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Attitudes Towards Youth Crime, and Willingness to Intervene: findings from the 2006 *Scottish Social Attitudes* Survey

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ATTITUDES TOWARDS YOUTH CRIME AND WILLINGNESS TO INTERVENE: FINDINGS FROM THE 2006 *SCOTTISH SOCIAL ATTITUDES* SURVEY

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Chapter One - Introduction

This report presents findings from a module of questions included in the 2006 Scottish Social Attitudes survey and revisits a theme first addressed by survey in 2004, namely public attitudes towards young people and youth crime. The module takes as its starting point the idea that the problem of youth crime is not simply about the number of 'things that happen' (e.g. the number of windows broken, people threatened or assaulted, cars stolen) but about the way that as individuals and communities we respond to those acts. As such, it sets out to understand better how the relationship between different age groups might fuel or help to defuse the problem of youth crime. In particular, the 2006 module was intended to shed light on adult willingness to intervene in situations in which young people are either posing a risk or are at risk themselves.

Specifically, the module set out to answer the following questions:

- How are adult members of the public likely to react in problematic situations involving young people?
- To what extent will they modify their own behaviour in the face of groups of young people in public places?
- How likely are they to intervene directly in situations in which young people's behaviour is problematic for the wider community or in which young people themselves appear to be at risk?
- What is the balance between direct intervention and other, formal and informal, strategies?
- How is 'willingness to intervene' related to other variables, such as 'social connectedness' and inter-generational contact; general perceptions of young people and youth crime; and broader social and demographic characteristics?
- What reasons do adults give for any reluctance to intervene directly in such situations? How do such responses vary according to the gender of the adult and of the young people involved?

Chapter Two - Trust, connectedness and inter-generational contact

- Most people feel they have a reasonable degree of social support and 'connectedness' within their own communities – though this may be based on relatively few, strong relationships with friends and families rather than on a broader 'density of acquaintanceship'.
- Women are more likely than men to exhibit higher levels of social connectedness, as are people in higher income households. General levels of social connectedness are also associated with higher levels of inter-generational contact. Older people do not appear to be especially *dis*connected, scoring higher than other age groups on some measures but lower on others.
- Older people do score much more highly on the survey measure of social trust, as do men, despite their lower levels of social connectedness. Social trust is also markedly higher among those with higher levels of educational attainment, in higher income households and in areas of least deprivation.
- The two main measures of inter-generational contact (based on household structure and

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level of contact with young people in the area) vary greatly according to lifestage, rather than age *per se*, with the highest levels of contact associated with those most likely to have children aged between 11 and 24.

- There are clearly some very significant gaps in contact between the oldest and the youngest age groups – exacerbated by the almost complete absence of households spanning more than two generations – but a sizeable minority of the 65 plus age group do have links through grandchildren of that age.

- Although around three adults in ten say that they come into contact with young people simply by meeting them in their neighbourhood, for most adults, inter-generational contact is structured around family ties of various kinds.

Chapter Three - Views of young people and youth crime

- General attitudes towards young people appear largely unchanged since 2004 and remain characterised by a tension between sympathy for and concern about 'young people today'.

- Key predictors of a more positive attitude towards young people included higher levels of educational attainment, living in an area of less deprivation and having at least some contact with 16 to 24 year-olds within one's neighbourhood.

- Intriguingly, the most negative attitudes towards 'young people today' were expressed by the *youngest* age group covered by the survey – those who were themselves aged 18-24 at time of interview. Those aged 55 and over, by contrast, tended to hold much more positive views.

- Between a fifth and a half of those interviewed thought that the five youth crime-related problems asked about were either very or fairly common in their own neighbourhood, but there was wide variation in overall perceptions of prevalence across sub-groups.

- One of the most powerful predictors of seeing youth crime problems as common was area deprivation. Other variables independently associated with perceiving youth crime as common included lack of contact with 16 to 24 year-olds in the neighbourhood, living in social rented housing, being directly affected by youth crime and having less positive views of young people in general.

- A measure of the extent to which individuals have been *directly affected* by the various types of youth crime-related behaviour suggests a slightly less dramatic picture of the 'problem of youth crime'. Although very clearly related to perceived prevalence, for each type of behaviour, the proportion indicating they had been affected a 'great deal' or 'quite a lot' was very much lower than those saying the problem was 'very' or 'fairly common' in their area.

Chapter Four - Avoidance behaviour and willingness to intervene

- When asked to consider a scenario in which they had to walk past a group of teenagers to get to a shop, only a small proportion of adults (around one in ten) indicated that they would feel 'very uncomfortable' or would 'probably avoid doing so altogether'. But the fact that a further four in ten would feel 'slightly uncomfortable' is an indicator of the diffuse sense of unease that groups of young people can produce in adult members of the population.

- Moreover, among some sub-groups – such as women in general and older women in particular – the proportion saying they would feel very uncomfortable or avoid walking past altogether is significantly higher.

- In relation to a scenario in which a group of male or female teenagers were vandalising a bus shelter, there was wide variation in how likely respondents felt they would be to take different forms of action. The proportion saying they would be 'very likely' to call the police was higher than in relation to any other course of action, but sizeable numbers indicated that they would be likely to take some form of informal action, such as challenging the young people directly, speaking to them later or speaking to their parents.
- Men were more likely than women to say they would challenge the young people directly at the time, but were no more or less likely to take the other courses of action. And the difference in likelihood of intervening directly between male and female respondents is much greater in relation to the version of the scenario involving boys than the one involving girls.
- Otherwise, levels of inter-generational contact and general social connectedness are the most important predictors of willingness to intervene in this situation. People living in remote and rural communities are more likely both to intervene directly and to call the police, suggesting that formal and informal mechanisms can reinforce rather than replace each other in certain circumstances.
- Relatively few respondents said they would have 'no concerns' about intervening in such a situation, with a sizeable group inhibited by what they see as the possibility of threatened or actual violence.
- Both male and female respondents are more likely to worry about violence in the scenario involving a group of 14 year-old boys than the one involving girls, but for male respondents, concern about wrongful allegations directed against them is the predominant concern.
- When asked to consider a situation in which a ten year-old boy/girl was potentially at risk, around a third of all respondents said they would speak to the child directly while slightly more said they would call the police.
- But the interaction of the gender of the respondent with that of the child is critical here. Male respondents are much less likely to intervene directly in a situation involving a ten year-old girl than boy. For female respondents, the opposite is true.
- Male reluctance to intervene is overwhelmingly associated with concern about wrongful accusations of threat or assault – indeed, as many as 64% of men indicated that they might be reluctant to intervene for this reason in the scenario involving a 10 year-old girl – while female reticence is relatively more likely to be associated with concern about *being* threatened or assaulted.

Chapter Five – Conclusions and implications

- The study provides strong support for the idea that there is a connection between levels of general social connectedness, intergenerational contact, perceptions of young people and youth crime and willingness to intervene. A concomitant of this is that, by focusing on any one of these areas, policy may have intended or unintended consequences for the others.
- In general, the research emphasises the need to understand better the notion of civilities as well as *in*civilities – the circumstances in which individuals feel able and motivated to engage in actions that are of wider social benefit. This chimes with Bannister's recent call for the development of a 'civic criminology' (Bannister, 2007).
- As part of this, we need to be aware of the ways in which prevailing attitudes and policies may inadvertently inhibit such interventions. The study has thrown up one hugely significant – if largely unanticipated – finding in this respect: that a large proportion of

adult males are now deterred from intervening in problematic situations involving young people because of concerns that they themselves will be falsely accused of threatening behaviour or assault. This has potentially serious consequences for the ability of communities to self-regulate and for the police and other formal agencies who will increasingly be called upon to fill the gap.

- Although effective informal social control is by no means a cure-all for the problems of youth crime, it is probably a necessary – if not sufficient – condition for effective policing. By strengthening social cohesion and connectedness, such interventions can help to create the conditions in which the public will co-operate with the police while also limiting the demands placed on the police in relation to relatively trivial problems.

- Looking forward, it is clear that demographic change is likely to limit further the opportunities for intergenerational contact and, consequently, to have important consequences for the construction of the 'problem of youth crime' in Scotland's communities. In policy terms, there is a case both for anticipating the consequences of such developments and considering what steps might be taken to prepare for them – e.g. by seeking to promote or reinforce opportunities for intergenerational contact.

- As ever, the biggest challenges in this respect lie in the most deprived communities, the areas of greatest need and fewest resources, which also suffer from the most serious crime-related problems. Do high levels of youth crime reduce the capacity to exert such control, or does the lack of informal control lead to youth crime? The answer is almost certainly both, which again emphasises the need for policy to pay as much attention to reactions as actions, to civilities as incivilities, and to *pro*-social as anti-social behaviour.

CHAPTER ONE   INTRODUCTION

Introduction

1.1   This report, which draws on data from the 2006 Scottish Social Attitudes survey, takes as its starting point the idea that the problem of youth crime is not simply about the number of 'things that happen' (e.g. the number of windows broken, people threatened or assaulted, cars stolen) but about the way that as individuals and communities we respond to those acts. In other words, it revisits a tenet of criminology that crime consists of both action and *re*action, and places a renewed emphasis on processes of informal social control. In particular, it focuses on the specific example of public willingness to intervene in problematic situations involving young people and relates this to broader attitudes towards young people, perceptions and direct experience of youth crime, social cohesion and inter-generational contact.

Background

1.2   The role of informal social control – and its interaction with formal control – has been the subject of surprisingly little recent study. With a few notable exceptions (e.g. Atkinson and Flint, 2003; Forrest, Myhill and Tilley, 2005) – and despite the wider interest in issues relating to community efficacy and cohesion – contemporary criminology and criminal justice policy has tended to focus more on criminal actions rather than individual and community reactions. It is clear, however, that the latter are central to the construction of the problem of crime (and hence the problem of youth crime). It is not only that certain types of behaviour have to be viewed or interpreted as criminal before they emerge as a social problem; the immediate and longer-term consequences of such behaviours can be either exacerbated or dissipated through the reactions they produce. For example, in some circumstances, an over-reliance on formal criminal justice can inflame intra-community tensions and set in motion processes of labelling and distancing that may increase the likelihood of future conflict. In others, a constant recourse to mechanisms of informal social control may lead to vigilantism, or leave people reluctant to involve agencies such as the police, even in very serious matters, because of fear of reprisal or concern about being labelled an informer.

1.3   In 2004, the Scottish Executive commissioned a module of questions in the Scottish Social Attitudes survey to explore the issue of public attitudes towards young people and youth crime. The results of that exercise (see Anderson, Bromley and Given, 2005) went some way towards unpacking and contextualising views in this area. They showed, for example, that – despite the very powerful ways in which inter-generational contact is structured into many households and communities – a significant proportion of adults have little or no contact with young people between the ages of 11 and 24. The results also indicated that adult views of young people are more complicated than might otherwise be supposed: overall, there is certainly a great deal of concern about 'young people today', but there is also much concern and sympathy *for* young people in the face of the difficulties of contemporary society, particularly among the age group one might expect to be their sternest critics – those aged 65 and over. There was also some evidence that levels of inter-generational contact might influence or predict such attitudes: in other words, that those with lower levels of contact with young people may also hold the most

negative attitudes.

1.4   Overall, the study concluded that public attitudes towards young people and youth crime should be seen as not simply reflecting but helping to constitute the 'problem of youth crime'. As such, the case was made for monitoring attitudes in this area over time and for attempting to understand better the relationship between attitudes, experience (e.g. of contact with young people) and behaviour (e.g. willingness to intervene in problematic situations affecting young people).

1.5   With funding from the Scottish Executive, the 2006 SSA was able to revisit these issues and, in particular, to examine further the ways in which the relationship between different age groups might fuel or help to defuse the problem of youth crime. In particular, the 2006 module was intended to shed light on adult willingness to intervene in situations in which young people are either posing a risk or are at risk themselves – behaviour that could be seen as a key test of the ability of communities to self-regulate and to absorb or defuse problematic behaviour associated with young people. The module also set out to understand how such interventions may be influenced by patterns of intergenerational contact, wider 'social connectedness' and prevailing attitudes towards young people and youth crime – a web of potential relationships summarised in the diagram below.

1.6   Specifically, the module set out to answer the following questions:

- How are adult members of the public likely to react in problematic situations involving young people?
- To what extent will they modify their own behaviour in the face of groups of young people in public places?
- How likely are they to intervene directly in situations in which young people's behaviour is problematic for the wider community or in which young people themselves appear to be at risk?
- What is the balance between direct intervention and other, formal and informal, strategies?
- How is 'willingness to intervene' related to other variables, such as 'social

connectedness' and inter-generational contact; general perceptions of young people and youth crime; and broader social and demographic characteristics?

- What reasons do adults give for any reluctance to intervene directly in such situations? How do such responses vary according to the gender of the adult and of the young people involved?

1.7   The core of the study, therefore, consisted of a series of hypothetical scenarios (or 'vignettes'), in which respondents were asked to indicate their most likely course of action. These are a useful means of exploring responses to different types of situations and, in particular, variations in response across different sections of the population (see Finch, 1987; Alexander and Becker, 1978).

Format of the report and reporting conventions

1.8   Chapters 2 and 3 revisit and develop some of the themes of the 2004 module. Chapter 2 examines levels of inter-generational contact, and sets these in the context of broader measures of 'social connectedness' and social trust. Chapter 3 focuses on prevailing attitudes towards young people and youth crime. It also relates perceptions of the prevalence of youth crime-related problems to their actual experience. Chapter 4 contains the main analysis of the variables relating to avoidance behaviour and willingness to intervene. These are related to the variables documented in Chapters 2 and 3, and also to broader socio-demographic factors, such as age and gender. Chapter 5 summarises the main themes emerging from the research and considers the implications of these for policy and practice.

The data

1.9   Our data come from the 2006 *Scottish Social Attitudes* (SSA) survey, conducted by the Scottish Centre for Social Research. SSA is an independent survey that aims to provide high quality survey data on a wide range of social and political attitudes in order both to inform public policy and to facilitate the academic study of public opinion. The survey is conducted annually and comprises a series of separately-funded modules addressing different themes and a shared set of socio-demographic questions. Other topics covered by the survey in 2006 included attitudes towards homelessness, discrimination, national identity, and public services and devolution.

Fieldwork for the survey took place between August 2006 and early January 2007, and interviews were carried out with a random sample of 1,594 adults aged 18 plus resident in Scotland. This represented a response rate of between 56% and 58%[1]. Further technical details about the survey are included in Annex A.

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[1] The precise figure given for response rates depends on whether dwelling units whose eligibility to participate was unknown are included or excluded from the calculation. Dwelling units are coded as 'unknown eligibility' where the interviewer is unable to establish whether the property is occupied and residential. The higher response rate excludes dwelling units of unknown eligibility from the calculation, while the lower rate includes them. As some of the dwelling units whose eligibility was unknown are likely to be eligible and some ineligible, the true response rate probably lies somewhere between the two figures. For further details on response rate calculations, see the technical report.

CHAPTER TWO   TRUST, CONNECTEDNESS AND INTER-GENERATIONAL CONTACT

Introduction

2.1   By way of context, the module included a small number of measures of social trust, 'social connectedness' and inter-generational contact – concepts that are clearly linked to wider debates around issues such as collective efficacy, reciprocity, social cohesiveness and social capital. These are examined in this chapter in their own right and used in subsequent chapters as potential explanatory variables in relation to views of young people and youth crime and expressed willingness to intervene.

2.2   Why might these factors matter in the context of willingness to intervene? It is reasonable to hypothesise that informal social control might be exercised more readily in a context of greater social cohesion and what has been termed 'density of acquaintanceship' (Freudenberg, 1986). Not only might this mean that adults are more likely to have some point of contact with the young people whose behaviour is considered problematic (e.g. they might know them as the children of friends, neighbours or workmates); it might also give them greater confidence that their reading of the situation (and of the basis for intervention) is likely to be shared by others. A culture of trust and reciprocity might also be hypothesised to be supportive of informal social control, since it may set up expectations around mutual aid and provide reassurance about people's motives when intervening.

Measures of reciprocity and social connectedness

2.3   To tap experiences and perceptions of reciprocity and 'social connectedness', respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the following statements.

- I have friends or relatives in this area I feel I could turn to for advice or support
- If my home was empty, I could count on one of my friends or relatives in this area to keep an eye on it
- I regularly stop and speak to people in my area

2.4   The results for the sample as a whole are summarised in the following table.

Table 1 - Measures of social connectedness

	Agree strongly	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	*Sample size*
	%	%	%	%	%	
I have friends or relatives in this area I feel I could turn to for advice or support	39	45	3	11	3	*1594*
If my home was empty, I could count on one of my friends or relatives in this area to keep an eye on it	44	47	2	5	2	*1594*
I regularly stop and speak to people in my area	28	54	8	9	1	1594

2.5   Overall, the results suggest that most people feel they do have a reasonable degree of social support and connectedness in their local community, though the proportion agreeing strongly with the last statement is markedly lower than for the other two. This suggests that social connectedness cannot be reduced to 'density of acquaintanceship' and that individuals may have strong networks of help and support within their own community without necessarily knowing everybody within it.

2.6   There are also some variations of note across the different sub-groups. On all three measures, women were more likely than men to agree strongly – an indication, perhaps, that women are more connected to their local communities through childcare in particular. In relation to age, the picture is slightly more complicated. In general, those in the younger age groups were more likely to agree strongly with the first statement, while those in the middle age group were more likely to agree strongly with the second. Those in the oldest age group were relatively more likely, however, to agree with the third. In other words, the three statements appear to be tapping different dimensions of social cohesion and reciprocity and experience of these appears to vary across the lifecourse.

2.7   Those on lower incomes and in areas of highest deprivation[2] were no less likely to stop and speak to people in the street, but *were* less likely to have friends, family or neighbours to whom they can turn for help or support. In other words, such individuals and areas may be characterised by breadth rather than depth of 'connectedness'. Any suggestion that the areas of greatest deprivation are nevertheless characterised by high levels of neighbourliness and cohesiveness is also roundly disproved: on all three measures, those living in the most deprived quintile exhibit the lowest levels of connectedness and cohesiveness.

