

# Youth Taskforce – Progress Report

Summer 2009



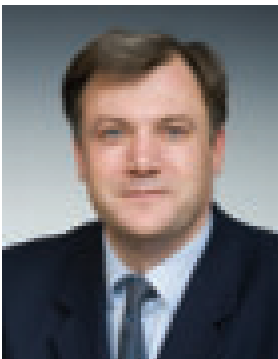
department for  
children, schools and families

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# Foreword by the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families



The great majority of young people are successful and law-abiding, a credit to themselves and their families. Unfortunately, it is also undeniable that a small minority pose a risk to others around them, undermining strong

communities and tarnishing the image of young people overall.

The message we collectively give to this group must be unambiguously clear: we will not tolerate

your offending and anti-social behaviour and we will act firmly and decisively to make sure it stops.

Chronic problems like drug and alcohol abuse often lie at the heart of youth offending and anti-social behaviour, so non-negotiable, expert intervention to tackle these problems must be part of our approach: there is no point dealing with the presenting features if we don't also address the underlying causes.

I established the Youth Taskforce to respond more effectively to young people like these and to get in early to prevent and halt the anti-social, offending, or other damaging behaviour which, if unchecked, can blight neighbourhoods and ruin lives.

The numbers of first-time entrants to the criminal justice system aged 10-17 fell by 9.4% between 2006-7 and 2007-8 and we are confident this downward trend is continuing, demonstrating that better prevention and early intervention – which the Youth Taskforce promotes through all its work - are having a real impact.

This report documents how the Taskforce is helping to turn round some of our most difficult and vulnerable young people, with more than 30,000 benefiting directly from its work over the last year. Drawing on expertise across

Government, local authorities, and the voluntary and private sectors, the Taskforce is gathering and promoting best practice, and injecting vigor and imagination into how services are delivered, making sure agencies work effectively together.

The Taskforce has developed a triple-track approach of enforcement with early intervention and non-negotiable support and challenge, because the evidence shows that when these three elements work together the best results are achieved. The most forward-looking local authorities have already put the triple-track approach into practice to get young people back on track. The Taskforce is working to ensure every area benefits from the experience of these leaders in the field.

The progress being made in many localities, with the support of the Taskforce and other partners, is impressive. Pioneering approaches like the Intensive Intervention and Challenge and Support Projects are already improving outcomes for some of the most difficult and vulnerable young people. Young people in some of the most deprived neighborhoods have new opportunities to get involved in positive activities, including on Friday and Saturday nights. And 95% of local authorities have now implemented the Targeted Youth Support reforms, meaning systematic and joined-up approaches to prevention, early intervention and support are increasingly the norm.

Anne Weinstock and the Taskforce are making an outstanding contribution, supporting practitioners and managers to deliver sustained change on the ground, overcoming challenges and making a tangible difference to the lives of young people, their families and the communities in which they live. I applaud the progress made over the last year.

I hope you enjoy reading this report, with its inspirational case studies and ideas for effective practice, and I look forward to celebrating further successes in the months and years ahead.



**Ed Balls,**  
Secretary of State for  
Children, Schools and Families



# The Youth Taskforce

**The Youth Taskforce is part of the Department for Children, Schools and Families and was set up to help meet the *Children's Plan* commitment to improve outcomes for some of our most at risk and challenging young people.**

Evolving from the Respect Taskforce, the Youth Taskforce has deepened and strengthened the government's approach to tackling youth crime and anti-social behaviour. In doing so, we contribute to Public Service Agreement 14, *increasing the number of children and young people on the path to success.*

The triple track approach

## enforcement

where behaviour is unacceptable or illegal.

## non-negotiable support

to address properly the underlying causes of poor behaviour; and

## better prevention

to tackle emerging problems before they become serious and entrenched;

We work across government and with partners up and down the country to strengthen local delivery of services. March 2008 saw the launch of the Youth Taskforce Action Plan, backed by a total funding package of £218 million. In parallel, a Families Delivery Team was set-up, working directly with local authorities and other partners to extend and improve targeted support for families. The Action Plan is informed and inspired by the Government's 'triple track' approach:

This progress report showcases some of the excellent work that is making a huge difference to young people and their families. It introduces some young people and parents who have succeeded in turning their lives around, and the professionals who have helped them. Much of this work does not get the publicity it deserves, but nevertheless shows that people across the country are making a difference, and that others can do the same.

# Working together: building success to improve delivery

By building strong partnerships with local authorities, the police and other agencies, and third sector organisations, the Taskforce brings together professionals across traditional boundaries to organise multi-agency services around the particular challenges of each young person. Our delivery programme consists of a range of successful and promising approaches and gives us direct, regular contact with managers and front-line workers in more than 80 local authorities, in addition to a programme of Targeted Youth Support reforms that operates in every area.

Taskforce-funded projects improve and transform the lives of thousands of young people, families and neighbours, especially in the most deprived neighbourhoods. Through the dedication

and commitment of leaders, managers and practitioners from a range of disciplines, working more closely together than ever before, young people are being helped to build aspirations and achieve their potential.

