charged with undertaking such work in England and Wales.

<sup>6</sup> Minutes of the National Crime Reduction Board meetings, Home Office; <http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/crimereductionprogramme/crimereductionprogramme033.htm>

<sup>7</sup> Youth Crime Action Plan, Home Office, p 65, 2008



“ Though the Government’s rhetoric suggests that it has accepted the argument for early crime prevention, this has not yet been reflected in the way resources are allocated; evidence-based early intervention is still seen as a “pet project” rather than a mainstream crime prevention tool ”

**3 The funding provided for prevention projects is piecemeal and unsustainable.** Funds provided in the youth crime action plan will be in place for the next two-and-a-half years only and, given the pressures on departmental budgets, there is no guarantee that they will be extended. Resources

provided by government departments for the piloting of projects under the social exclusion task force have so far been provided on an ad hoc basis with no funds planned for national expansion. Funds provided for Youth Justice Board prevention efforts barely scratch the surface compared with those provided for the provision of custody – just 5% of the YJB’s budget is spent on prevention compared with 75% on custody. Though the Government’s rhetoric suggests that it has accepted the argument for early crime

prevention, this has not yet been reflected in the way resources are allocated; evidence-based early intervention is still seen as a “pet project” rather than a mainstream crime prevention tool.

**4 Prevention programmes are not reaching the people they need to.** The Youth Justice Board estimates that since 1999, its prevention programmes have reached 50,000 children and young people “on the cusp of offending” – an average of 6,250 a year. But with nearly 100,000 new entrants to the criminal justice system every year, it is clear that the scale of the Government’s prevention efforts is inadequate.

**5 There is confused responsibility for cutting youth crime.** The youth crime action plan further confuses the issue of responsibility by placing a duty on children’s trusts (established to improve outcomes for all children, young people and their families by further integrating services, strategies and processes) to prevent youth offending, while not explicitly addressing the relationship between youth offending teams and trusts.

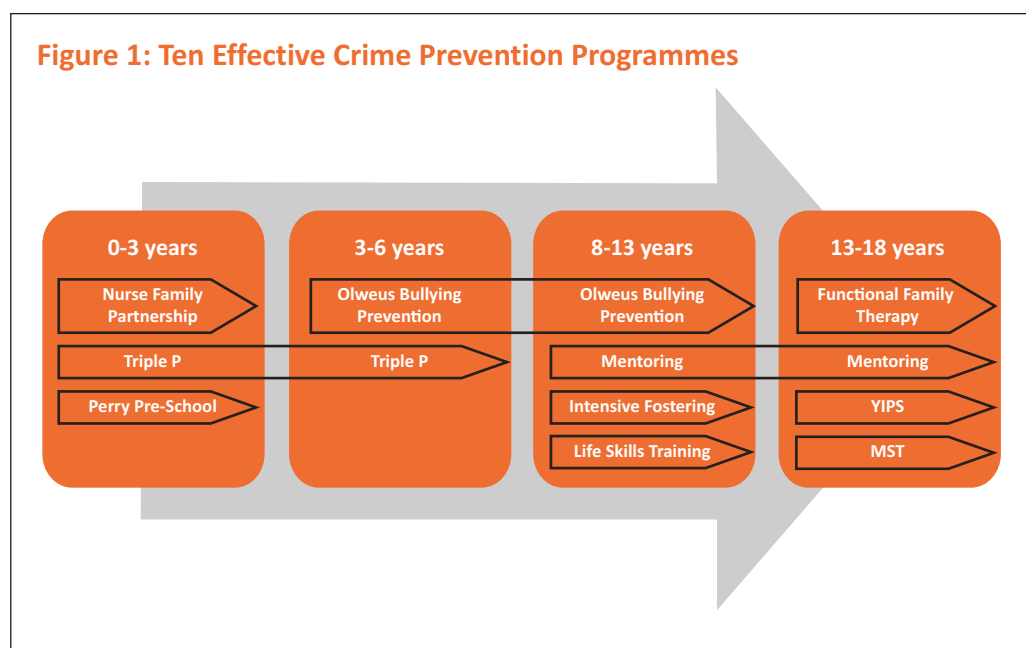
**6 Perverse incentives and funding stream problems have not been rectified.** The youth crime action plan recognises, but glosses over, the issue of perverse financial incentives at a local level. At present, central government, through the Youth Justice Board, takes financial responsibility for those children drawn into the criminal justice system, and this acts as a powerful disincentive for other agencies to get to grips at the early stages with the most at-risk children. In this way, custody acts as a kind of “respite care” for local authorities, which do not have to bear the costs of custody. The action plan states that the target-driven local area agreements and the new common area assessment will provide an incentive for reducing custody. However, it does not address the central questions of whether local authorities should directly bear the costs of youth custody and the benefits of reducing its use, a bold change that would provide a powerful new incentive for local bodies.

This report argues that to address these shortcomings, policymakers in England and Wales should learn from prevention programmes that have proved effective and cost-effective in other countries.

The good news is that, 12 years after New Labour were elected, the evidence about what works is even stronger. The best prevention programmes target the known risk factors for offending and are designed to counteract them at every stage of a child's development. The greater the number of risk factors in a young person's life, the greater the chances that he or she will become an offender. A Home Office study has found that although only 6% of boys under 18 had at least four risk factors, over three-quarters (85%) of them had committed at least one offence at some point in their lives, and more than half (57%) were currently persistent or serious offenders.<sup>8</sup>

More than 40 years of scientific research has established a body of knowledge that criminal justice policymakers and practitioners can draw upon to develop and deliver programmes that are both effective and cost-effective. Some reap rewards of as much as \$25 for every dollar invested. The potential savings are substantial, especially as research from the United States indicates that the most prolific young offenders can cost the taxpayer up to \$5.6 million by the time they reach the age of 26.<sup>9</sup> The National Audit Office has estimated that preventing just one in ten young offenders from ending up in custody in the UK would save £100 million a year.

This report identifies examples of ten programmes that are proven to have significant impact on future offending as well as being cost-effective. The interventions highlighted target a combination of risk factors at every stage of a child's development, from birth to age 18. They have been thoroughly evaluated, including through randomised controlled trials, and many have undergone rigorous cost-benefit analyses.



But knowing what works is only the first step; these programmes have to be put into practice properly in order to have the desired effect.

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/toolkits/py020204.htm>

<sup>9</sup> Cohen M and Piquero A, "New Evidence on the Monetary Value of Saving a High Risk Youth", *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, Vol 25, No 1, March 2009

## International delivery of effective interventions

Since the 1970s governments in Western Europe and the Commonwealth, including Canada, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Sweden, New Zealand and Australia, have established national crime prevention councils, designed to undertake rigorous research for crime prevention efforts and to help local communities to put in place the policies that have been shown to work.

These councils disseminate technical assistance, skills and knowledge to local agencies for prevention programmes, provide funding for pilots and ensure continuity, co-ordination and monitoring of local programmes. They provide training in prevention science for people in local agencies and maintain high standards of evaluation research. They also act as centres for discussion of how the policy initiatives of different government agencies influence crime and associated social problems. They set a national and local agenda for research and practice in the early prevention of crime, as well as drug and alcohol abuse, mental health and associated social problems. Finally, they support systematic reviews of the literature on the effectiveness of early interventions to prevent delinquency and offending.

In 1991 the need for such bodies was underlined at the UN's second international crime prevention conference in Paris. Its final declaration stated:

*"Governments must establish national crime prevention structures to recommend improved policies, undertake research and development, and foster the implementation of effective crime prevention programmes, particularly by cities."<sup>10</sup>*

These national strategies are still evolving. They are justified by arguments of effectiveness and cost-efficiency and are focused on delivery by local government. Belgium now contracts with local authorities at a level of almost £3 per citizen. In Canada, the federal government is spending £1.50 per head to adapt and test suc-

cessful prevention programs that produce results. Recently the government of the Province of Alberta in Canada reviewed the worldwide evidence and won an election on a platform to put £7 a head into effective prevention, matching a similar amount for enforcement and even more in treatment.

“ A better balance needs to be struck if the Government is going to make a real impact on crime rates and to spend taxpayers' money more wisely ”

This report examines the key characteristics of these national bodies, including their role, staff numbers, budgets and location within government. The next report, to be published later this year, will recommend in greater detail how such a body might be constituted in England and Wales.

## Conclusions and recommendations

While prevention methods can never be a substitute for enforcement, a better balance needs to be struck if the Government is going to make a real impact on crime rates and to spend taxpayers' money more wisely. The prevention methods highlighted here will also significantly improve the life chances of children and teenagers, reaping rewards for government and society as a whole.

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<sup>10</sup> European Forum for Urban Safety, Federation of Canadian Municipalities, and United States Conference of Mayors, 1991. Final Declaration, Second International Conference on Urban Safety, Drugs and Crime Prevention, 18-20th November, 1991, Paris

This report, the first in a series that will focus on how to intervene effectively with at-risk young people, makes a number of recommendations:

**The Government should create a national council for crime prevention, located in the Cabinet Office.** The council will mobilise key government departments and partners and develop a cross-departmental strategy for delivering early social interventions to prevent crime. It will have two parts: a secretariat responsible for strategy and an independent research and development unit responsible for establishing an evidence-base of effective crime prevention programmes. The research unit will disseminate best practice and train local practitioners; evaluate local programmes; and provide guidance to local authorities on tailoring programmes using regional and local data.

**The national council must have a sustainable budget.** The budget should be in the region of £200 million a year, in line with similar councils in other countries. The funds should come from three areas:

- 6% of the £1.3 billion Sure Start budget (c £80 million a year) should be spent on effective interventions for the 6% of children with four or more risk factors
- 1% of the centrally funded national police budget (£70 million annum) should be reallocated to local crime prevention
- £50 million of the Crime Reduction and Safety Services budget (£362 million in 2007/08) should be spent by youth offending teams or other agencies that can deliver tried and tested early intervention

This is a total of £200 million.

These funds should be provided for four years and divided into:

- £20 million per annum on the national crime prevention council and evaluation unit
- £180 million annual seed funding for effective programmes

This spending equates to around £4 per citizen – more than is spent in Belgium and approaching the budget for the most progressive jurisdictions, such as Alberta.

**Local authorities should create early intervention boards.** These would fill the existing gap in provision between those programmes which involve pre and post-natal care and those run by youth offending teams and targeted at adolescents. These local delivery units will choose a package of evidence-based programmes according to their local needs.

The early intervention boards must have a number of characteristics:

- A partnership with an appropriate composition, encompassing all the services which are able to deliver interventions. This includes children and family services
- The board should be led by the local authority
- The board must liaise with the national council, using the evidence on what works and what doesn't, and using real-time data on crime hotspots and families who are at risk to target the people most in need of intervention. In time, a

common risk assessment tool, developed by the national council, will be used to identify those most at risk

**Local authorities should fund effective programmes using social bonds.** Such bonds would be secured against the projected income stream or savings of a project. There are two main benefits of this approach: first, it has the potential for raising large sums of money up-front during a downturn; second, social bonds commit local areas to a particular outcome over an extended period of time. These bonds could either be local authority social bonds, or financed through government arrangements with other service providers. The Treasury and other key departments should devise a viable financial instrument to fund crime prevention and early intervention efforts, to allow some of the potentially large savings to be released at a local level.

**The Government should devolve budgetary responsibility for youth custody from the Youth Justice Board to a lower level.** This could involve budgets for youth custody being held by consortiums of local authorities matching criminal justice area boundaries. Each local authority would make financial contributions according to their respective rates of youth custody. Local authorities need much stronger incentives to reduce youth crime than reformed local area agreements and a new common area assessment framework. A “charge-back” scheme would do exactly that. A consortium of local authorities (matching local criminal justice areas as far as possible) would receive the sum it costs to incarcerate young offenders in the local area over a period of time. If it reduced the number of children in custody it would reap the savings, but would be charged the extra costs if custody numbers increased. For example, 112 children in Birmingham received a custodial sentence in 2008 at no cost to Birmingham City Council but at a cost to the Youth Justice Board of £8.4 million. Under the justice reinvestment model, if Birmingham were to reduce the number of children by half by ensuring proper evidence-based early years and youth support, the council would retain the £4.2 million saving.

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# 1

## Crime in England and Wales: the legacy of the last decade

### Summary

After more than a decade in office, and despite unprecedented expenditure on policing, courts and prisons, public confidence in the Government's ability to fight crime and disorder remains extremely low. The UK remains a high-crime country, with major rises in violent crime in the last ten years and the costs of crime estimated to be more than £78 billion a year.

The Government's pledge to be "tough on the causes of crime" has not been delivered. Labour's youth justice reforms have been heavily focused on enforcement instead of prevention and, during the economic boom, there were countless missed opportunities for a sustained, strategic effort to implement evidence-based prevention programmes to reduce youth crime. The result has been high rates of youth offending, more and more children being drawn into the criminal justice system year on year, insufficient reductions in re-offending rates and huge additional costs to taxpayers.

### The Costs of Crime

The cost of crime in the UK in 2000 was estimated to be at least £60 billion a year – over £164 million every day.<sup>11</sup> Adjusted for inflation, the cost of crime in 2009 is more than £78 billion. This is equivalent to an extra 20p in the basic rate of income tax and amounts to over £3,000 per household each year. Today, in the context of rising violent crime and expected increases in property and other crime associated with the recession, the true figure is likely to be even higher.

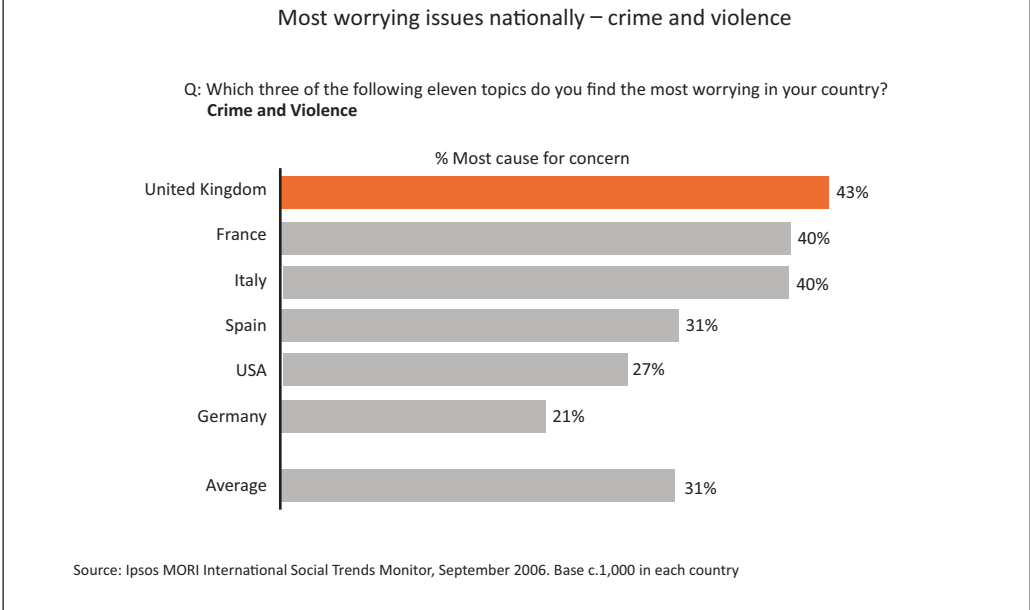
Of the total in 2000, £19 billion was attributed to the cost of stolen or damaged property; £18 billion to the direct emotional and physical impact on victims of crime (over £14 billion of this incurred as a result of violent crime); £12 billion was judged to be the cost of the response to crime by the criminal justice system; and £5 billion for the costs associated with the anticipation of crime. These figures did not include any financial estimate of the costs of fear, quality of life, drug crime, low-level disorder, undiscovered fraud, costs in terms of attitudes and social structures, lost productivity or the opportunity costs of crime.

Britain is still a high-crime country compared with its neighbours. Despite falls in some categories of crime in the last decade, England and Wales has the fourth highest rate of recorded crime out of 39 European countries – twice the European average – and we have the second highest rate of victimisation according to the 17-country International Crime Victim Survey.<sup>12</sup> It is therefore unsurprising that the problem of crime is so consistently high on the list of voters' most pressing concerns.

<sup>11</sup> The Economic and Social Costs of Crime, Home Office Research Study 217, 2000

<sup>12</sup> Dijk J van, Kesteren J van and Smit P, *Criminal Victimization in International Perspective: Key Findings from the 2004-2005 ICVS and EU ICS*, The Hague, Ministry of Justice, 2007

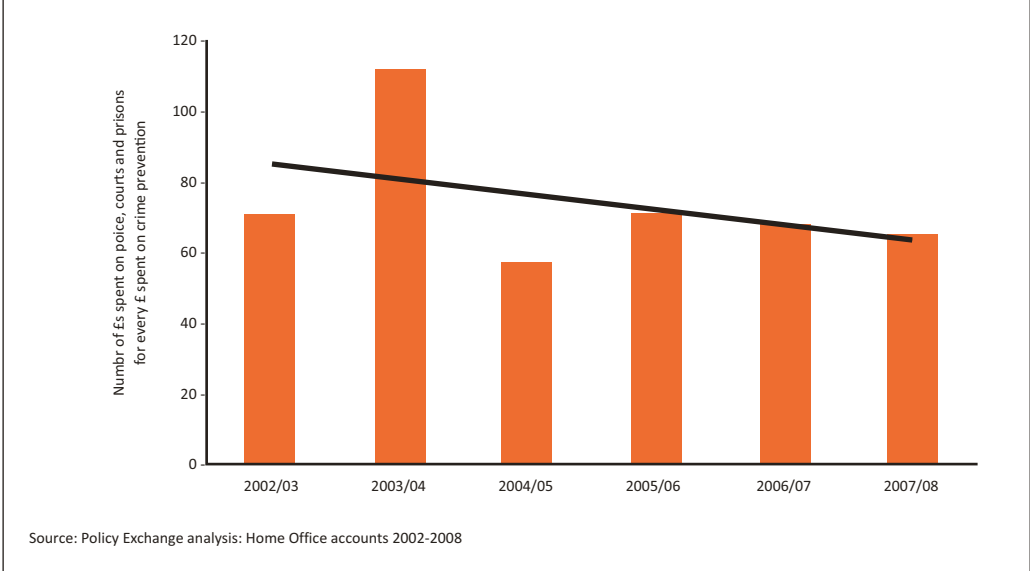
**Figure 2: Public concern about crime and violence**



### Government Spending on Law and Order

Despite the Government’s pledge to be tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime, New Labour has concentrated on law enforcement and the criminal justice system rather than on crime prevention and getting to grips with the underlying causes of criminal behaviour. This has been reflected in the areas to which additional government spending has been directed.

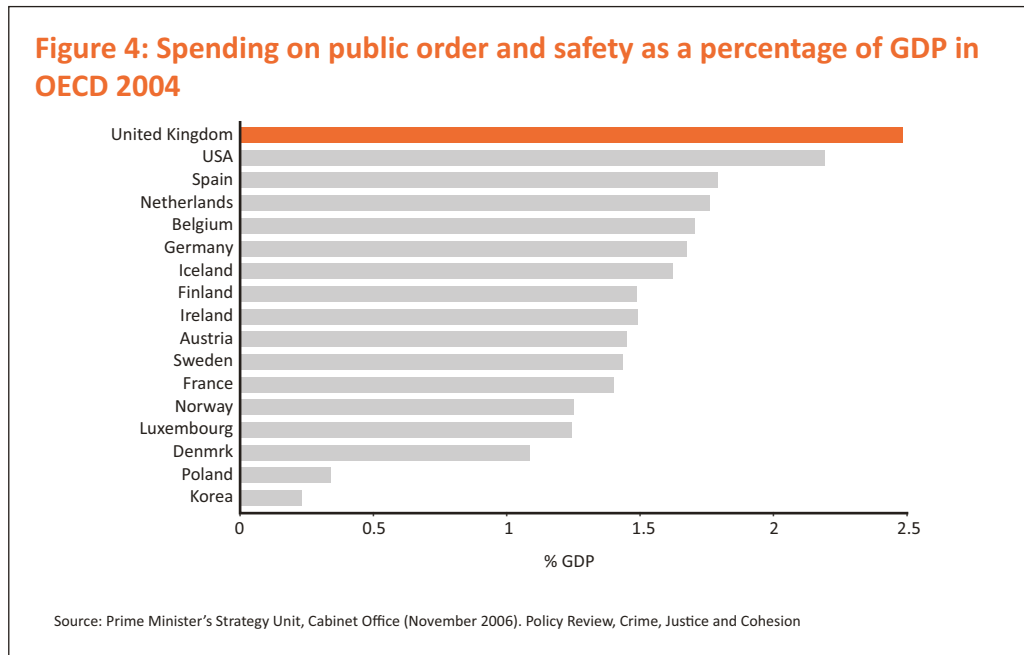
**Figure 3: Amount spent on enforcement for every £1 spent on prevention**



Initially the Government abided by the spending plans of the previous Conservative administration, so that criminal justice agencies did not receive a significant injection of extra funds until 2001. However, when the spending did get underway

it was extremely generous. Between 2001 and 2005 there was a 6.5% annual growth in spending on law and order.<sup>13</sup> Labour claimed it was the biggest injection of new resources for 20 years.

By 2004, the Government was already spending 2.5% of its national income on law and order – a larger proportion than ever before. The UK now spends a higher proportion of GDP (gross domestic product) on security and tackling crime than any other country in the industrialised nations of the OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development).<sup>14</sup>



In 2007-08 the criminal justice system in England and Wales received just under £23 billion, a third more in real terms than ten years previously.<sup>15</sup>

Nearly two-thirds of the growth in spending on law and order between 2001 and 2005 was spent on the 43 police forces in England and Wales, which received an annual increase in spending of just under 4% in real terms between 2001 and 2006. This largely went on recruitment of police officers. Since 2000, when numbers were in decline, there has been a remarkable increase in police numbers, from just under 125,000 to more than 141,000 in 2007.

The prison system has also received a large portion of this extra spending. Since June 1995 the prison population has increased by 60%<sup>16</sup> and England and Wales now boasts the highest prison rate per capita in Western Europe.<sup>17</sup>

This puts huge pressure on public sector budgets, not least because the cost per prisoner in England and Wales is approximately £37,500 a year.<sup>18</sup> As a result, total penal expenditure has increased massively, from £2.8 billion in 1995 to £4.3 billion in 2006.

Though probation is a small part of the total expenditure, proportionately it has had the largest growth in funding in real terms followed by youth justice. The extra funds for probation were largely for increases in support staff and the creation of a centralised probation directorate.

Youth justice has been a vital element of the Government's reform programme and this has been reflected in substantial increases in expenditure. Total spending on

13 Emmerson C and Frayne C, *Public Spending: Election Briefing 2005*, Institute of Fiscal Studies 2005

14 Building on Progress: security, crime and justice, Prime Minister's Strategy Unit, 2007

15 Solomon E, Eades C, Garside R and Rutherford M, *Ten Years of Criminal Justice under Labour: An Independent Audit*, Centre for Crime and Justice Studies, 2007

16 As cited by Lord Carter in *Securing the Future: proposals for the efficient and sustainable use of custody in England and Wales*, Ministry of Justice, December 2007

17 In comparison to the prison population figure of 81,454 as at 23rd November 2007

18 Cost figures are based on the total cost of prisons (both public and private) and expenditure met by HMPS and NOMS (eg prison property, prisoner escort services, IT). They include adult prisons and young offenders' institutes but exclude health and education expenditure



youth justice increased by £267.2 million between 2000 and 2007, a real terms increase of 45%. This was initially to fund the creation of the new youth offending teams and a national Youth Justice Board to oversee the youth justice system and purchase custodial accommodation for children. The board has accounted for just over two-thirds of spending on youth justice, the majority of which paid for secure accommodation for the increasing number of children in custody.