2.8   In order to summarise these variations across different groups, a 'connectedness' scale was created from the three measures outlined above, yielding a maximum score of 15 and a minimum score of 3. Respondents were then assigned to tertiles, labelled in the

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[2] Participants' postcodes were linked to an area-based indicator of deprivation – the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 2006. See Annex A for further details.
http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/SIMD/Overview for further details on the SIMD

following analysis as 'most connected,' 'intermediate' and 'least connected'. The following table shows those variables which (on the basis of logistic regression) are independently and significantly associated with belonging to the 'most connected' group. This highlights the powerful association between household income and social connectedness with those in more affluent households significantly more likely to belong to the 'most connected' group. Those who perceive problems with youth crime to be less common are also more likely to feature in the 'most connected' group.

Table 2 - Social connectedness by key variables (row percentages)

	Most connected	**Intermediate**	**Least connected**	*Sample size*
	%	**%**	**%**	
All	34	39	27	*1594*
Sex				
Male	27	42	31	*701*
Female	39	37	24	*893*
Age				
18-24	31	32	38	*108*
25-34	39	32	30	*222*
35-44	41	33	26	*325*
45-54	34	43	24	*270*
55-64	26	46	29	*270*
65+	30	48	22	*396*
Contact with 11 to 15 year-olds				
Know most	44	40	16	*226*
Know none	26	39	35	*757*
Contact with 16 to 24 year-olds				
Know most	42	41	17	*241*
Know none	23	38	39	*631*
Income				
Lowest quintile	22	44	34	*399*
Highest quintile	39	35	26	*236*
Perceptions of youth crime problems				
Least common	36	37	28	*489*
Most common	30	40	30	*464*

Social trust

2.9   The survey also included a simple measure of social trust, which has been used extensively in previous sweeps of the survey. This simply asks respondents to choose which of two statements is closest to their view: 'most people can be trusted' or 'you can't be too careful these days'. Interestingly, the results do not map neatly onto the measures of social connectedness outlined above. Indeed, although women were more likely than men to agree with each of the statements relating to reciprocity/connectedness, they were *less* likely to agree that most people can be trusted. The results in relation to age are even more striking, with older age groups much more likely than younger ones to exhibit social trust, despite the fact that they appear to be less closely connected to those around them. This is also, perhaps, a finding that confounds

conventional wisdom about increasing social mistrust and isolation among older people and, in doing so, begs the question of whether this is a lifecourse or a cohort effect. In other words, do people become more trusting as they get older, or does the current cohort of older people simply belong to a generation that has always been more trusting than those that followed?

Figure 1 – Social trust – 'most people can be trusted' - by age group and gender (%)

Sample size – 1587
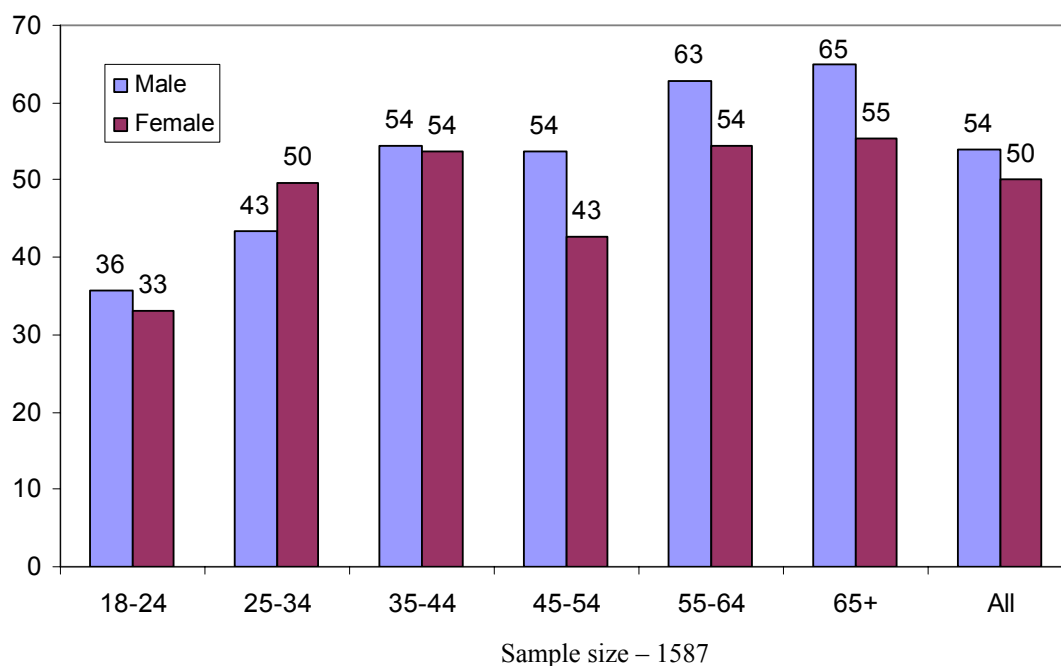
2.10   As the results from regression modelling demonstrate (see Table 3), it is also clear that social trust is generally much greater among home owners, those with higher levels of educational attainment, those in higher income households and living in areas of least deprivation. For example, among those in the least deprived quintile, the proportion saying that 'most people can be trusted' was 61%; among those in the most deprived, it was just 37%. There is also a clear link to overall social connectedness.

Table 3 - Social trust by key variables (row percentages)

	Most people can be trusted	Can't be too careful	Don't know	*Sample size*
	%	**%**	**%**	
All	52	44	5	*1594*
Social connectedness				
Most connected	55	41	4	*546*
Least connected	43	53	4	*417*
Area deprivation				
Least deprived	61	36	3	*319*
Most deprived	37	58	5	*307*
Tenure				
Owner-occupier	57	39	5	*1088*
Social renter	37	59	4	*373*
Age				
18-24	35	56	9	*108*
25-34	47	48	5	*222*
35-44	54	42	4	*325*
45-54	48	46	6	*270*
55-64	59	39	2	*270*
65+	59	38	2	*396*
Highest educational qualification				
Degree/Higher Education	59	35	6	*479*
None	43	53	4	*394*
Income				
Lowest quintile	42	56	3	*399*
Highest quintile	63	34	4	*236*

Measures of inter-generational contact

2.11   A key theme in the 2004 module was inter-generational contact, which was found to be strongly associated with attitudes towards young people.

2.12   This issue was revisited in the 2006 survey, through two main types of measure. First of all, from background demographic data collected as part of the survey, it is possible to establish whether or not respondents live in households that contain young people. Secondly, the survey asked respondents how many of the young people in their area – apart from close relatives or household members – they would know well enough to speak to.

2.13   The findings reinforce the picture emerging from the 2004 module: that young people are by no means a 'tribe apart', but that there are significant gaps in contact.

Household composition and parent-child links

2.14   The most direct way in which adults come into contact with young people is through their own households and family relationships. Overall, 12% of those interviewed lived in a household containing at least one person aged 11-15 while 20% lived with someone aged 16-24. Ten per cent and 12%, respectively, had children (or step-children) in those particular age groups.

2.15   For the most part, the picture here is entirely as one might expect. Those aged 35 to 54 (i.e. of typical parenting age) are by far the most likely to live with someone aged 11 to 15.

Figure 2 – Resident in household containing young person by age group (%)

Sample size: 1594
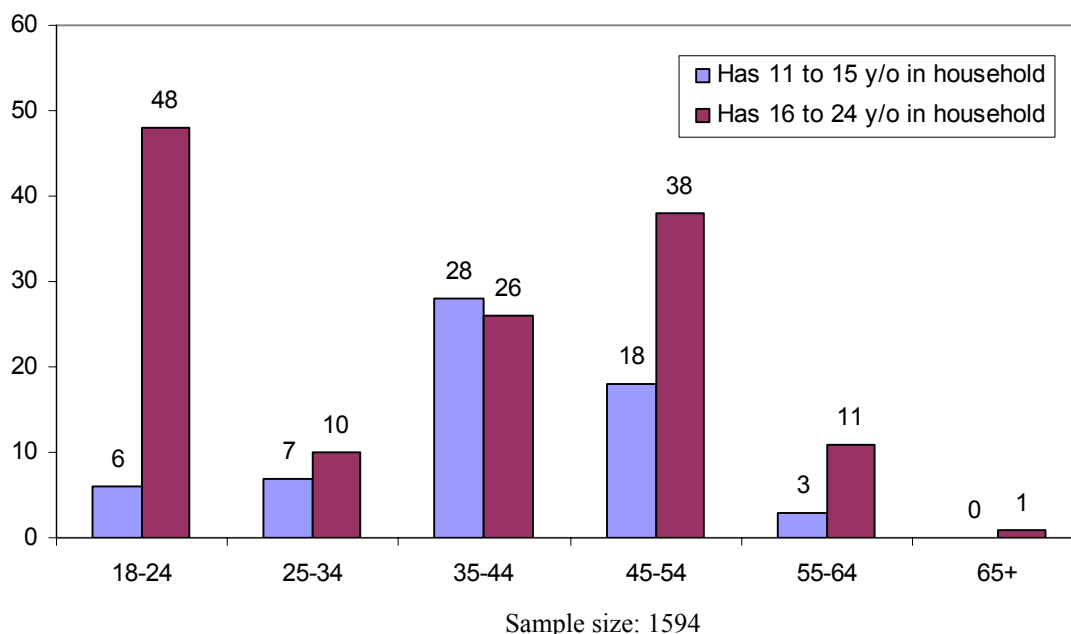
2.16   But perhaps the most striking finding here is the almost complete absence of multi-generational households containing both young people and those in the oldest age group. Although we have no easily available comparative data here, it seems unlikely that the same results would have been obtained some 30 or 40 years ago. It also means that there may be a fundamental structural difficulty to be overcome in establishing close relationships between the oldest and youngest sections of the population. That said, many older people do have links with younger people through grandparenting – an issue we return to below.

Contact with young people in area

2.17   The survey also included a set of questions aimed at gauging respondents' levels of contact with young people in their area. For 11 to 15 year-olds, 16 to 24 year-olds and also – for reasons of comparability – people aged over 25, respondents were asked whether they knew 'most', 'some' or 'none' well enough to speak to in the street.

2.18   The results again suggest that there are some significant gaps in inter-generational contact.

Figure 3 – Contact with 11 to 15 year-olds in area by age group (%)

Legend:
- Know most 11-15
- Know none 11-15

Age group	Know most 11-15	Know none 11-15
18-24	14	56
25-34	11	61
35-44	14	37
45-54	18	39
55-64	16	53
65+	10	54

Sample size: 1594
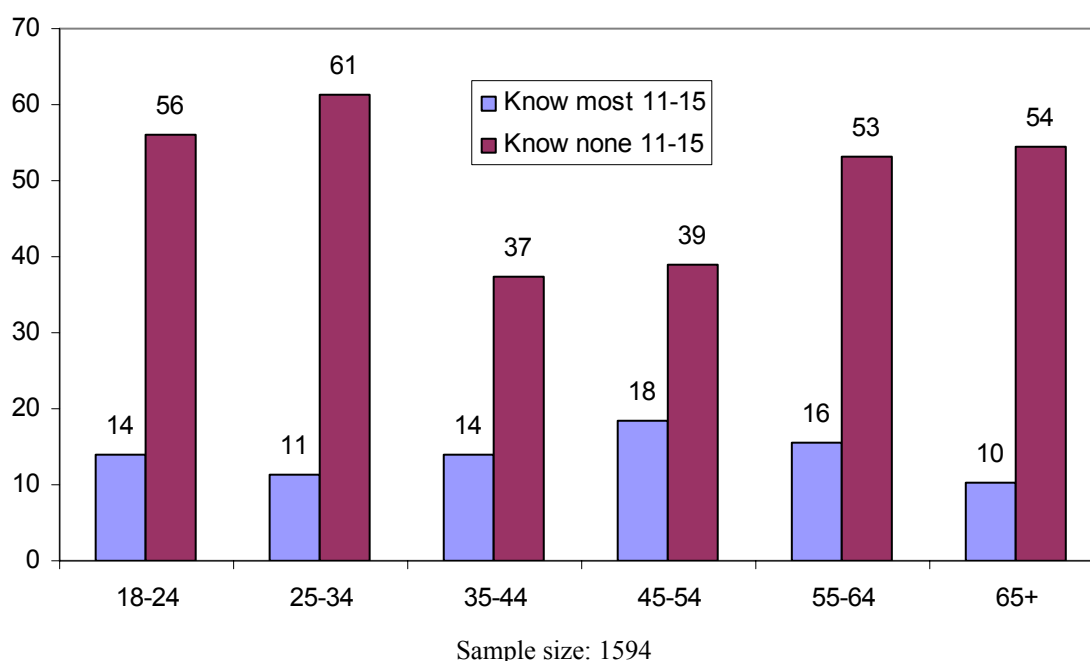
Figure 4 – Contact with 16 to 24 year-olds in area by age group (%)

Legend:
- Know most 16-24
- Know none 16-24

Age group	Know most 16-24	Know none 16-24
18-24	37	16
25-34	15	45
35-44	11	43
45-54	18	25
55-64	14	44
65+	10	51

Sample size: 1594
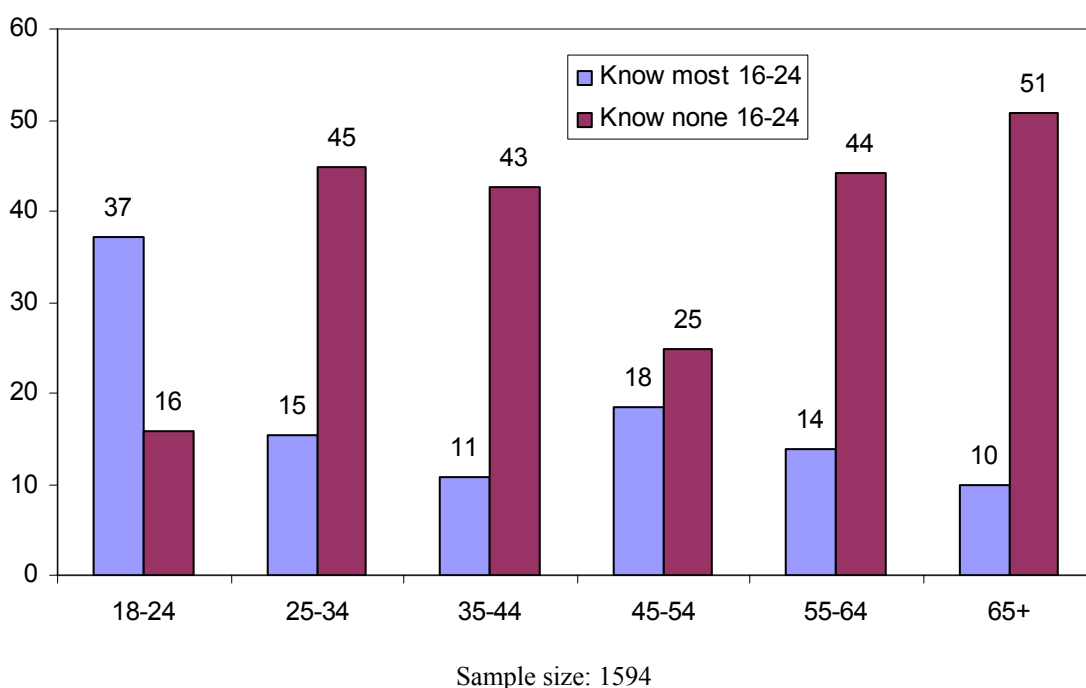
2.19   Again, this serves to emphasise the way in which inter-generational contact is patterned by lifestage rather than age *per se*. The proportion of adults between the ages of 18 and 34 who know 'none' of the 11 to 15 year-olds in their area is much higher than in the two subsequent age groups (who are the most likely to have children of their own in that age bracket) and indeed than that among the oldest age groups. The same pattern does not, of course, hold for contact with 16 to 24 year-olds, since the youngest age group covered by the survey largely coincides with this group.

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2.20   Other factors independently associated with extent of contact with the 11 to 15 year-olds in the area were tenure (those in social rented accommodation were more likely than either home owners or private renters to know 'most'), area deprivation (those in more deprived areas were more likely to know most) and extent of general social connectedness. The following figure shows the relationship between contact with young people (aged 11 to 15 and 16 to 24) and the social connectedness scale described earlier in this chapter.

Figure 5 – Contact with 11 to 15 year-olds in area by 'social connectedness' scale (%)

Sample size: 1594
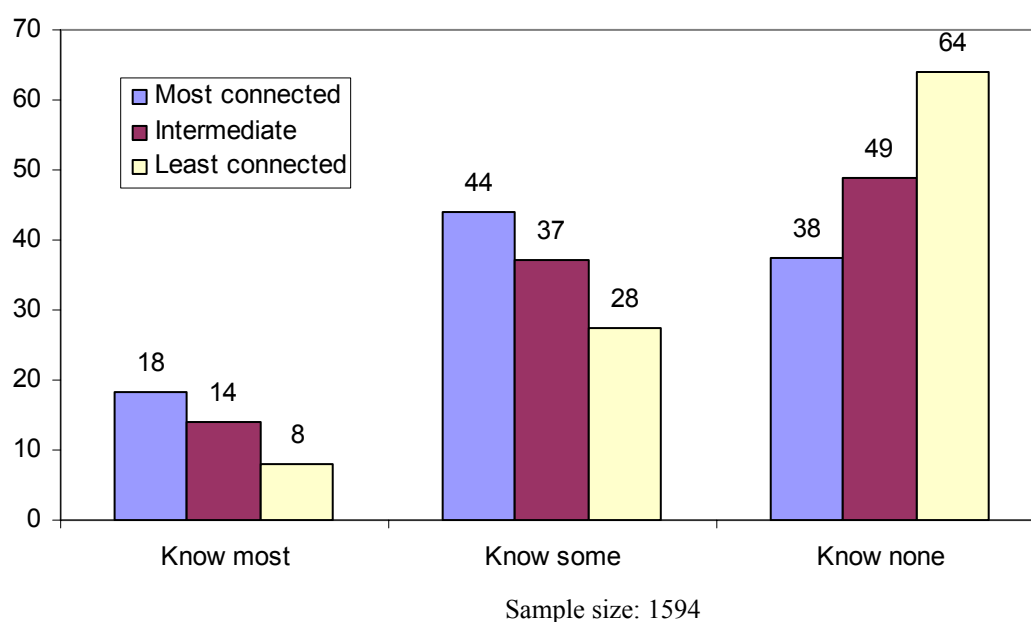
2.21   For the first time in the 2006 survey, respondents were asked about *how* they came into contact with young people in their area.

