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What Works with Children and Young People involved in Crime?

by Bill Whyte

A Review of Scottish Research

by Maureen Buist

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What Works with Children and Young People involved in Crime?

Introduction

This review was commissioned by Audit Scotland in 2002 to examine the evidence on ‘what works?’ as it applies to children and young people involved in offending in Scotland.

The first part of the paper provides a brief overview of research on factors associated with criminal behaviour in children and young people before considering research on effective intervention and change. The second paper provides an annotated summary of recent Scottish research in this field.

Research tends to focus on individual change within a youth or criminal justice context. While responses to crime require to be informed by what seems to be effective in reducing criminal activity, they must, equally, be informed by our knowledge of the personal and social factors associated with criminal activity, by the nature of youth crime itself and by those important ingredients which assist young people sustain change over time and desist from offending. Factors associated with positive outcomes for children and young people cannot be considered separately from opportunities for social participation and social inclusion which are more difficult to document and measure.

Crimes committed by children and young people account for a substantial minority of known offending in Scotland (Anderson et al 1992, Scottish Executive 2002:4). One survey (Graham and Bowling 1995) found that 55% of young males aged 14-24 and 31% of young females admitted committing at least one of a list of 23 offences at some time in their lives. Most only admitted to one or two offences but a small proportion accounted for a wholly disproportionate amount of crime. The most commonly admitted crimes were of dishonesty for both males and females, in particular theft and handling stolen goods. Most recorded offences committed by young people tended to be property related and those who persistently engaged in offending were not disproportionately engaged in the most serious and violent crimes (Graham and Bowling 1995).

There is no straightforward definition of persistent offending that allows a simple classification of those at highest risk. One study (Hagell & Newburn 1994) applied three definitions of persistence to a sample of 10-16 years olds, all of whom had a minimum of three offences in a 12-month period – the top 10% most frequently arrested; those with 10 offences in a three-month period; and those 12-14 year olds with three or more imprisonable or serious offences. Only three young people were common to each definition group. The common characteristics of the groups identified lay less in their offending and more in their social adversity and history of public care. A distinction also needs to be made between the number and type of offences and the number of episodes in a given time period – one episode, such as car related crime, can appear as a large number of offences. Similarly, persistence and seriousness were not mutually inclusive. The evidence suggests that any single or overly narrow definition of persistence is likely to miss out an equally important group of young people when targeting intervention. Scotland has now adopted two definitions of persistence: one for use in ‘fast track’ Children’s Hearings of ‘five episodes in a six-month period’; and for the pilot youth court, ‘three episodes in a six-month period’.

In 2001, fewer referrals on offence grounds were received by children’s reporters in Scotland than in 1977 – 14,000 young people, approximately 1.4% of the youth population. This was a 19% reduction in the previous three years. A smaller group of 2,700 young people were responsible for more than three offences in that year (0.3%). Around 800 were responsible for more than 10 offences (0.1%) and although very small, this group has doubled in size in the last decade as has offending by young females in the same period. In Scotland, young people under 16 tend to commit less serious offences such as vandalism, while 16-21 year olds are responsible for most car and violent crime. While recorded levels of vandalism are up by 14% and handling offensive weapons up by 6% since 2000, housebreaking and theft from motor vehicles in Scotland have halved since the early 1990s.

Factors associated with criminal behaviour in children and young people

The rationale for an integrated system in Scotland dealing with both children and young people who offend and those in need of care and protection is that they are considered to have much in common in that the roots of their difficulties often stem from broadly similar experiences of disadvantage and social adversity. Scottish studies support this assumption and indicate that when compared with available data on Scotland as a whole, the vast majority of the young people in the Scottish Hearing system because of their offending are living in relatively poor economic and social circumstances. This socio-economic disadvantage is generally combined or associated with family disruption and poor education attainment. The most persistent offenders often have the highest levels of social adversity. Many children who offend have also come to the attention of reporters for care reasons. Most jointly reported young people at the interface of the Hearing and Criminal Justice system seem to fall into this category (Waterhouse et al 2000).

Some children are considered to be at higher risk of offending than others. Studies confirm the significant implications of early criminal activity combined with multiple disadvantage as an early warning sign (Rutter et al 1998). A US National Youth Survey suggested that the risk of becoming a persistent offender is two to three times higher for child offenders aged under 12 than for a young person whose onset of delinquency is later (McGarrell 2001). Early involvement in offending may be a stepping stone in a pathway to more serious, violent, and persistent offending (Loeber and Farrington 2000). Children at risk of more serious or violent behaviour often exhibit clear behavioural markers of violent activity in their earlier years including:

- bullying other children or being the target of bullies
- exhibiting aggressive behaviour or being alternately aggressive and withdrawn
- being truant from school
- being arrested before age 14
- belonging to delinquent or violent peer groups
- abusing alcohol or other drugs
- engaging in anti-social behaviour, such as setting fires and treating animals cruelly (Loeber and Farrington 1998)

Children brought up in families with lax parental supervision and in poor neighbourhoods are viewed as being at higher risk of becoming persistent offenders (Sampson and Laub 1993; Audit Commission 1996:60). Reviews of family factors associated with youth offending have found that poor parental supervision, harsh and inconsistent discipline, parental conflict, and parental rejection were important predictors of offending; broken homes and early separations, both permanent and temporary, and criminality in the family are also commonly associated with delinquency (Farrington 1996). Studies on which these reviews were based are now somewhat dated, particularly in regard to major changes in family structure over the last 25 years. These changes have involved the growth of lone parent and reconstituted households with the result that large numbers of Scottish children now experience instability and disruption in their family life. Around a fifth of households are now headed by a lone parent in Scotland, 93% of these by women; the rates vary with locality from 10% in East Renfrewshire to 30% in the City of Glasgow (NCH 2000). As a result of family changes, one in eight children now grow up in a reconstituted family (Scottish Executive 1999). Despite these rapid changes for large numbers of children, the backgrounds of the children and young people reported for offending show markedly higher rates of disruption than for Scotland as a whole and the relationship between offending and disrupted family life has been confirmed by all major longitudinal studies (Juby and Farrington 2001).

While relatively recent findings support the view that those living with both natural parents have been found to be less likely to offend than those living with one parent or in a reconstituted family (Graham and Bowling 1995), family structure seems to be less important than parenting style and parent child attachment. Findings point to the importance of family life on children's involvement in crime, in particular, the

importance of parental supervision and parental involvement, family disruption and parental attitudes to crime. Theories based on developmental stages stress the importance of good family management practices in moderating, for example, early involvement with anti-social peers. While conditioning theories stress parent-child rearing patterns, more recent social learning theories emphasise the importance of instruction, modelling thought processes and interpersonal problem-solving strategies as essential parental skills. The evidence suggests that parents with skills to control and directly supervise their young people and the quality of parent-child attachment are often inter-related (Wells and Rankin 1991). While much is known about parenting styles generally, parental practices and differences among the various types of households is still not well understood.

An important indicator to the kind of neighbourhoods where children and young people who offend live is often the type of housing occupied by their families, in particular public authority housing. Studies examining data about patterns of offending, social composition of neighbourhoods, and mechanisms of informal social control suggest that large neighbourhood differences in crime rates may be explained, in part, by differences in the functioning and composition of communities (Sampson et al 1997). Relatively little is documented about the capacity of such neighbourhood communities to regulate themselves according to shared values and about the factors which most influence variation in a community's capacity to control their social environment by informal methods.

Educational problems have long been identified as an important component in a cluster of disadvantage experienced by children and young people who offend. Links between disaffection at school and delinquency are well established although it is less clear whether young people who dislike school are more likely to offend or simply that children and young people who offend come to dislike school (Graham 1998). Poor school performance, low intelligence and being seen as 'troublesome' in school at a young age are major crime-risk factors identified both by British and American studies which suggest that attitudes and weak attachment to school and poor school performance are often linked to adolescent delinquency. Less is known at what age these behaviours begin to predict offending at later ages (Rutter et al 1998). Studies have found that girls who report disliking school and boys who report regular truanting or school exclusion are more likely to offend than others. The odds of ever committing an offence for those who play truant have been reported to be more than three times those who have not truanted; those skipping school once a week or more are more likely to admit to offending (Graham and Bowling 1995). Similarly, features of schooling itself such as relationships with teachers, rewards and sanctions, and systems of pupil support are thought to play a part in sustaining or reducing difficult behaviour. School practices, then, not just the characteristics of the intake, are considered to encourage or inhibit offending (Rutter et al 1998).

There is evidence to show that having relationships with criminal others is associated with criminal behaviour (Sutherland and Cressey 1970) and the nature of peer relationships has long been identified as an independent predictor of future offending (West 1982). Studies have suggested that boys identified as anti-social in childhood show poor-quality friendships at age 13-14 and that boys with poor-quality friendships and a high level of delinquency at age 13-14 are at risk of delinquent behaviour over the following two years (Poulin et al 1999). There is debate about the mechanisms through which offending associates influence one another and how they acquire networks which support criminal pathways.

A study of young people in custody in Scotland (Loucks et al 2000) provides an examination of the background characteristics, lifestyles, adjustment to custody and the likelihood of re-offending of 348 young offenders aged 16-22 years, drawn from five HM institutions for young people, including 42 females. Information on their characteristics revealed that predisposing factors associated with offending behaviour discussed above were highly prevalent. The young people were characterised by a history of disruptive and offending behaviour from an early age; poor school attendance and achievement; lack of stable employment; familial histories of offending; alcohol and drug abuse; and in many cases neglectful parenting. Links were shown between neglectful parenting styles and offending behaviour. The report noted that since 20% of the young people already had children of their own, the potential existed for such patterns to continue into the next generation. The report identified clear links between alcohol/drug misuse and offending patterns. The researchers suggested that those seeking to challenge offending behaviour should address the fact

that for many young people persistent in their offending, offending behaviour is exciting and enjoyable. Offending occurs in a social context which provides peer approval and leads to enhanced self-esteem, albeit of a negative nature. The researchers suggest that since many of the young people have conventional aspirations, intervention must offer opportunities for equally rewarding behaviour that provides opportunities to realise these aspirations in the community.

The nature of youth crime

Criminologists acknowledge, to varying degrees, that the individual and the social context are relevant to understanding and preventing or reducing crime. The modern trend has been to try and develop more integrated social development theory which draws from earlier theories of crime. Major individual characteristics fostering anti-social tendencies in young people tend to be long term ones such as impulsivity and poor internal controls, poor ability to manipulate abstract concepts (cognition), low empathy, weak conscience, poor internalised norms and attitudes supporting offending, and long term influences such as desire for material gain, and status with peers (Farrington 1996). Factors influencing whether or not anti-social behaviour leads to offending are often short term situational influences such as boredom, frustration, alcohol or drug misuse, opportunities to offend, and perceived costs and benefits of delinquency.

Those concerned to reduce offending among children and young people, in addition to understanding the developmental needs of the young people and their social background, must also develop an understanding of the nature of the youth crime as a social phenomenon in itself including the significance of its **form** (the relationship of offender and victim); the **social context** (nature of peer or other significant relations) and the **shape** of crime (different types of offences present different networks of relationships), its direction through **time** and **space** (where and when it takes place). Research and theory alike are increasingly agreed that for intervention to be effective it needs to focus on key intermediate factors, which research suggests are likely to reinforce and sustain criminal behaviour and that are amenable to change. These so called 'criminogenic' needs associated with effective outcomes include:

- changing anti-social attitudes and feelings
- reducing anti-social peer associations
- promoting familial affection/communication
- promoting familial monitoring and supervision
- promoting protection
- developing positive social role models
- increasing self control, self management and problem solving skills
- replacing the skills of lying, stealing and aggression with more pro-social alternatives
- reducing misuse of chemical substances
- shifting the distribution of rewards and costs associated with offending behaviour so that non criminal activity is favoured
- ensuring that the offender is able to recognise risky situations and has concrete and well-rehearsed plans for dealing with those situations
- confronting the personal and circumstantial barriers in the way of effective service outcomes.

These crime related needs are to be distinguished from other social needs, which even if successfully addressed, are unlikely on their own to impact on reducing offending, eg:

- increasing self esteem without reducing anti-social thinking
- increasing the cohesiveness of anti-social peer groups but failing to provide positive social models and pro-social significant others such as social mentors
- increasing employment or educational aspirations without concrete assistance to achieving these aspirations

Principles of restorative justice suggest that crime can best be understood in its relational context taking account of the victim, the community, the offender and the agencies of control including police and social work. Effective responses should be geared, where possible, to restore these relationships by reparative action.