The Taskforce also drives change more broadly, by testing new approaches, building partnerships and demonstrating what can be done. We have a rolling programme of conferences and seminars, through which we have reached some 3,000 practitioners from a range of different disciplines over the last year. By showcasing success and sharing ideas at these events, the Taskforce is leading innovation and excellence while bringing professionals together to exchange experiences and build regional and national networks. Meanwhile, since April 2007 the Families Delivery Team has delivered a number of events and training days for family practitioners.

All projects are evaluated and lessons shared, as part of the Government's wider efforts to improve its support for local delivery. The Centre for Excellence and Outcomes will begin working on youth issues from September 2009, helping to improve the evidence base on what works in: Increasing the engagement of young people in positive activities; increasing the impact of targeted youth support; and helping young people make healthy lifestyle choices by reducing their alcohol consumption.

# A deeper response to anti-social behaviour

## Intensive Intervention Projects (IIPs)

The most challenging and troubled young people need concerted, persistent help to deal with their problems and improve their behaviour. Traditional approaches do not work for these young people whose needs are especially complex, whose issues are particularly ingrained, whose behaviour is exceptionally difficult. IIPs have been established to make a difference to these young people.

IIPs work because they address the roots of bad behaviour – difficult family circumstances, lack of firm boundaries, lack of opportunities. Building on the Family Intervention Project model, IIPs take an assertive and persistent approach, not taking ‘no’ for an answer, co-ordinated by a key worker. Young people sign a contract for changing their behaviour, outlining the consequences if they

don’t make the change – including consequences for their whole families. In return, they get the intensive support they need – whether it’s drug treatment or literacy training – giving them a real chance of getting over their problems.

The Youth Taskforce Action Plan committed us to establishing **20 Intensive Intervention Projects ...that will turn around the lives of up to 1,000 of the most challenging and problematic young people every year** from April 2009. We are well on the way to reaching this target. IIPs have been launched in 20 pilot areas following an open bidding process during summer 2008. Around 200 people have already begun to receive intensive support from an IIP key worker, contributing to reduced anti-social behaviour (ASB) and crime, increased participation in education and training, less substance misuse, and reduced homelessness.

## Intensive Intervention case study



Alan is 14 years old and lives with his mother and 9-year-old brother. Over the last year Alan's school attendance had fallen to 35 per cent – he would spend all day in bed and hang around the street most nights drinking and smoking cannabis. Alan's mother had been placed under caution by the Education Welfare Service as a result of Alan's poor attendance. Alan and his brother spent some time in care on suspicion of neglect, and their mother continued to struggle to manage their behaviour but had refused to co-operate with any agency.

Alan was referred to the IIP in January 2009 by the Youth Inclusion and Support Panel (YISP). Based on a Think Family approach the IIP developed a support plan involving Alan's school, Education Welfare Service, Parenting Support, and Drug and Alcohol Counselling Service. Through daily home visits by the IIP key worker, Alan's school attendance initially rose to 97 per cent.

However, his attendance dropped again, until the IIP identified alternative education and training provision with a voluntary organisation.

Alan reports better self esteem as a result of the alternative activities offered, has attended Drug and Alcohol sessions, and requested assistance in quitting smoking. Alan's mother is now working with a Parenting Practitioner, and attending a Parenting Course, to equip her with improved skills for managing her sons.

"The IIP has enabled us to work in a flexible way that gets results. The young people we work with know that their key worker will go the extra mile... to form positive relationships, through which we can challenge and support young people to make positive changes."

**Clare Gardiner, IIP Manager**

## Challenge & Support Projects

Challenge and Support epitomises the ‘triple track’ of enforcement, support and prevention, going beyond traditional approaches and working to transform the behaviour of young people on the verge of criminalisation. Evidence shows that young people respond to a combination of firm boundaries and support, and that one without the other is much less effective. This combination underpins the Challenge and Support projects funded by the Taskforce in 52 areas where youth crime and ASB are particular problems.

The Youth Taskforce Action Plan committed us to working with 15,000 young people and their families each year and we are on course to deliver this. Between September 2008 and April 2009, 7,793 young people and families benefited from Challenge and Support in the 52 areas running the projects. We are also looking for ways to ensure that the Challenge and Support approach is embedded as a sustainable part of mainstream services in the areas where projects are running now, and to ensure that the approach is applied in other areas where possible.

Challenge and Support projects ensure that young people whose behaviour is serious enough to attract formal warning letters – Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) or Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) – get support to address the causes of their behaviour. In



particular, these young people subject to an ASBO must be considered for support via Individual Support Orders (ISOs). Although ISOs have been available since 2004, court data shows that take-up has been limited: **in 2006, only 18 per cent of ASBOs on under-18s had an ISO attached.** Early information from the 52 Challenge and Support areas suggests that they are applying for ISOs with a greater proportion of ASBOs than the rest of the country, but still not in all cases. Over the next two years, we want to see an increase in the proportion of ASBOs accompanied by ISOs, ensuring that appropriate services are made readily available and that young people accept the support that is offered. We also want to see parents assessed for parenting needs – with help offered on a voluntary basis, and via a Parenting Order if necessary.