Table 4 – Reasons for contact with young people in area (%)

	11 to 15	16 to 24
	%	%
I have other close relatives this age	31	27
I meet people in neighbourhood	29	32
I meet child/grandchild's friends	14	11
I have grandchildren	13	8
I have children this age	11	11
I meet people this age at work	10	25
I meet people in clubs/groups	7	12
I volunteer with young people	5	2
I myself have friends	4	18
Other reason	3	2
I don't have any contact	28	21
Sample size	*1594*	*1594*

2.22   Although around three in ten indicated that they simply meet young people in their neighbourhood, most responses related to family ties of various kinds.

Grandparenting is especially significant in relation to those aged 65 and over, with 39% of respondents indicating that they have a grandchild between the ages of 11 and 15. In the absence of genuinely multi-generational households, such links may have a particular significance. Not surprisingly, the proportion of respondents saying they work with young people or have friends of that age was higher in relation to the 16 to 24 year-old age group.

Key points

- The results suggest that most people feel they have a reasonable degree of social support and 'connectedness' within their own communities – though this may be based on relatively few, strong relationships with friends and families rather than on a broader 'density of acquaintanceship'.
- Women are more likely than men to exhibit higher levels of social connectedness, as are people in higher income households. General levels of social connectedness are also associated with higher levels of inter-generational contact. Older people do not appear to be especially *dis*connected, scoring higher than other age groups on some measures but lower on others.
- Older people do score much more highly on the survey measure of social trust, as do men, despite their lower levels of social connectedness. Social trust is also markedly higher among those with higher levels of educational attainment, in higher income households and living in areas of least deprivation.
- The two main measures of inter-generational contact (based on household structure and level of contact with young people in the area) vary greatly according to lifestage, rather than age *per se*, with the highest levels of contact associated with those most likely to have children aged between 11 and 24.
- There are clearly some very significant gaps in contact between the oldest and the youngest age groups – exacerbated by the almost complete absence of households spanning more than two generations – but a sizeable minority of the 65 plus age group do have links through grandchildren of that age.
- Although around three in ten adults say that they come into contact with young people simply by meeting them in their neighbourhood, for most, inter-generational contact is structured around family ties of various kinds.

CHAPTER THREE VIEWS OF YOUNG PEOPLE AND YOUTH CRIME

Introduction

It was argued in the conclusion to the report on the 2004 module that public attitudes towards young people and youth crime should be seen as not simply reflecting, but helping to constitute the problem of 'youth crime'. With that in mind, the 2006 module revisited a number of measures of public attitudes in this area. General attitudes towards young people were again documented, since these both shape and are shaped by the on-going public, political and media concern with young people and anti-social behaviour. Perceptions of the prevalence of youth crime were also examined, as an indicator of what people hear and believe to be happening in their own neighbourhoods. Finally, questions were asked about the *direct impact* on respondents of the same range of youth crime-related behaviours.

General attitudes towards young people

3.1   As in the 2004 survey, respondents were presented with a series of attitude statements relating to young people:

- *The behaviour of young people today is no worse than it was in the past*
- *Most young people are responsible and well-behaved*
- *Young people today have no respect for older people*
- *Most young people are helpful and friendly*
- *Young people are more likely than older people to be the victims of crime.*

Table 5 – Agreement/disagreement with statements about young people (%)

	Agree/agree strongly	Neither	Disagree/ disagree strongly	*Sample size*
	%	%	%	
The behaviour of young people today is no worse than it was in the past	28	11	62	*1575*
Most young people are responsible and well-behaved	53	19	28	*1588*
Young people today have no respect for older people	45	21	34	*1588*
Most young people are helpful and friendly	50	29	21	*1581*

3.2   The pattern of results is extremely close to that obtained in 2004 – indeed there is no statistically significant variation in results between the two years – and suggests a continuing ambivalence in adult attitudes towards young people. While 62% *dis*agree that the behaviour of young people is no worse than in the past and 45% agree that young people today have no respect for older people, more than half also agree that most people are helpful and friendly and a similar proportion that most are responsible and well-behaved.

3.3   Of course, this ambivalence exists at the level of the sample as a whole, rather than necessarily being present within the views of individuals. For example, 79% of those who agree that young people have no respect for older people *disagree* that most young people are helpful and friendly; while 77% of those who disagree that young people have no respect for older people *agree* that most young people are helpful and friendly. In other words, there is a tension between the views of *different* sets of adults, some of whom are broadly positive and others broadly negative in their attitudes towards young people.

3.4   In order to facilitate an analysis of the key drivers of positive and negative perceptions of young people in general, the four items were scaled to create a single index with a minimum score of 4 (indicating the most positive end of the spectrum) and a maximum score of 16 (indicating the least positive). By assigning cases to tertiles, it was possible to categorise individuals as belonging to the 'most positive', 'least positive' or 'intermediate' groups. On the basis of a logistic regression model, the following variables were shown to have the strongest independent association with more positive attitudes.

Table 6 – General attitudes towards young people by key variables (row percentages)

	Most positive group	Intermediate group	Least positive group	Sample size
	%	**%**	**%**	
All	34	32	34	*1594*
Perceptions of youth crime problems				
Most common	17	29	55	*464*
Least common	49	30	20	*489*
Highest educational qualification				
Degree/Higher Education	46	30	25	*479*
None	21	34	45	*394*
Social trust				
Most can be trusted	46	32	22	*831*
Can't be too careful	21	31	48	*702*
Age				
18-24	23	24	53	*108*
25-34	29	31	40	*222*
35-44	35	32	33	*325*
45-54	42	30	28	*270*
55-64	35	37	28	*270*
65+	34	34	32	*396*
Contact with 16 to 24 year-olds in area				
Know none	27	37	36	*362*
Know some/all	36	30	34	*1232*

3.5   As in 2004, what is most striking is that those in the youngest age group (18 to 24 year-olds) hold the least positive views of young people, while those aged 65 and over hold much more positive views. Positive views of young people are also independently associated with lower levels of perceived youth crime problems (see below), lower levels of contact with young people aged 16 to 24, higher levels of educational attainment and higher levels of social trust.

Perceptions of prevalence of local youth crime problems

3.6   We turn now from general attitudes towards young people to adult views and experiences of youth crime and disorder. Respondents were asked how common they felt a range of specific youth-crime related problems were in their own area. As the following table shows, the proportion saying each was either very or fairly common ranged from around a fifth to a half of those interviewed (in relation to young people using drugs in public and being noisy in the street, respectively).

Table 7 – Perceptions of prevalence of local youth crime problems (%)

	Young people being noisy in the street	Vandalism or graffiti caused by young people	Young people being drunk in public	Young people using drugs in public	Young people behaving in a threatening way
	%	%	%	%	%
Very common	17	11	16	7	7
Fairly common	32	25	31	12	18
Not very common	36	44	34	37	47
Not at all common	15	20	17	36	27
(Don't know)	*	*	2	7	1
Sample size	*1594*	*1594*	*1594*	*1594*	*1594*

3.7   Again, these variables were combined into a scale to facilitate analysis of the key factors associated with perceptions of local youth crime problems as being very common. By far the most powerful predictor of belonging to the 'most common' group was area deprivation. As might be expected, youth crime was much more likely to be seen as common in areas of greater deprivation, a relationship summarised in the following graph.

Figure 6 – Perceptions of prevalence of youth crime by area deprivation (%)

Sample size: 1594
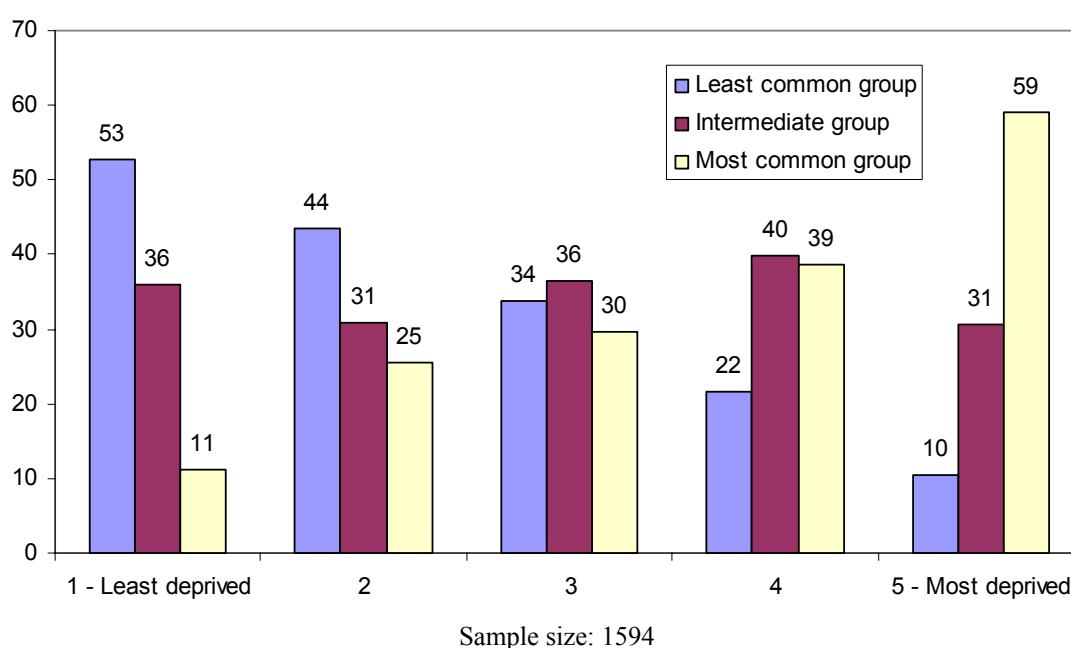
3.8   Other variables independently associated with seeing youth crime problems as more common included being in the social rented sector, being directly affected by youth crime and having less positive views of young people in general. Interestingly, a higher level of contact with 16 to 24 year-olds is associated with seeing youth crime problems as *more* common – perhaps reflecting the fact that the group most likely to experience victimisation are young people themselves.

Table 8 – Perceptions of prevalence of youth crime problems by key variables (row percentages)

	Most common	**Intermediate**	**Least common**	*Sample size*
	%	**%**	**%**	
All	32	35	33	*1594*
Directly affected by youth crime				
Most affected	66	32	2	*516*
Least affected	10	26	64	*468*
Contact with 16 to 24 year-olds in area				
Know most	37	28	28	*241*
Know none	31	35	41	*631*
General attitudes towards young people				
Most positive	16	37	47	*531*
Least positive	52	30	18	*517*
Area deprivation				
Most deprived	59	31	10	*281*
Least deprived	11	36	53	*291*
Tenure				
Owner-occupier	26	36	38	*983*
Social renter	52	29	19	*343*

Direct experience of local youth crime problems

3.9   While perceptions of the prevalence of particular types of crime and disorder undoubtedly reflect something important about the 'problem of youth crime', they should not necessarily be read as straightforward reflections of crime reality. Individuals and neighbourhoods may be differentially sensitised to such issues, with the result that the same objective level of behaviour in one area may be seen as much more prevalent or problematic than in another. Factors shaping this will include the architecture and geography of different communities (in some areas, for example, vandalism and graffiti may be much more visible than in others) and tolerance of particular types of disturbance (e.g. noise from teenagers hanging around in the street).

3.10   Consequently it was also decided to ask respondents about the extent to which they had been *directly affected* by each of the youth crime-related problems discussed above. While this concept is itself problematic – e.g. what exactly does it mean to be 'directly affected'? – it was hoped that this would at least help to distinguish beliefs or sensitivities relating to youth crime from its actual consequences.

3.11   What is immediately clear is that this measure suggests a less dramatic problem than does the measure of perceived prevalence. For all five types of behaviour, the vast majority of those interviewed say that they have been directly affected either 'not very

much' or 'not at all'.

Table 9 – Extent to which 'directly affected' by local youth crime problems (%)

	Young people being noisy in the street	Vandalism or graffiti caused by young people	Young people being drunk in public	Young people using drugs in public	Young people behaving in a threatening way
	%	%	%	%	%
A great deal	3	2	3	1	2
Quite a lot	13	9	14	5	6
Not very much	41	29	31	21	25
Not at all	43	60	52	73	67
(Don't know)	0	*	0	*	0
Sample size	*1594*	*1594*	*1594*	*1594*	*1594*

3.12   That is not to say that there is no association between perceptions of the prevalence of specific problems and being directly affected by them – indeed the two are very strongly correlated – but, on all five measures, the proportion of respondents saying they had been directly affected 'quite a lot' or 'a great deal' was markedly smaller than that saying the problem was 'very common' in their area.

Figure 7 – Perceived prevalence versus direct effects of youth crime-related problems (%)
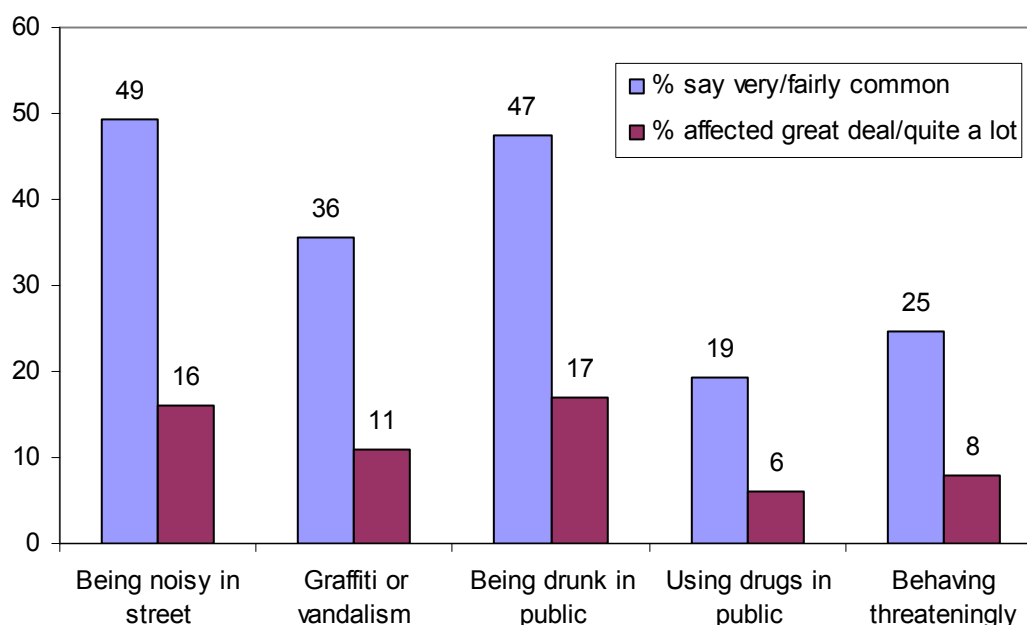
Sample size: 1594

3.13   When the various items are scaled, and respondents are assigned to tertiles according to their responses across the five measures, a handful of significant and independent associations emerge from a logistic regression. It is notable, for example,

that those living in remote and rural communities are less likely than those in urban areas and, especially, accessible small towns to fall into the 'most directly affected' category.[3] It is also striking that the proportion of older people falling into the 'least directly affected' group is higher than for other age groups, although this may reflect the fact that they are less likely to use public spaces, especially after dark, perhaps even as a result of crime-related anxiety.[4] Less surprising, perhaps, is the finding that those who hold the least positive attitudes towards young people in general are more likely to report having been directly affected by youth crime.

Table 10 – Extent to which 'directly affected' by local youth crime problems by key variables (row percentages)

	Most directly affected	Intermediate	Least directly affected	*Sample size*
	%	**%**	**%**	
All	34	33	33	*1594*
Urban-rural classification				
Large urban	39	36	26	*508*
Other urban	35	35	31	*375*
Accessible small towns	43	28	30	*187*
Remote small towns	14	43	43	*113*
Accessible rural	27	28	45	*219*
Remote rural	12	25	63	*192*
General attitudes towards young people				
Most positive	22	36	42	*531*
Least positive	48	29	24	*517*
Perceptions of youth crime problems				
Most common	68	23	10	*459*
Least common	2	32	66	*486*
Age group				
18-24	39	35	27	*108*
25-34	40	39	21	*222*
35-44	35	32	33	*325*
45-54	37	35	29	*270*
55-64	34	30	36	*270*
65+	22	29	49	*396*

Key points

- General attitudes towards young people appear largely unchanged since 2004 and remain characterised by a tension between sympathy for and concern about 'young people today'.

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[3] This analysis is based on the Scottish Government's Urban-Rural Classification which takes account of both the population size of a 'settlement' and, in the case of smaller settlements, how long it would take to drive to a settlement of at least 10,000 people. It is a six-fold classification that ranges from large urban areas to remote rural ones. See http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/07/31114822/0 and Annex A for further details.

[4] It should be noted, though, that the extent to which older people are 'prisoners of fear' is often over-stated. Although they are more likely than younger groups to indicate that they would feel unsafe walking alone in their area after dark, on other measures, such as worry about specific forms of victimisation or perceptions of its likelihood, they differ little from other age groups (see Anderson, 1998).

- Key predictors of a more positive attitude towards young people included higher levels of educational attainment, living in a less deprived area and having at least some contact with young people aged 16 to 24.

- Intriguingly, the most negative attitudes towards 'young people today' were expressed by the *youngest* age group covered by the survey – those who were themselves aged 18-24 at time of interview. Those aged 55 and over, by contrast, tended to hold much more positive views.

- Between a fifth and a half of those interviewed thought that the five youth crime-related problems asked about were either very or fairly common in their own neighbourhood, but there was wide variation in overall perceptions of prevalence across sub-groups.

- One of the most powerful predictors of seeing youth crime problems as common was area deprivation. Other variables independently associated with perceiving youth crime as common included lack of contact with 16 to 24 year-olds in the neighbourhood, living in social rented housing, being directly affected by youth crime and having less positive views of young people in general.