### Labour’s record on crime reduction

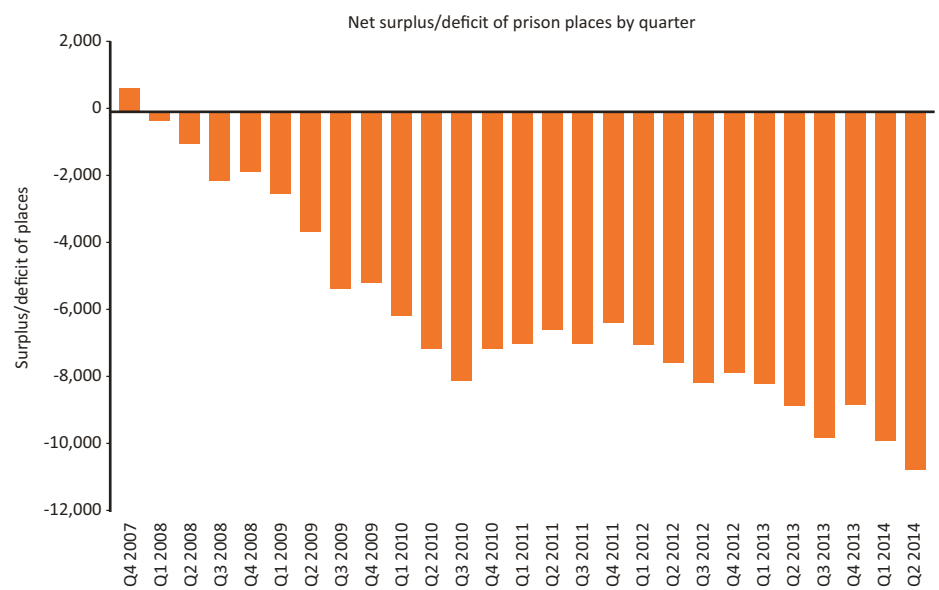
Labour’s goal to reform criminal justice to be “tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime” was hugely ambitious. The scale of the increased expenditure, the mass of legislation and the political energy and attention devoted has been unprecedented in any other comparable country. At first sight, it would appear to have had a significant impact. Overall crime rates have fallen according to the British Crime Survey, which measures

“ The Prime Minister’s Strategy Unit concluded that 80% of the reduction in the official crime rate since 1997 was the result of economic, not criminal justice, factors.”

the number of adults who were victims of crime independently of police statistics. Yet the same decline has taken place in most other western nations. Overall crime would have declined to a large extent had Labour published only one criminal justice plan and made just a few basic reforms.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, the Prime Minister’s Strategy Unit concluded that 80% of

the reduction in the official crime rate since 1997 was the result of economic, not criminal justice, factors.<sup>20</sup> However, according to police recorded crime statistics, serious violent offences increased by 66% between 1997-98 and 2005-06 and robbery has risen by 47% over the same period.<sup>21</sup> Violent crime has almost doubled.<sup>22</sup>

Figure 5: Projected shortfall in prison places by 2014



Source: Securing the Future: proposals for the efficient and sustainable use of custody in England and Wales, Ministry of Justice, December 2007

19 Solomon E, *New Labour and Crime Prevention in England and Wales: What Worked?*, 2009

20 Prime Minister’s Strategy Unit, 2006

21 Crime in England and Wales, Home Office, 2006 p 26

22 Crime in England and Wales, Home Office, 2007, Table 2.04

Building more prison places, while simultaneously failing to tackle the causes of crime, has not reduced demand for prison. A study by Lord Carter in December 2007 illustrated that without immediate emergency measures, including building huge new Titan prisons, demand for new prison places would soon outstrip supply, resulting in a shortfall of over 10,000 places by 2014.<sup>23</sup>

Youth disorder and offending continues to be a huge problem. There are almost 100,000 new entrants to the criminal justice system every year and since 1997, the number of prolific young offenders has increased by 60%. The number of offences committed by prolific young offenders has also increased hugely – by 82%.<sup>24</sup>

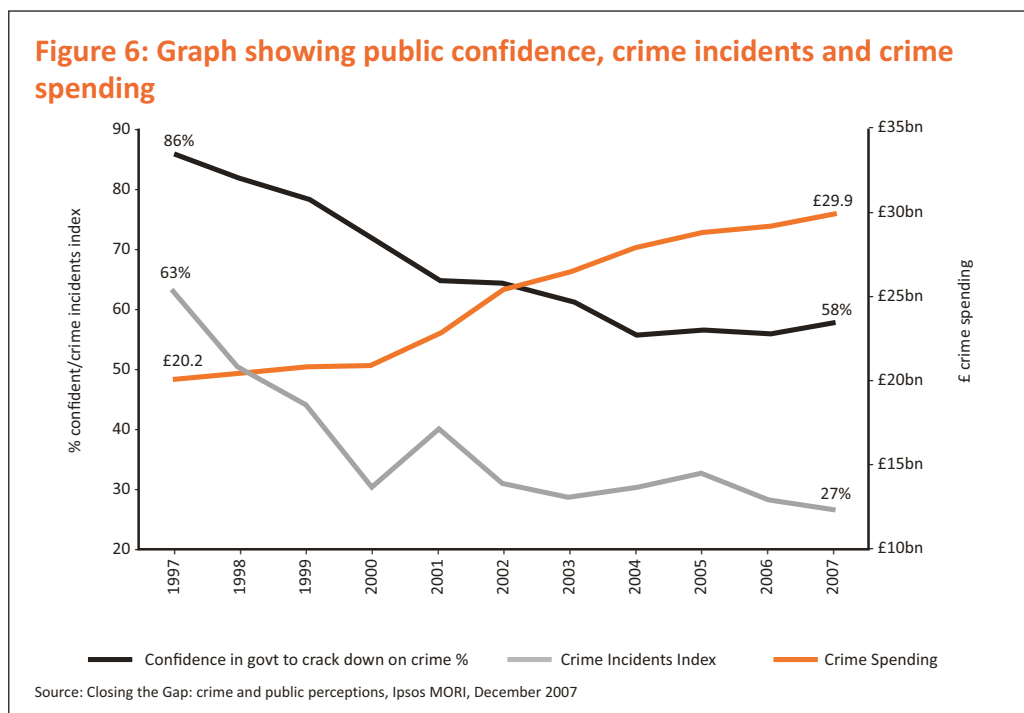
In many inner city areas, the age of perpetrators and victims of violent street crime involving weapons has declined from the mid-twenties to early to mid-teens.<sup>25</sup> Over the last decade, the number of children coming before the courts for robbery has increased by 76%, the number of children sentenced for drug offences has risen by 142%, those sentenced for criminal damage has risen by 61% and sex offences committed by children have risen by 14%.

Despite the expenditure on the youth justice system, including £648.5 million spent in 2006-2007, youth offending (as based on self-reports) has not decreased and the principal aim of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, to prevent young people offending, has not been achieved.<sup>26</sup>

Self-reported offending levels remained static over the five years to 2005. Figures show that, in 2005, 27% of schoolchildren admitted to having committed an offence in the last 12 months, compared with 26% in 2002, 2003 and 2004.<sup>27</sup>

The youth justice agencies admit that they are currently able to do little more than to regulate youth crime and are failing to meet the needs of a group of vulnerable children and young people who require co-ordinated, specialist support.

## Public Confidence



23 *Securing the Future: proposals for the efficient and sustainable use of custody in England and Wales*, Ministry of Justice, December 2007

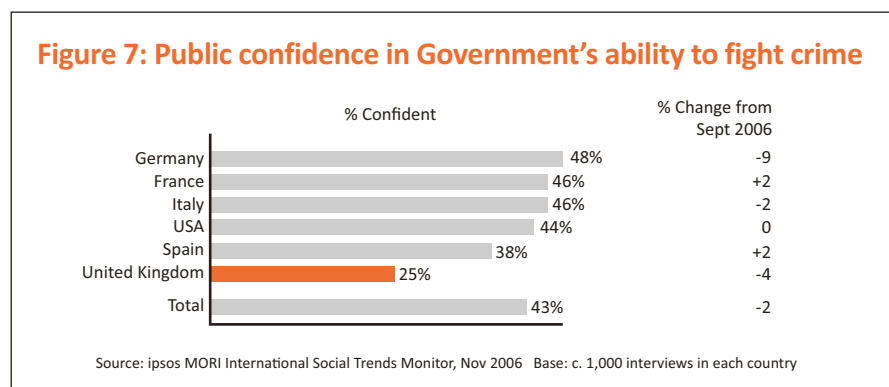
24 Commons Hansard Column 973W 24th April 2009

25 Squires P, Silvestri A, Grimshaw R and Solomon E, *Street Weapons Commission: Guns, Knives and Street Violence in Five UK Cities*, Channel 4

26 *Ten Years of Labour's Youth Justice Reform*, Centre for Crime and Justice Studies, 21st May 2008

27 *Ibid*

Despite the large rise in the number of police officers, the huge increase in the number of prisoners and the amount of spending on enforcement, public confidence in the ability of the Government to tackle crime and violence remains low. Just 25% of the public have such confidence, around half the levels in comparable western countries. (See below)



There have been two distinct phases in the Government’s approach to tackling youth crime. The first phase, lasting until 2007, was marked by a more punitive approach to youth offending. As it became clear that this had had very little effect, the emphasis shifted to prevention and early intervention.

### Tackling Youth Crime – Phase I: 1997-2007

Following its 1997 election victory, New Labour began its reform of the youth justice system. The White Paper, *No More Excuses*, which preceded the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, signalled a move away from a welfare-based approach to youth crime towards a more punitive model. It stated that “punishment is important to signal society’s disapproval of criminal acts and deter offending. It is the appropriate response to children and young people who wilfully break the law”.<sup>28</sup>

One of the key reforms was a move away from the traditional discretionary response to young offenders – cautions – towards a graduated approach involving the use of reprimands and final warnings. As a result more young people have been drawn into the criminal justice system. Youth Justice Board data shows that in the five years 2002-03 to 2006-07, the total number of disposals either pre or post-court given to children increased by 28%, from 168,673 to 216,011.<sup>29</sup> The former chair of the YJB, Professor Rod Morgan, stated in his resignation letter, that the increase signalled “a form of mission creep” that was “silting up” the youth justice system. An analysis by crime reduction charity, Nacro, found that in the three years to 2006 there was a 19% increase in the number of children given a reprimand, final warning or conviction for serious indictable offences and a 39% increase in the numbers dealt with formally for summary or minor offences.<sup>30</sup>

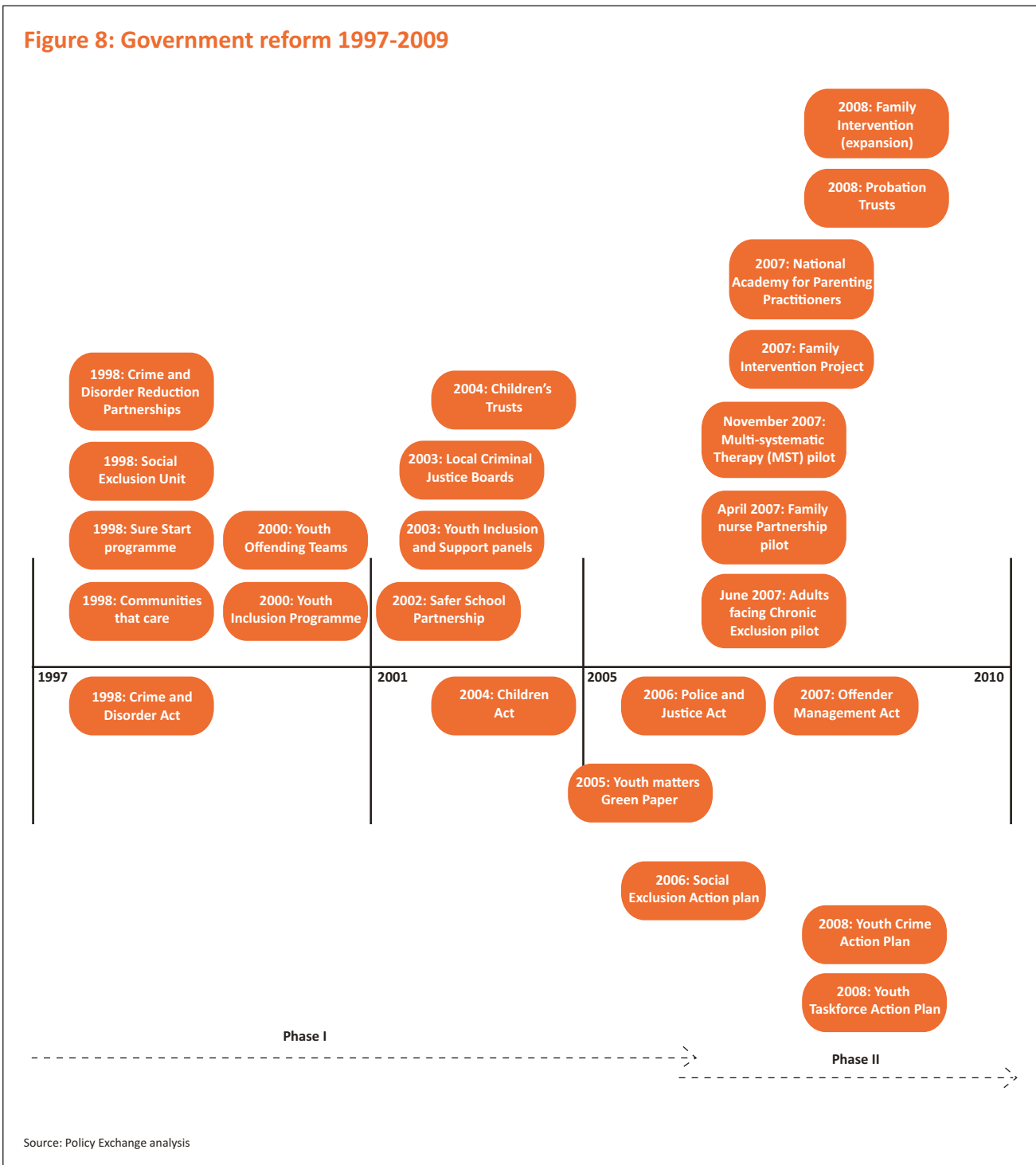
This increasingly punitive attitude towards children was also reflected in the Government’s “respect agenda”, which saw the introduction of antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs) and expansions in the use of penalty notices for disorder. There is little evidence that the respect agenda has succeeded: many young people seeing ASBOs as a badge of honour and this is reflected in high breach rates and increases in perceived levels of antisocial behaviour.<sup>31</sup>

28 Home Office White Paper, *No More Excuses – A new approach to tackling youth crime in England and Wales*, CM 3809, (London, TSO, 1997), p 12

29 Youth Justice Annual Statistics 2005-06, Youth Justice Board 2006; Youth Justice Annual Workload Data 2006-07, Youth Justice Board, 2008

30 Youth Crime Briefing, NACRO, April 2008

31 *The Home Office: Tackling anti-social behaviour*, National Audit Office, December 2006



The YJB has also highlighted the problem of the Government's offences-brought-to-justice targets, stating in its 2007 annual report:

“There is evidence to suggest that changes in police practices are leading to higher numbers of young people entering the Criminal Justice System for the first time. The National Criminal Justice Board has noted that the public service agreement to bring 1.25 million offences to justice in 2007/08 has resulted in lower order offences making up a greater proportion of offences brought to justice. Minor offences are disproportionately committed by young people,

therefore as greater volumes of lower order offences are detected by the police, so the number of young people who offend and are brought to justice increases.”<sup>32</sup>

Other reforms have been somewhat more promising. Major proposals were brought together in the Government’s flagship legislation, the Crime and Disorder Act 1998: the establishment of the Youth Justice Board (YJB); the creation of local multi-agency crime and disorder reduction partnerships; the creation of locally accountable youth offending teams (YOTs); and the restructuring of non-custodial penalties available to the youth court.<sup>33</sup>

### Failure to tackle the causes of crime

When New Labour came to power, there was already a growing body of international evidence about what works in preventing crime. In 1998 distinguished researchers and criminologists from across the world came together with Home Office officials to draw together a compendium on effective crime prevention measures that would guide British policymaking and ensure that crime prevention efforts could be based on the latest available evidence. Their report highlighted the significant cost savings that could be realised through timely and effective prevention.

The report recognised that effective programmes “stem from problem analysis – considering the information about a specific issue and its community context, devising solutions and then developing mechanisms for implementation”. It contained examples of this approach, including “risk-based prevention” (tackling the underlying propensities or motives for criminal behaviour), but mainly focused on “situational crime prevention” (aiming to influence an offender’s decision or ability to commit crime at particular places or times), and innovative policing methods.<sup>34</sup>

The report emphasised the difficulties in simply transporting internationally successful programmes (many of which originated in the United States) into the UK and also bemoaned the lack of a UK evidence base for effective programmes and strategies. “There is an open question as to whether it [the US evidence] would be equally effective in England and Wales or, in some cases, whether it is appropriate to conditions here. Conversely, some initiatives which are claimed to work in the UK have not been rigorously evaluated.” The authors also stressed the importance of evaluation – “close monitoring and evaluation must be included as integral components of an implementation programme. Regular reviews, based on this information, should help to ensure that the principles on which the programmes are based are maintained stringently enough for them to deliver reductions in crime effectively.”<sup>35</sup>

This body of evidence was enough for the Treasury and the Home Office to invest £250 million in a crime reduction programme, which included both early intervention and situational crime prevention. Although a relative drop in the ocean compared with resources invested in courts, police and prisons, it represented a significant effort to support the local implementation of evidence based crime prevention strategies. The £250 million was for three years in the first instance but with the possibility of an extension to ten years. This promise was never fulfilled, however, as the Government did not invest adequately in quality implementation, did not invest in early intervention and sought to control and direct how the money was spent by local authorities – contributing to the over-riding reason for the funding being cut off – a significant failure of implementation.

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32 Youth Justice Board annual report and accounts 2006-07, (London, TSO), 2007

33 Solomon E, *New Labour and Crime Prevention in England and Wales: What Worked?*, 2009

34 Goldblatt P and Lewis C, *Reducing Offending: an assessment of research evidence on ways of dealing with offending behaviour*, Home Office Research Study 187, 1998

35 Ibid

## Failure of Implementation

One of the most important innovations of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 was the requirement for local government to create crime and disorder reduction partnerships (CDRPs). Given the recommendations of the Morgan report on community safety in 1994, local partnerships that were able to mobilise agencies such as housing, social services, schools and policing around a diagnosis of local crime problems held significant promise.

CDRPs, also known as community safety partnerships, are partnerships between the police, local authorities, the probation service, health authorities, the voluntary sector, and local residents and businesses. There are currently 375 in England and Wales. The responsible authorities (the divisional police commander and the chief executive of the local authority) are under a statutory duty to ensure that the key agencies come together to work in partnership and carry out an audit of local crime, disorder and misuse of drugs every three years. Using the information arising from this audit and based on consultation with local communities, they then formulate a strategy for prevention in the local area.

Initially, CDRPs were funded through contributions from local government (ie, there was no new money or direct central funding). However within months of putting into place their locally diagnosed crime reduction plans for 1999-2002, they discovered that significant central funding might be available – which, of course, came with a number of caveats. The Home Office had identified its own priorities, including a national burglary reduction initiative. CDRPs had to apply for funding for problems that the crime reduction programme, or the other national initiatives, prioritised. But there was no guarantee that these were the same priorities as had been identified locally, thus undermining the concept of a locally owned strategy and fostering short-term solutions focused on policing and situational crime prevention. The promise of early intervention to reduce offending in both the short and long term, as had been identified in the Home Office’s 1998 report, was lost.

“ The promise of early intervention to reduce offending in both the short and long term, as had been identified in the Home Office’s 1998 report, was lost ”

There was also no guarantee that problems were being tackled according to the principle of “what works”. There was often a distinct gap between what interventions were supposed to achieve and what happened in practice. This was due, in part, to limitations in local capacity, including skills such as project management. The “what works” principle was undermined further by the seemingly arbitrary injection of an additional £150 million for CCTV projects, despite their dubious worth in reducing or preventing crime (unless well-targeted).

Another reason for this failure of implementation is that CDRPs are often police-dominated both in membership and strategy, since the legislation created different tiers of membership and authority within the partnerships. There is often little or no involvement of children’s and education services because there is no statutory requirement for their inclusion or responsibility for the strategy. But these agencies should be key partners for delivering effective crime prevention efforts.

Additionally, while CDRPs were responsible for creating crime and disorder reduction strategies, the agencies that were expected to be involved in this process

all had their own strategies and plans to follow. These were not necessarily synchronous with each other or with the CDRP strategy. Statutory guidance suggested that “with a little common sense, the different demands can be reconciled”.<sup>36</sup> But the centralised performance management regime placed on all agencies required that they prioritise what they perceived to be their core business, endowing them with a “silo” mentality. When you consider that some key agencies were not designated as responsible authorities under the 1998 Act, this was a further disincentive against full participation in CDRPs.

The relationship between CDRPs and youth offending teams (YOTs) was also a source of tension. Since youth crime was likely to figure prominently in local crime, as the statutory guidance suggested, CDRPs wanted to prioritise measures to tackle youth crime but, in doing so, they entered YOT territory, each with its own strategy. One consequence was that CDRPs and YOTs did not see eye-to-eye on the best way to address youth crime – a problem which was later exacerbated by the centrally imposed respect agenda and the focus on antisocial behaviour. The other consequence was that YOTs came to focus more on youth criminality and less on “the wider needs of young people”, as the guidance had suggested.<sup>37</sup>

The reality, therefore, is that CDRPs have concentrated on situational crime prevention and operational policing, for example, burglary reduction through “target hardening” (strengthening the security of premises), and the enforcement of antisocial behaviour legislation, rather than on the causes of crime. As a number of academics have concluded, there is a distinct bias in favour of situational prevention and a lack of focus on the causes of crime.<sup>38</sup> Although this may have reduced some crime in some areas, the achievements are not as extensive or sustained as they would have been using early prevention. In addition, these measures tend to reinforce a view that the best way to prevent crime is to protect victims from criminals, which tends to create fear and isolation.

The final failure of implementation concerned monitoring and evaluation. Academics have argued that the Home Office was ill-equipped to monitor the efforts of local areas to counteract police dominance and deliver their local strategies. The task was eventually given to a confusing array of different bodies, including regional crime reduction directors, Crime Concern, Nacro and the Home Office, causing duplication and ineffective monitoring and support. This also exacerbated the difficulties surrounding the crucial issue of evaluation, which was severely hampered by problems of data quality and availability.<sup>39</sup>

## The Youth Justice Board and Youth Offending Teams

Youth offending teams, also created by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, are designed to work with children who are given a youth justice sanction and also to prevent at-risk children from entering the youth justice system. They are locally run multi-agency partnerships including the police, probation, health, education, children’s services and, in some cases, housing.

It was widely hoped that the creation of YOTs would provide an exemplary model of how to deliver tangible improvements in crime prevention and recidivism reduction.

The Youth Justice Board for England and Wales (YJB) has developed a range of evidence-based, targeted youth crime and antisocial behaviour prevention models.