Any discussion on evidence-based practice must rest on a realistic understanding of the nature of the social sciences, and limitations in the scope for measurement in human relations interventions. Many factors are unpredictable, in particular the social context, which changes with time and space. Realist evaluators (Tonry 1991) stress that processes and social context as well as outcomes are crucial in the evaluation of any social programme. The same programme may work in different ways in different circumstances, and sometimes it will not work at all. It is not always possible to ensure that effective programmes can be replicated in a mechanical way with the expectation that the approach will work everywhere and always.

An important aim of an evidenced based approach to practice is to support the ethical principle that one should not intervene in the lives of children and young people without having some demonstrable reason for believing that the intervention is likely to be effective, however defined, or at least that it will do no harm. The Children (Scotland) Act 1995 embodies this principle and requires that no action should be taken unless it can be shown to be beneficial. While the promising body of evidence for social interventions remains limited, it points in a consistent direction. No-one has ever been able to show that state punishment (inflicting pain) reforms or leads to lasting positive change in individuals nor that others are particularly deterred by the example of its infliction. Despite this, the debate about 'what works?' with children and young people is very much a live one in Scotland including the demand for more punitive responses to children and young people.

Effective Intervention and What Works?

Effective intervention in this context is discussed in terms of an assumed goal of reducing or stopping re-offending, although this is not a straightforward measure. At the same time other objectives around skill development such as the acquisition of knowledge and understanding, improved social and personal skills are recognised as important outcomes. The wider social context is equally important since 'social circumstances and relationships with others are both the object of the intervention and the medium through which change can be achieved' (Farrall 2002:21). Social learning theorists have argued that change requires a 'productive investment' in young people as a form of 'human capital' to make 'possible the achievement of certain ends that would not be attainable in its absence' (Coleman 1990:302); in other words to equip young people with skills and capabilities for new ways of behaving. While well structured interventions can build individual human capital, in terms of enhanced cognitive and social skills, in themselves they will not generate the 'social capital' residing in relationships needed to facilitate or produce social participation and inclusion vital in maintaining desistance from offending.

Research reviews do not point to any single outstanding approach that by itself is guaranteed to work as a means of reducing offending. Research findings have, however, helped recover confidence that there is promising evidence of social interventions which can have a direct and positive effect on young people who offend and on their behaviour.

Targets

Research has identified key risk factors (discussed above) which are highly associated with criminal behaviour in children and young people. While we know that children exposed to multiple risk factors are disproportionately likely to end up as serious or persistent offenders, we cannot predict with accuracy which individuals are likely to become offenders on the basis of the level of risk to which they are exposed (Graham 1998). Not all children and young people exposed to multiple risk factors become offenders, nor do all children and young people who offend grow up in socio-economic difficulty. Research has highlighted that there are important aspects of the lives of young people that can protect them against risk in the same way that some personal and social factors are strongly associated with the likelihood of offending. Studies suggest

that many children appear to survive even serious risky experiences with no major developmental disruptions (Kirby and Fraser 1998). Individual characteristics, such as having a resilient temperament or a positive social orientation, positive and warm relationships that promote close bonds with family members, teachers, and other adults who encourage and recognise a young person's competence, as well as close friendships with peers, are all recognised as operating as protective factors that can reduce the impact of risks or change the way a child responds to them.

Those involved in anti-social or criminal behaviour at an early age and experiencing multiple social adversity are more likely to become persistent offenders (Home Office 1987, Rutter et al 1998). This combination of factors is generally part of a childhood pattern (Capaldi and Paterson 1996) and differs little from those associated with youthful deviant behaviour (Hawkins and Catalano 1992; Dreyfoos 1996). For this reason, it is argued that programmes to prevent or reduce crime should be part of wider programmes to address difficulties for young people, such as school failure, substance misuse and social exclusion. Commentators (Graham 1998:8) suggest that prevention and social inclusion programmes can be cost effective with results extending beyond reductions in crime. Available evidence supports approaches which consider children and young people at risk of persistent offending as a category or subset of children in need as reflected in s22 and s29 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995.

There is no single or simple way of helping an individual change their behaviour and precise knowledge about which methods seem to work best with specific kinds of offences remains limited. Cognitive behavioural and social learning methods are central to effectiveness but many questions remain unanswered and many ideas are still to be tested through local innovation (Andrews and Bonta 1994). Considering the enormous number of offenders who pass through youth justice systems in many jurisdictions, there are a comparatively small number of evaluations of interventions that focus specifically on children and young people who offend. Most of the reviews have been carried out in North America. The emerging principles and findings have tended to be formulated in regard to adult and young adults dealt within formal criminal processes and need to be tested in their application to children and young people in Scotland in diversionary and non criminal processes.

There is now little disagreement in criminological literature about predictors of offending such as age, gender, criminal history, early family factors, schooling and criminal associates. However, there has been much debate about which factors are changeable (dynamic) and which predict re-offending. The findings of reviews have been sufficiently consistent to allow some basic principles to be established which seem to be applicable to intervention with children and young people as well as with adults. (Gendreau and Ross 1987; Cullen and Gendreau 1989).

Programmes must target those who are at sufficient risk of re-offending so that any reduction is meaningful (**risk**). Programmes that provide intensive services for individuals at low risk of future re-offending are likely to use scarce resources on young people unlikely to re-offend anyway and may draw them into formal systems unnecessarily. Intervention aimed at general offending with young people must directly address characteristics that can be changed (dynamic) and that are directly associated with the individual's criminal behaviour (**criminogenic need**). Evidence suggests that the larger the number of relevant targets a programme is aimed at, using a range of appropriate methods (**multi-modal**), the more successful it is likely to be. Similarly, changes achieved in the community seem to result in better and longer lasting outcomes (**community based**) than those achieved in institutional settings. The integrity of the programme – the need for the programme to be delivered as planned and designed – is important. Poorly implemented programmes, delivered by poorly trained personnel, where participants spend only a minimal amount of time in the programme, can hardly be expected to be successful in reducing re-offending. A further core principle emerging from the research is the need to deliver interventions in a way that addresses the learning styles and abilities of young people (**general responsivity**). Programmes that use cognitive behavioural and social learning and skills approaches rather than non-directive relationship-oriented counselling or psycho-dynamic, insight-oriented counselling seem to be more effective. Programmes for specific groups of young people, eg females or ethnic groups or those involved in specific offences need to be adapted appropriately to the particular characteristics of these young people (**specific responsivity**).

Programme Integrity

There is a general consensus that programme integrity – programmes delivered as intended in theory and in practice – is the key issue that has to be achieved if re-integrative intervention is to be effective. This, however, is simpler to define than it is to achieve. Research reviews consistently demonstrate that the quality of delivery is critical to the successful reduction of re-offending. Programme integrity can be undermined in a variety of ways through:

- Programme drift – where aims and objectives of the programme are changed unsystematically over time
- Programme reversal – where the goals are directly undermined by professionals who, for example, fail to model positive behaviour, or who do not operate within the theoretical frame set, or who simply are not convinced that the programme is worthwhile
- Programme non-compliance – when changes are made to the content or targets of the programme without reference to theoretical principles or to the original objectives of the exercise (Hollins 2001).

Problems of programme integrity can occur even for the best of motives, for example, as practitioners try to adapt material – particularly from other cultural contexts – to the learning style and to the pace of learning of individual young people (responsivity). Consequently, programme accreditation systems tend to demand evidence of a coherent theoretical framework (or at least explicit practice assumptions) for programmes; documentation in the form of programme manuals; the proper facilities to deliver the programme as intended; the appointment of specialist programme leaders to provide support and supervision for staff, to ensure that staff are adequately trained to carry out the task, and to operate contingency planning and ongoing maintenance.

Reviews of research have shown that effectiveness is associated with the level of involvement of a leader in all stages of programme delivery and in overseeing implementation. Organisational barriers are equally well recognised as problematic. Gendreau (1996) found that programme integrity can be undermined by what he called the ‘MBA management syndrome’ – generalist managers who may be very capable of effective management but who have little or insufficient knowledge about intervention with young people who offend to know if staff are planning and implementing programmes with integrity. At the same time programmes can be viewed by managers as ‘bolt-on’ activities peripheral to mainstream service provision and activity. Programmes must be located within mainstream strategic planning for children, young people and families as part of social inclusion provision. Lipsey’s review demonstrated that the important characteristics of effective programmes ‘were not fully embedded in the nature of the intervention ... but were part of the administrative context for the intervention ... Effective intervention, therefore, requires more than a ‘magic bullet’ program(me) concept – it also depends on a good match between program(me) concept, host organisation, and the clientele targeted (Lipsey & Wilson 1998: 331). A high level of organisational commitment is essential to ensure adequate resources, the availability of skilled staff, interventions directed by well structured plans and explicit procedures for monitoring and evaluation.

The skills of those delivering the intervention are crucially important. Successful outcomes are strongly influenced by skilled effective workers who are warm, optimistic and enthusiastic, creative and imaginative and who use their personal influence through the quality of interaction directly with young people. Key practitioner skills associated with positive outcomes include social modelling, positive reinforcement and effective disapproval, providing structured learning to develop problem-solving skills and providing opportunities for restoration and making amends as part of examining (Trotter 1999).

Applying core principles to studies of interventions with young people and adults, Andrews et al (1990:384) concluded that the major source in variation on the effects of re-offending was the extent to which services were directed by the principles of risk, crime related need and responsivity. They concluded that formal disposals and human service interventions should be differentiated since the impact in regard to re-offending appears to lie with providing appropriateness of the intervention rather than with the nature of the formal disposal itself. This is an important point in the current political climate in Scotland when

politicians seem to want to create a plethora of ‘orders’ as if somehow these in themselves will ensure targeted and integrated provision and effective outcomes.

Most studies classified as ‘effective’ tend to be behavioural in nature but not exclusively so. Interventions based on deterrence (eg ‘scared straight’ programmes), non directive approaches, non-behavioural milieu or/and group approaches tend to be ineffective.

In summary, there is promising research evidence that community based social intervention can be effective in reducing the criminal behaviour of young people persistent in their offending. The evidence from reviews suggests that effective programmes appear to have common characteristics that distinguish them from unsuccessful approaches:

- carefully designed to target the crime related characteristics that can be changed (dynamic characteristics) by the intervention and those that are predictive of the individual’s future criminal activities
- implemented in a way that is appropriate for the participant using techniques that are known to work and which require participants to spend a reasonable length of time in the programme considering the changes desired (sufficiency)
- designed, delivered and evaluated by knowledgeable skilled individuals, appropriately educated and experienced
- give the most intensive programmes to those at the highest risk of re-offending
- use cognitive and behavioural methods based on theoretical models such as social learning or cognitive behavioural theories of change, emphasise positive reinforcement, provide contingencies for positive social behaviour and are individualised as much as possible.

Research reviews have allowed some distinctions to be made between those approaches associated with significant positive effect and those that have very little or even negative effects. Lipsey’s (1992) review of evaluations of intervention projects with young people found that 30% showed an overall counter-productive effect. Some types of approaches seemed less suitable for general use. Some therapeutic approaches involving loosely defined and unstructured models of counselling or support seemed to be ineffective and in some cases counter productive in reducing offending behaviour. For example, unstructured face-to-face counselling, often the main method of standard supervision of young people, seemed not only to be ineffective on its own in dealing with offending behaviour, but the available evidence seemed to suggest that the associated outcome was often increased re-offending (Lipsey et al 1990). The value of classical psychotherapeutic models emerged as questionable at best. Programmes that are considered ineffective tend to employ psychotherapy or group therapy approaches (McGuire 1995). These findings are supported by reviews of social work effectiveness. Sheldon (1994:226), while emphasising that counselling approaches in other fields of social work have produced positive gains, acknowledged ‘that without undue pessimism ... rarely do we see offenders exposed to a therapeutic programme giving up criminal behaviour in large numbers in comparison with their control counterparts and maintaining these gains at two year follow up’ (p.226). Counselling methods seem to have a more positive effect when they are part of a ‘multi-modal’ or combined approach.