- A measure of the extent to which individuals have been *directly affected* by the various types of youth crime-related behaviour suggests a slightly less dramatic picture of the 'problem of youth crime'. Although clearly related to perceived prevalence, for each type of behaviour, the proportion indicating they had been affected a 'great deal' or 'quite a lot' was very much lower than those saying the problem was 'very' or 'fairly common' in their area.

CHAPTER FOUR   AVOIDANCE BEHAVIOUR AND WILLINGNESS TO INTERVENE

Introduction

4.1.   In this chapter, the focus shifts to the ways in which adults react to problematic situations involving young people. The analysis is based on three hypothetical scenarios posited in the course of the interview: one aimed at exploring 'avoidance behaviour' by adults when confronted by a gathering of teenagers; the second relating to willingness to intervene to prevent anti-social behaviour; and the last relating to willingness to intervene in the interest of a young person's safety.

Avoidance behaviour

4.2   Before moving on to consider willingness to intervene in problematic situations involving young people, it may be worth exploring briefly a related issue: namely, respondents' modification of their own behaviour in the face of a potentially threatening situation involving young people. All respondents were asked the following question:

> I'd like you to imagine a situation in which you had to walk past a group of teenagers in order to get to a shop. Which of the answers on this card best describes how you might feel in that situation?

4.3   In tapping into adult concerns about encounters with young people and subsequent 'avoidance behaviour', this is clearly linked to the ability of individuals and communities to exercise informal social control. In many respects, avoidance behaviour can be seen as the flipside of willingness to intervene: if adults feel concerned about engaging with young people even in relatively unproblematic situations, it is reasonable to assume that they will also feel inhibited about involving themselves in situations in which young people are clearly posing a risk to others or are at risk themselves.

4.4   In terms of the wording of the scenario, it is worth noting that there is nothing to suggest that the young people concerned are behaving in an especially threatening or even boisterous way. The gender of the group is not specified.

4.5   Overall, around half of those interviewed said it would not bother them at all to walk past the teenagers and only around one in ten that they would feel very worried or uncomfortable or would probably avoid walking past them altogether. But there is also a very sizeable group who say they would feel 'slightly worried or uncomfortable' in such circumstances – an indication perhaps of the unease, rather than outright fear, that groups of young people can induce in much of the adult population.

Figure 8 – How feel about walking past group of teenagers to get to shop (%)

Legend:
- Not bother me at all
- Slightly worried/uncomfortable
- Very worried/uncomfortable
- Probably avoid walking past them

Values: 49, 42, 5, 4
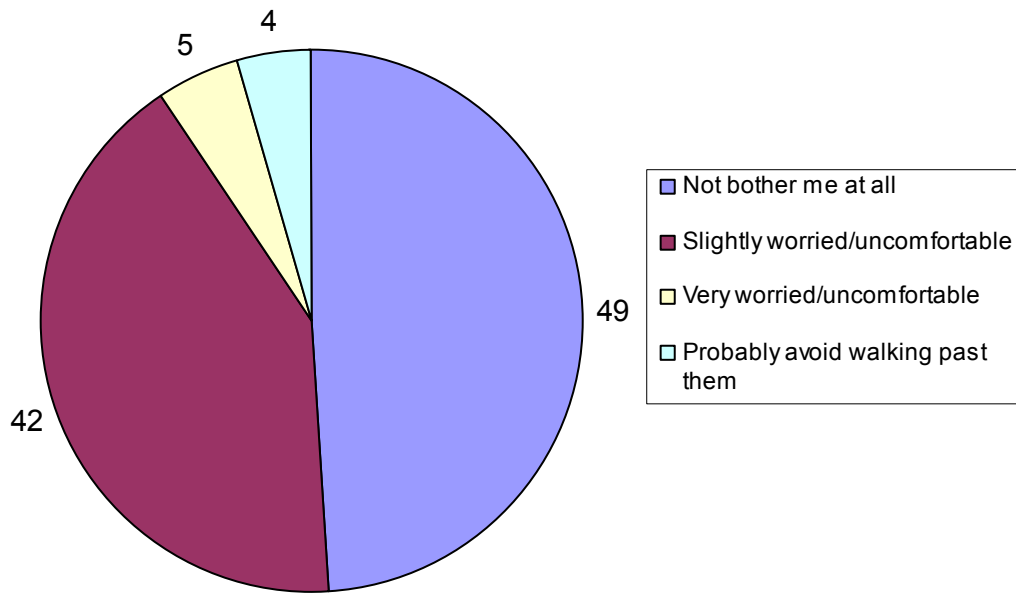
Sample size: 1589

4.6   It is also worth noting how responses to this question are patterned by age and gender. As the following graph shows, women in general – and older women in particular – are much more likely to say they would feel very worried/uncomfortable or avoid the teenagers altogether.

Figure 9 – Feel very uncomfortable/avoid altogether by age group and gender (%)

Legend:
- Males
- Females

Age group	Males	Females
18-24	2	10
25-34	7	6
35-44	5	9
45-54	4	10
55-64	8	18
65+	11	17
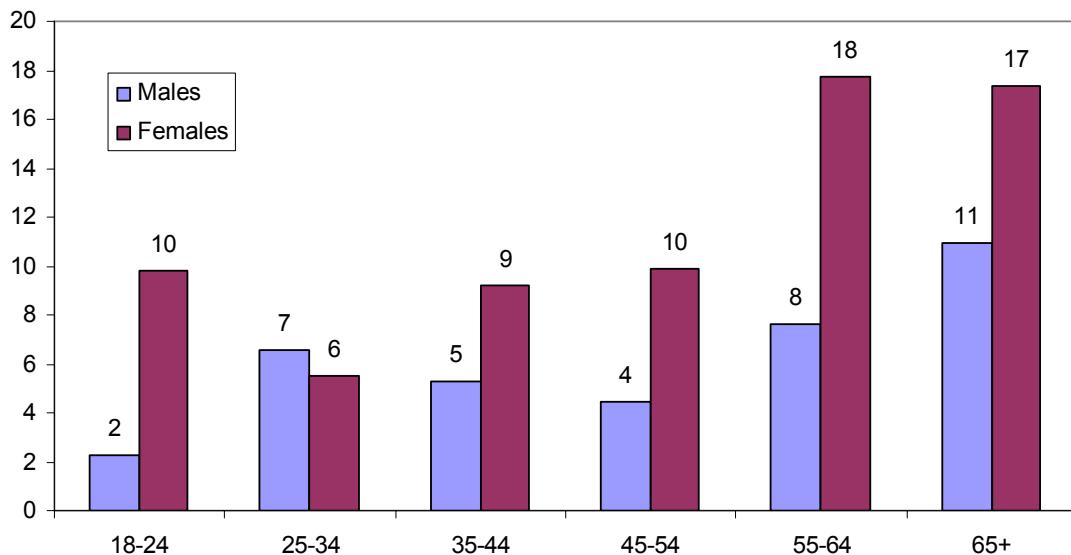
Sample size: 1589

4.7   Other variables that are independently associated with feeling 'not bothered at all' in such a scenario include the extent to which individuals have been directly affected by youth crime, general attitudes towards young people, extent of contact with 16 to 24 year-

olds in the area, tenure[5] and area deprivation. In these findings, we start to see very clearly, in empirical rather than theoretical terms, the inter-relationships sketched out in the introduction. For example, 64% of those who say they know most of the 16 to 24 year-olds in their area say they would not be bothered at all, while the same is true of only 44% of those who say they know none.

Table 11 – Avoidance behaviour when faced with group of teenagers outside shop by key variables (row percentages)

	Not bothered at all	Slightly worried/ uncomfortable	Very worried/ uncomfortable	Avoid walking past altogether	*Sample size*
	%	**%**	**%**	**%**	*%*
All	49	42	5	4	*1594*
Sex					
Male	59	35	4	3	*701*
Female	40	49	6	6	*893*
Age group					
18-24	45	49	3	3	*108*
25-34	51	43	3	3	*222*
35-44	49	43	5	3	*325*
45-54	52	41	3	5	*270*
55-64	49	38	8	5	*270*
65+					
Urban-rural classification					
Large urban	40	49	7	5	*508*
Other urban	48	43	4	5	*375*
Accessible small towns	53	32	4	11	*187*
Remote small towns	60	36	4	1	*113*
Accessible rural	56	40	3	1	*219*
Remote rural	73	24	2	1	*192*
General attitudes towards young people					
Most positive	62	33	3	3	*530*
Least positive	39	47	8	7	*516*
Area deprivation					
Most deprived	36	49	9	6	*307*
Least deprived	57	38	2	4	*318*
Directly affected by youth crime					
Least directly affected	64	31	2	3	*516*
Most directly affected	34	48	10	8	*466*
Social trust					
Most can be trusted	56	38	4	3	*828*
Can't be too careful	41	46	7	6	*700*
Contact with 16 to 24 year-olds in area					
Know most	64	30	3	3	*241*
Know none	44	43	7	5	*631*
Tenure					
Owner-occupier	49	44	3	3	*1085*
Social rented	49	33	10	8	*372*

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[5] Although this relationship is not obvious in bivariate analysis (crosstabulation), multivariate analysis suggests that social renters are in fact more likely to say they would be 'not bothered at all' in such a situation.

Willingness to intervene: risks posed *by* young people

4.8   In order to gauge adult willingness to intervene in situations involving risks posed by young people, respondents were asked to consider a situation in which they saw a group of 'fourteen year-old [boys/girls] **you recognised** damaging a bus shelter or other public property in your area'. Respondents were then asked to indicate how likely they would be to take each of a series of actions.

4.9   Several points are worth noting about this question. First, a random half of the sample was asked about boys and the other half about girls. In the analysis that follows, these two versions are both combined and treated separately to allow us to explore interactions between the gender of the young people. Secondly, the scenario explicitly assumes that there is some point of connection between the respondent and the young people concerned, through reference to recognising the young people and 'your area'. Thirdly, this question was included in the self-completion component of the survey and was affected by relatively high levels of item non-response, possibly because respondents thought they were being asked to indicate the action they would be *most* likely to take, rather than their likelihood of doing each one. While this may have affected the results, it is likely to have done so in ways that are broadly consistent across the sample. Hence the data still provide a reasonable basis for examining variations in response *across* different sub-groups.

4.10.   We start by examining the responses of *all* respondents – i.e. by combining responses for those asked about 14 year-old boys and those asked about 14 year-old girls.

Table 12 – Likelihood of different actions in the face of teenagers vandalising bus shelter (%)

	Challenge directly	Talk to them later on their own	Speak to their parents	Call the police
	%	%	%	%
Very likely	25	12	20	31
Fairly likely	26	30	30	27
Not very likely	22	26	23	22
Not at all likely	24	27	21	15
Don't know	4	5	6	5
Sample size	*1252*	*1087*	*1122*	*1214*

4.11   There is by no means a clear consensus about the likelihood of taking each course of action - in relation to each, responses are fairly evenly spread – though the results do suggest that a majority of adults would take some kind of action in such a situation (setting aside, for the moment, the difference between a hypothesised scenario and real life decisions).

4.12   The proportion saying they would be 'very likely' to take a particular course of action was highest in relation to calling the police (31%), but this should not be taken as an indication that there is no appetite for informal intervention: a quarter said they would be very likely to challenge the young people directly and a fifth to speak to the young people's parents. The least likely course of action is speaking to the young people later when they are on their own – only 12% saying they would be 'very likely' to do this.

4.13   If we separate out the responses of men and women, we find a higher proportion of men saying they would be 'very likely' to challenge the young people directly. On the remaining three measures, there is no statistical difference between male and female respondents.

Figure 10 – 'Very likely' to take different actions (14 year-old boys/girls combined) by respondent's gender (%)

Sample size: 1087 – 1252
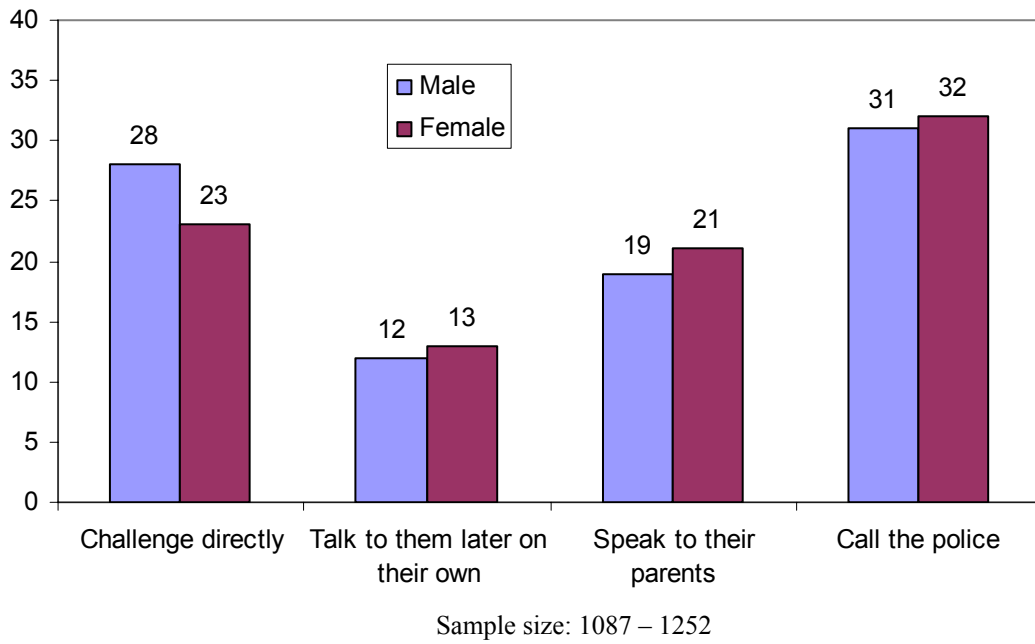
4.14   What happens if we now split responses according to the gender of the young people in the scenario? The following graphs show the proportions of male and female respondents 'very likely' to take each course of action, first in a situation involving 14 year-old boys, then one involving 14 year-old girls.

Figure 11 – 'Very likely' to take different actions (14 year-old boys only) by respondent's gender (%)
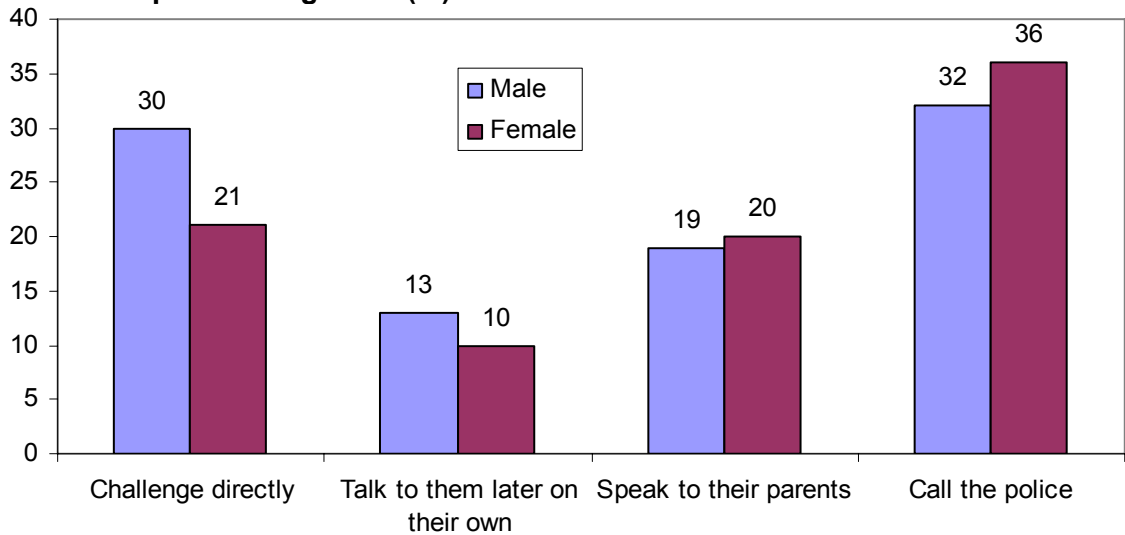

Sample size: 566 - 647

Figure 12 – 'Very likely' to take different actions (14 year-old girls only) by respondent's gender (%)
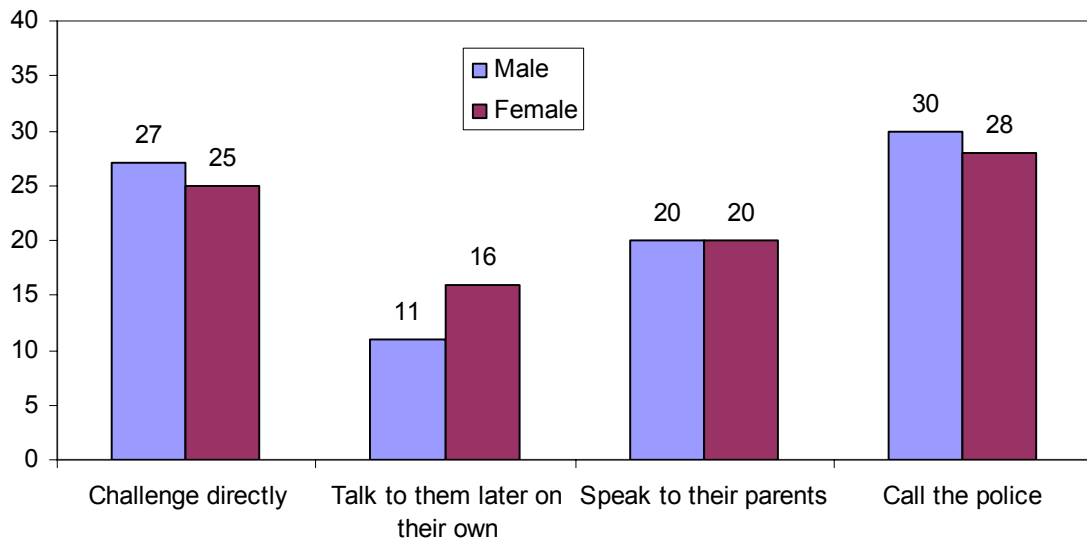
Sample size: 521 – 605

4.15   Male respondents are significantly more likely than females to say they would challenge directly a group of 14 year-old boys. In relation to the scenario involving 14 year-old girls, the difference is far less pronounced. Female respondents are more likely to intervene directly in a situation involving 14 year-old girls than one involving boys of the same age, and are also more likely to say they would talk to them later on their own. Both male and female respondents are slightly less likely to say they would call the police in a situation involving 14 year-old girls than one involving boys of the same age.

