

# New Deal for Communities

## The National Evaluation

### Research Reports

#### Youth Crime: Offender Based Approaches to Reduction

Research Report 4

The Neighbourhood Renewal Unit is currently sponsoring the 2002-2005 national evaluation of New Deal for Communities. This evaluation is being undertaken by a consortium of organisations co-ordinated by the Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research at Sheffield Hallam University. The views expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect those of the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit.

Those wishing to know more about the evaluation should consult the evaluation's web site in the first instance  
<http://ndcevaluation.adc.shu.ac.uk/ndcevaluation/home.asp>



*Sheffield Hallam University*

**Youth Crime:  
Offender Based Approaches to  
Reduction**

Research Report 4

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## **Executive Summary**

**Youth Crime, which is a significant national problem particularly common in socially deprived areas, has been identified as an issue in 34 of the 39 regeneration schemes established under the New Deal for Communities (NDC) programme.**

Offences committed by young people in the NDCs were most frequently perceived to be theft and handling, and violent crime. Disorder is also a large problem in NDCs where teenagers hanging around on the streets are seen as an issue by 25% more residents than the national average. In addition, young people have higher risks of victimisation than older people, a problem which impacts on their behaviour.

A wide range of risk factors predict offending and anti-social behaviour but no one factor can be said to "cause" youth crime. Risk factors cluster in the lives of some children while protective factors are absent. **Risk factors identified in NDCs included lack of education, poor parenting, and drugs problems.**

Offender based schemes form one of a number of categories of youth crime reduction approaches. **NDC is currently funding such initiatives in half of the 39 partnerships.**

**17 NDCs have implemented Youth Inclusion Programmes (YIPs)**, a national scheme part funded by the Youth Justice Board for the 50 young people in an area who are already involved in crime or most at risk of offending. The aims are to reduce recorded crime, arrest rates, truancy and school exclusions in the area concerned.

Approaches to implementation have varied. Many of the activities available to young people are essentially diversionary but others include education and life/social skills development. The two case study NDC YIPs have used an action plan approach.

Nationally there have been positive early signs in reduced crime, arrest rates and exclusions but some increased truancy among young people on the schemes. **There is evidence that NDC YIPs have had some success.** Both case studies achieved better than average rates for engagement of young people in the "Top 50" and anecdotal evidence of behavioural change including reduced seriousness and frequency of offending.

There have been few problems in implementation of NDC YIPs. Some difficulties have been encountered in setting up the referral process, in working within a community led environment, in staffing and in motivating young people.

The reasons for the success of the YIP programme include its clear objectives and targets, its centrally prescribed processes with local flexibility in delivery, its neighbourhood base with use of local people in operation of the projects, the engagement of young people themselves in management and delivery of work, the targeting of young people most "at risk", partnership working and human and financial resources.

**One NDC is implementing a modified form of the Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme (ISSP)**, another national programme promoted by the Youth Justice Board, targeted at those young offenders who commit large numbers of offences. The aims are to reduce the rate and seriousness of offending, to tackle underlying problems and to provide reassurance to the community that offending behaviour is being addressed.

**This NDC has shown evidence of reduced youth offending in the area since the project began.** There is strong anecdotal evidence of benefits to individual young people in terms of employment, education, training courses and behavioural changes including reduced or ceased offending.

**One NDC studied has introduced Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) as a supplement to Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) to tackle youth crime and anti-social behaviour.** These are voluntary agreements between those involved in anti-social behaviour and the local police, housing providers or the perpetrator's school.

Nationally ABCs have proved effective as a means of encouraging young people and parents to take responsibility for anti-social behaviour. **In the NDC case study three quarters of the ABC agreements have not required further enforcement action and some young people have themselves reported changes in their behaviour in terms of keeping out of trouble, school attendance and leisure activities.**

Offender based schemes require long term evaluation for a real assessment of their effectiveness to be possible. National evaluations currently in progress will provide a context for continued work on NDC case studies in the second and third years of the NDC evaluation.

## **1. Introduction**

Youth crime is a significant problem throughout the country but particularly in areas of socio-economic deprivation. The problem is recognised in most of the New Deal for Communities (NDC) areas, 34 of the 39 NDCs having identified some kind of youth crime problem in the delivery plans. Offender based interventions are being used to tackle it in half of these partnerships.

This report will briefly consider the nature and causes of the problem of youth crime as identified in the literature and in the NDCs. A more detailed discussion is contained in the related paper on Youth Crime – Diversionary approaches to reduction (Adamson, 2003). It will review some of the offender based interventions used in the NDCs with particular reference to projects implemented in two case study NDCs. It will discuss problems encountered in implementing these projects to date and preliminary results achieved in the first year of a three year evaluation. It will point to key messages and lessons learned and offer a check list for those considering tackling youth crime problems using these types of programme.

## **2. Methodology**

The offender based interventions implemented in the case study NDCs are all part of, or related to, wider national schemes and are being nationally evaluated. Where available, use has been made of these national evaluations and of local evaluations commissioned by the projects. Preliminary telephone interviews have been carried out with representatives of the majority of the 34 NDCs which have identified a youth crime problem and from these 4 NDCs selected for more detailed study in the first year of the national NDC evaluation, two implementing youth diversionary schemes, which are the subject of a separate report (Adamson, 2003), and two offender based projects. The case study areas for offender based schemes are:

- Bradford
- East Brighton

Both these NDCs have been able to provide some crime data but detailed offender data by age have been unavailable. Systematic output data has similarly been lacking although both NDCs studied have been able to produce some output figures. Information has also been derived from in house reports and interviews with managers, workers and young people.

