

New Deal for Communities

The National Evaluation

Research Reports

Different Routes to Reducing Youth Crime

Research Report 46

The Neighbourhood Renewal Unit within the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister 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 NRU/ODPM.

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/h>



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Different Routes to Reducing Youth Crime

Research Report 46

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Executive Summary

- Youth crime problems have been identified in the majority of New Deal for Communities (NDC) partnerships and a wide variety of interventions introduced to tackle them.
- There have been two main approaches. One group of interventions targets young offenders and those at greatest risk of offending. The other is more generally aimed at all young people in the NDC area and may provide a wide variety of activities and facilities to divert them from crime.
- Case study work has been carried out in two partnerships. Information on reduction in offending in the target group of seven Youth Inclusion Programmes (YIPs) has been obtained from the national evaluation of the YIP programme. Evidence from these sources has been related to key indicators from the MORI surveys of 2002 and 2004.
- Bradford NDC has taken a multi-faceted approach to youth crime prevention but targeted mainly young offenders and those most at risk of offending. This has been at two levels. A YIP provides approximately 2.5 hours contact time for each young person engaged. An Intensive Supervision programme provides more intensive intervention of up to 20 hours per week for those with the greatest problems.
- Hackney NDC has tackled youth crime by filling the gap caused by a lack of statutory youth service provision in the area. It has supported youth diversionary projects for all young NDC residents. The projects do, however, provide some focussed group and one to one work as well as recreational and sporting activities.
- For both case study NDCs there have been reductions in types of crime associated with young people. Both case study NDCs have shown limited quantitative evidence of reduction in youth offending and examples of desistance from offending or reductions in frequency or seriousness of offending for individual young people.
- MORI survey indicators of change show for both case study NDCs significant reductions in feeling unsafe outside alone after dark and worries about crime. There are less reliable decreases in the perception of teenagers hanging around on the street as a serious problem. Hackney shows a significant increase in satisfaction with the police.
- Eight NDCs have YIPs which have showed reductions in offending of the target group. Six of the eight show a relationship of reduction in offending in the target group and reduction in teenagers hanging around on the street seen as a serious problem in the NDC. From this and from the case study evidence it is suggested that reductions in teenagers hanging around on the streets are likely to be associated with reductions in youth offending.
- A relationship is apparent between decreases in the MORI indicators of perception of teenagers hanging around on the street as a serious problem and of feeling unsafe outside alone after dark (an indicator of fear of crime). The case study NDCs and six YIP NDCs which showed a relationship between teenagers hanging around on the street and youth offending fall fairly close to the regression line. It is tentatively deduced that reductions in youth crime are likely to impact on fear of crime. This has implications for NDC strategies against fear of crime.
- Although it is clear that very different intervention packages may be successful in reducing youth crime and perhaps thereby impacting on fear of crime, there are a number of common elements in the case study approaches. From these may be derived not so much guidance on what works, but pointers to the best way of ensuring that interventions implemented have the greatest chance of producing success. These are not new but confirm findings that have been described earlier in this evaluation and elsewhere. They are nevertheless worth repeating.

- Ingredients for successful youth crime prevention include:
 - Thorough initial assessment of the problem. Use recorded crime data, recorded data on youth offending from YOT or police sources as well as data derived from community surveys and focus groups.
 - Consideration of this assessment when planning a strategy. Tailor the interventions proposed to the problems identified. Identify clear targets and mechanisms through which it is intended that the intervention should impact on the problem.
 - Continued collection of data in order to monitor progress towards targets and show evidence of performance to partner agencies and the community. This can help to facilitate mainstreaming and continued impetus for the project.
 - Partnerships not only with statutory agencies but also voluntary bodies. Most youth crime interventions work by identifying and addressing a range of risk factors for young offenders or those at risk of offending. Tackling this wide range of issues for individuals and groups therefore requires partnership working of both statutory and voluntary agencies to provide expertise and experience as well as funding in money or kind.
 - High quality staff. At the management level experienced, hard working and committed staff are required to support the more junior staff and here projects with a strong professional input often have advantages. However team working is important and there are clear benefits where workers are based in the local area. Where workers are local people they are more likely to understand the problems of the local young people and have local contacts. They may be able to engage with very difficult young people who would not engage with anyone else.
 - Support from the community. In order to maintain this it is necessary to publicise what projects are doing to counter the often very negative stories which are emphasised in the press.

1. Introduction

The links between youth and crime are complex with many young people involved in crime as perpetrators and, less commonly appreciated, many as victims. For most perpetrators this will be only minor illegal behaviour such as under age drinking, buying cigarettes or experimenting with soft drugs but a significant minority will go on to commit more serious crime while still in their teens. The peak age of offending is late teens and disorder is even more commonly associated with youth by most people. Since many risk factors associated with youth offending are common in socially and economically deprived areas, youth crime levels here tend to be higher than the national average. Not only does this impact on current crime levels but those young people who become persistent offenders may continue their offending in their adult years.

34 of the 39 New Deal for Communities (NDC) partnerships identified some kind of youth crime problem in the delivery plans, although for many the assessment of the issue has been based more on the perceptions of residents than on measurement of actual offending levels. 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 (Adamson, 2003a). Problems of youth disorder are even more widely recognised. The NDC average in the first MORI survey (MORI, 2002) was 41% seeing teenagers hanging around on the street as a serious problem in the area compared with 18% nationally and many NDCs identified youth anti-social behaviour, youth disturbance, juvenile nuisance or youths causing annoyance as severe problems in delivery plans.

In response to these issues, NDC partnerships have shown a wide variety of approaches. In one or two NDCs, an integrated strategy to tackle different levels of youth offending has been introduced. In most the emphasis has been on tackling the underlying causes of crime but the causes identified and the suggested ways of impacting upon them have varied. The strong links between youth crime and truancy, on one hand, and youth crime and worklessness/homelessness, on the other, are widely recognised. The role of drugs in youth crime is another common element. Many NDCs have also recognised the role of boredom and lack of facilities.

The interventions introduced can be considered for convenience in two groups:

- those aimed at young people who are already offending or regarded as at great risk of offending, and
- those intended to have a more general effect on all young people by providing activities and facilities to divert them from crime

Those specifically aimed at young offenders or those at most risk of offending fall into three principal types (Adamson, 2003b). These are the Youth Inclusion Programme, Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme and Acceptable Behaviour Contracts. Other projects have included various uses of restorative practices and work with specific groups of young offenders. The other main group of interventions provides a wide variety of activities including not only youth clubs, sport and after school activities but also education, issue based workshops and mentoring (Adamson, 2003a). Those projects in this group which provide more individual risk based intervention with young people probably differ only from those directed at young people most at risk of offending in intensity, that is in the number of hours that can be devoted to each individual. The two groups of interventions are in fact a continuum of intervention intensity.