One important success of these efforts at early prevention is that the work is targeted

<sup>36</sup> Gilling D, *Crime Reduction and Community Safety: Labour and the Politics of Crime Control*, Willan Publishing, 2007

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>38</sup> Hope T, “Pretend it Works: evidence and governance in the evaluation of the Reducing Burglary Initiative”, *Criminal Justice*, 4 (30) pp 287-308, 2004

<sup>39</sup> Hough M, “Modernisation, Scientific Rationalism and the Crime Reduction Programme”, *Criminal Justice*, 4 (3) pp 239-253, 2004

on young people who are considered most at risk of offending. Examples include the youth inclusion programmes (YIPs), targeted at 13-16-year-olds, and youth inclusion and support panels (YISPs), targeted at 8 to 13-year-olds. As the Home Affairs Select Committee has stated, “all the indications are that these schemes are extremely successful and cost effective in terms of their impact on anti-social behaviour.”<sup>40</sup>

However, despite the evidence that these schemes have been successful (particularly YIPs), their resources have been extremely limited: the only the youth inclusion programme received significant medium-term funding (around £7 million a year between 1999 and 2005).

The Youth Justice Board estimated that this limited funding has restricted its ability to promote the involvement of YOTs in prevention work with young people before they entered the criminal justice system, which has been uneven as a result.<sup>41</sup>

A breakthrough came in 2002, when 25% of the Children’s Fund in England 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.

More recently, in 2005-06, the YJB gained additional government funding of £45 million until 2007-08 for YIPs and for parenting projects.

**Figure 9 – Youth Justice Board spending on prevention 1999-2007**

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	£10,571,544	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;
<b>Total</b>	<b>£100,562,339</b>	

Source: Towards a Youth Crime Prevention Strategy, p12, March 2007, Youth Justice Board

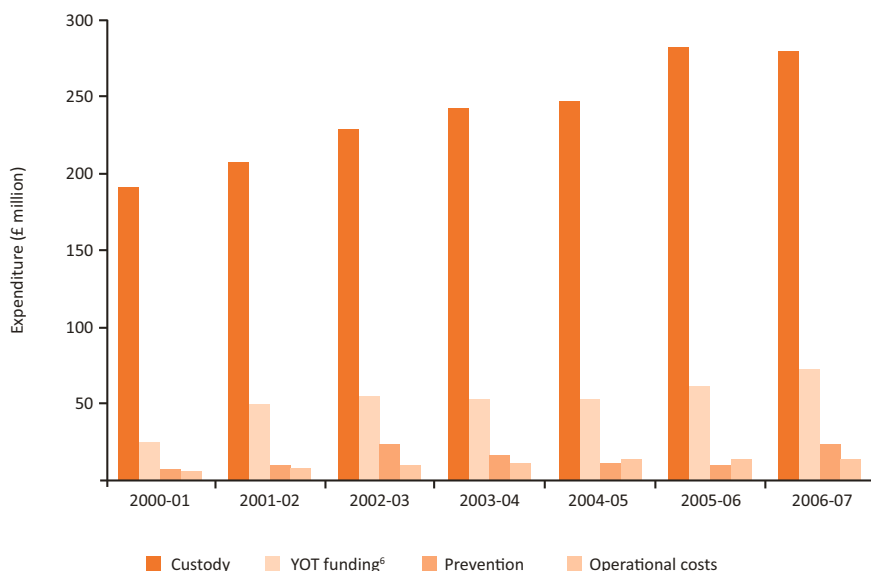
40 Home Affairs Select Committee Fifth Report of 2004-05, TSO. Available at [www.parliament.uk/parliamentary\\_committees/home\\_affairs\\_committee.cfm](http://www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/home_affairs_committee.cfm)

41 Towards a Youth Crime Prevention Strategy, p12, March 2007, Youth Justice Board



Overall, however, prevention work has been severely underfunded, especially compared to the amount spent on custody, which accounts for ten times more expenditure. Between 1999 and 2007, just £100 million has been allocated by the Youth Justice Board for preventive programmes. However the YJB stresses that “each YOT typically secures £1.25 of extra partnership funding (cash and in kind) for every £1 of YJB prevention grant”.<sup>42</sup>

**Figure 10: Youth Justice Board spending by category**



Source: Towards a Youth Crime Prevention Strategy, p12, March 2007, Youth Justice Board

£100 million over eight years is a very small investment compared to the huge real terms increases in criminal justice spending over the same period. This is not necessarily the fault of the Youth Justice Board, in whose long-term interests it is to prevent crime – the fewer new entrants a YOT has to deal with, the more it can concentrate on improving the quality of its work delivering community sentences and in fulfilling its responsibilities towards those in custody. However, the YJB is forced to spend the majority of its budget on providing custodial places – fire-fighting – due to the failure of wider and earlier prevention efforts.

Preventive schemes are most effective when they are run over several years, yet most preventive activities in England and Wales receive fixed-term funding of two or three years. Not only is there no assurance of renewal, but significant time and resources are required to prepare proposals to seek new funding. In general therefore, preventive schemes have to rely on short-term, non-renewable, project funding rather than a needs-based income stream that enables them to become part of the community they serve or provide career opportunities for professionals who specialise in early intervention activities.

Funding for preventive work goes to individual projects and is rarely co-ordinated across an area. Some projects receive most of their money from one funder, but others are reliant on many different funding sources. 56 projects in a survey by the National Audit Office received funding of just over £3.3 million from 54 different funding streams. The typical project had three different sources of funds.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>42</sup> *Tired of Hanging Around: using sport and leisure activities to prevent anti-social behaviour by young people*, Audit Commission, January 2009

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid*

A typical project leader spends nearly a third of his or her time (28%) on identifying and applying for funding and on managing budgets. This is equivalent to £8,000 a year diverted from frontline service provision to unbudgeted administration.<sup>44</sup>

## The Evaluation Gap

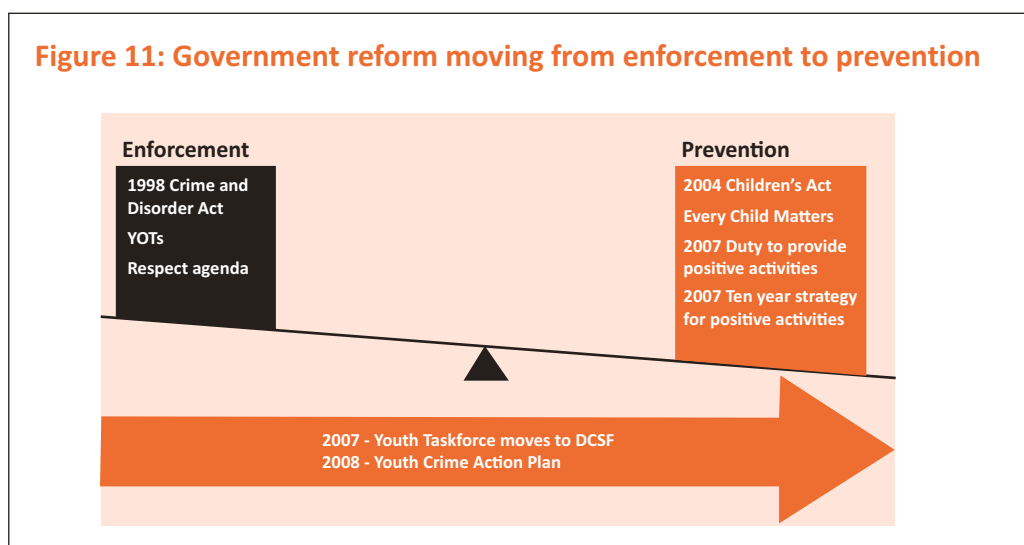
Rigorous evaluation is critical for understanding the effectiveness, economy and efficiency of crime prevention programmes. But in Europe, and the UK in particular, there is not a strong tradition of evaluation.

While early childhood interventions do exist in the UK (such as parenting programmes provided by the YJB and YOTs), a review produced for the national evaluation of the Children’s Fund notes that there is still inadequate outcome data both for Children’s Fund and Youth Justice Board programmes.<sup>45</sup> Indeed, a review produced for the YJB states that “in general, programmes that appear relevant to reducing the risks of children and young people becoming involved in crime have not been rigorously evaluated in the UK”.<sup>46</sup>

One such example was a review of the Youth Justice Board’s cognitive behaviour projects, completed in 2004. This set out to assess whether the programme was meeting its objectives but was so beset by methodological problems that it became solely a process evaluation, rather than a study of outcomes.<sup>47</sup> Elsewhere, a study on the effectiveness of referral orders was found to be inadequate due to a lack of a control group or comparability to other reconviction rates.<sup>48</sup>

## Tackling Youth Crime – Phase II: 2007-2009

Although the Government initially tipped the scales far more towards being tough on crime rather than its causes, from 2007 it appeared to recognise that in order to make a cost-effective and long-term impact on levels of crime, it must focus additional resources and attention on prevention through early intervention – stopping at-risk children from committing crime in the first place.



The key changes have been the rolling out of various prevention pilot schemes facilitated by the social exclusion task force, an increased emphasis on social

44 Ibid

45 Prior D and Paris A, *Preventing Children's Involvement in Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour: A Literature Review*, paper for the National Evaluation of the Children's Fund, University of Birmingham, (2005)

46 *Risk and Protective Factors, Communities that Care*, commissioned by the Youth Justice Board, 2005

47 Feilzer M, Appleton C, Roberts, and Hoyle C, *Cognitive Behaviour Projects: the National Evaluation of the Youth Justice Board's Cognitive Behaviour Projects*, Youth Justice Board, 2004

48 *Risk and Protective Factors Associated with Youth Crime and Effective Interventions to Prevent it*, Youth Justice Board, 2001

policy through children's trusts and the publication of the youth crime action plan, which sets out the Government's strategy for preventing youth offending and re-offending.

## Social Exclusion Task Force

The social exclusion task force promotes:

- 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

In September 2006, the Government's paper *Reaching Out: An Action Plan on Social Exclusion* laid out its intention to focus on the "2.5% of every generation caught in a lifetime of disadvantage and harm".<sup>49</sup>

It stated that "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."<sup>50</sup>

The taskforce noted the following shortcomings in crime 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 on tackling those already with problems (the "stock") rather than preventing the flow of individuals into criminal life.

The taskforce is currently helping to run pilot projects for effective early interventions. Ten pilot sites were set up for a family nurse partnership programme in April 2007, led and funded by the Department for Children, Schools and Families and the Department of Health. In November 2007, another ten pilot sites for multisystemic therapy (MST) were announced, fulfilling a commitment laid out in the social exclusion action plan. The pilots are led and funded by the DH, with support from the DCSF and the Youth Justice Board.

## Children's Trusts

In 2003 responsibility for all children's services was transferred to the Department for Education and Skills. In September 2003, the Government presented *Every Child Matters* to Parliament, with the agreement of ministers across Whitehall. It is a ten-year programme aiming to improve five target outcomes (being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution, and economic well-being) for children and young people from birth to 19. Local organisations are expected to work together, taking the views of children and young people more into account in designing and delivering their services. Early intervention and prevention is a key component of the programme.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> *Reaching Out: An Action Plan on Social Exclusion*, Cabinet Office, 2006, p5

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*, p9, para 1.1.3

<sup>51</sup> <http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/childrenstrusts/report.pdf>

Children’s trusts are the vehicle for delivering the five outcomes. Section 10 of the Children Act 2004 places a duty on all children’s services in England to promote co-operation between certain named partners, including YOTs, to improve the wellbeing of children in each authority’s area.<sup>52</sup>

These duties have resulted in children’s trust arrangements being established to improve outcomes for all children, young people and their families by further integrating services, strategies and processes. This will include appropriate joint commissioning and the pooling of budgets, co-ordinating staff development and capacity building and shared governance arrangements.

The recently published youth crime action plan places a new duty on children’s trusts to prevent youth crime and reduce re-offending, so that they are now a key partner for YOTs (see below).

### Will Children’s Trusts Reduce Crime?

Five years after Lord Laming’s inquiry into the Victoria Climbié case urged better joint working in children’s services, the Audit Commission report, *Are We There Yet?*, published in October 2008, highlights confusion over the multi-agency bodies that “gets in the way” of service delivery. A third of directors of children’s social services feel that the purpose of the trusts is unclear, and the commission’s verdict is that the Government has been too prescriptive in its bid to introduce the new way of working.<sup>53</sup>

The report says that improvements to children’s services have happened in spite of the trusts, rather than because of them: “There’s no evidence that the trusts have resulted in any improved outcomes for children.”<sup>54</sup> The report concludes that “there is little evidence to show that the changes have brought improved outcomes to children and young people and, since children’s trusts are less developed than might have been expected, it may be too early to make an assessment. But it is not too early to identify potential improvements that are needed if all children’s trusts are to improve the lives of vulnerable children.”<sup>55</sup>

Children’s trusts have also had consequences for the operation of youth offending teams. In a 2006 report, team managers identified a number of risks for YOTs following the creation of children’s trusts, including a marginalisation of the youth crime agenda and a loss in YOT activities.<sup>56</sup>

Despite this, the Government has significantly increased the responsibilities of the trusts to tackle crime as part of the youth crime action plan.

### The Youth Crime Action Plan

The Government’s latest approach to early intervention was set out in the Youth Crime Action Plan, published in July 2008.

It states that “effective early intervention to address...risk factors is not only a vital response to youth crime but also puts more young people on the path to success. That is why this plan sets out a comprehensive package to tackle this problem – transforming our ability to prevent young people from falling into a life of crime.”<sup>57</sup>

It recognises some of the major failings of the current system and proposes reforms with some additional funding over the next two and a half years to prevent youth crime. However, whether the action plan will be transformative is questionable.

52 <http://www.yjb.gov.uk/en-gb/practitioners/ReformingChildrensServices/ChildrensTrusts/>

53 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2008/oct/29/childrenstrusts>

54 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2008/oct/29/childrenstrusts>

55 <http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/childrenstrusts/report.pdf>

56 Interim findings from the research study into the developing relationships between youth offending teams (YOTs) and children’s trusts, Youth Justice Board, 2006,

57 Youth Crime Action Plan, p28, Home Office, Ministry of Justice, Department for Children Schools and Families, 2008

The action plan itself concedes that “the evolution of services has led to several different agencies having responsibility for different aspects of tackling youth crime. In some areas this can mean there is not a single joined up approach, and information on children and families at risk is not always shared between agencies, leading to a disjointed picture of the child’s needs. Both are essential to underpin an approach that successfully combines enforcement where appropriate, support where needed, and effective prevention.”<sup>58</sup>

Later, the Government admits that “the variety of services involved means it can be difficult to establish who has overall responsibility for the outcomes of individuals who are at risk of offending, or for those who have left the Youth Justice System. In addition, children within the youth justice system can often be treated differently from other children and it can be difficult to ensure they receive the support they need where they are disengaged from mainstream services or when they leave the youth justice system”.<sup>59</sup>

However, the reforms proposed in the action plan do not address this issue. The Government’s proposals include placing specific responsibilities on the local children’s trust for improving outcomes, including the prevention of youth crime and re-offending. The trust would develop a children and young people’s plan that would detail the agreed local system for the early identification of, and intervention with, young people at risk. The trust would also set out the arrangements for local commissioning of services, including those for crime prevention and the financial contribution of each local partner. But the relationship between trusts and youth offending teams is not addressed, further confusing the issue of which agencies have responsibility for which offences.

Bob Ashford, head of strategy at the Youth Justice Board, said before the publication of the action plan that he did not want responsibility for youth justice “just to go to one agency.”<sup>60</sup>

He said: “Children’s trusts are largely untried and untested... they are entirely different in terms of their development. If lead responsibility were to be handed to those agencies – or any other agency, but particularly children’s trusts – we would have some reservations about how prepared and ready they were.”<sup>61</sup>

The other measures intended to ensure a more joined-up approach are the ongoing changes to how local areas are assessed, including local area agreements (which include a number of indicators for youth crime and youth justice) and the comprehensive area assessment, currently being developed by the Audit Commission. Although these developments may improve local authority accountability for youth crime outcomes in a limited way, they still do not address the crucial issue of responsibility.

## The Question of Financial Incentives

Related to this is the question of accountability and financial incentives. Primary responsibility for identifying and supporting children who are most at risk of offending lies with the local authority children’s services department. Both the Children’s Act 1989 and the Children’s Act 2004 empower children’s services to pursue youth crime prevention practices that take account of vulnerability, prevent exclusion from school, prevent abuse and neglect, tackle poverty and social exclusion, and create opportunities for children in local communities.

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58 Ibid, p65

59 Ibid, p66

60 [www.communitycare.co.uk/Articles/2008/06/27/108667/youth-crime-action-plan-yjb-has-childrens-trust-doubts.html](http://www.communitycare.co.uk/Articles/2008/06/27/108667/youth-crime-action-plan-yjb-has-childrens-trust-doubts.html)

61 Ibid

However, because of the way local authority funding works, there is little or no incentive for a children’s services department, or indeed social services, to direct resources to tackle the children most likely to offend because once a child is drawn into the criminal justice sphere, he or she will become the responsibility of the youth offending team or young offender institution. There is a statutory duty for local authorities to prevent crime and disorder (by virtue of s17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998), but the operation of funding streams mean that there is a direct financial disincentive for local agencies and services to get to grips with the most difficult to manage children – the same ones which end up costing the criminal justice system hundreds of thousands of pounds to incarcerate. As the youth crime action plan recognises, young offenders in the criminal justice system “are frequently well known to local services through instability at home or in education and have needs that have not been met earlier. By the time these children receive community sentences or even custodial sentences, they tend to be disengaged from mainstream services and lack positive links to their communities, resulting in high rates of re-offending.”<sup>62</sup>

Under the current system, central government, through the Youth Justice Board, has total financial responsibility for sentenced children. (Although local authorities do regard young people in the criminal justice system as young people first and foremost, that responsibility is taken out of their hands once a child is in custody).

While a child is in custody, the local authority does not have to pay for that child’s placement. So custody acts as a type of “respite care”, offering a cost-saving to the local authority. It is little wonder that the kind of pooled budgets, long-term planning and early interventions that are required are not currently being delivered.

There are significant differences in the numbers of children imprisoned by local authorities. For example, in Newcastle, one in every 1,900 10-17 year olds are in custody, compared with one in every 367 in Lambeth.

62 Youth Crime Action Plan, p57, Home Office, Ministry of Justice, Department for Children Schools and Families, 2008

**Table 1: The number of children in custody in selected local authorities (2008)**

Local Authority	Children in Custody	Number of 10-19 year olds	Ratio	Costs to the youth Justice Board
Barnet	21	39,000	1:1876	£1.7 million
Birmingham	112	142,000	1:1267	£8.4 million
Brent	37	29,500	1:797	£2.7 million
Bridgend	13	17,100	1:1315	£0.9 million
Ealing	22	33,600	1:1527	£1.6 million
Enfield	19	36,000	1:1894	£1.4 million
Hackney	40	24,400	1:610	£3.0 million
Hammersmith and Fulham	21	14,900	1:709	£1.5 million
Haringey	28	24,100	1:860	£2.1 million
Lambeth	70	25,700	1:367	£5.2 million
Leeds	80	47,400	1:1217	£6.0 million
Liverpool	71	56,000	1:793	£5.2 million
Manchester	104	57,200	1:550	£7.8 million
Newcastle	18	34,100	1:1894	£1.3 million

Source: Policy Exchange analysis - YJB custody figures April 2009; weighted average cost per head; and ONS population estimates mid 2007 - table 9, quinary age groups by local authorities in the UK

“ Ensuring that local authorities bear the costs of custodial places (and thus also reap the financial rewards for improving practices and intervening early to reduce the numbers in custody), would compel local agencies to ensure that everything that could be done is actually being done. ”

These discrepancies cannot simply be down to chance or differences in youth crime rates - there are many steps which could be taken to reduce the numbers. Ensuring that local authorities bear the costs of custodial places (and thus also reap the financial rewards for improving practices and intervening early to reduce the numbers in custody), would compel local agencies to ensure that everything that could be done is actually being done.

A more direct financial incentive would not only act as a spur to ensure that local authorities took steps to intervene early (using the kind of programmes identified in the next chapter) to tackle the most difficult cases and hard-to-reach families, it would also ensure that simple, common sense steps could be taken to ensure that practices are reviewed and improved. The savings generated could then be reinvested in prevention activities and targeted support.

#### **Box 1: The North Hampshire Custody Panel**

A pilot scheme in North Hampshire illustrates just such a common-sense step. In September 2007, a custody panel was formed to look at the cases of all children under 18 sentenced to custody in the area. Formed with representatives of the Youth Offending Team, Children's Services and the voluntary sector, the panel reviewed each case to see if action might have been taken to avoid custody and to give feedback to those working on the case. In addition, the panel sought to inform and improve practice among all agencies and aggregate data relating to the use of youth custody.

Annual custody figures demonstrate a 42% drop in the numbers of children being sentenced to prison since the pilot initiative was introduced. In 2008, 45 children were sentenced to prison in North Hampshire, compared with 78 children in the previous year.<sup>63</sup>

The youth crime action plan recognises the problem of perverse incentives for local authorities. However, it merely includes a promise to “consult on new measures to strengthen their contribution to the prevention of offending, to facilitate work with local partners on finding innovative ways to reduce youth offending, and to ensure that they take greater responsibility for reducing the numbers of young people entering custody.”<sup>64</sup> Apart from the target-driven local area agreement and common area assessment, there is nothing in the action plan which addresses this financial disincentive. The plan states that “the new focus on youth offending in local area agreements should provide a good context for this (improving outcomes and for children and reducing crime). Ultimately this should lead to fewer children receiving custodial sentences; since custodial provision is very expensive, lower use would result in savings that could be used for earlier intervention”.

However, lower use of custodial sentences would only result in savings to the Youth Justice Board, not the local authorities themselves. So there is still no direct financial incentive for local authorities to direct resources to the most at-risk children. There is just one mention in the action plan of whether local authorities

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<sup>63</sup> Howard League briefing paper on the Custody Panel, April 2009

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid*, p69

should have such an incentive – a reference to “making the costs of custody more visible”, which would “demonstrate the savings that are made where local areas reduce the use of custody and conversely the costs incurred when custody use increases”.<sup>65</sup> This will, according to the Government, “help inform the debate on whether, in the long-term, local authorities should be responsible for the placement and funding of custodial placements.” However, no view is expressed on whether this would be a welcome development or not.

## Problems with the Government’s Approach

The Government’s recent change of emphasis is welcome. There is now solid evidence (drawing heavily on international studies, but also on evaluations carried out in England and Wales) that a new approach to crime reduction which focuses prudently on risk-based prevention will reap significant rewards in England and Wales. There is growing agreement among policymakers that early intervention is the most effective and cost-effective way to reduce crime in the long term. They recognise that although it should never be a substitute for enforcement measures, it should complement traditional law and order approaches and be much more part of mainstream efforts to fight crime than is currently the case. However, despite recent good intentions, policymakers have yet to seriously address the structural, financial and political barriers that stand in the way.