## **3. The Nature of the Problem**

In 2001/02 25% of persons arrested nationally were aged under 18. Research shows that between one quarter and one half of young people commit offences at some time in their lives, with more males than females admitting to crime. Crime is particularly high among those excluded from school. 34 of the NDCs have identified a youth crime problem, although few have been able to provide figures. From the limited evidence presented, youth crime appears to be at least as great a problem as the national average and in many NDCs a significantly larger one.

The types of offences committed by young people vary with age and gender. Nationally most known offenders at all ages are guilty of theft and handling stolen goods but this proportion is much greater for females and very young males. Male offenders aged 15-17 are more likely to be guilty of violence against the person and drug offences than either females or younger males. Burglary and criminal damage are particularly common among boys aged 10-11. Research in self-reported offending confirms these differences in age and gender. Evidence for the types of crime committed by young people in the NDCs has largely been based on the

perceptions of residents, and those involved with the projects. Perceptions in the four case study NDCs show a wide range of crime committed by young people but with an emphasis on theft and handling and on violent crime. Some NDCs have been able to produce figures to support these perceptions. The evidence available from a few NDCs therefore suggests that the types of youth crime are similar to those identified nationally and therefore the situation is likely to be similar across most NDCs.

Disorder is even more closely associated by most people with young people. Teenagers hanging around on the streets were seen to be a very or fairly big problem by 32% of respondents to the British Crime Survey of 2001/02 (Simmons et al, 2002). The problem is even greater in the NDCs. The NDC average in the MORI survey of 2002 was 41% seeing teenagers hanging around on the street as a serious problem in the area and many of the NDCs identified youth anti-social behaviour, youth disturbance, juvenile nuisance or youths causing annoyance as severe problems in the delivery plans. In some NDCs such as Hackney the figure rose to 43% where it is felt that children and young people are the main perpetrators of a range of unacceptable behaviour ranging from noise pollution to victimisation of specific tenants. Young people who hang around on the streets are also more likely to commit criminal offences.

Young people also have significantly higher risks of victimisation than older people. The British Crime Survey has showed that risks are greater for a variety of types of crime and found that young people are particularly likely to say that they had experienced anti-social behaviour. The problem of youth victimisation has been recognised in the NDCs. The MORI Survey found that 16% of 16-24 year olds had suffered assault in the last 12 months compared to 5% of all age groups. Middlesbrough identified youth victimisation as a problem in its delivery plan and in Hackney interviews emphasised that young people were at least as likely to be victims as perpetrators and that fear of crime restricts young people's activities and their access to youth facilities which could support their personal development.

#### **4. Causes of the Problem**

Why do young people offend? The most common motive given by young people has been found by research to be material gain, followed by for excitement, for enjoyment or to relieve boredom. In the NDCs several of the delivery plans describe a lack of activities and facilities for young people as a major issue in the area, implying a problem with youth boredom. In two of the NDCs studied, while poverty and the desire for status symbol goods was mentioned, boredom was felt by those interviewed to be the most important factor. In Bradford it was felt that a need for excitement in young people's lives is provided by the adrenalin rushes involved in car chases or the use of drugs.

It has been found that offending behaviour is part of a larger syndrome of anti-social behaviour and a wide variety of risk factors which predict offending and anti-social behaviour have been identified although no one factor can be said to "cause" youth crime. Rather, a number of risk factors frequently cluster and interact in the lives of some children while protective factors are absent (Youth Justice Board, 2001). The principal risk factors identified are shown in Box 1. Young people are protected from involvement in crime not only by absence of these factors but by the presence of others which moderate the effects of exposure to risk. These help to explain why some children exposed to clusters of risk factors do not grow up to commit criminal offences. The root causes seen behind the crime problems in the NDCs studied generally support the theory outlined above and are summarised at Box 2. These factors can probably be regarded as applying to most NDCs.

**Box 1. Risk factors which predict offending and anti-social behaviour** (Farrington, 1996, Youth Justice Board, 2001 and others)

- Teenage pregnancy.
- Smoking, drinking or drug taking in pregnancy affecting low birth weight, small height and low school attainment.
- Early hyperactivity and impulsivity and aggressive behaviour.
- Low intelligence possibly affecting through inability to manipulate abstract concepts or through school failure.
- Poor parental supervision, harsh or erratic parental discipline and passive or neglectful parental attitude.
- Broken homes, especially where mother is not affectionate, and parental conflict, unstable living conditions.
- Family history of criminality and attitudes that condone offending.
- Socio-economic deprivation – low family income and poor housing.
- Peer influences – co-offending and association with delinquent friends
- School influences – going to high delinquency rate schools is a predictor of later convictions but the mechanism is not clear. Truancy and exclusion.
- Community influences – socially disadvantaged areas may have a breakdown of community ties and neighbourhood patterns of mutual support and produce anonymity.
- Situational influences – opportunities for crime.
- Lack of training and employment.
- Drugs and alcohol abuse.

