



House of Commons
Home Affairs Committee

The Government's Approach to Crime Prevention

Tenth Report of Session 2009–10

Report, together with formal minutes

Volume I

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The Home Affairs Committee

The Home Affairs Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration, and policy of the Home Office and its associated public bodies.

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Contents

Report	<i>Page</i>
Key facts	3
Summary	5
1 Introduction	7
Background to our inquiry	7
Context	8
Progress on crime reduction prior to the introduction of the Cutting Crime strategy in 2007	8
Evidence base	10
Overview of the Government's current approach	11
2 Preventing youth criminality	13
Context	13
Risk factors	13
Approach	17
Early intervention with young children and their parents	17
Early reaction	19
Enforcement	19
Families	22
Parenting Orders	23
Re-directing funding to prevention	26
Diversionary activities	27
Schools	32
3 Reducing re-offending	34
Context	34
Scale of the problem	34
Approach to reducing re-offending	36
In custody	37
Overview of rehabilitation interventions	38
Offending behaviour programmes	39
Learning and skills	40
Finding employment	41
Sentencing lengths	45
Resettlement	47
In the community	49
Prolific and Priority Offender Programmes	49
Community orders	50
4 Deterring criminals	53
Situational crime prevention—Designing-out crime	53
Approach	53
Government action	54

Communication strategies	55
Developing an early warning system	57
Public confidence in the criminal justice system	59
5 Roles and responsibilities	61
Public sector partnerships	61
Voluntary and community sector	63
Business	65
Conclusions and recommendations	68
Annex A: Meeting with User Voice	76
Causes of crime	76
Schools	76
Communities	77
The Criminal Justice System	77
Voice of the user in decision-making	77
Formal Minutes	78
Witnesses	79
List of written evidence	80
List of unprinted evidence	81
List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament	82

Key facts

- Young people exposed to the most acute combination of risk factors—which include family neglect, poverty, school under-achievement and a lack of positive role models—are between five and 20 times more likely to offend than those who are not.
- A quarter of young people who commit anti-social behaviour go on to more serious offending. ASBOs can reduce the likelihood of offending but only 11% of ASBOs handed down to under-18s in 2007 had an Individual Support Order attached.
- A young person in the criminal justice system costs the taxpayer on average over £200,000 by the age of 16, while one given support to stay out costs less than £50,000.
- Only 7% of Youth Justice Board funding is specifically dedicated to prevention.
- 39% of adult and 37.5% of juvenile offenders released from custody or beginning a community sentence at the start of 2007 re-offended within a year, down from 43% and 40% respectively in 2000.
- Re-offending rates for young men serving a prison sentence may be as high as 80%, and around 60% of adult offenders serving a short custodial sentence are convicted of at least one offence during the year following release.
- The largest reduction in the frequency of re-offending between 2000 and 2007 was for prolific offenders. Last year the rate of re-offending of repeat offenders who were subject to Prolific and Priority Offending programmes reduced by 29%.
- Good resettlement support can reduce the frequency of re-offending by 35% and the seriousness of re-offending by 10%.
- Putting pressure on the car manufacturing industry to design out opportunities for crime has contributed to a 65% reduction in vehicle theft since 1995.
- The introduction of Chip and PIN technology reduced losses on transactions on the UK high street by 55% between 2004 and 2008.

Summary

The causes of crime are complex. There is now a broad cross-party consensus as to the risk factors for offending, which tend to cluster in the lives of the most disadvantaged children. An understanding of these risk factors—which include family neglect, poverty, school under-achievement and a lack of positive role models—is valuable in planning preventative interventions but does not constitute a foolproof method of predicting offending: individuals from all kinds of backgrounds commit crime for a variety of reasons; crime prevention strategies must therefore be multi-faceted.

The Government's *Cutting Crime* strategy was introduced in 2007 to re-focus crime prevention activity on areas where progress on crime reduction has been slow, particularly youth crime, more serious offending, anti-social behaviour, reducing re-offending and designing-out crime.

To be successful in tackling youth anti-social behaviour and ensuring perpetrators do not progress to more serious offending, enforcement must be coupled with support. Leisure activities will not prevent offending on their own, but interaction with positive models can help to divert young people away from crime. The third sector plays a crucial role in working with individuals at-risk of offending and re-offending, particularly those who are disengaged from mainstream services. Voluntary and community groups are frustrated by high levels of bureaucracy involved in the funding application process; longer-term funding would improve their capacity to sustain interactions with young people.

A more effective long-term prevention strategy must focus on early intervention with young children and their parents. The Government has made a good start in this area, particularly through the Sure Start initiative, but needs to go further, ensuring that support reaches the most vulnerable and is available throughout the childhood years. Starting secondary school is a particularly formative time for children; mentoring would help those lacking support at home to manage this transition.

The Government has reduced the frequency of re-offending but there are still groups of offenders, particularly young men and those serving short-term custodial sentences, with very high re-offending rates. Short custodial sentences make effective rehabilitation almost impossible, but the high level of breaches regrettably make it difficult for us to give unqualified support to greater use of community sentences as an alternative. Prisons must do more to ensure that training and employment provision meets the needs of individual prisoners and the labour market, and to ensure that a higher proportion of individuals benefit from resettlement support.

The Government should place more emphasis on measures to prevent opportunities for crime, including faster progress towards meeting its goal of introducing an early warning system to identify emerging crime trends. Better data about crime trends can also play a role in persuading those in a position to design-out crime opportunities, including businesses, of the need for action. Situational crime prevention will only be fully effective if potential offenders are convinced there is a real risk they will be caught and brought to justice.

1 Introduction

Background to our inquiry

1. The Labour Government famously came to power in 1997 on a pledge to be “tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime.” Criminal justice reform has been a major goal of that and subsequent Labour administrations, with 19 pieces of related legislation passed since 1997. The early adoption of the Crime and Disorder Act, in 1998, introduced for the specific purpose of “preventing crime and disorder”, appeared to signal serious intentions to tackle the causes of crime; section 6 for example placed a duty on every local area to “formulate and implement a strategy for the reduction of crime and disorder.”¹ At the same time, the Government believed that its programme of social change, including Sure Start centres and the New Deal for Communities, would form an equally important component of this agenda.

2. Ten years after the 1997 election, the then Home Secretary, the Rt Hon Jacqui Smith MP introduced a new crime prevention strategy, *Cutting Crime* that she told the House would “reinvigorate our efforts” towards “strong and sustainable reductions in crime.”² We wanted to examine whether the Government is meeting its pledge to be “tough on the causes of crime” by looking briefly at its record on crime reduction since 1997 before examining the extent to which lessons learnt during this period have been applied to the development of this latest strategy and gauging early indications of its success. Given the breadth of the topic, we decided to focus our attention on three key aspects of crime prevention in which we had a particular interest; as well as considering the roles played by different actors and how they are co-ordinated.

3. Our terms of reference, published in December 2009, therefore set out our intention to “examine the Government’s approach to crime prevention using as a framework its strategy *Cutting Crime: a new partnership 2008–11*.” In particular the inquiry was to focus on:

- Measures to prevent youth criminality;
- Measures to design out crime;
- Measures to reduce re-offending;
- Measures to maximise partnership working at a local and national level;
- The role of the different public sector partners in crime prevention;
- The role of the third sector in crime prevention; and
- The role of business in crime prevention.

1 Crime and Disorder Act 1998, Preamble and Article 6

2 HC Deb, 19 July 2007, col 463 [Commons Chamber]

In the course of our inquiry we took oral evidence from 27 witnesses and received 23 written memoranda. A list of those who gave evidence is annexed. We also held a round-table discussion with an organisation called User Voice, run by former offenders. We would like to thank all those who contributed their time and expertise to our inquiry.

Context

Progress on crime reduction prior to the introduction of the Cutting Crime strategy in 2007

4. By the mid-1990s crime levels had reached a record high, having risen annually by an average of around 5% since 1918.³ The Labour Government's first crime reduction strategy focused efforts on raising the performance of the police and the crime and disorder reduction partnerships; reducing burglary and property crime; tackling vehicle crime; dealing effectively with young offenders; dealing effectively with adult offenders; dealing with disorder and anti-social behaviour; and helping victims and witnesses.⁴

5. On the face of it, police and partner agencies, who were given significant additional funding from 2000, did indeed raise their performance: according to official Government figures, crime fell by 35% between 1997 and 2006.⁵ The Government met its targets to reduce domestic burglary by 25% between 1998/99 and 2005 and vehicle crime by 30% between 1998/99 and 2004.⁶ However, while these reductions in volume crime met the Government's stated aims—with the usual caveat about the limitations of recorded crime and British Crime Survey statistics as true indicators of crime levels⁷—there were less impressive reductions in other crime types, particularly robbery and serious violent crime.⁸

6. In 1997 some 40% of offenders cautioned or convicted for an indictable offence were under 21.⁹ The Chief Executive of the Youth Justice Board, John Drew, argued that over the following decade there was “a huge amount of focus on youth offending in a way that was not there beforehand”.¹⁰ This led, amongst other developments, to the expansion of the youth justice system into areas of policy which have not traditionally been part of its remit, such as parenting programmes, summer Splash schemes for children in high crime areas and Youth Inclusion and Support Programmes to identify children at risk of offending.¹¹

3 Q 375 [Professor Laycock]

4 Home Office, *Crime Reduction Strategy*, November 1999

5 Enver Solomon, Richard Garside, Chris Eades and Max Rutherford, *Ten Years of criminal justice under Labour—an independent audit*, Centre for Crime and Justice Studies, January 2007, p 10

6 Q 290; *Home Office Departmental Report 2004–05*, June 2005

7 For example Barclay and Tavares (1999) estimate that of the 100% of offences which are committed, approximately 45.2% are actually reported to the police by victims.

8 Home Office, *Cutting Crime—a new partnership 2008–11*, p 3

9 Home Office crime reduction website, www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk

10 Q 114

11 Enver Solomon and Richard Garside, *Ten years of Labour's youth justice reforms: an independent audit*. Centre for Crime and Justice Studies, May 2008, p 10

7. However, the Centre for Crime and Justice Studies argued in 2008 that the Government's record on youth crime reduction was:

Less impressive than many would have expected following a wide-ranging programme of youth justice reform and substantial investment ...

Even if the first-time entrants target is met, it masks the fact that overall, in recent years, the trend has been for more children to be drawn into the youth justice system.¹²

Despite some initial falls during the period, there were 109,800 first time entrants to the criminal justice system aged under 18 during 2006/07, up from 89,800 in 2000/01 (data prior to 2000 are incomplete).¹³

8. In terms of adult offenders, changes in sentencing policy led to an increase in the prison population of around 21,000, or 30%, between 1997 and 2007.¹⁴ It has been estimated that the 22% rise occurring between 1997 and 2003 reduced crime by around 5% during this period.¹⁵ However, attempts to "provide constructive regimes in the Prison Service that address offending behaviour and improve educational and work skills" appear to have been less successful. According to the Centre for Crime and Justice Studies, Government targets on reducing re-offending were "modified, missed or dropped".¹⁶ It remained the case that around half of all crime was committed by those with previous convictions.

9. Despite the introduction of a new regime for tackling anti-social behaviour, built around a tiered use of tools and powers combining enforcement with support, public perceptions of anti-social behaviour remained high. Some 18% of those interviewed for the 2006/07 British Crime Survey perceived high levels of anti-social behaviour around them, not a substantial reduction from 19% in 2001/02, the first time perceptions of anti-social behaviour were measured in this particular way.¹⁷ Progress was particularly slow in terms of the final aspect of the Government's strategy, helping victims and witnesses. Public confidence in the criminal justice system was extremely low: only 33% of those interviewed for the 2006/07 British Crime Survey were confident that the criminal justice system met the needs of victims and 41% that it was effective in bringing offenders to justice; 65% thought that crime had risen in the country over the previous two years.¹⁸

10. The Government appeared to make good progress on some aspects of its crime prevention agenda in its first ten years in office. In particular, British Crime Survey and police data showed significant reductions in vehicle crime and burglary, continuing the downward trend begun in 1995. Additional funding and incentives were provided to

12 Enver Solomon and Richard Garside, *Ten years of Labour's youth justice reforms: an independent audit*. Centre for Crime and Justice Studies, May 2008, p 10

13 HC Deb, 20 October 2009, col 1367W [Commons written answer]

14 Prison Reform Trust, *Bromley Briefings Prison Factfile*, December 2007, p 4

15 Patrick Carter, *Managing Offenders, reducing crime*, Prime Minister's Strategy Unit, December 2003

16 Ministry of Justice, *Sentencing Statistics: England and Wales 2008*, January 2010, p 23

17 *Anti-social behaviour order statistics*, Standard Note SN/SG/3112, House of Commons Library, 30 October 2009, p 3

18 Chris Kershaw, Sian Nicholas and Alison Walker (eds), *Crime in England and Wales 2006/07*, Home Office, July 2007, pp 96, 105

focus local efforts on crime reduction in a much more co-ordinated manner. However, despite a reformed youth justice system whose overarching function was defined in statute as the prevention of crime, the numbers of young people entering the criminal justice system had actually increased by 2007. Furthermore, progress to reduce re-offending was unsatisfactory: offenders with previous convictions continued to be responsible for around half of all crime. Perceptions of anti-social behaviour did not improve dramatically, and public confidence in the criminal justice system was shockingly low. In our inquiry, we sought to judge the success of the Government's approach to crime prevention by assessing how well its current strategy, introduced in 2007, addresses these outstanding shortcomings.

Evidence base

11. Certain aspects of crime prevention are common sense. Speaking in relation to preventing youth crime, Louise Casey, Director-General of the Neighbourhoods, Crime and Justice Group at the Home Office was clear that "it is absolutely not rocket science."¹⁹ However, some witnesses expressed concern about what they perceived as the lack of an effective evidence base for crime prevention initiatives. The Liberal Democrat's Home Affairs spokesman, Chris Huhne MP, said he was:

Frankly shocked at how little hard evidence there is on the social factors that actually create crime; and we ought to be investing as a society much more in model building so that we can actually understand the levers which we genuinely have to affect crime and get it down more rapidly.²⁰

The Rt Hon Iain Duncan Smith MP argued that too often, in response to a short-term pressure, Governments "create programmes, thump them in, put money behind them and say that will be fine; but they have not looked at it properly and it ends up costing us money with no tangible saving."²¹ Our colleagues on the Justice Committee recently criticised the lack of research effort that has gone into evaluating what works in reducing re-offending.²²

12. Much of the evidence we do have comes from the United States. A comprehensive Home Office 1998 study on crime prevention research noted this point and warned that:

We cannot be sure that what works in one country will work equally well in another. The widespread ownership of firearms, the absence of a public health service, the ethnic minority composition of many inner city areas and the widespread use of drugs are just some of the features of American society which are different from ours. It is important therefore that we develop strategies for testing preventive interventions in England and Wales.²³

19 Qq 5, 10

20 Q 258

21 Q 287

22 Justice Committee, First Report of Session 2009–10, *Cutting Crime: the case for justice reinvestment*, HC 94, para 110

23 Peter Goldblatt, "Comparing the effectiveness of different approaches", *Reducing offending: an assessment of research evidence on ways of dealing with offending behaviour*, Home Office Research Study 187, 1998, p 124

This scientific approach is espoused by the Jill Dando Institute of Crime Science. Its Head, Professor Gloria Laycock, took the view that research into crime prevention is currently insufficient as the Government “does not really understand” the extent to which good experimentation in this field could lead to a stronger knowledge base.²⁴

13. The Home Office study cited above made a further point about the importance of involving target groups in the design and implementation of crime prevention programmes.²⁵ Former offenders involved with the organisation User Voice argued strongly in favour of greater contact between individuals like themselves and decision-makers to counter what they regard as the distorting effects of a well-meaning but out-of-touch criminal justice industry.²⁶ The Government has previously attempted to gauge the views of offenders, for example for the Home Office publication *Tell them so they listen*;²⁷ the extent of the impact of such consultations on policy-making is another matter.

Overview of the Government's current approach

14. The Government's current crime prevention strategy, *Cutting Crime—a new partnership 2008–11*, was published in July 2007. It is based around the following themes:

- Taking a stronger focus on serious violence by addressing the drivers of violence, intervening early to prevent it, preventing escalation, being robust in our response to violent offenders and finding innovative solutions to difficult issues;
- Continuing pressure to combat anti-social behaviour through supportive interventions, including parenting contracts that address the underlying factors contributing to anti-social behaviour, alongside robust enforcement;
- Renewed focus on young people—dealing with social exclusion and strengthening the links between the police, schools and youth provision;
- A new national approach to designing out crime—working closely with the corporate sector to design crime out of new products and services (including the built environment) at an early stage;
- Continuing to reduce re-offending by strengthening the capability of the police, Crime Prosecution Service and courts to simplify criminal justice system processes, focusing on the most prolific offenders and on reducing re-offending;
- Creating a greater sense of national partnership by bringing together key partners at a National Crime Reduction Board and strengthening relationships between Government and Industry and between Government and the Third Sector; and

24 Q 381

25 John Graham, “What works in preventing criminality”, *Reducing offending: an assessment of research evidence on ways of dealing with offending behaviour*, Home Office Research Study 187, 1998, p 17

26 Annex A

27 Juliet Lyon et al, *'Tell them so they listen': Messages from young people in custody*, Home Office Research Study 201, 2000

- Freeing up local partners through simplifying performance assessment and cutting red tape and strengthening local partnership working to bring all up to the level of the best.²⁸

15. The overarching themes of the Government's current crime prevention strategy, *Cutting Crime*, reflect what the evidence suggests are the outstanding gaps in performance on crime reduction over the previous decade. However, we have a general concern about the evidence base used to support the implementation of measures to achieve these aims, some of which we explore in more detail later in our Report. Witnesses found it difficult to assess the extent to which individual measures have contributed to crime reduction. We understand that the Government often faces pressure to respond to crime concerns immediately, but Ministers should still ensure that interventions are properly scoped, piloted and evaluated. In doing this they should take account of the experiences of victims and offenders, such as the organisation User Voice set up by former offenders for this precise purpose.