Children, Young People and Crime

The most extensive review examining the effectiveness of outcomes specifically with young people (Lipsey 1992) examined the effectiveness of 443 different research studies. Findings revealed that overall in 64% of the studies the programme group did better (in most cases this refers to a reduction in re-offending) than control groups. Differences in methods were associated with outcomes, with the more effective programmes predicted to reduce re-offending substantially. Behavioural, skill oriented approaches and especially, combinations of approaches (‘multi-modal’), had the most positive impact. Deterrence or ‘shock’ approaches were associated with negative outcomes compared with control groups. For ‘multi-modal’, behavioural and skill oriented

approaches, the re-offending rate was 20% to 32% lower than for control groups. Overall, the results of the review indicated that more effective programmes were:

- longer in duration and provided larger amounts of meaningful contact
- in situations where a researcher was influential in the intervention setting (*ie*, built-in evaluation)
- behavioural, skill-oriented and multi-modal
- provided in community settings.

The issue of the duration, sequencing and intensity of a programme seems important though less is known about these factors. Literature on distance from offending aims to explore not only what works in helping people change but also when, how and why change occurs and how the changes can be maintained over time (Murano 2000). Evidence even of good outcomes suggests that without actively maintaining positive change over time, the benefits can ‘wash out’ and disappear. More effective interventions provide a sufficient amount of service to achieve the change objective set. Lipsey defined this as programmes lasting 100 hours or more over a period of 26 weeks involving contact two or more times a week. He cautions that a more refined breakdown of findings would be needed before definite conclusions could be drawn on these matters.

Family based initiatives

Family experiences play a critical role in causing, promoting, or reinforcing delinquent behaviour by children and young people. Therefore, it is important to develop interventions targeted to parents, siblings, or the entire family unit. For youth who do not pose an immediate threat to others or themselves, most of the successful strategies work with young people in their own homes and communities, rather than in institutions, and focus heavily on the family environment. Effective interventions that involve the family often complement interventions carried out simultaneously in schools or other parts of the community. Three broad categories of family based interventions are associated with effective outcomes with children and young people: early home visitation provision and pre-school education programmes, parent training and structured family work.

Home visitation programmes provided by skilled and committed professionals (Sherman et al 1997), often health visitors or social workers, aimed at helping, and sometime training, parents of young children in adversity, have consistently shown positive effects on crime and crime risk factors. Of the 18 evaluations in Sherman’s review, two – the Syracuse Family Development Programme and the Perry Pre-school Programme (High/Scope) measured the long term impact of home visitation on offending. In the Syracuse study only 6% of the programme group had a conviction by age 15 compared with 22% of the control group. The programme group showed 73% reduction in statutory supervision (probation) by age 15 (Lally et al 1988). The Perry programme targeted both parents and children and combined early childhood instruction (taught by masters-level teachers) with parenting assistance and weekly home visits. The programme group performed better at school and in employment than the control group. Arrest rates were dramatically reduced during adolescence and young adulthood and were 40% lower by age 19 than for the control group. By age 27, only 7% of Perry youth had been arrested five or more times, compared with 35% of youth in a randomly-assigned control group. A cost benefit analysis indicated a long term saving of \$7 for every \$1 spent (Schweinhart and Weikart 1993). Ten other evaluations in this review showed reductions in crime risk factors and produced positive outcomes in terms of later reductions in anti-social behaviour and improvements in cognitive skills, parental attachment and parenting skills. These findings have given rise to a range of service developments in Scotland in recent years including Sure-start, Home-start and Health-start projects. The key ingredient to success seems to be the intensity of the home visiting yet this is the element most likely to be ‘watered down’ in any roll-out of such programmes.

Reviews of direct family work and parent training show promising outcomes. Overall, parent training courses do seem to help parents respond more constructively, use discipline less harshly and more consistently, and manage conflict situations better than control groups. The effectiveness of family and

parenting interventions seems to increase exponentially when children are very young, before anti-social, aggressive or criminal behaviours are fully developed (Webster-Stratton and Hancock 1998). By the time a child reaches adolescence, both the child and the parents are following well-established patterns and are more resistant to long-term change (Patterson, Reid, and Dishion 1992). The most promising parent and family-based interventions combine training in parenting skills, education about child development and the factors that predispose children to criminal behaviour with other approaches such as social and problem-solving skills for children, pro-active classroom management, and peer related programmes for older children (O'Donnell et al 1995). Programmes typically include exercises to help parents develop skills for communicating with their children and for resolving conflict in non violent ways.

Designed for parents of middle-school students at risk for substance use, academic failure, and anti-social behaviour, the Adolescent Transition Programme has proven effective for families with older children. This intervention seeks to improve seven classic parenting skills: making neutral requests, using rewards, monitoring, making rules, providing reasonable consequences for rule violations, problem-solving, and active listening. Classes are conducted weekly for 12 weeks in groups of eight to 16 parents and follow a skill-based curriculum. In a randomised control trial involving 303 families over a four-year period, parents in the programme reported a lower tendency to overreact to their child's behaviour, greater diligence in dealing with problem behaviour, and less depression than the control group. There was also some indication of lower levels of daily anti-social behaviour from the young person. The more sessions a parent attended (many did not complete the 12-week programme), the greater the reported improvements in behaviour. This evaluation is limited because it was based on the parents' assessment and interpretation of behaviour rather than on objective measures (Irvine et al 1999). In a rural context another self-directed intervention reporting positive outcomes is Parenting Adolescents Wisely, a CD-ROM-based programme (Gordon). This has been adapted for use in the UK and is being used in Scotland.

There are a range of multi-dimensional family work approaches that are associated with positive outcomes when carried out by well trained practitioners. Multi-dimensional family work has shown a positive impact in reversing negative behaviours among troubled youth, particularly those with substance abuse problems. In a study of drug-abusing adolescents, structured family work improved parenting skills in 69% of the participating families. In addition, 71% of participating youth significantly reduced problem behaviours and 79% significantly reduced their substance use (Schmidt, Liddle & Dakof 1996). Functional Family Therapy (FFT) focuses on the multiple domains and systems within which young people and their families live. It targets both the family and the individual behaviour of the youth employing intensive and research-driven techniques aimed at identifying and reversing negative family dynamics that produce problem behaviours. FFT has been shown to reduce the re-offending rates of youth by 25% to 80% in repeated trials. One trial with serious and persistent offenders showed that participants were almost six times as likely to avoid arrest (40% vs. 7%) than the control group (Barton et al 1985). Multi-systemic Family Therapy (MST) has been used by trained staff successfully in work with young people persistent in offending and their families. Eight studies showed very positive results when compared with individual counselling (Borduin et al 1995). Evaluations of MST have shown reductions in re-offending rates of young people persistent in their offending by 25% to 70% in a series of rigorous trials. All forms of structured family work approaches, though costly, are likely to cost less than a quarter of institutional care.

Fostering Schemes

A US study of Treatment Foster Care (TFC) for serious and persistent young offenders aged 12-18, as an alternative to secure care, found that those allocated TFC had fewer arrests and had spent less time in custody and more time at home over the subsequent two years than controls (Chamberlain 1998). A good relationship with an adult caretaker was viewed as an important protective factor against continued involvement in a criminal peer group. A number of similar schemes have been developed in the UK and suggest that a high proportion of young people involved in serious or repeat offending placed with foster parents succeed in staying out of trouble during their placement (Utting and Vennard 2000)

School-Based Approaches

Few school based programmes aimed at reducing offending, violent behaviour, or substance abuse have been subject to meaningful outcome evaluation. The evidence available indicates that most programmes currently offered by schools, particularly quick, one-dimensional programmes implemented without strong planning or special staff training, make little or no long-term difference on youth behaviour including offending. This lack of impact by school-based programmes is not due to a shortage of effective models. Research consistently finds that school-based programmes can produce sustained behaviour changes when they are carefully implemented, developmentally appropriate, sustained over time and focused, at least in part, on building social competence (Mendel 2000). Several school-based approaches have demonstrated the power to reduce either delinquency or known precursors to delinquency such as substance abuse and anti-social behaviour. School programmes can be divided into those which attempt to influence the organisation and ethos of a school, anti-bullying initiatives and family-school partnerships.

The PATHE Project (Gottfredson & Gottfredson 1986) combined organisational changes in a high school with initiatives aimed at improving educational attainment and reducing offending. The organisational changes seemed to have only marginal effects on delinquency after one year. The most dramatic improvement occurred in official recording of suspensions which dropped by 14% in one year compared with a 10% increase in a control school. The individual focused initiatives seemed to have no effect on delinquency but did improve commitment of 'at risk' pupils to education resulting in improved attendance and attainment.

School bullies are at significant risk of becoming serious violent offenders. A bullying prevention project pioneered in Norway in 42 schools found that by engaging the entire school community (students, teachers, and parents), setting and enforcing clear rules about bullying behaviour, and supporting and protecting the victims of bullying that the incidence of bullying was cut in half. Rates of vandalism, truancy, and theft in participating schools declined also over a 20-month period (Boulder 1998). A similar initiative in 23 schools in Sheffield was successful in reducing bullying in primary schools but had only small effects in secondary schools. On the whole, research studies show that schools which are characterised by high quality classroom management, good leadership and organisation and where children feel emotionally and educationally supported are best placed to impact on children's offending.

Evidence suggests that to be effective, early intervention needs to improve both the parenting and the education of children at risk throughout childhood. This can only be achieved by forging partnerships with parents and schools. The Fast Track programme (CPPRG 1992) is one of the most promising family-school initiatives aimed at reducing anti-social behaviour, increased academic achievement and social/cognitive development by improving parent-child and family-school relationships. The approach involves parent training, bi-weekly home visits, social skills training, academic tutoring and teacher-based academic interventions to improve behavioural management. Findings after one year suggested that the programme group were showing signs of better parental involvement in school, increased cognitive skills and reduced problem behaviour compared with controls (Dodge 1993). A multi-component Social Development programme in Seattle offered school children six years (grades 1-6) of social competence training, parenting skills training, and training for teachers in classroom management and interactive instructional techniques. Researchers followed the students to age 18 and found that, compared with a control group, they committed fewer delinquent or violent acts, did less heavy drinking, misbehaved less in school and were more committed and attached to school (Catalano et al 1998).

Reducing offending has not typically been a primary goal of after-school activities and other positive youth development programmes. Consequently few studies have measured the direct impact of such work on delinquency and crime. Yet logic suggests their potential to curb delinquent activity. In Ottawa, Canada, an after-school recreation programme targeting all children in a local public housing project led to a 75% drop in the number of arrests for youth residing in the targeted project, compared with a 67% rise for a comparison group. A Columbia University study compared public housing complexes with and without an on-site club for boys and girls. Complexes with a club that also delivered a social skills training curriculum for youth suffered significantly less vandalism, drug trafficking, and juvenile crime (Schinke et al 1992).

Community Approaches

Commentators suggest that when community members are asked to help plan and become involved in an intervention, they develop a sense of ownership (Graham 1998). Involving the community can also make it easier to obtain resources and volunteers to carry out interventions. Mentoring programmes appear to be a promising approach to reducing youth offending and to involving community members. However, there is very little data to demonstrate whether, and under what circumstances, it is effective. More rigorous and systematic evaluations are still needed. A study of a Big Brothers/Big Sisters mentoring project revealed that youth assigned a mentor were 46% less likely to take drugs, 27% less likely to drink alcohol, and almost one-third less likely to strike another person than a control group (Tierney et al 1995). However, earlier reviews (Howell et al 1995) of ten US schemes found few positive outcomes with the exception of a Buddy System in Hawaii for 11-17s with behaviour management problems. Mentoring programmes are increasingly popular in the UK as a way of offering maintenance support through frequent contact with a socially positive adult or older peer (Utting and Vennard 2000). Like restorative justice approaches for young people, positive mentoring may provide a vehicle or a lever for change, but is unlikely on its own to be enough to impact significantly on the behaviour of a young person with multiple difficulties persistent in their offending.

Association with criminal peers in the community is a well established factor in subsequent criminality. Influencing this is difficult and there are few good examples of effective interventions. One promising model, the South Baltimore Youth Centre project, was based on building a contracted social network between young people and workers who acted as mentors and advocates. Peer pressure was used to exercise discipline and control. Participants were taught to manage anger and to develop personal skills. Serious delinquent behaviour decreased by a third for the programme group compared with a slight increase for the control group over a 19-month period (Baker et al 1995). Group work and peer work can have unintended consequences and some commentators warn that bringing together young people involved in persistent offending can make them worse without the skilled workers and the appropriate models of practice to challenge their criminal attitudes and to assist them to change positively.