Various theories have been suggested as to why offending increases through the teen years and then reduces, including changes in hormones, physical capabilities and perception of the severity of penalties, changes in behavioural influences from parental to peers, adolescent uncertainties, and the later development of responsibilities and a sense of direction. Reasons for differences between the offending of girls and boys may arise from differences in susceptibility to risk factors or in their roles in mating and parenting.

**Box 2. Causes of youth crime perceived in NDCs**

- Lack of education – third generation illiteracy, ADHD prevalence
- Inadequate parenting- lack of interest by parents, failure to set boundaries between right and wrong, single parent families, shift working, drug and alcohol abuse by parents.
- Limited horizons, social deprivation.
- Peer influences – need to prove selves where no conventional achievements.
- Drug abuse by young people.
- No strong message by society that crime and anti-social behaviour unacceptable
- Feeling that society has let people down and they cannot therefore be held responsible for their actions.

## **5. Offender Based Solutions to the Problem**

Approaches to tackling youth crime are many and varied. Situational crime prevention attempts to reduce opportunities for crime and includes target hardening (physical security of properties), increased surveillance (CCTV, improved lighting, neighbourhood wardens etc.), making stolen goods more easily traceable (property marking), and eliminating situations in which crimes occur (e.g. paying wages by cheque rather than cash). These methods have been shown to reduce crime using 'before' and 'after' measures and, although directed at the whole criminal population, because they are also directed at crimes which are commonly committed by young people, can be said to tackle youth crime. Other approaches tackle underlying risk factors in the development of youth offending, the variety and complexity of which means that any strategy to reduce youth crime must consider a wide variety of interventions and requires partnership across a number of agencies in any area. Combinations of interventions very early in a young person's life probably are the most effective in the long term. These include early home visiting, parent education, pre-school programmes, child care provision, school based programmes, anti-bullying projects and peer influence strategies. Although evaluation has been limited, some success has been shown particularly in the United States. Youth diversionary approaches to deter young people from starting to offend are reviewed in another paper in this series. Work with young offenders and those at risk of offending is considered in the remainder of this paper. The fourth and last main category of youth crime interventions is work with young people who have been victims of crime. Some of the more successful approaches are reviewed by Utting (1999). The Youth Justice Board (2001) includes chapters on "Reducing levels of risk – what works?" and "Effective risk focussed interventions with young offenders".

### **a. The Range of Work with Young Offenders and Those at Risk of Offending**

Law enforcement and criminal justice system agencies use a range of statutory powers and arrangements to deal with young offenders and deter offending and these are an important part of prevention of youth crime. In interviews with former young offenders, Graham and Bowling (1995) found that criminal and penal sanctions were important deterrents. For the majority of young offenders, contact with the Criminal Justice System at an early stage in their criminal career is sufficient to stop further offending. Following the Audit Commission's report in 1996, which identified problems with the system for dealing with young offenders, the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 defined a number of new powers including four new orders and a new pre-court provision, the final warning. All these provisions are delivered by new statutory multi-agency Youth Offending Teams (YOTs). The new system recognised the need for early intervention and was designed to speed up the youth justice process. The needs of victims were addressed with new reparation orders. A variety of interventions offer new approaches to working with young offenders, applying lessons learned outside the Youth Justice Service. These interventions may include intensive regimes, mentoring, acceptable behaviour contracts and restorative justice projects as well as education and skills training, employment opportunities and addressing of problems of substance abuse. Holdaway et al (2001) have described the emerging lessons for good practice in the new system.

Research reviews and meta-analysis in the past 20 years have pointed to modest but significant reductions in offending using a range of interventions tailored to the offending related needs of individual offenders (Youth Justice Board, 2001). Various research has shown that programmes likely to reduce recidivism are those focussing on improving personal and social skills, on changing behaviour, including cognitive behavioural approaches, and those combining a number of different methods. Programmes involving vocational counselling and deterrent or "scared straight" programmes such as shock incarceration on the other hand had negative effects. McGuire (1995) identified broad "what works" principles as shown in Box 3.

### **Box 3. What works in reducing re-offending (McGuire, 1995)**

- Risk classification – matching level and intensity of intervention to seriousness of offending and risk of repeat offences.
- Criminogenic needs – distinguishing between needs that support or contribute to offending and those that are more distantly related.
- Responsivity – careful structuring of programmes and response to learning styles of offenders.
- Community base – community programmes are more effective than custodial ones.
- Multiple approaches – including tackling criminogenic needs, skills, problem solving, personal and social interaction, cognitive or behavioural focus.
- Programme integrity – clear linking of aims and methods, adequate resources, appropriate training and support of staff.
- Dosage – adequate intensity and duration of programmes.