The Neighbourhood Renewal Unit of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (NRU) has identified the adoption of an evidence-based approach to delivering change (i.e., getting proof of what works in practice) as one of the keys to change of the New Deal for

Communities programme. The NRU requires "Action based on evidence about **what works**' and what doesn't."

(see website <http://www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/ndcomms.asp>).

The NDC National Evaluation therefore needs to consider which of these widely differing approaches works, in what way and in which circumstances. A problem for youth crime prevention is that there are no NDC wide data on youth offending. While the evaluation is collecting recorded crime statistics across all 39 Partnerships, recorded crime figures include offences committed by offenders of any age and are not necessarily a good measure of youth crime prevention. Moreover there is as yet no change data available. Therefore the only potential indicators across the partnerships are provided by the MORI Survey. Again there is no information specifically on youth crime but there are data on experience and fear of crime and on the degree to which teenagers hanging around on the streets is perceived as a problem.

This report will examine the impact on youth crime made in two case study NDCs who are very different in character and who have taken very different approaches to youth crime reduction. Because the two NDCs have provided different kinds of evidence which are not directly comparable, the report will also consider the change in MORI indicators for these NDCs and whether these indicators can be related to evidence of youth crime prevention presented. It will attempt to draw lessons for the 39 Partnerships from these relationships.

2. Methodology

Case study work in two partnerships, Bradford and Hackney, has been carried out over three years. Crime and youth offending statistics have been obtained and analysed, in house reports have been examined and interviews have been carried out with a range of NDC and project staff and with young people themselves. Changes in key indicators for individual partnerships have been derived from reports produced from the MORI Surveys of 2002 and 2004. Performance in Bradford and Hackney for these indicators has been considered in relation to the national average and in relation to the evidence of reduction in youth crime already presented. For Bradford and seven other NDCs which have Youth Justice Board Youth Inclusion Programmes (YIPs) the key indicator of young people hanging around on street corners has been related to reduction in offending by those on the scheme. Finally, the relationship of teenagers hanging around and residents feeling unsafe after dark has been considered across the 39 NDC partnerships

3. Bradford

The Problem

In Bradford the NDC delivery plan showed that with a population of 2.3% of that of Bradford District, total crime was 4.3%, rising to 4.7% for criminal damage, 4.9% for theft of or from a car, 5% for violence against the person, 5.5% for drug offences and 7.8% for robbery. The Youth Offending Information System showed that youth offending in the NDC was more than twice that in the district as a whole. Case study interviews suggested that young offenders were involved in all types of crime although some of the more common ones were theft of vehicles, mobile phone theft and drugs and the NDC Crime and Community Safety Coordinator regarded criminal damage as an indicator for youth crime. In line with Youth Justice Board research, most of the youth crime in the area was committed by a small number of prolific offenders. In Bradford NDC 7% of young people committing offences in a six month period to May 2003 accounted for 32% of the youth offences.

The Approach

Bradford NDC has taken a multi-faceted approach to youth crime reduction with a series of different interventions designed to tackle different levels of youth offending or risk of offending. The main projects are:

A Youth Justice Board Youth Inclusion Programme working with the 50 young people most at risk of offending, referred from a variety of agencies including the Youth Offending Team but also from social services, schools and youth clubs. This was the first project, introduced in April 2000. While the proportion of young people who are already offenders has increased in the last year, many of the young people are just starting offending and others, while assessed as "at risk", are at present still on the edge. The aim is to intervene with these young people before they become deeply involved in criminal activity, tackle issues which may lead them towards crime and thereby prevent future offending. The programme target is 5 hours contact time per week per young person although the Bradford project currently averages less than half that amount. After assessment an Action Plan is drawn up for each young person which aims to include one hour per week with the YIP worker and access to a variety of other provision including programmes around personal development, anger management, first aid and food hygiene, motor education, residential, sport and outdoor pursuits.

A local variant of the Youth Justice Board Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme (TISSP) which is designed to work with prolific or serious offenders, the bulk of the work being with young people referred under court orders. There is some non-statutory work with those most at risk such as siblings of offenders or young people referred by agencies such as police or social services. These young people receive much more intensive intervention according to identified needs, up to 20 hours a week for the more serious cases. Like the YIP, a programme is drawn up for each individual young person. This may include one to one work with an assigned worker and access to services provided by other agencies such as education and training, restorative treatment, counselling and mentor provision. A detailed account of the work of this scheme may be found on the NDC Evaluation website (Adamson, 2004a).

Other interventions in which the NDC is involved include the Princes Trust and Home School Mediation for young people at risk of school exclusion or already excluded. The various projects know the range of other programmes in the area. Where a need is identified, inter-project referral is possible and indeed frequently used.

The Results - Quantitative data

Detailed crime data have not been available for the period before the NDC began in 1999 or the youth crime interventions started in April 2000. Table 1 shows a comparison of the proportion of the figures for proportions of crime in Bradford District committed in the NDC.

Table 1: Changes in proportion of Bradford crime committed in NDC

	Crime in NDC as percentage of crime in Bradford		Change
	Before NDC (from delivery plan)	December 2003- November 2004	
Criminal damage	4.7	3.7	-1
Theft of/from car	4.5	4.1	-0.4
Violent crime	5	6.3	1.3
Robbery	7.8	8.2	+0.4
Drugs Offences	5.5	3.5	-2
Total	4.3	4.2	-0.1

The before NDC figures quoted in the Delivery Plan are compared with the figures for the most recent year for which crime statistics have been provided. It can be seen that while there has been little change for total crime, crimes associated locally with youth have tended relatively to decrease. This conclusion must, however, be approached with some caution. The change in proportion could be, as we would hope, the result of a decrease in the NDC at the same time as smaller decrease or increase in Bradford. Alternatively, however, it could be the result of a large increase in Bradford and a smaller increase in the NDC. In the absence of detailed crime figures before the NDC began, it does however provide an indicator. The figures for violent crime are likely to be distorted because of changes in recording practice and the establishment of a few night clubs and pubs on the edge of the NDC.