A community approach to risk and protection focused prevention is at the heart of the Communities that Care and other 'whole community' approaches. Developed in the US and Europe, five Communities that Care projects have been established in Scotland. Using a public health model, it operates on the assumption that action to tackle priority risk factors for children across a whole neighbourhood will in due course reduce the levels of youth crime (Utting and Venard 2000). FARE in Easterhouse in Glasgow provides a 'home grown' model that seems greatly valued by the local community.

Sport, Leisure and Adventure

Intuitively, sport, leisure and outdoor challenge pursuits seem both an obvious and attractive means of diverting young people from crime and a means of preventing crime. There is evidence that participation in outdoor recreation programmes can contribute to increased self-esteem, perceptions of mastery and control and increased social skills. However, there is no guaranteed linear relationship between participation and outcome. Many programmes have low completion rates, raising the possibility of 'self-selection', with those most positively affected being those least likely to re-offend. Further, returning participants to their original peer environment after short periods of time inevitably means that for some there will be a return to criminal or anti-social behaviour (Taylor et al 1999).

The debate about the relationship between sports participation and crime divides broadly into theories of prevention (or diversion) and theories about the re-integration of offenders. The former tends to express itself in relatively large-scale sports programmes targeted at specific areas, or during specific time periods (eg, summer sports programmes). The re-integrative approach is often based on an intensive counselling approach, in which the needs of the young people are identified and programmes adapted to suit their needs which it is hoped will transfer to the wider social context and reduce offending behaviour (Coalter et al 2000). Coalter's review suggests that location and personnel are important factors in

successful outcomes. Traditional facility-based programmes provided by professional recreation and sport staff seem unlikely to have the desired impact. The evidence suggests that people with excellent coaching skills are not necessarily good with difficult young people nor those who are skilled in working with difficult young people necessarily good sports or PE instructors.

The New Opportunities Fund's Active Steps programme intends to develop sport and physical education programmes across Scotland aimed at preventing crime among young people. The Venture Trust provides adventure and wilderness programmes for male and female offenders aged 16-21 in Scotland. There is a shortage of independent evaluation providing dependable evidence on effectiveness of such programmes. Utting and Vennard (2000) report a few examples of sports and adventure programmes that achieve at least short-term reductions in re-offending.

Lipsey and Wilson's (1998) meta-analysis identified 'wilderness' and outdoor challenge programmes among the least effective types of intervention for serious and violent young offenders whether in institutional or community settings, while Barret's review (1997) of US programmes cites some reduction in the frequency and severity of offending. Little research was concerned with longer term outcomes. The limited evidence suggests that merely introducing young people who offend to sport, leisure, or adventure activities is unlikely on its own to reduce criminality, unless it is combined or integrated with other measures associated with effective outcomes.

A more recent review (Wilson & Lipsey 2000) specifically on wilderness challenge programmes found moderately positive overall results which suggest, on balance, that these kinds of programmes can be effective for delinquent youth up to age 21. Programmes involving relatively intense physical activities and programme enhancements such as individual counselling, family work, and group work sessions appear to be especially effective. The results suggest that a 'treatment' component enhances the delinquency effects of challenge programmes. The results described related primarily to Caucasian males already 'in the criminal justice system'. These need to be tested in a Scottish context. One important area of uncertainty raised by this review is an apparent counter-intuitive relationship between programme duration and outcome. The analysis showed that programme length was not related to the size of the effect on re-offending for programmes up to six weeks long. Programmes beyond this length, however, showed a marked decrease in effectiveness. The information reported in the available studies, unfortunately, is not sufficient to identify which characteristics are most influential and this topic warrants further investigation.

Proponents of wilderness programmes suggest the importance of having certain 'defining' experiences that result from the challenges a participant must meet and that these experiences are presumed to trigger changes in a participant's self-esteem and anti-social behaviour. Lipsey poses the question as to whether these 'defining' moments are influenced negatively by the other components of a youth's overall intervention programme in longer programmes.

The commonly argued rationale for including sport and outdoor activities is as a catalyst within a multi-modal programme with young people who offend. A Home Office study (Taylor et al 1999) highlighted the problem of finding qualitative evaluation techniques which adequately monitor the complex outcomes which most of the programmes aspire to. It concluded that 'all programmes agree that physical activities do not by themselves reduce offending ... All agree that there are personal and social development objectives which form part of a matrix of outcomes. These developments may, sooner or later, improve offending behaviour, but their impact is unpredictable in scale and timing. To expect anything more tangible is unrealistic' (p.50).

It remains unclear which aspects of leisure, sport and outdoor adventure programmes are most valuable. There is limited information on whether certain activities and ways of organising them are more effective than others and whether they work better with certain types of young offenders than others. Without this there are serious risks of programmes attracting inappropriate referrals.

Restorative Approaches

Restorative approaches have provided promising outcomes in general, but as yet modest results when applied specifically to children and young people (Whyte 2002). Nonetheless, only one of more than 30 studies examined by Braithwaite (1999) could be interpreted as showing an increase in re-offending for any type of offender involved in restorative justice programmes and many showed reduced offending. The Canberra Re-integrative Shaming Experiments (RISE) specifically focused on two types of juvenile property offences – shoplifting apprehended by store security officers and offences against personal victims – and found no differences in offending rates among young people between court and conference groups on the basis of one-year before-after changes. The Indianapolis Restorative Justice Conferencing Experiment (McGarrell et al 2000) replicated the Canberra RISE experiments with very minor first offenders under the age of 14. Re-arrest rates at 12 months for those who successfully completed a programme found only 23.2% had been rearrested at 12 months compared with 29% of controls. This was not statistically significant and questions whether restorative measures are best suited for minor first offenders. More practically, in a Scottish context, 60% - 70% of minor first offenders who are detected do not re-appear within a 12-month period (SCRA unpublished data). Some caution will be required in rolling out restorative justice approaches in Scotland to ensure scarce resources are targeting effectively and to avoid net-widening.

Institutional Containment

There are young people who present such risks to others and to themselves that containment is required. Containment will prevent crimes that these young people would otherwise commit on the street. Research suggests that the number of crimes prevented by locking up each additional offender, however, declines. (Visher 1987). While there is evidence to suggest that ‘effective methodologies’ applied in some institutional settings can result in positive outcomes with serious offenders (Lipsey et al 2000), existing studies on large residential training schools have consistently failed to show effective outcomes in re-integrating young people who offend or steering them from crime. Existing evidence suggests that re-offending from large training schools is uniformly high. A follow-up study on youth released from Minnesota’s two training schools in 1991 found that 91% were arrested within five years of release. In Maryland, a study of 947 youths found that 82% were referred to juvenile or criminal courts within two-and-one-half years after release (Maryland DJJ 1997). In fact, virtually every study examining re-offending among youth sent to training schools in the past three decades has found that at least 50% to 70% of offenders are arrested within one or two years after release (Mendel 2000).

Some reviews conclude that training schools actually increase re-offending in comparison to community-based provision (Mendel 2000). Young people sent to training schools in Ohio were re-arrested far faster (average 4.8 months) than young people supervised in the community (average 12 months), even after controlling for seriousness of offence and other variables (Hamparian et al 1996). A South Carolina study found that 82% of males born in 1967 who spent time in a juvenile residential institution had adult criminal records by age 27, compared with 40% of non-institutionalised control groups (Rivers et al 1995). Missouri, US, closed all its residential training schools in the early 1980s and replaced them with unlocked residential centres and with a comprehensive series of non residential programmes including day centres providing intensive education, life skills training, structured family work and intensive mentoring supervision. This matrix of programmes and services produced relatively positive long term results. A follow-up study in Missouri of nearly 5,000 young people released from residential schools as part of the closure programme in the 1980s found that only 15% went on to collect adult criminal records (Gorsuch et al 1992). No outcome data is available in the public domain from institutional school-based programmes in Scotland although substantial investment is made in residential schools and secure accommodation.

More specialised secure training facilities, often referred to as ‘Boot camps’, show consistently poor outcomes. Recidivism rates range from 64% to 75% in US reviews. Despite the overwhelming direction of the evidence, most continue to operate as usual – a clear indication that policy and planning of expenditure and provision can ignore even good evidence.

Summary

Many community based intervention programmes work in preventing or reducing offending among children and young people. Others do not. Most programmes have not yet been evaluated with enough evidence to draw firm conclusions. However, enough evidence is available to create provisional lists of what works?, what doesn't and what seems promising.

A major review in the US classified effective interventions into these three categories (Sherman et al 1997 – see Appendix 1 for full bibliography). The research in this review is a little dated and new findings will have to be added as outcomes are published.

Community based initiatives

What works?

- Re-integrative programmes for young people involved in persistent offending using interventions appropriate to their risk factors and directed by key principles reduces repeat offending rates (Andrews et al 1990; Lipton and Pearson 1996).

What is promising

- Intensive supervision and aftercare of young people involved in serious offending in a Pennsylvania programme reduced re-arrests compared with putting offenders on standard probation (Sontheimer 1993).
- Intensive supervision and aftercare of young people involved in less serious offending, such as run-aways or truants, can reduce future offending (Land et al 1990).
- Drug courts that ordered and monitored a combination of rehabilitation and drug treatment reduced repeat incarcerations compared with regular probation among offenders convicted of a first time drug possession (Deschenes et al 1996b).
- Problem-solving analysis addressed to the specific crime situation at each location (Goldstein 1990; Clarke 1992).
- Gang offender monitoring by community workers, probation and police officers can reduce gang violence (review by Howell 1995).
- Community-based mentoring (Tierney et al 1995) can be effective, although evaluations of other programmes with mentoring as a major component did not (McCord 1978; Fo and O'Donnell 1974, 1975).

What doesn't work

- Re-integrative programmes using counselling that does not specifically focus on each young person's risk factors fail to reduce repeat offending (Lipsey 1992).
- Intensive supervision on (parole or probation) supervision (ISP) does not reduce repeat offending compared with normal levels of community supervision, although there are some exceptions and findings vary by site (Petersilia and Turner 1993; Deschenes et al 1995).
- Instructional programmes focusing on information dissemination, fear arousal, moral appeal, self-esteem, and affective education fail to reduce substance abuse (Botvin 1990).
- Community mobilisation of residents' efforts against crime in high-crime, inner-city areas of concentrated poverty fails to reduce crime in those areas (Hope 1995).
- Shock probation, shock parole, and split disposals, in which young people are detained for a short period of time and then supervised in the community, do not reduce repeat offending compared with the placement of similar offenders only under community supervision and can increase crime rates for some groups (Vito & Allen 1981; Vito 1984; Boudouris & Turnbull 1985).
- "Scared Straight" or deterrent programmes, for example, bringing young people to visit maximum security prisons to see the severity of prison conditions failed to reduce the participants' re-offending rates and may actually increase crime (Finckenauer 1982; Buckner and Chesney-Lewis 1983).
- Home detention with electronic monitoring for low-risk offenders fails to reduce offending com-

pared to the placement of similar offenders under standard community supervision without electronic monitoring (Baumer and Mendelsohn 1991; Austin and Hardyman 1991).

- Residential programmes for young people who offend in rural settings using "outward bound," wilderness, challenge, or counselling programmes fail to reduce repeat offending significantly in comparison to standard training schools (Deschenes et al 1996a; Greenwood and Turner 1993).
- Boot camps fail to reduce repeat offending after release compared to having similar offenders serve time on probation or parole for juveniles (Peters 1996a, 1996b, 1996c; Bottcher et al 1996).

Family based initiatives

What works

- Frequent home visits to infants aged 0–2 by trained nurses and other helpers reduce child abuse and other injuries to the infants (Gray et al 1979; Larson 1980; Olds 1986, 1988; Barth, Hacking, and Ash 1988).
- Pre-school and weekly home visits by teachers to children under 5 substantially reduce arrests at least between age 15 (Lally et al 1988) and up to age 19 (Berrueta-Clement et al 1985).
- Structured family work/therapy and parent training about delinquency and at-risk pre-adolescents reduce risk factors for delinquency such as aggression and hyperactivity (Tremblay and Craig 1995).