A number of U.K. schemes using cognitive behavioural approaches with young offenders are in evaluation. These approaches involve behaviour modification, social skills training, problem solving, anger management and moral reasoning. The Inverclyde Intensive Probation Unit for 16-21 year olds, developed by NCH Action for Children, is an example that worked with serious and persistent young offenders. Reconviction rates were lowered and those who took part in the programme believed it had stopped them offending (Jamieson, 1998). A number of mentoring programmes based on the successful United States Big Brothers and Big Sisters Programme have been implemented. One of these, the Dalston Youth project in the London Borough of Hackney found that among participants in the first course, the numbers arrested in the following year was 40% lower than in the year preceding involvement and the total number of arrests was halved (Janice Webb Research, 1997). Guidance documents concerning working with parents and families and restorative justice work in relation to young offenders have been produced, including evaluation for the Youth Justice Board. ([http://www.youth-justice-board.gov.uk/policy/development\\_fund.html](http://www.youth-justice-board.gov.uk/policy/development_fund.html))

Within the NDC programme three principal types of intervention are being used to work with young offenders or those at risk of offending. These are the Youth Inclusion Programme, Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme and Acceptable Behaviour Contracts. There are some other youth offender based projects planned or at an early stage. These include restorative justice (Brighton), reparation by young offenders (Salford), a youth mediation project with victims (Lambeth), specific work with young burglars (Birmingham Aston), and working with a small caseload of disaffected young people (Wolverhampton).

#### **b. Youth Inclusion Programme (YIP)**

##### **(i) What is it?**

A major scheme for the 50 young people in an area who are already involved in crime or most at risk of offending is the Youth Inclusion Programme, a national scheme funded by the Youth Justice Board with the purpose of including socially excluded young people in mainstream society and thereby addressing problems of youth crime. It targets the 50 13-16 year olds either already involved in crime and or most disaffected and at risk of offending in their neighbourhood. The YJB provides £75,000 per year per project which projects have to match from other sources. New Deal for Communities is currently providing all or part of this matched funding for 17 Youth Inclusion Projects. The aims of the scheme are for each project to:

- Reduce recorded crime in the area by 30%
- Reduce arrest rates by 60%

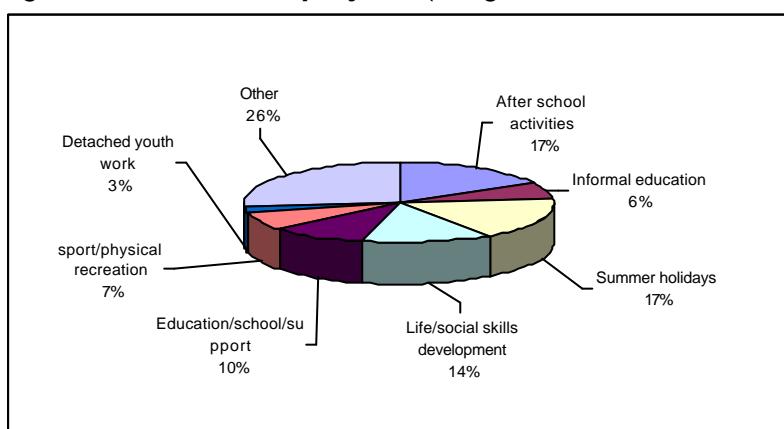
- Reduce truancy by one third
- Reduce school exclusions by one third.

There is a national evaluation of the YIPs being carried out by Morgan, Harris Burrows ([http://www.youth-justice-board.gov.uk/policy/evaluation\\_report.pdf](http://www.youth-justice-board.gov.uk/policy/evaluation_report.pdf)) and separate reports by Cap Gemini Ernst & Young plc on the 2001 Splash scheme run by many of the YIPs ([http://www.youth-justice-board.gov.uk/policy/splash\\_2001.pdf](http://www.youth-justice-board.gov.uk/policy/splash_2001.pdf)).

### (ii) What does it do?

The Youth Inclusion Projects nationally are using a variety of activities to achieve these aims as shown by Fig 1. Many of these interventions are essentially diversionary and are available to all young people in the community, although the focus is on those most at risk. More young people are involved in group activities than individual (one to one) interventions although the proportion of individual for those identified as "top 50" is greater. Participation by the young people is voluntary. Sports and physical recreational pursuits are particularly popular among projects and are successful in drawing in large numbers of young people.

**Fig 1 Activities in YIP projects** (Morgan, Harris Burrows, 2001)



Within the NDCs varying approaches to implementation have been pursued. Two NDCs for which case studies have been conducted take an action plan approach as shown in Box 4 while other NDC YIP experience is described in Box 5.

### (iii) What has it achieved?

The YIP National Evaluation Overview of September 2001 reports positive early signs in regard to the YIP objectives. In five of nine projects which had been operational for six months or more and been able to provide data, crime had fallen and in one remained the same, the largest decreases being in burglary, theft and handling offences. Analysis of data for the 50 most at risk young people on the schemes showed a 30% reduction in arrests and an 18% reduction in the number of offences for which young people have been arrested. However those involved in the interventions were more likely to be truanting from school although less likely to be excluded from school.

The evaluation has shown that YIPs are having success in engaging known offenders, over half of the young people having been arrested once since January 2000. Of the 50 most at risk in a typical project, figures suggest that 15 are not engaged, 12 are engaged for more than the 10 hours targeted, 15 are engaged for 2-10 hours, and 8 for less than two hours. The national evaluation found that statutory services were on the whole satisfied with the YIPs as were the local community and the young people themselves. The police in particular were very positive. The YOTs play a central role in assisting and supporting the projects and lack of YOT support has sometimes been blamed for implementation difficulties. Schools and

#### **Box 4. YIP Experience in East Brighton and Bradford NDCs**

- Individual tailored action plans drawn up for young people with what each is going to do, what the agency wants them to do and what they get in return.
- Targets set in consideration of each young person's capabilities.
- Young people rewarded by activities desired by the young people and/or certificates in recognition of their achievements.
- Regular review of action plans with progress recorded and modifications made incorporating changes of direction identified by the young person.