4.16   We will return to some of these gender effects below when we consider the reasons people give for any reluctance to intervene. First, however, we consider briefly the ways in which willingness to intervene varies along other dimensions.

Other predictors of willingness to intervene

4.17   Regression modelling suggests that inter-generational contact and general social connectedness are key predictors of willingness to intervene directly in such situations. For example, 35% of those in the 'most connected' group said they would be 'very likely' to challenge the young people directly, compared with 22% of those in the 'least connected' group. The same was true of 36% of those who said they know all or most of the 11 to 15 year-olds in their area, but of only 20% of those who knew none. Interestingly, however, these variables do not predict likelihood of calling the police. The following graphs shows the proportion of respondents saying they would be 'very likely' to challenge the young people directly by extent of contact with 11 to 15 year-olds in their area and overall social connectedness.

Figure 13 – 'Very likely' to challenge directly (14 year-old boys/girls combined) by level of contact with 11 to 15 year-olds in area (%)

Sample size: 1086 – 1251
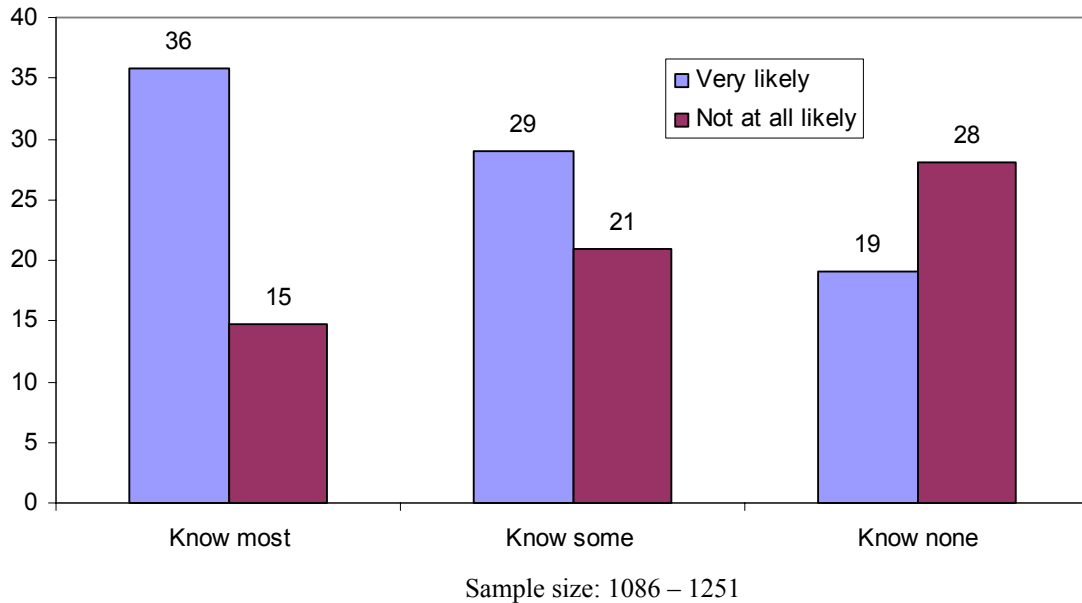
Figure 14 – 'Very likely' to challenge directly (14 year-old boys/girls combined) by social connectedness scale (%)

Sample size: 1085 – 1250
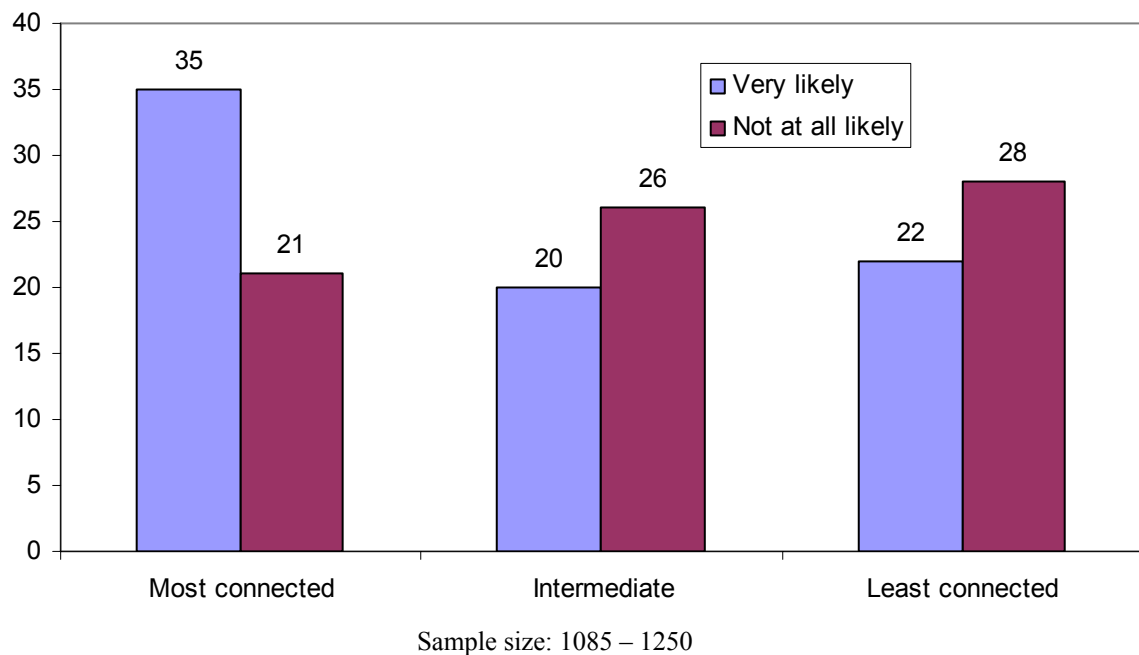
4.18   Although the differences are not that great, there is some evidence that these variables are even stronger predictors in relation to the specific scenario involving 14 year-old boys: for example, 40% of those knowing most of the 11-15 year-olds in their area said they would be very likely to intervene directly in such a situation, compared with just 16% of those knowing none.

4.19   There are also some interesting differences of note associated with settlement

type. Essentially, those living in urban locations (and especially in large urban areas) are less likely to signal that they would intervene directly *or* call the police, while those in remote small towns and remote rural areas are more likely to do both. This suggests that processes of both informal *and* formal social control are stronger in remote rural areas. This supports the notion that effective community responses to crime and anti-social behaviour may involve both formal and informal dimensions, and indeed that one may support the other. This is a theme we return to in the conclusions.

Figure 15 – 'Very likely' to challenge directly or very likely to call police (14 year-old boys/girls combined) by urban-rural classification (%)

Sample size: 1150 – 1202
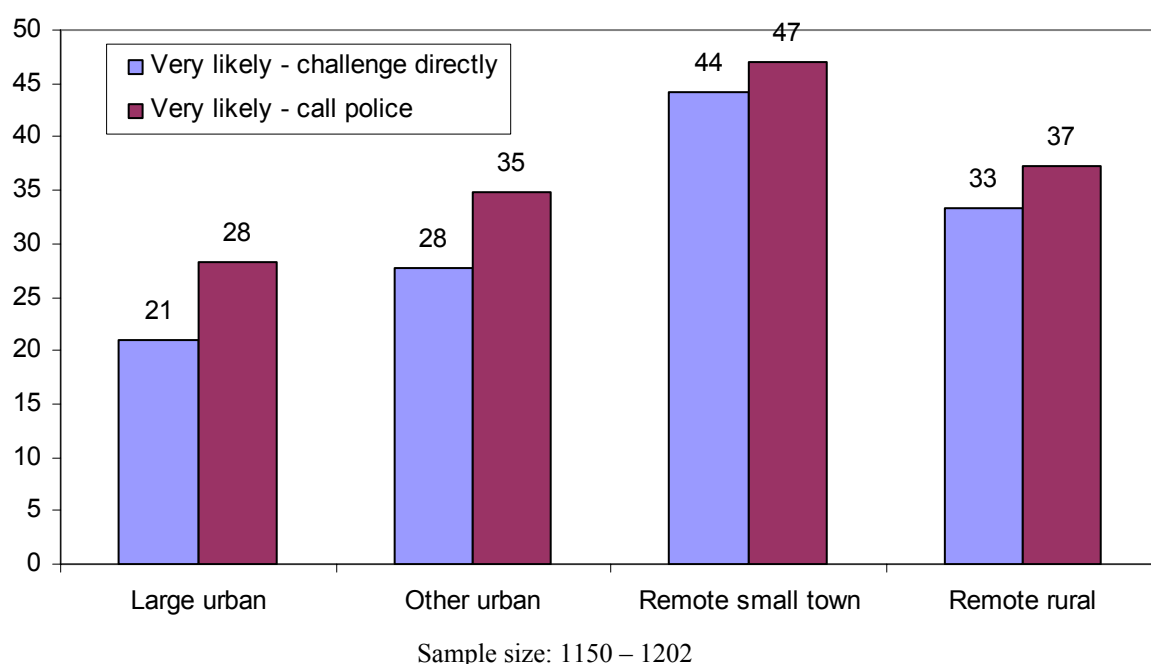
Reluctance to intervene

4.20   We turn now from what people say they would do to a consideration of *why* they might be reluctant to intervene directly in such situations. Regardless of their responses to the questions about their likely behaviour, respondents were asked the following:

> Still thinking about this **group of fourteen year-old [boys/girls]**, some people might be reluctant to speak to them directly. What, if any, concerns would you have about speaking to them directly?[6]

4.21   The following table shows the most common responses for the sample as a whole (i.e. for both versions of the scenario combined) and separately for those asked about 14 year-old boys and 14 year-old girls.

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[6] Respondents were asked to choose their answers from a pre-coded list of response options (showcard). A copy of the full questionnaire is available from the research team.

Table 13 – Reasons for reluctance to speak to teenagers directly by gender of teenagers (%)

	Combined %	Girls %	Boys %
Would make no difference	34	33	35
Might shout/threaten	32	30	33
Might hit/assault	30	23	36
Might allege threat or assault	24	28	21
Might be laughed at	17	18	16
Wouldn't have confidence	10	10	10
No concerns	23	26	19
Sample size	*1436*	*704*	*733*

4.22   Several things are striking here. First, only around a quarter of all respondents (and even fewer of those asked to consider the scenario involving 14 year-old boys) say they would have *no* concerns about intervening directly. Secondly, although the most common response is simply that they would be reluctant to intervene because 'it would make no difference', there is also a sizeable group of respondents who indicate that they would be inhibited by the fear of actual or threatened violence, or by concern that they young people might make a false allegation of assault against them. Perhaps not surprisingly, concern about being threatened or assaulted is expressed more commonly in relation to the scenario involving boys, while concern about counter allegations is more common in relation to the scenario involving girls.

4.23   But the gender dimension can only be fully understood once the gender of the respondent is related to that of the young people specified in each scenario. As the following graphs show, for both male and female respondents, there are some important variations across the two scenarios.

Figure 16 – Reasons for reluctance to intervene directly (14 year-old girls only) by respondent's gender (%)

Sample size: 704

34
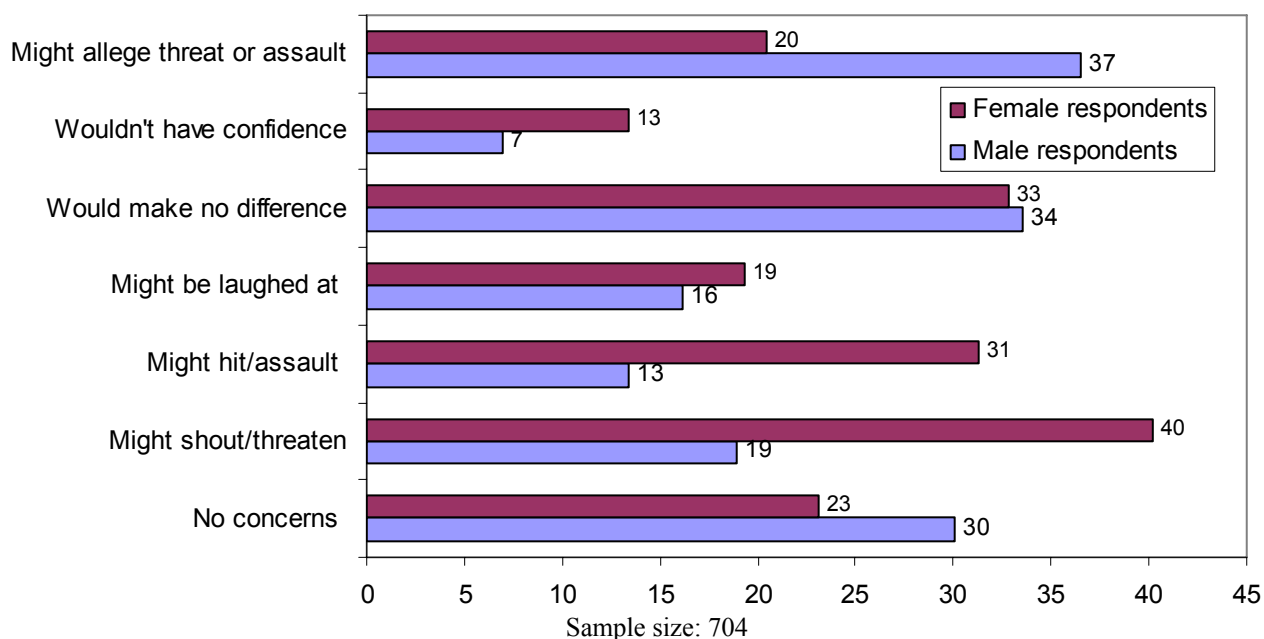
4.24 In relation to the scenario involving girls, female respondents were less likely than males to have 'no concerns' and much more likely to mention concern about actual or threatened assault. Male respondents, on the other hand, were much more likely to cite concern about false allegation as an inhibiting factor. Indeed this was the single most common response and was mentioned by almost 4 in 10 of all male respondents. The significance of this will be returned at various points in the remainder of the report.

Figure 17 – Reasons for reluctance to intervene directly (14 year-old boys only) by respondent's gender (%)

Sample size: 733
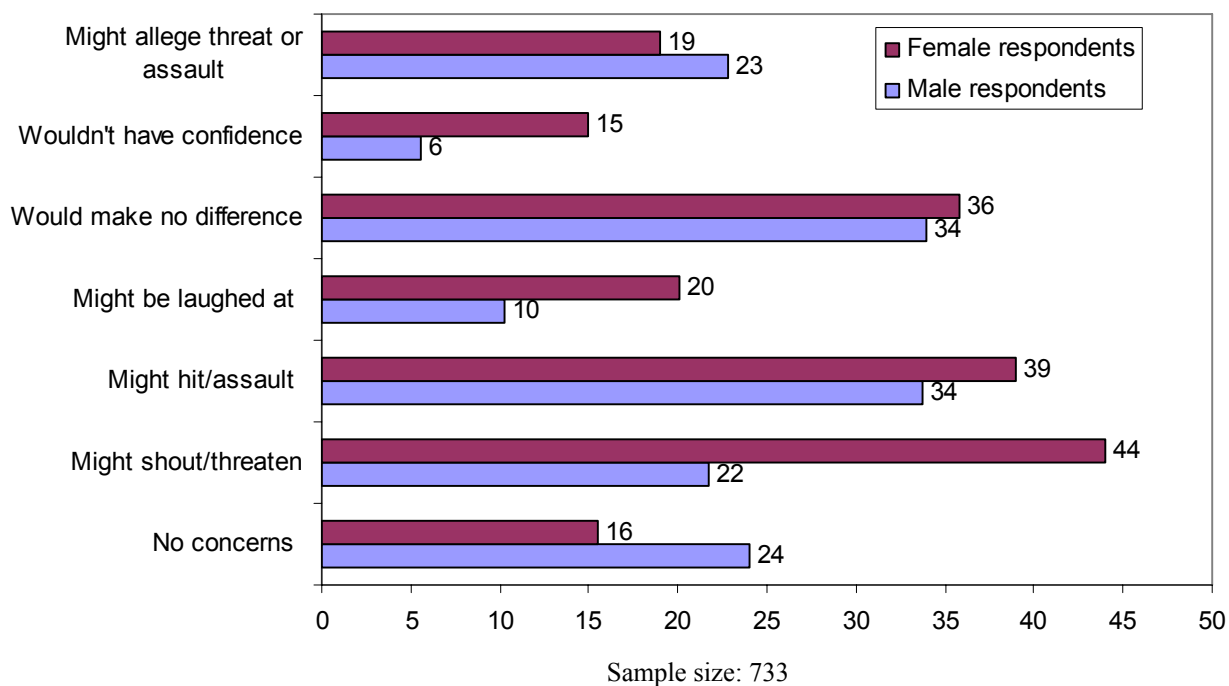
4.25 In relation to the scenario involving boys, female respondents were less likely to have 'no concerns' and more likely than male respondents to mention all of the other issues, with the exception of allegations of assault. They were twice as likely to cite concerns about being shouted at or threatened.

4.26 In summary, males are relatively less likely to have concerns about intervening in such situations, though only a minority say they would have *no* concerns. Both males and females are more likely to be concerned about violence or the threat of violence in situations involving boys than in situations involving girls. But for male respondents, the single biggest inhibiting factor in situations involving girls is the fear of wrongful allegations of assault.

4.27 Not surprisingly, those respondents with concerns about intervening are less likely to indicate that they would actually intervene; and the proportion of those with such concerns is, again, lower among those who know more of the young people who live in their area. The relationship with other variables is less pronounced.

Willingness to intervene: risks posed to young person

4.28   So far, we have focused on scenarios in which young people are engaged in anti-social behaviour or might otherwise be thought to pose a risk to other members of the community. The final scenario, by contrast, invited respondents to consider a situation in which a young person might be deemed to be *at risk*, and was worded as follows:

> Now I'd like you to imagine another situation where you are coming home after dark at around 11pm. You see **a ten year old [boy/girl]**, whom you don't know, playing on [his/her] own in a local park. Which ONE of these things do you think you would be most likely to do?