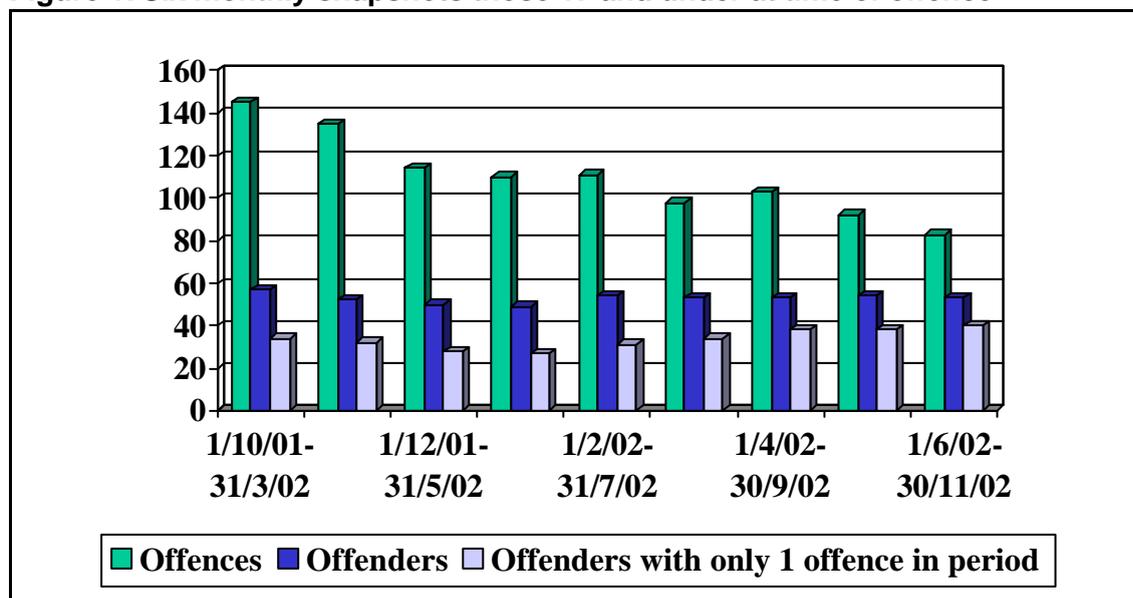
Table 2 compares the crime data for the first two years after youth crime prevention interventions began with the next equal period to March 2004. The figures for the NDC area are compared with those which might be expected if the trends in the NDC area were the same as those in the surrounding area of Bradford to give an estimate of the savings in total crime and types of crime associated with young people. The reduction in criminal damage is particularly large. Although there is a reduction in total crime, it is small because of the sizeable increase in violent crime discussed above.

Table 2: Crimes saved Bradford NDC

	Crimes saved
Criminal Damage	360
Drugs Offences	1
Robbery	57
Theft from vehicle	57
Theft of vehicle	71
Total	6

The reduction in crime figures cannot be definitely ascribed to the youth crime reduction programme. Firstly the crime statistics will include crimes committed by adults. Secondly other NDC crime prevention initiatives such as the community police officers are likely to impact on youth offending as well as that of adults. It seems clear that there has been a reduction of crimes associated with young offenders but is there specific evidence that youth offending has decreased? During the first year of the TISSP figures were produced indicating a decrease in youth offending in the area (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Six monthly snapshots those 17 and under at time of offence



Since that time, however, there have been difficulties in providing meaningful statistics for the area because of changes in recording practice and increases in detections, partly caused by the increased police focus on the area because it is an NDC. Youth offending increased as a result of these factors and because of the move into the area of three prolific young offenders from May 2003 to a peak in October 2003, after which levels again fell. Since April 2004 statistics are produced under a revised system which show a general downward trend month on month in both numbers of offences, offenders and of persistent offenders (Table 3). These statistics must be approached with caution as they cover a relatively short period and seasonal effects cannot be discounted.

Table 3: Young Offenders Cases created in Bradford NDC area April-September 2004

	Persistent	Warned/Cautioned	Sentenced in court	Total
April	8	51	7	59
May	4	20	5	28
June	1	1	1	11
July	1	7	0	7
August	2	15	1	19
September	1	8	1	13

The area based evidence for a reduction in youth offending is supported by data for individual projects. The TISSP can show that of its clients 12% re-offended in 2002/03, 8% in 2003/04 and 5.5% in the first three quarters of 2004/05. The YIP showed that, for the year April 2003 to March 2004, 71% of the "Top 50" target group engaged reduced their offending and that the offending rate (which takes into account numbers of arrests and numbers of offences) reduced by 56%.

Quantitative evidence that Bradford's youth crime prevention strategy has shown some success can be summarised as follows:

- reduction in crimes associated with young people, particularly criminal damage
- some area based evidence of reduction in youth offending
- TISSP clients show reduction in re-offending
- YIP target group show reduced arrests and numbers of offences

The Results - Qualitative evidence

The quantitative evidence is reinforced from more qualitative opinions and case studies. The NDC Crime and Community Safety Coordinator felt in February 2003 that "There is a reduction in youth crime in the area and a reduction in criminal damage which I feel is an indicator" and in September said that reductions were continuing. In November 2004 he said "We do see the youth crime projects as having had a significant impact on recorded youth crime and on criminal damage and these types of offences which are young people's type of offending". The TISSP feel that they are making an impact. The TISSP coordinator claimed in February 2003 "We have not had young people engaged on the programme in the Trident area re-offending since November." A worker said "It is one of the best schemes that have been set up. It is reducing crime in the BD5 area".

Case studies of eight young people with court orders in 2003 and 2004 and on TISSP programmes examined case histories, and interviewed the young people themselves, parents and key workers. Of these young people, six have not re-offended during or since their time on the programme (see examples in Box 1). Although three of these were on orders connected with the Bradford riots and were perhaps not persistent

offenders, the other three had committed at least 15 previous offences between them including arson, robbery, burglary, theft and criminal damage. One of these three acknowledged that the TISSP had helped him to stop offending saying:

“Yes. I do not go about with the same people.”

Box 1: Case Histories

Case A

Age at first conviction 14

Age at start of order 14

Offences - Arson, robbery, burglary

Background - Parents unemployed. Older brother in prison for armed robbery. Has not attended school for two years

Order started May 2003

Still will not attend school. One to one education. Says he has learned to read better

Not re-offended

Case B

Age at first conviction 12

Age at start of order 17

Offences - theft, criminal damage, shoplifting, unlawful sex

Background - deprived family, concerns over neglect of children

Order started February 2003

Achieved qualifications in IT, First Aid, food Hygiene, Maths, English

Not re-offended

Of the two re-offenders, one has committed robbery of phones and the other, after a nine month arrest free period, has recently been charged with burglary. Two comments made by parents about the most helpful part of the programme related to keeping the young person away from crime scenes or criminal peers.

The YIP can also claim success in reducing offending in individuals in its target group. The first YIP manager 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.” His successor said “Young people’s crime is going down because there are a lot of initiatives around” but also indicated that there is still work to be done as “the ones that are offending tend to be doing a lot more serious crime now” and “the other thing that is becoming more acceptable to young people is violence.”

4. Hackney

The Problem

At the time of the first delivery plan the crime rate was more than twice that of Hackney Borough and two and a half times the national rate. 38% of respondents to a local survey were afraid to go out at night for fear of crime. A detailed crime audit in July 2001 pointed to problems with violence against the person, street robbery, burglary, motor vehicle crime, drug offences, domestic violence, race crime, prostitution, drug offences and anti-social behaviour. The audit also emphasised the part young people play in crime. 15.6% of crime suspects were aged between 11 and 17 and 12.3% of the victims of violent crimes were of the same age. Most of the alleged perpetrators of day time muggings were perceived to be young males in their late teen and early twenties. Young people were also regarded as perpetrators and victims of snatch thefts. Many prostitutes were very young. Vehicle crime was high - the rate for one ward standing at

167.4% over that for Hackney Borough. Local people believed that young people from the age of 14 to late teens were responsible for the thefts, burning out and vandalism of vehicles. In terms of anti-social behaviour it was 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. The 1999 Household Survey of the NDC area showed that gangs of young people hanging around were seen as a big problem by 44% of respondents. The same percentage reported that gangs of young people were the main reason why residents feel unsafe while walking after dark. Teenagers hanging around remained a serious problem for 43% of respondents to the 2002 MORI survey. Case study interviews indicated that the important youth crimes were vehicle crime - theft of cars and motorbikes for joyriding and arson, muggings, street robbery particularly of telephones and drug related crime.