East Brighton has a programme of group-work and one to one work around issues such as anger management, offending behaviour, local identity, sexual health, self esteem and substance misuse. The YIP also works with the wider group that contains the "Top 50" as young people bring their friends who may be outside the age range. The focussed action plans are only for the "Top 50" but other interventions and group-work may include as many as 50% other young people in order that there is no stigma attached to attending sessions.

Bradford has a wide range of activities in which young people can be involved which are sub contracted to various providers, including group work and individual work, drug skills workshops, motor education projects on two sites, outdoor education including potholing, caving and climbing, a sports academy providing opportunities to try a wide range of sports, a technology room including video, health education materials and computers with access to software for GCSE and basic literacy and numeracy, and a recording studio.

education services have offered a mixed response, many being positive but some presenting difficulties in the supply of data on truancy and exclusions. The Youth Service often appear to be negative, some viewing the projects as a form of competition and others objecting to targeting the most at risk young people. Local communities have welcomed projects partly for tackling local crime problems and partly for providing youth services where none previously existed. Young people have commented that education conveyed by project staff is more accessible than that at school and that their offending has reduced.

#### **Box 5. Other NDC YIPs**

**Manchester YIP** began by offering street based youth work, mentoring and family support and progressed to offering additionally after school, summer holiday activities, the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme , an after school centre, and day time alternative education for those not in school.

**Middlesbrough YIP** interventions include a Splash school with sports activities, leadership/citizenship skills, career/life management and a learning mentor scheme. There is a detached youth project and young people participate in the tall ships race. Pilot work has been conducted with 8-12 year olds.

**Hull YIP** interventions include a fishing club, Preston Road motor bike club, social exclusion work, a Youth Club, a Cyber Club, drop in facilities in conjunction with the youth service and Summer Splash activities. Support to young people is also given through Anti-Social Behaviour contracts to prevent escalation to Anti-Social Behaviour Orders.

The YIPs funded in part by New Deal for Communities have shown a number of achievements as shown in Box 6.

#### Box 6. NDC YIP Achievements so far

##### **East Brighton**

- 373 on database.
- Rate of engagement of “Top 50” and reduction of offending of those engaged slightly better than national average
- Manager views scheme as successful. Changes seen in behaviour of young people particularly in relating to adults. “If we can get them to engage with other agencies we can make a huge difference in their life because they can get support from anywhere once they are OK with talking to adults.”
- Positive views from stakeholders, community representatives and the young people themselves

##### **Bradford**

- Engagement 100% of “Top 50” identified
- Successful summer Splash activities attracting 8500 visits from young people.
- Evidence of reduced seriousness and frequency of offending, reduced truancy among the young people involved.
- Manager has said “If you have someone with 136 past charges and in the next 12 months they are charged once that is a huge success. If you have someone who has committed acts of violence and the next few things are shoplifting that is a huge success.”
- Also evidence of other improvements in behaviour such as increased punctuality, confidence and improved social skills.
- Benefits are felt in partnership working in that agencies can use each other's expertise and groundwork in implementing new schemes.

##### **Other NDC YIPS**

**East Manchester YIP** regards the project as a success in that it has grown from relatively small beginnings, extending its area and range of work. The YIP was asked to become part of the Connexions trial for Manchester and as a result obtained additional funding.

**Middlesbrough YIP** views the project as performing extremely well. High level of participation by young people. At a recent six monthly review of the 50 most at risk 14 were no longer regarded as at risk.

**Hull YIP** views the scheme as a success because Youths Causing Annoyance calls for service have decreased by 29% between 2000 and 2002.

#### (iv) What problems have there been?

Few major problems have been identified in implementation of the NDC YIPs. There have been some initial problems in the process of identifying young people “at risk” although these have been resolved by the setting up of multi-agency referral procedures. Additional problems have been encountered in ensuring that those identified are from the NDC areas. Some pointed to difficulties arising from the community led nature of the New Deal programme. Problems have been experienced in working with varied local perceptions and local politics, insufficient training is provided for those who are administering very large sums of money and money is not always going to the right places within the areas or is not used as wisely as it might be. There are tensions related to match funding in that local YIP policies are largely shaped by the Home Office and YJB, who are the main funders and deciders of national policy. Local communities, even where these provide match funding, can have

limited influence. Other issues mentioned relate to staffing problems. Over use of sessional workers who may not be reliable and for whom long term career development cannot be provided has created difficulties. A funding crisis when the continuation of the YJB funding was in doubt resulted in losses of staff for one YIP because of the uncertainty of their continued employment. The effect has been an overburdening of the remaining staff and a necessary reduction in the number of young people with whom the project could work. Administrative support has also been seen to be a problem. Motivation of the young people themselves, many of whom are unused to timetables and meetings, is thought to be a problem suffered by all YIPs. There have been some problems in building relationships with other agencies such as schools and Social Services. Several YIPs have mentioned as a difficulty the perception in the area that bad behaviour is being rewarded and the labelling effect on young people targeted. They are still perceived as being YIP kids if they present challenging behaviour even if this is no worse than other kids.

(v) Does it work?