“ Despite recent good intentions, policymakers have yet to seriously address the structural, financial and political barriers that stand in the way ”

- 1 **There is no leadership.** The Government has made a limited effort to lead prevention efforts through the National Crime Reduction Board set up in 2007. But it has no budget, no secretariat driving delivery and no monitoring or evaluation tools. Its status as the key high-level forum for driving the crime reduction agenda must be questioned, given that two Secretaries of State have been regularly absent from meetings – the Secretary of State for Justice has been present for only one and the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families for two. In total, there have been 29 ministerial absentees at the five meetings – and early prevention programmes have been discussed only once according to the minutes of the board’s five meetings, when the Home Secretary gave a presentation on the youth crime action plan.<sup>66</sup> There is also no effective co-ordination of prevention programmes. There is no strategic plan looking at crime trends, overview of actions, likely interventions, priorities, implementation and evaluation.
- 2 **There is no effective vehicle for evaluating programmes or establishing an evidence base.** In England and Wales, responsibility for interventions lies with many different agencies, programmes are evaluated in different places, with different criteria and different desired outcomes. Without an effective vehicle, the evidence base needed to make the case for early intervention cannot be

<sup>65</sup> Ibid, p70

<sup>66</sup> Minutes of the National Crime Reduction Board meetings, Home Office: <http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/crimereductionprogramme/crimereductionprogramme033.htm>



established at a national level. In America, the US Justice Department commissioned the University of Maryland to evaluate how its funding had led to the prevention of crime through study of “what works, what does not and what is promising”. Together with the US Health Department it also commissioned the University of Colorado’s Centre for the Study and Prevention of Violence to review hundreds of prevention programmes, focusing on the evidence base, sustainability, value for money and local applicability. The researchers identified the top 11 model programmes, which became known as “blueprints”. No equivalent body has yet been charged with undertaking this work in England and Wales.

- 3 The funding provided for prevention projects is piecemeal, unsustainable and omits quality implementation.** Funds provided in the youth crime action plan will only be in place for the next two-and-a-half years and given the pressures on departmental budgets, there is no guarantee that they will be extended. Resources provided by government departments for the piloting of projects under the social exclusion task force have so far been provided on an ad hoc basis with no funds planned for national expansion. Funds provided for YJB prevention efforts barely scratch the surface compared with those for the provision of custody. Though the Government’s rhetoric suggests that it has accepted the argument for early crime prevention, this has not yet been reflected in the way resources are allocated; evidence-based early intervention is still seen as a “pet project”, rather than a mainstream crime prevention tool.
- 4 Prevention programmes are not reaching the people they need to.** The Youth Justice Board estimates that since 1999, its prevention programmes have reached 50,000 children and young people “on the cusp of offending” – an average of just over 6,000 people a year. But with nearly 100,000 new entrants to the criminal justice system every year, it is clear that the scale of the Government’s prevention efforts is totally inadequate.
- 5 There is confused responsibility for cutting youth crime.** The youth crime action plan further confuses the issue of responsibility by placing a duty on children’s trusts to prevent youth offending while not explicitly addressing the relationship between youth offending teams and children’s trusts.
- 6 Perverse incentives and funding stream problems have not been rectified.** The youth crime action plan glosses over the issue of perverse financial incentives at a local level. At present, youth offending teams and youth custody take financial responsibility for those children drawn into the criminal justice system, acting as a direct disincentive for other agencies to get to grips at the early stages with the most at-risk children. The action plan states that the target-driven local area agreements and the new common area assessment will provide an incentive for reducing custody. However, it does not address the central question of whether local authorities should directly bear the costs of youth custody and the benefits of reducing its use, a bold change which would provide a powerful new incentive for local bodies.

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# 2

## What works

### Summary

There are prevention programmes that are proven to prevent and reduce crime. The evidence base is much stronger today than when the Home Office failed to implement effective programmes over a decade ago. These programmes target key risk factors for offending behaviour and are designed and implemented to counteract them at every stage of a child's development. More than 40 years of scientific research has created a body of knowledge that criminal justice policymakers and practitioners can draw upon to develop and deliver programmes that are both effective and cost-effective. In other words, we are able to identify what works, and what doesn't work, in preventing crime. We are also able to identify the key ingredients for the successful implementation of what works.

### Risk factors

A risk factor is a variable that predicts an increased risk of re-offending. The predictions of delinquency based on these risk factors are about as accurate as predictions of epidemiologists forecasting who will get lung cancer based on weight, income, or smoking habits.<sup>67</sup> This confidence in knowing what causes people to offend comes from impressive large-scale surveys conducted by scientists in England, the United States, and elsewhere. The surveys are known as "longitudinal" because they research the development of thousands of children longitudinally from birth to adolescence. These studies repeatedly measure and follow up the same people over time.

Professionals completing and analysing these longitudinal surveys talk to tens of thousands of children and young people in a systematic manner – collecting the same data and asking the same questions. They record the various developmental experiences of the children through all stages of their childhood, primary and secondary school, and later life. With permission, data is also obtained from doctors and hospitals from which the children received medical care. Data are collected from their schools about their performance, peers, and discipline, and from their parents about upbringing and attitudes. In adolescence, checks are made with the police to collect data on whether they have been arrested or charged with an offence. Some scientists also follow adult achievements and difficulties. The data is then used to see statistically what experiences preceded their involvement in crime, particularly if it was persistent.

One of the most recent and largest of these surveys was under taken in Chicago in the 1990s under the direction of Felton Earls, a professor in the School of

67 *Juvenile Crime, Juvenile Justice*, pp 3-4, National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, National Academy Press, 2001

Public Health at Harvard University. His Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods followed 7,000 children and youths over an eight-year period. The study not only looked at the developmental pathways that predispose some children to become involved in persistent delinquency but also at how community ties and relationships affect these pathways. It had a particular focus on how exposure to violence affects the outcomes.

The most robust source of knowledge for policymaking comes from a meta-analysis of several of these longitudinal studies. It has shown that the nature of the experiences that predispose young people to crime is similar between the studies, and these are what need to be tackled to reduce crime. The risk factors that predispose children and young people to become offenders can be categorised as follows:

**Individual risk factors**

- Low intelligence and attainment, low empathy and impulsiveness are important risk factors for offending;

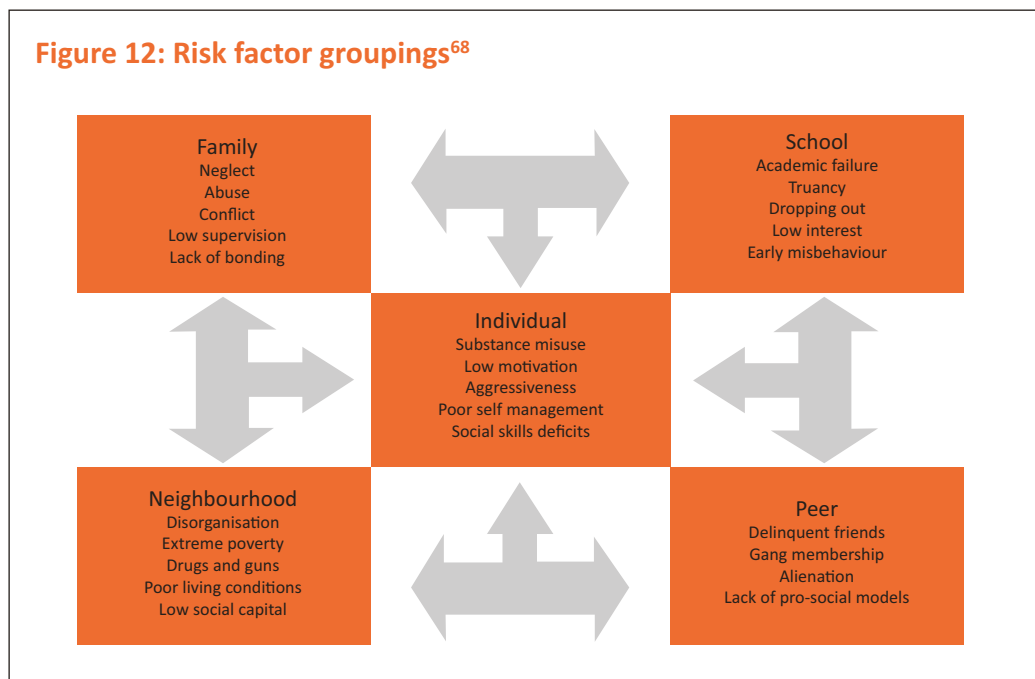
**Family risk factors**

- The strongest family predictor of offending is usually criminal or antisocial parents. Other quite strong and replicable risk factors are large family size, poor parental supervision, parental conflict and disrupted families. In contrast, child abuse and young mothers are weak predictors;

**Peer, school and neighbourhood risk factors**

- Offenders disproportionately come from deprived families, tend to have friends who are delinquents, tend to attend high delinquency-rate schools and tend to live in deprived areas. All these factors are associated with the individual and family characteristics described above. It is difficult to disentangle all these relationships and draw accurate conclusions about which risk factors are causal.

**Figure 12: Risk factor groupings<sup>68</sup>**

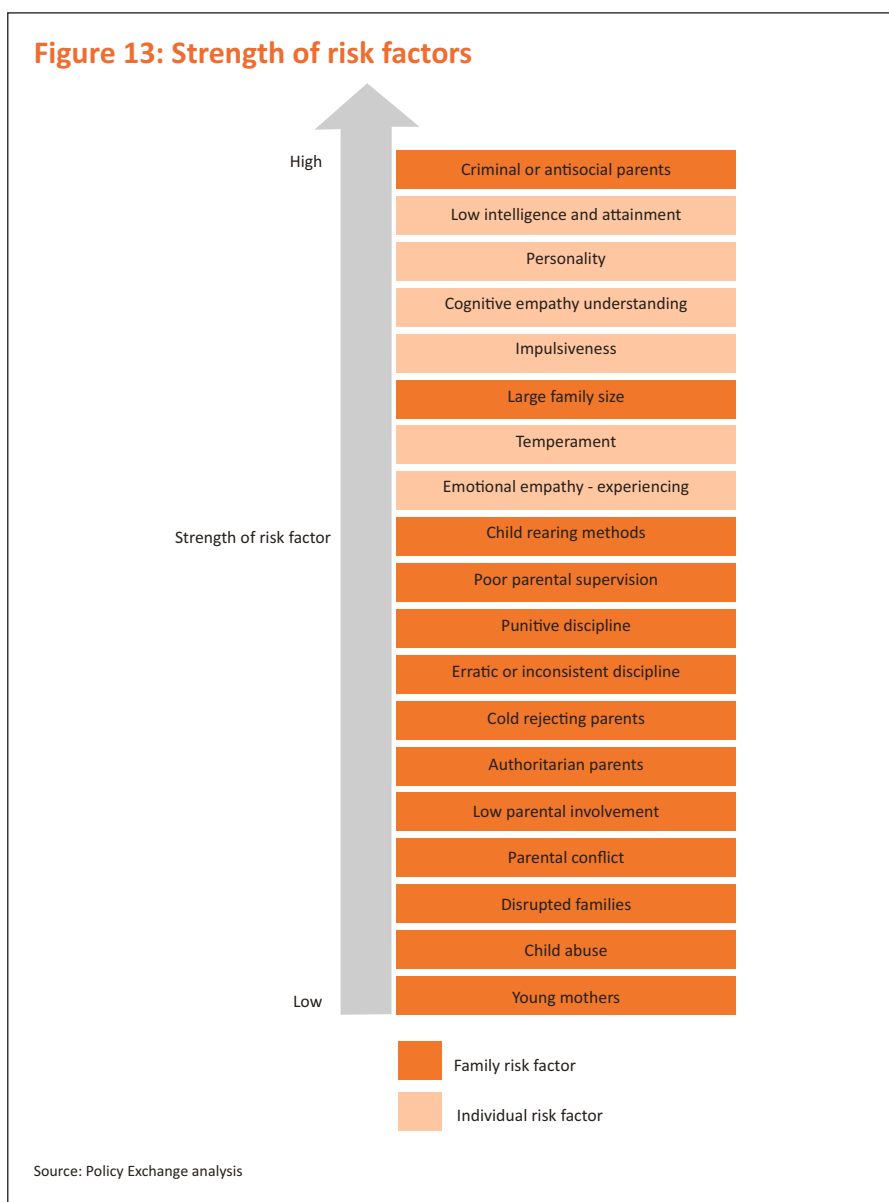


68 Waller I, *Less Law, More Order: the Truth about Reducing Crime*, Greenwood Publishing, 2006. (Diagram adapted from the work of Sohail Husain)

The children who become persistent offenders tend to grow up with negative family and school experiences, such as:

- being born into a family in relative poverty and inadequate housing
- being brought up with inconsistent and uncaring parenting, including violence
- having limited social and cognitive abilities
- having behavioural problems identified in primary school
- being excluded from, or dropping out of, secondary school
- living with a culture of violence on television and in the neighbourhood
- being frequently unemployed and with relatively limited income as a young adult

This is not to excuse the behaviour: many with these disadvantages choose not to commit offences and others without these disadvantages do.



### Box 2: Jack’s Troubled Life: The Costs to Society of a Young Person in Trouble<sup>69</sup>

Problems start early for many future offenders, especially those who will become chronic and persistent offenders. Patterns of troublesome behaviour are often apparent by the age of three. The costs to society start early as well, and they increase as the years go by.

Identifying all the costs of a delinquent career would be an impossible task. But it is possible to identify some elements and make estimates or educated guesses of what they might cost in the life of a repeat young offender before he reaches the age of 18. There are no case studies of the costs to the taxpayer of a criminal career in England and Wales. The case study below looks at the case of a young Canadian man called Jack. He is a troubled child who needs special help and preventive services early in his life – but the appropriate services are not available to him and his family, and he is soon launched on his troubled career.

#### Grand Total for Jack’s Career to Age 17 = \$511,500

##### Jack’s First Three Years:

The child welfare authorities become aware of serious problems in Jack’s home during his first year. His parents often have arguments, many of which end with the exchange of blows, especially after they have been drinking. Their parenting is affectionate, but erratic. Child welfare staff regularly visit Jack and his parents during his first three years of life. Social workers make a number of suggestions about his care and the special help he may need, but because of a lack of community resources, they are not able to refer Jack to appropriate support services.

**Costs: Child welfare services for three years at \$2,300.**

**Total = \$6,900**

##### Jack Aged Three to Five:

Jack is showing a number of developmental problems, both physical and psychological. By the age of three he is difficult to manage. His parents do not know how to cope with his impulsive behaviour, and he shows no awareness of the consequences of his actions. The child welfare services, in conjunction with the family doctor and child psychiatric services, conclude that Jack would benefit from being placed in a subsidised child care centre. Jack’s mother qualifies for the subsidised service, but unfortunately the staff at the centre are not trained to provide the remedial care he really needs. Jack tends to bully the other children, disrupt their play, and be insensitive to the needs of others.

**Costs: Three years child welfare services at \$2,300 a year, child care at \$12,000 a year, and health and psychiatric services at \$2,000 a year.**

**Total = \$48,900**

##### Jack Aged Six to Ten:

Although Jack has benefited from the child care services and is better behaved in group settings, his home situation has gone from bad to worse. His parents have separated, and his mother is now living with a young man who appears jealous of the affection she shows towards Jack, and is abusive towards him.

The child welfare services decide, reluctantly, that they have to take him into care; this requires an appearance in family court. Jack is placed in the first of a series of foster homes. Separation from his mother upsets him and reawakens his behaviour problems. He has difficulty relating to his foster parents and their children. Over a period of five years, he lives in five foster homes. These moves disrupt his education, and he has difficulty settling down in school and getting on with other children. At various times he is involved with school guidance counsellors and child psychiatric services.

**Costs: Five years of child welfare services at \$2,300 a year, foster care at \$7,300 a year, guidance counsellors and special education services at \$2,000 a year, health and child psychiatric services at \$2,000 a year, and court services for one appearance at \$1,000.**

**Total = \$69,000**

**Jack Aged 11 to 14:**

By the age of 11, Jack is big for his age and precocious in his behaviour towards his peers, particularly girls. The child welfare services recognise that he has never settled down in the various foster homes he has lived in. In conjunction with the education and child health services, they conclude that a group home placement may be the only way to contain Jack's "acting-out".

The acting out continues in the group home setting, however. He comes to the notice of the police several times before he turns 12, partly through misbehaviour at school and partly through various delinquent acts in the community.

Finally, at the age of 12 he is charged in relation to a number of incidents of shoplifting, vandalism and rowdy behaviour in a local shopping mall. He goes to Youth Court for the first time, and is ordered to provide restitution services to make up for the damage he has done in the mall. He remains in the care of the child welfare services.

Jack's contact with his mother is spasmodic after years of living away from her. When he does see her, it usually results in a period of disturbed behaviour in the group home and at school. At the age of 13, he gets involved with drugs at school, starts selling them to schoolmates and becomes physically abusive in collecting his debts.

On one occasion, he hurts a boy seriously enough for the boy to have to receive inpatient care at a local hospital. Charges are laid, and Jack goes to youth court for a second time, where he is found guilty. The court is in a quandary over what sentence to give him. One possibility is to send him to a youth custodial facility, but this is seen as extreme for a boy of his age. Instead, he is placed on probation for a year, while continuing in the care of the child welfare services.

Jack is able to complete the year's probation without any further major incidents, with the help of the child welfare services, including the group home staff, the probation officer, and the school authorities. The probation ends when he has passed his 14th birthday. He is by now a physically mature young man, but he still has difficulty restraining his temper.

One weekend Jack leaves the group home without permission and meets some friends at a local mall. They obtain drink and drugs, and end up stealing a car. Jack is the ringleader. They are caught after running the car off the road. On his third appearance in the youth court, Jack is remanded to the local detention facility for assessment reports. When he next returns to court, for his fourth appearance, the youth court sentences him to an open custodial placement followed by probation supervision of a year. He is sent to a youth centre for three months, and there meets other youths with backgrounds similar to his own. Jack receives some educational services, but is found to be backward for his age. The court had recommended psychological and psychiatric services, but no professional treatment other than assessments is provided in the open facility.

**Jack Aged 15 to 17:**

When he leaves the open custody facility, Jack is 15-years-old. He returns to the same group home, continues to have contact with the child welfare social worker, and attends school when he feels like it. He is again under probation supervision, but is very unsettled. He meets some of his former friends from the youth centre, and they decide

**Costs: Four years of group home care at \$36,500, special education services at \$2000 a year, child welfare supervision at \$2,300 a year; probation supervision for one year at \$1,200; police contacts before age 12, \$1,000; three police investigations at ages 12 to 14 at \$1,500 each; four court sessions at \$1,000 each; four police attendances at court at \$250 each; two psychological and psychiatric assessments at \$2,000 each; three months open custody \$19,250.**

**Total = \$198,150.**

**Costs: special education services, about \$2,000; two psychological and psychiatric assessments at \$2,000 each; three years for child welfare su-**

to break into a local pharmacy to steal some drugs. In doing so, they trip the alarm, and are promptly apprehended. In view of his record, and after a further remand in a detention facility, the youth court (where he has now made his fifth and sixth appearances) sends Jack to another open custody facility for six months, with supervision to follow.

Halfway through his sentence, Jack escapes with some of his fellow inmates. They steal a car, but their erratic driving alerts a patrolling police car. In the chase that follows, with Jack at the wheel, they crash into another vehicle, killing the driver. It is now his seventh appearance, and the youth court, without asking for further reports, sends him to a secure custody facility for two years, with supervision to follow.

By the time Jack is released he is approaching the age of 18 and adult status. He has a girlfriend, and their relationship, not surprisingly, is unstable and violent at times. She soon becomes pregnant, and it is all too likely that the cycle of Jack's early life is about to repeat itself.

**pervision at \$2,300 a year; one year for group home care at \$36,500; three appearances in youth court at \$1,000; two police investigations at \$1,500 each and three police court attendances at \$250 each; two years of probation supervision etc. at \$1,200; six months open custody at \$38,500; one year closed custody at \$91,500.**

**Total = \$188,550**

**Grand Total for Jack's Career to Age 17 = \$511,500**

### The Moral of the Story

Jack's career as a repeat young offender serves to illustrate some of the common features of how children and young people pass through the child welfare and young offender systems. Not only are these services expensive to provide, but the offences themselves result in a cost to society in terms of the physical costs, personal injuries, and psychological harm experienced by victims.

Jack has a painful early life, and his offences cause pain to others. The cost of such pain is enormous and not easily calculated in dollar terms, which would require placing a figure on a lost life, or lost employment and lost enjoyment of life by victims and families. In addition, the costs of crime have to be calculated over time, because pain and suffering are not necessarily short-term in their effects.

Jack's story is not intended to suggest that the various services do not succeed in helping many young people. What it shows, in fact, is how important it is to invest early in helping young people and their families. Without this help, too many young people end up just like Jack, poised at the age of 18 to enter on a life of adult offending and to bring further costs to society and all who come in contact with them.

## Effective Crime Prevention Programmes

To be effective, prevention programmes need to be tailored to the age range of the target population and the risk factors that occur during that particular period of youth development.

The remainder of this section identifies risk-focused crime prevention programmes that work. These programs are specifically designed to counteract risk factors for later offending, and they have been found through rigorous scientific research to prevent delinquency and criminal behaviour.

As the primary focus of this programme review is preventing and reducing crime, only those that have been evaluated for criminal behaviour outcomes have been included.

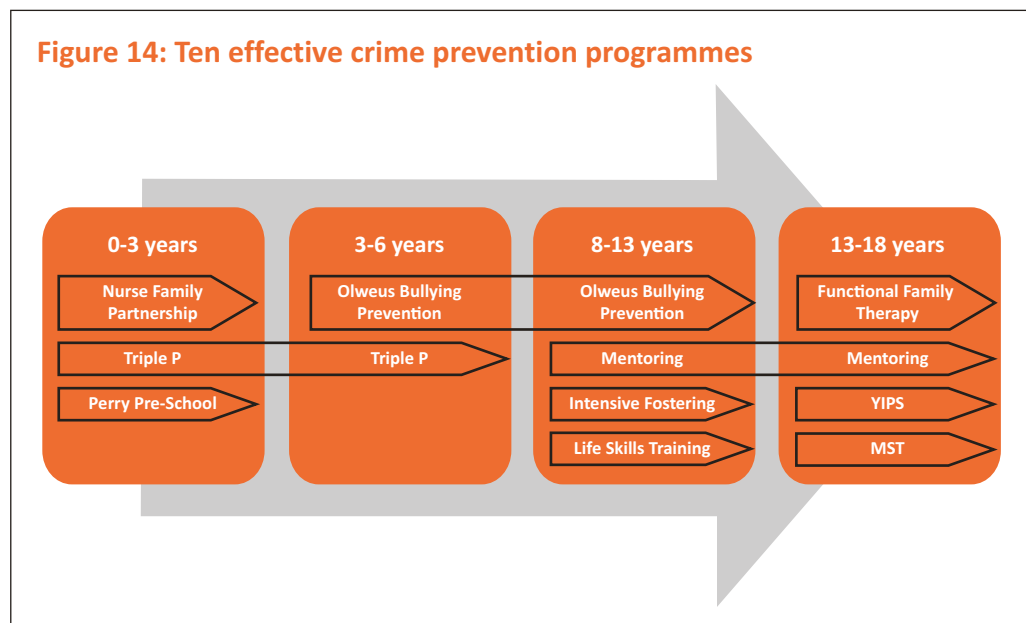
There is much scientific value in programmes that tackle individual risk factors (a great deal can be learned about the causes of crime from the results), but the evidence suggests that those which tackle multiple factors are more effective than interventions which target only a single risk factor.<sup>70</sup>

The authors have identified ten programmes that, after rigorous assessment, have been shown to have a significant impact on future offending as well as being cost-effective. The interventions highlighted here target a combination of risk factors; work with various age groups, from birth to age 18; have been com-

69 Prepared by H. Philip Hepworth, Senior Adviser, National Crime Prevention Centre, Department of Justice, Canada

70 Wasserman G and Miller L, "The Prevention of Serious and Violent Juvenile Offending", in Loeber R and Farrington D (eds), *Serious and Violent Juvenile Offenders: Risk Factors and Successful Interventions*, Sage, 1998

hensively evaluated, including through randomised controlled trials; and have undergone rigorous cost-benefit analyses.