The Approach

The strategy adopted by the NDC, which began in April 2000, was to tackle youth crime by filling the gap caused by the lack of statutory youth service provision by supporting youth diversionary projects. This was expected to add to the expected impact of the establishment of a City Academy in the area and renovation of the estates. The NDC has funded a number of youth projects including YMCA sessional outreach work, a traditional boys club, a water sports project, an adventure playground, a contribution towards the Hackney wide Summer University and a youth participation project. The main diversionary projects are, however, the Crib and SKY.

The SKY (South Kingsland Youth) Partnership originated in the summer of 2001 as local voluntary sector project and from the beginning of 2002 was part funded by the NDC. SKY works with young people aged 10 to 25 and has two main areas of work; youth information services and youth led projects.

The youth information services maintain a resource point where young people can access information including an internet library and one to one sessions providing a more in depth approach for individual young people. Young people can be referred by agencies or refer themselves for one to one support.

In the youth led projects SKY supports young people to run projects which are of benefit to the community. This may also involve use of the resource room. For example, a small group of girls made a pamphlet on the problems of young women for distribution in the area.

SKY also holds public meetings every quarter for youth projects to provide a forum for the exchange of information about what is being done. Where gaps in provision are identified, SKY works with the projects to fill the gaps. SKY also engages with young people through detached outreach on the estates. Examples of varied projects are work with teenage mothers and fathers, a major football tournament and a youth day where young people broke into groups to discuss crime and other matters. Two young people were funded by Save the Children to train as project workers with SKY and have since been employed on a half time basis.

The Crib was set up by a private company running most of the housing in the area in 2000 because of recognition of the need. From 2001 the project was first entirely funded by NDC before gradually moving towards support by a wide variety of organisations ranging from the Metropolitan Police through Connexions and the Learning Trust to Hackney Voluntary Services. The Crib works with young people over the age of 9 and regards itself as an informal youth inclusion project. The Crib ran a youth centre in a former school until September 2004, between 10 a.m. and 8 p.m. on two weekdays and every other Saturday. Here the young people could do arts and crafts, dance, play badminton, pool and table tennis or just chat, providing an alternative

to congregating on the local stair well. There was also a homework club on Wednesdays. Unfortunately the Crib had to close in September 2004 because of premises problems but it was hoped to move into new premises early in 2005. In the interim the workers attempted to maintain contact by doing outreach work with the more challenging young people and acting as advocates for young people in court and to get excluded boys back to school.

The Crib is very youth centred with an active youth forum of 10 young members but with more attending meetings if they feel any threat to the project. Young people suggest what classes should be run, hire dance tutors and generally organise the club. Besides providing the facility, the Crib works with young people to address issues and provide support. The Crib is open to all young people in the area but because it is open during the day is particularly available to those who are excluded from school or who have slipped through the system. Work is carried out with Social Services, young people are accompanied to Housing if there is an issue, referrals may be made to the teenage pregnancy unit and attempts are made to build relationships by working with parents or entire families. Group discussions centre on issues of housing, employment and sexual health and there are also one to one confidential sessions. An anti-bullying initiative in years five and six of junior schools took the form of the production of a video by young people for the school. Through Connexions there is a programme for education in the home. A Healthy Eating Centre on Friday nights at a local community centre is run by young people who have gained qualifications in food hygiene and health and safety. A scheme has been run for four consecutive years in conjunction with the Metropolitan Police aimed at improving youth/police relations and specifically focussed on stop and search procedures. This initiative, called "Trading Places" involves young people and police officers swapping roles to build mutual understanding.

The Results - Quantitative data

While the total crime rate for the NDC was at the time of the first delivery plan said to be twice that in Hackney Borough, crime data provided for the NDC and information in the Hackney Crime Audit April 2001- March 2004 show that for 2003/04 the difference in rates has fallen to 1.5 times. Table 4 shows changes in types of crime locally associated with young people up to March 2004. While annual crime numbers for the NDC have been available from two years before the NDC began, similar figures have not been available for Hackney Borough as a whole and therefore the changes in Table 4 are in gross figures. The trends in the surrounding area have not been removed. In view of change in the comparative rate of total crime in the NDC and Hackney Borough it seems likely that the NDC will be performing better for individual crime categories but evidence has not been available.

Table 4: Changes in crime - Hackney NDC

	Percentage change		
	2 years before NDC/ First 2 years after	First 2 years after/ Second 2 years after	2 years before NDC/ Second 2 years after
Violence against the person	7.9	4.4	12.6
Robbery	41.4	-12.0	24.5
Theft from motor vehicle	21.5	15.1	39.8
Theft of motor vehicle	23.7	-16.0	3.9
Other theft	64.3	10.2	81.1
Criminal Damage	-8.8	-2.2	-10.7
Drugs	-33.8	81.1	20.0
Total crime	16.4	9.9	27.9

The table shows that the only crime category for which there has been sustained improvement is criminal damage. There have been sustained increases in violence

against the person, theft from vehicle and other theft. Drugs offences showed a drop in the first period but thereafter a large increase. Thefts of motor vehicles and robbery reduced in the second two year after. However, as was mentioned with regard to Bradford, much of this crime will be committed by adults. Much of the violent crime is associated with the night time economy in a small part of the area and is thought to be committed by non residents. In addition some of the reductions noted are probably more associated with specific initiatives than with the youth projects. For example Operation Crackdown in January 2000 targeted crack cocaine dens, a government campaign against mobile phone theft in 2002 impacted on robbery and more recently there have been high profile campaigns against vehicle crime which have resulted in reported 2004 reductions in both theft of and theft from vehicles. While youth interventions may have impacted on criminal damage, the introduction of neighbourhood wardens is another likely contributory factor.

Some data have been available for the first two years after the NDC start concerning numbers of young people charged with crime in the area. In this period, while reported crime increased slightly, there was evidence of a reduction in that committed by young people. Comparison of a period two years before the NDC began with two years after showed a reduction of 20 (8%) in the numbers of those aged 10-17 charged (Table 5).