## Challenge and Support case study

Jim, 16, was frequently linked to anti-social behaviour and crime – throwing mud at houses, drinking, shoplifting, abuse, and criminal damage – and received a reprimand for theft. A case conference involving the Police, the Youth Offending service, Social Services and the school referred Jim to the Challenge and Support project.

On the project, Jim agreed to sign a behavioural contract for six months, and received 1:1 support from a mentor to help him understand and control his behaviour and to identify

positive activities. Meanwhile, Jim's mother benefited from specialist parenting advice, and help with her mental health issues and drug misuse.

Jim has not breached his contract and his family engaged well with support which they had never done in the past. The Police are pleased to observe a dramatic change in Jim's behaviour, and his mother is immensely proud and determined to continue to use her new skills and support him in building a positive future.

# Targeted Youth Support

## Reforming the System

The Youth Taskforce Action Plan set out an ambitious programme of reforms to ensure every area has a joined-up and systematic approach to early identification, prevention and support for teenagers at risk. That means young people's needs are consistently assessed at an early stage, and support services are swiftly delivered through universal settings, co-ordinated by a lead professional.

The reforms are focused on delivering services that are accessible, relevant, and responsive to feedback, ensuring that young people are supported at the earliest possible opportunity to resolve difficulties and make successful transitions to adulthood. Successful implementation of Targeted Youth Support outcomes helps local areas deliver on their agenda for young people, underpinning successful delivery of strategies and priorities for youth. These include accelerating declines in teenage pregnancy and improving outcomes for teenage parents and reducing the proportion of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET).

Over the last year we have delivered a national change programme enabling local areas to implement the reforms. Virtually all local areas have now completed the introduction of their reforms and the handful of remaining areas will complete over the next few months.

The Targeted Youth Support reforms represent a comprehensive system change. The first independent evaluation of Targeted Youth Support pathfinder areas has given us an insight into the impact the reforms are having – improvement in the identification and assessment of needs, joined-up working, and information-sharing has resulted in improved family relationships, better school attendance, and participation in positive activities.

But there is more to do. The challenge now is to ensure that the reforms take root and bring about far reaching, long-term improvements to service delivery and lasting impact on outcomes for vulnerable teenagers.

This means making progress on both the *sustainability* of the reforms and the *systematic* ways in which they are applied. We want to see the major partners across schools, youth services and positive activities, community safety and police, and health services working routinely together to identify young people at risk early on, and that the right systems are in place to provide joined up support when it is needed.



## Targeted Youth Support case study

Since moving to a new school in September 2007, Kevin was regularly in trouble and at risk of exclusion: refusing to work and disrupting classes. His mother was struggling to control his behaviour and agreed that Kevin might benefit from extra support.

Kevin, his mother and the Lead Professional, felt that the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) was effective in getting him to open up about some of the issues. His mother said: "Kevin wouldn't talk to me at home but he seemed to really open up ... and told me lots of stuff about how he was feeling and what was upsetting him. Since then he's been much more open with me."

A package of support, delivered by the Youth Offending Service (YOS), helped improve the relationship between Kevin and his parents, by providing fun time together, positive activities over the summer holidays, and mentoring support from a role model.

He is now attending school regularly and is 'talking rather than arguing' at home. There have been significant improvements in Kevin's relationships with teachers and he has stopped bullying other children. His reading and spelling have improved from 6.9 years to 9.2 years over the four months. His mother said: *"I was getting phoned up by the school every week before. Now, I just get phone calls telling me good things about how he's getting on."*

# Helping every parent do the best for their child

Parents and families are the biggest influence on a child's life, and most do a great job – shaping the aspirations of their children and setting clear boundaries and expectations to keep them on track. But some teenagers pose a particular challenge. By supporting local authorities to respond to different types of family needs, we are ensuring that parents finding it hard to cope know where to turn, and that teenagers get every chance to benefit from good parenting.

## Family Intervention Projects

The Government is investing nearly £30 million in 2009/10 to introduce Family Intervention Projects (FIPs) across all local authorities to provide intensive support and challenge to families in the greatest difficulties. Recent evaluation has shown FIPs to be particularly effective in tackling ASB, as well as improving a range of other outcomes, like attendance at school.

The Youth Taskforce Action Plan committed us to **...continue to deal with the most anti-social families**. Since the Action Plan was published, the Government has announced further plans to expand the number of FIPs, with particular variants focused on preventing youth crime and tackling child poverty.

The Families Delivery Team is providing direct support to local authorities in establishing these projects. The number has grown from a handful of projects in 2006, to 180 by summer 2009, now working with nearly 2,000 challenging families – and with at least one project in every local authority. So we are well on our way to achieving our goal of 20,000 families by 2011.