Although there is as yet no full evaluation report of the scheme, preliminary indications as described above are that the Youth Inclusion can have an effect on the behaviour of the young people at whom it is targeted and reduce their arrest rates. However more detailed analysis of offending patterns in the areas concerned is required to establish whether this has had an effect on crime levels themselves. Some of the reasons why the Youth Inclusion

**Box 7. Reasons for Success of the YIP Programme**

YIP Managers Guidance Document, July 2002,

- “The Youth Inclusion Programme has clear objectives and targets. The programme is centrally planned and locally delivered. The structure and processes are prescribed but allow enormous flexibility in delivery.
- YIPs are based in the neighbourhood.
- YIPs seek to involve local people as members of the neighbourhood steering group, as volunteers and increasingly as members of staff.
- YIPs put young people at the heart of the project and engage them in the management and delivery of the work.
- YIPs target their resources at those young people at most risk, working alongside individual young people with individual needs.
- YIPs are a collaborative venture – partnership working with the statutory agencies, the community and young people.
- YIPs have the resources, human and financial, to make the projects work.”

Programme is thought to work are summarised in Box 7.

(vi) Further information

Since the Youth Inclusion Programme is an established national scheme, there is considerable guidance available on setting up and running a YIP. A system has been set up whereby each YIP can work through a series of processes to discover the most appropriate and achievable interventions for its own neighbourhood. See website (<http://www.yipkbase.com/yipkbase/youthinc.nsf>). For the processes of neighbourhood selection, audit of the existing situation and option appraisal guidance is available from the YIP Knowledge Database, Category, Guidance (YIP). Guidance on production of the action plan, identifying the 50 most at risk, engaging, assessing and monitoring the 50, delivery, monitoring and evaluation is detailed in the YIP Manager's Guidance Document. The YIP knowledge base is the main communication tool between the national supporter (Cap Gemini Ernst & Young plc) and the YIPs and provides details of YIPMIS, future funding of the

programme, training, networking events and new guidance. Information concerning other YIPs is available on this knowledge base which can also be used to communicate with other YIPs. Contact details for national and regional supporters and evaluators are available in the YIP Managers Guidance Document.

### **c. Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme (ISSP)**

#### **(i) What is it?**

The Youth Justice Board has another programme targeted at those young offenders who commit a considerable number of offences and who require intensive and highly structured programmes if they are to be dealt with in the community. Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programmes (ISSPs) began in 2001 and are focussed on major conurbations and towns to deal with the most active repeat offenders. The key objectives are:

- Reduce the rate of re-offending in the target group by 5% and the seriousness of that offending, by 2003-4
- Tackle the underlying problems of the young people concerned in an effective manner with a particular emphasis on educational needs
- Provide reassurance to the community that the behaviour of these repeat young offenders is being closely monitored and that any relapse will be effectively dealt with.

#### **(ii) What does it do?**

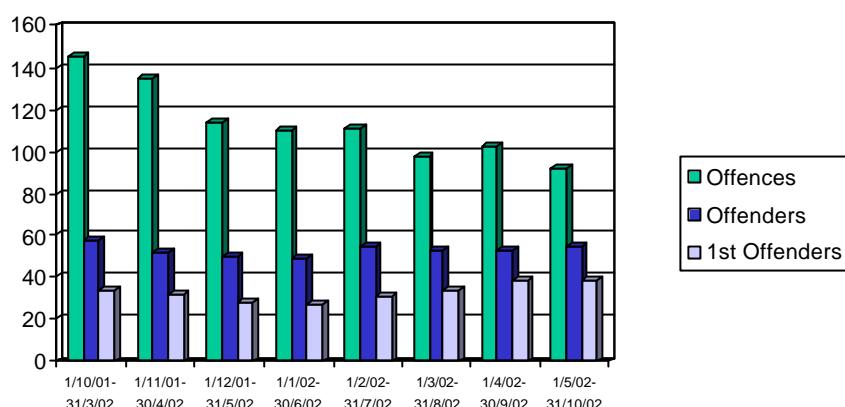
In order to achieve these objectives the ISSP draws up a tailored programme for each young person concerned. The ISSP programme is being nationally evaluated by a team from Oxford University who produce a quarterly bulletin concerning progress on the evaluation available from [robin.moore@crim.ox.ac.uk](mailto:robin.moore@crim.ox.ac.uk). The full evaluation report is not due until March 2004. The Bradford Trident Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme (TISSP), which began in September 2001, was based on the national Youth Justice Board ISSP but differs significantly from it and should not be confused with the mainstream Bradford ISSP. The first difference is that the national scheme targets only very prolific offenders or those whose offences are particularly serious. The NDC area does not have sufficient young people who would meet the very stringent requirements of the national scheme but works with young people who are not necessarily the most prolific offenders but where early intervention may prevent escalation of offending. Young people may be on statutory orders, be siblings of known offenders, be the subject of referrals by Housing, Social Services, local police officers or at the Anti-Crime Partnership monthly meetings or be young people whose parents have shown a deterioration in health. However most of the work is statutory work through the courts. The second main difference is that the national scheme requires 20 hours a week of input for the first 3 months followed by 1 hour per week for the next three months. The TISSP scheme is more flexible providing opportunities to work intensively with a few or with many for less hours according to the needs identified.