2 Preventing youth criminality

Context

16. Those who engage in anti-social or criminal behaviour at a young age are more likely to become serious and persistent offenders,²⁹ therefore preventing youth offending is key to crime reduction. In its written submission to our inquiry, the Government outlined its approach to preventing youth criminality:

Better prevention to tackle problems before they become serious or entrenched; more non-negotiable support to address the underlying causes of poor behaviour; and tough enforcement where behaviour is unacceptable.³⁰

Risk factors

17. Addressing the underlying causes of behaviour demands an understanding of the factors which increase the likelihood of offending. Such risk factors can be established by studying offender backgrounds. Memoranda from the Youth Justice Board (YJB) and the national youth charity Catch 22 cited virtually identical lists, which have been identified by reviewing more than 30 years of research in the United Kingdom, the United States and other western countries. They can be grouped as follows:

Table 1: Risk factors influencing likelihood of offending³¹

Family risk factors	School risk factors	Community risk factors	Individual risk factors
Poor parental supervision and discipline	Low achievement beginning in primary school	Disadvantaged neighbourhood	Hyperactivity and impulsivity
Family history of problem behaviours	Aggressive behaviour in school (bullying)	Community disorganisation and neglect	Alienation and lack of social commitment
Family conflict	Lack of commitment to school, including truancy	Availability of drugs	Early involvement in crime and substance misuse
Parental involvement in /attitudes condoning problem behaviour	Lack of engagement	High turnover and lack of neighbourhood attachment	Friendships with peers involved in crime
Low income and poor housing			Poor mental health

29 John Graham, "What works in preventing criminality", *Reducing offending: an assessment of research evidence on ways of dealing with offending behaviour*, Home Office Research Study 187, 1998, p 7

30 Ev 83 [Home Office]

31 Based on data provided in Ev 134 [Youth Justice Board]; Ev 108-9 [Catch 22]

A number of protective factors which can lessen the likelihood of offending have also been identified. These include the opportunity for pro-social involvement at school, school rewards for pro-social involvement, family attachment, opportunities for pro-social involvement in the family and family rewards for pro-social involvement.³² According to a 2005 report by the YJB:

The relationship between risk and protective factors, and the precise ways in which they interrelate is uncertain. It is, nevertheless, clear that risk factors cluster together in the lives of the most disadvantaged children; and the chances that they will become anti-social and criminally active increases as the number of risk factors increases.³³

18. The evidence given to our inquiry corroborated these findings. Asked about the root causes of crime, witnesses tended to emphasise poverty, family neglect, past victimisation and feeling unsafe, under-achievement, a lack of positive role models and intergenerational cycles of offending.³⁴ The Governor of Reading Young Offenders Institution, Pauline Bryant, agreed this reflected the typical experience of inmates.³⁵ The Chief Executive of Nacro, Paul McDowell, highlighted the interconnected nature of these factors from the crime reduction charity's experience of working with offenders over the years:

Many different elements connected to social deprivation are probably among the biggest causes. For instance, I refer to young people who are excluded from school, do not have a sound education or level of attainment, are unable to get employment and have not had great role models in their family and upbringing, so there is a broad lack of opportunity which leads them into crime.³⁶

Breaking the cycle of offending is crucial. Some 7% of children experience the imprisonment of a parent during their school years.³⁷ Bob Ashford, Head of Youth Justice Strategy at the YJB, said that in such circumstances it is "fairly likely" that the young person will go on to start offending themselves.³⁸ It is not just within families that role models are important; User Voice emphasised the importance of having visible success stories in the community to present an attractive alternative to a criminal lifestyle.³⁹

19. There was some slight disagreement about the relative importance of family relationships and poverty as risk factors for criminal behaviour. The Rt Hon Iain Duncan Smith MP and Graham Allen MP, who have co-authored a book on the subject for the Centre for Social Justice, argued that tackling Britain's "peculiarly high level of family breakdown"⁴⁰ is key to reducing crime. They write in their book that:

32 Ev 109 [Catch 22]

33 Youth Justice Board, *Risk and Protective Factors*, 2005, Summary, p 29

34 See for example Q 284 [Mr Duncan Smith MP], Qq 242–253 [DAC Jarman]; Q 278 [Mr Allen MP]

35 Q 191

36 Q 159

37 Prison Reform Trust, *Bromley Briefings Prison Factfile*, November 2009, p 3

38 Q 102

39 Annex A

40 Q 278 [Mr Duncan Smith MP]

Successive governments have followed a short-term agenda, narrowly focusing on the economic rather than on the real-life influences on dysfunctional families. What this document shows is that child poverty and income are only part of the picture ... Our parents are the chief sculptors of our futures.⁴¹

They also cite research from the US carried out by Ray Arthur, who concluded that:

Children from deprived backgrounds who avoided a criminal record had tended to enjoy good parental care and supervision in a less crowded home. The statistical connection between socioeconomic status and children's early offending behaviour was entirely mediated by family management practices.⁴²

20. Other witnesses, while not denying the significance of the family, argued that the underlying driver of crime is in fact poverty. The Chief Executive of the National Youth Agency, Fiona Blacke, said:

If you had asked me the questions about what were the main causes of crime and disorder, I probably would have started with poverty.⁴³

Barnardo's drew our attention to interviews with teenagers serving Detention and Training Orders carried out for their 2008 publication *Locking Up or Giving Up*, in which most children were from families that struggled financially, and those involved in burglary and robbery said that they did so to "get money".⁴⁴

21. There is a debate about the extent to which offending can be predicted from risk factors. On the one hand, young people who have been exposed to the greatest risk are between five and 20 times more likely to become serious and violent offenders than those who have not.⁴⁵ The Rt Hon Iain Duncan Smith MP drew our attention to the results of the Dunedin Longitudinal Study, which tracked the fortunes of families in New Zealand: by the age of 21 the boys identified as being "at-risk" had two and a half times as many criminal convictions as the group deemed not to be at-risk.⁴⁶ Louise Casey informed us that around 90% of teenagers who are recidivist criminals had conduct disorder as children.⁴⁷

22. However, John Drew, Chief Executive of the YJB, was clear that it is not possible to predict from birth whether or not someone is going to commit a criminal offence.⁴⁸ According to Professor Laycock, for the Jill Dando Institute of Crime Science, around 33% of adult males born in 1953 had a criminal conviction by the age of 46, significantly more than the number of males who grow up in poverty or in dysfunctional families.⁴⁹ In a

41 Graham Allen MP and Rt Hon Iain Duncan Smith MP, *Early Intervention: Good Parents, Great Kids, Better Citizens*, Centre for Social Justice, September 2008, p 24

42 *Ibid*, pp 21–22

43 Qq 50–1

44 Barnardo's, *Locking up or giving up? Is custody for children always the right answer?* London, 2008

45 Youth Justice Board, *Risk and Protective Factors*, 2005, p 32

46 Q 283

47 Q 4

48 Q 85

49 Q 376, citing Home Office research published in 2001

recent paper the Director of the Centre for Crime and Justice Studies, Richard Garside, noted the high error rate in predicting offenders from known risk factors: in one particular study, around nine out of ten individuals identified as a significant homicide risk in Pittsburgh did not go on to commit a homicide.⁵⁰ He argues that risk factor analysis tends to be much better at explaining links and associations after the event than predicting future behaviour and suggests that the current focus on the family may be politically expedient, citing fellow academic John Pitt:

In a time when politicians are unwilling to countenance robust social and economic intervention to counter social problems, and eager to demonstrate that they are 'tough on crime', an analysis which identifies poor child-rearing practices and weak parental control as the fundamental problem, and a strategy which targets families and classroom regimes and their capacity to inculcate self-control in unruly and disruptive children ... is a political godsend.⁵¹

23. This note of caution about predictions mirrored a strong view expressed by the former offenders with whom we spoke, that it is not possible to generalise too much about why people commit crime and that this can in fact impede policy-making. For example, not all of them came from broken homes or felt neglected by their parents. Some did well at school and were employed at the time of offending.⁵²

24. The prevailing understanding of the root causes of criminal behaviour is informed by many years of international research. We were struck by a far greater cross-party consensus about the causes of criminality than in the past, which bodes well for consistent policy-making. Most witnesses outlined a set of risk factors for offending which centred on family dysfunction, school and community under-achievement and poverty. The evidence suggests that these factors cluster in the lives of the most deprived children, and that these children are significantly more likely to offend than their counterparts who are not at-risk. The impact of family relationships is crucial: good parental care is a strong protective factor and should therefore constitute a key policy objective. However, it is important that governments do not use measures to promote parenting or support "problem" families to mask the need to do more to reduce poverty in communities.

25. The ability to identify those most at-risk of offending is an important tool in planning and implementing preventative interventions. However, it is important not to place too much emphasis on this: predicting offending is by no means an exact science. Many individuals from deprived backgrounds choose not to commit crime; conversely, many individuals who enjoyed a privileged upbringing do. As many as 33% of males born in 1953 had a criminal conviction by the age of 46. Our discussions with former offenders warned us against making assumptions about the causes of offending behaviour: they did not all come from broken homes or do poorly in school. Tackling

50 Richard Garside, *Risky People or Risky Societies? Rethinking interventions for young adults in transition*, Centre for Crime and Justice Studies, December 2009, p 8

51 *Ibid.*, p 11

52 Annex A

these risk factors, whilst a laudable aim in itself, should not form the entire basis of crime prevention strategies.

Approach

26. Building on this understanding of risk factors, the Government has stated it is committed to:

- Investing heavily in services for families with very young children, including Sure Start Children's Centres and extending Family Nurse Partnerships;
- Improving the quality, access and safety of youth provision, including additional funding for targeted provision through Positive Activities for Young People and funding new and refurbished youth facilities, particularly on Friday and Saturday nights;
- Providing targeted parenting provision and expanding the use of Family Intervention Projects for the most challenging families;
- Encouraging use of multi-agency street patrols and police operations to engage and remove young people on the cusp of offending to a place of safety, building on a network of Safer Schools Partnerships and Youth Inclusion Projects, which provide targeted support; and
- Intensifying action to tackle anti-social behaviour.⁵³

Early intervention with young children and their parents

27. The Government has attempted to improve the outcomes for young children through the launch of Sure Start Centres in 1998 to deliver childcare, early education, health and family support, with an emphasis on outreach and community development. This approach to family support drew praise from our witnesses⁵⁴, including the Rt Hon Iain Duncan Smith MP, Chris Huhne MP and voluntary sector organisations like Barnardo's:

One of the major accomplishments of the current Government has been to embed into public policy the notion that government has a legitimate role in promoting positive parenting.⁵⁵

In evidence to our colleagues on the Children, Schools and Family Committee on 14 December 2009, Barnardo's Chief Executive, Martin Narey, elaborated:

When people ... ask me about what we should be doing in the field of crime prevention, I do not talk about Youth Justice Board schemes, I say, "Go and see Sure

53 Ev 83 [Home Office]

54 Q 53; Q 260

55 Ev 103

Start”, because that avenue towards a new start in life and towards a child doing well educationally and what that means for aspirations, has dramatic potential.⁵⁶

Sure Start includes an element of health visiting. Research in the US has found that the most promising achievements in preventing criminality are to be found in home visitation programmes where nurses, health visitors or social workers support and train parents of young children.⁵⁷

28. However, the Shadow Home Secretary, Chris Grayling MP, drew attention to a criticism levelled at Sure Start, that the support it offers is not reaching the right people.⁵⁸ The programme was originally limited to deprived areas, although it was open to all parents living in the catchment area regardless of circumstance. With the move to Sure Start Children's Centres, the programme has been extended to other geographical areas. Barnardo's also argues for a greater focus on tailored provision for hard to reach families who fail to engage with traditional parenting support, particularly parents in the secure estate, young fathers and Black and Minority Ethnic fathers.⁵⁹

29. The Government is also piloting Family Nurse Partnerships for a small number of families, based on a 30-year-old US model of intensive, nurse-led home visiting for vulnerable, first time, young parents shown to improve antenatal health, enhance child development and school readiness, reduce child neglect and improve father involvement. However, the Rt Hon Iain Duncan Smith MP and Graham Allen MP argue that the Government's approach to intensive family support does not go far enough in terms of the numbers it covers and the level of intervention:

Not many are receiving what I would term early intervention. There are some fantastic experiments, as it were, going on... There is lots of good work but it is sporadic.⁶⁰

Alan Given, Head of the Nottingham Crime and Drugs Partnership, also warned that:

Early intervention is different to early reaction. People often say, “What we will do is bring this programme much earlier into somebody's offending behaviour” or, “We will deal with them as soon as it happens rather than wait three months.” That is reacting early to the same problem.⁶¹

30. The One Nottingham partnership, of which Graham Allen MP is Chair, is piloting an approach which includes a range of measures for children aged 0–18, including training in empathy and emotional competence, drug and alcohol education, and housing, parenting skills and health care for teenage mothers.⁶² Such a strategy was supported by evidence to

56 Uncorrected transcript of oral evidence taken before the Children, Schools and Families Committee on 14 December 2009, HC (2009–10) 130-ii, Q 178

57 John Graham, “What works in preventing criminality”, *Reducing offending: an assessment of research evidence on ways of dealing with offending behaviour*, Home Office Research Study 187, 1998, p 8

58 Q 356

59 Ev 103

60 Q 281 [Mr Allen]

61 Q 280

62 Graham Allen MP and Rt Hon Iain Duncan Smith MP, *Early Intervention: Good Parents, Great Kids, Better Citizens*, Centre for Social Justice, September 2008, p 105

us from Barnardo's, suggesting that a wider range of services should be available for parents to access at a later stage, including during the transition from primary to secondary education and during adolescence.⁶³

31. The Government's approach in relation to supporting young children and their parents, principally through Sure Start, drew the most praise during our inquiry. Witnesses agreed that improving outcomes for young children and bolstering parenting support was extremely likely to be effective in long-term prevention. Evidence suggests that health visiting is a particularly key component. In order to reap the maximum benefits, schemes must ensure that support is reaching the most deprived families, and that parenting support is available throughout a child's life, not just in the early years. The Government should pay close attention to the package of early intervention measures being put into practice by One Nottingham, with a view to encouraging their implementation elsewhere, if demonstrated to be successful.

Early reaction

Enforcement

32. The effects of early intervention will take at least a generation to be realised. In the meantime, the Government aims to concentrate on low-level offending and anti-social behaviour with a view to nipping problem behaviour in the bud. Longitudinal analysis of the Offending, Crime and Justice Survey between 2003 and 2006 has shown that about a quarter of 10-25 year olds who committed anti-social behaviour or used drugs in the first year of the study went on to offend.⁶⁴ But is the drive to reduce anti-social behaviour by young people working? Anti Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) were introduced by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to play a major role in this regard. The Minister of State responsible for crime and policing, the Rt Hon David Hanson MP, told us that:

93% of individuals who receive an ASBO after their third criminal justice intervention do not get involved in the two years following that intervention in criminal activity again. ASB interventions themselves (including ASBOs) are effective.⁶⁵

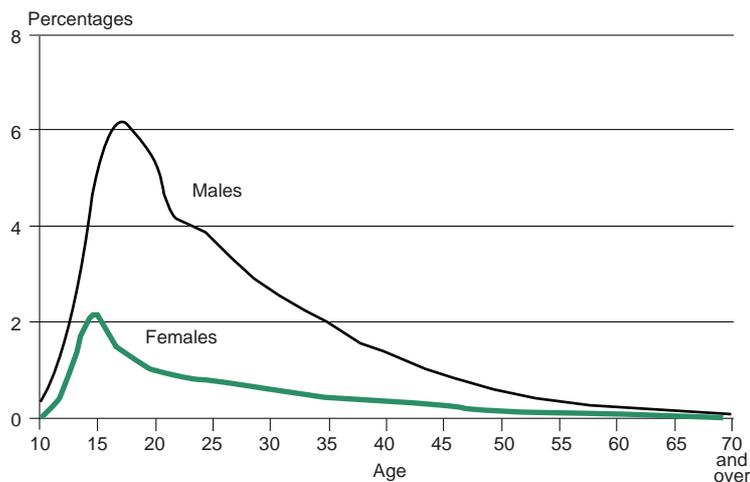
33. However, evidence from Barnardo's highlighted recent research from the Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime—another longitudinal study, involving 4,380 children—which concluded that the use of compulsory measures, such as ASBOs, in the early stages of offending, tends to “label and stigmatise young people”, inhibiting the normal process of ‘growing out’ of offending that would happen otherwise.⁶⁶ The Youth Justice Board provided the following graph which shows the tail-off in offending past the ages of 18 for males and 15 for females:

63 Ev 104

64 Jon Hales et al, *Longitudinal analysis of the Offending, Crime and Justice Survey 2003–06*, Home Office, November 2009

65 Q 313

66 Ev 104

Figure 1: Offenders as a percentage of the population by age, 2006, England and Wales⁶⁷

34. Deputy Assistant Commissioner Jarman, representing the Association of Chief Police Officers, stressed the need to balance enforcement with support:

If you just took ASBOs on their own, I would probably not be supportive of them as a tool. But I think they are a really important part of a range of different interventions ... The point about an ASBO is that it should be part of a long-term engagement with somebody and if the other approaches do not work then the anti-social behaviour order should be the way of intervening.⁶⁸

As of May 2004 magistrates may attach an Individual Support Order to an ASBO made against young people aged between 10 and 17 years old which impose positive conditions on the young person that are designed to tackle the underlying causes of their anti-social behaviour. It is therefore disturbing to note that only 11% of ASBOs handed down to under-18s in 2007 had an Individual Support Order attached.⁶⁹

35. The year 2006 also saw a 34% drop in the number of new ASBOs issued, and research conducted for the YJB revealed that nearly half of all orders were breached.⁷⁰ The Minister of State responsible for crime and policing admitted that he was “not happy” with the level of breaches which are not followed through.⁷¹ Louise Casey told us:

The Home Secretary used the expression “coasting on antisocial behaviour”. I would agree with that ... we cannot leave bad behaviour and low level crime and antisocial behaviour unchecked.⁷²

Perceptions of anti-social behaviour have improved slightly—17% of those surveyed for the British Crime Survey in 2008/09 perceived high levels of anti-social behaviour around

67 Ev 126

68 Q 252

69 Home Office data cited in *Anti-social behaviour order statistics*, Standard Note SN/SG/3112, House of Commons Library, 30 October 2009, p 16

70 “A short history of the ASBO”, *The Guardian*, 27 August 2008, www.guardian.co.uk

71 Q 314

72 Q 19

them down from 18% in 2006/07⁷³—but not dramatically. Anti-social behaviour is therefore back under the spotlight. The Crime and Security Bill currently under parliamentary consideration includes measures to increase the effectiveness of ASBOs, including make Parenting Orders mandatory upon breach.⁷⁴

36. This leads us to a wider point about the stage at which offending behaviour is addressed by the system. Chris Grayling MP argued that:

The criminal justice system ... lets people get away with it for too long ... I want to fill what I perceive to be a gap between first contact between the police and the offender and the criminal justice system.⁷⁵

Deputy Assistant Commissioner Jarman also spoke of the importance of a “short, sharp shock of some description”.⁷⁶ This view was reinforced by User Voice. One former offender told us that his behaviour went unchallenged for a long time including, crucially, by himself, despite regularly being arrested and charged. It eventually took a custodial sentence for this to change. But as we explore in the next chapter, such sentences bring a whole raft of problems of their own.⁷⁷

37. A further related point concerns bullying. According to Professor Laycock:

One of the things I think we have got to do much more systematically is deal with school bullying, especially where it involves theft. To take a concrete example, in Ealing, when we looked at street robbery in 2006, the ... biggest increase was an 84% increase in 16-year-old victims, 16 and below ... and the perpetrators were other children. If you just think about what they are learning ... is that you can steal things and nothing happens.⁷⁸

The Safer Sutton Partnership also considered dealing with bullying to be an important part of preventing future offending behaviour. One of the functions of their new Life Centre is to teach school groups about bullying.⁷⁹

38. Given that a quarter of young people who commit anti-social behaviour progress to more serious offending, tough enforcement of anti-social behaviour should have a positive impact on reducing crime. However, an Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO) will not achieve this end unless it is both coupled with effective support interventions and is properly supervised. There should be greater efforts to encourage the attachment of Individual Support Orders to ASBOs and to follow-up the high level of breaches.

39. Despite the introduction of ASBOs and other forms of intervention with young people at risk of offending, in many cases problem behaviour still goes unchallenged

73 Alison Walker, John Flatley, Chris Kershaw and Debbie Moon (eds), *Crime in England and Wales 2008/09*, Home Office, July 2009, p 100

74 Crime and Security Bill, clause 38 (2009–10)

75 Q 350

76 Q 242

77 Annex A

78 Q 392

79 Q 432

for too long. It is important to find a mechanism for dealing with this while avoiding criminalising young people. Challenging bullying is one important component of this; we were encouraged that in Sutton, for example, anti-bullying sessions will form part of the provision in their new Life Centre, and recommend that the results of this experience are shared with other areas once evaluated.

Families

40. Family Intervention Programmes (FIPs) were introduced as part of the Respect Agenda, to tackle the causes of anti-social behaviour within families. The National Centre for Social Research carried out an independent evaluation of the 53 FIPs set up during 2006 and 2007, published in 2008, which found that:

- Typically FIPs were working with families in their own homes for between six to 12 months.
- 885 families were referred to a FIP between February and October 2007. Of these 78% met the referral criteria and agreed to work with a FIP. 90 families completed the FIP intervention during the evaluation period.
- While the level of anti-social behaviour declined considerably, 35% of families were still engaged in anti-social behaviour when they completed the intervention (the corresponding figure at the start of the intervention was 92%).
- The proportion of families reported to have no risk factors increased markedly from 1% at the start of working with a FIP to 20% by the end of it. Where risk factors were still present, there were considerable reductions in the number of risk factors families were reported to have.
- The number of 5–15 year old children who were reported to have educational problems declined from 37% at the start of working with the FIP to 21% when they left.⁸⁰

41. Deputy Assistant Commissioner Jarman commented that this approach of dealing with whole families seemed “hugely expensive” given that it involves “almost man-to-man marking” of family members.⁸¹ However, Louise Casey drew our attention to a 2004 piece of research by which the Treasury showed that the average amount of money already being spent on a problem family is between £250,000 and £330,000 a year. By contrast, the average cost of a Family Intervention Project was between £8,000 and £20,000:

The families I am talking about [already] have a panoply of social workers, youth offending team workers, housing officers, police officers, ex-officers, floating support workers, drugs people, domestic violence people—upwards of 14 different organisations and individuals—taking an interest in those families, but my point is that you need a collaborative enforcement effort.⁸²

80 Clarissa White, Martha Warrener, Alice Reeves and Ivana La Valle, *Family Intervention Projects: An Evaluation of their Design, Set-up and Early Outcomes*, National Centre for Social Research, 2008

81 Q 249

82 Q 10

42. The Minister of State responsible for crime and policing, when asked for the Government's assessment of the number of problem families nationwide, cited the Prime Minister's announcement of the expansion of FIPs from 10,000 to around 56,000 families [in England] by 2015. He admitted that this was based on an assessment of what was possible "in relation to funding challenges".⁸³ This figure differs significantly from the estimates of "dysfunctional families" provided by the Rt Hon Iain Duncan Smith MP and Graham Allen MP—10% of the population, rising to 25% over the next 20 years,⁸⁴ although they base this on US, rather than UK, population estimates.

43. Given the importance of family relationships as a factor influencing future offending, interventions that focus on the behaviour of family units as a whole would appear to be a useful crime prevention tool. An initial evaluation of Family Intervention Programmes demonstrated their potential to reduce anti-social behaviour and other forms of problem behaviour, although we would advocate a further study that tracks the long-term results of intervention over the coming years. This level of family support does seem to be very expensive. However, there are indications it can be cost-effective in the long run given the extent of unco-ordinated contact that typically takes place between problem families and the myriad statutory agencies dealing with the implications of their behaviour. We consider that it would be useful for the National Audit Office to undertake further research in this area.