## Family Intervention case study

Police, social care and education referred the family to the Nottingham FIP following reports of ASB, non school attendance and concerns of child neglect. The four eldest children had not been attending school in the past 18 months and the two youngest children, who were accessing education, were at risk of permanent exclusion due to their very challenging and aggressive behaviour. Parenting was extremely problematic with little evidence of boundary setting or consistent discipline methods. The father had acute mental health difficulties and the mother

was alcohol dependent and suffered from depression.

The family was referred to the FIP in view of the level of reported ASB (daily complaints) and the consequent significant threat of homelessness. A multi-agency conference was convened during which the FIP identified and prioritised the work that was required and provided co-ordination for the services involved.

- The housing situation was considered to be the first priority and the local authority housing provider agreed to suspend plans to evict the family whilst the FIP began work with all family members.
- The FIP worked with the whole family visiting late (midnight) and early (7am) to help ensure children went to bed at night and got up in the morning at appropriate times.
- Both parents were subject to parenting contracts with ABCs served on the children.
- The mother was supported to access alcohol services and counselling.
- Education and training provision was put in place for all the children, including statements of educational need.
- Specialist emotional and mental health support was provided to the children who needed it and to the parents by child and adolescent mental health (CAMHS) and Adult Mental Health Services.
- Tenancy support and debt management was provided; conditions in the home are much improved with no signs of the previous squalid conditions.
- A multi-agency team around the family met every six weeks to review progress in dealing with their many complex needs.

In the last six months there have been no further complaints of ASB. All the school-age children are now in full-time education with over 90 per cent attendance. The mother has benefited from the specialist counselling support, her confidence has risen and she has attended employment training. The way the family lives now follows a structured pattern and this is providing much needed security for the children and helping ensure they attend school and keep out of trouble. There have been major improvements in parenting, including by some of the children who are themselves young parents. This family has now exited the FIP and the positive changes have been sustained.