School based initiatives

What works

- Building school capacity to initiate and sustain innovation through the use of school teams or other organisational development strategies reduces crime and delinquency (Gottfredson 1986, 1987; Kenney and Watson 1996).
- Clarifying and communicating norms about behaviour through rules, reinforcement of positive behaviour, and school-wide initiatives (such as anti-bullying campaigns) reduces crime and delinquency (Mayer et al 1983; Olweus 1991, 1992) and substance abuse (Institute of Medicine 1994; Hansen and Graham 1991).
- Social competency skills curriculum, such as Life Skills Training (LST), which teach, over a long period of time, such skills as stress management, problem solving, self-control, and emotional intelligence, reduce delinquency, and substance abuse (Botvin, et al 1984; Weissberg and Caplan 1994), or conduct problems (Greenberg et al 1995).
- Training or coaching in thinking skills for high-risk youth using behaviour modification techniques or rewards and punishments reduces substance abuse (Lochman et al 1984; Bry 1982; Lipsey 1992).

What is promising

- After school recreation programmes may reduce juvenile crime in the areas immediately around the centre (Howell 1995).
- Schools within schools programmes such as Student Training Through Urban Strategies (STATUS) that group young people into smaller units for more supportive interaction or flexibility in instruction have reduced drug abuse and delinquency (Gottfredson 1990).
- Training or coaching in thinking skills for high-risk youth using behaviour modification techniques or rewards and sanctions may reduce delinquency (Bry 1982).
- Building school capacity to initiate and sustain innovation through the use of school teams or other organisational development strategies worked to reduce delinquency and substance abuse in one study (D. Gottfredson 1986).
- Improved classroom management and instructional techniques reduced alcohol use in one study (Battistich et al 1996).

What doesn't work

- Individual counselling and peer counselling of students fail to reduce substance abuse or

delinquency and can actually increase delinquency (Gottfredson 1986; G. Gottfredson 1987; Lipsey 1992).

- School-based leisure-time enrichment programmes, including supervised homework and self-esteem exercises, fail to reduce delinquency risk factors or drug abuse (Botvin 1990; Hansen 1992; Ross et al 1992; Stoil et al 1994; Cronin 1996).
- Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.), a curriculum taught by uniformed police officers primarily to 5th and 6th graders over 17 lessons, fails to reduce drug abuse when the original D.A.R.E. curriculum (pre- 1993) is used (Ringwalt et al 1994; Rosenbaum et al 1994; Clayton et al 1996).

Police initiatives

What works?

- Extra police patrols in high crime hot spots reduce crime in those places (Press 1971; Chaiken et al 1975; Chaiken 1978; Sherman and Weisburd 1995; Koper 1995).

What is promising

- Policing with greater respect to young people reduced repeat offending in one analysis of arrested offenders (Paternoster et al 1997) and increased respect for the law and police in another (Sherman et al 1997).
- Community policing with meetings to set priorities reduced community perceptions of the severity of crime problems in Chicago (Skogan and Hartnett 1997).

What doesn't work

- Neighbourhood watch programmes organised with police fail to reduce burglary or other target crimes, especially in higher crime areas where voluntary participation often fails (Rosenbaum 1986; Pate et al 1987).
- Arrests of juveniles for minor offences cause them to become more delinquent in the future than if police exercise discretion to merely warn them or use other alternatives to formal charging (Farrington 1977; Klein 1986).

Discussion

Good practices are based on knowledge derived from rigorous evaluations of interventions. However, a number of factors complicate the approach to identifying best practices for youth crime interventions. First, relatively few longitudinal and randomised-control studies have been conducted. Second, while studies have evaluated the outcome of interventions, they have not typically evaluated the effectiveness of individual implementation practices. In the real world it is often difficult to deliver what has been planned with integrity and to sustain it over time. Yet without this, programmes are unlikely to be effective. Systems of individual support for staff and well trained programme leaders who monitor the frequency, intensity and duration of programmes against measurable outcomes are required. Despite limitations in knowledge and expertise, there is sufficient positive evidence of good models of effective practice and a wide range of promising approaches specifically with children and young people. There is also some convincing evidence about approaches that seem not to work.

This paper has highlighted the consistent and overwhelming evidence that the majority of children and young people involved in persistent offending share common characteristics of multiple social need directly associated with sustaining and supporting their criminality. Available evidence supports approaches which consider children and young people at risk of persistent offending as a category or subset of children in need as reflected in s22 and s29/30 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995.

There is no simple or straightforward mechanism for defining levels of persistent offending against which resources can be matched. Studies suggest that any single definition will exclude many young people who require well structured intervention and too rigid an application of a single definition may be counter-

productive and result in net widening. However, a number of categories emerge from the literature to give some guidance as to when earmarked funding is likely to be required.

Early pre-school provision for vulnerable children aimed at improving parenting and social development is demonstrably effective in preventing or reducing crime risk factors. Early onset of criminal activity combined with social adversity is a clear indication of vulnerability and risk of future persistent offending. If behaviour includes bullying or violent behaviour, the risks of future serious offending are increased. Children in this category should be a top priority for targeted multi-disciplinary social inclusion provision, where possible without recourse to formal youth crime processes. Young people involved in three or more offences over a short period should act as a warning of the need for families to provide effective supervision with or without assistance. Those involved in more than 10 offences in a year, if resources have not already been directed towards their offending behaviour, are likely to need direct (and in some instances more intensive) multi-modal provision. The practical problem with using number of offences is that one episode, particularly of car crime, could result in large numbers of offences. Any definition of persistence may have to include some notion of pattern of offending over time, including number of offences and number of episodes. Young people who commit serious offences are untypical and may often require specialised assistance.

Numerous models of effective practice have been tested and demonstrate good or promising outcomes for different ages and stages of development. Much more has still to be done. It is not a coincidence, however, that effective programmes target key domains in a child or young person's life which research identifies as crime related needs. Similarly, the most effective programmes are longer and combine a range of methods and targets to tackle, simultaneously, a range of difficulties associated with youth crime when compared to ineffective methods. Despite the existing evidence, resource allocation and programme planning seems seldom to be driven by this evidence. Programme requirements and priority targets are not based on objective assessment of crime related factors and few programmes in Scotland have been subjected to rigorous evaluation. Without a shared understanding of what programmes are likely to be effective with individual children and young people, and without explicit statements of the achievable aims and objectives of particular programmes, it is difficult to see how consistency, effectiveness and justice can be achieved. National objectives and standards provide the possibility of a shared framework which could assist match the most appropriate types of programmes to children with specific crime related needs, promote transparency of targeting and a requirement for outcome data. Such a framework should also be accessible to users and their representatives to assist them understand whether or not the provision on offer is 'fit for purpose' and whether the programme on offer has explicit evidence to support the expected outcomes to avoid confusion between user failure and service failure. Regulation alone is unlikely to be sufficient without earmarked funding or some means of holding service providers accountable for the effectiveness of the provision they offer, and providing a mechanism for identifying service shortfall.

There is little doubt from existing evidence that effective practice draws on a range of skills from very specialised professional activity through to community based volunteers and members of natural social networks. However, most effective programmes for young people persistent in their offending require involvement of well trained practitioners who are dedicated to this difficult group of children and young people. To ensure that the most appropriate day time, evening and, when required 24/7, supervision plans, are made and implemented, case managers are likely to be specialists in youth crime though may be drawn from a range of professional backgrounds with additional post qualifying training in youth crime. The complex difficulties of the most persistent and serious offenders are likely to require multi-dimensional responses from different professionals and different disciplines. Cross cutting provision and accessing inter-disciplinary provision has taxed providers for many years. Dedicated inter-disciplinary teams may be one way of ensuring that those children and young people deemed highest priority can be guaranteed the appropriate skills mix within any plan designed to deal with their multiple difficulties.

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2003

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Review of Scottish Research

1 Introduction

This section highlights research findings from projects working with young people in Scotland who offend. Most but not all of the projects seek to address offending behaviour. This is followed by a review of research on how offending by young people is addressed in the adult criminal justice system.

2 Freagarrach

Freagarrach (Lobley et al 2001), a Barnardo's project, began in 1995. The project, which emerged from a coherent inter-agency strategy on young people at risk in Central Region, was provided with active and practical support from the police, reporters, social work and education departments from the start.

2.1 Aims and objectives

- To address offending behaviour.
- To promote victim awareness and reparation.
- To address any problems concerned with education and employment.
- To resolve family issues.
- To promote constructive use of leisure time.

2.2 Referral criteria

Social workers refer young people aged 12-16 years who have been involved in at least five episodes of offending within the previous 12 months with offending being the main reason for agency involvement. It was envisaged that the project would accept 40 young people per year.

2.3 Formal arrangements for involving the young person

The gap between referral and acceptance on the project was rarely more than eight weeks. The first four-six weeks at the project was used for assessment of the young person's needs, circumstances, problems and reasons for offending. The next stage was a meeting of parents/carers and professionals at which an Individual Programme Contract covering the objectives to be pursued was signed. Young people were given details of the arrangements to collect and return them home each day. It was anticipated that they would have three face-to-face contacts lasting one to two hours each week with additional contact if necessary. Since each young person was expected to be with the project for six months, this amounted to 150 hours (75 contacts). The young person's progress was reviewed by those involved in the initial assessment every eight weeks.

2.4 Modifications over time

In time, referrals were accepted from Criminal Justice Social Work teams and the age range extended to 18 years. Staff undertook additional 'outreach work' with young people who did not, for a variety of reasons, attend the project.

2.5 How offending behaviour was addressed

The project was classified as client centred, on the basis that young people were given the opportunity to express their views. Staff condemned offending but gave the young people the message that they could change their behaviour. Their approach to offending was defined as eclectic due to the fact that it was 'a practical synthesis of a number of cognitive, behavioural and social skills based methods'. The techniques and resources used included pencil and paper exercises, worksheets, video, role play, cartooning and the analysis of reasoned action.

Individual discussion sessions were used to look at the situation, motivation, perceptions and circumstances in which offending behaviour occurred. The method of identifying and exploring factors which appeared to increase the risk of offending was described in the report as having a cognitive-behavioural emphasis. Young people were encouraged to recognise and avoid or withdraw from certain situations. They

were empowered and enabled to make different choices and decisions if faced with similar situations. If drug and alcohol misuse played a major part in offending, the worker concentrated upon the causal links between substance misuse and offending. There were discussions on the impact of crime on victims (including when the young person or their family had been victims), on taking responsibility for actions and on developing awareness of the consequences of actions.

Group sessions were used to discuss specific topics within the areas specified in the project's objectives and the young people met a group of offenders from Glenochil Young Offenders Institution.

Staff maintained a meaningful dialogue with parents and encouraged and enabled them to participate in the review meetings. Other less formal contact occurred when project workers took the young people home.

2.6 Difficulties encountered during the project

Ensuring local authority social workers were aware of and understood the objectives of the project was a continuous task partly because of the rapid turnover of staff in the authority.

Some young people were reluctant to attend. Staff responsible for bringing them to the project acted as if they assumed the young person would return and if not at home, sought them out. Some accommodated young people never became truly engaged and ceased to attend. Returning those who had truanted/been suspended to mainstream schooling was rarely possible.

Many young people remained with the project longer than the six-month period envisaged at the start. Those requiring the most intensive contact were the youngest offenders who tended to lack the cognitive ability needed to grasp the point of working on offending or acquire insight into their behaviour. Individual contact with the project ranged from 2-100+ sessions and some young people were unwilling to leave which meant that a number continued attending after the formal ending.

2.7 Effectiveness of the project in addressing offending behaviour

Offending behaviour was monitored through the police TRACE system and checks with the Reporter and social workers, arrangements which allowed the project to be pro-active in seeking referrals where they became aware of an individual's persistent offending.

The records for the Freagarrach group were compared with other young offenders but the researchers found it difficult to be precise about the project's impact upon the criminal careers of the former. There was little doubt that the majority of the Freagarrach group had offended at a lower rate in the year after starting at the project and indications that over a two-year period they offended less seriously than the comparison group. The researchers believed that a longer term effect might exist since few in the group for whom a three-year follow up of records was possible had been sentenced to custody.

The researchers concluded that the project had been effective in reducing offending in the short term with a reduction of between 20% and 50% but questioned, since the project was working with young people who were most at risk of long-term criminal careers, whether desistance from offending was a realistic objective. They suggested that a more realistic objective would be a change in the rate and seriousness of offending.