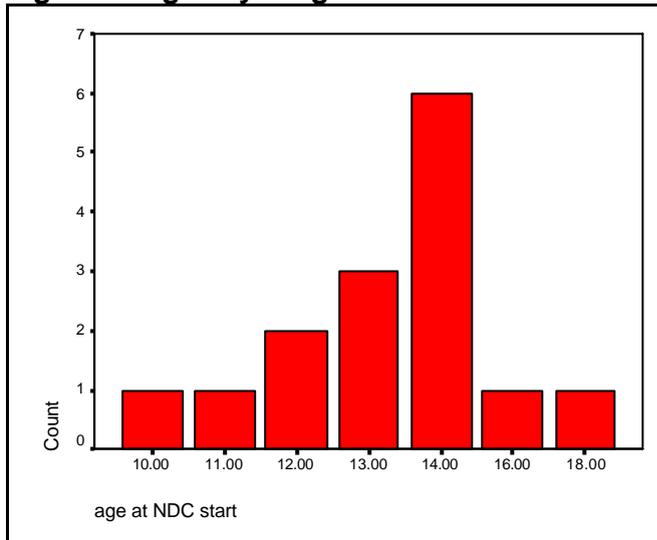
Table 5: Crime before and first two years after Hackney NDC start

	Offences where offenders accused are aged				All Offences
	10-17			18-24	
	April 98 - March 2000	April 2000 - March 2002	Percentage change	Percentage change	
Burglary	19	11	-42	-29	-10
Theft & handling	77	60	-22	+19	+16
Criminal Damage	36	8	-77	-3	-5
Robbery	9	40	+355	+35	+32
Drugs	31	39	+26	-24	-14
Total	238	218	-8	+3	+6

There is a large decrease for criminal damage, which lends weight to the suggestion that the reduction in criminal damage noted in reported crime figures is an impact of youth crime prevention, and lesser ones for burglary and theft and handling. There is a very large increase in robbery, probably reflecting the upsurge in mobile phone theft in London, and a lesser increase for drug offences. The decreases in burglary and theft and handling may be the result of crime switch to robbery, all these being types of acquisitive crime. However criminal damage is not acquisitive crime and its reduction can then be seen as an independent improvement. Older young people (18-24) show a slight increase in those charged but have less considerable increases or decreases for individual types of crime. Criminal damage and burglary offences show percentage decreases less than those for 10-17 year olds charged.

Information has been provided concerning the offending histories of 15 young people with home postcodes in the NDC area aged between 10 and 18 at the start of the NDC and between 15 and 22 now. Figure 2 shows the age breakdown of these young offenders at the start of the NDC.

Figure 2: Age of young offenders at start of NDC



Overall there were 7 convictions of these young offenders before the NDC start, 22 in the first two years after, 50 in the next two years and 12 in the remaining eight months for which information is held (Table 6).

Table 6: Convictions of 15 Hackney NDC young offenders by age at conviction

	Convictions at age				Total convictions
	10-14	15-17	18-20	21	
Before NDC	7				7
First 2 years	6	15	1		22
Second 2 years	12	32	3	3	50
Last eight months	1	6	5		12

As might be expected from the ages of the young people, before the NDC start all the convictions were at age 14 or less. In the later periods, the ages at conviction reflect the increase in offending which would be expected between 15 and 17. However, while the peak rate for offending among males nationally is still 18 (Home Office 2003), there is an apparent tailing off in convictions among this group in the last eight months for which data are held. This may be a reduction of offending among these young people as a group although the sample is too small to show any firm conclusions.

Table 7 shows the types of offences committed. A range of offences are recorded the most frequent being theft and handling and drugs offences followed by vehicle theft and assault. It is notable that criminal damage features hardly at all.

Table 7: Types of offences committed

	Before NDC	First 2 years	Second 2 years	Last 8 months
Theft & handling	3	3	10	0
Vehicle theft	0	2	9	1
Offensive weapon	1	4	0	1
Assault	2	4	3	1
Drugs	0	3	9	3
Criminal Damage		1		
Robbery	0	2	3	0
Burglary	1	0	4	2
Sexual offences	0	2	0	0
Other offences	0	1	12	4
Total	7	22	50	12

All the drugs offences, of which 3 were for heroin/crack possession, 1 for ecstasy and 10 for cannabis, took place after the start of the NDC. A contributory explanation for the

lack of drugs offences before the NDC start may be the then age of the young offenders concerned. Violent crime does show some encouraging signs with reduced assault convictions and those for possession of offensive weapons. This is the reverse of what might be expected since violent offences are nationally more common in late teenage males than in younger boys and may be indicative of a beneficial effect of NDC interventions. Conclusions must however be tentative because the sample size is very small. Furthermore only four of the group are known to have been involved with NDC interventions and therefore we cannot infer from the total group much about the effectiveness of NDC youth crime prevention. Convictions have not reduced for the four Crib members in the group with 12 in the first two years and 16 in the next.

Quantitative evidence of success for Hackney's approach to reducing youth crime can be summarised as follows:

- sustained reduction over four years in criminal damage, frequently associated with young people
- reduction in first two years of NDC of burglary, criminal damage and theft/handling committed by those aged 10-17
- possible indications of reduced offending, particularly violent crime, in a small sample of resident young offenders

The Results - qualitative evidence

Interviews provided anecdotal evidence of reduction in offending by Crib members. For example one individual was said to have been involved with drugs but now does not offend at all and has a girl friend. Another with a history of street robbery now only smokes cannabis. Some young people who might have been expected to offend in view of their background have not. However in the words of the police sergeant "There are some difficult characters. It has not always worked". One local resident identified a massive reduction in antisocial behaviour on his estate in the three weeks when SKY first coordinated a local football tournament because the young people were practicing rather than hanging around on stairwells. Therefore further tournaments have been run, the last on every Friday in October 2004.

Although total convictions have not reduced among the four Crib members in the group for which offending data was obtained, there are signs of success, if not in completely desisting from offending, in offending less seriously or less often (Box 2). A fourth Crib member was regarded as a success for a time. After committing a first offence at the age of 12 he was found guilty of offences including theft and handling, two and possessing heroin and cocaine over the next five years. In the next 21 months he was convicted only for possession of cannabis on four occasions. However he has since had two convictions, for possession of an offensive weapon and of heroin and is currently on remand for murder. The murder with which the two young people were involved took place when young people from Hackney tried to attend a youth club in nearby Islington. Young people are very protective of what they see as their own territory and an incident developed between the two groups during which one young person was hit on the head and died. Although there were numerous contributing circumstances to this incident, the temporary closure of the Crib in September 2004 because the lease on the premises finished is locally regarded as one factor. Although great efforts had been made to find alternative premises, this was not achieved in time. New premises have now been located and are being improved prior to reopening of the Crib. Although terminating or interrupting youth interventions will rarely have such extreme impacts, this case does underline the lesson that projects doing valuable work with young people should be considered long term, and that efforts must be made to ensure that, once started, facilities valued by the young people are able to continue.

Box 2: Case Histories 2

Case A

Age at first offending 11

Age at NDC start 14

Offences to 2002 - assault, possessing article with a blade, possess heroin

Offences since 2002 - handling stolen goods and burglary April 2003. No further offences.