44. The Prime Minister recently announced an extension of Family Intervention Programmes from 10,000 to 56,000 in 2015. The Home Office Minister admitted this figure was calculated on the basis of available resources rather than an assessment of the number of families who would benefit from intervention. The Centre for Social Justice has estimated that 10% of the population are growing up in "dysfunctional" families, a figure likely to rise to 25% within 20 years on current trends. Intervening to reduce these numbers would require a huge level of resources. This gives greater weight to the argument to intervene early with young children and their parents to prevent the escalation of problem behaviour.

Parenting Orders

45. Parenting Orders are another form of enforcement-related supportive intervention. A Home Office study published in 1995 showed that 53% of surveyed males and 30% of surveyed females who had low or medium levels of parental supervision had offended, in comparison with 32% of males and 14% of females who had experienced high levels of parental supervision.⁸⁵ An order can be given to the parents or carers of young people who offend, truant or who have received an ASBO and usually require attendance at counselling or guidance sessions for a period of up to three months. They may also have conditions imposed on them such as attending meetings with teachers at their child's school, ensuring their child does not visit a particular place unsupervised or ensuring their child is at home at particular times, which can last for a period up to 12 months. Parents can be prosecuted for failing to keep the requirements of the order.

83 Q 315

84 Q 278

85 John Graham and Benjamin Bowling, *Young people and crime*, Home Office Research Study 145, 1995, Table 4.1

46. Parenting Orders generally received a positive reaction from our witnesses. Although the Government has not yet carried out a formal evaluation of their effectiveness, the Minister of State responsible for crime and policing believed that “they are a valuable product and we are certainly encouraging their use still further”.⁸⁶ The Youth Justice Board undertook an evaluation in 2002 of its Development Fund parenting programmes, which found a reduction in the levels of offending from 4.4 offences per young person before parenting interventions were delivered, to 2.1 afterwards.⁸⁷ The Liberal Democrat’s Home Affairs spokesman, Chris Huhne MP, agreed that parenting programmes could be effective; however, their effectiveness would be increased if they were imposed prior to offending behaviour, a point reiterated by Louise Casey.⁸⁸

47. Louise Casey was also concerned that youth courts have been attaching orders in too few cases, “only about 1,000 or 1,500 in something like 60,000 individual offenders”:

I was so frustrated over those years. It seemed to me that people did not grip that if you did an ASBO on a young person, you had to look at what was happening in their families.⁸⁹

The Home Secretary admitted during a recent debate on the Crime and Security Bill that Parenting Orders “have not been used widely enough”.⁹⁰ The Home Office provided us with the following data.

86 Q 325

87 Ev 136

88 Qq 260, 30

89 Q 18

90 HC Dec, 18 January 2010, col 27 [Commons Chamber]

Table 2: Parenting Orders by legal basis England and Wales YOTs⁹¹

England and Wales	00-01	01-02	02-03	03-04	04-05	05-06	06-07	07-08	Total
Crime	725	807	765	686	979	1,069	1,014	1,049	7,094
Education	96	276	209	215	237	213	166	230	1,642
Other	158	129	202	197					686
Referral Order					176	183	227	295	881
ASBO					36	33	64	46	179
Sex Offences Prevention Order					0	0	1	0	1
Child Safety Order					0	0	1	0	1
Free Standing-YOT					7	7	16	8	38
Free Standing-LEA					0	0	18	21	39
Total	979	1,212	1,176	1,098	1,435	1,505	1,507	1,649	10,561

The Bill would require the authority pursuing an ASBO to prepare a report on the person's family circumstances to encourage the courts to give more consideration to the award of Parenting Orders.

48. Anecdotal evidence suggests that Parenting Orders are an effective means of improving parent-child interactions, a crucial protective factor against future offending. Levels of use are disappointing, however. The Crime and Security Bill currently going through Parliament would require the courts to give consideration to attaching a Parenting Order when handing down an ASBO, with attachment compulsory upon breach. There will be good reasons why in some cases the award of a Parenting Order is not appropriate but we hope that the legislation, if passed, will be a useful tool in increasing parenting support. Youth offending teams must ensure there is adequate provision to allow this to take place. Ideally, those parents in need of support should be able to access it before matters progress to this stage.

Re-directing funding to prevention

49. Section 37 of the Crime and Disorder Act established that “it shall be the principal aim of the youth justice system to prevent offending by children and young persons.” The YJB told us that the number of new entrants to the youth justice system in England fell by 20% between 2007/08 and 2008/09. However, this followed a rise in entrants during the preceding years.⁹² Both Barnardo’s and Catch 22 pointed to the low proportion of funding devoted to prevention and argued for a greater proportion of funding to be diverted to provide more timely support to young people at risk of offending.⁹³ The YJB appeared to agree with this analysis in its draft crime prevention strategy published in 2007, which stated that:

The limited prevention funding for YOTs [youth offending teams], until 2005, restricted our ability to promote the involvement of YOTs in prevention work with young people prior to them entering the Criminal Justice System ... Early intervention is where the greatest scope for successful crime prevention lies, and it remains relatively unexplored and under-invested in.⁹⁴

50. YJB evidence to our inquiry pointed to a “significant expansion” in funding for targeted prevention programmes made available from 2005/06, which allowed the agency to allocate some funds for prevention to all youth offending teams in England and Wales for the first time. This has been used to finance initiatives such as Operation Staysafe and Triage, whereby YOT workers are located in custody suites to ensure intervention with young people starts at the earliest point from arrest, the further promotion of Safer School Partnerships, Family Intervention Programmes and an increased focus on parenting support.⁹⁵ Bob Ashford said:

When the Youth Justice Board ... and the Youth Offending Teams started just over ten years ago, the emphasis of both the YJB and Youth Offending Teams was really on preventing re-offending. What we have done over the last ten years is to shift that emphasis away not just from preventing re-offending, which we have done very successfully, but also to prevent offending in the first place.⁹⁶

However, the YJB admitted that, of its £511m budget, only £36m or 7% is “specifically labelled as prevention money”.⁹⁷ This sum had actually been cut by £2m from the previous year.⁹⁸

51. The Chief Executive of the National Youth Agency, Fiona Blacke, argued that if “even a small percentage” of youth custodial budgets, which she said are in the region of £360m,

92 Ev 135

93 Ev 102 [Barnardo’s]; Ev 105 [Catch 22]

94 Youth Justice Board, *Towards a Youth Crime Prevention Strategy*, March 2007, p 4

95 Ev 136

96 Q 102

97 Q 89

98 “Youth offending teams begin to feel the pinch”, *Children and Young People Now*, 13 August 2009, www.cpynow.co.uk

was focused on prevention, it would make an “absolutely enormous difference”.⁹⁹ Local authorities who help to reduce the use of custody receive no financial benefits as they do not pay the costs; the YJB has had sole responsibility for purchasing and maintaining custodial places for young people since 2000.¹⁰⁰ Barnardo’s recommended that:

Local authorities ... carry the full costs for those children sentenced to custody so that there is a greater incentive for investment in prevention projects.¹⁰¹

This echoes calls last year from the Policy Exchange think-tank.¹⁰² The YJB told us it is exploring how the role of local authorities in preventing offending can be developed further: in principle it favours improving financial incentives.

52. Despite the fact that the principal aim of the youth justice system is to prevent offending, only 7% of the Youth Justice Board’s £511m budget is ring-fenced specifically for prevention. We are disappointed that initial increases in recent years were diminished by a decrease of £2m between 2008 and 2009. The large sums spent on incarcerating young people means there is less money available for preventative activities. There are currently no financial incentives for local authorities to work towards reducing the use of custody, as the custody budget is held centrally. We urge the Government to give consideration to the introduction of such incentives.

Diversions activities

53. The 2008 Crime and Communities Review concluded that provision in the right places at the right time could help divert more young people into constructive activities and away from crime and anti-social behaviour. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 introduced a new duty on local authorities, through their children’s trust arrangements, to secure access to sufficient positive leisure-time activities for young people in their area. This covers both recreational and educational provision, and includes a specific requirement to secure access to youth work activities. This legislation underpins the Government’s ten year strategy for positive activities, *Aiming high for young people*, launched in July 2007. A key component of *Aiming high* is Positive Activities for Young People (PAYP) funding, which aims to engage disaffected young people in high quality positive activities. In 2008/09, the government gave 15 local authorities a total of £6.5m additional PAYP funding to test out innovative approaches to involve the most disengaged young people in positive activities. All local authorities are receiving additional PAYP funding over the next two years—£28m in 2009/10 and £48m in 2010/11—to help them develop year round personalised provision for the most disadvantaged and disengaged young people.¹⁰³

99 Q 38. The most recent figure for youth custody expenditure, for 2008/09, was lower at 298m: HC Deb, 25 February 2010, 665W [Commons written answer]

100 Ev 136

101 Ev 101

102 Max Chambers, *Arrested Development—reducing the number of young people in custody while reducing crime*, Policy Exchange, July 2009

103 National Youth Agency, *Positive Activities for Young People: Expanding Friday and Saturday Night Provision*, July 2009, p 3

54. Louise Casey told us that despite this increase in funding, youth services were not delivering effective programmes for young people:

We still have a way to go in getting a commonsense approach to youth activities ... One of the least reformed areas of public service has to be the Youth Service. In some areas of the country they are working to term times.¹⁰⁴

Eight out of ten parents or carers, and six out of ten teenagers say there is not enough for young people to do in their area.¹⁰⁵ User Voice's Adnan Mohammed, speaking from his experiences of growing up in South London, agreed that:

When we needed to see people or needed to be interacted with, it was not nine to five, it was unsociable hours, maybe 12 o'clock in the morning, on the streets.¹⁰⁶

55. The Chief Executive of the National Youth Agency, Fiona Blacke, considered that provision was improving:

I have to say I rather take a different stance in relation to the number of local authorities which are attempting to deliver [out of hours services]. I think many of them are attempting to move services towards that.¹⁰⁷

The *Youth Crime Action Plan (YCAP)* included a specific focus on weekend provision, setting out the Government's commitment to ensuring that more youth centres stay open late at weekends and evenings, particularly on Fridays and Saturdays. The importance of weekend provision is also reflected in the criteria for the £270m *myplace* capital investment programme, and in the £22.5m Youth Capital Fund Plus initiative.¹⁰⁸

56. We asked Deputy Assistant Commissioner Jarman if the police had noticed any correlation between the advent of Positive Activities for Young People, especially on Friday and Saturday nights, and crime levels. He replied:

Our indications are that, in those areas where additional funds have been made available and, in particular, an additional focus has been made, there has been a decrease in the amount of antisocial behaviour and violence. I think, though, that there are so many complex things happening at the same time that it would be wrong to draw a conclusion that it was just that one element that made a difference.¹⁰⁹

57. It is interesting to note that "diversion to leisure or recreation facilities" is included in a list of measures proven *not* to work in preventing criminality, cited in a Home Office research study. In respect of this list, the authors conclude:

104 Q 16

105 Audit Commission, *Tired of hanging around—using sport and leisure activities to prevent anti-social behaviour by young people*, January 2009, p 2

106 Q 52

107 Q 47

108 National Youth Agency, *Positive Activities for Young People: Expanding Friday and Saturday Night Provision*, July 2009, p 3

109 Q 248

Many of these were based on single measure interventions and it is now accepted that, to be effective, prevention programmes need to comprise a range of complementary measures which target multiple risk factors within the primary domains of a child's life.¹¹⁰

This need for complementary interventions came across in the evidence we received from several successful projects. Cricket for Change, based in Surrey, runs a number of diversionary programmes including 'Street20' Cricket, played in crowded urban environments on housing estates and with community groups throughout London over the last three years. Acting Chief Executive Andy Sellins told us that:

The key elements ... are that we are there all the time, that we have a positive, often male role model, who is their cricket coach but is so much more than their cricket coach ...

It is about having that young person out with one of our team ... day in, day out showing them first about turning up on time, being responsible for your actions, building positive adult relationships ... This is a revelation to a lot of the kids.¹¹¹

Adam Halls, a former client and now Development Manager for the organisation clarified that:

Cricket is very much the carrot that we dangle. It is more youth engagement and almost being a youth worker.¹¹²

58. Deputy Assistant Commissioner Jarman agreed that diversionary activities work where they involve young people in a process over a long period of time "where they are engaged with other people who set a series of values and expectations for them and enforce them".¹¹³ Fiona Blacke also noted the importance for at-risk young people of having a long-term relationship with a trusted adult, as this is something often missing from their lives.¹¹⁴

59. John Dennis and Steve Bell described the work they contribute to in Keighley, encouraging young people's participation in sport particularly through the Oakbank Sports College, the national Positive Futures programme and the *sportKeighley* partnership:

Will such work reduce crime? The answer is probably "not on its own" but it will certainly help as part of a co-ordinated approach ... The key is to create the knowledge and confidence to access the available options and to make a positive lifestyle exciting, cool, challenging and "sexy" enough to be a viable alternative to boredom and crime.

110 John Graham, "What works in preventing criminality", *Reducing offending: an assessment of research evidence on ways of dealing with offending behaviour*, Home Office Research Study 187, 1998, p 16

111 Qq 441, 446

112 Q 451

113 Q 250

114 Q 49

They also warned about the need to be realistic about the long-term impacts of participation:

There is, for most people, a “glow” that comes from an uplifting and intense experience, one that pretty soon fades when returning to life's everyday challenges ...

Whilst the short-term impacts of a sporting “diversionary” programme can be very profound and positive for a young person involved in any particular programme on an individual basis, the social conditions that lead youngsters into criminal activity still prevail.¹¹⁵

This was very much the experience described by former offenders with User Voice.¹¹⁶ In order to maximise the effects, John Dennis and Steve Bell argue:

The concept of “getting out only what is put in” needs to be built-in. There is in a sense here the need to incorporate strongly into programmes the concept of “investment” (of time, effort and money) and of “responsibility”—most people have to invest their time and efforts in order to create the space and opportunity for doing what they wish to do.¹¹⁷

60. It is disturbing to note that, despite an “overwhelmingly positive” response to Positive Futures in Keighley, the local scheme was wound down in 2006/07 because of a lack of funding.¹¹⁸ The National Youth Agency warned that the indications from a survey of heads of integrated youth services in England were that funding issues are likely to worsen:

In almost every area people are being asked to plan for significant cuts in youth services, sometimes in excess of a third of those budgets. It is not that local authorities think they are unimportant or that directors of children's services think these are unimportant services; the problem is that once you take direct schools grant out of the local authority equation for children's services and they are having to make 10% cuts ... you are finding that there is a much bigger hit on youth services than you might expect.¹¹⁹

Positive Activities for Young People, for example, is not a discrete, ring-fenced budget and is therefore at risk.

61. The Audit Commission drew our attention to its recent study *Tired of Hanging Around*, published in January 2009. This found that preventive projects are cost-effective—a young person who starts showing behavioural problems at the age of five and is dealt with through the criminal justice system costs the taxpayer over £200,000 by the age of 16, while one given support to stay out costs less than £50,000—but a general lack of data on costs and performance constrains effective commissioning, national funding arrangements are inefficient and projects depend on unreliable short-term funding that is expensive to

115 Ev 120, 123

116 Annex A

117 Ev 124

118 Ev 122

119 Q 64

administer. A typical project leader spends a third of their time chasing new funds and reporting to their current funders but the full cost of applying for smaller grants can exceed the value of the grant. Most funding arrangements last for fewer than three years: this limits the effectiveness and sustainability of projects.¹²⁰ This latter point was reiterated by John Dennis and Steve Bell:

Funding is paramount, but so too is the co-ordination of such funding so that pragmatic and beneficial programmes with sustainable outcomes are mutually supported and are “built-in” to mainstream services and thus have long-term prospects. A series of short-term, effectively “ad-hoc” projects, no matter how good, cannot seriously expect to fundamentally change the behaviour of existing and future generations.¹²¹

62. Determining the type of activities run ideally requires user input to be successful. The same Audit Commission study found that young people are “rarely” consulted when planning new activities.¹²² Adnan Mohammed told us:

The social activities that were put on by charities, clubs, social clubs, anything like that, the people that I knew and I grew up with that were in my area would not attend anything to do with any of that.¹²³

The Government has pledged that young people will have control of 25% of youth budgets by 2018.¹²⁴

63. The expansion of the Positive Activities for Young People (PAYP) initiative to provide diversionary activities on Friday and Saturday nights is to be welcomed, considering the historical deficiencies in youth service provision. The police have witnessed a reduction in problem behaviour on the part of young people following this expansion, although their representative acknowledged the difficulty in linking the two directly, as it was accompanied by additional preventative measures.

64. Properly planned diversionary activities are valued by young people but will not reduce crime on their own. After they have taken part in such activities, young people return to find the challenges they face in their home and their community unchanged. The real benefit of such activities from a crime-prevention perspective is the exposure to positive role models and a glimpse of the attractions of a crime-free lifestyle, through interaction with a “trusted adult” who helps the young person to develop their self-esteem and to take responsibility for their own actions.

65. In order to have a preventative effect, successful schemes must therefore receive long-term financial support to ensure such interactions can be sustained. We were inspired by the work of organisations working with at-risk young people, such as

¹²⁰ Audit Commission, *Tired of Hanging Around—using sport and leisure facilities to prevent anti-social behaviour by young people*, January 2009, pp 24, 76–82

¹²¹ Ev 124

¹²² Audit Commission, *Tired of Hanging Around—using sport and leisure facilities to prevent anti-social behaviour by young people*, January 2009, pp 2–4

¹²³ Q 52

¹²⁴ Q 56

Cricket for Change, but depressed by tales of hard work falling by the wayside because of a lack of money. The Government and local authorities should make it easier for such voluntary organisations to thrive by providing funding on a longer-term basis and decreasing the bureaucratic burden; and prioritise organisations that include design input from potential users.

Schools

66. User Voice argued that children from deprived backgrounds are not ready to start academic learning at the age of five. The Rt Hon Iain Duncan Smith MP cited scientific evidence showing that the brains of neglected children do not develop at the normal rate, which puts them at a distinct disadvantage compared with their peers at the beginning of their formal education.¹²⁵ User Voice argued that the education system should focus more on conflict resolution and emotional learning in order to meet their needs.¹²⁶ A Home Office crime prevention study found that this opinion is supported by the existing research:

Schools ... where children feel emotionally as well as educationally supported, are those which are best placed to protect their pupils from engaging in criminal behaviour.¹²⁷

Conflict resolution is one of the activities undertaken by Safer Schools Partnerships. Launched in September 2002, partnerships place a dedicated police officer within a school or a collection of schools. Over 450 Safer School Partnerships now exist and the Youth Crime Action Plan committed the Government to their further expansion.¹²⁸

67. As we would have expected from evidence given to our previous inquiries,¹²⁹ User Voice emphasised the importance of the transition from primary to secondary school in forming a child's life chances, including their likelihood of offending. They advocated the use of mentors—not teachers but non-authoritarian figures who children can relate to—to provide emotional support for this process.¹³⁰ There are a number of mentoring programmes in existence for socially excluded young people. In the main they appear to take place outside of schools but the Mentoring and Befriending Organisation does promote the expansion of peer mentoring opportunities for children and young people within primary and secondary schools through a national contract funded by the Department of Children, Schools and Families.¹³¹

68. A mentoring study undertaken by researchers from the London School of Economics found that the young people engaged in the Mentoring Plus programmes run by Crime Concern and Breaking Barriers responded positively to mentoring, and that although there

125 Q 278

126 Annex A

127 John Graham, "What works in preventing criminality", *Reducing offending: an assessment of research evidence on ways of dealing with offending behaviour*, Home Office Research Study 187, 1998, p 13

128 Ev 138 [Youth Justice Board]

129 See for example Home Affairs Committee, Seventh Report of Session 2008–09, *Knife Crime*, HC121

130 Annex A

131 Memorandum submitted to the Children, Schools and Families Committee by the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation, December 2009

was no clear evidence that the programme had an impact in relation to offending, it did have a positive impact in relation to engagement with education, training and work, one of the risk factors for offending.¹³²

69. Young children from deprived backgrounds are less likely to develop emotional intelligence, self-esteem and basic conflict-resolution skills in the home. We consider that the early years of schooling should therefore place more focus on these areas, and advocate further expansion of the conflict resolution activity undertaken by Safer Schools Partnerships. The transition from primary school to secondary school has been highlighted as particularly important in affecting a child's life chances, including their risk of offending. Former offenders told us that they would have benefited from a mentor to help them through this process. The Department for Children, Schools and Families should give consideration to expanding the peer mentoring scheme that currently operates in some schools, with a particular focus on making provision available for pupils about to start secondary school and encouraging the use of mentors who have undergone similar experiences to children judged to be at-risk of offending.

132 Joseph Rowntree Foundation, *Mentoring disaffected young people: an evaluation of 'Mentoring Plus'*, June 2004

3 Reducing re-offending

Context

Scale of the problem

70. The Government's Social Exclusion Unit published a detailed report on re-offending in 2002, which drew renewed attention to the scale of the problem. It noted that despite falling in the 1980s, reconviction rates had risen again in the 1990s so that at the time of publication people who had been in prison accounted for one in five of all crimes and nearly three in five prisoners were re-convicted within two years of leaving prison.