Investing in evidence-based programmes like these is the key to reducing the number of victims and improving public safety while simultaneously managing the spiralling costs of our growing prison population.

Risk-focused prevention has been applied with great success in medicine and health. In the criminal justice setting, however, the merit and value of early prevention is sometimes overlooked because the full rewards are not realised for many years. But prevention works and it is cost-effective. Effective risk-focused programmes are proven to reduce victimisation and the volume of offenders entering the youth and criminal justice systems. They not only reduce crime, but also significantly improve the life chances of at-risk children. Just as it is accepted in medicine and health that prevention is better than cure, it is cheaper and safer to prevent crime than to treat its expensive symptoms – treating more and more victims and locking up ever more offenders at great cost to the taxpayer.

“ Just as it is accepted in medicine and health that prevention is better than cure, it is cheaper and safer to prevent crime than to treat its expensive symptoms – treating more and more victims and locking up ever more offenders at great cost to the taxpayer ”

Unfortunately, many of the programmes that reduce recidivism or prevent crime in the most cost-effective manner are not well known. Other interventions that sound plausible or that have considerable political or public appeal, turn out, after an exhaustive review of the evidence, not to be very effective at all. Some even do more harm than good. Academics have concluded that offender interventions and crime prevention efforts are, more often than not, based on tradition, conviction or ideology, rather than the best available evidence about what works. This has to change, particularly in times of economic recession and severe budgetary constraints.



### The importance of data and evidence

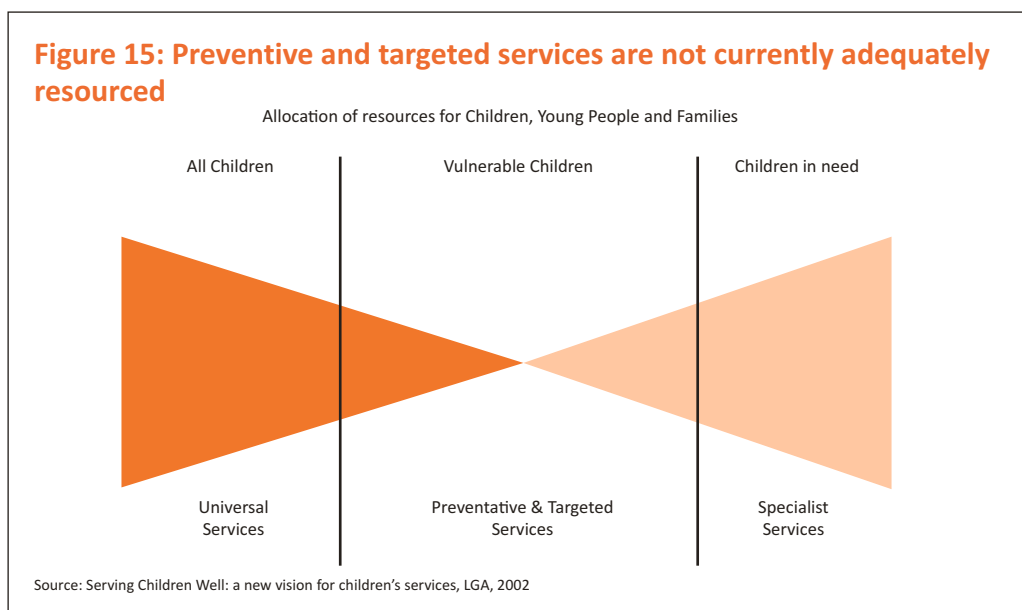
The term “evidence-based policy” generally describes methods and programmes that are informed by, and rooted in, the results of scientific research. But it also implies something more: rather than relying on conviction, conjecture or conventional wisdom, decision-makers turn to the best available evidence about what does and does not work when weighing up policy options. It is thus simply the systematic application of the best available knowledge in order to select the most effective policy.

When a particular field of policy develops a set of effective programme models with a strong evidence base, as is now the case within the criminal justice sphere, it represents a significant opportunity for policymakers. The reliance on old trial-and-error methods can be reduced, resulting in both more effective policy and more prudent use of scarce public money. From an economic standpoint then, evidence-based programmes can be effective and efficient, and help to ensure that limited resources produce a sound return on investment.

### Targeting

An important finding from the longitudinal surveys is that a small group of children born each year will commit a disproportionate number of future offences – 5-10% of children account for 50-70% of all the offences admitted by the children or known to the police. This 5-10% subgroup are often referred to as persistent offenders.<sup>71</sup> Successful intervention programmes are those which target these at-risk children and young people.

**Figure 15: Preventive and targeted services are not currently adequately resourced**



A Home Office analysis of the its youth lifestyles survey found that the greater the number of risk factors in a young person’s life, the greater the chances of him becoming an offender. Thus, 6% of boys under 18 had at least four risk factors and over three-quarters (85%) of them had committed at least one offence at some point in their lives, while more than half (57%) were currently persistent or serious offenders.<sup>72</sup>

### Value for money

When crime is prevented or recidivism reduced, there are fewer victims and fewer offenders arrested, prosecuted and sent to prison. The financial savings to victims

<sup>71</sup> *Crime Prevention Digest II*, International Centre for Prevention of Crime, 1999, *Juvenile Crime, Juvenile Justice*, National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, National Academy Press, 2001

<sup>72</sup> <http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/toolkits/py020204.htm>

and taxpayers are significant. The Audit Commission estimates that intervening early to prevent one in ten young offenders from receiving a custodial sentence would save £100 million a year.

Estimates in the United States highlight the tremendous value that could be gained by targeting certain high-risk offenders. Studies have found that the present value of costs imposed by someone who only has one police contact in their lifetime ranges from \$173,000 to \$242,000. However, an offender with two or more police contacts imposed \$1.1 to \$1.6 million by the age of 26. The worst offenders – those who have 15 or more police contacts – impose costs that are estimated to range between \$3.6 and \$5.8 million by the age of 26.<sup>73</sup>

Not only are the programmes highlighted below effective in reducing rates of crime and re-offending, but economic evaluations also consistently show that some of these programmes pay for themselves in terms of reduced costs to the criminal justice system and taxpayers. The return on investment is even greater when intangibles such as victim suffering and fear of crime are also taken into account.

Due to the range of sources and different methodologies used for cost-benefit analyses, it is not appropriate to rank different programmes according to their cost and benefits. Monetary valuations of costs and benefits are often based on a variety of assumptions and they can be imprecise. The analyst's decision, for example, to measure or not measure certain costs or benefits can radically affect a programme's bottom line.

## Home visits during infancy

Pre-natal and infant care services offer support and guidance to parents and their babies at a critical time in their physical and psychological development. Good pre-natal care can reduce the chances of premature birth and low birth weight, as well as the child's exposure to alcohol, tobacco and drugs that can contribute to risk factors. Such services also support protective factors by helping new parents to bond with their babies. One of the most detailed studies ever undertaken on the issue showed that being abused or neglected as a child increased the likelihood of arrest as a juvenile by 59%, as an adult by 28% and for a violent crime by 30%.<sup>74</sup>

By becoming a friend to the family and building a trusting relationship, home visitors can support parents with information and advice on child care, development and parenting. They can also direct families towards key services and ensure that problems are dealt with early, as well as reducing the levels of risk factors associated with youth crime.

### 1. Nurse-Family Partnership

Nurse-family partnerships are an example of home visit programmes. Home visits with new parents are one of the most common prevention programmes delivered during the early years of a child's life. They focus on parent education and seek to improve both the pre- and post-natal care of the children. Most programmes are selective, often targeting first time, young mothers who are economically disadvantaged.

Some reviews of home visit programmes have shown mixed results. However, a rigorous meta-analysis by Farrington and Welsh found that the key to success was implementation; the best implemented programmes are effective, reducing delinquency by 12% on average.<sup>75</sup>

73 Cohen M and Piquero A, "New Evidence on the Monetary Value of Saving a High Risk Youth", *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, Vol 25, No 1, March 2009

74 Widon C and Maxfield M, *An Update on the 'Cycle of Violence'*, Research in brief, NIJ, US Department of Justice, 2001

75 Farrington D and Welsh B, *Saving Children from a Life of Crime*, Oxford University Press, 2007

The nurse-family partnership programme consists of intensive home visits by nurses during a woman's pregnancy and the first two years after the birth of her first child. While the primary mode of service delivery is the home visit, the programme depends upon a variety of other health and human services in order to achieve its positive effects.

The programme has three core objectives: the improvement of pregnancy outcomes; the improvement of the child's health and development; and the improvement of the mother's personal development.

During the home visits, the nurses promote three aspects of maternal functioning: health-related behaviour during pregnancy and the early years of the child's life; the care parents provide to their children; and parents' family planning, educational achievement and participation in the workforce. In the service of these three goals, the nurses link families with health and human services and involve other family members and friends in the pregnancy, birth and early care of the child.

### Impact

A longitudinal study into such a programme's effectiveness was carried out in Elmira, a semi-rural area in New York State. Children whose mothers had been supported by a full nurse-family partnership programme had 60% fewer instances of running away, 56% fewer arrests and 81% fewer convictions or violations of parole.<sup>76</sup>

Nurse-Family Partnerships were also shown to be successful in:

- improving women's prenatal health-related behaviours (especially reducing cigarette smoking and improving diet)
- reducing pregnancy complications, such as hypertensive disorders and kidney infections
- reducing harm to children, as reflected in fewer cases of child abuse and neglect and injuries to children revealed in their medical records
- improving women's own personal development, indicated by reductions in the rates of subsequent pregnancy, an increase in spacing between first and second born children, a reduction in welfare dependence, and reductions in behavioural problems due to substance abuse and in criminal behaviour on the part of mothers who were unmarried and from low-income households at registration during pregnancy
- reducing criminal and antisocial behaviour on the part of the 15-year old children as indicated by fewer arrests, convictions/violations of probation, and days of consuming alcohol

### Cost-Benefit

Economic evaluations have shown that the NFP program produces a sound return on investment. A rigorous 2004 meta-analysis showed that for every \$1 spent on the programme, \$2.88 was saved through projected reductions in crime.<sup>77</sup>

### Implementation in England and Wales

A joint DH and DCSF project is testing a model of intensive, nurse-led home visiting for vulnerable, first-time young parents. The programme is voluntary and has been taken up by 90% of the families that have been offered it. The Government made a commitment to trial the family nurse partnership (FNP) model as part of

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76 Olds D, Hill P, Mihalic S and O'Brien R, *Blueprints for Violence Prevention*, Book Seven: Prenatal and Infancy Home Visitation by Nurses, Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, University of Colorado, 1998

77 Benefits and Costs of Prevention and Early Intervention programs for Youth, Washington State Institute for Public Policy, 2004. Full report available at [www.wsipp.wa.gov](http://www.wsipp.wa.gov)

the social exclusion action plan in September 2006. The programme was initially piloted at ten sites.

After successful results, a further £30million was invested to extend the scheme to a further 20 sites in March 2008. The funding for the expansion of the FNP from the Comprehensive Spending Review will be split as follows: £5 million in 2008-09; £10 million in 2009-10; £15 million in 2010-11.

## Pre-school

Playgroups, nursery classes and other kinds of pre-school education give children the opportunity to learn through play to mix with other children and master a range of basic social skills. High-quality early years education has been linked to lasting benefits through adolescence and on into adulthood. By reducing the risks of poor performance in primary school and increasing children's protection through cognitive and social skills, quality pre-school programmes have been shown to prevent youth crime.

### 2. High/Scope Perry Preschool

Low intelligence and educational attainment are among the most important individual risk factors for criminal offending later in life. Several studies, have found that low IQ at ages as early as 4 and 6 predict arrests for crime and violence well into adulthood.<sup>78</sup> This link between low intelligence at an early age and problems later in life has led to the development of prevention programmes that are delivered to very young children to improve their learning and social skills. Farrington and Welsh refer to these programmes as "pre-school intellectual enrichment programmes."<sup>79</sup> A number of meta-analyses of these programmes have shown considerable benefits and reductions in crime.

Perhaps the most rigorously evaluated of the pre-school programmes, the High/Scope Perry Preschool project was a Head Start-style intellectual enrichment programme carried out in Ypsilanti, Michigan, from 1962 to 1967 which targeted 3 and 4-year-old African-American children. The project is a particularly useful example because a number of longer-term longitudinal studies have been conducted since its inception.

The children attended a daily, two-and-a-half hour pre-school programme led by educators trained in psychology, backed up by weekly home visits, usually lasting two years. The curriculum emphasised active learning; the children engaged in activities that involved both decision-making and problem solving, and were planned, carried out, and reviewed by the children themselves, with support from adults. The aim of the "plan-do-review" programme was to provide intellectual stimulation, to increase thinking and reasoning abilities, and to increase later school achievement.

### Impact

Studies of Perry Preschool have shown that early childhood education programmes can prevent crime in a cost-beneficial way. A number of longitudinal studies have assessed the impact of the programme, which randomly assigned 123 children to an experimental group and a control group. At age 19, the experimental group was more likely to be employed, more likely to have graduated from high school, more likely to have received a college or vocational training, and less likely to have

<sup>78</sup> Farrington D and Welsh B, *Saving Children from a Life of Crime*, Oxford University Press, 2007

<sup>79</sup> Ibid

been arrested.<sup>80</sup> By age 27, the experimental group had accumulated half as many arrests as the controls – an average of 2.3 compared to 4.6 arrests.<sup>81</sup> In addition, they were more likely to have graduated from high school, had significantly higher earnings and were more likely to be homeowners.

A later study found that age 40, the programme continued to show significant benefits. Compared to the control group, programme group members had significantly fewer lifetime arrests for violent crimes (32% vs 48%), property crimes (36% vs 58%), and drug crimes (14% vs 34%), and were significantly less likely to be arrested five or more times (36% vs 55%).<sup>82</sup>

#### Cost-benefit

A number of cost-benefit studies have been carried out, all showing that Perry Preschool generated significant savings for the taxpayer. A study by Barnett, based on the follow up at age 27, showed that for every \$1 spent on the programme, more than \$7 was saved in the long term.<sup>83</sup>

The most recent follow up, at age 40, showed that Perry Preschool produced just over \$17 benefit per dollar of cost, with 76% of this being returned to the general public – in the form of savings in crime, education, welfare and increased tax revenue.<sup>84</sup> Other less comprehensive cost-benefit analyses have also shown that the programme is effective, but has produced lower benefits per dollar spent.<sup>85</sup>

## School

### Anti-Bullying Programmes

In recent years, there has been an increasing recognition that bullying is a problem requiring intervention – bullying prevention is crime prevention. Numerous studies have documented the short and long-term impacts that bullying has on victims. But recently, Fox and his colleagues recently reported that nearly 60% of boys whom researchers classified as bullies in grades six to nine (aged 11 to 14) were convicted of at least one crime by the age of 24. It is even more striking that 40% of them had three or more convictions by age 24.<sup>86</sup>

### 3. Olweus Bullying Prevention Programme (BPP)

The Olweus Bullying Prevention Programme is a school-based programme designed to prevent and reduce bullying problems. It was developed at the University of Bergen in Norway and is based on the research of Dan Olweus, a world expert on bullying. BPP attempts to restructure the school environment to reduce opportunities and rewards for bullying. The goal is to mobilise the entire school in a way that makes bullying unacceptable.

The BPP has components at school, classroom and individual level. The school-level component includes the distribution of a student questionnaire designed to assess the bullying problem. It also involves training for school staff on prevention measures, the creation of a committee to co-ordinate prevention activities, and the development of anti-bullying rules and policies. Increased monitoring of areas where bullying is likely to occur also takes place. Classroom components include regular discussions about bullying and reinforcement of anti-bullying rules and policies. Individual level components are designed to stop any ongoing bullying and provide support to victims.

80 Berrueta-Clement J, Schweinhart L, Barnett W Steven, Epstein A and Weikart D, *Changed Lives: The Effects of the Perry Preschool Program on Youths through Age 19*, High/Scope Press, 1984

81 Schweinhart L, Barnes H, and Weikart D, *Significant Benefits: The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study through Age 27*, High/Scope Press, 1993

82 Schweinhart L, Montie J, Xiang Z, Barnett W Steven, Belfield R and Nores M, *Lifetime Effects: The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study through Age 40*, High/Scope Press, 2005

83 Barnett W Steven, *Lives in the Balance: Age 27 Benefit-Cost Analysis of the High/Scope Perry Preschool Program*, High/Scope Press, 1996

84 Schweinhart L, Montie J, Xiang Z, Barnett W Steven, Belfield R and Nores M, *Lifetime Effects: The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study through Age 40*, High/Scope Press, 2005

85 Brandon W, Farrington D and Sherman L (eds), *Costs and Benefits of Preventing Crime*, Westview Press, 2000

86 Fox J, Elliott D, Kerlikowske R, Newman S and Christeson W, "Bullying Prevention is Crime Prevention", *Fight Crime: Invest in Kids*, 2003, p4

The BPP is designed for use in elementary, middle, and junior high schools (ages 7-14). School staff are responsible for putting the programme into practice and all students participate in it. Parents are actively involved as well. It is typically launched at the start of a school year and takes two years to complete.

#### Impact

Several evaluations of BPP have demonstrated that the programme reduces bullying, other problem behaviour and delinquency. The first evaluation of BPP in Norway, for example, found a 50% reduction in bullying incidents and reductions in antisocial behaviour such as vandalism, fighting and theft.<sup>87</sup>

Evaluations in the US have reported similar results. In South Carolina, for example, students participating in the BPP programme had lower levels of school misbehaviour, vandalism, and general delinquency than students who did not.<sup>88</sup>

No rigorous cost-benefit analysis has been undertaken into Olweus BPP.

### Alcohol and Substance Abuse

#### 4. The Life Skills Training (LST) programme

The Life Skills Training (LST) programme was developed by Gilbert Botvin, a Professor of Public Health and Psychiatry at Cornell University. The LST programme was designed to influence individual risk factors associated with substance abuse but has recently been found to reduce delinquency and violent behaviour in the months immediately following the programme.

Rather than merely teaching information about the dangers of drug abuse, LST promotes healthy alternatives to substance use through activities designed to teach students the necessary social skills to resist peer pressures to smoke, drink and use drugs; help them to develop greater self-esteem and self-confidence and cope with anxiety; and increase their knowledge of the immediate consequences of substance abuse.

#### Impact

While numerous evaluations have demonstrated that the LST programme reduces substance use, recent research has shown that the programme also has a positive effect on delinquency and violence. Botvin and his colleagues randomly assigned 41 New York City schools to either intervention or control conditions. Participants in the 20 intervention schools received the LST programme, modified to include material that focused on violence, anger management, and conflict resolution skills.

Findings showed significant reductions in violence and delinquency for intervention participants relative to controls in the three months following the programme. Also, the study found that “programme dose” mattered: students who attended more than half of the programme sessions had better outcomes than those with less exposure.<sup>89</sup>

#### Cost-Benefit

Steve Aos and his colleagues conducted a meta-analysis of Life Skills Training programmes and found significant value for money, with \$25.61 of savings for every \$1 spent on the programme.<sup>90</sup>

87 Olweus D, “Bully/Victim Problems among Schoolchildren: basic facts and effects of a school-based intervention program”, in Pepler D and Rubin K (eds), *The Development and Treatment of Childhood Aggression*, pp 411-448, Erlbaum, 1991

88 Fox J, Elliott D, Kerlikowske R, Newman S and Christeson W, “Bullying Prevention is Crime Prevention”, *Fight Crime: Invest in Kids*, 2003, p4

89 Botvin G, Griffin K, Nichols T, “Preventing Youth Violence and Delinquency through a Universal School-based Prevention Approach”, *Prevention Science*, 7, p405

90 Aos S, *Benefits and Costs of Prevention and Early Intervention Programs for Youth*, Washington Institute for Public Policy, 2006

## Family

Parenting and family factors account for as much as 30-40% of the variation in child antisocial behaviour.<sup>91</sup> Parenting practices found to have a negative impact on children's emotional and behavioural adjustment include harsh and inconsistent discipline, high levels of criticism, poor supervision, low involvement, and a lack of warmth in the parent-child relationship. Parenting programmes aim to support and train parents and carers to fulfil their parenting role effectively.

### Triple P-Positive Parenting Program

Triple P-Positive Parenting Program is a multi-level parenting and family support strategy that aims to prevent severe behavioural, emotional and developmental problems in children by enhancing the knowledge, skills and confidence of parents. The programme was developed by Professor Matt Sanders and colleagues from the Parenting and Family Support Centre in the School of Psychology at the University of Queensland.<sup>92</sup> Triple P incorporates five levels of intervention of increasing strength for parents of children from birth to age 12. It has been widely used and evaluated internationally,<sup>93</sup> and is associated with a range of positive child and parent outcomes.

The programme is based on five core principles: ensuring a safe and engaging environment; creating a positive learning environment; using assertive principles; having realistic expectations; and taking care of oneself as a parent.

Its aim is to empower families to help themselves by building on existing strengths, identifying weaknesses, selecting goals for change and implementing planned changes with their children. The specific aims of the programme as outlined by its developers<sup>94</sup> are:

- To promote the independence and health of families by enhancing parents' knowledge, skills and confidence
- To promote the development of non-violent, protective and nurturing environments for children
- To promote the development of growth, health and social competencies of young children
- To reduce the incidence of child abuse, mental illness, behaviour problems, delinquency and homelessness
- to enhance the competence, resourcefulness and self-sufficiency of parents in raising their children

### Impact

A number of randomised controlled trials of Triple P have been conducted. These indicate that the programme can be effective for children with complex behavioural difficulties resulting in a range of positive child and parent outcomes including: significant reductions in disruptive child behaviour problems, poor parenting practices and increases in parental self-efficacy and competence.<sup>95, 96</sup>

Other studies have focused on parents (rather than children) with specific difficulties. Sanders et al assessed parents who were considered to be at risk of abusing their child and compared those receiving Group Triple P alone with those exposed to Group Triple P plus anger management modules.<sup>97</sup> Both arms of the intervention showed lower levels of disruptive child behaviour, dysfunctional parenting, parental distress, relationship conflict and greater parental

91 Barlow J. "Parent-training Programmes and Behaviour Problems: Findings from a Systematic Review". In: Buchanan, A. and Hudson, B. L. (Eds). *Parenting, Schooling and Children's Behaviour*. Ashgate; 1998

92 Sanders M, "Triple P-Positive Parenting Program: towards an empirically validated multilevel parenting and family support strategy for the prevention of behavior and emotional problems in children", *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review*, Vol 2 (2), pp 71-90, 1999

93 Sanders M et al "The Triple P-Positive Parenting Program: A comparison of enhanced, standard, and self-directed behavioral family intervention for parents and children with early onset conduct problems", *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 68, pp 624-640, 2000

94 See [www.triplep.net](http://www.triplep.net) for further information about the program

95 Bor W, Sanders M and Markie-Dadds C, "The effects of Triple P-Positive Parenting Program on preschool children with co-occurring disruptive behaviour and attentional problems", *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology* 30, 6 pp 571-587, 2002

96 Hoath F and Sanders M "A feasibility study of Enhanced Group Triple P-Positive Parenting Program for parents of children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder", *Behaviour Change*. Vol 19 (4), 191-206, 2002

97 Sanders M, Gravestock F, Pidgeon A, Connors M and Brown S, "Does parental attributional retraining and anger management enhance the effects of the Triple P-Positive Parenting Program with parents at-risk of child maltreatment?", *Behavior Therapy*, Summer 2004; Vol 35 (3): 513-535

self-efficacy. However, those receiving the additional anger management module also exhibited greater reductions in potential for child abuse. Results were maintained at follow-up.