Case B

Age at first offending 18

Age at NDC start 18

Offences 2001 to July 2003 - mainly theft and handling 2001. No further convictions but currently on bail for handling stolen goods.

Case C

Age at first offending 14

Age at NDC start 14

Offences to September 2002 - violent offences, theft, breach of ASBO, driving offences
No further convictions. Currently on remand for murder

One of the strengths of the Hackney Borough strategy against youth crime is seen as the close involvement of police in roles other than enforcement. For example a chief inspector is involved in a new initiative to tackle gang problems, with workers from the Youth Inclusion Programme and Connexions and detached outreach workers. The police sergeant seconded to the NDC has been actively involved in the Crib, attending usually on four days a week. He has said that it takes 6 to 7 months for him to build up a relationship with the young people. The time the project has been running and the continuity in his secondment have enabled this to happen. Unfortunately the relationship has suffered recently because the police sergeant was given information concerning the murder which he had to pass on. The Crib recently won the Police Commissioner's Peace Week Award for the "Trading Places" scheme which aims to improve relationships between the police and young people. Hackney Borough Council are thinking of including this in the Youth Strategy for the whole borough. There is evidence of improved relations between the police and young people which will result partly from "Trading Places" but may be also influenced by a "Stop and Speak" project being implemented more widely in Hackney. When accompanying two local beat officers around the area on a research visit it was noted that they were on first name terms with young people and adults. The Crib has the support of the community. When the NDC funding was reviewed in March 2003, all the community representatives voted for continued funding and community support also helped in obtaining the new premises. The Crib is also well thought of by local agencies. The Learning Trust in Hackney Borough Community Services carried out a review of projects in the borough and identified the Crib as one of three worth saving.

5. MORI Survey Indicators for Bradford and Hackney

As has been mentioned above, the MORI survey currently provides the only comparable data across all NDCs. Examination of selected key indicators from the MORI surveys of 2002 and 2004 has shown some similarities between Bradford and Hackney in the changes shown but also differences (Table 8). In both NDCs the perception of teenagers hanging around on the street as a serious problem has decreased at more than twice the NDC average rate, although these decreases are not statistically significant (they are not sufficiently large for certainty that they are not due to chance). Both NDCs are now below the NDC average, Hackney marginally and Bradford with a statistically significant difference of 6%. This seems to indicate that efforts to reduce youth crime may have impacted on anti-social behaviour. Both NDCs

started with levels of those feeling unsafe after dark higher than the NDC average and in both a statistically significant reduction has brought them to the NDC average.

Table 8: Change in key indicators from the MORI Surveys of 2002 and 2004

	Change percent 2002-2004 (start level in brackets)		
	Bradford	Hackney	NDC average
Teenagers hanging around on the streets a serious problem	-4 (37)	-5 (43)	-2 (41)
Quality of life in area very/fairly good	4 (73)	2 (72)	2 (76)
Feel very unsafe outside alone after dark	-9 (36)	-9 (34)	-6 (33)
Very/fairly satisfied with police	0 (54)	8 (52)	5 (48)
Very/fairly worried about burglary	-7 (64)	-12 (63)	-10 (65)
Very/fairly worried about being robbed or mugged	-15 (62)	-8 (63)	-10 (58)
Experienced burglary/attempted burglary in last 12 months	-4 (8)	-1 (6)	-2 (7)
Experienced assault in last 12 months	-4 (6)	0 (5)	-1 (5)
Experienced vehicle theft in last 12 months	-6 (10)	0 (8)	-1 (6)

Bradford, which started with a level significantly above the national average, shows no change in police satisfaction. The Community Policing started early in the NDC and may account for the high MORI base level. The evaluation of Bradford NDC's Community Policing suggested that it had led to a general level of appreciation for the level of police visibility in the area, of the efforts made to increase confidence in the police and evidence of impacts on perceptions of unequal treatment by police and levels of police satisfaction. Public perceptions of response times and quality of response were also thought to have improved (Adamson, 2004b). Hackney shows a significant increase in satisfaction with the police which means it is now well above the NDC average although still far short of the national average. While increased emphasis on police beat patrols and the introduction of neighbourhood wardens, no doubt, have been principal factors, the Trading Places project which aims to improve relationships between youth and the police may also have contributed.

Neither Bradford nor Hackney show significant reductions in experience of crime although the vehicle theft reduction in Bradford approaches the level which might be accepted as a real decrease. In terms of worries about crime, however, there are significant improvements, particularly in concerns about being mugged or robbed in Bradford.

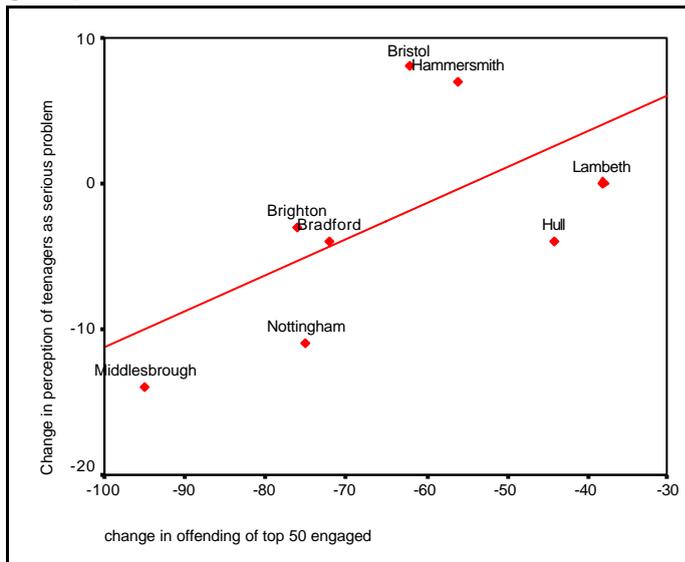
6. Teenagers Hanging Around and Youth Crime

It is shown above that there is some evidence that the problem of teenagers hanging around has reduced in two NDCs with active youth crime prevention programmes which have shown some evidence of success, although these reductions may not be reliable. Is there other evidence that youth crime is reducing in NDCs where teenagers hanging around are seen to be less of a problem?