71. The Ministry of Justice told us that for cohorts of offenders discharged from a custodial sentence or beginning sentences in the community between 2000–2007, the *frequency* of adult and youth re-offending over the following year fell by 20.3% (from 185 to 147 offences per 100 offenders) and 23.6% (from 151 to 115) respectively.¹³³ The data provided below also show smaller falls in the *proportion* of individuals who re-offend. 39% of adult and 37.5% of juvenile offenders in the 2007 cohort re-offended within a year, down from 43% and 40% in 2000.¹³⁴

Table 3: Adults—frequency, severity, and actual and predicted re-offending rates¹³⁵

Year	No. of offenders in cohort	Frequency		Severity		Binary (yes/no)		
		Rate per 100 offenders	% change from 2000	Rate per 100 offenders	% change from 2000	Actual		Predicted
						% re-offending	% change from 2000	
2000 Q1	42,734	185.0	0.0%	0.76	0.0%	43.0%	0.0%	40.2%
2001 Q1								
2002 Q1	43,247	212.7	15.0%	0.87	13.7%	45.5%	5.7%	41.5%
2003 Q1	44,095	205.3	11.0%	0.85	11.8%	45.4%	5.5%	41.6%
2004 Q1	46,532	181.3	-2.0%	0.83	8.2%	42.9%	-0.2%	41.7%
2005 Q1	43,429	165.7	-10.4%	0.85	11.7%	41.2%	-4.3%	41.2%
2006 Q1	50,281	144.0	-22.2%	0.68	-11.1%	38.6%	-10.3%	40.2%
2007 Q1	50,085	147.3	-20.3%	0.77	0.8%	39.0%	-9.4%	40.1%

133 Ev 90 [Ministry of Justice]

134 Severity refers to the rate at which re-offenders committed serious violent crimes (grievous bodily harm, murder and manslaughter) and serious sexual offences.

135 Ministry of Justice, *Re-offending of adults: results from the 2007 cohort*, May 2009. These are the most recently published data. Data from 2001 are missing owing to a problems with archived data on court orders.

Table 4: Juveniles—frequency, severity, actual and predicted re-offending rates¹³⁶

Year	No. of offenders in cohort	Frequency		Severity		Binary (yes/no)		
		Rate per 100 offenders	% change from 2000	Rate per 100 offenders	% change from 2000	Actual		Predicted
						% re-offending	% change from 2000	
2000 Q1	41,176	151.4	0.0%	0.91	0.0%	40.2%	0.0%	39.8%
2001 Q1								
2002 Q1	40,753	142.1	-6.2%	0.94	3.7%	38.5%	-4.3%	39.9%
2003 Q1	40,297	141.5	-6.5%	1.01	10.6%	39.0%	-2.9%	39.6%
2004 Q1	44,153	132.4	-12.5%	0.96	4.9%	38.6%	-4.0%	39.0%
2005 Q1	45,337	125.0	-17.4%	0.90	-0.7%	38.4%	-4.4%	38.4%
2006 Q1	48,938	123.1	-18.7%	0.83	-8.7%	38.7%	-3.7%	38.4%
2007 Q1	52,544	115.7	-23.6%	0.73	-19.5%	37.5%	-6.6%	38.7%

72. The Director-General of the National Offender Management Service (NOMS), Phil Wheatley, drew our attention to the difference between predicted and actual offending rates, which he argued show the service is “adding value” through its rehabilitative interventions. From the data above, this does not appear particularly marked. However, when broken down further, it is possible to see particular improvements for some groups of offenders. For example, the predicted rate for offenders sentenced to four years and over in custody is 25.1%: in 2000 the actual re-offending rate was 23.4% and by 2007 it was 17.6%.¹³⁷

73. Despite these falls, the Ministry of Justice estimates that around half of all crime is committed by people with previous convictions.¹³⁸ The most recent figures published last month confirm this state of affairs, which has remained unchanged since 2000. Moreover, they show that 28% of sentences given for indictable offences in 2008 were handed down to offenders with 15 or more previous convictions; this has actually risen from 17% in 2000.¹³⁹ The figures in tables 3 and 4 mask higher re-offending rates amongst some groups of offenders, and also only relate to re-offending that happens within the first year. Further examination of the full data set by the Prison Reform Trust showed that 65% of the 2004 prison cohort were reconvicted within two years of being released, and 75% of young men aged 18-20.¹⁴⁰ The Minister of State for crime and policing admitted that:

For some young people [re-offending] will be as high as 75% to 80%—for people under the age of 18. For some people on community-based sentences, it may be between 45% and 60%. For those on prison sentences, maybe 60% to 75%.¹⁴¹

¹³⁶ Ministry of Justice, *Re-offending of juveniles: results from the 2007 cohort*, May 2009. These are the most recently published data. Data from 2001 are missing owing to a problems with archived data on court orders.

¹³⁷ Q 124

¹³⁸ Ev 90

¹³⁹ Ministry of Justice, *Sentencing Statistics: England and Wales 2008*, January 2010, p 23

¹⁴⁰ Prison Reform Trust, *Bromley Briefings Prison Factfile*, June 2008, p 5

¹⁴¹ Q 320

74. The overall re-offending rate for the cohort of offenders released from custody or beginning a community sentence over the following year has continued to fall over the last few years in terms of actual re-offending and frequency of re-offending. The biggest falls relate to the frequency of re-offending; those for actual re-offending are less substantial. However, those with prior convictions still account for around half of all crime committed and this has remained unchanged since 2000. For young males the likelihood of re-offending may be as high as 80%.

Approach to reducing re-offending

75. The Social Exclusion Unit identified nine key factors influencing the likelihood of re-offending: education, employment, drug and alcohol misuse, mental and physical health, attitudes and self-control, institutionalisation and life-skills, housing, financial support and debt, and family networks. For example, being in employment reduced the risk of re-offending by between a third and a half; and having stable accommodation reduced the risk by a fifth. Only 20% of prisoners have the writing skills, 35% the numeracy skills and 50% the reading skills of an 11-year-old child; 60–70% of prisoners were using drugs before imprisonment; and 70% of prisoners suffer from at least two mental disorders.¹⁴² Home Office analysis of data in the OASys offender assessment system in 2005, shows the level of problems experienced by offenders:

Table 5: Offender needs¹⁴³

Section of OASys	Percentage of offenders assessed as having a problem	
	Community sentences	Custodial sentences
Accommodation	31%	43%
Education, training and employment	53%	65%
Financial management and income	22%	29%
Relationships	36%	42%
Lifestyle and associates	35%	52%
Drug misuse	27%	39%
Alcohol misuse	34%	33%
Emotional well-being	40%	38%
Thinking and behaviour	50%	59%
Attitudes	21%	32%
Number of criminogenic needs	3.5	4.3

76. Once again, witnesses shared this understanding of the main factors influencing the likelihood of re-offending. The need for support for prisoners on release from custody to help them with their accommodation, employment as well as psychological needs came across particularly strongly. In relation to young offenders, the memorandum we received from Catch 22 cited a piece of research indicating that good resettlement support can reduce the frequency of offending by 35% and the seriousness of offending by 10%.¹⁴⁴ The Youth Justice Board agreed that for young offenders:

¹⁴² Social Exclusion Unit, *Reducing re-offending by ex-prisoners*, July 2002, p 6

¹⁴³ Extracted from Table 1: Factors association with offending in Gemma Harper and Chloe Chitty (eds), *The impact of corrections on re-offending: a review of 'what works'*, Home Office Research Study 291, February 2005

¹⁴⁴ Ev 106

Three key elements identified that can reduce their likelihood of re-offending are the provision of accommodation that is stable, secure and sustained; engagement in education, training or employment and the existence of positive adult role models.¹⁴⁵

77. The section of the Government's *Cutting Crime* strategy setting out action on reducing re-offending appears to draw on this analysis in that the seven main themes it outlines are closely linked to those described by the Social Exclusion Unit:

- Tackling the high prevalence of drug and alcohol misuse;
- Dealing with the mental and general health needs of offenders;
- Improving offenders' basic skills and their ability to get and retain a job;
- Ensuring that offenders can access and retain appropriate accommodation, and tackling debt;
- Improving offenders' ability to see the consequences of their actions and to tackle problems without recourse to violence;
- Ensuring education, training and employment opportunities for young offenders and raising achievement levels; and
- Tackling the intergenerational offending cycle through working with offenders' families and children.¹⁴⁶

78. The risk factors for re-offending are well understood across the relevant agencies having been clearly articulated by the Government's Social Exclusion Unit in 2002. The need for increased practical support to help offenders find employment and accommodation having served their sentence, as well as for mentoring to assist re-integration came across particularly strongly in our evidence. Measures to mitigate these risk factors form the basis of the Government's strategy to reduce re-offending, which is helpful.

In custody

79. The figures for January 2010 show that the overall number of people in custody was 83,788, of whom 72,172 were over 21 (adults), 9,506 were aged 18–21 (young adults), 1,700 were 15–17 year olds in young offender institutions, 153 were teenagers housed in secure children's homes and 257 teenagers in secure training centres.¹⁴⁷ By the end of 2009 the population of under-18s in the prison system had dropped below 2,000 for the first time since 2001.¹⁴⁸

145 Ev 136

146 Home Office, *Cutting Crime—a new partnership 2008–11*, July 2007, p 38

147 HM Prison Service website, <http://www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk/resourcecentre>

148 HM Inspectorate of Prisons, *HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for England and Wales, Annual Report 2008–09*, February 2010, p 7

Overview of rehabilitation interventions

80. The Social Exclusion Unit concluded in 2002 in relation to initiatives to reduce re-offending that:

Although the Prison Service and Probation Service have improved their focus on reducing re-offending, the current balance of resources still does not enable them to deliver beneficial programmes such as education, drug and mental health treatment, offending behaviour, and reparation programmes and many others, to anything like the number who need them.

The availability of positive initiatives ... is patchy, and the majority of prisoners, particularly those serving short sentences, receive little practical support, before release or afterwards.¹⁴⁹

81. Our predecessor Committee found little improvement during its 2004–05 inquiry on *Rehabilitation of Prisoners*, concluding that:

Progress has undoubtedly been made on drug treatment and provision of basic education. However ... we found little evidence that serious efforts are being made within the Prison Service to prepare prisoners for the world of work. Much other provision for rehabilitation and resettlement continues to be inadequate ... Too few attempts are made, either, to provide rehabilitative services to short-term or remand prisoners.

The Committee called for a major drive to provide work and work-like regimes and training within prisons and an extension of this provision and other rehabilitative interventions to short-term and remand prisoners.¹⁵⁰

82. The Head of NOMS told us that spending on offending behaviour programmes, drug treatment programmes and education had risen from £745 per prisoner in 1998/99 to £4,300 in 2008/09, with an additional 40% increase in money going to the Probation Service since the formation of the national service. Phil Wheatley told us he believed that this extra investment had led to the reductions in re-offending.¹⁵¹ In 2007 Lord Carter directly attributed reductions to re-offending to increased investment in offender interventions both in prison and in the community.¹⁵² Paul McDowell, a prison governor for many years before becoming the Chief Executive of Nacro, agreed that:

The quality of the work delivered in the Prison Service now compared with when I joined has changed significantly. Levels of educational provision, the quality of offender behaviour programmes we deliver, even the ability of the service to join up with other agencies, which has improved though there is a long way to go.¹⁵³

149 Social Exclusion Unit, *Reducing re-offending by ex-prisoners*, July 2002, p 5

150 Home Affairs Committee, First Report of Session 2004–05, *Rehabilitation of Prisoners*, HC 193, paras 381–2, 387

151 Q 130

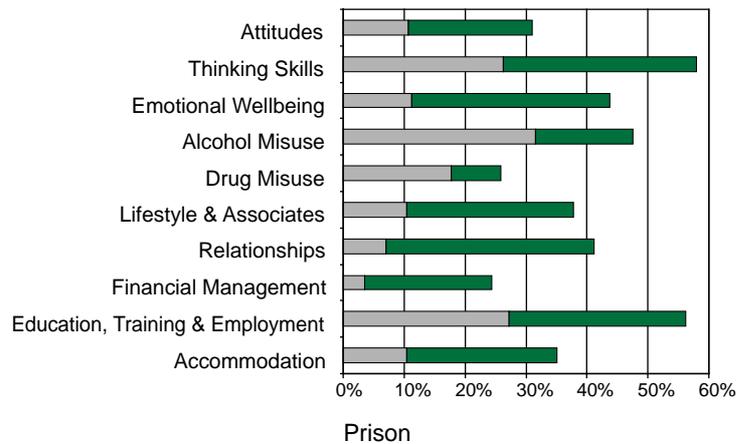
152 Lord Carter, *Securing the future: proposals for the efficient and sustainable use of custody in England and Wales*, December 2007, p 5

153 Q 168

83. However, Phil Wheatley was “less sure” he could pinpoint precisely which of the increases had made the biggest difference.¹⁵⁴ Despite this, the *Cutting Crime* strategy sets out the Government’s intention to focus resources in prison and probation “where they will make the most difference”.¹⁵⁵

84. Notwithstanding these improvements, there remains a serious level of unmet need, as represented in the following diagram showing the relationship between the proportion of offenders identified as having particular needs and the proportion of offenders for whom these needs are being met.

Figure 2: Level of unmet needs related to offending among prisoners subject to OASys assessments April 2006–March 2007¹⁵⁶



The GREEN bars represent the percentage of offenders with needs. The sections filled in GREY represent the proportion of offenders who have interventions planned to meet these needs.

Source: OASys assessments April 06–March 07

We explore some of these areas of need below.

85. **Increased levels of investment in prisoner education and training, offending behaviour and resettlement care have contributed to reductions in reported crime levels; however, there is still a high level of unmet need. The Government wants to “focus resources in prison and probation where they will make the most difference”: this is a worthy aim; however, as we noted earlier, the lack of an effective evidence base may make this difficult to determine.**

Offending behaviour programmes

86. The Ministry of Justice told us that NOMS delivers a “range” of accredited programmes to tackle offending behaviour, covering anger management, domestic and other types of violent as well as sexual offending. This included provision for over 17,000 violent offenders in 2008/9.¹⁵⁷ However, in her Annual Report for 2008–09 the Chief Inspector of

154 Q 130

155 Home Office, *Cutting Crime—a new partnership 2008–11*, July 2007, pp 4, 37

156 Extracted from Justice Committee, First Report of Session 2009–10, *Cutting Crime: the case for justice reinvestment*, HC 94, Chart 3. The green bars represent the percentage of offenders with needs; the grey bars represent the offenders with interventions planned to meet these needs.

157 Ev 91

Prisons, Dame Anne Owers, pointed to the difficulty in accessing offending behaviour programmes:

Only around two-thirds of prisoners in training prisons said that they were able to complete some or all of their sentence plan targets at their current prison. Throughout the prison estate, there were gaps in courses linked to violence ... There were significant waiting lists for enhanced thinking skills (ETS) and in particular CALM. Some prisoners were discharged without having completed courses, and others, particularly sex offenders and indeterminate-sentenced prisoners, spent long periods waiting for a progressive transfer to undertake courses.¹⁵⁸

Learning and skills

87. The Ministry of Justice has increased investment in education provision for offenders threefold, from £57m in 2001/02 to more than £175m in 2009/10.¹⁵⁹ The Chief Inspector of Prisons' Annual Report found continued improvement in the *quality* of provision; Ofsted judged only two prisons to be inadequate compared with 24% in the previous year, and for the first time, assessed one adult prison as outstanding. However, the *quantity* of, and the access to, educational and vocational training remained problematic:

The most common finding was that there was simply too little activity to engage the number of prisoners held. Only 59% of the adult male closed prisons inspected were assessed as performing well or reasonably well in activity, and only four out of 34 were assessed as performing well.¹⁶⁰

88. The Centre for Crime and Justice Studies has argued in respect of young offenders that, despite official statistics, each year far fewer are making progress in numeracy and literacy, partly due to overcrowding and the high turnover rates, but also as a result of the lower levels of staffing and difficulties in accessing courses.¹⁶¹ Adnan Mohammed of User Voice believed that institutions are not set up to help people to learn new skills:

I think we just storage people: put them in storage and leave them to fester and then they come out with no skills ... When I was in the camp on the Isle of Wight, there is something called Prison Council and we made some suggestions. They were always telling us there was not enough funding, so we said, "Why can't we have the prisoners that are in the prison with us"—the mechanics and the electricians that have skills—"empowered to let us help learn the skills?"¹⁶²

A series of focus groups with young people in custody commissioned by the Home Office and published in 2000 found that many of the young people wanted to use their time in custody constructively and were frustrated by poor inductions and sentence planning and

158 HM Inspectorate of Prisons, *HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for England and Wales, Annual Report 2008–09*, February 2010, pp 54–5

159 Ev 92

160 HM Inspectorate of Prisons, *HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for England and Wales, Annual Report 2008–09*, February 2010, p 45

161 Enver Solomon and Richard Garside, *Ten years of Labour's youth justice reforms: an independent audit*. Centre for Crime and Justice Studies, May 2008, p 10

162 Q 75

the difficulty of completing the education, cognitive skills and parenthood courses they valued.¹⁶³ Given what we were told by User Voice, this lesson does not appear to have been heeded.¹⁶⁴

89. Furthermore, recent comments from the Chief Inspector of Prisons, Dame Anne Owers, conjure up an alarming vision of the future:

As the population expands, resources are under increased threat. The cuts already announced for next year come on top of already sliced budgets, with the possibility of even more cuts later ... As I said last year, there are two risks: of increased instability in inherently fragile environments, and of reducing prisons' capacity to rehabilitate those they hold.

The new benchmarking process for key regime activities is at least honest—clarifying what can actually be delivered within limited resources. But it is also an exercise in regression to the mean. Prisons doing excellent work are being told to aim for the bronze standard; prisons with full employment are told that this will not be affordable; innovative work, outside formal and mandated interventions, is under threat.¹⁶⁵

90. We are pleased to note the Chief Inspector of Prisons' assessment of the improvement in the quality of educational and vocational training in prisons. However, we were concerned that quantity of provision is still an issue, and that insufficient progress had been made to address the conclusions about a lack of purposeful activity drawn by our predecessor committee in 2005. We were struck by the assessment of one former inmate that prisons just "storage people". Sentence planning should be improved to ensure that prisoners can access and complete the courses that would be most of benefit to them. The threat of budget cuts has the potential to reverse the advances made in quality. Considering the vast cost of crime to society, cuts in this area appear irrational.

Finding employment

91. In 2008/9, only 38% of prisoners entered education, employment or training upon release.¹⁶⁶ A Home Office study from 1998 noted that a clear message from the available research was the necessity for prisons to work more closely with outside employers and plan their provision to match labour needs.¹⁶⁷ The Justice Minister of State, Maria Eagle MP, informed us that the Government now has a Corporate Alliance of over 100 employers who train specifically for the kind of jobs that they want, including some who guarantee jobs to people who have successfully completed the training when they come

163 Juliet Lyon et al, *'Tell them so they listen': Messages from young people in custody*, Home Office Research Study 201, 2000

164 Annex A

165 HM Inspectorate of Prisons, *HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for England and Wales, Annual Report 2008–09*, February 2010, pp 7–8

166 Ev 92 [Ministry of Justice]

167 Julie Vennard and Catherine Hedderman, "Effective interventions with offenders", *Reducing offending: an assessment of research evidence on ways of dealing with offending behaviour*, Home Office Research Study 187, 1998, p 109

out. A new work plan is also being developed to ensure that each business sector is represented by at least one employer who will champion offender employment, linking up with Jobcentre Plus' Local Employment Partnerships.¹⁶⁸

92. Liberal Democrat spokesman Chris Huhne MP drew our attention to a largely self-financing and “successful” pilot run by the Howard League for Penal Reform, which paid prisoners wages comparable with the market rate from which they paid tax, national insurance and into a compensation fund for victims.¹⁶⁹ The scheme to which he referred was a social enterprise in HMP Coldingley called Barbed, which was forced to close down in December 2008 after two years of producing graphic design for a wide range of clients. The Director of the Howard League, Frances Crook, described on her blog the “insurmountable problems that made it impossible to run as a business”:

The cut in hours made it impossible to compete. Two years ago we started at 30 hours a week but the prison cuts meant we lost about 8 hours per person. There was never any possibility of overtime or flexibility—if we need a few minutes to finish a piece of work, hard luck. The sudden and frequent lock downs meant we could not fulfil contracts ... the policies, attitudes and practices [of prison management] prevent any real activities going on in prisons.¹⁷⁰

Prisoners spent on average 11.8 hours a week in employment activities in the period April–December 2009.¹⁷¹ An investigation by *Society Guardian* in September 2009 found that in many cases contracts between employers and prisons are “exploitive”, offering prisoners mundane and repetitive work with little opportunity for training or rehabilitation when they are released.¹⁷²

93. We received evidence about the National Grid Young Offender Programme, which provides training for prisoners coming towards the end of their sentences, leading on to guaranteed employment on release. Although dealing with small numbers of offenders—1,000 have taken part thus far—an evaluation found that re-offending rates for participants were only 7%.¹⁷³ According to the National Grid, the success of the programme is down to the obvious incentives for offender participants in the promise of paid employment on release; the fact that because the training begins before the offender is released, he or she has several months to get used to the routine of going out to work; the commercial nature of employers' motivation, which makes it viable (participants must go through the company's normal recruitment and training procedures); and the mentoring of participants both pre and post release.¹⁷⁴

94. Reading Young Offenders Institution has been involved in the scheme from the start. When asked about its success rate, Clive Barber, the Deputy Governor, told us:

168 Q 407; Ev 93 [Ministry of Justice]

169 Q 275

170 Frances Crooks' blog, 22 December 2008, www.howardleague.org/francescrookblog

171 HC Deb, 29 January 2010, col 1123W [Commons written answer]

172 “Inside the sell blocks”, *Society Guardian*, 9 September 2009, www.guardian.co.uk/society

173 Ev 96

174 Ev 97

Since the programme started 66 prisoners from Reading have been through it and I am aware of only four who have come back in [although] that does not mean to say they have not gone into other establishments.¹⁷⁵

However, the institution finds it difficult to involve many inmates as firstly, a large number of inmates are on remand, and are ineligible as they cannot be released on temporary licence; some others will be deemed too high risk and some will be awaiting procedures for a further charge:

To quantify that, Kennet unit holds about 20 prisoners. We accept up to 24 year-olds and we struggle to fill it with prisoners who are of a risk low enough to release them on temporary licence.¹⁷⁶

Participants must also have a minimum reading age of 11 to enable them to pass the theory part of their driving licence.