Only a few young people returned to mainstream education or entered employment, but there were indications that attendance at Freagarrach had helped to improve some young people's family relationships and had removed or delayed entry to the care system.

2.8 Costs

The researchers estimated that the savings (from reduced use of residential care, the criminal justice system and social work) would be £125,000 per annum. This was calculated as a direct saving of £2.4 million over a 10-12 year period (the average length of a criminal career).

Annual cost of the project	£338,000
Annual cost per individual	£13,580
Weekly cost per individual	£350

2.9 Main conclusions

The main reasons given for the project's success were:

- It was embedded in a local strategic approach which ensured active and practical inter-agency support, particularly from Central Scotland's Police force who shared information and supported the project throughout.
- It challenged offending behaviour but was child centred and welfare oriented, for staff incorporated insights and techniques from a range of disciplines – social work, education, alcohol and drug abuse and family relationships into their work – and they integrated the approaches of social work with children and families and with criminal justice into practice.
- Attendance was voluntary which meant staff did not spend time and energy on enforcement.

3 SACRO (Fife) Young Offender Mediation Project

The SACRO mediation project (Sawyer, 2000) was based upon the principles of restorative justice and directed by three main principles, namely early intervention, inclusion of the victim perspective and voluntary reparation.

3.1 Aims and objectives

- To raise the young person's awareness of offending behaviour.
- To provide an opportunity for young people to make amends.
- To prevent re-offending.

3.2 Referral criteria

Young people age 11-16 years were referred by the Reporter on the basis of the pattern of offending behaviour revealed in police reports. This was followed by a consultation with project workers and the young person's social worker.

3.3 Formal arrangements for involving the young person

Young offenders, parents and victims were given information about the project, by letter, visits or phone calls. The time from offence to completion of the programme was expected to be three months or less and over a period of 34 months the project worked with 343 young people.

3.4 Modifications over time

The majority of those referred to the project were males aged 14 or 15 years and many young people had only one charge against them or showed little evidence of a pattern of offending behaviour.

3.5 How offending behaviour was addressed

The project focused upon particular incidents and the young person's offending behaviour. Victims were asked to choose one of three options which the young person could agree to undertake or not:

- undertake a task for the victim or in the wider community.
- meet the victim face to face to discuss offending behaviour.
- write a letter of apology or explanation to the victim.

The first option proved the most popular as many young people were unwilling to have face-to-face meetings with victims because they felt guilty. Some did not agree to any of these options but instead participated in a non mediation programme which addressed offending behaviour without the involvement of the victim. Others entered a non-harassment agreement based upon discussion with the victim.

3.6 Difficulties encountered during the project

The aim was to have six weeks elapse between the commission of an offence and referral to the project but in most instances it took longer. The majority of young people took around six months to complete the programme rather than the expected three months and more than a quarter were referred on more than one occasion.

There were different perceptions of the project. Parents thought the project was suitable for a first time offender more so than a police or Reporter's warning. Both they and the young people appeared to be unaware of the voluntary nature of the project. Parents and victims regarded attendance as a punitive sanction and thought that putting young people through humiliating experiences would be most effective. In contrast, project staff thought that young people should not be put through humiliating experiences. They saw letter writing as a difficult option, whereas parents and victims saw it as a soft option.

3.7 Effectiveness of the project

The researcher encountered problems obtaining data on outcomes. The SACRO data base proved impossible to access and the check of the Reporter's records some 12 months after a young person had left the project was only partially completed resulting in information on only 87 young people.

This showed that 62% (54/87) had not been re-referred to the Reporter. However, it was not clear whether these were young people with an established pattern of offending. There was little evidence to suggest that involvement in any one of the options in the project was more effective than the others.

All respondents believed the project had been particularly effective in raising awareness of the consequences of offending behaviour because of the focus on the offence and the victim's involvement. Victims appreciated the central role they had played in contrast to neglect by the criminal justice system.

3.8 Costs

None provided.

3.9 Main conclusions

The researcher considered there was little conclusive evidence that the project had met its aims. However, service providers and users felt the project filled a gap.

4 A Chance to Change: an intervention with young people who have sexually abused others

This was a Barnardo's project (Buist & Fuller 1997) established in Dundee 1993 in consultation with the local authority social work department following awareness that there were a number of cases of sexual abuse involving young perpetrators.

4.1 Aims and objectives

- To provide time limited programmes for young abusers (main objective).
- To offer advice and consultation.
- To raise awareness of sexually abusive behaviour by adolescents.

4.2 Referral criteria

The young person's suitability for the project was discussed before formal referrals were accepted. The target group was 12-18 years who had sexually abused others.

4.3 Formal arrangements for involving the young person

If considered suitable for the project the young person had to agree to take part, after which there was a joint assessment by the project worker and social worker of the young person and his family. Co-working continued throughout the young person's attendance, generally a one-hour session each week for around six-12 months.

4.4 Modifications over time

The age limit for referrals was lowered. Project staff became more involved in advice and consultancy work (secondary objective) than was originally envisaged.

4.5 How offending behaviour was addressed

Young people were not regarded as sex offenders but as having behaved in an unacceptable manner which could be changed. The project's approach was described as eclectic as it drew upon many sources, primarily cognitive behavioural influenced by a feminist perspective. Staff concentrated on getting young people to take responsibility for their offences and on developing victim empathy. Techniques included didactic interaction, games, role play, drawings and questionnaires. Sessions were videoed and reviewed.

This work was complemented by sessions with families on how to manage the young people and restrict opportunities for further abuse as many of the victims were siblings. Later on in the life of the project there were group sessions.

4.6 Difficulties encountered during the project

Referrals were slow in coming and some young people refused the offer of assessment. Others who had agreed to take part in the programmes missed appointments even when mandated to attend by a Hearing. Consequently there were only five young people on programmes in the first year, making it impossible to undertake group work.

Programmes had to be extended when new disclosures revealed long-term abusive behaviour often involving more than one victim. If families rejected these 'high risk' young people they were admitted to local authority residential homes which led to project staff working with residential care workers on child protection issues.

Parents did not always share the workers interpretation of the behaviour and could be difficult to engage. The least co-operative families frequently shared a history of perpetrators and victims of abuse and domestic violence.

Co-working was demanding of local authority social workers time and staff changes created difficulties. As knowledge of sexually abusive behaviour perpetrated by children was limited opinions differed as to how behaviour should be interpreted.

4.7 Effectiveness of the project

The evaluation of the project included a review of project records and interviews with staff but it was impossible to determine the effectiveness of the project as there were no completed programmes.

4.8 Costs

None provided.

4.9 Main conclusions

- The project was not integrated into the local authority's child protection strategy from the start, thus referrals were slow in coming and workers had no opportunity to establish their credibility or publicise their objectives.
- The limited knowledge among professionals and lay people of the nature and incidence of sexual abuse by children and young people meant staff spent considerable time addressing this issue.
- Formal protocols for co-operative work with local authority social workers would facilitate concord.
- Contact with young people should be more intensive in the early stages in order to establish the full extent of abuse.
- The duration of a programme is likely to be more than the six-12 months envisaged.
- The existence of victim/perpetrator of sexual abuse and/or domestic violence in families suggests an increase in the number of workers may be required.
- Alternative residential care provision for perpetrators who can no longer remain within the family home is essential.
- The work on such projects is invariably innovative and stressful, therefore staff should be supported by specialist consultant staff.

5 Working with Persistent Juvenile Offenders: an evaluation of the APEX CueTen project

The project (Lobley & Smith 1999) was established in Fife as a result of a Scottish Office initiative to promote the development of community-based resources for persistent juvenile offenders.

5.1 Aims and objectives

- To provide an intensive, structured and individualised programme for persistent young offenders through the creation and development of employment and employment related opportunities.
- To reduce offending behaviour.

5.2 Referral criteria

The target group was 14-15 year olds who had appeared at a Hearing as a result of their persistent offending (3+ offences in the previous 12 months) for whom statutory measures had proved unsatisfactory or inadequate and who were at risk of custody or residential care.

The initial intention was that referrals should come from the Regional Allocation Group (RAG) but inter-departmental complications led to this becoming referral from social workers with ratification by the Hearings. Attendance at the project became a condition of a Supervision Requirement and young people had to agree to meet the responsibilities implied if they participated in the programme.

5.3 Formal arrangements for involving the young person

Following referral there was an assessment interview with the project leader, social worker and parent/carer. Staff anticipated running four groups of eight young people per year and that the programme would be provided in three blocks.

Block 1 (13 weeks) focused upon attitudes and behaviour for employment, cognitive and negotiating skills, vocational training, educational choices and skills and knowledge relevant to acquiring and keeping a job. It was delivered through group discussions, visits to college, work based experience, and group and individual exercises.

Block 2 (7 weeks) included individual counselling, plans for employment or training, group experiences in the form of sports and adventure activities, creative arts and the development of IT skills.

Block 3 (6 weeks) action on individual plans and identifying the support such as mentoring which would be provided on leaving the project.

5.4 Modifications over time

The project was under-subscribed and accepted some who were said to lack the motivation to attend. It also accepted young people already accommodated by the local authority. The project ran three rather than four groups per year but still took around 32 young people. Ultimately there were referrals from school guidance teachers routed through social workers.

5.5 How offending behaviour was addressed

The project's philosophy was that changing a young person's attitudes to training and employment would have an impact upon offending. Sessions with the young people involved discussions on taking responsibility for actions and reflecting on behaviour which led to damaging situations.

5.6 Difficulties encountered during the project

The project's start was delayed while interagency links were established. Other difficulties included the effects of local authority reorganisation, inter-departmental quarrels over who should pay the young people's transport costs (Cue Ten or the Education department) and what should happen to young people who should have been attending school. Additionally the project never had access to the information from police they hoped for.

The formal curriculum proved too demanding for many young people and some did not wish or could not cope with the second block in which they were expected to undertake work experience.

Some young people had 'social' problems or were difficult to manage or motivate. These were problems staff had not previously encountered and led to 26 young people failing to finish the programme because of circumstances in other aspects of their lives and a further 20 being excluded on account of their behaviour.

Staff spent so much time on management and attendance issues that they had little time for the more developmental aspects of the project. Links with employers did not develop as extensively as envisaged and the mentoring scheme for the support of young people after they left the project did not materialise.

5.7 Effectiveness of the project in addressing offending

The researcher compared SCRO information on the young people who had completed the programme with those who did not complete the programme or who had not taken part.

Comparison of records indicated that those who completed the programme (who tended to have the fewest charges) offended less seriously and less frequently but the researchers did not consider the results statistically significant. They estimated the number of crimes prevented at 44.

The project appeared to be particularly unsuccessful with young people accommodated by the local authority (some had absconded or had been moved to a new placement).

5.8 Costs

The project cost £588,162 over three years (£196,054 per annum). The average cost per individual was £6,129. On the basis of the number of crimes prevented it was calculated that CueTen had saved the criminal justice system £30,800 in costs, about £100,000 through the reduction in the number of custodial sentences and about £98,300 as a result of diversion from residential care.

It may have saved about £400,000 by preventing four criminal careers. If the notional marginal costs of crimes by young people were added, the short term savings were calculated at £319,000. This was £251,000 below the total cost of the project and considered to be more cost effective than the mix of supervision, groupwork, residential care and custody received by the comparison group.

5.9 Main conclusions

- The project's slow start was due to the fact that it was not appropriately integrated within existing agency structures.
- It is essential that attendance is voluntary and young people are well motivated to attend.
- The rational cognitive approach of CueTen is likely to be effective with young people with reasonably developed social skills and coping capacities, who are not overburdened by domestic stresses, or deeply enmeshed in subcultures of petty crime or substance abuse.
- The programme makes more sense if conceived as a bridge between school and employment or further education but not a return to school. The project might therefore be more appropriate in preparing young people for discharge from a YOI or long-term residential care. It might also provide support for young people with a history of persistent offending as juveniles who had reached the stage when they would not be expected to return to school.
- There were important differences in the offending patterns of young people who completed the programmes, but little doubt that Cue Ten helped some of them to modify their behaviour. It contributed to a reduction in the frequency and seriousness of their offending. However, it could not be stated that CueTen had a lasting effect upon offending.