As has been mentioned there is no NDC wide information on youth offending. However, at least 17 NDCs have used the Youth Justice Board Youth Inclusion Programme as part of their strategy against youth crime. For eight NDCs there is limited information in the national evaluation of the YIP programme (Morgan Harris Burrows 2003) concerning total numbers engaged by the programme and reduction in offending by those in the principal target group who are engaged to December 2002. The eight YIPs all show reductions in offending in the target group. Consideration of the MORI Survey 2002 figures for differences between the NDC and NDC average in

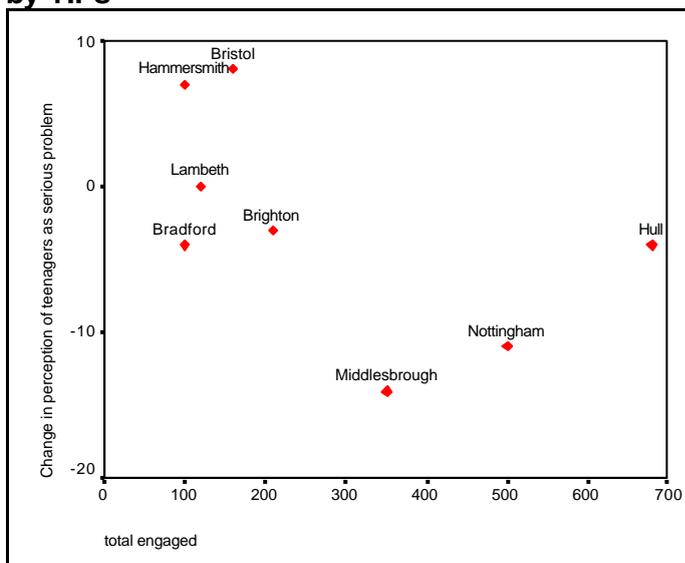
those regarding teenagers hanging around on the street as a serious problem shows a strong negative relationship with changes in offending (correlation -0.753 significant at the 0.05 level). Figure 3 shows that there is a modest relationship (correlation 0.596) between reductions in perceptions of teenagers hanging around as a serious problem and reductions in offending by the YIP target group. However because of the very small sample the significance does not reach the 5% level meaning that we cannot reject the possibility that the relationship might have occurred by chance. If the two NDCs of Hammersmith and Bristol are removed from the analysis, the correlation increases to 0.778 and the significance to 0.068 which approaches the 5% cut off level.

Figure 3: Changes in teenagers as a serious problem and offending by YIP target group



Four of the five YIP NDCs which show reductions in perceptions of teenagers hanging around as a serious problem also have between 200 and 700 total numbers of young people engaged while the three NDCs with no change or increases in the problem of teenagers have levels of engagement of 160 and below and. However Figure 4 shows that there is no clear relationship between these variables.

Figure 4: Changes in teenagers as a serious problem and total number engaged by YIPs



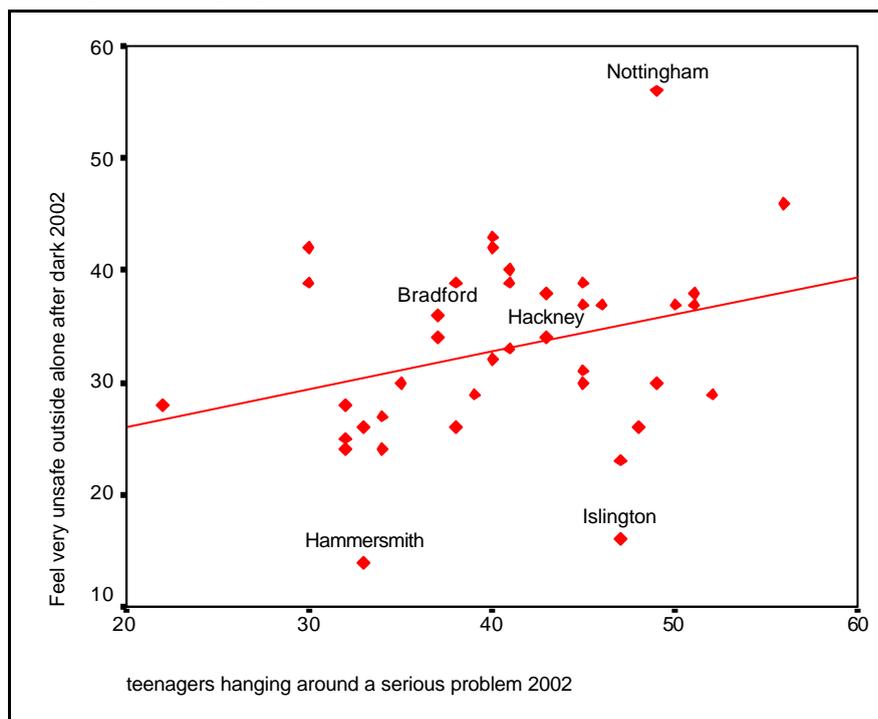
There is, therefore, some evidence that reductions in youth offending in a few NDCs are linked to reductions in perceptions of teenagers hanging around on the streets as a serious problem. This must however be regarded as tentative for a number of reasons.

Firstly, the number of NDCs considered is very small. Secondly, there could be a wide range of other factors affecting these perceptions. Thirdly, the MORI change data does not relate to the same period as the offending data. However for two NDC YIPs more recent data is held. For Bradford 71% of the “Top 50” reduced their offending in 2003-4 showing little change from that in the evaluation report. For Brighton reductions in recent months have been less which would bring its relationship with the decrease in perception of teenagers as a problem closer to the regression line.

7. The relationship between feeling unsafe and teenagers hanging around

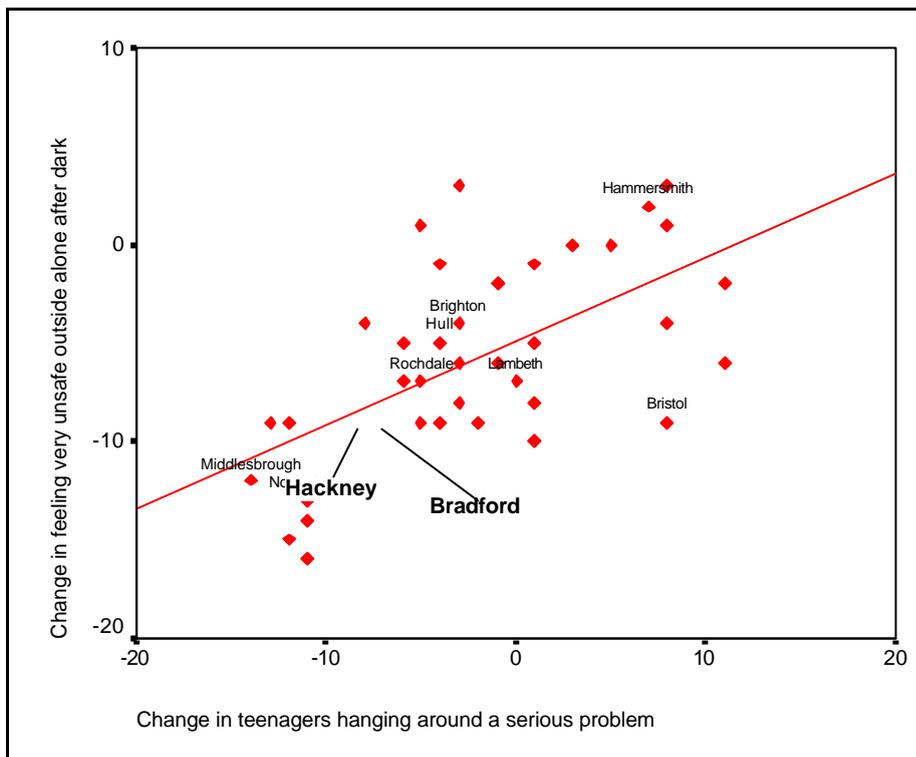
It is shown above that both Bradford and Hackney have decreases in perceptions of teenagers hanging around on the streets as a serious problem, although these may not be reliable, and significant reductions in feeling unsafe after dark, which is often regarded as an indicator of fear of crime. The relationship of the levels of these two variables in 2002 has therefore been considered across all 39 Partnerships and is shown in graph form in Figure 5. It can be seen that there is a weak relationship (Correlation 0.306, significance 0.059 and therefore just not significant).