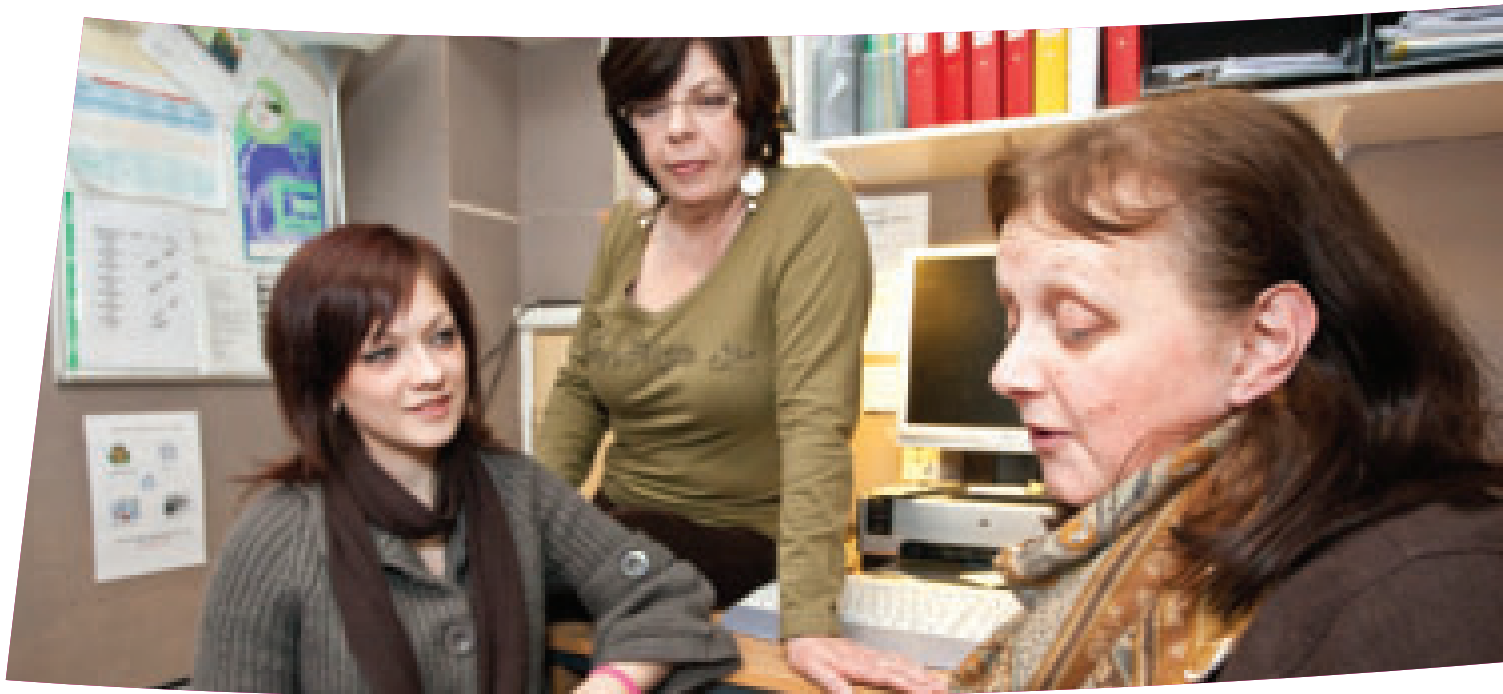
## Think Family

Excellent children's services, and excellent adults' services, are not enough in isolation. To transform life chances and break the cycle of disadvantage, services must go further – they must 'Think Family'. This means securing better outcomes for children, young people and families by co-ordinating the support they receive from children, adult and family services. Think Family builds on Every Child Matters and is a fundamental reform to the way agencies work together.

Think Family secures better outcomes for children, young people and families by bringing together support from a range of different

services – schools, criminal justice, health and housing services for example. Think Family means assessing family members and supporting them all, instead of only working with the individual who is referred to a service. This secures earlier interventions, preventing problems escalating to crisis level.

Every local authority is now being provided with funding to implement the Think Family reforms. The Families Delivery Team is leading a programme of work to support this, working jointly with the government departments that sponsor key adult services such as prisons, the Probation Service and the National Treatment Agency.





## Think Family case study

Dan is an offender who had recently returned to prison. Baz, his 9-year-old son, was getting involved in risky behaviour such as climbing on the school roof, and starting fires, and was not attending school full time. The family have only been able to visit Dan in prison occasionally, and this has had a negative affect on Baz's behaviour.

A common assessment meeting, initiated by a Police Community Support Officer (PCSO), increased the support to Baz and his family. This support included an Educational Psychologist, counselling for Baz and his mother, and ongoing support by the PCSO and a family support worker at the Prison. Baz's mother was given information on Community Transport and the Assisted Prison Visits Scheme, enabling them to visit Dan more often. This had a notable positive effect on

Baz's behaviour, as did his counselling sessions – helping him think about his feelings and the effects of his behaviour on his mother.

The Family Support Worker supported Dan to access other services in prison, for example drug and alcohol services. Additional behavioural programmes were also put in place to support Dan to deal with the abuse and addiction issues he had raised in conversation with the support worker.

When Dan was sentenced he was due to be moved out of the region, making it more difficult for the family to visit. Adopting a Think Family approach, professionals including the probation officer and others intervened assertively to prevent the move meaning that the more regular contact between Dan and Baz can continue to benefit the whole family.

## Parenting Early Intervention

The Parenting Early Intervention Programme is now being expanded nationally meeting the Youth Taskforce Action Plan commitment **to invest up to £60 million to expand the successful Parenting Early Intervention Pathfinders**. All local authorities are funded to enable practitioners from various disciplines and agencies to deliver evidence-based parenting projects to parents of 8–13-year-olds showing signs of problem behaviour. There are already

42 established Parenting Early Intervention projects and a further 110 are being funded from April 2009.

The Government is going further to make sure that parenting support reaches the people that need it, agreeing the early-warning signs which should trigger assessments such as where families have problems with drugs or alcohol, domestic violence, the persistent absence or exclusion of children from school, or their involvement in crime or ASB.



# Positive activities, safer communities

We know that when young people feel they have little alternative but hanging around, kicking their heels, this can lead them to get into trouble. Through the Aiming High strategy for positive activities, the Government is working with local authorities and others to provide teenagers with somewhere safe to socialise, have fun, learn, and contribute to their communities, whether through volunteering, music groups, or football at the local youth centre.

The Government is making unprecedented levels of investment: £900 million over three years in positive youth activities, and a further £780 million on PE and sport. This underpins a broad campaign to ensure young people are offered constructive things to do outside school/college. We are also taking action to ensure that facilities for young people are open at the times when they are most needed, including Friday and Saturday nights.

Currently, too many young people (around 25 per cent) don't engage in any form of



structured activities beyond education. Young people in deprived communities are particularly likely to miss out on opportunities that better-off youngsters take for granted. The Government's investment is directed towards these communities, and for the first time, young people are being given direct influence over the activities available, and responsibility for using the resources most effectively, for example by directing use of the £272 million *myplace* fund, the £120 million Youth Opportunity Fund and the £100 million Youth Capital Fund. By 2018, a quarter of the money spent on youth activities will be determined by young people.

## Open



### Friday/Saturday evening activities case study

Working in a multi-agency partnership, Sunderland Council developed an innovative mobile ‘youth village’ on two sites on Fridays and Saturdays. Professionals work with young people to deliver a range of high quality activities and services including Marquees with DJs, live performances, football, sexual health advice with screening, and an ‘information trailer’.

At first, publicity was spread by word of mouth between young people, detached youth workers, community police and local schools. About 150 young people attend each event. Community concerns were addressed through surveys, home

visits and feedback to resident groups, and the scheme eventually won full backing.