95. It is well established that one of the key difficulties of finding a job stems from the reluctance of employers to recruit people with a criminal record. The Chief Executive of the National Youth Agency, Fiona Blacke, told us:

If, as an employer, you get a positive Criminal Records Bureau check back on someone, you then undertake a risk assessment process to decide whether you are going to let that person undertake the duties and what you need to put in place to make sure the young people they are working with are safe. Most employers are very unsophisticated in that.¹⁷⁷

Nacro takes “calls in their thousands” from ex-offenders seeking advice about how to overcome the restrictions on them in terms of employment opportunities.¹⁷⁸

96. In 2002 the Government committed to legislate to amend the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, which specifies rehabilitation periods after which offenders are no longer required to disclose their convictions when applying for a job. The Act does not extend to offenders sentenced to more than 30 months in custody and the Government acknowledged that, “for many of those who do qualify for the right not to disclose their ‘spent’ convictions, the disclosure periods have been criticised as complicated and excessively long”.¹⁷⁹ The legislation has been yet introduced an amendment.

97. Witnesses identified one area of work where ex-offenders could make a unique contribution. Adnan Mohammed, speaking as a former offender as well as for an organisation representing former offenders, advised that:

Offenders are most impacted by people who have been through the same experience that they have been. These are the people that most likely they will listen to. If you remove young ex-offenders talking to young people, then the only thing we are left to

175 Q 189

176 Q 192 [Mr Barber, Mrs Bryant]

177 Q 67

178 Q 171 [Mr McDowell]

179 HM Government, *Justice for All*, Cm 5563, July 2002, p 111

talk to is people that we have always felt are on the other side to us, either clinical psychologists or social workers.¹⁸⁰

Adam Halls, who was a former client of Cricket for Change before joining the apprenticeship scheme run by the organisation and then becoming their Development Manager, endorsed this view:

Through the sort of process that I have gone through and all the lessons that I have learned through my own criminal background, I have learned how to engage better with young people who are in the same situation as I am. I am working on a daily basis now with young people who are in drug abuse, who are running away from home or who have real criminal backgrounds, and I can relate to them.¹⁸¹

Fiona Blacke advocated a scheme to be set up in young offenders' institutes that would allow inmates to obtain level 1 youth-work qualifications which they could then use with their peers upon release.¹⁸²

98. Last year only 38% of prisoners went into training, education or employment on release. Preparing prisoners to enter the labour market should be a key objective for prison authorities; it is therefore disappointing that, for example, the social enterprise at HMP Coldingley was forced to close in 2008 apparently because of the inflexibility of prison management. The National Offender Management Service must ensure that schemes operating within prisons teach skills relevant to future employment opportunities and portray working life in a good light. The National Grid Young Offenders programme attributes its low re-offending rates to the guarantee of employment for participants upon release from prison and payment of a decent wage: this would be a good model to replicate, although the numbers of prisoners eligible for release on temporary licence and with the requisite literacy levels for participation in such schemes are low.

99. The Ministry of Justice has initiated a Corporate Alliance to champion offender employment. This partnership should be assisting employers in becoming more sophisticated in their risk assessments of former offenders. We feel strongly that public sector bodies should be setting a good example to other employers through their recruitment practices in this area. In 2002 the Government pledged to amend the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 to limit the damage of excessively long disclosure periods for some offenders; we would like to know why legislation to achieve this has not been yet brought forward.

100. Ex-offenders with the right attributes are ideally qualified for youth work with troubled young people because of their experiences. Often they may be the only people to whom such young people will listen. We recommend that the Ministry of Justice pilot a scheme to allow young offenders to access youth work qualifications in custody.

180 Q 67

181 Q 445

182 Q 67

Sentencing lengths

101. Offenders sentenced to less than a year in custody have the highest re-offending rates, around 60% of adult offenders are convicted of at least one offence in the year after release. These sentences account for over 60,000 adult offenders entering prison each year.¹⁸³ Although the biggest increases in the prison population are for those serving over four years, the number of men serving less than a year increased by 19% between 1996 and 2006 and the number of women by 71%.¹⁸⁴ Moreover, adults serving these short sentences are not subject to statutory supervision by probation on release. The average period for young people in custody is currently 73 days.¹⁸⁵ The National Audit Office recently estimated that re-offending by all recent ex-prisoners cost the economy between £9.5 billion and £13 billion and that as much as three quarters of this cost can be attributed to former short-sentenced prisoners: some £7 billion to £10 billion a year.¹⁸⁶

102. We have heard the view expressed on a number of occasions that it is impossible to carry out useful interventions with an offender sentenced to less than 12 months in prison. The Governor of Reading Prison told us:

We worked out that the average stay for prisoners was about 12 weeks which is clearly not long enough ... As long as people have sentences of perhaps over 12 months—in other words, they are serving at least six months—you can do some serious intervention work to make a difference ... While we can probably attain some of the employment targets, and have done successfully, we are not attaining all of the training targets because we have not got people there long enough or they are being released from Reading ... Community service orders for short sentences would be far better.¹⁸⁷

103. When probed about interventions with offenders on short-term sentences, the Director-General of NOMS, Phil Wheatley, confirmed that the best results are being shown by the longer sentence prisoners. The predicted offending rate for the prisoners serving four years and over group is 25.1% and for the 12-month and over group it is 42.1%. He said:

If you wanted me to work more in prison with anybody you would have to give him longer than a very short sentence.¹⁸⁸

The Minister of State for crime and policing agreed that “there are people going to prison who would be best served by a community-based sentence”.¹⁸⁹

183 Based on Departmental analysis of those released in the first quarter of 2007, cited in National Audit Office, *Managing offenders on short custodial sentences*, 10 March 2010, p 4

184 Ministry of Justice data cited in Prison Reform Trust, *Bromley Briefings Prison Factfile*, June 2008, p 6

185 Q 114 [Mr Drew]

186 National Audit Office, *Managing offenders on short custodial sentences*, 10 March 2010, p 4

187 Qq 197, 200, 211 [Mrs Bryant]

188 Qq 124, 144, 146

189 Q 324

104. Matters would also be improved if interventions were better joined up between custody and release into the community. Nacro's Paul McDowell argued that:

We are not necessarily very good at the moment in joining up through the gates. When people are back in the community there is a tendency for us not to continue with the delivery of effective services.¹⁹⁰

The Criminal Justice Act 2003 provided a legal framework for custody plus, a sentence which would allow an offender to serve both a short custodial sentence and then be supervised in the community afterwards. The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Ministry of Justice, Claire Ward MP, recently advised the House that “resource constraints” have meant that the Ministry has been unable to implement custody plus and there is “no prospect” of doing so in the near future.¹⁹¹

105. A lack of co-ordination can also be a problem *within* the secure estate. Witnesses argued that overcrowding has led to increased churn, whereby prisoners are moved around the prison estate which often means they cannot complete their courses.¹⁹² The recent report from the Chief Inspector of Prisons substantiated this concern:

Population pressure affects the whole system—stretching resources and managerial energy, keeping in use buildings that ought to be condemned, doubling up prisoners in cramped cells, and leading to unnecessary and destabilising prisoner moves. All of this compromises successful rehabilitation.¹⁹³

106. When we put these points to the Justice Minister of State, Maria Eagle MP, she explained that the Ministry of Justice is now able to transfer offender learning records between custodial settings to allow for continuity. In addition, the Offender Learning and Skills Service is now able to provide the same educational courses in custodial and non-custodial settings to allow offenders to complete qualifications, and is moving to shorter modules to enable short-sentence prisoners to do something towards an educational qualification which they can continue with when they leave a custodial setting.¹⁹⁴

107. Witnesses, including Government Ministers, were unanimous in their view that short prison sentences do not allow time for effective rehabilitative interventions to take place. Around 60% of adults serving less than a year are convicted of at least one offence in the year after release. This compares with predicted re-offending rates of 25% for prisoners serving four years and over. However, use of these short sentences has shot up over the past decade. The problem is particularly acute in relation to young offenders, who spend an average of 73 days in custody. The rise in short sentences has contributed towards prison overcrowding, which itself compromises the rehabilitation process as increased prisoner transfer around the secure estate restricts their ability to complete training and treatment.

190 Q 165

191 HC Deb, 3 February 2010, col 17WS [Commons written ministerial statement]

192 Q 178 [Mr McDowell]; Q 272 [Mr Huhne MP]

193 HM Inspectorate of Prisons, *HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for England and Wales, Annual Report 2008–09*, February 2010, p 8

194 Q 405

108. We discuss alternative options to short custodial sentences below; but where they are handed down, improved case management between prisons and probation officers is key to ensuring that interventions can be continued in a community setting. Adult offenders serving less than 12 months are not currently assigned a probation officer. In 2003 the Government legislated for a new form of sentencing, known as custody plus, which would allow for offenders to serve a short custodial sentence followed by supervision in the community; we are disappointed that there is “no prospect” of this being implemented in the near future.

Resettlement

109. Progress made in prison can be quickly reversed if there is insufficient aftercare for prisoners upon release. Nacro argued that a renewed focus on the delivery of basic joined-up resettlement processes “is most likely to have made the difference” in respect of reductions in re-offending rates.¹⁹⁵ In her Annual Report for 2008—09 the Chief Inspector of Prisons commended the advances that have been made:

Resettlement, which I described as ‘essentially an add-on’ in 2002, is now seen as a core part of prisons’ function ... The seven ‘resettlement pathways’ define the actual and practical support necessary for reintegration. Some are relatively well developed, and it is welcome to see a greater focus on the hitherto neglected area of children and families.¹⁹⁶

For example, almost all establishments now have some form of specialist housing advice.¹⁹⁷ In 2008/09, NOMS met its targets relating to housing for offenders, in that 70% of offenders were in settled and suitable accommodation at the end of their order or licence; and 80% of prisoners were moved into settled accommodation upon release.¹⁹⁸

110. As part of the Youth Crime Action Plan, in August 2009 the Government announced an £8.4m investment over the next two years to improve resettlement provision for young offenders.¹⁹⁹ Bob Ashford, of the Youth Justice Board, argued that there had been progress in improving resettlement for young people, including:

- Integrated resettlement support—ensuring that it is not just Youth Offending Teams that are working on resettlement but also local authorities, children’s services, housing authorities.
- Resettlement Consortia—closer working between local authorities and Youth Offending Teams to try to identify young people who are the most likely to re-offend on release from custody and produce an “enhanced offer” in terms of education opportunities, accommodation opportunities and employment opportunities.²⁰⁰

195 Q 162

196 HM Inspectorate of Prisons, *HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for England and Wales, Annual Report 2008–09*, February 2010, p 6

197 *Ibid*, p 54

198 Ev 92

199 Ev 90

200 Q 110

111. However, Chris Grayling MP, the Shadow Home Secretary, considered that for far too many prisoners, things had not changed:

I talk to a lot of police officers who say that what is actually happening is that the guys who are coming out of prison are effectively going straight back to the same streets they were in before with 20 quid in their pocket.²⁰¹

The problem of returning to old habits was also highlighted by User Voice. Their representatives told us that during the first few weeks after release they had been confident they could make a fresh start but then old problems returned which they felt unable to deal with on their own.²⁰² Their comments echoed the findings of a series of focus groups with young people in custody commissioned by the Home Office and published in 2000, which highlighted a “pressing need for support and someone to talk to after prison”.²⁰³ Chief Executive Paul McDowell argued that:

One of the things we believe should be a distinct part of what we do in relation to prolific offenders is an increased level of relevant mentoring for offenders by well-trained adults once they are released back into the community. We are running those types of schemes around the country especially for young offenders. We believe that to be quite effective.²⁰⁴

112. According to Catch 22, the will to provide resettlement support may be there, but the resources are not:

Young offenders aged 12 to 17 may be offered resettlement support under Detention and Training Orders, but in practice, effective sentence planning is limited and largely dependent on the availability of resources.²⁰⁵

The Chief Inspector of Prisons agreed that so far only a minority of prisoners have benefited from end-to-end case management through custody and the community. At local and category C training prisons fewer than one in five prisoners said they had been helped by staff to prepare for release, rising to one in four at women's prisons and nearly half of those in open prisons, “though that figure is itself surprisingly low, given their role.” In her experience, finance, benefit and debt remained one of the weakest resettlement pathways, often focusing on little more than closing down tenancies and ensuring that benefits were discontinued.²⁰⁶

113. Progress on delivering resettlement support in recent years is likely to have been the key factor in reducing re-offending. However, not enough prisoners are receiving support in preparing for release, especially in relation to finance, benefits and debt. Former prisoners with whom we spoke often had the best intentions to lead crime-free

201 Q 357

202 Annex A

203 Juliet Lyon et al, *'Tell them so they listen': Messages from young people in custody*, Home Office Research Study 201, 2000

204 Q 163

205 Ev 106

206 HM Inspectorate of Prisons, *HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for England and Wales, Annual Report 2008–09*, February 2010, pp 6, 54

lives upon leaving prison but found it impossible to stick to this path when confronted with unresolved problems. We support increased mentoring after release into the community to build their resilience.

In the community

Prolific and Priority Offender Programmes

114. Assessing the range of police preventative strategies applied in the UK and elsewhere, Home Office researchers concluded in 1998 that targeting repeat offenders “appeared to be worthwhile”.²⁰⁷ Subsequent research carried out in 2001 found that, of a total offending population of around one million, 100,000 offenders—10% of all active offenders—were responsible for half of all the crime committed in England and Wales. The *Cutting Crime* strategy document sets out the Government’s intention to focus on the most prolific offenders throughout the criminal justice system. The Prolific and other Priority Offender (PPO) programme, implemented from September 2004, directs resources to this group of individuals through a strategy of:

- Prevent and Deter—aimed at young offenders most at risk of becoming the next generation of prolific offenders by reducing opportunities for re-offending;
- Catch and Convict—preventing PPOs from offending through speedy apprehension and conviction; and
- Rehabilitate and Resettle—rehabilitating PPOs through closer working between all relevant agencies and continued support for offenders on the programme.

115. An evaluation of the PPO programme carried out in 2007 found that:

- PPOs have higher levels of need than non-PPOs: they were less likely to be in suitable accommodation, more likely to misuse drugs and less likely to be in employment;
- Offenders favourably compared the frequency of interventions received on the PPO scheme to their previous experiences of the criminal justice system;
- The introduction of the PPO programme had brought clear benefits in data sharing and partnership working between agencies, although some blockages remained; co-location was apparent in over half of all PPO schemes and was valuable in delivering the programme effectively;
- Comparing the total number of convictions in the 17 months before and following the PPO programme showed that there had been a 43% reduction in the offending of the entire PPO cohort; and
- The PPO cohort had a reduction in the rate of their offending following entry onto the programme. The average rate of offending fell from 0.51 convictions per month per

²⁰⁷ Peter Jordan, “Effective policing strategies for reducing crime”, *Reducing offending: an assessment of research evidence on ways of dealing with offending behaviour*, Home Office Research Study 187, 1998, p 66

PPO in the 12 months prior to entry onto the scheme to 0.39 for the 12 months following entry, a reduction of 24%.²⁰⁸

116. The Head of NOMS agreed that initial findings suggested that the PPO scheme “is making really big reductions in re-offending”.²⁰⁹ The Director-General of the Home Office Policing Group, Stephen Rimmer, told us that the overall reduction in re-offending for people going through the scheme last year was 29%.²¹⁰ Prolific offenders accounted for the largest reduction in the frequency of re-offending that took place between 2000 and 2007. The Government is now going a step further in piloting Integrated Offender Management (IOM), which involves closer co-operation between the police, probation and other relevant bodies to manage offenders through the system. The Minister of State responsible for crime and policing explained the rationale:

In the past, probation may not have known what happened in prison; prison may not have known previous histories in the detail that we want them to; the police may not have managed that individual outside as a potential further offender.²¹¹

We were given figures for some of the IOM pilots: in Leeds, the overall reduction for re-offending was 45%, and in Nottingham 42%.²¹²

117. The strategy to tackle repeat offenders through the Prolific and Priority Offender programme is based on sound evidence and appears to be working well, with the new Integrated Offender Management approach proving particularly successful at reducing re-offending in the areas in which it has been piloted. Although the number of criminals sentenced for indictable offences in 2008 who had 15 or more previous convictions actually rose to 28% in 2008 from 17% in 2000, prolific offenders accounted for the largest reduction in the frequency of re-offending that took place between 2000 and 2007. The Government should maintain and strengthen its focus on prolific and priority offenders as an integral part of its crime prevention approach.

Community orders

118. As cited in paragraphs 102 and 103 some witnesses advocated greater use of community orders²¹³ in place of short-term custodial sentences. Historical data indicate that re-offending rates for non-custodial sentences are not significantly lower than for custodial sentences—remaining within two percentage points between 1987 and 1995.²¹⁴

208 Paul Dawson, *The National PPO evaluation—research to inform and guide practice*, Home Office, 2007; Paul Dawson and Lucy Cuppleditch, *An impact assessment of the Prolific and other Priority Offender programme*, Home Office, 2007

209 Q 154

210 Q 329

211 *Ibid.*

212 *Ibid.* [Mr Rimmer]

213 Introduced in 2005 to replace all previous community sentences, a community order can have up to 12 requirements, which allow judges or magistrates to tailor-make a sentence for each offender. There are unpaid work, accredited programmes aimed at changing offenders' thinking and behaviour, exclusion from certain areas, residence, mental health treatment, drug rehabilitation, alcohol treatment, supervision, curfew, prohibition from taking part in certain activities, participation in specified activities, such as improving basic skills, and attendance centre.

214 David Moxon, “The role of sentencing policy”, *Reducing offending: an assessment of research evidence on ways of dealing with offending behaviour*, Home Office Research Study 187, 1998, p 90

However, this is improving. 36% of adults receiving community orders in 2007 re-offended within a year, as opposed to 47% of adults receiving a custodial sentence. Offenders commencing court orders also have lower frequency rates than offenders discharged from prison.²¹⁵ Deputy Assistant Commissioner Jarman told us that:

We are just beginning to get an idea of how effective non-custodial sentences can be if we are more robust in making sure that people actually complete the non-custodial sentence, and if we work on trying to prevent them committing crime again.²¹⁶

Speaking in terms of community sentences for young people, John Drew said:

I believe that we engage young people, we confront them with the consequences of their behaviour in a much more purposeful way than we did when I started which was in the mid-1970s.²¹⁷

119. Nevertheless, we have received contradictory evidence about the effectiveness of supervision of offenders on community sentences. On the one hand, the Governor of Reading YOI stated that she was “content that they are quite well supervised”.²¹⁸ However the Liberal Democrat Home Affairs spokesman, Chris Huhne MP, cited anecdotal evidence suggesting that supervision was in fact poor, meaning that community sentences were “not honoured” and “so often breached that they effectively do not do what they are meant to do”.²¹⁹ This was confirmed by evidence to a recent Justice Committee inquiry from the Magistrate’s Association, which expressly stated that the inadequacy of probation resources impinges on the effectiveness of non-custodial sentences aimed at reducing re-offending. Probation officers routinely have 70 to 100 cases each to deal with.²²⁰

120. Figures released under a freedom of information request during our inquiry showed that the number of reported breaches rose from 46,589 in 2006 to 68,343 in 2008, a rise of 47% over three years. This could not be explained by a corresponding proportionate rise in the numbers of community orders handed out, as the total only increased by 8,591, from 119,109 to 127,700.²²¹ This may be in part due to an increase in enforcement action by probation officers which has resulted in the discovery of a greater number of breaches. Justice Minister of State Maria Eagle MP told us that the number of people being sent into custody for breaching their community orders has been increasing: “we take breach of orders much more seriously now than was the case ten or 12 years ago”.²²² The Ministry of Justice provided data showing a 71% compliance rate for community orders in 2008/09.²²³

215 Ministry of Justice, *Re-offending of adults: results from the 2007 cohort*, May 2009, p 31

216 Q 256

217 Q 92

218 Q 211

219 Q 261

220 Justice Committee, First Report of Session 2009–10, *Cutting Crime: the case for justice reinvestment*, HC 94, paras 75–76

221 “Hike in number of community orders breached”, *Regeneration and Renewal*, 8 February 2010, www.regen.net

222 Q 401

223 Ev 133

121. One means of dealing with the problems inherent in shorter custodial sentences is through greater use of community orders, which allow for rehabilitation without exacerbating some of the risk factors inherent in custodial sentences, such as loss of accommodation. Witnesses considered that advances had been made in their effectiveness. However, community orders will only be a satisfactory substitute if properly supervised. The numbers of reported breaches rose by 47% between 2006 and 2008. It is difficult to establish how much of this rise is attributable to increased enforcement action, which would be a positive development, but evidence suggests it is at least in part due to the overloading of probation officers. We therefore find it difficult, regrettably, to give our unqualified support to an increased use of community orders at this time.