Figure 5: NDC partnerships relationships feelings of safety and problem of teenagers hanging around in 2002



However, Figure 6 shows that the relationship for change in these two indicators is stronger. As can be seen, although there is considerable scatter, there is a modest relationship with a Pearson correlation of 0.587 which is significant at the one per cent level. 34% of the variance in changes of feelings of safety can be explained by changes in teenagers hanging around. Hackney and Bradford, while not showing the greatest reductions in either variable, fall fairly close to the regression line. It is clear that this is also true for the YIP NDCs which showed a relationship between changes in perceptions of young people hanging around on the streets as a serious problem and changes in offending by YIP target group.

Figure 6: Change in feelings of safety and teenagers hanging around 2002-2004



Relationships were also examined between these change indicators and changes in quality of life, satisfaction with the police and experience of burglary, assault and vehicle theft. No significant correlations were found with changes in feeling unsafe although there were significant correlations between change in experience of vehicle crime, burglary and assault. A regression analysis using crime variables (changes in satisfaction with the police and experience of burglary, assault and vehicle theft) and changes in perceptions of teenagers hanging around and of quality of life found that the greatest amount of variance in feeling unsafe was explained by changes in teenagers hanging around with changes in quality of life and experience of assault making the next highest contribution.

A relationship between reduction in the perception of young people hanging around on the streets as a serious problem and reduction in feeling unsafe alone after dark on the street would not seem surprising. Residents are likely to feel intimidated and therefore less safe where there are groups of youths regardless of whether there is any real threat. In one NDC young people themselves described their fear of attack and gave that as a reason why they spend their time in groups. "We feel safe in a group." "I go with friends to be safe." They felt that adult fear of gangs of young people is often not justified in that not many crimes are committed in groups. The gangs may be intimidating but are not actually linked to crime although, as the young people said, "old people look at us like we're criminals". The point was also made that the vast majority of young people are not engaged in crime but a few high profile youngsters cause most of the problems.

A relationship between decrease in young people hanging around on the streets being a problem and evidence of youth crime reduction has been observed in some NDCs. A relationship between decrease in young people hanging around on the streets being a problem and decrease in feeling unsafe after dark has been noted for the same NDCs. Therefore we may tentatively conclude that reducing youth crime is likely to impact on feeling unsafe. This is in line with other research. For example, an evaluation of the YJB Summer Splash programme showed an impact on motor crime, drugs offences and juvenile nuisance. It was also suggested from qualitative feedback from the community that the scheme had played an important part in decreasing fear of crime. It would seem therefore that where NDCs aim to reduce fear of crime as measured by feeling

unsafe on the street at night, one of the strategies should be youth crime prevention initiatives. These may be intensive programmes for young offenders or they may be little more than providing alternative places for young people to go. Even if there is little impact on actual youth offending, the latter may contribute to reducing fear of crime. Rochdale has done just that by introducing Youth Tolerance Zones where young people can congregate and a certain amount of noise will be tolerated within set bounds. The scheme aims to educate both sides, since there is a question whether incidents are the result of youth nuisance or of adult intolerance. While other interventions are likely to have contributed it is notable that Rochdale has shown a 5% decrease in those regarding teenagers hanging around on the street as a problem and a 7% decrease in feeling unsafe.

8. Conclusion

It has been shown that two NDCs in very different areas have achieved some success in reducing youth offending using very different approaches. One NDC has emphasized intensive work with young offenders and those most at risk of offending and the other has concentrated on improving provision for all youth in the area, and in the process has worked with some young offenders. One has had a substantial input from statutory youth offending agencies while the other has had active support from the police but has otherwise been more driven by a voluntary and youth service input. One is located within established organisations while the other has struggled to find suitable premises. There is however some common ground:

- both started by establishing the nature of the problem. Both had access to recorded crime data. One was able to also use youth offending data and the other relied heavily on surveys conducted for a crime audit
- both planned their strategy against youth crime to target the particular problems identified
- both have continued to collect detailed data to assist their planning and monitor their progress
- both have strong partnerships involving not only statutory agencies but also voluntary bodies. In Bradford the YOT are heavily involved with both projects. There is a strong link between the YMCA and TISSP and the YIP now shares a building and information with a variety of youth organisations in a Young People's Support Unit. In Hackney the Metropolitan Police have a substantial role and there are links with education, social services, and Save the Children
- both have a key strength in the quality of their staff. In Bradford it is regarded as very important that workers are local people who understand the problems of the local young people and have local contacts. The local workers "can engage with very difficult young people who would not engage with anyone else." This is felt to be partly because the workers themselves had had colourful pasts and therefore "similar experiences and show that you can come good." Young people interviewed regarded workers as friends and referred to the time given to them, to the workers' availability at all times and to the workers being easy to talk to. In Hackney the workers who are perceived as the right kind of people who are "understanding people who can recognise need" and who are willing to give time. The Crib manager said "they have someone apart from parents and teachers that they can fall back on and it's confidential. We make it their choice to bring us home to their parents." The police also see the Crib workers as good at their jobs
- both have the support of the community as evidenced from interviews with the Bradford YOT manager, workers in both projects and the support of community leaders in the NDC partnerships

It is clear that there is no single route to success in youth crime prevention. From these similarities, however, there may be derived not guidance on “what works”, but pointers to the best way of ensuring that interventions implemented have the greatest chance of producing success.

Reductions in offending among the target group have been shown in eight NDC YIPs, one of which was also a case study. It is suggested from exploring links for the case study NDCs and YIP NDCs with MORI survey indicators that reduction in the perception of young people standing around on street corners as a serious problem may be tentatively regarded as a proxy for youth crime prevention success. Further research to assess youth offending levels and interventions implemented with NDCs such as Middlesbrough, Nottingham and Hartlepool which have experienced large reductions in the problem would help to throw further light on this. An apparent relationship between the reduction in the perception of young people standing around on street corners as a serious problem and decrease in feeling unsafe suggests that youth crime prevention projects may be important contributors to NDC strategies to reduce fear of crime.

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Website links:

<http://ndcevaluation.adc.shu.ac.uk/ndcevaluation/Reports.asp>

NDC National Evaluation site for other evaluation reports

<http://www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/ndcomms.asp>

Neighbourhood Renewal Unit