One participant said: “I feel safe when we come here and I know that we won’t get into any trouble. If I felt that something was going to happen, like being threatened, the youth workers will help and sort it out.” Another said: “It makes us feel good as it is in the newspaper and something we are proud to be involved in.”

Jackie Clark, Inspector, Northumbria Police, said: “Within the identified areas youth disorder has reduced by 34 per cent over the same period last year. This has been achieved through partners working together.”

Most young people tell us that the availability of more and better activities would be the most important thing that would keep them out of trouble, especially on Friday and Saturday evenings. Others in their communities tell us the same thing. Yet a very small percentage of activities are available at weekends. Through the national Open Drive, we are also challenging local areas to make sure facilities are open when they are most needed. In areas where weekend provision is available, established, and popular, there has been a significant reduction in incidents of ASB, in some areas by as much as 50 per cent.

Last year we provided additional funding to 81 local authorities where the problems of youth crime and in particular knife crime are greatest to boost provision on Friday and Saturday nights.

This resulted in more than 5,000 additional sessions, engaging more than 26,000 young people.

We are also pressing for long-term transformation. We are asking local authorities to use their extra £28 million Positive Activities for Young People allocation in 2009/10 and an extra £48 million in 2010/11 to increase provision all year round, and particularly on Friday and Saturday evenings. This augments other routes for investment in things for young people to do and safe places for young people to go – the Youth Capital Fund, Youth Capital Fund Plus, and myplace, and in partnership with the Third Sector through the Youth Sector Development Fund.



## Youth Capital Fund Plus

Capital investment in youth facilities is at unprecedented levels, with over £370 million being invested through *myplace* and the Youth Capital Fund over three years. The Taskforce has injected extra urgency into this transformation by identifying an immediate £22.5 million through the YCF+. 50 local authorities have been funded to create new or refurbished youth facilities in areas where they are needed most. Involving young people and the wider community in the decision making process and design, these facilities will provide a safe and stimulating environment for young people in the places and at the times



that young people want and need – particularly Friday and Saturday nights.

While some local authorities have used the funding to build or refurbish a single facility, many have invested in two or three facilities and in some cases, have also invested in mobile units. We expect over 100 facilities to be open by March 2010, across the 50 local authorities, and each one will offer activities on Friday and Saturday nights. Many will have opened by spring/summer 2009, and most will open before the start of 2010.



The Safer Knowsley Partnership has identified Westvale Community Centre for refurbishment as a new youth centre, being located in a 'hotspot' for youth crime. The Centre was constructed in the 1950s with subsequent additions including a hall for a youth centre – which now has a very tired appearance and is far from inviting to young people.

Youth Capital Fund Plus (YCF+) is being used to finance the demolition and rebuilding of the hall as a modern youth centre, under the direction of the Youth Forum and other members of the existing Youth Club. Young people and the design consultants have presented their plans to users of the centre, elected members and other members of the community, and guided by the Project Team, the young people had the final say on the design. The new centre will offer dance, drama,

band nights, DJ sessions, IT projects, and will be open on Friday and Saturday evenings.

The Architects have offered work experience places to the young people involved in the project so they can gain first hand experience of the design and development process. An apprentice Youth Worker has been allocated to the project and will be based in the Youth Centre on its completion. Local residents have been offered places on the 'Introduction to Youth Work' Course.

"This will make a huge difference to the young people in the area – and we will have more control over the activities and projects that are on offer to us."

**Ryan Walker, Youth club member**

## Inter-generational practice

It is often a lack of communication and understanding that fuels disaffection between young people and the communities in which they live. The greater the generation gap, the more acute the issues. And yet much good and innovative work is being done to bridge these gaps and foster positive relationships between young and old.

However, the small scale, local nature of most inter-generational projects means that it can be difficult to share and replicate good practice. For that reason, the Government recently announced the £5.5 million Generations Together programme, comprising 12 inter-generational projects, which will demonstrate the benefits of inter-generational activity and allow successful areas to develop and share good practice.



We have already awarded the Beth Johnson Foundation – leaders in the field of inter-generational activity – £196,000 to work closely with local authorities to identify how inter-generational approaches could deliver the priorities set out in their Local Area Agreements. They will also provide particular support and training for youth organisations, so they can develop their own inter-generational projects.

As soon as these projects begin to show results, we will quickly move to apply their lessons to other areas, through events and written evidence and case studies to help other projects and organisations.



## Inter-generational case study

Age Concern Enfield works with voluntary and statutory organisations to improve the quality of life of people aged 50+ and their carers in the London Borough of Enfield.

The trans-IT inter-generational computer project helps older people access computers and the internet through a weekly programme of one-to-one tuition delivered by young volunteers from local secondary schools. The service aims to develop positive and mutually beneficial

relationships between young volunteers and older learners – and provide people with new skills, independence and confidence.

To date, 35 sixth-form students have volunteered on the project. Volunteers reflect the mixed ethnicity of the local community. They support people aged 50 to 90 who are unable to access group classes. There are currently 14 people on the waiting list to join the project.