6 The Partnership Community Justice and Employment Project

The Partnership Project (Barry et al 2002) is a joint initiative involving NCH, APEX and Glasgow City Council Social Work Department.

6.1 Aims and objectives

- To stop the young people offending.

- To increase employability.
- To address alcohol or drug misuse.

6.2 Referral criteria

The project targets:

- 15-18 year olds from the Children's Hearing System (the CHS group) whose offending is serious; who are likely to progress quickly to residential/secure measures of care or the criminal justice system; and who are at risk of further offending.
- 16-21 year olds from the Criminal Justice System (the CJS group) whose offending is serious and/or repeated; who are at high risk of receiving a custodial sentence; and who have already been sentenced to other existing community-based disposals. Attendance at the project is an additional requirement of a probation order.

The project insisted on adherence to its target group, high tariff, serious and persistent offenders in both the CHS and CJS components. The target is 80 participants per annum (40 from each system). There are three broad programmes, one for each of the CHS and CJS groups, and a newer programme the Car Crimes Project, a project for 14-25 year olds (not included within the project evaluation).

6.3 Formal arrangements for involving the young person

During the course of the programme supervising social workers retain responsibility for contact with the young person, although within the CHS element of the programme, no statutory order is required. On average, participants attend groups two days every fortnight, are involved in leisure pursuits and one-to-one work.

Each programme comprises a discrete set of modules adapted to the age of the client and has its own specialist workers. NCH staff provide modules on offending behaviour and associated issues to groups and individuals and APEX the social inclusion and employability element of the programmes including the core and basic skills identified by Scottish Enterprise.

The anticipated duration of a programme is from 6-9 months although this fluctuates according to the needs and circumstances of each young person. The project has the capacity and resources to offer follow-up work to young people who have been on the programme and has an 'open door' policy.

6.4 Modifications over time

Nothing major referred to in report.

6.5 How offending behaviour was addressed

There is a choice of eight NCH modules adapted accordingly. The modules which address offending behaviour include: general offending, attitude to authority, keeping your head, violence and society, drugs and offending, alcohol and offending, men/women and their relationships, and the consequences of offending.

6.6 Difficulties encountered during the project

Social workers, sheriffs and panel members were uncertain of the criteria for referral to the project. Some CHS young people did not complete their programme because their supervision requirement was terminated, they did not co-operate or had personal problems. A substantial number of CJS young people had been breached as a result of a new offences or non compliance. There was evidence that a conviction for an old offence and subsequent custody prevented at least one young person from continuing with the programme.

6.7 Effectiveness of the project in addressing offending behaviour

The range of methods for the evaluation of the project (then operational for two years) included questionnaires, interviews with stakeholders and an analysis of reconviction among young people referred

to the project, together with information from the project data base and staff time diaries. Participants, social workers and project workers considered the objectives had been partly or fully achieved on completion of the programme. Young people spoke highly of their relationships with project workers, seeing the staff as fair minded, open and friendly. Being able to talk about their problems and being helped to reduce offending were factors rated highly.

The researchers were unable to complete a full data check on conviction records because of difficulties obtaining unique reference numbers and associated problems (delays attributed to the processing of convictions and 'pseudo convictions'). A comparison of the data on convictions of those who completed the programme, those who did not and those who received an alternative sentence showed that the proportion of young people who were re-convicted did not differ across the three groups. However, young people who completed the programme were less likely subsequently to have been imprisoned than those in the other two groups.

6.8 Costs

The cost per CJS participant attending the project was £7,051 which took account of reduced social work supervision costs. It was assumed that costs for the younger age group would have been similar and that the costs of custody, secure accommodation and alternative intensive community-based disposals would be higher.

6.9 Main conclusions

- Given that referrals to the project fluctuated between area teams and were lower than the targets set at the outset, ways of ensuring a more consistent flow of referrals should be considered.
- There is a need to publicise the project in a more sustained way and also to consider the possibility of screening cases remitted by sheriffs back to the reporters for advice hearings.
- The majority of referrals were accurately targeted having above-average numbers of previous convictions and being at a high risk of entering secure accommodation or custody.
- The project should consider targeting young women more rigorously although this would mean widening the age range.
- More effort is needed to ensure that the employment element of the project with its associated implications for the social inclusion and overall wellbeing of young people is given equal emphasis to the direct focus on offending behaviour. However, greater clarity would be required regarding what could feasibly be achieved in respect of employment as opposed to employability. Local economic conditions and the youth labour market would need to be recognised.
- The project engaged the young people, impacted positively upon their offending and their wider circumstances, at least in the short term.
- The centralised location of the project made it difficult to use volunteers as mentors, to involve the families in the rehabilitation process and work in partnership with local communities and services.

7 Fostering and Secure Care: an evaluation of the community alternative placement scheme (CAPS)

CAPS is an innovative community placement scheme set up by NCH (Walker et al., 2002). It places young people in foster care who would otherwise be in secure care and pays foster carers, who have undergone a period of training, the equivalent of a full-time salary, while also according them the status of fellow professionals. Carers are paid a salary from the time they are accepted on the scheme.

7.1 Aims and objectives

- To prevent young people close to being accommodated in secure accommodation from being admitted.

7.2 Referral criteria

A senior CAPS social worker employed by NCH accepts enquiries from local authority social work staff concerning young people aged 9-17 years who are thought to be close to going into secure care.

7.3 Formal arrangements for involving the young person

Young people are placed with foster parents within three months of referral in the expectation that placements will last for around six months.

7.4 Modifications over time

The demand for emergency placements led to the introduction of a new service.

7.5 How offending behaviour was addressed

Addressing offending was not an objective of the project per se. Although around a third of the young people had been involved in offending and over half of them used drugs or alcohol, carers did not regard these as specific issues to be tackled in the placement. They placed more emphasis on their capacity to deal with emotional issues and tried to influence the young people by talking to them about their behaviour and its consequence, by setting firm boundaries, providing a good example and by involving them in leisure activities and keeping them occupied. Additionally, carers considered they presented opportunities for the young people to learn about families, to become aware of the importance of having consideration for others, and of using humour to resolve tensions.

7.6 Difficulties encountered during the project

The original plan of a partnership with two local authority social work departments did not materialise as one authority backed out over a dispute as to payment for education outwith the authority. The project therefore expanded to working with around 12 authorities which meant that children were placed with carers and in schools in authorities other than their own.

Many problems followed on from this, all of which required time to negotiate a solution. Some head teachers were reluctant to accept 'difficult' children without assessment (a problem resolved by the placing authority paying for a psychologist's assessment). Young people receiving specialist education made expensive taxi journeys in order to continue their schooling without interruption and where this proved impossible went without. This created difficulties for foster carers because the young person was at home all day and the carer was denied the opportunity to build upon the young person's experience of school.

Foster parent vacancies did not arise as frequently as expected due to the fact that many young people required a longer placement than had been envisaged and others could not move on because of the shortage of supported accommodation.

The relatively high payments to the foster parents meant some social workers expected them to carry on even when they found things very difficult. Some carers had serious concerns for the safety of the young people and others found they were the object of allegations of abuse. A view emerged that some young people needed secure accommodation.

7.7 Effectiveness of the project

The evaluation concerned 48 children (14 girls and 34 boys) and was undertaken by comparing the CAPS group with a sample of young people in secure accommodation.

The majority of the CAPS group entered foster care from residential schools rather than children's homes and there were many concerns about their safety with approximately half of them having been involved in serious or persistent offending. The entire secure accommodation sample had been involved in offending.

A quarter of the CAPS group was thought to have benefited fully from their placement and none was thought to have gained little or no benefit. In terms of age, sex, or previous care history no particular categories of young person benefited more than others.

The position regarding re-offending by CAPS young people was somewhat complicated and not considered to be too informative as the researchers found it impossible to obtain complete information on the sample.

7.8 Costs

The standard cost of a CAPS placement was £850.00 per week (the carer's fee, respite, management costs and maintenance). In addition, there was a linking fee of £750.00 and three one-off charges per year, (£400 for birthday, Christmas and expenses associated with summer). Other costs were dependent upon whether the young person was in specialist education and the distance between the placement, eg, the weekly cost for one boy was £430 for the school place and £200 for taxis.

7.9 Main conclusions

Although there were persistent offenders within the CAPS group, this behaviour was not a major concern for carers who set out to address the needs of emotionally damaged rather than delinquent young people, thus conclusions are couched in these terms.

- Positive outcomes were associated with the young person's initial commitment to CAPS and the degree of family closeness which fitted their orientation to family life, carers respect for the young person's views, not treating their role as work and applying rules in an adaptable manner.
- Foster care was least effective where the young person did not want to be placed with a family and while there were difficulties when placements were far from home these worked well for some young people so this option should be retained.
- Foster care could be offered as part of an integrated service through a combination of a CAPS type scheme and secure care. Future projects should consider which sections of the secure care population are suitable, at what stage and the type of family placement they would require.
- Young people from both samples found it very difficult to move into further education, training or work. Those who could rely on CAPS carers for support fared best.

8 The Offence Resolution Programme (ORP)

The project, initially funded by Scottish Borders Social Work Department and Lothian and Borders Police (Scottish Borders Council & Lothian & Borders Police, undated) was subsequently funded by the Borders Youth Offending Team. Based in Hawick, the project takes referrals from anywhere in the authority.

8.1 Aims and objectives

- To reduce the likelihood of re-offending by those aged 11-16 who have committed an offence.
- To support a resolution between the parties involved in an offence.
- To offer support to those affected by offending behaviour.
- To prevent young people entering the Criminal Justice System.
- To enable young people to develop the cognitive reasoning skills to avoid future offending.
- To provide a primary preventive service in partnership between Social Work and the Police.

8.2 Referral criteria

The police juvenile liaison officer and the social worker make a recommendation to the Reporter where the young person is of the appropriate age and:

- Has been involved in a maximum of three sets of offending behaviour (excluding sexual offences).
- Is willing to work with the programme.

Those referred can choose to participate or not. If they choose not to get involved, this is recorded and no further action is taken.

8.3 Formal arrangements for involving the young person

The worker meets the young person to establish whether they are willing to resolve their offence and

victims are contacted for their views. Dependent upon the outcome of these two meetings a plan is devised with the main objective that the young people gain an understanding of the consequences of their action.

8.4 Modifications over time

The problems of a 'singleton worker' noted at 8.6 led to the introduction of sessional staff and consideration of the secondment of a full-time police officer. The opportunity to monitor the effectiveness of the project was recognised and a protocol established with the Reporter which would ensure re-offending rates were monitored.

8.5 How offending behaviour was addressed

The young person spent three sessions with the worker and/or police on specially developed 'flexible' programmes. These included:

- Prevention of Vandalism Programme.
- Prevention of Shoplifting Programme.
- Fire education.
- Housebreaking.
- Wasting police time.
- Theft from motor vehicles.

8.6 Difficulties encountered during the project

It proved impossible for the worker to deal with referrals, deliver programmes and meet with victims, problems exacerbated by the rural nature of the authority. Additionally, he was responsible for maintaining statistics and client records yet had little clerical support. There were no funds to provide 'IT' programmes.

8.7 Effectiveness of the project in addressing offending behaviour

An evaluation (Scottish Borders Council & Lothian & Borders Police 2000) noted that 25 (31%) of the 80 closed cases had re-offended in contrast to nine (50%) of those who chose not to participate.

8.8 Costs

None provided.

8.9 Main Conclusions

- Reporters, Children's Panel members, police and social workers considered the Programme filled a gap but was under-resourced by having only one worker.

9 The Gap Project

The GAP project, the Inverclyde Children's Hearing Project, is managed and run by NCH. It aims to provide intensive structured community based programmes to 11-18 year olds who demonstrate a pattern of offending or whose offending is repeated or serious. It has not yet been evaluated by external researchers although there is ongoing internal evaluation.

10 CHOSI

CHOSI (Children's Hearing Over Sixteen) a Barnardo's project based in Motherwell, provides a service for the North Lanarkshire authority area who pay 70% of the costs. The project, which works with young people aged 15-17 years, has not yet been evaluated by external researchers although there has been an internal evaluation report.

11 New Directions

This is a Barnardos' project which works with young people aged 14-17 years who are persistent offenders or are at risk of secure accommodation or custody. It has not yet been evaluated by external researchers but has undertaken an internal evaluation.