4 Detering criminals

Situational crime prevention—Designing-out crime

Approach

122. Situational crime prevention aims to reduce opportunities for crime. It focuses on specific forms of crime, changing the way the immediate environment or target of the crime is managed or designed so that the risk or the effort required to commit the offence is increased, the rewards are reduced, or the triggers removed from the environment. The advantages of this approach are that:

- Interventions can bypass intractable social problems unresponsive to other approaches;
- Removing temptation may have a ‘multiplier’ effect if it prevents crimes which are typically the entry to a criminal career, such as shop-lifting or vehicle crime; and
- Typically situational crime prevention needs a short time to implement and have an impact, which amongst other benefits can prevent a runaway growth in crime.²²⁴

123. Professor Gloria Laycock, Head of the Jill Dando Institute of Crime Science, argued that, while tackling the social problems that can increase the risk of criminality was clearly an important goal for any government, effective crime prevention strategies should include a strong focus on crime opportunities:

We [should] regard opportunities as a cause of crime—the more opportunities the more crime—and that is something we can do something about because it relates to the immediate situation ...

I am assuming that this country is doing the best it can in helping young people in terms of reducing poverty, in terms of educating them, in terms of getting jobs. What else are we going to do? I think the thing we can do which would be really helpful is to make it much more difficult for them to steal cars, to do burglaries or shoplift. I pick those three offences because if you look at the criminal careers of offenders, they get into it through those easy routes.²²⁵

Evidence from Deputy Assistant Commissioner Rod Jarman, that “most crime happens opportunistically ... most crime happens because people have not shut doors; have not locked windows”,²²⁶ supports the usefulness of such an approach.

124. According to the Government, the UK is seen as the world leader in developing this approach to crime with the introduction of the Crime and Disorder Act in 1998

224 Paul Ekblom, “Situational crime prevention: effectiveness of local initiatives”, *Reducing offending: an assessment of research evidence on ways of dealing with offending behaviour*, Home Office Research Study 187, 1998, pp 26–7

225 Qq 364, 391

226 Q 241

particularly important in encouraging situational crime prevention at the local level.²²⁷ A good example is the approach to reducing vehicle crime as outlined by Professor Laycock:

The Home Office published the *Car Theft Index*, which was a massive lever over the car industry to put deadlocks and immobilisers on vehicles, and that ... resulted in something like a 65% reduction in theft of vehicles since 1995.²²⁸

The index allows those planning on buying a car to check which models are particularly vulnerable to theft, putting commercial pressure on manufactures. A study by the National Audit Office concurred that improvements in vehicle security are likely to be a main reason for the reduction in thefts of vehicles, and that the Home Office had worked consistently and effectively with the motor industry to bring about such changes.²²⁹

125. In the *Cutting Crime* strategy, the Government pledged a “new national approach” to designing out crime which would involve working closely with the corporate sector to “design crime out of new products and services at an early stage”, focusing on:

- Supporting the provision and dissemination of good practice guidance on effective problem-solving techniques to local partnerships, individual organisations and analysts;
- Creating an early warning system that draws on local crime analysis and consumer experience to identify problems quickly that are best tackled at national rather than local level;
- Developing incentives for business design decision makers to ‘think crime’ routinely;
- Working closely with consumer groups to increase the demand for crime-free products and services; and
- Supporting the inclusion of crime prevention in the professional training of scientists and designers.²³⁰

The strategy outlined the Government’s intention to focus initially on a number of key business areas: new housing developments, mobile electronic products, the retail sector, banking fraud and identity fraud.²³¹

Government action

126. To take this work forward, the Home Secretary set up a Design and Technology Alliance, an expert panel working to identify emerging crime problems and develop solutions to prevent them. During our inquiry a number of new developments were unveiled by the Home Office. The leader of the Alliance, Sebastian Conran, demonstrated one example to us, a pint glass designed to prevent glass-related violent incidents, of which

227 Home Office, *Cutting Crime—a new partnership 2008–11*, July 2007, p 33

228 Q 371

229 National Audit Office, *Reducing vehicle crime*, January 2005, p 2

230 Home Office, *Cutting Crime—a new partnership 2008–11*, July 2007, p 4

231 *Ibid.*, p 35

there are 87,000 each year. It contains an encapsulating film, so that if broken the shards are contained and there is less likelihood of serious injury. The Alliance has also been working on a glass that works like a car windscreen, in that it will shatter into very small pieces.²³²

127. Another area of work involves disincentivising the theft of mobile phones. Jack Wraith, representing the Telecommunications UK Against Fraud Forum, who are working with the Government on this issue, explained that early handsets contained security aspects which could very easily be manipulated; while today, manipulation is a lot more challenging technically because of changes to the handset design, based around an International Mobile Equipment Identity number which gives the unit a unique identity:

Once that IMEI is identified, then the handset ... is disabled on the home network and it is that information which is passed ... to the other four networks ... They will then use that information to populate their own networks, so that within 48 hours that handset will not work.²³³

128. We asked Professor Laycock if the Government had achieved the right balance between measures to prevent criminality and those to prevent crime opportunities. She responded:

I think not really. I think a lot of progress is being made. There is still a very persistent bias towards offender-based interventions, and we should have them—I am absolutely clear about that—but I am not sure that until really quite recently enough emphasis has been placed on controlling opportunities.²³⁴

129. Most crime is opportunistic. Designing out opportunities for crime can bypass social problems which are unresponsive to other approaches and often need only a short time to implement and have an effect. The approach has been particularly successful in reducing vehicle crime. We welcome the renewed emphasis given to designing-out crime in the *Cutting Crime* strategy and the establishment of the Home Secretary's Design and Technology Alliance. However, we note concerns that the Government continues to place insufficient emphasis on this area of crime prevention.

Communication strategies

130. Our evidence highlighted the need to ensure that measures are accompanied by effective communications strategies. For example, SmartWater, a property-marking system aimed at deterring theft, whose deployment in Nottingham has contributed to a reduction in repeat victimisation of over 70% in three years,²³⁵ argues that its success lies in its high visibility:

SmartWater strategy creates a genuine deterrent for criminals by sending them the message that if they commit a crime, they, or the stolen goods can be traced and

232 Qq 234, 236

233 Qq 217, 222

234 Q 368

235 Ev 98

identified ... Highlighting the deployment of SmartWater to local criminals ensures the maximum deterrent effect. For example, we display signs both on properties and in prominent locations within the neighbourhood to publicise the presence of SmartWater, and we install scanners in local police stations [so that] criminals know that the police are looking for it.²³⁶

131. This point was re-iterated by Jack Wraith in respect of the process of disabling mobile phone handsets:

We have found that the mere fact that that is in operation, the knowledge that that is in operation, has cut down on a lot of the types of handset sales that used to go on on a Friday night in the pub or a Thursday night in the pub, because people know that, yes, the phone might work if it has just been stolen outside, but come Monday morning it will not work.²³⁷

Mr Wraith also argued that it was important not to overlook consumer education, given that consumers have become far more safety-conscious recently.²³⁸ The National Audit Office study cited above concluded that a number of publicity campaigns aimed at motorists were “very likely” to have contributed to the reduction in thefts of and from vehicles.²³⁹

132. Concerns have been raised over the years that situational crime prevention measures can result in a displacement of crime to other locations or crime types, including from the better off to those less able to protect themselves.²⁴⁰ However, Professor Laycock denied this is a genuine issue:

Displacement is presumed to occur far more than it does ... There is always a net gain according to the research. Indeed, there is some evidence that if temporal and geographic boundaries are kept fairly fuzzy when you are announcing a crime prevention measure, you get what academics call a diffusion of benefits; in other words, the positive effect spreads beyond the geographical area that you are acting in, and there is also a temporal spread. It lasts for longer, in other words.²⁴¹

133. In order to be successful, initiatives to design-out crime should be accompanied by a clear communications strategy to raise awareness amongst potential criminals of the increased level of risks and thereby increase the deterrent effect. Marketing strategies should also capitalise on increased consumer demand for safe products.

236 Ev 99

237 Q 222

238 Q 218

239 National Audit Office, *Reducing vehicle crime*, January 2005, p 2

240 Paul Ekblom, “Situational crime prevention: effectiveness of local initiatives”, *Reducing offending: an assessment of research evidence on ways of dealing with offending behaviour*, Home Office Research Study 187, 1998, p 29

241 Q 372

Developing an early warning system

134. Visa Europe described to us how the banking industry had spent over £1 billion to migrate to chip and PIN technology, resulting in reductions in losses on transactions on the UK high street of 55%, from £218.8m in 2004 to £98.5m in 2008. The European Commission estimates that chip and PIN will save banks and retailers over £412m annually.²⁴² However, on 11 February 2010 Cambridge University researchers revealed on *Newsnight* that a flaw in the technology can and probably already does allow criminals to make bank card payments without knowing the correct PIN number.

135. This highlighted one of the difficulties in situational crime prevention, the constant pressure to stay one step ahead of criminal gangs. Particularly where it involves technological advance, this requires a high level of investment on the part of industry and criminal justice agencies. A Home Office Research Study in 1998 highlighted the need for “continuous” research and development “to keep ahead of obsolescence”, combined with a “national ‘surveillance system’ enabling rapid response to the identification of emergent crime targets, and new tools and methods of offending”.²⁴³

136. Jack Wraith argued in respect of mobile phones that “we are keeping up with the game”, citing the “very low” percentage of mobile phone robberies reported in last year’s British Crime Survey, despite a fairly significant increase in the number of mobile phones in the market-place.²⁴⁴ When asked about progress on implementing an early warning system for identifying new criminal trends, as promised in the *Cutting Crime* strategy, the Minister of State responsible for crime and policing admitted:

It is work in progress. We need to sharpen up on how we develop that early warning system ... Our focus has been on identifying hot-spots, trying to fund preventative measures in those hot-spots and that is where the resource has gone to date.”²⁴⁵

However, Professor Laycock considered it would be difficult to make much progress with the data streams available:

I do not think current police systems are designed to identify emerging trends. They are designed to help the police respond to crime, quite reasonably, they are designed to provide statistics for the Home Office, again, quite reasonably, but they are very poorly designed if they are intending to find emerging crimes that might suddenly tip and cause a massive great crime wave.”²⁴⁶

137. Professor Laycock described the work she had been doing with Merseyside Police, supported by the Design and Technology Alliance, attempting to pinpoint the next products at risk of a crime wave. In Merseyside they have been specifically looking for evidence to support their prediction that flat-screen digital televisions will become a target

242 Ev 89

243 Ken Pease, “Changing the context of crime prevention”, *Reducing offending: an assessment of research evidence on ways of dealing with offending behaviour*, Home Office Research Study 187, 1998, p 41

244 Q 221

245 Q 330

246 Q 377

because of increased demand when the analogue signal is switched off in 2010. Software has been designed that allows police force analysts to interrogate large recorded crime datasets over several years: not only the coded data detailing the offence category, but also the free text description of offences, which assists in picking out patterns. She said:

We hope, if we can get continued funding, to develop that into a tool that all the analysts can use throughout the UK and then we can sum it across various forces and respond appropriately.²⁴⁷

138. On a related point, Professor Laycock spoke about the difficulty of getting evidence to persuade the Department of Transport to protect car registration plates. Automatic Number Plate Recognition technology relies on the integrity of the number plate, which is currently very insecure. Professor Laycock told us that the Department for Transport had undertaken to provide electronic vehicle identification systems by 2007, but this has not happened. She said that the Department for Transport is demanding evidence confirming the scale of the problem, but the police find it very difficult to calculate the extent to which these registration plates are involved in crime because their use would fall under different categories of offences (a problem that would be alleviated if analysts could interrogate the free text function as described above). Professor Laycock said:

If we had an epidemic of it, they might be persuaded to do something. It is difficult to prove there is an epidemic because it is so spread out, but my general point is I do not think we should be waiting until we are in the middle of a crime wave before we do something. We know enough about crime and enough about the opportunities that cause crime to be able to pre-empt these things, and that is the difficulty.²⁴⁸

139. We asked the Department of Transport to clarify their position. The Secretary of State, Lord Adonis, responded that, although the Government agreed to consider a recommendation from the Jill Dando Institute in 2002 that it should plan to introduce Electronic Vehicle Identification (EVI) by 2007:

Contrary to Professor Laycock's claim, the Government never undertook to introduce EVI by this or any other date.

The Drivers and Vehicles Licensing Authority did conduct a trial of electronic number plates in 2006, which "demonstrated that microchip technology could be deployed successfully to identify vehicles in traffic"; and a study into the feasibility of using Electronic Vehicle Identification for motorcycles, which concluded that EVI was not justified solely for the identification of motorcycles and would need to be considered in the wider context of road traffic management. The Department cites Transport for London congestion charge figures showing that around 3 vehicles in every 1000 have forged or stolen plates, which they argue suggests a "fairly low level of non-compliance".²⁴⁹ However,

247 Q 377

248 Qq 384-5

249 Ev 131-2

given that almost 300,000 motorised vehicles entered the central London charging zone in 2007,²⁵⁰ the number of forged or stolen plates is not insignificant.

140. It is very disappointing that conclusions about the need for “continuous” research and development and a “national ‘surveillance system’ enabling rapid response to the identification of emergent crime targets, and new tools and methods of offending” identified in a Home Office Research Study in 1998 have not yet been translated into action. The Government has acknowledged that progress in this area is too slow.

141. The current limitations on the analysis of crime trends was illustrated during our inquiry by the issue of car registration plates. The ability to confirm expert suspicions about the extent of the involvement of forged or stolen car registration plates in crimes would give greater impetus to the Department for Transport to implement Electronic Vehicle Implementation, which would in turn increase the effectiveness of Automatic Number Plate Recognition technology which relies on the integrity of the plate. We commend the work being undertaken with Merseyside Police to identify emerging crime waves through use of more sophisticated software and hope that this can be implemented more widely, including to resolve the issue of insecure car number plates.

Public confidence in the criminal justice system

142. A Home Office review in 1998 found that situational crime prevention also relies on a criminal justice system efficient enough to make the risks credible.²⁵¹ In other words, in many cases the deterrent only works if a potential offender believes there is a strong chance he will be caught and punished for the crime. This obviously is dependent mainly on the criminal justice system itself, but also on effective publicity about police and sentencing activity. We did not in this inquiry examine the efforts of those responsible for bringing offenders to justice but we did note the Shadow Home Secretary's view that:

One pretty important part of crime prevention is the fact that there are people around who are going to nick you if you are caught ... [this is one of the two main reasons] why the Government's crime prevention policy has not worked ... too many policemen in police stations filling out forms.²⁵²

143. We did take evidence on the second point. Louise Casey was commissioned by the Cabinet Office to carry out a review to explore “how we can work together to reduce crime further, reduce the fear of crime and give the public a sense of hope and trust that those working to fight crime are on their side.” Her findings were published in 2008.²⁵³ She told us that:

250 Transport for London, *Central London Congestion Charging, Sixth Annual Impacts Monitoring Report*, July 2008, Figure 3.1

251 Paul Ekblom, “Situational crime prevention: effectiveness of local initiatives”, *Reducing offending: an assessment of research evidence on ways of dealing with offending behaviour*, Home Office Research Study 187, 1998, p 35

252 Q 360

253 Cabinet Office, *Engaging Communities in Fighting Crime: A review by Louise Casey*, June 2008

The most fundamental thing is that the review found that the public are almost cut off from the criminal justice system; they do not hear about the consequences for criminals.²⁵⁴

For example, less than a quarter of those surveyed by Ipsos MORI last year said they felt informed about sentences locally.²⁵⁵ 38% of those interviewed for the 2008/09 British Crime Survey were confident that the criminal justice system was effective in bringing offenders to justice, actually a decrease from the figures we cited for 2006/07 in our introduction.²⁵⁶

144. The former offenders with whom we spoke agreed that better awareness about the realities of sentencing and prison experiences would discourage some individuals from offending.²⁵⁷ Louise Casey told us about the work being carried out following her review, to raise public awareness:

They want to know there are consequences for criminals. Since I published the review, that is very much what I have been trying to drive forward within government. I think that is the way forward ... Getting a policing pledge agreed and implemented across the country is happening, but I would not say it is a smooth process.²⁵⁸

145. Situational crime prevention will only be fully effective if potential offenders are convinced there is a real risk they will be caught and brought to justice. Efforts to improve public confidence in the criminal justice system is a crucial part of this. In our view, this is the area in which the Government has made least progress. Building on the introduction of the policing pledge, there must be a consistent push by local agencies across the country to increase the awareness of policing and sentencing activity.

254 Q 25

255 Home Office public opinion survey conducted by Ipsos MORI (2009), cited in Ev 117 [Home Office]

256 Alison Walker, John Flatley, Chris Kershaw and Debbie Moon (eds), *Crime in England and Wales 2008/09*, Home Office, July 2009, p 105

257 Annex A

258 Qq 21, 27

5 Roles and responsibilities

Public sector partnerships

146. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 brought together relevant agencies at a local level including the police, local authority, youth offending teams and health services into crime and disorder reduction partnerships (CDRPs), with the aim of improving multi-agency working to reduce crime. This has generally been considered to be a positive step forward. Speaking on behalf of the police, Deputy Assistant Commissioner Jarman considered that:

We have seen over the past few years a significant change in emphasis into the causes of crime and how we deal with them. I think that the ability for me to sit here and talk to you about young family intervention and understanding how young people growing up leads to crime has only come because the agenda in the public sector is about how do we work together, from pre-birth until adulthood, on reducing the criminal aspects that might affect young people. So I think there has been a massive change in the way that we work—a massive positive change.²⁵⁹

147. Despite this encouraging progress, a 2005 Home Office evaluation highlighted that many CDRPs experience difficulties around ensuring the appropriate staff from all the relevant agencies were represented; a lack of engagement on the part of some agencies, such as social services and youth services; an over-proliferation of groups set up to tackle crime; and a lack of willingness or ability to share data across partner agencies.²⁶⁰ The Minister of State responsible for crime and policing argued that CDRPs needed to continue to “raise the game”. Stephen Rimmer noted that performance between partnerships varied and was highly dependent on the quality of leadership.²⁶¹

148. Professor Laycock expressed disappointment about some of these limitations given the radical potential of the Crime and Disorder Act:

Partners do come together but the responses are not driven by data and sometimes there is a reluctance to take action if it means that the people who have got to take that action have got to spend money ... the Crime and Disorder Act, which I think was a brilliant Act, has not really led to good analysis and that analysis has not driven the activities of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships.²⁶²

We did hear one good example of this kind of data-led action, namely the Safer Sutton Partnership's use of the Intelligence through Neighbourhood Security Interviews methodology, by which interviews conducted in the home by police officers and PCSOs are analysed to provide a detailed intelligence picture of crime on a ward-by-ward basis and used to generate multi-agency action plans to deal with the issues identified.²⁶³ Alan Given,

259 Q 256

260 Home Office, *Review of the partnership provisions of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998: report of findings*, January 2006

261 Q 341

262 Q 373

263 Ev 120 [Safer Sutton Partnership]

who leads the Nottingham Crime and Drugs Partnership, stressed the importance of demonstrating the value of crime reduction for all the participating agencies for the other areas of their work, in particular the cost benefits, to ensure they are fully on board.²⁶⁴

149. Deputy Assistant Commissioner Jarman highlighted one area of multi-agency working which in his view remains weak:

The area where it becomes quite difficult for people to understand is at the sort of universal, provision-to-everybody type area. How do we all work together to assist all young people growing up? ... The police role quite often has been to fill the void in youth provision out-of-hours ... I think the police have a real definite role in being the front end of joint services around those types of people, because we are the ones out on the streets in uniform identifying them, but I do not think we are always as capable as we need to be to intervene appropriately with them.²⁶⁵

In response, the Minister of State at the Department for Children, Schools and Families, the Rt Hon Vernon Coaker MP, cited the introduction of local Children's Trust Boards, which will be a statutory requirement as of April 2010 as likely to make a "real difference with respect to that". According to the Minister, Trusts will be required to produce a plan for the provision of services for young people in their area with the aim of ensuring greater co-ordination in delivery of services.²⁶⁶

150. The advent of better multi-agency working through crime and disorder reduction partnerships represents an important step forward in crime prevention; however, not all operate to the same high standard. The Home Office has identified the importance of strong leadership in partnership performance but we remain uncertain as to how this is being enhanced in under-achieving areas. Effective partnerships are also rigorous in their collection and analysis of data to support their crime reduction activities, and able to incentivise active involvement on the part of all relevant agencies by highlighting the benefits of involvement for their work streams. The Department for Children, Schools and Families expects that Children's Trust Boards will drive improved co-ordination for delivery of diversionary activities for young people: we hope that our successor Committee in the next parliament will revisit this issue at an appropriate juncture.