An initial assessment is carried out of a young person's needs and a programme drawn up to take account of what is required by the court, what is proposed by TISSP and what the young person wants to achieve. The programme is then regularly reviewed and evaluated. The programme includes one to one sessions and accessing services which the young person wants or the programme thinks would benefit him. These services are provided by other agencies and bought in, the project reserving its own funding for providing staff to assist young offenders in accessing services, shepherd them through weekly timetables, implement surveillance and provide support and positive role models. Services include education and training, restorative treatment, changing offending behaviour, interpersonal skills, family support, counselling and mentor provision.

(iii) What has it achieved?

TISSP engages 97-98% of the targeted young offenders (16 in the first 1.5 years) and can point to continuing involvement of some young people with the programme after their statutory order is finished. One young man interviewed was enthusiastic about what the scheme had done for him. There is evidence of reduced offending by young people in the NDC area since the TISSP project began (Fig 2).

Fig 2 Bradford NDC Six monthly snapshots - aged 17 and under at time of offence



The number of young people aged 17 and under accused of crime is claimed to have reduced by 5% and the number of offences by 37% between October 2001 and October 2002. There is also strong evidence in the form accounts of individual young people who have benefited from TISSP by obtaining employment, education, training courses, or accommodation and some for whom behaviour changes including reduced or cessation of offending are seen. A key strength for TISSP has been the quality of the staff. The two male workers "can engage with very difficult young people who would not engage with anyone else." The NDC Crime and Community Safety Coordinator has said that they "had a good rapport with young people. They were seen as role models because they had colourful pasts themselves." Good, experienced, hard working and committed staff at the management level was also mentioned as a key strength for the TISSP.

(iv) What problems have there been?

The main problem identified by both the staff interviewed was the problem of a statutory and a voluntary agency working together. The two organisations have different ways of working, viewpoints which can clash and differences in rates of pay. However there is mutual respect and a determination to overcome the difficulties. The other main problem identified was premises, partly in the size of accommodation allocated to the TISSP which is to be resolved in a forthcoming move to other YMCA premises within the NDC area but also in the location of a project dealing with offenders on premises where other activities such as those for children are also run. In addition TISSP has had difficulties attracting Asian clients to premises run by a Christian organisation. There were initial problems in using locally recruited workers who were not used to structured work.

(v) Does it work?

Preliminary indications are that the TISSP in Bradford NDC has had effects on youth offending in the area. However, a more long term assessment of this project is required before conclusions can be drawn and for the national ISSP programme the results of the national evaluation must be awaited.

## **d. Anti-Social Behaviour Orders and Acceptable Behaviour Contracts**

### **(i) What are they and what do they do?**

Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOS) were introduced under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and first used in 1999 to tackle a wide range of anti-social behaviour from harassment and noise nuisance through criminal damage and vandalism to vehicle crime and assault. Both adults and young people can be the subjects of ASBOs. Home Office research published in 2002 found that the orders had delivered real improvement in the quality of life to communities around the country (Campbell, 2002). ASBOs are civil orders containing conditions prohibiting the offender from specific anti-social acts or entering defined areas, are effective for a minimum of two years and have legal force. Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) are voluntary agreements made between people involved in anti-social behaviour and the local police, the housing department, the registered social landlord or the perpetrator's school. They are flexible in terms of content and format and were initially introduced in the London Borough of Islington to deal with problems on estates being caused

### **Box 8. East Brighton ABCs**

#### **What are they?**

- Used with 10-18 year olds. For those under 10, alternative Parental Consent Agreements signed by the parent on behalf of the child's behaviour.
- Contracts between young person, partner agency and police administered by the NDC Community Safety Team and usually lasting 6 months.
- Contracts include undertakings by young person and support elements such as anger management training and parenting support.
- Monthly meetings between young person, parents, housing officer and community police officer.
- Certificates awarded on completion. Activities also used as rewards.

#### **What has been achieved?**

- 36 ABCs to September 2002 (43 to October)
- For 28 of the 36 no further enforcement action required
- Viewed by all agencies concerned as effective way of engaging young people and families and preventing further offending.
- 4 out of 10 families interviewed expressed support for the scheme.
- Most young people concerned have reported changes in behaviour – reduced anti-social behaviour, keeping out of trouble, increased school attendance and types of leisure activities.
- Some parents recognised changes in their children's behaviour or reported changes in parenting practice

#### **What problems and weaknesses have there been?**

- Local evaluation has suggested some problems in partnership working – greater engagement needed to encourage joint problem solving and remove misapprehensions about each other's capabilities.
- Some failures in communication between Community Safety Team and families concerned leading to failures to understand the gravity of children's behaviour, feelings that there had been no warning of the imminence of the contract procedure, lack of clarity concerning the legal significance of ABCs and ASBOs and young people and their parents being unable to remember the terms of their contracts or why they were on them.
- Evaluators expressed criticism of rewards system – more real incentives needed
- Community Safety Team needs specialist training in mental health, special educational needs and domestic violence.

by young people aged between 10 and 17. ABCs are designed as an alternative to ASBOs where the latter are not thought justified and can be used for any young person, not just those of social housing tenants. Among the NDCs, East Brighton has used ABCs to work with young people to stop offending and to provide support to parents and children. Brief details are given in Box 8.

(ii) What have ABCs achieved?

ABCs have proved effective as a means of encouraging young adults, children and, importantly, parents to take responsibility for unacceptable behaviour (Home Office, 2002). A number of case studies where ABCs have been used are outlined in recent research (Lucas and Whitworth, 2002).