## 6. Functional Family Therapy

Functional Family Therapy (FFT) is an outcome-driven programme for young people who have displayed a wide range of behavioural problems.

The overarching goal is to prevent antisocial behaviour and other problems by engaging the family, developing family strengths and counteracting risk factors for problem behaviour. FFT was designed to help diverse populations of at-risk young people, many of who are labelled as treatment resistant. The programme targets 11-18 year-olds and their families, including young people engaging in delinquency, violence or substance abuse.

The FFT model has three distinct phases: engagement and motivation, behaviour change, and generalisation. Each phase has distinct goals and objectives, and each addresses different risk and protective factors. Engagement and motivation is designed to break down barriers and prepare young people and families for positive change. Behaviour change focuses on skill building and the development and implementation of appropriate short and long-term behaviour change plans. The generalisation phase is aimed at relapse prevention and helping families to sustain change by applying what has been learned to future situations.

On average, participating young people and families attend 8 to 12 one hour sessions over a 3 month period, but up to 30 hours of service may be involved. FFT sessions are delivered by one or two highly trained therapists, with therapists' case-loads averaging 12-16 families.

### Impact

FFT has been shown to:

- reduce the need for higher-cost treatment at a later stage;
- reduce the use of social services by these adolescents;
- generate positive outcomes with the entire spectrum of intervention personnel;
- prevent further incidence of the problem;
- prevent younger children in the family from entering the system of care;
- prevent adolescents from entering the adult criminal system; and
- transfer treatment effects across treatment systems<sup>98</sup>

### Cost-benefit

Rigorous studies have shown FFT to be both effective in reducing crime and in producing significant long-term savings for taxpayers. A meta-analysis found that for every \$1 spent on the programme, \$13.25 was saved through reductions in crime.<sup>99</sup>

## Community

### Mentoring

While mentoring programmes are designed to provide young people with a variety of benefits, each programme model has an underlying crime prevention ra-

98 Alexander, J. Barton, C. Gordon, D. Gropeter, J. Hansson, K. Harrison, R. Mears, S., Mihalic, S., Parsons, B., Pugh, C., Schulman, S., Waldron, H., & Sexton, T. (1998) *Functional Family Therapy: Blueprints for Violence prevention, Book Three*. Blueprints for Violence Prevention Series (D.S. Elliott, Series Editor). Bpouder, CO: Centre for the Study and Prevention of Violence, institute of Behavioural Science, University of Colorado.

99. Benefits and Costs of Prevention and Early Intervention programs for Youth, Washington State Institute for Public Policy, 2004., Full report available at [www.wsipp.wa.gov](http://www.wsipp.wa.gov)



tionale. Given the higher rate of antisocial behaviour and juvenile crime during after school hours when young people are less likely to have adult supervision, after-school clubs combined with mentoring programmes can offer a safe environment for young people where they are supervised by adults, providing them with positive role models, peer associations and a variety of constructive programmes.

### **7. Big Brothers Big Sisters**

Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) is the largest youth mentoring programme in the United States. BBBS operates in every state and several other countries and is recognised as a model programme by the Centre for the Study and Prevention of Violence at the University of Colorado.

The programme matches young people aged between 6 and 18 with mentors in professionally supported one-to-one relationships. Professional staff administer and supervise every match, and they also provide training and ongoing support. Both community-based and school-based mentoring programmes are offered through BBBS.

A rigorous evaluation of BBBS programmes was conducted by Tierney and Grossman in the early 1990s. The researchers randomly assigned 959 10-16-year-olds who applied to BBBS programmes across eight sites to a treatment group, for which BBBS matches were made or attempted, and a waiting-list control group. In an 18-month post-application follow-up period, mentored young people were 46% less likely to start using drugs and 32% less likely to have hit someone than their control group counterparts.<sup>100</sup>

### **8. Multisystemic Therapy**

Multisystemic Therapy (MST) is an intensive family and community-based treatment that addresses serious antisocial behaviour in 12-17 year olds who are violent or substance abusing.

The multisystemic approach views individuals as embedded within a network that encompasses the individual, family and extra-familial (peer, school, neighbourhood) factors. MST addresses the multiple factors known to be related to delinquency and strives to promote behaviour change in the young people's environment, by drawing on the strengths of each system – family, peers, school, neighbourhood, indigenous support network.

The major goals of MST are to empower parents with the skills and resources needed to address the difficulties that arise in raising teenagers, and to empower young people to cope with family, peers, school, and neighbourhood problems. Within a context of support and skill building, the therapist places appropriate demands on the adolescent and family for responsible behaviour. Intervention strategies include family therapy, behavioural parent training and cognitive behaviour therapies.

MST is provided in the home. This helps to overcome barriers to service access, increases family retention in treatment, allows for the provision of intensive services (ie, therapists have low caseloads), and enhances the maintenance of treatment gains. The usual duration of MST treatment is approximately 60 hours of contact over four months, but frequency and duration of sessions are determined by family need.

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100 Tierney J and Grossman J.  
*Making a Difference: An Impact  
Study of Big Brothers Big Sisters.*  
Public/Private Ventures Report,  
2000

### Impact

Evaluations of MST have demonstrated for serious young offenders reductions of 25-70% in long-term rates of re-arrest; reductions of 47-64% in out-of-home placements; extensive improvements in family functioning; and decreased mental health problems for serious juvenile offenders.<sup>101</sup>

### Cost-benefit

A meta-analysis of 10 MST programmes showed an average 10.5% reduction in crime. The study showed that this reduction in crime meant that for every \$1 spent on MST, an average of \$2.26 was recouped in savings to the criminal justice system. Furthermore, for every \$1 spent, another \$3.01 was saved through costs associated with victimisation.<sup>102</sup>

### Implementation in England and Wales

MST services are running at two sites in the UK and the Government has committed £17.5 million to pilot the programme at a further ten sites. The pilots will be led by the Department of Health, with support from the Department of Children, Schools and Families and the Youth Justice Board. Funding for this programme is provided by the DCSF (£12 million) and the DH (£5.65 million).

## 9. Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care

Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care (MTFC) is a cost-effective alternative to group or residential treatment, incarceration, and hospitalisation for teenagers who exhibit chronic antisocial behaviour, emotional disturbance and delinquency. It has been used successfully with offenders in Oregon since the 1980s and uses a system of points and levels to reward appropriate behaviour.

Foster families, who are recruited, trained, and closely supervised, provide adolescents with treatment and intensive supervision at home, school, and in the community. They establish clear and consistent limits with follow-through on consequences for non-compliance; positive reinforcement for appropriate behaviour; a relationship with a mentoring adult; and separation from delinquent peers.

### Impact

An evaluation of the scheme was published in February 2009. This showed positive outcomes in most of the assessed areas of risk compared with the year before admission; 44.5% of the group of graduates entered the programme with criminal convictions, but only 13% had received a further caution or conviction on leaving; violent behaviour fell from 75% on admission to 46% on leaving; of the 30.5% young people with a history of self-harm on entry, only 4% had engaged in this behaviour. Concerns about young people's sexual behaviour risks to themselves and/or others fell during from 49% on entry to 28% on leaving.<sup>103</sup>

### Cost-benefit

A meta-analysis of three MTFC programmes demonstrated an average 22% reduction in crime. For every \$1 spent on the programme, \$4.74 was recouped in savings to the criminal justice system and a further \$7.57 saved through costs associated with victimisation.<sup>104</sup>

101 Henggeler, S.W., Mihalic, S.F., Rone, L., Thomas, C. & Timmons-Mitchell, J. (1998) *Blueprints for Violence Prevention Book Six: Multisystematic Therapy*. Boulder, CO: Centre for the Study and Prevention of Violence.

102 Aos S, *Evidence based public policy options to reduce future prison construction, criminal justice system costs and crime rates*, Washington State Institute for Public Policy, October 2006

103 *MTFC Annual Report*, Department for Children, Schools and Families, February 2006

104 Ibid

### Implementation in England and Wales

Intensive fostering emerged as part of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, which makes foster care a requirement of a supervision order, and is based on the MTFC model. The programme provides highly intensive care for up to 12 months for each individual, as well as a comprehensive programme of support for their family. Pilot schemes with foster care providers in Hampshire and Staffordshire began in early 2005.

### 10. Youth Inclusion Programme

Youth inclusion programmes (YIPs), established in 2000, are tailor-made for 8 to 17-year-olds at high risk of involvement in crime or antisocial behaviour, but are also open to other young people in the local area. YIPs generally work with either the 8-12 age range (junior) or the 13-17 (senior) and the programmes operate in 114 of the most deprived, high crime neighbourhoods in England and Wales.

A number of different agencies, including the youth offending team, police, children and family services, local education authorities or schools, neighbour-

hood wardens and antisocial behaviour teams, identify the individuals for the programme. It gives young people somewhere safe to go, where they can learn new skills, take part in activities with others and get support with their education and careers guidance. Positive role models – the workers and volun-

teer mentors – help to change their attitudes to crime and antisocial behaviour, and address those factors that put them at risk of offending or antisocial behaviour.

Each project contributes to its youth offending team target to reduce the number of new entrants to the criminal justice system in the YOT area. To do so, YIPs have the following aims:

- to engage with a high proportion of the core group, especially those members deemed most at risk within the group
- to address the risk factors and enhance the protective factors, as identified by Onset assessments, for the young people with whom it is working
- to increase access for engaged young people to mainstream and specialist services, especially in relation to education, training and employment
- to prevent engaged young people from entering the criminal justice system, and to reduce offending of young people already in the system
- to intervene, not just on an individual level, but with communities and families (especially the parents of the core group)

### Impact

An independent national evaluation of the first three years of the programme found that arrest rates for the 50 young people considered to be most at risk of crime in each YIP went down by 65%. Of those who had offended before joining the programme, 73% were arrested for fewer offences after engaging with a YIP. And of those who had not offended previously but who were at risk, 74% did not go on to be arrested after engaging with a YIP.<sup>105</sup>

“ Prevention activities do not have to be implemented instead of or in isolation from enforcement measures ”

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105 Evaluation of the Youth Inclusion Programme, July 2003; <http://www.yjb.gov.uk/NR/rdon-lyres/F1FB825F-C3F1-4F44-9151-30EDAB5D5F0C/147/YIPevaluation2003.pdf>

### Box 3: The Boston Gun Strategy and SACSII – Prevention and Enforcement Combined

Prevention activities do not have to be implemented instead of or in isolation from enforcement measures. The Boston gun project combined policing, aimed at reducing the high rates of homicide among young people (aged 24 and under) in Boston, with outreach work. Like many large cities in the United States, Boston experienced this epidemic in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Youth homicide increased 230% – from 22 victims in 1987 to 73 victims in 1990. Boston still averaged about 44 youth homicides a year between 1991 and 1995.

The project assembled an inter-agency working group of largely frontline criminal justice and other practitioners who used quantitative and qualitative research techniques to assess the dynamics of youth violence in Boston. From this they developed an intervention designed to have a substantial, rapid impact on youth homicide and which could be modified as it was evaluated.

The project began with Operation Ceasefire in the late spring of 1996. Operation Ceasefire was based on the “pulling levers” deterrence strategy, which focused criminal justice attention on a small number of chronically offending, gang-involved youth who were responsible for much of Boston’s youth homicide problem.

But the Boston strategy was much more than Operation Ceasefire. It included prevention programmes such as outreach social workers who mediated in gang disputes and helped the young people and their families to access much needed social services. It increased the services for runaways and put in place programmes to mentor and reduce school drop-outs. It also increased job training and mobilised local firms to create jobs. The John Hancock Mutual Life Insurance company invested in a summer programme that gave young people a greater chance of completing high school and going on to college. All of these activities have been shown to reduce violence.

Youth homicide fell from an average rate of 44 a year in the period from 1991 to 1995 to 15 in 1998, a 66% drop in three years, and none of these latter incidents involved children under 16 in gun violence. Although there is no scientific evaluation of the total package of activities – only Operation Ceasefire – it makes sense that the results were due to more than “smart” policing.

To see if Boston’s approach could be replicated in other cities, the US Department of Justice launched the strategic approaches to community safety initiative (SACSII), which was piloted in ten cities and based on the Boston strategy.

SACSII was aimed to bring together some of the best practices for reducing and preventing violent crime, adapting the methods used in Operation Ceasefire: multi-agency collaboration, integration of research into programme planning and implementation, and strategic problem-solving, all under the leadership of the US Attorney’s Office. In Boston, a multi-agency planning group developed co-ordinated strategies from detailed information about juvenile homicide and gun-related crime supplied by a research partner and law enforcement officers. Boston’s signature strategy called for “lever pulling” meetings with high-risk offenders. These were designed to deter juvenile crime through a combination of warnings of swift and sure prosecution for any violence, and the provision of social and vocational services. The strategy seemed to be a solid success. But it was Boston’s collaborative, data-driven, problem-solving process that SACSII sought to emulate, not its central intervention strategy. The SACSII approach had much in common with earlier collaborative problem-solving efforts, except that the integration of a local research partner into the core planning group was a new feature.

The SACSII partnerships developed and implemented an impressive number of intervention strategies. They ranged from prevention to arrest and prosecution, and from the traditional to the innovative.

#### Prevention strategies

Community and service-oriented prevention strategies were more prevalent and robust in sites with broad-based representation in the core group and one or more strong non-law-enforcement partners. Prevention strategies were provided by probation officers, social service agencies, and coalitions of churches and other faith-based and community organisations. The list of prevention and intervention services provided through SACSII is long, and includes job training, job placement, substance abuse treatment, tutoring, mentoring, family-based services, after-school activities, tattoo removal, driver’s licence replacement and, in Memphis, a school-based rape prevention programme.

The SACSII project in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, was the most heavily involved in prevention and intervention, with several new initiatives launched in addition to more typical prevention activities (such as, youth mentoring, family-based serv-

ices, skills training and job placement, and after-school activities). In a new programme, Operation Reach, teams comprising a police officer, court counsellor or probation officer, minister, community representative and street-level workers provided co-ordinated services to high-risk individuals after lever-pulling meetings. Atlanta and St Louis created promising hospital emergency-room projects designed both to gather useful information on gunshot victims and victims of other violent crime and to reach out to victims and families when they are most vulnerable.

A study of the SACSI approach found that, when implemented effectively, it is associated with reductions in targeted violent crimes, sometimes by as much as 50%. Successful elements of the SACSI approach include the leadership provided at national level, the integration of research into planning and intervention, and collaborative strategic planning.

## Lessons

The programmes highlighted above all have a number of common elements. They:

- Focus on the risk factors that increase the likelihood of offending behaviour
- Work in community rather than custodial settings as much as possible
- Focus on the offender's specific behavioural and skills needs, taking into account gender, age, ethnicity and cultural identity
- Involve many agencies in order to offer the offender a range of opportunities for personal, social, economic and educational development.
- Include a cognitive component to help the offender modify the attitudes and beliefs that support crime and antisocial behaviour
- Target high and medium-risk offenders rather than being universal
- Demonstrate "programme integrity", ie, establish aims, methods, resources, staff, training, support, monitoring and evaluation that are integrated and consistent

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# 3

## What does not work

### Summary

The existence of a sensible, evidence-based approach to crime prevention is the reason why the Government must resist the temptation to announce one-off, populist initiatives that achieve little except a few positive next-day headlines. In fact, this kind of reactive approach can increase crime, rather than reduce it. As well as identifying programmes that are proven to reduce risk factors for offending and victimisation, it is also important to register those that do not work, or that may even make matters worse.

### Shock Tactics

Initiatives that involve “shock tactics” can increase re-offending and do more harm than good. For example, Scared Straight, a programme in the United States, involves organised visits to prisons by juvenile delinquents or children at risk of becoming delinquent. It is designed to deter participants from future offending by providing first-hand observations of prison life and interaction with adult inmates.

### Impact

All the evidence shows that Scared Straight programmes either have little effect, or can actually increase recidivism: arrest rates and rates of juvenile crime were often higher for those who participated.<sup>106</sup> Other shock tactics that have been shown to be ineffective include boot camps for young offenders, “shock probation” and “shock parole”.<sup>107</sup>

### Cost-benefit

A meta-analysis of ten Scared Straight programmes showed that offending actually increased by 6.8%, costing the taxpayer an average of over \$14,000 per participant.<sup>108</sup>

### Implementation in England and Wales

Despite all the evidence that shock tactics do not work, the Home Secretary announced last July that knife carriers would be taken to hospitals to meet young stabbing victims – presumably to show the young offenders that they themselves risk being stabbed if they carry a knife. More worryingly, ministers subsequently admitted they were aware of all the evidence that programmes which involve shock tactics do not work, yet still went ahead with the announcement anyway.<sup>109</sup> It was only after a media outcry that the policy was downgraded.

There are other examples of programmes in England and Wales in which criminal justice practitioners (usually police and prison officers) attempt to deter young people from committing crime by organising visits to prisons or police stations. Despite the clearly good intentions of those involved, and the apparently high success rates often claimed, these programmes are not scientifically evaluated and, given what we know of similar schemes, are likely to do more harm than good.

106 Buckner, J and Chesney-Lind M, “Dramatic cures for juvenile crime: An evaluation of a prison-run delinquency prevention program”, *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 10, pp 227-247, 1983

107 Vito G, “Developments in shock probation: A review of research findings and policy implications”, *Federal Probation*, 48, pp 22-7, 1984

108 Aos S, *Evidence based Public Policy options to Reduce Future Prison Construction, Criminal Justice System Costs and Crime Rates*, Washington State Institute for Public Policy, October 2006

109 House of Commons, Hansard WPO, 8th September 2008

### Curfews for young people

Home confinement, or curfews, which seek to regulate or restrict the freedom of the offender within the community, have also been shown to be ineffective. In the United States, curfews are popular in many cities, but the evidence suggests that they do not reduce crime.

### Impact

A meta-analysis of ten such programmes concluded:

“Public opinion shows overwhelming support for curfews, and even teenagers, who are subject to enforcement, favour curfew restrictions. The primary basis for support is the conviction that curfews reduce crime and make the streets safer. However, research fails to support this hypothesis.”

“Studies consistently report no change in crime in relation to curfews. When changes in crime are observed, they are almost equally likely to be increases in crime as opposed to decreases. Furthermore, curfew enforcement rarely leads to discovery of serious criminal behaviour precipitating arrest. For the most part, curfew violators tend to be arrested for curfew-related offences, such as lying about one’s age, and it could be argued that these arrests needlessly add to the criminal histories of some juveniles.”<sup>110</sup>

### Cost-benefit

Not enough evaluations of juvenile curfews have been carried out to establish a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis.

### Implementation in England and Wales

Despite all the evidence to the contrary, politicians continue to expand the use of curfews. In the last decade, the Government has massively expanded the use of electronic tagging, either for those given a curfew order or for those released early from prison on a tag. Early Home Office studies of adult curfews showed no difference in recidivism when compared with a control group,<sup>111</sup> while a 2006 report by the Public Accounts Committee concluded:

*There is insufficient evidence available to determine whether electronic monitoring helps to reduce re-offending or promote rehabilitation. The Home Office should carry out further research to establish the role that electronic monitoring could play in minimising re-offending.*<sup>112</sup>

110 Adams K, The Effectiveness of Juvenile Curfews at Crime Prevention, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol 587, No1, pp 136-159, 2003

111 Electronic Monitoring of Released Prisoners: an evaluation of the Home Detention Curfew scheme, Home Office, March 2001

112 The Electronic Monitoring of Adult Offenders, A Report of the Public Accounts Committee, October 2006

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# 4

## A National Strategy

### Summary

There are examples of governments around the world that have developed national strategies for crime prevention, seeking to intervene early to tackle the causes of crime. These strategies have been supported by long-term sustainable funding. National councils for crime prevention have provided technical assistance, skills and knowledge to local agencies in implementing evidence-based prevention programmes. They provide funding for such programmes and ensure continuity, co-ordination and monitoring of local programmes.

### Why a national strategy?

A national strategy is one way of harnessing the influential role of central government. At its most basic level, a national prevention strategy sets out the ideological orientation or vision of the country's approach to preventing crime. This orientation, whether it is directed at early intervention, situational prevention, or some other approach or combination of approaches, then becomes the guiding principle for more practical operations, including funding, technical assistance, research and evaluation, and so on. On the one hand, a national strategy is symbolic; on the other hand, it is the organising principle from which all policy can flow.

“On the one hand, a national strategy is symbolic; on the other hand, it is the organising principle from which all policy can flow”

### What is a national strategy?

A national strategy very often involves central government establishing a permanent structure, such as an agency, council, or secretariat. In Sweden, this is known as the National Council for Crime Prevention (est 1974) and in Canada, it is the National Crime Prevention Centre (est 1994).

The need for and key roles of a national structure of this sort were outlined in the “Final Declaration” of the second international crime prevention conference, held in Paris in 1991:

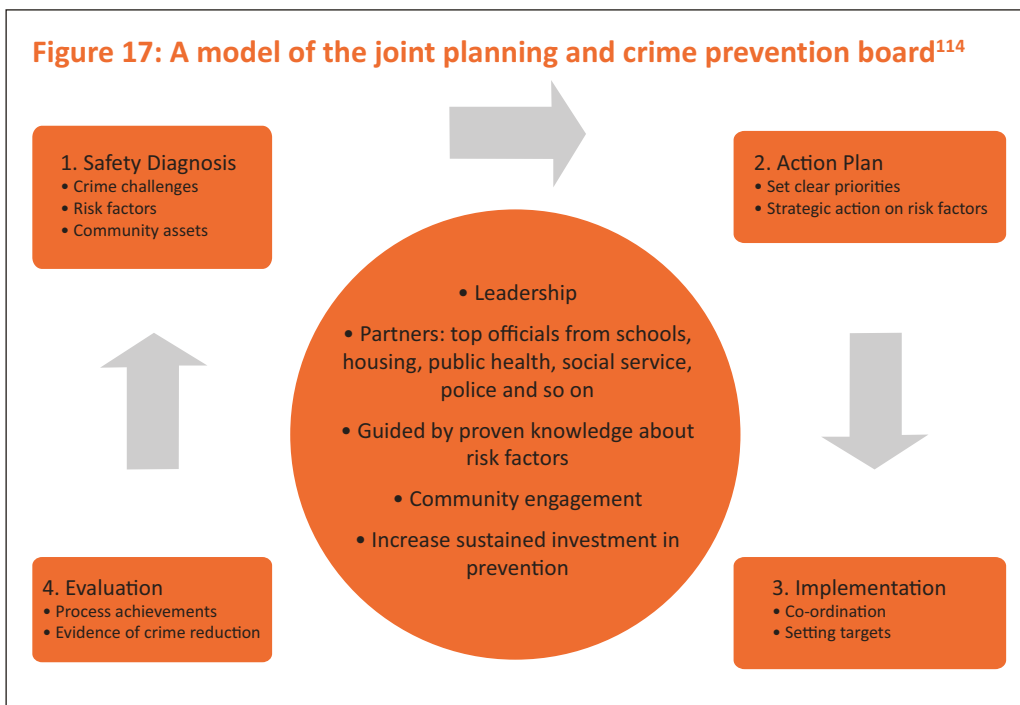
“Governments must establish national crime prevention structures to recommend improved policies, undertake research and development, and foster the implementation of effective crime prevention programmes, particularly by cities.”<sup>113</sup>

113 European Forum for Urban Safety, Federation of Canadian Municipalities, and United States Conference of Mayors, 1991. Final Declaration, Second International Conference on Urban Safety, Drugs and Crime Prevention, November 18-20, 1991, Paris



### International examples of national crime reduction strategies

There are numerous international examples of national councils for crime prevention, both in western Europe and the Commonwealth, including in Canada, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Sweden, New Zealand and Australia.