151. In January 2010 the *Daily Telegraph* published a leaked letter from a Home Office official to local authorities in England, warning that capital grants for the Safer and Stronger Communities fund will be cut by 50% next year, from around £20m to £10m.²⁶⁷ The Safer and Stronger Communities Fund was introduced for all local authorities in England in 2005 to bring together Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (now Department for Communities and Local Government) and Home Office funding streams aimed at tackling crime, anti-social behaviour and drugs, empowering communities and improving the condition of streets and public spaces, prioritising the most disadvantaged

264 Q 288

265 Q 243

266 Q 417

267 "Crime budget cut overshadows fall in offences", *Daily Telegraph*, 21 January 2010, www.telegraph.co.uk

neighbourhoods. It is therefore a key source of funding for crime prevention for designated responsible authorities under the Crime and Disorder Act. It is worth noting that the Policing and Crime Act 2009 amended that Act to add a further statutory duty on reducing re-offending to the list of duties that responsible authorities must carry out.

152. When asked about the funding cut, the Home Office Minister of State responsible for crime and policing argued that it would “not” have a “major impact” on CDRPs’ ability to deliver crime reductions: for some local councils the loss might be as little as £8,000 although this would rise to £100,000 for others.²⁶⁸ The Head of the Safer Sutton Partnership, Warren Shadbolt, disagreed with this assessment:

The 50% cut in the capital element of Safer and Stronger Communities Funds represents £26,000 for Sutton, and that will now be a gap that will occur on our Life Centre project ... All of these apparently minor funding streams are crucial for smaller boroughs with lower revenue.²⁶⁹

153. We appreciate that the Government is currently having to make tough decisions about funding. We do, however, anticipate that the cut to the Safer and Stronger Communities Fund will have a negative impact on the ability of some local authorities to deliver crime reduction initiatives.

Voluntary and community sector

154. The Home Office submission highlights the important role played by the voluntary and community sector in “providing links to and advocates for people who have experienced crime, as well as providing tailored services to diverse communities”:

The Home Office is committed to working with the VCS as an effective partner in delivering crime reduction activities through promoting local commissioning; providing funding; seeking the expertise of experienced practitioners; and sharing effective practice and ideas.²⁷⁰

The Youth Justice Board stated that third-sector involvement has been “among the factors that have contributed to the successful delivery of [prevention] programmes”.²⁷¹ Both the Home Office and the Ministry of Justice have developed formal strategies with the voluntary sector relating to crime reduction and the Chief Executive of Nacro acknowledged that the involvement of the voluntary sector has increased significantly.²⁷²

155. Catch 22 outlined some of the reasons for this:

- Third sector providers are more popular with service users;
- They have an ability to innovate, and tailor provision to service users’ needs; and

268 Q 342

269 Q 425

270 Ev 85

271 Ev 136

272 Q343 [Mr Hanson MP]; Q 168 [Mr McDowell]

- They are better able to engage those perceived as 'hard to reach' because of the more flexible approach taken by individual voluntary providers, or because of distrust of statutory agencies.²⁷³

Peta Halls, Development Officer at the National Youth Agency, reiterated this final point:

To engage with those young people and to gain their trust, as somebody who is not from their community was extremely difficult. We found it incredibly interesting that they absolutely never would engage with the police. They have total distrust of authority.²⁷⁴

156. However, we also note the conclusion of our colleagues on the Justice Committee that the voluntary sector is "under-utilised" in the rehabilitation of prisoners. According to Napo the number of new contacts won by the voluntary sector to assist prisons and probation since 2004 has been negligible.²⁷⁵ The voluntary sector faces a number of challenges to winning such contracts, not least bureaucracy. Paul McDowell told us that:

One of the big frustrations for us is the level of bureaucracy built into many of the commissioning systems ... Too many managers, too many levels and too much bureaucracy. What we would very much like to see ... is straight line commissioning arrangements so we can deliver horizontal joined-up services.²⁷⁶

Fiona Blacke also argued for "really sensitive commissioning" from local authorities, so that they look beyond the "obvious and visible" organisations to those who can provide the best services but may have less capacity to meet funding application demands.²⁷⁷

157. Ms Blacke also pointed to barriers faced by potential volunteers. A survey of the public conducted for Louise Casey's review in April 2008 found that three out of four of the 1,852 respondents would be interested in giving up spare time for prevention-related activities such as helping run activities for young people and joining Neighbourhood Watch.²⁷⁸ The review also noted a reduction in Neighbourhood Watch membership over the preceding decade and that three-quarters of those surveyed for the British Crime Survey said they would join a Neighbourhood Watch scheme if one were available.²⁷⁹

158. Capacity building is one important aspect in this, particularly to ensure that such schemes are not restricted to the more affluent neighbourhoods which are in any case less likely to experience high crime levels. Louise Casey told us that:

Last year we trained over 4,000 members of the public who were tenants' leaders, Neighbourhood Watch leaders, and so on and so forth, key leadership members in

273 Ev 107

274 Q 58

275 Justice Committee, First Report of Session 2009–10, *Cutting Crime: the case for justice reinvestment*, HC 94, para 56

276 Qq 184, 186 [Mr McDowell]

277 Q 57

278 Cabinet Office, *Engaging Communities in Fighting Crime: A review by Louise Casey*, June 2008, pp 73–6

279 *Ibid*, p 74

their communities, to do a number of things, including setting up activities in community groups.²⁸⁰

The Home Office is also investing £500,000 in a Neighbourhood Watch capacity building programme focusing on developing the activities of local groups, improving communications for volunteers; developing toolkits and training for volunteers; and strengthening the national and regional governance structures. Capacity Builders, through the Home Office, have also engaged the Design Council to support work to strengthen membership in hard-pressed areas, among the younger generations and in more diverse communities.²⁸¹

159. The third sector can play a crucial role in providing preventative initiatives and support for those at risk of offending or re-offending of the kind we discussed earlier in our Report. They tend to be more popular with service users, particularly those who distrust statutory agencies. We are pleased that the Home Office and Ministry of Justice have recognised this through the development of formal strategies with the voluntary sector. Voluntary sector groups are, however, frustrated by high levels of bureaucracy. In particular those groups best able to engage the hard-to-reach may lack the capacity to apply for funding. There is also evidence that more members of the public would like to play a more active role in crime prevention through activities such as Neighbourhood Watch and volunteering with young people. We heard evidence from the Home Office about its work to build capacity with volunteers; this should include support for funding applications from organisations engaging hard-to-reach groups.

Business

160. In the *Cutting Crime* strategy, the Government acknowledged that there are few incentives for businesses to design out crime as there is little regulation, consumers have little choice or knowledge to inform their purchasing decisions, and businesses may not always bear the costs of the crime associated with their products and services. Professor Laycock gave us an example of when designing out crime can actually be commercially damaging:

Years ago when Vauxhall disaggregated the car radio so the speakers were here and the knobs were there and the rest of it, the sales of replacement car radios into Vauxhall cars went through the floor, they kind of shot themselves in the foot, and that is not uncommon.²⁸²

161. However, the Government also noted that businesses are often also victims of crime—from shoplifting to fraud to theft of cash and valuables in transit, and therefore tackling crime through design will have benefits for the corporate sector.²⁸³ SmartWater argued, for example, that if car parts were marked during their manufacturing stage, allowing parts to be tracked and traced over time, this would be to the benefit of legitimate car dealerships

280 Q 17

281 Ev 118 [Home Office]

282 Q 379

283 Home Office, *Cutting Crime—a new partnership 2008–11*, July 2007, p 34

who have often been unable to compete due to competition from illegitimate workshops and garages using cheap parts to repair vehicles, recycled from stolen vehicles.²⁸⁴ The Head of the Design and Technology Alliance, Sebastian Conran, explained other potential benefits for business:

Although initially business may seem to benefit inadvertently from a theft, the reality is that, as the thief becomes more sophisticated, he will begin to target business itself and so that will be self-defeating. Another issue is that, as people become more aware of the benefits of crime-resistant design, it will become a sales benefit and a feature that people will look for, in the same way that maybe environmental issues have now become features that people are conscious of and for which there is a demand.²⁸⁵

Mr Wraith agreed that safety is now being used as a marketing tool, in a way in which it never was ten or 15 years ago.²⁸⁶

162. Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires each local authority and other responsible authority to 'exercise its functions with due regard to ... the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in its areas'. Ken Pease, Visiting Professor at the University College London and the University of Loughborough, has argued that this duty could be extended to apply to private sector companies.²⁸⁷ There have been some attempts towards mandating crime prevention considerations into commercial activity. For example, the Sustainable and Secure Buildings Act 2004 allowed for building regulations aimed at preventing crime. Rather than pursue this, the Department for Communities and Local Government included security requirements in the Code on Sustainable Homes—since 2008, over 90% of dwellings assessed have met these requirements—but the Department is currently consulting on amendments to the Code, including whether the security requirements should be made mandatory, or removed from the Code in favour of introducing new building regulations for security.²⁸⁸

163. Witnesses spoke about their frustrations in trying to move the designing-out crime agenda forward with the corporate sector. Sebastian Conran gave us one example:

Having a functioning burglar alarm and one that is linked to the police response system will reduce your likelihood of being burgled. We have been lobbying to have a Home Security Assessment as part of the HIPs Report. The resistance, rather unbelievably, has been that if criminals come across this they will be able to access, through estate agents, which houses are vulnerable, and so we have to overcome that sort of resistance.²⁸⁹

284 Ev 100

285 Q 219

286 *Ibid.*

287 Ken Pease, "Crime Reduction", in Mike Maguire, Rod Morgan and Robert Reiner (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Criminology*, Oxford, 2002, p 968

288 Ev 131 [Home Office]

289 Q 230

The Government has also recently called on the mobile phone industry to do more to protect handset owners against theft. Alan Campbell, Home Office Minister for Crime Prevention, said that:

First this is a great opportunity—this is new technology which can be promoted around the world. But also mobile phone companies have a responsibility which goes beyond the profits they can make from phones; they have a social and a corporate responsibility to tackle crime.²⁹⁰

164. Incentivising businesses to change their practices relies on providing them with data about the particular issue. Professor Laycock told us:

I think it is going to be a fairly long haul, and one of the reasons why I think it is extremely important that the Alliance, or something like it, stays in place is because getting leverage over manufacturers, especially if they say things like “Well, give us the evidence”, which is sometimes extremely difficult to do, they just will not do it.²⁹¹

At times it may be necessary to pursue a tougher approach. Professor Laycock gave us one example from the 1980s:

We knew that 40% of burglaries on local authority houses were related to the theft of money from gas and electricity coin meters. It was a huge problem. The fuel suppliers would not do anything about it because if your meter was broken into you had to pay them and you had to pay them to fix the meter, so they lost no money. Margaret Thatcher said to them, “If you do not do something, the Department of Energy has the power to deregulate 18 million meters overnight, so change them”, and they did.²⁹²

Another example of this approach concerns the music shop HMV, which reduced crime in its Oxford Street store when the threat was made to reduce police services.²⁹³

165. Many businesses will consider they have little incentive to protect their products from theft given that they may actually benefit commercially from a crime wave. Appeals to a sense of social responsibility may be insufficient to encourage businesses to take a serious approach to designing-out crime from their products. On occasions a tougher approach to force businesses to act has been successful; further opportunities may be generated by extending regulations to put some kind of crime prevention duty on businesses. However, persuading businesses of the benefits for action, particularly through emphasis on the popularity of secure products with the public, would be the optimum approach. It is important to have an effective evidence base in order to be able to demonstrate clearly to manufacturers where the problems lie. We therefore reiterate our earlier conclusion about the need for more action to develop a system for the earlier identification of emerging crime trends.

290 “Government calls for action on mobile phone crime”, *BBC News Online*, 11 February 2010, www.bbc.co.uk

291 Q 379

292 *Ibid.*

293 Ken Pease, “Changing the context of crime prevention”, *Reducing offending: an assessment of research evidence on ways of dealing with offending behaviour*, Home Office Research Study 187, 1998, pp 39, 44

Conclusions and recommendations

Context

1. The Government appeared to make good progress on some aspects of its crime prevention agenda in its first ten years in office. In particular, British Crime Survey and police data showed significant reductions in vehicle crime and burglary, continuing the downward trend begun in 1995. Additional funding and incentives were provided to focus local efforts on crime reduction in a much more co-ordinated manner. However, despite a reformed youth justice system whose overarching function was defined in statute as the prevention of crime, the numbers of young people entering the criminal justice system had actually increased by 2007. Furthermore, progress to reduce re-offending was unsatisfactory: offenders with previous convictions continued to be responsible for around half of all crime. Perceptions of anti-social behaviour did not improve dramatically, and public confidence in the criminal justice system was shockingly low. In our inquiry, we sought to judge the success of the Government's approach to crime prevention by assessing how well its current strategy, introduced in 2007, addresses these outstanding shortcomings. (Paragraph 10)
2. The overarching themes of the Government's current crime prevention strategy, *Cutting Crime*, reflect what the evidence suggests are the outstanding gaps in performance on crime reduction over the previous decade. However, we have a general concern about the evidence base used to support the implementation of measures to achieve these aims, some of which we explore in more detail later in our Report. Witnesses found it difficult to assess the extent to which individual measures have contributed to crime reduction. We understand that the Government often faces pressure to respond to crime concerns immediately, but Ministers should still ensure that interventions are properly scoped, piloted and evaluated. In doing this they should take account of the experiences of victims and offenders, such as the organisation User Voice set up by former offenders for this precise purpose. (Paragraph 15)

Preventing youth criminality

3. The prevailing understanding of the root causes of criminal behaviour is informed by many years of international research. We were struck by a far greater cross-party consensus about the causes of criminality than in the past, which bodes well for consistent policy-making. Most witnesses outlined a set of risk factors for offending which centred on family dysfunction, school and community under-achievement and poverty. The evidence suggests that these factors cluster in the lives of the most deprived children, and that these children are significantly more likely to offend than their counterparts who are not at-risk. The impact of family relationships is crucial: good parental care is a strong protective factor and should therefore constitute a key policy objective. However, it is important that governments do not use measures to promote parenting or support "problem" families to mask the need to do more to reduce poverty in communities. (Paragraph 24)

4. The ability to identify those most at-risk of offending is an important tool in planning and implementing preventative interventions. However, it is important not to place too much emphasis on this: predicting offending is by no means an exact science. Many individuals from deprived backgrounds choose not to commit crime; conversely, many individuals who enjoyed a privileged upbringing do. As many as 33% of males born in 1953 had a criminal conviction by the age of 46. Our discussions with former offenders warned us against making assumptions about the causes of offending behaviour: they did not all come from broken homes or do poorly in school. Tackling these risk factors, whilst a laudable aim in itself, should not form the entire basis of crime prevention strategies. (Paragraph 25)
5. The Government's approach in relation to supporting young children and their parents, principally through Sure Start, drew the most praise during our inquiry. Witnesses agreed that improving outcomes for young children and bolstering parenting support was extremely likely to be effective in long-term prevention. Evidence suggests that health visiting is a particularly key component. In order to reap the maximum benefits, schemes must ensure that support is reaching the most deprived families, and that parenting support is available throughout a child's life, not just in the early years. The Government should pay close attention to the package of early intervention measures being put into practice by One Nottingham, with a view to encouraging their implementation elsewhere, if demonstrated to be successful. (Paragraph 31)
6. Given that a quarter of young people who commit anti-social behaviour progress to more serious offending, tough enforcement of anti-social behaviour should have a positive impact on reducing crime. However, an Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO) will not achieve this end unless it is both coupled with effective support interventions and is properly supervised. There should be greater efforts to encourage the attachment of Individual Support Orders to ASBOs and to follow-up the high level of breaches. (Paragraph 38)
7. Despite the introduction of ASBOs and other forms of intervention with young people at risk of offending, in many cases problem behaviour still goes unchallenged for too long. It is important to find a mechanism for dealing with this while avoiding criminalising young people. Challenging bullying is one important component of this; we were encouraged that in Sutton, for example, anti-bullying sessions will form part of the provision in their new Life Centre, and recommend that the results of this experience are shared with other areas once evaluated. (Paragraph 39)
8. Given the importance of family relationships as a factor influencing future offending, interventions that focus on the behaviour of family units as a whole would appear to be a useful crime prevention tool. An initial evaluation of Family Intervention Programmes demonstrated their potential to reduce anti-social behaviour and other forms of problem behaviour, although we would advocate a further study that tracks the long-term results of intervention over the coming years. This level of family support does seem to be very expensive. However, there are indications it can be cost-effective in the long run given the extent of unco-ordinated contact that typically takes place between problem families and the myriad statutory agencies dealing with the implications of their behaviour. We consider that it would be useful

for the National Audit Office to undertake further research in this area. (Paragraph 43)

9. The Prime Minister recently announced an extension of Family Intervention Programmes from 10,000 to 56,000 in 2015. The Home Office Minister admitted this figure was calculated on the basis of available resources rather than an assessment of the number of families who would benefit from intervention. The Centre for Social Justice has estimated that 10% of the population are growing up in “dysfunctional” families, a figure likely to rise to 25% within 20 years on current trends. Intervening to reduce these numbers would require a huge level of resources. This gives greater weight to the argument to intervene early with young children and their parents to prevent the escalation of problem behaviour. (Paragraph 44)
10. Anecdotal evidence suggests that Parenting Orders are an effective means of improving parent-child interactions, a crucial protective factor against future offending. Levels of use are disappointing, however. The Crime and Security Bill currently going through Parliament would require the courts to give consideration to attaching a Parenting Order when handing down an ASBO, with attachment compulsory upon breach. There will be good reasons why in some cases the award of a Parenting Order is not appropriate but we hope that the legislation, if passed, will be a useful tool in increasing parenting support. Youth offending teams must ensure there is adequate provision to allow this to take place. Ideally, those parents in need of support should be able to access it before matters progress to this stage. (Paragraph 48)
11. Despite the fact that the principal aim of the youth justice system is to prevent offending, only 7% of the Youth Justice Board's £511m budget is ring-fenced specifically for prevention. We are disappointed that initial increases in recent years were diminished by a decrease of £2m between 2008 and 2009. The large sums spent on incarcerating young people means there is less money available for preventative activities. There are currently no financial incentives for local authorities to work towards reducing the use of custody, as the custody budget is held centrally. We urge the Government to give consideration to the introduction of such incentives. (Paragraph 52)
12. The expansion of the Positive Activities for Young People (PAYP) initiative to provide diversionary activities on Friday and Saturday nights is to be welcomed, considering the historical deficiencies in youth service provision. The police have witnessed a reduction in problem behaviour on the part of young people following this expansion, although their representative acknowledged the difficulty in linking the two directly, as it was accompanied by additional preventative measures. (Paragraph 63)
13. Properly planned diversionary activities are valued by young people but will not reduce crime on their own. After they have taken part in such activities, young people return to find the challenges they face in their home and their community unchanged. The real benefit of such activities from a crime-prevention perspective is the exposure to positive role models and a glimpse of the attractions of a crime-free lifestyle, through interaction with a “trusted adult” who helps the young person to

develop their self-esteem and to take responsibility for their own actions. (Paragraph 64)

14. In order to have a preventative effect, successful schemes must therefore receive long-term financial support to ensure such interactions can be sustained. We were inspired by the work of organisations working with at-risk young people, such as Cricket for Change, but depressed by tales of hard work falling by the wayside because of a lack of money. The Government and local authorities should make it easier for such voluntary organisations to thrive by providing funding on a longer-term basis and decreasing the bureaucratic burden; and prioritise organisations that include design input from potential users. (Paragraph 65)
15. Young children from deprived backgrounds are less likely to develop emotional intelligence, self-esteem and basic conflict-resolution skills in the home. We consider that the early years of schooling should therefore place more focus on these areas, and advocate further expansion of the conflict resolution activity undertaken by Safer Schools Partnerships. The transition from primary school to secondary school has been highlighted as particularly important in affecting a child's life chances, including their risk of offending. Former offenders told us that they would have benefited from a mentor to help them through this process. The Department for Children, Schools and Families should give consideration to expanding the peer mentoring scheme that currently operates in some schools, with a particular focus on making provision available for pupils about to start secondary school and encouraging the use of mentors who have undergone similar experiences to children judged to be at-risk of offending. (Paragraph 69)