# Concerted local action to tackle youth crime

## The Youth Crime Action Plan

The Youth Crime Action Plan (YCAP), published on 15 July 2008, describes the Government's approach to preventing and tackling offending by young people. Along with measures to make an immediate, tangible difference on the ground, the plan outlines longer-term proposals to embed the triple track approach and to improve the operation of the youth justice system.

The Taskforce is driving local delivery of five of the seven elements of the YCAP intensive package, working directly with the 69 local authorities where problems of youth crime and anti-social behaviour are most acute. From April 2009, all 69 areas will be supported to deliver the following elements:



## Street teams

Street teams tackle youth offending and ASB by engaging disaffected young people on the streets. They prioritise young people who have rejected previous offers of support, in particular, and seek to divert them into positive activities and training or work. Street teams comprise youth workers working with the police and youth support providers, sharing information to identify young people at risk. By March 2009, 55 local authorities were delivering street teams, and by July 2009 all 69 YCAP areas will be doing so.



### Street team case study

The Camden Youth Disorder Engagement Team is a team of four youth workers and police officers who engage on the street with young people at risk of ASB or crime. The team includes an ex-gang member. The team goes out on foot, outside schools, housing estates, shops, anywhere young people congregate.

The team seeks to talk to specific young people, developing a rapport over time. The team informs young people about relevant agencies and activities, offering ways out of trouble.

“People have been reporting a massive improvement in the area and how the young people have behaved around us.”

**Chris Downs, Met Police, Camden Borough**



## After School Patrol case study

Concerns were being reported about the ASB caused by some pupils in a particular school in South Tyneside. An After School Patrol tackled the problem by means of high-visibility uniformed patrols in the area to deter ASB, engaging with the young people where possible and speaking with the school to understand the cause of the problem and develop a mutual approach. ASB after school closing times has largely disappeared, and there have been no further complaints.



## After School patrols

After School Patrols are designed to tackle ASB and disorder at school closing time, on problematic school bus routes and at transport interchanges. The visibility of the patrols reassures local schools and communities in areas where crime and disturbances occur while helping to prevent problems and enforce laws as required. After School Patrols also make links with street teams, truancy sweeps and positive activities. By March 2009, 43 local authorities were delivering After School Patrols and by July 2009 all 69 YCAP areas will be doing so.



## Stay safe

Children and young people on the streets unsupervised late at night can be a risk to themselves and to others. Stay safe teams and children's services deal promptly and robustly with these young people by assessing the risk, and taking them to a 'place of safety'. Stay safe teams identify any underlying reasons why the young person is out late at night, and make appropriate referrals. By March 2009, 31 local authorities had delivered a total of 369 'Stay safe' type operations, with over a thousand children taken to a place of safety and referred to other support services. By July 2009 all 69 YCAP areas will be delivering 'Stay safe'-type operations.

### Stay Safe case study

Merseyside police and social services work together in Stay safe operations, identifying children who are on the street late at night in situations which put them at risk. Children are taken to a place of safety prepared in advance, at which point routine checks are made and parents are contacted.

Referrals are made as appropriate – for example to Family Intervention Projects, and Careline. Merseyside's Stay safe has achieved reductions of around 25 per cent in ASB on those nights when the operation runs. Local media have shown strong interest in Stay safe, and awareness among people in the local area is considerable, creating a deterrent effect.

## Triage

Triage strengthens the youth justice system by ensuring that when young people have been arrested and taken to the police station, an informed decision can be taken about what should happen to them next. Triage therefore prevents the unnecessary criminalisation of young people when it is clear, as a result of a professional assessment, that they are likely to benefit more from non-custodial alternatives.

Youth Offending Officers work with police officers in custody suites to keep young people out of the criminal justice system where appropriate; they also help to meet the needs of victims – for example through restorative approaches. The Youth Taskforce is keen to promote greater use of these measures as part of a triple track of prevention, non-negotiable support and enforcement.





## Triage case study

The Triage pilot in the London Borough of Lewisham is a partnership between Lewisham Borough police, Metropolitan Police and Lewisham Youth Offending Service (YOS). Young people arrested for a low level offence are referred to a YOS worker who makes an immediate assessment and develops a plan for the young person to avoid criminalisation – for example by referral to services such as

Connexions, and mental health services. Police officers are enthusiastic advocates of Triage, confirming that the availability of YOS expertise at the point of arrest means that informed decisions can be made about the best way of dealing with them, with those best responded to outside the justice system filtered out at this early stage.

## Reparation

The Youth Crime Action Plan includes commitments to improve the use of reparation – work which contributes to community well-being and recompenses in some way for the crime committed, as part of a community sentence.

Reparation should take place during leisure time, including Friday and Saturday nights, and local residents are given opportunities to identify suitable work in relevant neighbourhoods.