As part of a larger project on international trends in crime prevention, a number of Canadian criminologists<sup>115</sup> examined the efforts of the federal governments of seven industrialised countries (Australia, Belgium, Canada, England and Wales, France, the Netherlands, and the United States).<sup>116</sup> Six elements were identified as important for the success of a national strategy designed to foster effective crime prevention activities at the local level. These six elements can be divided into two categories and include:

Characteristics of a national secretariat or agency:

- a staff, reporting to a senior official, with a budget for development
- b capacity to mobilise key partners, harness effective methods and set priorities. Training and development of staff is also a key part of harnessing effective methods
- c able to propose strategies based on analysis of crime problems and prevention practices

Delivery possible through:

- d collaboration with other government departments
- e development of local problem-solving partnerships<sup>117</sup>
- f involvement of citizens<sup>118</sup>

Point (a) highlights the need for permanence and influence within the government hierarchy. It goes without saying that a government agency that reports di-

114 Waller I, *Less Law, More Order: the Truth about Reducing Crime*, Greenwood Publishing, 2006

115 Waller I and Welsh B, "International Trends in Crime Prevention: Cost-Effective Ways to Reduce Victimization" in Newman G (ed), *Global Report on Crime and Justice*, Oxford University Press, 1999. Waller I, Welsh B and Sansfacon D, *Crime Prevention Digest 1997: Success, Benefits and Directions from Seven Countries*, International Centre for the Prevention of Crime, 1997

116 A project by Sansfacon and Welsh in 1999 expanded the number of countries to nine, by adding Sweden and New Zealand

117 These involve "measures developed as a result of a careful effort to identify causal factors while mobilizing the agencies able to influence those factors", Waller I and Welsh B, p191, 1999

118 Waller I and Welsh B, "International Trends in Crime Prevention: Cost-Effective Ways to Reduce Victimization", in Newman G (ed), *Global Report on Crime and Justice*, Oxford University Press, 1999

rectly to a high-ranking public official, such as the US Attorney General or Secretary of Health and Human services, will have a great deal more influence in shaping national policy and obtaining resources to pursue the agency's objectives than one that does not. In the seven-country study, it was found that national crime prevention agencies reported to an official between two and four levels down from the top public servant.

Sweden's National Council for Crime Prevention employs about 60 full-time staff, including criminologists, sociologists, psychologists, economists, lawyers, statisticians, and administrators, who work in nine divisions.<sup>119</sup> There is also an advisory group and scientific board attached to the council.<sup>120</sup> Canada's National Crime Prevention Centre employs about 85 full-time staff with similar professional backgrounds.<sup>121</sup> Two affiliated groups provide management and strategic advice on the implementation of the national crime prevention strategy – the joint management committees and the federal-provincial-territorial working group on crime prevention.<sup>122</sup>

A national prevention agency must also be able to influence other federal agencies or departments whose policies impact on crime levels, such as health, education, social services, and employment. This is a key feature of point (b). Daniel Sansfacon and Brandon Welsh noted that “crime prevention policies will have optimal impacts if other ministries (or departments) include crime prevention as a consideration in developing their policies and programmes”.<sup>123</sup>

Point (b) also recognises the need to develop the capacity to support an evidence-based approach, using the best available research evidence on what works in preventing crime. A national prevention agency can serve as a clearinghouse for research on what works, commission systematic reviews on important prevention measures and emerging issues, and produce guidelines on effective practice. Setting clear priorities for action, especially in the early years of an agency, is crucial to developing political capital within government and being able to produce tangible products to aid local officials in implementing effective prevention measures.

In the seven-country study, it was common for national crime prevention agencies either to be doing too little (often a function of a limited budget) or to be too over-extended to support an evidence-based approach.<sup>124</sup> This cannot be said about Sweden, which was not among the countries in this study. Sweden's national council publishes a series of “best practice” manuals “intended to have immediate relevance for those engaged in local crime prevention activities”. These manuals bring together the leading research on effective programmes in Sweden and other countries. The Canadian Government, too, has long recognised the importance of having “access to experience and research from around the world” to aid in the development of more efficacious and cost-effective crime prevention measures for Canadian communities. This has included providing funding for the International Centre for the Prevention of Crime and the Campbell Collaboration Crime and Justice Group.<sup>125</sup>

Point (c), the ability to propose strategies based on analysis of crime problems and prevention practices, is concerned with research and strategic analysis capabilities on a national level. Here, the national agency is interested in identifying national trends in crime and related social problems and the effects of different national policies (eg, early intervention, imprisonment) aimed at reducing crime.

119 These divisions are local crime prevention; reform evaluation; evaluation of individual measures; crime studies; statistics; methodology; and development; information and publications; administration; and international, National Council for Crime Prevention, p14, 2001

120 Andersson J, “The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention: A Short Presentation”, *Journal of Scandinavian Studies in Criminology and Crime Prevention*, Vol 6, pp74-88, 2005

121 Half of the staff are located at the centre's main office in the capital, Ottawa, and the other half are dispersed among the regional offices across the country. Almost three-quarters (62) of the staff are involved in programme delivery and the remainder (23) work in policy, research, and evaluation

122 Irving M, electronic communication with the Acting Chief of the Research and Knowledge Unit, National Crime Prevention Centre, Canada, 17th March, 2006

123 Sansfacon D and Welsh B, *Crime Prevention Digest II: Comparative Analysis of Successful Community Safety*, International Centre for the Prevention of Crime, p77, 1999

124 Waller I and Welsh B, “International Trends in Crime Prevention: Cost-Effective Ways to Reduce Victimization” in Newman G (ed), *Global Report on Crime and Justice*, Oxford University Press, 1999

125 Farrington D and Petrosino, A, “The Campbell Collaboration Crime and Justice Group”, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol 578, pp 35-49, 2001

Sweden's national council has a division – the crime studies division – for this sole purpose. France also has a national observatory and there are many other examples of similar bodies in other countries, particularly at the local level.

Points (d), (e), and (f) – collaboration with other government departments, development of local problem-solving partnerships, and involvement of citizens – pertain to the effective implementation or delivery of evidence-based programmes at the local level. These points specify the pivotal role of the transition of evidence-based results (i.e. from systematic reviews) into local practice. Each point specifies concrete steps that a national agency can have some influence over at the local level, but programme success, ultimately, will depend on people at the local level. A national agency can influence implementation by developing guidelines on effective practice and making project funding conditional on the use of evidence-based programmes.

In both Sweden and Canada, the national agencies play an important role in fostering the implementation and testing of proven prevention programme at the local level.

## Governance structures from around the world

### Sweden

In 1996 the Swedish Government launched a national crime prevention policy called “Our Collective Responsibility”.<sup>126</sup> Establishing crime prevention councils at municipal level lay at the heart of this policy. The councils are meant to bring together key local stakeholders who can influence the factors that cause crime. The promotion of greater citizen involvement in crime prevention is also central to the work of the councils.

By the beginning of 2005 (the most recent data available), local councils were operating in more than 80% of the country's 290 municipalities. The Swedish criminologist Jan Andersson noted, “local crime prevention councils have come to assume a central and strategic role in the work of crime prevention”.<sup>127</sup> Support comes in the form of disseminating knowledge on effective practice, training, and guidance in crime analysis and evaluation.

### New Zealand

In New Zealand, the Crime Prevention Unit (CPU) manages funding allocated by government for the provision of crime reduction and community safety programmes that follow government approved criteria. In 2005-06 this amounted to \$6.538 million.

The CPU funds partnership arrangements between the Ministry of Justice and metropolitan and large provincial territorial authorities (TAs). The remainder of the funding is used to fund specific crime reduction projects delivered by or through smaller TAs and independent service providers. The details of current funding arrangements are published each year.

The CPU ensures that government funding is used as effectively as possible in supporting crime reduction activities. CPU funding and guidance is generally directed to locations with significant crime problems and provides particular support to those crime reduction initiatives that are demonstrably effective.

The partnerships, activities and service providers supported by the CPU change each year. In 2004-05 TAs had to submit competing project applica-

126 Not all were convinced of the value of Sweden's new national crime prevention policy, which also had the effect of greatly reducing government support for research and vesting greater autonomy in municipalities over decisions about what works in preventing crime. As noted by Per-Olof Wikstrom and Marie Tortensson: “We fear that prevention once again, as was much the case in the 1970s, will become increasingly dominated by slogans, such as that ‘crime prevention is our collective responsibility’, the idea that crime prevention is best served by letting (a) ‘thousand flowers bloom’ (basically that all crime prevention ideas are equally valid until proven otherwise) and the view that ‘locals’ know best what to do about their crime problem” (1999, p 460, n1)

127 Andersson J, “The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention: a short presentation”, *Journal of Scandinavian Studies in Criminology and Crime Prevention*, Vol 6, pp74-88, 2005

tions. Successful proposals demonstrated both need and likely crime reduction benefits.

### **Alberta, Canada**

In Alberta, Canada, the provincial government has established the Safe Communities Secretariat – also known as SafeCom – to co-ordinate and implement the recommendations of the crime reduction and safe communities task force. The secretariat will focus on the factors that give rise to crime, such as drug and alcohol abuse and addiction, mental illness and dysfunctional families. SafeCom’s three-year mandate also includes developing a comprehensive, long-term crime reduction and prevention strategy, as well as promoting shared responsibility and safe community strategies.

The 2008 Budget included new funding of \$468 million over three years to implement the taskforce recommendations and another \$33 million to build public sector addiction treatment facilities.

SafeCom is a partnership of nine government ministries: Justice and Attorney General; Solicitor General and Public Security; Health and Wellness; Education, Children and Youth Services; Municipal Affairs; Aboriginal Relations; Housing and Urban Affairs; and Culture and Community Spirit. SafeCom will also work with municipalities, businesses, community agencies and individuals to find viable solutions to crime.

The \$60 million safe communities innovation fund (SCIF) is part of the government’s response to reducing and preventing crime in Alberta. The state is now accepting funding applications under the SCIF for community-based and community-police partnership pilot projects.

Strategic partners can apply for funding to implement pilot projects designed to reach at-risk populations and their families, and address the causes of crime and social disorder. Strategic partners may include, but are not limited to, youth shelters, mental health clinics, addiction centres, police agencies, child welfare agencies, or school boards.

After reviewing the criteria, any municipality, region, Aboriginal community or non-governmental organisation can apply for funding up to \$500,000 annually for a maximum of three years.

### **Belgium**

Belgium’s permanent secretariat for prevention policy was set up in 1992 to develop a co-ordinated and integrated crime prevention strategy.

It led to the creation of “safety contracts”, which sought to ensure integrated crime prevention delivery at the local level by co-ordinating state prevention efforts with those of regions and the communities.

The contracts have since been combined with separate local prevention projects dedicated to reducing poverty, improving the urban environment and local living conditions and integrating social development and justice.

Between 2002 and 2006, the Belgian Council of Ministers approved the content and budgets of 73 local security and society plans and 29 drug plans to be delivered throughout the country. These contracts are awarded on three criteria: the size of the local population (greater than 60,000 residents); the crime rate relevant to a specific group of offences; and the community’s socio-economic circumstances, including the average earnings per resident.

An annual budget of €33 million was dedicated to these contracts, which highlight:

- The creation of an efficient co-ordinating structure for managing projects and giving the necessary methodological support
- The response to specific crime and delinquency phenomena
- Situational prevention and responses to feelings of insecurity
- An emphasis on drug-related problems

From 2007, the Council of Ministers decided to combine both the security and drug plans into one strategic action plan of security and prevention. Belgium has now devolved much greater control and freedom to local authorities in managing the projects.

### **Australia**

Although the states and territories have primary responsibility for the criminal justice system, since 1996 the federal government has undertaken a range of substantial initiatives aimed at reducing the incidence of violence and other crime in Australia.

The National Community Crime Prevention Programme (NCCPP) was established in 2004. Funding of \$65.5 million was provided over four years (to 30th June 2008) for a national community grants programme.

The NCCPP was designed to provide funding for grassroots projects designed to prevent or reduce crime and antisocial behaviour, improve community safety and security, and reduce the fear of crime.

The NCCPP small grants programme, which featured a streamlined process for crime prevention grants of up to \$5,000, was announced on 1st May 2007; 417 projects were funded under this programme.

### **Norway**

The Norwegian National Crime Prevention Council (KRÅD) functions as the Norwegian Government's body of expertise within the judicial system. It is a government agency working under the Ministry of Justice. The council is independent in selecting matters to focus on and what kind of advice it chooses to give.

By producing data and disseminating knowledge on crime and crime prevention work the council works to reduce crime and improve levels of safety in society. It also evaluates reforms, surveys research to develop new knowledge and provides support for local crime prevention work. The council collaborates with other organisations and public sector agencies.

Its target groups are decision-makers and employees within the justice system, as well as operatives in the field of crime prevention and members of the general public with an interest in and a need for the knowledge it possesses.

The Norwegian National Crime Prevention Council was set up in 1980, modelled on existing organisations in Denmark and Sweden. It has a board consisting of ten people; two police officers, a teacher from the police academy, a prison leader, a research worker, a leader from a child welfare office, a civil servant, an adviser from the child ombudsman's office and an attorney at law. The council is appointed by the Government for periods of three years at the time. At

present it is led by a former MP, who now works as the head of the school administration in one of Norway's 18 counties. The council has a secretariat with seven permanent employees.

Its mandate states that the council shall contribute to the co-ordination of youth crime prevention ventures between official authorities and private organisations. It has the following primary tasks:

- Initiate co-operation with other authorities and organisations, giving advice and guidance on crime prevention strategies and actions and initiate research connected with this
- Initiate and support crime prevention work centrally and locally
- Work on tasks, give advice and attend hearings in cooperation with or on assignment from the Ministry of Justice or other ministries
- Contribute to the understanding of the importance of crime prevention on all levels in the Norwegian society

Since the early 1990s, one of the council's main tasks has been to encourage local municipalities to follow a model for co-ordination of local crime prevention enterprises that had proved very successful in Denmark.

#### **The Netherlands**

The Dutch Centre for Crime Prevention and Safety was set up in 2004. Its role is to develop and collate all the knowledge available on public safety in a single place.

The centre describes itself as a body that offers concrete information, ready to be put to use straight away. It is a multi-departmental agency, incorporating principals from the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Interior and Kingdom Relations, the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport and the Dutch Association of Insurers. It works in partnership with a number of other ministries, agencies and private bodies.

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# 5

## Implementing and funding early social intervention

### Summary

A national responsibility centre is best placed to address key implementation issues, including the question of local delivery, programme fidelity and the mobilisation of local support. There are a number of funding options for the successful implementation of a national crime prevention strategy, including commissioning for social outcomes, a “justice reinvestment” model and the financial instrument of an “invest to save” social bond.

### Funding

Funding interventions that work will be difficult, especially given the constraints on public finances in the next five years. There are at least four ways to fund these programmes, each of which has its advantages and risks.

All models bring some common challenges:

- Measurement – agreed baselines and metrics that are not vulnerable to economic downturns, national policy changes (eg, new crimes being legislated), and shared analysis of lifetime costs and benefits associated with different actions and client groups.
- Action – all depend on there being a credible menu of activities that significantly outperform existing ones, and the capacity to implement them. In most cases this is likely to involve a mix of public, private and voluntary organisations – none of these sectors has a clear advantage in terms of performance.
- Risk – the ability to handle downside risks, including not only failing to achieve targets but also political risks (if politicians overrule some of the interventions, for example).

Four methods of funding:

#### **1. Top slicing existing central government funding**

This would involve using a small percentage of the budgets of the various government departments (the Ministry of Justice, the Home Office, the Department for Children, Schools and Families, the Department for Communities and Local Government and the Department of Health) that would reap direct long-term benefits from successful early intervention and crime prevention projects.

Possible areas for reallocating existing budgets include:

**Sure Start:**

The Government has allocated around £4 billion for its flagship programme, Sure Start, for the 2009-11 period – around £1.3 billion a year.

There is evidence that, despite being targeted on disadvantaged neighbourhoods, Sure Start Local Programmes (SSLPs) are neither reaching nor benefiting the most disadvantaged in society. An evaluation by Belsky, Barnes and Melhuish found that SSLPs actually had an adverse effect on the most disadvantaged families.<sup>128</sup> The take-up rate and numbers of children using Sure Start centres is also unclear, highlighted by a 2006 National Audit Office report, which concluded that as a result, outcomes and benefits were difficult to ascertain.<sup>129</sup> The report also found that fewer than a third of Sure Start children’s centres were reaching out to the neediest families they were intended to target, with most failing to identify the most disadvantaged families in their area and offer them support.

“ Fewer than a third of Sure Start children’s centres were reaching out to the neediest families they were intended to target, with most failing to identify the most disadvantaged families in their area and offer them support ”

The report went on to warn that “most of the centres we visited were not tracking which excluded groups were using the centre” and that the very families that Sure Start was intended to help – including ethnic minorities, the unemployed, the disabled, asylum seekers and single parents – “will often require more proactive outreach services in order to identify them and offer them help that they feel they can accept.”

Most evaluative studies have illustrated that universal schemes achieve better outcomes than targeted schemes. However, this is primarily due to the tendency for middle class families to access available services more fully and effectively than poorer families, and far better than the most deprived families. Children from middle-class families post greater gains and raise the average scores on all evaluation measures. Overall, it is widely believed that universal schemes increase social and economic polarisation in the long run, partly because communities tend to be socially homogenous and partly

**Figure 18: Variations in the number of health visitors in different PCTs<sup>130</sup>**

Primary Care Trust	WTE health visitors	Under-fives (approx)	Proportion to children under five
City and Hackney PCT	33.33	17,714	531.47
Camden PCT	25.04	13,801	551.16
Newham PCT	44.21	24,981	565.05
North Tees PCT	18.48	10,500	568.18
Surrey PCT	112.16	64,000	570.61
Coventry Teaching PCT	31.78	18,992	597.61
Enfield PCT	34.38	21,587	627.89
Sutton and Merton PCT	38	24,434	643
Warwickshire PCT	39.2	28,233	720.23
Redbridge PCT	16.63	19,000	1,142.51

128 Melhuish, E., Belsky, J., Ball, M. & Anning, A. (2007). Programme Variation and Impact on Children and Families. In J. Belsky, J. Barnes, & E. Melhuish, E. (Eds.), *The National Evaluation of Sure Start: Does Area-based Early Intervention Work?* (pp. 155-172). Bristol, UK: The Policy Press.

129 Sure Start Children’s Centres, National Audit Office, 2006

130 Family and Parenting Institute, ‘Health Visitors – an endangered species’, April 2007



because funding levels are not usually increased sufficiently; the additional gains may not materialise at all or be greatly reduced. Given that the Government's own research suggests that, for instance, 6% of boys under the age of 18 have four or more risk factors, it is crucial that services like Sure Start actually reach the most at-risk.

An analysis of Government policies on health visitors reveals similar problems for the most at-risk children and families. It is generally believed by the profes-

“ Since 1997, an estimated £500 million of public money has been invested in the CCTV infrastructure, an average of £50 million a year ”

sionals that the maximum caseload for optimal contacts from birth to five years is no more than 300. But the average 'child under five' caseload is, at present, 362. And, within this average, health visitor numbers vary greatly between PCTs, with the ratio of health visitors to

children under five in their area ranging nationally from a best case of one health visitor for 160 children, up to a worst case of one for every 1,142 children.

The areas with the lowest health visitor caseloads include PCTs with 23 of the 43 most deprived populations 24, and deprivation does not seem to have played any part in PCT decision-making on health visitor numbers.”

#### CCTV and CDRP funding:

During the 1990s the Home Office spent 78% of its crime prevention budget on installing CCTV (Closed Circuit Television).<sup>131</sup> In London alone, it is estimated £200 million has been spent on publicly-funded CCTV schemes over the last decade. (Between 1999 and 2003, the Home Office spent £170 million on a nationwide CCTV initiative as part of its Crime Reduction Programme). Additional contributions have been made by Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, which are funded both by central grants and through contributions from local agencies (£362 million in total in 2007/08).<sup>132</sup>

Overall, since 1997, an estimated £500 million of public money has been invested in the CCTV infrastructure, an average of £50 million a year.<sup>133</sup>

#### Does CCTV work?

A 2005 Home Office study assessed the impact of CCTV installations in 13 areas, compared with similar areas which did not have CCTV (the control areas).<sup>134</sup>

This 2005 study chimed with other larger-scale analyses of the effectiveness of CCTV, including systematic reviews undertaken by Farrington and Welsh.<sup>135</sup>

It found that only two areas showed a statistically significant reduction in crime rates (although the changes could have been due to other reasons). In seven areas, crime increased, though it is not thought that these increases were attributable to the impact of CCTV.<sup>136</sup> Overall, the report concluded that “CCTV cannot be deemed a success. It has cost a lot of money and it has not produced the anticipated benefits.”<sup>137</sup>

The Home Office study also found negligible increases in public confidence, changes in behaviour (i.e. the public visiting areas they previously would have avoided), feelings of safety, perceived effectiveness of CCTV and levels of concern about being a victim of crime between areas with and without CCTV.

131 Norris, C and Armstrong, G. (1999), *The Maximum Surveillance Society: The Rise of Closed Circuit Television*, Oxford: Berg.:54

132 Department for Communities and Local Government, *Local Authority Revenue Expenditure and Financing: England 2007/08 Final Outrun*, November 2008

133 Norris, C. (2006) 'Closed Circuit Television: a review of its development and its implications for privacy', paper prepared for the Department of Homeland Security Data Privacy and Integrity Advisory Committee quarterly meeting, 7 June, San Francisco CA – as cited in *A Report on the Surveillance Society*, For the Information Commissioner by the Surveillance Studies Network, September 2006

134 *Assessing the Impact of CCTV*, 2005, Home Office Research Study 292

135 See Farrington, Welsh, Sherman and MacKenzie, *Evidence-based Crime Prevention*, 2002, Routledge

136 *Assessing the Impact of CCTV*, 2005, Home Office Research Study 292

137 Ibid pp 120

Last year, Detective Chief Inspector Mick Neville, the man who oversees the operation of CCTV and surveillance for the Metropolitan Police, launched a withering attack on Britain's expensive CCTV infrastructure, saying that "CCTV was originally seen as a preventative measure. Billions of pounds has been spent on kit, but no thought has gone into how the police are going to use the images and how they will be used in court. It's been an utter fiasco: only 3% of crimes were solved by CCTV. There's no fear of CCTV. Why don't people fear it? [They think] the cameras are not working."<sup>138</sup>

Mr Neville also accused officers of failing to find CCTV images "because it's hard work". Sometimes the police did not bother inquiring beyond local councils to find out whether CCTV cameras monitored a particular street incident.

Professor Nigel Gilbert, a surveillance expert, has called for a halt to CCTV cameras until their effectiveness was proven. He said, "The evidence suggests that surveillance cameras are completely useless as a way of reducing crime, their only use is as a way of collecting evidence a crime has been committed – it doesn't stop it happening in the first place. The public has been misled into believing that it's a silver bullet for crime reduction and actually it is not... It is not an efficient or cost-effective use of resources. With no one to watch, I would question the value of having them turned on at all."<sup>139</sup>

Recently it has been reported that councils are leaving CCTV stations unmanned due to the significant expense of monitoring the existing CCTV infrastructure. According to newspaper reports, "entire networks of surveillance cameras are being effectively put on auto-pilot, with police only reviewing tapes after a reported incident."<sup>140</sup> For example, Worcester City Council, who are dealing with a £4.3 million black hole in their finances, can no longer afford the £140,000 it costs to monitor their network of cameras.