(iii) Do they work?

ABCs have been widely adopted and agencies with extensive experience of their use have been very positive about their effect, reporting that in the majority of cases there has been no breach of the contract. The East Brighton experience supports this view.

## 6. Conclusion

Under the New Deal for Communities programme more than half the partnerships are implementing offender based schemes for reduction of youth crime, many of which are the subject of national evaluations in progress. The NDC case studies have provided some early evidence of success in these schemes and some insight into problems encountered. Limited availability of data and the time frame of this study have however prevented rigorous evaluation. Project managers need to recognise that offender based interventions will take time for their true effects to be seen and that there is a need for assessment of the long term impact of the projects, which will require detailed collection and recording of data for analysis in the second and third years of the NDC evaluation.

### **Checklist for Tackling Youth Crime with Offender Based Interventions**

An assessment of the nature and scale of the youth crime problem is a necessary first step in forming a strategy to deal with the problem.

- What is the scale of the problem? What is the nature of the problem? What kind of crime is involved? Or is it a problem of disorder – youths causing annoyance rather than actual crime?
- Is the problem one of perception by residents? If so, how is that measured?
- Can it be backed up by statistics? Are statistics available for the area in which you are working?
- Is it concentrated in particular areas?
- Has the nature and the scale of the problem changed in recent years? ...
- .... how has it changed?
- ... and why has it changed?

There are a number of national offender based schemes undergoing evaluation for which guidance documents may be available and for which lessons may be learned from experience elsewhere. A useful next step is therefore to check out the guidance available on websites such as that of the Youth Justice Board.

- Are there lessons you could learn from initiatives undertaken elsewhere?
- If your planned intervention is part of a national scheme, such as YIP or ISSP, have you consulted the appropriate guidance material?

In planning interventions you need to consider how you will engage the young people. In doing this you need to consider the nature of the youth crime problem and the needs of the young people in the area and the means by which planned activities will achieve an impact, in other words ensure that there is a logical relationship between the two.

- Have you tailored your approach to the particular nature of the problem in your area?
- Have you considered the needs of the individual young people?
- How is the activity you propose intended to impact on the problems?
- How will you engage the young people – direct contact through referral agency, detached youth work?

Offender based programmes may require input from a variety of agencies and other partners in management partnership, neighbourhood steering groups and in implementation of interventions.

- Which statutory bodies may have an input?
- Are there voluntary bodies who could also be involved?
- How might it be best to engage the interest and commitment of these organisations?
- Is there already a forum for the meeting of these organisations?
- Do they have different approaches to the problem?
- Are there other groups who can help, or should be consulted? For example, what role do local communities have to play? What do young people themselves have to say?
- Are their people in the local community who could be trained to work with young people?
- Are there suitable premises/venues available for planned activities?

It is vital that you know whether your approach to tackling youth crime is working or not.

- Have you drawn-up clearly defined and measurable objectives?
- Has a system been put in place to monitor the effectiveness of your approach?...
- .... and are you able to track the costs of your approach?
- Have you considered the question of displacement?
- Has sufficient time been allowed to undertake evaluative work?
- Do partners need to be involved in the evaluation process?

## **Contacts**

The Home Office  
Research Development Statistics  
Room 275, Home Office  
50 Queen Anne's Gate  
London SW1H 9AT  
Tel: 020 7273 2084  
Fax: 020 7222 0211  
<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/index.htm>

Youth Justice Board  
11 Carteret Street  
London SW1H 9DL  
020 7271 3033  
<http://www.youth-justice-board.gov.uk/index.cfm>

## **Further Reading**

There is no one work that provides a total overview of youth crime. The Audit Commission's Report of 1996 and update in 1998 form a starting point concerning the extent of the problem and its prevention. Farrington (1996) provides a useful summary of the reasons for youth crime and of the ways in which those underlying reasons have been tackled. The Youth Justice Board (2002) reviews risk and protective factors associated with youth crime and effective interventions to prevent it. Graham and Bowling (1995) and Flood-Page et al (2000) discuss self reported offending, underlying risk factors and reasons for desistance. Holdaway et al (2001) describe the implementation of the Youth Offending Teams and current statutory measures against youth crime.

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- Youth Justice Board (2001) Risk and protective factors associated with youth crime and effective interventions to prevent it

## **Website Links**

The Home Office  
Research Development Statistics  
<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/index.htm>

Youth Justice Board Youth Inclusion Programme  
<http://www.youth-justice-board.gov.uk/policy/prevention.html>

Youth Inclusion Programme Knowledge Base  
<http://www.yipkbase.com/yipkbase/youthinc.nsf>

Youth Justice Board guidance concerning parent, family and restorative justice work in relation to young offenders  
[http://www.youth-justice-board.gov.uk/policy/development\\_fund.html](http://www.youth-justice-board.gov.uk/policy/development_fund.html)

US Department of Justice  
<http://www.usdoj.gov/>

US National Criminal Justice Reference Service  
<http://www.ncjrs.org>

Crime Reduction website. This has a knowledgebase, toolkits and download able publications  
<http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk>

## **Model Documents**

YIP Managers Guidance Document July 2002  
Available on Youth Inclusion Programme Knowledge Base at  
<http://www.yipkbase.com/yipkbase/youthinc.nsf>