4.29   The sample was again split, with half the survey participants being presented with a version involving a 10 year-old boy and the other half a ten year-old girl. In this scenario, respondents were not given the cue of knowing or recognising the child, but the age of the child, the time of night and the fact it was dark were all intended to signal reasonable grounds for concern. The format of this question was slightly different in that respondents were not asked how likely they would be to do each of a range of things, but simply to indicate the thing they would be *most likely* to do.

4.30   As the following figure shows, around a third of all respondents said they would speak to the child directly, while slightly more indicated they would contact the police. Around one in five indicated that they would do nothing.

Figure 18 – Most likely action in scenario involving 10 year-old boy/girl (%)

Sample size: 649 – 1329
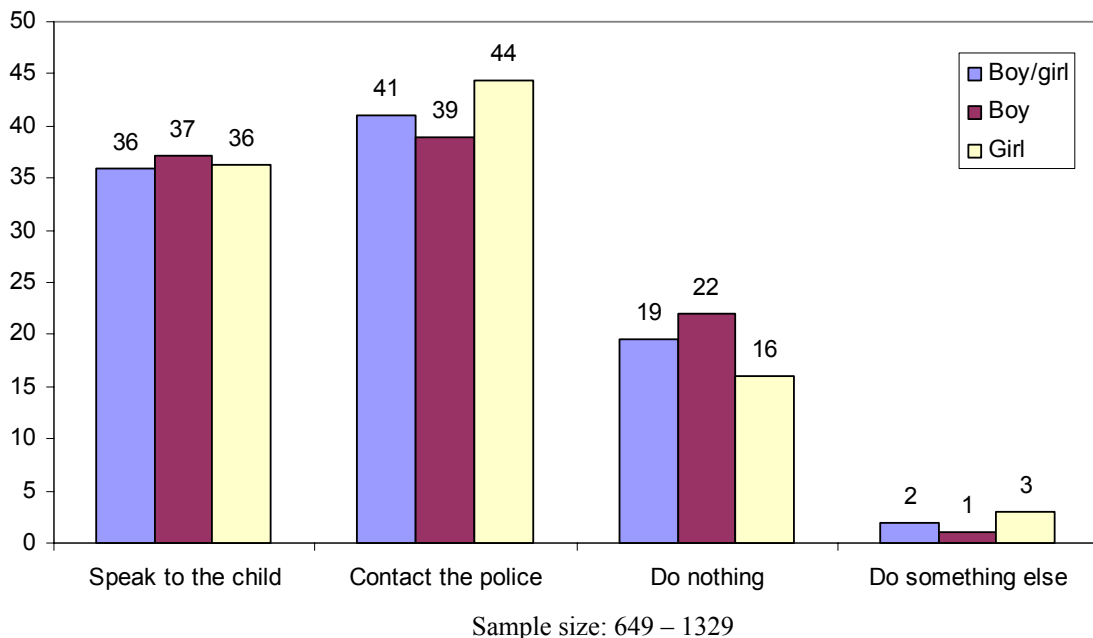
4.31   If we take into account the gender of the child, some differences are evident – in particular, the fact that respondents seem more likely to contact the police (and correspondingly less likely to 'do nothing') in situations in which a girl rather than a boy is at risk. Overall, however, it appears that willingness to intervene is less strongly

patterned by the gender of the young person than it was in the earlier example of the scenario involving vandalism.

4.32   The gender of the *respondent* is, however, a very important predictor here. Figure 19 shows the responses of male and female respondents for the two versions of the scenario combined. Figure 20 shows responses of male respondents only for the two versions of the scenario separately; Figure 21 shows the same for female respondents.

Figure 19 – Most likely action in scenario involving 10 year-old boy/girl by gender of respondent (%)

Sample size: 1329
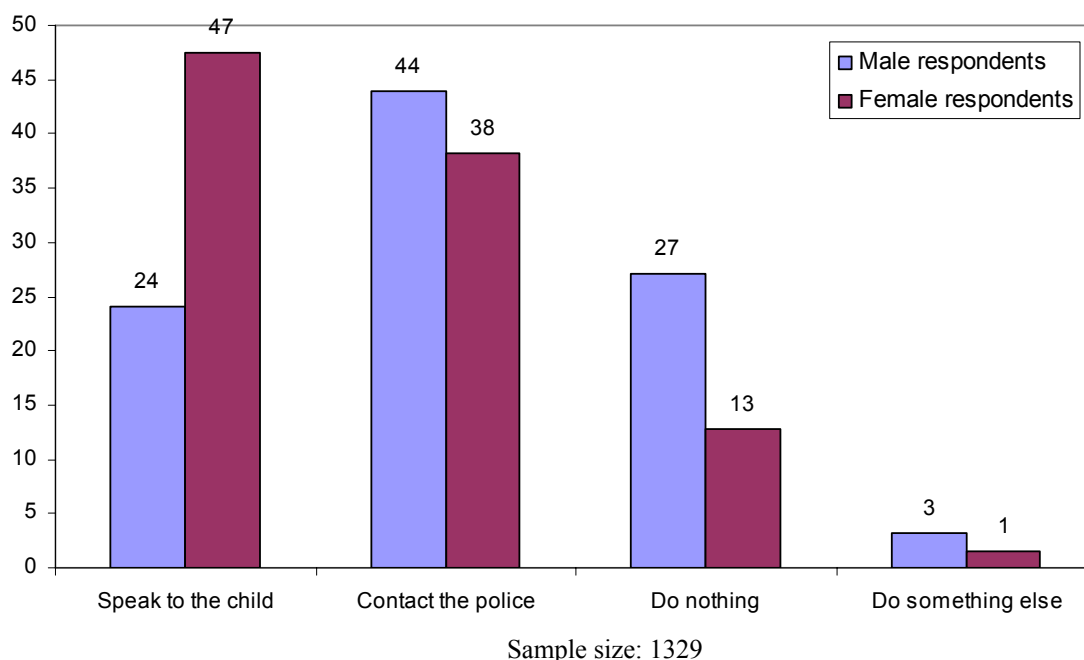
4.33   Overall, it is clear that male respondents are twice as likely as females to say they would 'do nothing' in such a situation and around half as likely to speak to the child directly. But, again, it is necessary to combine the gender of the respondent with that of the child to understand fully what is going on here.

4.34   Once this is done, it becomes clear that male respondents are much less likely to intervene directly in a situation involving a ten year-old girl than a boy of the same age. For female respondents, the opposite is true. Consequently, there is a huge gap in the likely actions of men and women in relation to the scenario involving the ten year-old girl: just 18% of men say they would speak to the girl directly, compared with 52% of females. Although a higher proportion of men than women say they would contact the police (54% compared with 36%), a quarter of men say they would be likely to 'do nothing' in such a situation compared with just one in ten women.

Figure 20 – Most likely action in scenario involving 10 year-old boy/girl – male respondents only (%)

Legend:
- 10 year-old boy
- 10 year-old girl

	Speak to the child	Contact the police	Do nothing	Do something else
10 year-old boy	30	37	30	1
10 year-old girl	17	52	23	5

Sample size: 649 - 680
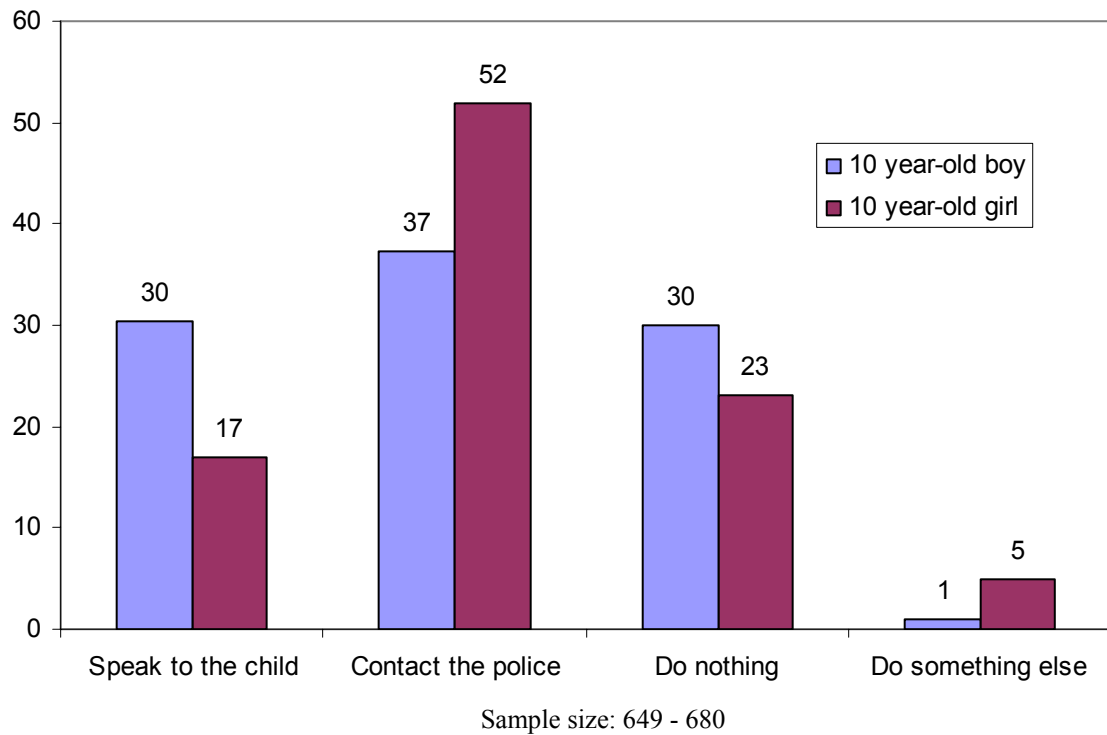
Figure 21 – Most likely action in scenario involving 10 year-old boy/girl – female respondents only (%)

Legend:
- 10 year-old boy
- 10 year-old girl

	Speak to the child	Contact the police	Do nothing	Do something else
10 year-old boy	43	40	16	1
10 year-old girl	52	36	10	2

Sample size: 649 - 680

38
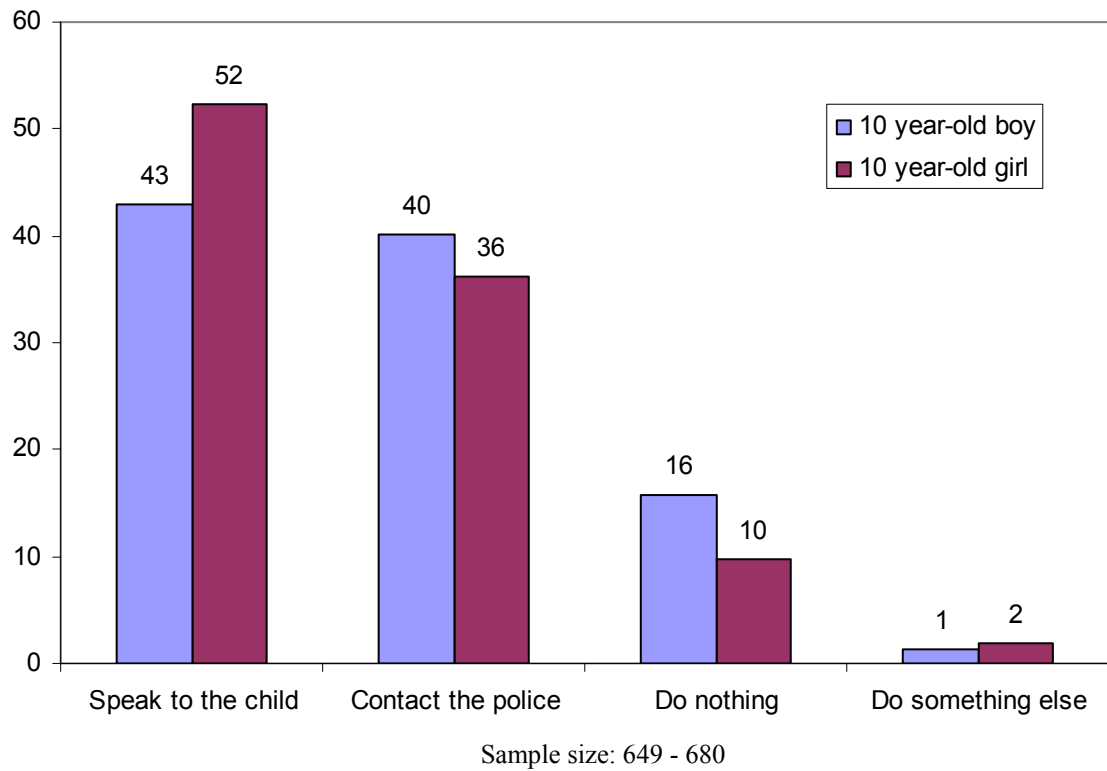
4.35   At first sight, this seems a curious finding. There is obvious concern about the well-being of the girl in the scenario, and male respondents are less likely to say they would do 'nothing' than in relation to a similar scenario involving a 10 year-old boy. Why, then, are male respondents so unlikely to approach the girl directly, and correspondingly more likely to call the police? We return to the factors that may lie behind these gender differences below.

4.36   Apart from gender, the other key predictors of willingness to intervene directly again relate to levels of inter-generational contact and social connectedness. The following figure shows the proportion of respondents who indicate they would speak directly to the child by these variables and suggests that those who know more of the young people in their area and have generally higher levels of social connectedness are much more likely to intervene.

Figure 22 – Most likely to speak to child directly in scenario involving 10 year-old boy/girl by contact with young people in area and social connectedness scale (%)

Sample size: 647 – 680
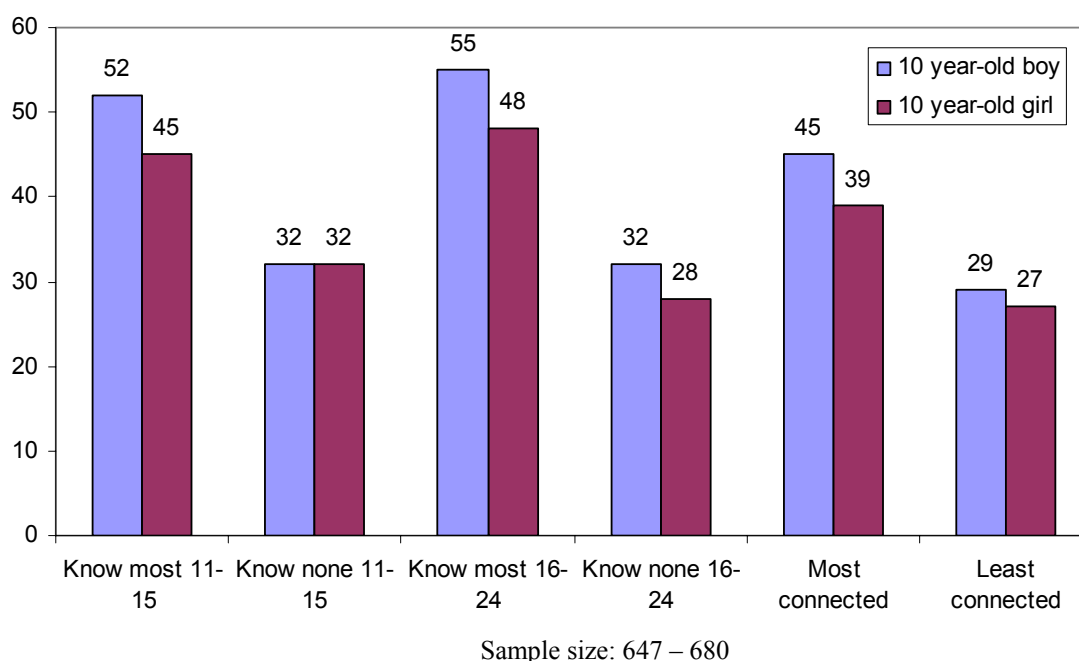
Reluctance to intervene

4.37   Again, regardless of their response to the initial question, respondents were asked about any concerns they might have about speaking to the child directly:

>   Still thinking about this same **ten year-old [boy/girl]**, some people might be reluctant to speak to [him/her] directly in this situation. What, if any, concerns would you have about speaking to him directly?

4.38   The results for the scenarios involving the ten year old boy and girl are shown both separately and combined in the table below.

Table 14 – Reasons for reluctance to speak to child directly by gender of child (%)

	Boy/girl combined	10 year-old boy	10 year-old girl
No concerns	35	38	33
Might shout/threaten	5	7	3
Might hit/assault	3	4	2
Might be laughed at	3	3	3
Would make no difference	9	11	7
Wouldn't have confidence	5	5	5
Might allege threat or assault	46	44	48
Sample size	*1395*	*713*	*682*

4.37   Only around a third of respondents say they would have 'no concerns' about speaking to the child directly (in other words, most would have concerns of some kind). But in relation to both scenarios only one issue is mentioned by a sizeable number of respondents: namely, concern about false allegation of threat or assault.

4.38   Again, however, the full picture is only revealed if the gender of respondents is related to the gender of the child in the scenario. Although concern about threatened or actual violence is low overall, in relation to the ten year-old boy, it is markedly higher among female than male respondents. There is not a wide variation in levels of concern about allegations of assault – mentioned by half the male respondents and four out of ten females.