“Billions of pounds has been spent on kit, but no thought has gone into how the police are going to use the images and how they will be used in court. It's been an utter fiasco: only 3% of crimes were solved by CCTV”

## 2. Commissioning for social outcomes

A second model aims to provide direct incentives to achieve detailed goals. For example, to get a service provider or group of providers to take responsibility for part of an age cohort in a particular area, such as 5% of 14-year-olds, to achieve educational and other goals by 19. This would extend the employment zone model, and again is relatively easy to design. Contractors would raise their own capital either through social investment sources (in which case they might be described as social impact bonds, with tax treatment equivalent to community development finance institutions) or on the market. In the latter case there might be some risk sharing with an investor (eg, a foundation). In all of these cases there are some important issues around risk transfer, and important lessons to be learned from the problems associated with private finance initiatives, private prisons etc, as well as issues of accountability, in particular the local authority's responsibility for children.

<sup>138</sup> CCTV boom has failed to slash crime, say police, The Guardian, 6th May 2008

<sup>139</sup> Big Brother is NOT watching you, Daily Mail, 16th December 2008

<sup>140</sup> Ibid

### 3. Justice reinvestment

Justice reinvestment (JR) is a term coined in the US to describe efforts to use funds spent on imprisoning offenders more productively in these areas through local community based initiatives designed to tackle the problems underlying criminal behaviour. This approach to criminal justice gives local rather than central government the power to decide how money should be best spent to produce safer local communities. There are two key elements. First, JR seeks to develop measures and policies to improve the prospects not just of individual cases but of particular places. Second, JR adopts a strategic approach to the prevention of offending and re-offending by collecting and analysing data to inform decisions about how and where best to allocate public funds to reduce crime.

For example, a study of the criminal justice system in the state of Connecticut found that taxpayers were spending about \$20 million annually to imprison around 380 people from a disadvantaged district in New Haven called the Hill. These 380 people served their sentences in state-financed correctional facilities, but appear to bring little long-term benefit to the community since the majority of released prisoners return to the same social and physical conditions in the Hill. Without the prospect of work, education or social reintegration many commit further crimes. Policymakers are now examining whether redirecting existing resources from the fast-growing prison system to rebuilding the social fabric of the community in areas like the Hill – investing in schools, healthcare and public spaces – might not have a greater long-term impact.

An experiment in Oregon has shown how this could work. There the state government turned over funds to the local level county administration equal to

“ One very radical way of implementing justice reinvestment would be to make local authorities responsible for the funds that pay for youth custody, thereby giving them the incentive to create a wide range of more socially productive alternatives ”

the cost of keeping the young offenders in the state criminal justice institutions. The county, not the state, then became financially responsible for all juveniles placed in custody but was allowed the alternative of supervising them in community programmes. The county could also use the funds to create neighbourhood improvement projects and to invest surplus funds in crime prevention programmes. The arrangement there-

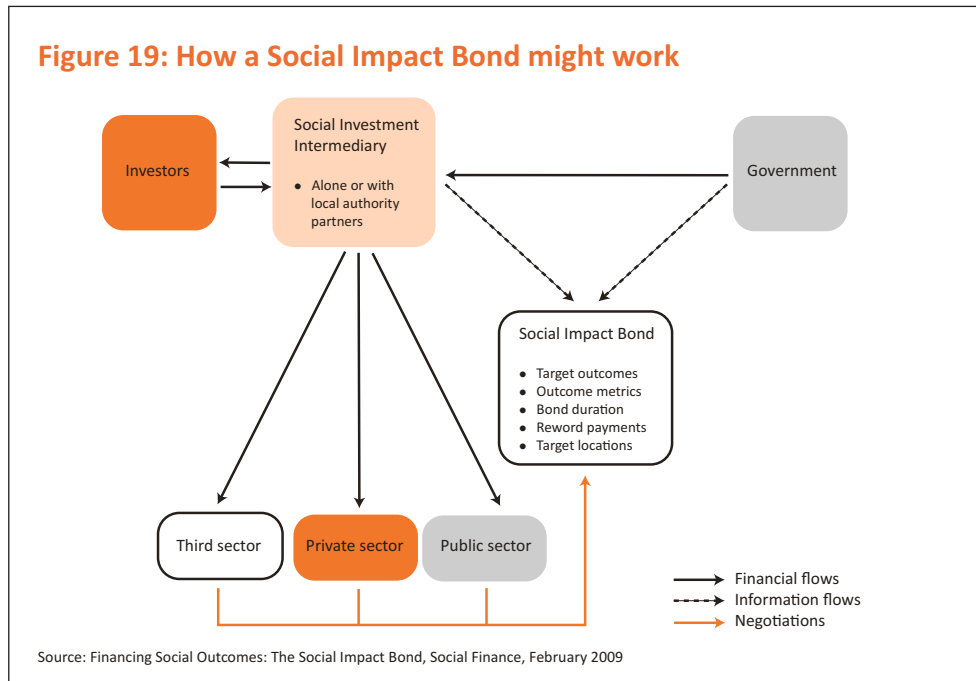
fore gave the county a powerful incentive to cut down on youth custody. As a result a very impressive 72% reduction in the number of juveniles in custody has been reported.

Inherent in the concept of JR is a greater emphasis on local responsibility for those in trouble with the law and the development of local solutions. One very radical way of implementing justice reinvestment would be to make local authorities responsible for the funds that pay for youth custody, thereby giving them the incentive to create a wide range of more socially productive alternatives.

This locality based analysis and approach is consistent with the current development of local public service agreements and local area agreements in English local government. The Local Government Association in their 2005 report

Going Straight said it would like to see, and would support, a pilot on the model of justice reinvestment (involving the development of alternative approaches to financing services for offenders) in England.

#### 4. Social bonds



- a Local authority bonds
- b Full impact social bonds

##### a. Local authority social impact bonds

In the first model a local authority or local strategic partnership would borrow on existing markets for a package of investment in a social impact programme (eg, for teenagers at risk of NEET status) and would receive a series of payments from central government if particular milestones, associated with lower costs for central government, were achieved. For example a city or London borough might borrow £5 million for an intensive programme of work with NEETs or potential young offenders, and would be repaid according to the numbers who achieved educational qualifications relative to an agreed baseline. The repayments would represent a proportion of the lifetime savings to central government (primarily through tax and benefits). Models of this kind are relatively easy to design and implement, involve relatively few players and transaction costs, though they do require clear protocols on design, establishment of baselines and measures of success.

##### b. Full Social Impact Bonds

A third possibility would share the risk for a bundle of interventions, with:

- finance raised from the market, with investors taking some of the risk for non-achievement of social outcomes

- action through a special purpose vehicle (potentially combining public sector, private and third sector) to manage a series of interventions with a target group
- payments based on results against benchmarks

This model is more complex, with more handovers and transaction costs, but opens up a radical avenue for bringing in new sources of finance. Several fields have been proposed for bonds of this kind. These include: investment in early years programmes; NEETs (focused on lifetime earnings) and youth or young adult offending; care leavers; and investments in health prevention and improvement. Another potential field for action is in employment creation during the downturn.

In principle the model is likely to work best in the short to medium term where:

- there is a reasonably short gap between interventions and measurable results
- there are very tangible financial gains, for example the very high costs associated with prison places, as well as with crime
- the numbers of players are small, ie one primary national department, a local authority, finance body and other agencies working on contract.

#### **Box 4: Birmingham City Council**

Birmingham City Council (BCC) made a business case for investing in early years interventions in 2008. They estimated that a combination of targeted early years support, including Nurse-Family Partnerships and Triple P, would cost £16 million but would reap cashable benefits to the council of almost £80 million over 15 years.

In order to ensure the identified benefits are fully realised, the BCC transformation methodology has been applied. This involves the production of a detailed benefits inventory, supported by signed benefits cards which are integrated into the programme plan, and which include:

- A description of expected benefit
- Key stakeholders
- Agreed benefit owner i.e. the person responsible for delivering the benefit
- Metric description
- Baseline measure and date
- Measurement frequency
- Person responsible for measuring the benefit
- Target benefit value and expected realisation date
- Change or activity required in order to realise the benefit and person responsible for implementation
- Risks associated with not being able to realise the benefit

A benefits tracking process will be implemented in which all benefit measures will be recorded. This will help to demonstrate whether the benefits are on track to be realised, during the benefits reviews, which will be conducted at regular intervals throughout the programme.

Once again, the problem of a lack of programme evaluation in England and Wales was highlighted: the council had to rely on US programmes, evaluation and cost-benefit studies.<sup>141</sup>

141 Birmingham Business Case, July 2008

## The importance of fidelity

Programme integrity can be compromised by a number of factors. One of the most common is the excessive adaptation of an intervention. Thomas Backer, a scientist affiliated with the National Center for the Advancement of Prevention, defines adaptation as the deliberate or accidental modification of the programme, including the following:

- deletions or additions (enhancements) of programme components
- modifications in the nature of the components that are included
- changes in the manner or intensity of administration of programme components called for in the programme manual, curriculum, or core components analysis
- cultural and other modifications required by local circumstances<sup>142</sup>

Although there is widespread consensus in the scientific community that implementation fidelity is an important goal, adaptation to meet local contingencies or achieve a sense of ownership is a common practice in many fields. It remains a controversial issue.

Many researchers argue that adaptation of any kind is potentially problematic because we know very little about which components of a programme are responsible for its success. By changing or tampering with programme elements, no matter how unwittingly, adaptation can degrade a programme's effects or even cause a programme to do more harm than good. Therefore, the argument goes, it is important to adhere to the programme model as closely as possible in every situation.

“ Transforming organisational culture requires a consistent message from the organisation's leaders, followed by actions and resources that reinforce the message ”

Some researchers and many practitioners, on the other hand, are concerned that rigid fidelity may not be the best approach. Adaptation, they argue, is sometimes necessary to reduce resistance to a new initiative or ensure that a programme is relevant at the local level.

Unfortunately, finding the ideal balance remains exceptionally difficult. Until better guidance becomes available, programme planners are often moving into uncharted territory and may be risking harm. Given the evidence regarding the overall importance of fidelity, adaptation is likely to be advantageous only when it is highly strategic, pursued with extreme caution and monitored to prevent harmful effects.

### Building support

Building a strong base of support is also essential for implementing these programmes. It is not uncommon for a new programme to be met with apprehension or even outright resistance that can undermine delivery and effectiveness. Therefore, it is critical that time and effort be taken to cultivate commitment and buy-in among local staff, partners and stakeholders. Education and training is almost always a prerequisite for change, and organisational development is frequently necessary to facilitate and sustain new efforts.

<sup>142</sup> Backer T, *Finding the Balance: Program Fidelity and Adaptation in Substance Abuse Prevention: A state-of-the-art review*, US Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, p7, 2002

### Organisational development

Evidence-based principles provide a scientific basis for developing more effective services. Organisational development is required to introduce and maintain systemic change successfully. Evidence-based practices require leaders to redefine the organisational mission and develop explicit values that are consistent with the new direction. It is vital to expose staff to new ideas, and then to build new knowledge and skills through a carefully planned training programme. It is usually necessary to give a portion of the organisation authority and responsibility for the new plan. Transforming organisational culture requires a consistent message from the organisation's leaders, followed by actions and resources that reinforce the message. Revised recruitment, personnel evaluation or other practices are sometimes needed, too.

Adequate resources for all aspects of programme planning and implementation also have to be obtained. This includes ensuring that staff have the training, skills and experience that are needed for programme delivery. Insufficient resources for manpower, training, equipment or financial support can cripple the best intentioned efforts.

### The importance of ongoing evaluation

An ongoing quality-control mechanism is essential for success. While evaluation can be used to discover and document programme effects, it also can be used to identify problems and deviations from planned designs. Feedback from evaluation is particularly important because policies and programmes are rarely implemented or delivered precisely according to plan. What appears to be simple and straightforward in the implementation process often turns out to be more complex and difficult than anticipated.

In a recent report on successful programme implementation, Sharon Mihalic and her colleagues identified four issues as key considerations when evaluating implementation fidelity:

**Adherence.** Is the programme being delivered as it was designed, with all core components in place; the appropriate target population being served; staff trained appropriately; and the right protocols and materials used?

**Exposure or dosage.** Do programme participants receive the programme content (ie, number of treatment sessions and length of each treatment session) they are supposed to receive?

**Quality of programme delivery.** Do staff members deliver the programme with skill, using the techniques or methods prescribed?

**Participant responsiveness.** Are participants engaged by programme activities?

In sum, realistic efforts to reduce recidivism and prevent criminal behaviour with evidence-based programmes must include an ongoing evaluation component to guide implementation, ensure fidelity and maximise the programme's potential.<sup>143</sup>

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143 Mihalic S, Irwin K, Fagan A, Ballard D and Elliott D, *Successful Program Implementation: Lessons From Blueprints*, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, US Department of Justice, 2004

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# 6

## Recommendations

### Recommendations

**1. The Government should create a national Crime Prevention Council, located in the Cabinet Office.** This would consist of ministers and officials from the Home Office, the Ministry of Justice, the Department for Children, Schools and Families, the Department of Health, and the Department for Communities and Local Government.

Its role would be to provide leadership to a co-ordinated, cross-departmental strategy for reducing victimisation and preventing crime. It must have the authority and capacity to achieve a balance between wise investment in social interventions which prevent crime and the expenditure needed to react to crime.

The Crime Prevention Council will have a secretariat, with the capability to:

- Develop a strategic action plan for approval by the council based on a diagnosis of the causes of crime and victimisation; an assessment of current programmes; solutions, including drawing on evidence from the independent assessment centre (see below); recommendations to ensure quality implementation; and evaluation feedback to guide programme development and operations, resolve problems and make mid-course programme corrections
- Mobilise policies and resources to implement the strategic plan
- Engage the public in developing and implementing the plan
- Use evidence and data to influence a number of departments which are not specifically crime-related but have the ability to target risk factors which predispose children and young people to persistent offending
- Adequate staff and funds to support the development and implementation of the strategic plan

**2. The council and secretariat should be supported by an independent assessment centre,** that would bring together all the evidence on successful, unsuccessful and promising intervention programmes in England and Wales, and elsewhere.

It would provide guidance to local authorities on implementing and tailoring effective programmes using regional and local data. The unit should develop a common risk assessment tool to ensure that programmes are delivered to those most at-risk of delinquency and criminality. This unit would supplant the roles of the Social Exclusion Unit and Youth Justice Board in evaluating early intervention programmes, ensuring that all evaluations are independent. This will allow England and Wales to develop a substantial evidence base of effective and cost-effective crime prevention programmes. The centre would disseminate best



practice and transfer knowledge and training to lead practitioners. Models for such centres exist in the US, the Netherlands and Canada. Comparable bodies have between 50 and 80 staff.

**3. The Crime Prevention Council and independent assessment centre should be funded with approximately £200 million per year, over a period of four years.**

International crime prevention councils spend annual amounts ranging from £0.35 to £7 per capita on funding for both their national councils themselves and for the budget which enables local authorities to set up programmes.

The funds should come from three areas:

Country	Total Council Budget	Total Budget per capita
Belgium	£30 million	£2.80
Sweden	£5.8 million	£0.62
Alberta, CA	£93.5 million	£7.00
Australia	£7.5 million	£0.35
New Zealand	£2.35 million	£0.55

Source: Policy Exchange analysis

- 6% of the £1.3 billion Sure Start budget (c £80 million a year) should be spent on effective interventions for the 6% of children with four or more risk factors
- 1% of the national police budget (£70 million annum) should be reallocated to local crime prevention
- £50 million of the Crime Reduction and Safety Services budget for local authorities (£362 million in 2007/08).

This is a total of £200 million.

These funds should be provided for four years and divided into:

- £20 million per annum on the crime prevention council and evaluation unit
- £180 million annual seed funding for effective programmes

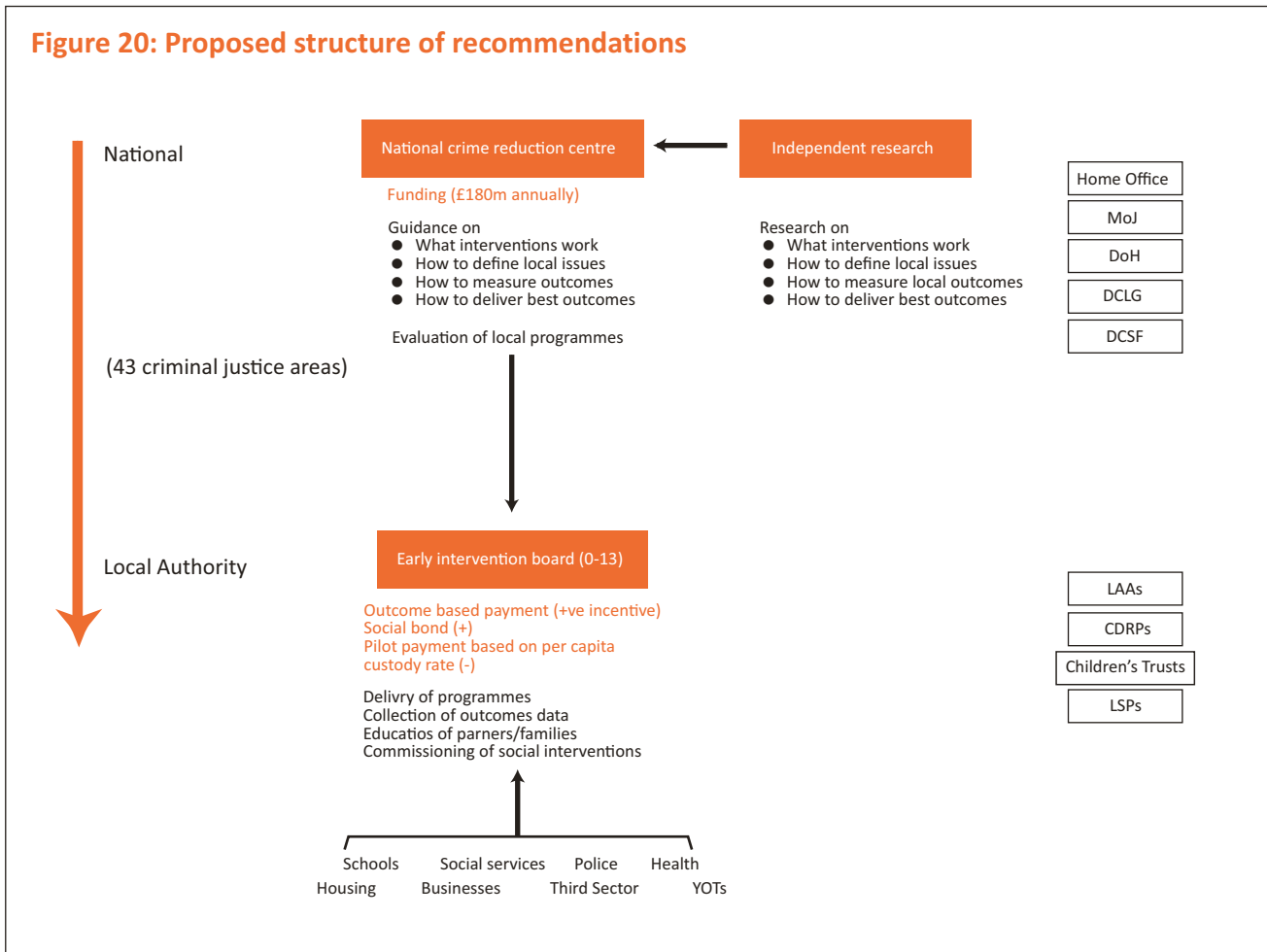
This spending equates to around £4 per citizen – this is more than Belgium but less than the budget for the most progressive jurisdictions, such as Alberta.

**4. Local authorities should create early intervention boards.** These would fill the existing gap in provision between those programmes which involve pre and post-natal care and those run by YOTs and targeted at adolescents. These local delivery units will choose a package of evidence-based programmes according to their local needs.

The early intervention boards must have a number of characteristics:

- A partnership with an appropriate composition, encompassing all the services which are able to deliver interventions. This includes children and family services

- The board should be led by the local authority
- The board must liaise with the national council, using the evidence on what works and what doesn't, and using real-time data on crime hotspots and families at risk to target the intervention programmes at the most appropriate people. In time, a common risk assessment tool, developed by the national council, will be used to identify those most at-risk



**5. Local authorities should fund effective programmes using social bonds.** These could either be local authority social bonds, or financed through government arrangements with other service providers. The Treasury and other key departments should devise a viable financial instrument to fund crime prevention and early intervention efforts, to allow some of the potentially large savings to be released at a local level.

**6. The Government should devolve budgetary responsibility for youth custody from the Youth Justice Board to a lower level.** This could involve budgets for youth custody being held by consortiums of local authorities matching criminal justice area boundaries. Each local authority would make financial contributions according to their respective rates of youth custody. Local authorities need much stronger incentives to reduce youth crime than reformed local area agreements and a new common area assessment framework. A “charge-back” scheme, whereby

a consortium of local authorities (matching local criminal justice areas as far as possible) would receive the sum it costs to incarcerate young offenders in the local area over a period of time. If it reduced the number of children in custody it would reap the savings, incentivising investment in effective early interventions, but would be charged the extra costs if custody numbers increased. This will encourage local authorities to use mainstream resources to ensure better outcomes for children and reduce the use of custody.

The Audit Commission estimates that intervening early to prevent just one in ten young offenders from receiving a custodial sentence would save £100 million a year.<sup>144</sup>

144 A Review of the Reformed Youth Justice System, Audit Commission, 2004

# Appendix: Polling

## PoliticsHome/Policy Exchange Poll:

1058 Adults were interviewed by email between 1 -5 May 2009

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING TWO STATEMENTS COMES CLOSEST TO YOUR OWN VIEW?

**The most effective approach to preventing youth crime is:**

*Giving young people who are at risk of offending opportunities to get involved in positive activities such as job training programs, drug rehabilitation programs and recreational programs aimed at building their self-esteem*

	Overall	Con	Lab	LDem	None
	44	31	53	68	42

*Increased law enforcement and tougher sentences for youth crimes so that young people will think twice about the consequences of committing a crime*

	Overall	Con	Lab	LDem	None
	53	67	44	29	55

*Don't know*

	Overall	Con	Lab	LDem	None
	2	2	2	3	3

*Government should match expenditures on policing and prisons with more investment in programmes likely to stop crime before it happens. Do you agree or disagree with this statement:*

	Overall	Con	Lab	LDem	None
Strongly agree	35	31	41	48	26
Somewhat agree	45	43	45	40	53
Somewhat disagree	11	14	8	7	10
Strongly disagree	5	7	3	2	4
Don't know	5	4	3	3	6

The estimated cost of crime to the UK is around £80 billion a year. This equates to £3,000 per household every year – an extra 20p on the basic rate of income tax. There is also untold pain, suffering and damage caused to an estimated 10 million victims of crime and their families. Now the country is in recession, this report argues that, more than ever, policy should be based on the best available evidence about what works in preventing crime.

Unfortunately, many of the programmes that reduce recidivism or prevent crime in the most cost-effective manner are still not well known. Some interventions that sound plausible or logical, or that have considerable political or public appeal, are often not very effective at all. Some even do more harm than good – many crime prevention programmes are based on tradition, conviction or ideology, rather than on the evidence about what works.

This report identifies examples of ten programmes that are proven to have significant impact on future offending as well as being cost-effective. But knowing what works is only the first step; these programmes have to be put into practice properly in order to have the desired effect and the report's authors also show how to implement and fund these programmes which would cut crime and its associated costs.

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