Reducing re-offending

16. The overall re-offending rate for the cohort of offenders released from custody or beginning a community sentence over the following year has continued to fall over the last few years in terms of actual re-offending and frequency of re-offending. The biggest falls relate to the frequency of re-offending; those for actual re-offending are less substantial. However, those with prior convictions still account for around half of all crime committed and this has remained unchanged since 2000. For young males the likelihood of re-offending may be as high as 80%. (Paragraph 74)
17. The risk factors for re-offending are well understood across the relevant agencies having been clearly articulated by the Government's Social Exclusion Unit in 2002. The need for increased practical support to help offenders find employment and accommodation having served their sentence, as well as for mentoring to assist re-integration came across particularly strongly in our evidence. Measures to mitigate these risk factors form the basis of the Government's strategy to reduce re-offending, which is helpful. (Paragraph 78)
18. Increased levels of investment in prisoner education and training, offending behaviour and resettlement care have contributed to reductions in reported crime levels; however, there is still a high level of unmet need. The Government wants to "focus resources in prison and probation where they will make the most difference":

this is a worthy aim; however, as we noted earlier, the lack of an effective evidence base may make this difficult to determine. (Paragraph 85)

19. We are pleased to note the Chief Inspector of Prisons' assessment of the improvement in the quality of educational and vocational training in prisons. However, we were concerned that quantity of provision is still an issue, and that insufficient progress had been made to address the conclusions about a lack of purposeful activity drawn by our predecessor committee in 2005. We were struck by the assessment of one former inmate that prisons just "storage people". Sentence planning should be improved to ensure that prisoners can access and complete the courses that would be most of benefit to them. The threat of budget cuts has the potential to reverse the advances made in quality. Considering the vast cost of crime to society, cuts in this area appear irrational. (Paragraph 90)
20. Last year only 38% of prisoners went into training, education or employment on release. Preparing prisoners to enter the labour market should be a key objective for prison authorities; it is therefore disappointing that, for example, the social enterprise at HMP Coldingley was forced to close in 2008 apparently because of the inflexibility of prison management. The National Offender Management Service must ensure that schemes operating within prisons teach skills relevant to future employment opportunities and portray working life in a good light. The National Grid Young Offenders programme attributes its low re-offending rates to the guarantee of employment for participants upon release from prison and payment of a decent wage: this would be a good model to replicate, although the numbers of prisoners eligible for release on temporary licence and with the requisite literacy levels for participation in such schemes are low. (Paragraph 98)
21. The Ministry of Justice has initiated a Corporate Alliance to champion offender employment. This partnership should be assisting employers in becoming more sophisticated in their risk assessments of former offenders. We feel strongly that public sector bodies should be setting a good example to other employers through their recruitment practices in this area. In 2002 the Government pledged to amend the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 to limit the damage of excessively long disclosure periods for some offenders; we would like to know why legislation to achieve this has not been yet brought forward. (Paragraph 99)
22. Ex-offenders with the right attributes are ideally qualified for youth work with troubled young people because of their experiences. Often they may be the only people to whom such young people will listen. We recommend that the Ministry of Justice pilot a scheme to allow young offenders to access youth work qualifications in custody. (Paragraph 100)
23. Witnesses, including Government Ministers, were unanimous in their view that short prison sentences do not allow time for effective rehabilitative interventions to take place. Around 60% of adults serving less than a year are convicted of at least one offence in the year after release. This compares with predicted re-offending rates of 25% for prisoners serving four years and over. However, use of these short sentences has shot up over the past decade. The problem is particularly acute in relation to young offenders, who spend an average of 73 days in custody. The rise in short

sentences has contributed towards prison overcrowding, which itself compromises the rehabilitation process as increased prisoner transfer around the secure estate restricts their ability to complete training and treatment. (Paragraph 107)

24. We discuss alternative options to short custodial sentences below; but where they are handed down, improved case management between prisons and probation officers is key to ensuring that interventions can be continued in a community setting. Adult offenders serving less than 12 months are not currently assigned a probation officer. In 2003 the Government legislated for a new form of sentencing, known as custody plus, which would allow for offenders to serve a short custodial sentence followed by supervision in the community; we are disappointed that there is “no prospect” of this being implemented in the near future. (Paragraph 108)
25. Progress on delivering resettlement support in recent years is likely to have been the key factor in reducing re-offending. However, not enough prisoners are receiving support in preparing for release, especially in relation to finance, benefits and debt. Former prisoners with whom we spoke often had the best intentions to lead crime-free lives upon leaving prison but found it impossible to stick to this path when confronted with unresolved problems. We support increased mentoring after release into the community to build their resilience. (Paragraph 113)
26. The strategy to tackle repeat offenders through the Prolific and Priority Offender programme is based on sound evidence and appears to be working well, with the new Integrated Offender Management approach proving particularly successful at reducing re-offending in the areas in which it has been piloted. Although the number of criminals sentenced for indictable offences in 2008 who had 15 or more previous convictions actually rose to 28% in 2008 from 17% in 2000, prolific offenders accounted for the largest reduction in the frequency of re-offending that took place between 2000 and 2007. The Government should maintain and strengthen its focus on prolific and priority offenders as an integral part of its crime prevention approach. (Paragraph 117)
27. One means of dealing with the problems inherent in shorter custodial sentences is through greater use of community orders, which allow for rehabilitation without exacerbating some of the risk factors inherent in custodial sentences, such as loss of accommodation. Witnesses considered that advances had been made in their effectiveness. However, community orders will only be a satisfactory substitute if properly supervised. The numbers of reported breaches rose by 47% between 2006 and 2008. It is difficult to establish how much of this rise is attributable to increased enforcement action, which would be a positive development, but evidence suggests it is at least in part due to the overloading of probation officers. We therefore find it difficult, regrettably, to give our unqualified support to an increased use of community orders at this time. (Paragraph 121)

Deterring criminals —designing-out crime

28. Most crime is opportunistic. Designing out opportunities for crime can bypass social problems which are unresponsive to other approaches and often need only a short time to implement and have an effect. The approach has been particularly successful

in reducing vehicle crime. We welcome the renewed emphasis given to designing-out crime in the Cutting Crime strategy and the establishment of the Home Secretary's Design and Technology Alliance. However, we note concerns that the Government continues to place insufficient emphasis on this area of crime prevention. (Paragraph 129)

29. In order to be successful, initiatives to design-out crime should be accompanied by a clear communications strategy to raise awareness amongst potential criminals of the increased level of risks and thereby increase the deterrent effect. Marketing strategies should also capitalise on increased consumer demand for safe products. (Paragraph 133)
30. A Home Office Research Study in 1998 highlighted the need for "continuous" research and development "to keep ahead of obsolescence", combined with a "national 'surveillance system' enabling rapid response to the identification of emergent crime targets, and new tools and methods of offending". (Paragraph 135)
31. It is very disappointing that conclusions about the need for "continuous" research and development and a "national 'surveillance system' enabling rapid response to the identification of emergent crime targets, and new tools and methods of offending" identified in a Home Office Research Study in 1998 have not yet been translated into action. The Government has acknowledged that progress in this area is too slow. (Paragraph 140)
32. The current limitations on the analysis of crime trends was illustrated during our inquiry by the issue of car registration plates. The ability to confirm expert suspicions about the extent of the involvement of forged or stolen car registration plates in crimes would give greater impetus to the Department for Transport to implement Electronic Vehicle Implementation, which would in turn increase the effectiveness of Automatic Number Plate Recognition technology which relies on the integrity of the plate. We commend the work being undertaken with Merseyside Police to identify emerging crime waves through use of more sophisticated software and hope that this can be implemented more widely, including to resolve the issue of insecure car number plates. (Paragraph 141)

Detering criminals—public confidence in the criminal justice system

33. Situational crime prevention will only be effective if potential offenders are convinced there is a real risk they will be caught and brought to justice. Efforts to improve public confidence is a crucial part of this. In our view, this is the area in which the Government has made least progress. Building on the introduction of the policing pledge, there must be a consistent push by local agencies across the country to increase the awareness of policing and sentencing activity. (Paragraph 145)

Roles and responsibilities

34. The advent of better multi-agency working through crime and disorder reduction partnerships represents an important step forward in crime prevention; however, not all operate to the same high standard. The Home Office has identified the

importance of strong leadership in crime and disorder reduction partnership performance but we remain uncertain as to how this is being enhanced in under-achieving areas. Effective partnerships are also rigorous in their collection and analysis of data to support their crime reduction activities, and able to incentivise active involvement on the part of all relevant agencies by highlighting the benefits of involvement for their work streams. The Department for Children, Schools and Families expects that Children's Trust Boards will drive improved co-ordination for delivery of diversionary activities for young people: we hope that our successor Committee in the next parliament will revisit this issue at an appropriate juncture. (Paragraph 150)

35. We appreciate that the Government is currently having to make tough decisions about funding. We do, however, anticipate that the cut to the Safer and Stronger Communities Fund will have a negative impact on the ability of some local authorities to deliver crime reduction initiatives. (Paragraph 153)
36. The third sector can play a crucial role in providing preventative initiatives and support for those at risk of offending or re-offending of the kind we discussed earlier in our Report. They tend to be more popular with service users, particularly those who distrust statutory agencies. We are pleased that the Home Office and Ministry of Justice have recognised this through the development of formal strategies with the voluntary sector. Voluntary sector groups are, however, frustrated by high levels of bureaucracy. In particular those groups best able to engage the hard-to-reach may lack the capacity to apply for funding. There is also evidence that more members of the public would like to play a more active role in crime prevention through activities such as Neighbourhood Watch and volunteering with young people. We heard evidence from the Home Office about its work to build capacity with volunteers; this should include support for funding applications from groups engaging hard-to-reach groups. (Paragraph 159)
37. Many businesses will consider they have little incentive to protect their products from theft given that they may actually benefit commercially from a crime wave. Appeals to a sense of social responsibility may be insufficient to encourage businesses to take a serious approach to designing-out crime from their products. On occasions a tougher approach to force businesses to act has been successful; further opportunities may be generated by extending regulations to put some kind of crime prevention duty on businesses. However, persuading businesses of the benefits for action, particularly through emphasis on the popularity of secure products with the public, would be the optimum approach. It is important to have an effective evidence base in order to be able to demonstrate clearly to manufacturers where the problems lie. We therefore reiterate our earlier conclusion about the need for more action to develop a system for the earlier identification of emerging crime trends. (Paragraph 165)

Annex A: Meeting with User Voice

User Voice is a national organisation led and delivered by ex-offenders which aims to reduce offending by presenting the voice of the most marginalised people in and around the criminal justice system to decision-makers.

On 8 February 2010 we met with seven former offenders aged 16–24 from different parts of England, all of whom had spent time in prison. We asked them to discuss, from their personal experiences and those of their peers, the reasons why young people are drawn into crime as well as their views of the interventions aimed at preventing young people from offending and re-offending. We summarise the main points they raised below.

Causes of crime

- Many young people lack positive role models in their communities. They are exposed to the “fame” that a criminal lifestyle can bring without seeing the downsides, such as the realities of prison. More contact with individuals from their own communities who have “made it” could help young people appreciate the benefits of a more stable, non-criminal lifestyle.
- User Voice representatives did not believe it was not possible to generalise too much about why people commit crime. For example, not all of the offenders came from broken homes or perceived themselves as having problems with their parents, although absent fathers were common. Not all had been unemployed at the time of offending, although in some cases employment provided an incentive to change behaviour. Not all did poorly at school.
- Most of the former offenders first committed an offence or engaged in behaviour clearly leading to an offence in their early teens, although some admitted to behavioural problems under the age of ten. There was a clear escalation from playground fights to more serious violent offending.
- From their experiences, offending begins to spiral out of control when individuals feel that they have no alternative options.
- Poor self-esteem and a lack of resilience make it difficult for individuals to walk away from conflict.

Schools

- User Voice representatives considered that children from deprived backgrounds are not ready emotionally to start academic learning at the age of five. The education system should focus more on conflict resolution and emotional development. Automatic exclusion does nothing to address the causes of behaviour.
- The transition from primary to secondary school is very important in determining future behaviour. At-risk children would benefit from mentoring to help them through

this process. Mentors should not be teachers but individuals who they can relate to, such as ex-offenders.

- Better education about the realities of sentencing and prison would help to deter some young people from offending. There could be a role for ex-offenders in this process.

Communities

- User Voice representatives had not come across any organisations mediating between street gangs. They considered there is a need for more community mediators. In some communities it can be very difficult for individuals to avoid involvement in gangs and still live an everyday life.
- Youth clubs will not prevent offending. Participating in leisure activities feels good at the time, but does nothing to solve everyday problems.

The Criminal Justice System

- It had taken a long time for offenders to receive a serious sentence and associated interventions—meaning they were not forced to challenge their own behaviour. In their view, criminal cases should be dealt with more efficiently.
- Short-term jail sentences tended not to motivate offenders to change.
- The former offenders considered that they had not been sufficiently consulted about the kinds of training course they were interested in or felt they would benefit from, which limited their rehabilitation and ability to learn new skills.
- Prisoners are released into unsafe environments, such as hostels where they are surrounded by drug and alcohol abuse.
- Probation services should be more focused on the first day of release and resettlement considerations should be dealt with further in advance of release.
- The first few weeks after release feels like a fresh start but a lack of employment and support can lead ex-offenders to return to old habits.

Voice of the user in decision-making

- User Voice representatives were shocked at what they perceive as the amount of money wasted on the criminal justice “industry”. Decision-makers are not listening to the right people. Professional policy-makers have implemented schemes (such as anti-knife crime initiatives) which have no resonance with the target audience.
- Many organisations claiming to be representing young offenders do not in fact represent their views.
- User Voice would be interested in setting up a network of regional reference groups of former offenders for MPs to access.

Formal Minutes

Tuesday 16 March 2010

Members present:

Rt Hon Keith Vaz, in the Chair

Tom Brake
Mr James Clappison
Mrs Janet Dean

Gwyn Prosser
Bob Russell
Mr David Winnick

Draft Report (*The Government's Approach to Crime Prevention*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 165 read and agreed to.

Annex, Key Facts and Summary agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Tenth Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 134.

Written evidence was ordered to be reported to the House for placing in the Library and Parliamentary Archives.

[Adjourned till Tuesday 23 March at 10.15 am

Witnesses

Tuesday 12 January 2010

Page

Ms Louise Casey, Director-General, Neighbourhood, Crime and Justice Group, Home Office Ev 1

Ms Fiona Blacke, Chief Executive, **Ms Peta Halls**, Development Officer, National Youth Agency, and **Mr Adnan Mohammed**, User Voice Ev 8

Mr John Drew, Chief Executive, and **Mr Bob Ashford**, Head of Youth Justice Strategy, Youth Justice Board Ev 14

Tuesday 19 January 2010

Mr Phil Wheatley, Director General, National Offender Management Service (NOMS) Ev 21

Mr Paul McDowell, Chief Executive, Nacro Ev 25

Ms Pauline Bryant, Governor, and **Mr Clive Barber**, Deputy Governor, Reading Young Offender Institution Ev 29

Tuesday 2 February 2010

Mr Sebastian Conran, Home Office Design and Technology Alliance, and **Mr Jack Wraith**, Telecommunications United Kingdom Fraud Forum Ev 33

Deputy Assistant Commissioner Rod Jarman, Association of Chief Police Officers Ev 36

Rt Hon Chris Huhne MP, Spokesman for the Liberal Democrats Ev 42

Rt Hon Iain Duncan Smith MP, **Rt Hon Graham Allen MP**, and **Mr Alan Given**, Chief Executive, Nottingham Crime and Drugs Partnership Ev 46

Wednesday 3 February 2010

Rt Hon David Hanson MP, Minister of State, and **Mr Stephen Rimmer**, Director-General, Crime and Policing Group, Home Office Ev 52

Chris Grayling MP, Home Affairs Spokesman, Conservative Party Ev 60

Tuesday 9 February 2010

Professor Gloria Laycock , Jill Dando Institute of Crime Science	Ev 65
Maria Eagle MP , Justice Minister, and Rt Hon Vernon Coaker MP , Department for Children, Schools and Families Minister	Ev 69
Lord Tope MBE , a Member of the House of Lords, Mr Warren Shadbolt , Head, Safer Sutton Partnership, Mr Andy Sellins , Acting Chief Executive, and Mr Adam Hall , Development Manager, Cricket for Change	Ev 75

List of written evidence

1	Home Office	Ev 83: Ev 114: Ev 130
2	Battersea Dogs & Cats Home	Ev 87
3	Visa Europe	Ev 88
4	Ministry of Justice	Ev 90: Ev 132
5	The Audit Commission	Ev 93
6	National Grid	Ev 96
7	SmartWater	Ev 97
8	Barnardo's	Ev 101
9	Catch22	Ev 105
10	Research In Motion	Ev 112
11	Nacro	Ev 114
12	Safer Sutton Partnership Service	Ev 119
13	Sport and Crime Prevention	Ev 120
14	National Offender Management Service	Ev 124
15	Youth Justice Board	Ev 125: Ev 134
16	Department of Transport	Ev 131

List of unprinted evidence

The following written evidence has been reported to the House, but to save printing costs has not been printed and copies have been placed in the House of Commons Library, where they may be inspected by Members. Other copies are in the Parliamentary Archives (www.parliament.uk/archives), and are available to the public for inspection. Requests for inspection should be addressed to The Parliamentary Archives, Houses of Parliament, London SW1A 0PW (tel. 020 7219 3074; email archives@parliament.uk). Opening hours are from 9.30 am to 5.00 pm on Mondays to Fridays.

Mediamarch

Battersea Dogs & Cats Home

Lucy Faithful

RoadPeace

Sutton Life Centre

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

The reference number of the Government's response to each Report is printed in brackets after the HC printing number.

Session 2009–10

First Report	The Detention of Children in the Immigration System	HC 73 (<i>Cm 7795</i>)
Second Report	The work of the UK Border Agency	HC 105 (<i>HC 370</i>)
Third Report	The E-Borders Programme	HC 170
Fourth Report	Work of the Committee in 2008–09	HC 265
Fifth Report	Police Service Strength	HC 50
Sixth Report	The Home Office's Response to Terrorist Attacks	HC 117 (<i>Cm 7788</i>)
Seventh Report	The Cocaine Trade	HC 74
Eighth Report	The National DNA Database	HC 222
Ninth Report	Counter-Terrorism Measures in British Airports	HC 311

Session 2008–09

First Report	Monitoring of the UK Border Agency	HC 77 (<i>HC 381</i>)
Second Report	The Police and the Media	HC 75
Third Report	The Work of the Committee 2007–08	HC 76
Fourth Report	Policing Process of Home Office Leaks Inquiry	HC 157 (<i>HC 1026</i>)
Fifth Report	Borders, Immigration and Citizenship Bill [HL]	HC 425
Sixth Report	Human Trafficking	HC 23–I
Seventh Report	Knife Crime	HC 217
Eighth Report	Policing of the G20 Protests	HC 418 (<i>HC 201</i>)
Ninth Report	Project CONTEST: The Government's Counter-Terrorism Strategy	HC 212
Tenth Report	The cost of policing football matches	HC 676 (<i>HC 339</i>)
Eleventh Report	Bogus Colleges	HC 595 (<i>Cm 7766</i>)
Twelfth Report	Macpherson Report—Ten Years On	HC 427
Thirteenth Report	Managing Migration: Points-Based System	HC 217 (<i>Cm 7767</i>)
Fourteenth Report	The work of the Serious Organised Crime Agency	HC 730

Session 2007–08

First Report	The Government's Counter-Terrorism Proposals	HC 43
Second Report	Bulgarian and Romanian Accession to the EU: Twelve months on	HC 59
Third Report	Security Industry Authority	HC 144
Fourth Report	Work of the Committee in 2007	HC 226
Fifth Report	A Surveillance Society?	HC 58 (HC 1124)
Sixth Report	Domestic Violence, Forced Marriage and "Honour"-Based Violence	HC 263 (HC 1165)
Seventh Report	Policing in the 21 st Century	HC 364
Special Report	Unauthorised Disclosure of Draft Report	HC 196

Session 2006–07

First Report	Work of the Committee in 2005–06	HC 296
Second Report	Young Black People and the Criminal Justice System	HC 181 (Cm 7217)
Third Report	Justice and Home Affairs Issues at European Union Level	HC 76 (HC 1021)
Fourth Report	Police Funding	HC 553 (HC 1092)

Session 2005–06

First Report	Draft Corporate Manslaughter Bill (First Joint Report with Work and Pensions Committee)	HC 540 (Cm 6755)
Second Report	Draft Sentencing Guideline: Robbery	HC 947
Third Report	Draft Sentencing Guidelines— <i>Overarching Principles: Domestic Violence and Breach of a Protective Order</i>	HC 1231
Fourth Report	Terrorism Detention Powers	HC 910 (Cm 6906)
Fifth Report	Immigration Control	HC 947 (Cm 6910)
Sixth Report	Draft Sentencing Guideline: Sexual Offences Act 2003	HC 1582