### Reparation case study

Ray, 16 years old, received a five-month Referral Order from the Youth Court for theft of tools from a garden shed. Although this was his first conviction, he had received a police reprimand for shoplifting and a final warning for being drunk and disorderly, and displayed other worrying behaviour, including cannabis use and poor school attendance.

Ray and his parents attended a Youth Offender Panel which included two members of the public, and Ray agreed to a behavioural contract including 10 hours per week gardening at a local

parish churchyard – as suggested by the victim of the theft. After some persuasion, Ray worked hard and was pleased at the results – as was his mother.

Ray, who now wants to do more gardening work, said: “It’s the first time I’ve done this kind of work and I thought it was going to be really boring. But I enjoyed doing practical stuff and making the place look better. I thought I would be really embarrassed but actually I enjoyed people from the church telling me how good it looked and thanking me.”

# The year ahead

The taskforce has made quick progress in helping local practitioners to set up new projects and test new approaches. We have met, or are on course to meet, all the commitments set out in the Youth Taskforce Action Plan. We have already taken practical action to deliver the Youth Crime Action Plan.

In 2009/10 we will deliver:

- intensive intervention with 1,000 more of the most problematic young people, building on the 200 young people already benefiting from Intensive Intervention Projects in 2008/09;
- Challenge and Support projects offering enforcement alongside support to stop anti-social behaviour to 15,000 more young people, nearly doubling the numbers already benefiting;
- the seven elements of the Youth Crime Action Plan 'intensive package' to 69 local authorities. We will be working to apply Youth Crime Action Plan approaches across the country, and to deepen the partnerships between Police, schools, social workers, youth workers and others, that have been fostered by these initiatives. All the approaches are inspired by work that was already going on in some local areas. We want to see innovative ways of working like Stay safe become part of normal practice, with resources coming from reallocation of existing staff and budgets rather than needing extra project funds;
- over 100 new and refurbished youth facilities, through the Youth Capital Fund+, with most projects open by the end of 2009. A further £32 million invested in world class facilities through myplace Round 2 on top of the £240 million already invested in 62 projects through earlier rounds;
- training and support to 3,000 more practitioners through Youth Taskforce events and visits;
- 12 new projects starting to demonstrate the benefits of inter-generational activity; and
- in partnership with the Home Office and Catch 22, expansion of the Philip Lawrence awards to recognise and celebrate those young people who successfully turn round their lives, or who make a significant contribution to their communities.

Much of this activity is focused on the areas and neighbourhoods facing the greatest problems, but we will be driving broader change to ensure that the 'triple track' approach to youth crime and ASB becomes a reality across the country. We will quickly move to apply their lessons to other areas, through events and written evidence and case studies to help other projects and organisations.



The broader changes we will push forward include:

- young people involved in crime or ASB more systematically prevented from getting in further trouble by a combination of enforcement measures and support;
- more youth facilities open on Friday and Saturday evenings across the country, thanks to a greater focus on these times in new and existing funding;
- new and improved youth facilities in all areas of the country over the next ten years, partly funded by the release of unclaimed assets from dormant bank and building society accounts;
- all 153 local authorities embedding the Targeted Youth Support reforms in real front-line practice; and
- parenting interventions, made compulsory where necessary through Parenting Orders, reaching more of the families that need them as soon as signs of problems emerge

# Call to further action:

## Dawn Primarolo, Minister for Children, Young People and Families



The *Children's Plan* articulated the compelling vision that this should be the best country in the world for children and young people to grow up. If we are to create the successful society and strong economy we want for our country, and prepare

young people for life and work in the 21st century, that means giving them a world class education,

and the support and opportunities they need to make the most of it.

Our vision for young people is ambitious. But we are not starting from scratch. Significant reforms in the last ten years mean that every local authority in England now has a Children's Trust bringing together key agencies to improve children's well-being. In setting their targets for the next three years, most local authorities have prioritised support for young people, and every local authority will soon have arrangements in place to support the most vulnerable young people more effectively, delivering a truly integrated service response to meet their identified needs. More than three-quarters of schools now deliver extended services to young people, their families and communities, and outcomes for young people continue to improve. These are remarkable achievements, and I am delighted to be working with you in building on them in the coming months and years.

I am impressed by the commitment and dedication of the many thousands of parents, teachers, lecturers, school and college support staff, health workers, careers advisers, youth workers, community workers, and local authority staff doing a fantastic job to help young people lead an active, healthy life, to stay engaged and attaining in learning, and to help them achieve all that they can. Your tireless energy and

commitment often goes un-sung, but is making a huge difference in helping the most vulnerable young people to turn their lives around.

We have come a very long way. But there is a lot still to achieve if we are to make a reality of the *Children's Plan* vision. Together, we can ensure that young people are provided with the right options, support and guidance, so they

can successfully enjoy and achieve in education until they are at least 18 and make a valuable contribution to the communities in which we all live. That is our ambition, and it is through the ongoing support and drive of the Youth Taskforce, and your willingness to innovate and to foster partnerships beyond traditional boundaries, that we will make it a reality.



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