Figure 22 – Reasons for reluctance to intervene directly (10 year-old boy only) by respondent's gender (%)

Sample size: 713

40
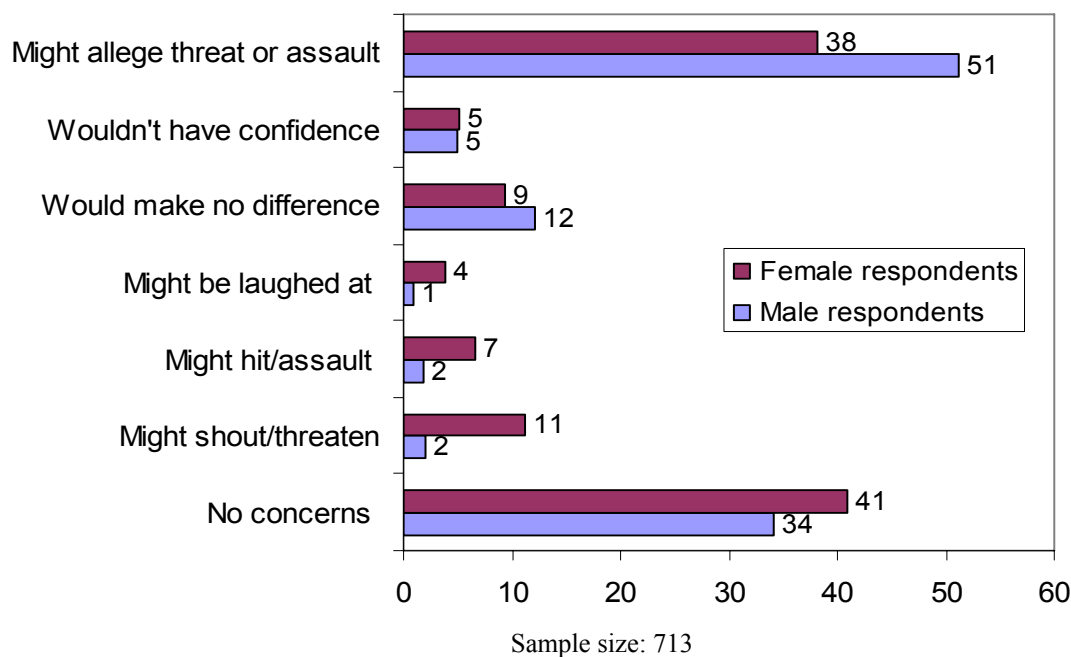
4.39   In relation to the scenario involving the 10 year-old girl, however, the differences between male and female respondents are much more pronounced. Perhaps the single most disturbing finding is that nearly two-thirds of male respondents say they would be reluctant to speak to a ten year-old girl in the circumstances outlined because of concerns about false allegations of threat or assault. The same was true for only around a third of female respondents. Only a fifth (21%) of males say they would have no concerns about intervening directly, compared with twice as many (43%) female respondents.

4.40   Overall, then, women are more likely than men to be concerned about threatened or actual violence – at least in relation to the scenario involving the 10 year-old boy – while men are much more likely to be worried about allegations of assault, especially in relation to the scenario involving the 10 year-old girl.

Figure 23 – Reasons for reluctance to intervene directly (10 year-old girl only) by respondent's gender (%)

Sample size: 682
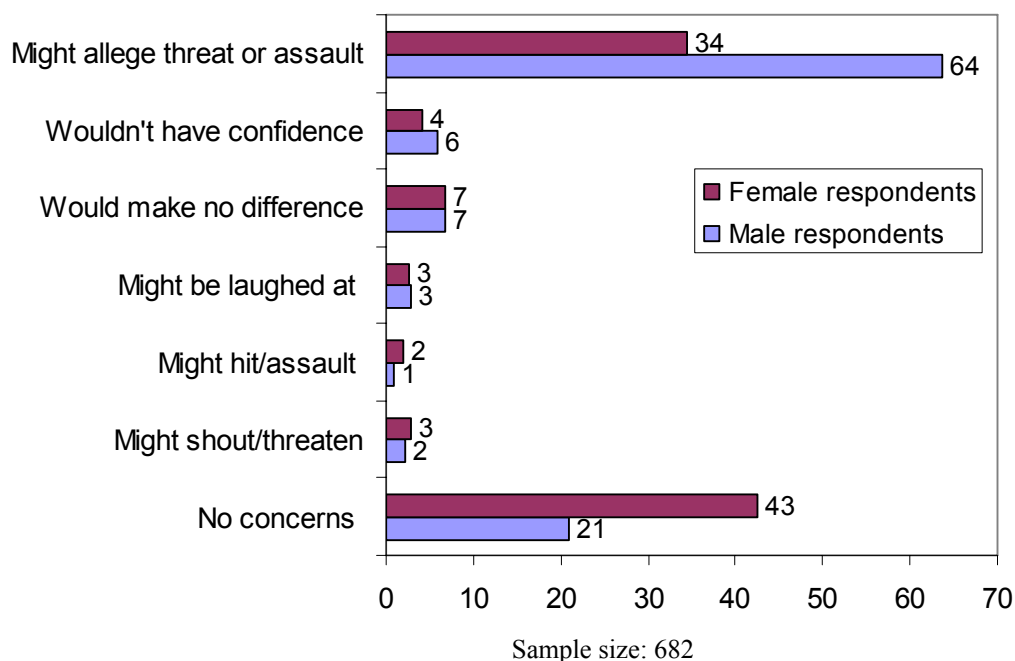
4.41   Whether or not adults know the young people in their area well enough to speak to them is a reasonable predictor of willingness to intervene. Interestingly, however, the degree of overall social connectedness is even more important. It may not be whether individuals know or recognise the young people causing problems that is the most important factor, but whether they are likely to know their parents. In other words, the most important thing may be to feel confident that one's actions will be understood and/or supported by other adults in the community. This is perhaps not surprising when set alongside the finding that concern about false allegation of assault is a key factor in discouraging adults from intervening in problematic situations involving young people.

Key points

- When asked to consider a scenario in which they had to walk past a group of teenagers to get to a shop, only a small proportion of adults (around one in ten) indicated that they would feel 'very uncomfortable' or would 'probably avoid doing

so altogether'. But the fact that a further four in ten would feel 'slightly uncomfortable' is an indicator of the diffuse sense of unease that groups of young people can produce in adult members of the population.

- Moreover, among some sub-groups – such as women in general and older women in particular – the proportion saying they would feel very uncomfortable or avoid walking past altogether is significantly higher.

- In relation to a scenario in which a group of male or female teenagers were vandalising a bus shelter, there was wide variation in how likely respondents felt they would be to take different forms of action. The proportion saying they would be 'very likely' to call the police was higher than in relation to any other course of action, but sizeable numbers indicated that they would be likely to take some form of informal action, such as challenging the young people directly, speaking to them later or speaking to their parents.

- Men were more likely than women to say they would challenge the young people directly at the time, but were no more or less likely to take the other courses of action. And the difference in likelihood of intervening directly between male and female respondents is much greater in relation to the version of the scenario involving boys than the one involving girls.

- Otherwise, levels of inter-generational contact and general social connectedness are the most important predictors of willingness to intervene in this situation. People living in remote and rural communities are more likely both to intervene directly and to call the police, suggesting that formal and informal mechanisms can reinforce rather than replace each other in certain circumstances.

- Relatively few respondents said they would have 'no concerns' about intervening in such a situation, with a sizeable group inhibited by what they see as the possibility of threatened or actual violence.

- Both male and female respondents are more likely to worry about violence in the scenario involving a group of 14 year-old boys than the one involving girls, but for male respondents, concern about wrongful allegations directed against them is the predominant concern.

- When asked to consider a situation in which a ten year-old boy/girl was potentially at risk, around a third of all respondents said they would speak to the child directly while slightly more said they would call the police.

- But the interaction of the gender of the respondent with that of the child is critical here. Male respondents are much less likely to intervene directly in a situation involving a ten year-old girl than boy. For female respondents, the opposite is true.

- Male reluctance to intervene is overwhelmingly associated with concern about wrongful accusations of threat or assault – indeed, as many as 64% of men indicated that they might be reluctant to intervene for this reason in the scenario involving a 10 year-old girl – while female reticence is relatively more likely to be associated with concern about *being* threatened or assaulted.

CHAPTER FIVE   CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1   This study has provided strong empirical support for the theoretical relationships posited in the introduction. It suggests that there is indeed a strong connection between levels of inter-generational contact, social connectedness, perceptions of young people and youth crime, and willingness to intervene. This also suggests that, by focusing on any one of these areas, policy may have intended or unintended consequences for the others.

5.2   The relationship between social connectedness and willingness to intervene is especially interesting and various mechanisms suggest themselves as explanations. It may be, for example, that adults feel more able to intervene in situations in which they know or recognise the young people concerned. Alternatively, they may think it likely that they will know or recognise the parents of the young people and anticipate a point of connection through that channel. Finally, through an implicit sense of connection with those in the community around them, they may feel confident that their actions will, at best, be supported and, at worst, not be misinterpreted. In other words, they are more likely to feel that their intervention will reflect shared norms and values. Of course, the reverse may also be true: through successful intervention, relationships may be built, collective values reinforced and community efficacy strengthened.

5.3   In general, the research emphasises the need to give greater consideration to the notion of *civilities* as well as incivilities – i.e. those everyday actions and behaviours that help to tighten, rather than loosen, the bonds between people and prevent or lessen the consequences of anti-social behaviour in its various forms. Although this is implicit in many of the recent debates about anti-social behaviour and the 'respect' agenda, we still understand little about the interactions and experiences that bring people together within and across communities. As Bannister and colleagues have argued (Bannister, 2007), there is a need for a renewed focus on the micro-aspects of civility – indeed, for the development of a 'civic criminology' – to help us better understand the circumstances in which individuals feel able and motivated to engage in actions that are of wider social benefit.

5.4   The present study has thrown up one hugely significant – and largely unanticipated – finding in this respect: that a large proportion of adult males are now deterred from intervening in problematic situations involving young people not because of fears for their own safety, but because of concerns that they themselves will be falsely accused of threatening behaviour or assault. This is clearly an issue that requires further debate, since there are good reasons why communities and individuals have become sensitised to 'stranger danger' and child abuse in its various forms. But we need to be aware of the consequences of this distancing – both for adult males, who would traditionally have played a central role in informal social control within all communities, and for the police, who will increasingly be called upon to fill the gap.

5.5   It should be emphasised that willingness to intervene – and informal social control more generally – is not being advanced here as a cure-all for the problem of youth crime; nor is it seen as inherently superior to formal responses to crime and anti-social behaviour. Indeed, in certain communities and in certain circumstances, informal social control may be impossible to enact without formal structures of various kinds (because social ties are so fragile). Alternatively, it may displace formal mechanisms to an

inappropriate and damaging degree – e.g. in communities which have turned to vigilantism or largely reject the police. In such circumstances, there may be a particular role for 'intermediate' solutions, such as community wardens and other agencies which provide a means to address anti-social behaviour without immediate recourse to the police.

5.6   But the successful exertion of a degree of informal social control is probably a necessary, if not sufficient, condition for healthy communities. Indeed, it could be argued that mechanisms of informal social control are what allow formal social control to operate effectively. They do so, in part, by strengthening social cohesion and a sense of shared values and endeavour. In such circumstances, as sociologists from Durkheim onwards have told us, communities are more likely to identify and act against those who transgress norms – and, in so doing, reaffirm those norms. Such mechanisms also allow the police to operate more effectively, first, by helping to create the conditions in which members of the public may co-operate with them and, secondly, by allowing the police to focus on more serious problems. There has been a striking paradox in recent years: in an era of falling crime rates, the demands on police resources have risen steadily. Why might this be the case? Of course, to some extent, it reflects the increasing diversity and complexity of the role of the police (resulting, for example, from globalisation, technological development and terrorism). But it also reflects a more mundane reality: that crime may be down but 'call handling' is up. The police are now regularly expected to intervene in a range of often sub-criminal forms of behaviour that would previously have been either tolerated or resolved by communities themselves.

5.7   It may also be worth considering the implications for informal social control and the 'problem of youth crime' of Scotland's ageing population. The balance and the nature of the relationships between the youngest and oldest sections of the population have shifted hugely in recent decades and will shift even further over the coming years. It is not just that older people increasingly outnumber the young: as families disperse and communities change, the opportunities for inter-generational contact are also likely to contract. There will also be more childless older people, who do not have children and grandchildren to weave them back into the wider community. That said, there are also some grounds for optimism about the nature of such relationships. First, as older people live longer and more active lives, they may remain involved in a range of activities that bring them (or keep them) in contact with younger people – not least, of course, employment. Secondly, it could be argued that there is a collapsing cultural distance between the generations or, at the very least, that the 'generation gap' is narrower than in previous decades. Finally, it is possible that the phenomenon of older parenting will extend the role of grandparenting and great-grandparenting into older age groups – though it is also possible, of course, that many young people will simply not have grandparents and that this important inter-generational bridge will be broken.

5.8   In policy terms, there is a case both for anticipating the consequences of such developments and considering what steps might be taken to prepare for them. As such, initiatives aimed at building or reinforcing inter-generational contact clearly have an important role within the broader context of attempts to strengthen community cohesion and efficacy.

5.9   As ever, the biggest challenges in this respect lie in the most deprived communities, the areas of greatest need and fewest resources. As this research has

demonstrated, residents of such areas are more likely to be directly affected by youth crime, and certainly to *feel* that it is all around them. At the same time, they are less likely to trust or to have strong links to others which, as we have seen, are both important indicators of willingness and ability to exert informal social control (at least as evidenced through willingness to intervene). Do high levels of youth crime reduce the capacity to exert such control, or does the lack of informal control lead to youth crime? The answer is almost certainly both, which suggests the need for policy to take a more holistic approach to the problem of youth crime – one which pays as much attention to reactions as actions, to civilities as incivilities, and to *pro*-social as anti-social behaviour.

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ANNEX A – TECHNICAL DETAILS OF THE SURVEY

The Scottish Social Attitudes series

1. The *Scottish Social Attitudes* (SSA) survey was launched by the Scottish Centre for Social Research[7] (part of the National Centre for Social Research) in 1999, following the advent of devolution. Based on annual rounds of interviews with 1,500-1,600 people drawn using random probability sampling, its aims are to facilitate the study of public opinion and inform the development of public policy in Scotland. In this it has similar objectives to the British Social Attitudes (BSA) survey, which was launched by the National Centre in 1983. While BSA interviews people in Scotland, these are usually too few in any one year to permit separate analysis of public opinion in Scotland (see Park, et al, 2004 for more details of the BSA survey).

2. SSA is conducted annually and has a modular structure. In any one year it will typically contain four or five modules, each containing 40 questions. Funding for its first two years came from the Economic and Social Research Council, while from 2001 onwards different bodies have funded each year's individual modules. These bodies have included the Economic and Social Research Council, the Scottish Government and various charitable and grant awarding bodies, such as the Nuffield and Leverhulme Foundations.

The 2006 survey

3. The 2006 survey contained modules of questions on:
    *   attitudes to government and public services in post-devolution Scotland (funded by the Scottish Executive's Office of Chief Researcher from 2004-2007)
    *   discrimination in Scotland (funded by the Scottish Executive and Department for Trade and Industry)
    *   attitudes towards young people and youth crime (funded by the then Scottish Executive)
    *   views about national identity (in collaboration with David McCrone and Frank Bechhofer at the University of Edinburgh, funded by the Leverhulme Foundation) and, attitudes towards homelessness (funded by the Scottish Executive).

4. Findings from the 2006 modules are reported in separate publications produced by ScotCen and their collaborators. This technical annex accompanies ScotCen-authored reports for the Scottish Government. It covers the methodological details of the 2006 survey as well as further discussion of the analysis techniques used in the reports.

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[7]   The Scottish Centre for Social Research was formed in February 2004 as the result of a merger between The National Centre's existing organisation within Scotland and Scottish Health Feedback, an independent research consultancy.

Technical details of the survey

5.   The *Scottish Social Attitudes* survey involves a face-to-face interview with respondents and a self-completion questionnaire, completed by nine in ten of these people (90% in 2006). The numbers completing each stage in 2006 are shown in Table 1. See Bromley, Curtice and Given (2005) for technical details of the 1999-2004 surveys and Given and Ormston (2006) for technical details of the 2005 survey.

Table 1: 2006 Scottish Social Attitudes survey response

	Lower		Upper	
	No.	%	No.	%
Addresses issued	3162		3162	
Vacant, derelict and other out of scope [1]	323	10.2	323	10.2
Unknown eligibility [2]	89	3.2	89	3.2
In scope	2839		2750	
Interview achieved	1594	56.1	1594	58.0
Self-completion returned	1437	50.6	1437	52.3
Interview not achieved	1245	43.9	1245	42.0
Refused [3]	916	32.3	916	33.3
Non-contacted [4]	100	3.5	100	3.6
Other non-response [5]	140	4.9	140	5.1

Notes to table

The table shows a 'lower' and an 'upper' response rate. The former is calculated on the assumption that all addresses whose eligibility to participate was unknown were in fact eligible to take part. The latter is calculated on the assumption that they were all ineligible (because they were empty/derelict, non-residential, etc). The 'true' response is likely to lie somewhere between the two, since some addresses whose eligibility was unknown are likely to have been 'deadwood' while others may have been eligible. See Lynn et al (2001)[8] for a discussion of treatment of unknown eligibility in calculating response rates.

1This includes empty / derelict addresses, holiday homes, businesses and institutions.

2'Unknown eligibility' includes cases where the address could not be located, where it could not be determined if an address was a residence and where it could not be determined if an address was occupied or not.

3Refusals include refusals prior to selection of an individual, refusals to the office, refusal by the selected person, 'proxy' refusals made by someone on behalf of the respondent and broken appointments after which a respondent could not be re-contacted.

4Non-contacts comprise households where no one was contacted after at least 4 calls and those where the selected person could not be contacted.

5'Other non-response' includes people who were ill at home or in hospital during the survey period, people who were physically or mentally unable to participate and people who with insufficient English to participate.

Sample design

6.   The survey is designed to yield a representative sample of adults aged 18 or over living in Scotland. The sample frame is the Postcode Address File (PAF), a list of postal delivery points compiled by the Post Office. The detailed procedure for selecting the 2006 sample was as follows:

   I.   88 postcode sectors were selected from a list of all postal sectors in Scotland, with probability proportional to the number of addresses in each sector. Prior to selection the sectors were stratified by region, population density, and percentage of household heads recorded as being in non-manual occupations (SEG 1-6 and 13,

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[8] Lynn, Peter, et al (2001) *Recommended standard final outcome categories and standard definitions of response rates for social surveys*, Institute for Social and Economic Research

taken from the 2001 Census). The list was also stratified using the Scottish Household Survey (SHS) six-fold classification of urban and rural areas (see below for a description of this), and sectors within rural and remote categories were over-sampled.

II. In order to boost the number of respondents from remote and rural areas 31 addresses were selected in each sector located within the first three SHS urban-rural classifications (the four cities to accessible small towns), while 62 addresses were selected from the sectors within the three most rural categories (remote small towns to remote rural areas). The issued sample size is shown in Table 1.

III. Interviewers called at each selected address and identified its eligibility for the survey. Where more than one dwelling unit was present at an address, all dwelling units were listed systematically and one was selected at random using a computer generated random selection table. In all eligible dwelling units with more than one adult aged 18 or over, interviewers also had to carry out a random selection of one adult using a similar procedure.

Weighting

7. The weights applied to the SSA 2006 data are intended to correct for three potential sources of bias in the sample:

  I. Differential selection probabilities
 II. Deliberate over-sampling of rural areas
III. Non-response.

8. Data were weighted to take account of the fact that not all households or individuals have the same probability of selection for the survey. For example, adults living in large households have a lower selection probability than adults who live alone. Weighting was also used to correct the over-sampling of rural addresses. Differences between responding and non-responding households were taken into account using information from the census about the area of the address as well as interviewer observations about participating and non-participating addresses. Finally, the weights were adjusted to ensure that the weighted data matched the age-sex profile of the Scottish population (based on 2005 mid-year estimates from GROS).

9. Prior to the 2005 dataset, SSA data was only weighted to take account of differential selection probabilities and over-sampling in rural areas. The decision to introduce non-response weighting and 'calibration' weighting to match the sex-age profile of the population was taken following experimentation with the 2004 British Social Attitudes (BSA) dataset. Both BSA and SSA weights now incorporate these new elements, which are designed to reduce non-response bias.

Fieldwork

10. Fieldwork ran between August 2006 and January 2007 (with 77% completed by the end of October). An advance letter was sent to all addresses and was followed up by a personal visit from a *Scottish Centre for Social Research* interviewer. Interviewers were required to make a minimum of 4 calls at different times of the day (including at least one evening and one weekend call) in order to try and contact respondents, although in practice interviewers often made many more calls than this. All interviewers attended a one day briefing conference prior to starting work on the study.

11. Interviews were conducted using face-to-face computer-assisted interviewing (a process which involves the use of a laptop computer, with questions appearing on screen and interviewers directly entering respondents' answers into the computer). All respondents were asked to fill in a self-completion questionnaire which was either collected by the interviewer or returned by post. Table 1 summarises the response rate and the numbers completing the self-completion in 2006.

Analysis variables

12. A number of standard analyses have been used in the reports arising from the survey. Most of the analysis variables are taken directly from the questionnaire and to that extent are self-explanatory. These include age, sex, household income, and highest educational qualification obtained. The main analysis groups requiring further definition are set out below.

The Scottish Government six-fold urban-rural classification

13. The six categories used in this classification are: 1) large urban, 2) other urban, 3) small accessible towns, 4) small remote towns, 5) accessible rural, 6) remote rural. For more details see Hope, S. *et al* (2000).

National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS-SEC)

14. The most commonly used classification of socio-economic status used on government surveys is the National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS-SEC). SSA respondents were classified according to their own occupation, rather than that of the 'head of household'. Each respondent was asked about their current or last job, so that all respondents, with the exception of those who had never worked, were classified. The seven NS-SEC categories are:

•   Employers in large organisations, higher managerial and professional
•   Lower professional and managerial; higher technical and supervisory
•   Intermediate occupations
•   Small employers and own account workers
•   Lower supervisory and technical occupations
•   Semi-routine occupations
•   Routine occupations

15. The remaining respondents were grouped as 'never had a job' or 'not classifiable'.

Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)

16. The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)[9] 2006 measures the level of deprivation across Scotland – from the least deprived to the most deprived areas. It is based on 37 indicators in seven domains of Current Income, Employment, Health, Education Skills and Training, Geographic Access to Services (including public transport travel times for the first time), Housing and, new for 2006, Crime. SIMD 2006 is presented at data zone level, enabling small pockets of deprivation to be identified. The data zones are ranked from most deprived (1) to least deprived (6,505) on the overall SIMD 2006 and on each of the individual domains. The result is a comprehensive picture of relative area deprivation across Scotland.

17. The SSA analysis used three variables created from SIMD data indicating the level of deprivation of the data zone in which the respondent lived. The first variable (nsimd06s) indicates which SIMD quintile the respondent lives in (with 1 being the least deprived and 5 being the most deprived); the second (SNIMD15) indicates whether or not the respondent lives in the most deprived 15% of data zones as measured on the SIMD; the third indicates which tertile the respondent lives in (with 1 being the least deprived and 3 being the most deprived. All three variables are based on the SIMD scores for all datazones - not simply those included in the SSA sample.

Analysis techniques

Regression

18. For the more complex analysis in the reports, logistic regression models have been used to assess whether there is reliable evidence that particular variables are associated with each other.

19. Regression analysis aims to summarise the relationship between a 'dependent' variable and one or more 'independent' explanatory variables. It shows how well we can estimate a respondent's score on the dependent variable from knowledge of their scores on the independent variables. This technique takes into account relationships between the different independent variables (for example, between education and income, or social class and housing tenure). Regression is often undertaken to support a claim that the phenomena measured by the independent variables cause the phenomenon measured by the dependent variable. However, the causal ordering, if any, between the variables cannot be verified or falsified by the technique. Causality can only be inferred through special experimental designs or through assumptions made by the analyst. All regression analysis assumes that the relationship between the dependent and each of the independent variables takes a particular form.

20. The Scottish Social Attitudes 2006 reports use logistic regression – a method that summarises the relationship between a binary 'dependent' variable (one that takes the values '0' or '1') and one or more 'independent' explanatory variables. The tables in this

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[9] See http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/SIMD/Overview for further details on the SIMD

report show how the odds ratios for each category in significant explanatory variables compares to the odds ratio for the reference category (always taken to be 1.00).

21. Taking Model 1 (below) as an example, the dependent variable is based on belonging to the 'most connected' group using the 'social connectedness scale'. If the respondent belongs to this group, the dependent variable takes a value of 1. If not, it takes a value of 0. An odds ratio of above 1 means respondents in that category were *more* likely than respondents in the reference category to belong to the 'most connected' group. An odds ratio of below 1 means they were *less* likely than respondents in the reference category to belong to that group. If we look at sex, we can see that women were *more* likely than men to belong to the 'most connected' group, since they have an odds ratio of 2.00. However, if we look at perceptions of youth crime problems, we see that those who are most likely to think such problems are common in their area are *less* likely to belong to the 'most connected' group as they have an odds ratio of less than one.

22. The significance of differences between the reference category and other categories are indicated by 'P'. A p-value of 0.05 or less indicates that there is less than a 5% chance we would have found such a difference just by chance if in fact no such difference exists, while a p-value of 0.01 or less indicates that there is a less than 1% chance. P-values of 0.05 or less are generally considered to indicate that the difference is highly statistically significant, while a p-value of 0.06 to 0.10 may be considered marginally significant. As shorthand to aid interpretation, we have used symbols to summarise statistically significant differences:

- '+' denotes results that are significantly different from 0 at the 10% level (p = 0.06-0.10)
- '*' denotes results that are significant from 0 at the 5% level (p = 0.015 – 0.05) and
- '**' denotes results that are significantly different from 0 at the 1% level (p = 0.01 or below).

Regression models

Model 1   'Social connectedness'

Dependent variable coding 1 = belong to 'most connected' group 0 = NOT	Odds ratio	95% confidence interval	P	
Sex				
(Men)	1.00			
Women	2.00	1.59-2.60	0.000	**
Age				
(18-24)	1.00			
25-34	1.28	0.78-2.10	0.340	*NS*
35-44	1.19	0.73-1.95	0.487	*NS*
45-54	0.81	0.49-1.32	0.394	*NS*
55-64	0.68	0.40-1.15	0.152	*NS*
65+	1.01	0.61-1.68	0.957	*NS*
Contact with 11 to 15 year-olds in area				
(Know most/all)	1.00			
Know some	0.85	0.56-1.25	0.380	*NS*
Know none	0.61	0.39-0.91	0.016	*
Contact with 16 to 24 year-olds in area				
(Know most/all)	1.00			
Know some	1.03	0.70-1.51	0.890	*NS*
Know none	0.47	0.30-0.71	0.001	**
Household income				
(Lowest quartile)	1.00			
2	1.98	1.33-2.96	0.001	**
3	1.76	1.18-2.62	0.006	**
Highest quartile	2.02	1.32-3.10	0.001	**
Income not known	1.58	1.03-2.39	0.035	*
Perceptions of youth crime problems				
(Least common)	1.00			
Intermediate	1.03	0.77-1.38	0.828	*NS*
Most common	0.73	0.53-1.00	0.046	*

Cases included in model = 1,307

Independent variables included in initial forward stepwise model: Age, sex, area deprivation (SIMD quintiles), socio-economic class (NS-SEC), SHS urban-rural classification (6-fold), tenure, highest educational qualification, household income (quartiles), social trust, general attitudes towards young people (tertiles), general perceptions of youth crime problems (tertiles), extent to which directly affected by youth crime (tertiles), whether household contains children, contact with 11 to 15 year-olds in area, contact with 16 to 24 year-olds in area.

Model 2   Social trust

Dependent variable coding 1 = agreeing that 'you can't be too careful' 0 = NOT agreeing	Odds ratio	95% confidence interval	P	
Age				
(18-24)	1.00			
25-34	0.79	0.51-1.25	0.315	*NS*
35-44	0.59	0.38-0.92	0.021	*
45-54	0.66	0.42-1.04	0.071	+
55-64	0.43	0.27-0.68	0.000	**
65+	0.34	0.22-0.54	0.000	**
Social connectedness				
(Most connected)	1.00			
Intermediate	1.02	0.79-1.31	0.896	*NS*
Least connected	1.44	1.09-1.90	0.010	+
Household income				
(Lowest quartile)	1.00			
2	0.63	0.44-0.90	0.010	+
3	0.83	0.57-1.22	0.350	*NS*
Highest quartile	0.65	0.42-1.00	0.050	*
Income unknown	0.94	0.65-1.35	0.726	*NS*
Tenure				
(Owner-occupier)	1.00			
Social renter	1.61	1.18-2.18	0.002	**
Private renter	1.20	0.79-1.82	0.391	*NS*
Scottish index of multiple deprivation				
(Most deprived)	1.00			
2	0.82	0.58-1.16	0.262	*NS*
3	1.02	0.71-1.46	0.924	*NS*
4	1.17	0.82-1.67	0.385	*NS*
Least deprived	1.43	0.99-2.08	0.058	+
Highest educational qualification				
(None)	1.00			
Degree	1.61	1.17-2.20	0.003	**
Highers or equivalent	1.35	0.99-1.83	0.060	*
Standard grades or equivalent	1.96	1.36-2.81	0.000	**

Cases included in model = 1,525

Independent variables included in initial forward stepwise model: Age, sex, area deprivation (SIMD quintiles), socio-economic class (NS-SEC), SHS urban-rural classification (6-fold), tenure, highest educational qualification, household income (quartiles), social connectedness (tertiles), general attitudes towards young people (tertiles), general perceptions of youth crime problems (tertiles), extent to which directly affected by youth crime (tertiles), whether household contains children, contact with 11 to 15 year-olds in area, contact with 16 to 24 year-olds in area.

Model 3   General attitudes towards young people

Dependent variable coding 1 = belonging to 'most positive' group 0 = NOT	Odds ratio	95% confidence interval	P	
Age				
(18-24)				
25-34	1.32	0.76-2.30	0.322	*NS*
35-44	1.75	1.03-2.98	0.039	*
45-54	2.49	1.45-4.25	0.001	**
55-64	1.92	1.09-3.38	0.024	*
65+	1.98	1.12-3.51	0.019	*
Contact with 16 to 24 year-olds in area				
(No contact)				
Some contact	1.68	1.22-2.32	0.002	**
Social trust				
(Most people can be trusted)	0.40	0.31-0.52	0.000	**
You can't be too careful	0.34	0.17-0.69	0.003	**
Highest educational qualification				
(None)				
Degree	0.81	0.57-1.14	0.222	*NS*
Highers or equivalent	0.57	0.41-0.78	0.001	**
Standard grades or equivalent	0.36	0.24-0.54	0.000	**
Perceptions of youth crime problems				
(Least common)				
Intermediate	0.66	0.50-0.87	0.004	**
Most common	0.27	0.20-0.38	0.000	**

Cases included in model = 1,328

Independent variables included in initial forward stepwise model: Age, sex, area deprivation (SIMD quintiles), socio-economic class (NS-SEC), SHS urban-rural classification (6-fold), tenure, highest educational qualification, household income (quartiles), social connectedness (tertiles), social trust, general perceptions of youth crime problems (tertiles), extent to which directly affected by youth crime (tertiles), whether household contains children, contact with 11 to 15 year-olds in area, contact with 16 to 24 year-olds in area.

Model 4   General perceptions of prevalence of youth crime problems

Dependent variable coding 1 = belonging to 'most common' group 0 = NOT	Odds ratio	95% confidence interval	P	
Contact with 16 to 24 year-olds in area				
(Know most/all)	1.00			
Know some	0.62	0.41-0.92	0.017	*
Know none	0.46	0.31-0.70	0.000	**
General attitudes towards young people				
(Most positive)	1.00			
Intermediate	1.89	1.30-2.75	0.001	**
Least positive	3.46	2.41-4.95	0.000	**
Directly affected by youth crime problems				
(Most affected)	1.00			
Intermediate	2.55	1.70-3.80	0.000	**
Least affected	14.55	9.85-21.50	0.000	**
Scottish index of multiple deprivation				
(Most deprived)				
2	2.57	1.53-4.33	0.000	**
3	2.45	1.44-4.16	0.001	**
4	2.84	1.72-4.69	0.000	**
Least deprived	5.25	3.15-8.74	0.000	**
Tenure				
(Owner occupier)	1.00			
Social rented	1.52	1.06-2.18	0.022	*
Private rented	1.68	1.01-2.78	0.045	*

Cases included in model = 1,306

Independent variables included in initial forward stepwise model: Age, sex, area deprivation (SIMD quintiles), socio-economic class (NS-SEC), SHS urban-rural classification (6-fold), tenure, highest educational qualification, household income (quartiles), social connectedness (tertiles), social trust, general attitudes towards young people (tertiles), extent to which directly affected by youth crime (tertiles), whether household contains children, contact with 11 to 15 year-olds in area, contact with 16 to 24 year-olds in area.

Model 5   Extent to which directly affected by youth crime problems

Dependent variable coding 1 = belonging to 'most affected' group 0 = NOT	Odds ratio	95% confidence interval	P	
General attitudes towards young people				
(Most positive)	1.00			
Intermediate	1.07	0.73-1.55	0.738	*NS*
Least positive	1.55	1.08-2.23	0.016	*
Perceptions of youth crime problems				
(Least common)	1.00			
Intermediate	24.45	11.29-52.94	0.000	**
Most common	112.10	51.45-244.25	0.000	**
Age				
(18-24)	1.00			
25-34	2.06	1.21-3.49	0.007	**
35-44	2.21	1.30-3.75	0.003	**
45-54	2.52	1.47-4.31	0.001	**
55-64	1.78	1.03-3.10	0.039	*
65+	1.08	0.63-1.87	0.774	*NS*
SHS urban-rural classification				
(Large urban)	1.00			
Other urban	0.80	0.57-1.12	0.190	*NS*
Accessible small towns	1.13	0.69-1.84	0.633	*NS*
Remote small towns	0.32	0.13-0.78	0.012	*
Accessible rural	0.68	0.43-1.09	0.111	*NS*
Remote rural	0.39	0.19-0.80	0.010	+

Cases included in model = 1,313

Independent variables included in initial forward stepwise model: Age, sex, area deprivation (SIMD quintiles), socio-economic class (NS-SEC), SHS urban-rural classification (6-fold), tenure, highest educational qualification, household income (quartiles), social connectedness (tertiles), social trust, general perceptions of youth crime problems (tertiles), general attitudes towards young people (tertiles), whether household contains children, contact with 11 to 15 year-olds in area, contact with 16 to 24 year-olds in area.

Model 6   Avoidance behaviour when faced with group of teenagers outside shop

Dependent variable coding 1 = would feel 'not bothered at all' 0 = NOT	Odds ratio	95% confidence interval	P	
Sex				
(Male)				
Female	0.44	0.34-0.56	0.000	**
Age				
(18-24)				
25-34	1.18	0.71-1.96	0.518	*NS*
35-44	0.95	0.58-1.54	0.827	*NS*
45-54	0.91	0.55-1.50	0.697	*NS*
55-64	0.77	0.46-1.30	0.337	*NS*
65+	0.51	0.30-0.84	0.009	**
General attitudes towards young people				
(Most positive)				
Intermediate	0.54	0.40-0.72	0.000	**
Least positive	0.47	0.35-0.65	0.000	**
Directly affected by youth crime problems				
(Most affected)				
Intermediate	0.48	0.35-0.64	0.000	**
Least affected	0.32	0.24-0.45	0.000	**
SHS urban-rural classification				
Large urban				
Other urban	1.40	1.04-1.89	0.027	*
Accessible small towns	1.77	1.15-2.74	0.010	**
Remote small towns	1.86	0.98-3.56	0.059	+
Accessible rural	1.82	1.23-2.69	0.003	**
Remote rural	3.58	2.07-6.19	0.000	**
Tenure				
(Owner-occupier)				
Social renter	1.61	1.18-2.20	0.003	**
Private renter	0.90	0.57-1.44	0.669	*NS*
Contact with 16 to 24 year-olds in area				
(Know most/all)				
Know some	0.44	0.31-0.63	0.000	**
Know none	0.44	0.30-0.65	0.000	**
Social trust				
(Most can be trusted)				
You can't be too careful	0.64	0.50-0.83	0.001	**

Cases included in model = 1,306

Independent variables included in initial forward stepwise model: Age, sex, area deprivation (SIMD quintiles), socio-economic class (NS-SEC), SHS urban-rural classification (6-fold), tenure, highest educational qualification, household income (quartiles), social connectedness (tertiles), social trust, general perceptions of youth crime problems (tertiles), general attitudes towards young people (tertiles), extent to which directly affected by youth crime (tertiles), whether household contains children, contact with 11 to 15 year-olds in area, contact with 16 to 24 year-olds in area.

GOVERNMENT SOCIAL RESEARCH

Analysis for Policy