12 Matrix

The Matrix Project (McIver & Barry, 2002) a three-year pilot project, funded from the Treasury's Invest to Save budget in partnership with the Scottish Executive, is a Barnardos led project.

12.1 Aims and objectives

- To reduce the risk of offending amongst vulnerable young people.
- To provide intensive support to families and children.

12.2 Referral criteria

Cases involving 8-11 year olds with a history of referrals on care and protection grounds together with more recent referrals on offence grounds can be referred to Matrix from a variety of sources but must be channelled through the referral group in each participating authority. Decisions are based on information provided by the referrer (including an assessment of risk and protective factors undertaken by a social worker and the child's school).

Matrix provides services to families of children in three categories:

- Those with a history of referrals to the reporter on care and protection grounds and two or more referrals on offence grounds (Level 3).
- Those with a history of care and protection referrals who are referred on offence grounds for the first time (Level 2).
- Children who have not been referred to the Reporter on offence grounds but have a cluster of risk factors in their lives which place them at a risk of offending behaviour (Level 1).

12.3 Formal arrangements for involving the young person

Once a child is accepted by Matrix, a worker undertakes an assessment of the child and family lasting on average three months. This culminates in the development of a Family Agreement that identifies the difficulties and the goals and tasks to be undertaken. This work is reviewed every two months.

12.4 Modifications over time

The initial intention was to work with families for a period of around three or four months. In practice, however, the mean length of involvement with a family was 12 months with a range of between five and 20 months. The extended involvement appeared to be a result of other problems coming to light.

12.5 How offending behaviour was addressed

Offending was not usually addressed directly but rather through the development of other insights and skills. The work was undertaken in various locations on an individual and group basis. The range of methods included counselling, cognitive behavioural methods, advocacy, solution focused work, problem solving and task centred casework. Families were encouraged to use health, mental health, alcohol and advice services.

12.6 Difficulties encountered during the project

There was confusion over referral procedures, objectives and the criteria for inclusion in the project. It took longer than expected to work with the families to a satisfactory conclusion.

12.7 Effectiveness of project in addressing offending behaviour

The researchers concluded that Matrix had impacted positively upon offending and anti-social behaviour, attainment and behaviour at school and physical health. It had improved parental management and enhanced protective factors such as a positive home environment, good home-school links and positive peer influences. The project had less impact on attitudes linked to promoting an environment that responds positively to a child which suggested that the more fundamental attitudes and behaviour of parents was the most difficult to change. Moreover, risk factors such as, parental substance misuse became more prevalent

or were regarded as 'historical' or 'fixed' and beyond the scope of the project. The general view among Matrix staff and other professionals was there had been a reduction in the children's offending behaviour.

12.8 Costs

The average direct cost per family was £14,395 and the researchers concluded the cost effectiveness of the project was difficult to determine.

12.9 Main conclusions

The researchers advocated caution in interpreting their conclusions due to the fact that the sample size was small and the timescale for the evaluation brief.

- Professionals consider Matrix to be a valuable resource in work with vulnerable children and the holistic approach a major strength.
- The perceived benefits included increased confidence and improved behaviour among children and increased confidence and improved management skills in parents.
- There was evidence of a decrease in the incidence of risk factors and an increase in protective factors at the end of a family's involvement. Some children had either stopped or begun offending less. It was unclear whether these benefits could be sustained without longer-term support.

13 CHIP

The Court and Hearings Interface Project (CHIP) an NCH project originally in partnership with the Social Work Departments in the City of Edinburgh and Midlothian Councils (the latter are no longer involved) commenced in 1996 and is based in Edinburgh. The project works with 15-18 year olds whose offending is repeated or serious in nature. It has not yet been evaluated by external researchers.

14 Intensive probation

The Intensive Probation Project (IPU) (Jamieson, undated), an NCH project in partnership with Strathclyde Regional Council Social Work Department, was established in 1994 in Inverclyde. It received 100% funding from the Scottish Office. Staff consisted of a full-time manager, a full-time worker and a part-time administrative assistant.

14.1 Aims and objectives

The aim was to work in partnership with voluntary agencies, social workers, sessional workers and volunteers to provide a credible community based disposal for young offenders aged between 16-21 years.

14.2 Referral criteria

Offenders were referred to the project by social workers and the courts prior to sentencing at the point when an SER was requested. Young people at liberty were invited to attend for assessment and those in custody were visited by staff.

In a 16-month period, of 145 offenders referred to IPU 63% were assessed as suitable and 28% as unsuitable. Just over two fifths (40) of those assessed as suitable were sentenced to a probation order with a condition to attend the IPU project. The average length of the IPU group probation order was 18 months.

The previous involvement with the criminal justice system of the 40 on IPU was compared with that of the other offenders who had been referred to IPU for assessment but had received a custodial sentence or other disposal.

This revealed that the IPU group had on average more court appearances and had committed a greater number of offences than those in the other two groups but offenders in the custody sample had on average served the greatest number of custodial sentences. The researcher concluded that on this basis IPU attracted referrals of suitably high tariff offenders and that those who received IPU orders were of a similar tariff to those sentenced to custody.

14.3 Formal arrangements for involving the young person

An IPU order involved a minimum contact of 60 hours and probationers undertook a number of modules based on self and project staff assessments of need and relevance. An average module took around 20 hours to complete and workers utilised a variety of techniques (brainstorming, role-play, video recording and replay) together with presentations from staff and outside agencies. Their practice was informed by the What Works principles. An alternative women's modular group-work programme ran in parallel to the sessions for male probationers.

14.4 Modifications over time

None mentioned.

14.5 How offending behaviour was addressed

Offending was addressed within a range of modular group work. This included violence and assertiveness; drugs, alcohol and offending; men and women and their relationships; employment awareness and community and offending.

14.6 Difficulties encountered during the project

None mentioned.

14.7 Effectiveness of the project in respect of offending behaviour

In total, 46% of the IPU group successfully completed and 46% probationers were breached. The sample for the evaluation included all referrals to the IPU who consented to participate in the study during the 16-month period in 1995-1996. Information for the evaluation came from a variety of sources including case files, module evaluation questionnaires (developed to provide feedback to staff), interviews with probationers some 12-24 months after being breached or completing the project, and questionnaires completed by project staff and supervising social workers.

Two other measures provided information on the individual's inclination to commit an offence (pre and post intervention) the Crime-PicsII and a check of the data provided by the Scottish Criminal Records Office (SCRO).

The reconviction rates of all those referred to IPU were compared at 18 months following completion of IPU/release from custody. This showed that the rate for those who had completed an IPU was 20% lower than that for those released from custody.

The modular evaluations and post completion interviews demonstrated that probationers credited IPU with helping them stop offending, increase their understanding of offending and awareness of consequences, address issues which were causal in their offending and acquaint them with strategies which they could use to avoid further offending. Interviews with probationers also revealed they viewed and used IPU as a forum to access help and advice.

14.8 Costs

None mentioned.

14.9 Main conclusions

- The project reached its target group.
- It demonstrated a considerable degree of success in motivating high tariff offenders to attend and complete a programme designed to challenge and confront attitudes and behaviour.
- It was successful in reducing offending.
- While intensive probation should be premised on addressing offending, this should not be to the exclusion of the myriad of expressed needs and problems experienced by probationers.
- Intensive probation should form part of a wider and more coherent strategy to address factors identified as causal in offending behaviour.

15 Includem East

Includem East offers intensive support and supervision on a 24 hours, seven days a week basis to 'the most chaotic and vulnerable' young people who are in trouble with the law. Includem aims to reduce offending behaviour and increase the extent of social inclusion of each young person with whom they work. It has not yet been evaluated by external researchers.

16 Home Supervision

The Home Supervision Project (Murray et al 2002) examined social work case records and obtained data from Reporters, panel members, teachers, social workers, and families in order to identify the outcome of supervision requirements imposed by the Hearings. The specific objectives of the research were to:

- Describe the organisational arrangements for developing and delivering home supervision services.
- Identify the characteristics and circumstances of children who were subject to a compulsory measure of home supervision, and assess how these related to the supervision provided and required.
- Describe the nature and experience of home supervision.
- Identify the outcome and impact of home supervision on the child.

Among the main findings was the fact that the majority of the sample had had prior social work involvement with many families having faced major problems (financial and housing, physical and mental health and domestic violence). Social workers worked in partnership with other agencies on behalf of the children/families and services other than direct social work input were provided. The outcome of home supervision was broadly positive, particularly for children referred on care and protection grounds but less so in cases involving non-attendance at school without reasonable cause.

Although a majority of social workers and panel members considered social work contact was at a sufficient level, around a third of panel members and some families complained of insufficient contact. There were also a number of cases which were identified as having no attached social worker for a period of several months. Moreover, some key statutory requirements, care plans, the timing of the first visit to the family and the holding of internal social work case reviews were not implemented in the course of home supervision. More social work time was the resource most associated with even better results.

17 Secure accommodation

The review of secure care, based upon the records of 74 young people (SWI for Scotland, 1996) found that most of them had a history of problems, disturbed behaviour and offending. The most commonly identified problem was running away allied to difficulties with family relationships followed by offending for boys, while for girls it was substance abuse. Assessment reports stated the young people's general needs together with details of their offending and the action taken but although care plans were clear about how to meet general needs, they were less clear about how to deal with the behaviour and difficulties which led to the young people being placed in secure care.

The review concluded that the outcome of assessment should be a programme which aimed to change the behaviour which led to the placement in secure care and recommended improvements in the process with attention to aftercare arrangements which were poor or non-existent.

Currently secure accommodation costs are approximately £2,500 per week.

18 Airborne Initiative (Scotland)

The Airborne Initiative, located in South Lanarkshire, takes trainees from Scotlandwide. It was established in 1994 as an alternative to custody for male offenders aged 18-25 years. The evaluation of the programme (McIver et al 2000) focused upon the operation of the project since 1996.

18.1 Aims and objectives

- To enhance offenders' employment prospects.
- To reduce their risk of further offending behaviour.

18.2 Referral criteria

Referral to the project can be initiated by the social worker or by the court at the point at which an SER is requested. Offenders must be males aged 18-25 years who are facing a custodial sentence and who are reasonably well motivated and able to sustain a nine week residential course. The young people must be medically, dentally and mentally fit and not actively dependent upon drugs or alcohol. Offenders who participate in the programme are required to have been registered unemployed and in receipt of state benefits for six months in order to qualify for Training for Work status.

18.3 Formal arrangements for involving the young person

The Airborne manager makes an assessment of the young person based upon information from social workers supplemented by telephone contact with other agencies where necessary. Prior to participating in the initiative, the offender, the supervising social worker and Airborne staff sign a contract which commits all three to a partnership of shared action and responsibility.

The programmes are delivered to teams of 10-12 trainees which are guided by a team leader and four key workers. Each course has two teams running concurrently. Trainees reside at Airborne but have two four day leaves during which time they are expected to meet with the supervising social worker.

18.4 Modifications over time

Following a review (see below) there was a greater emphasis on life skills and employment skills and use of cognitive behavioural methods to address offending behaviour. Outdoor activities became a vehicle for the development and consolidation of skills promoted through other elements of the programme rather than a primary focus of the course and there were other programmatic and procedural changes. Supervising social workers began to play a greater role in supporting trainees on completion of their programme.

18.5 How offending behaviour was addressed

The overall approach is holistic and the nine week residential course consists of three distinct but inter-related elements, life skills, job search skills and outdoor activities. The life skills element focuses upon offending behaviour and uses a cognitive programme developed for Airborne by the Cognitive Centre in Wales. The programme encourages trainees to consider their actions and the outcomes these have had in the past and provides alternative processes through which problems can be addressed within the law. There are sessions on victim empathy, problem solving, consequential thinking and returning to the community.

18.6 Difficulties encountered during the project

A management review by Social Work Service Group of the Scottish Office in 1996 made over 70 recommendations for improvements following which the programme was re-launched.

18.7 Effectiveness of the project in addressing offending behaviour

Overall 58% of offenders who began the Airborne programme completed it successfully. Reconviction rates were markedly lower among completers than among non-completers and comparison group cases who received alternative low or high tariff disposals.

For instance, 64% of Airborne completers had been reconvicted within 12 months compared with 95% of non-completers and 77% of comparison group cases. Further analysis revealed that Airborne participants were slower to reconvict and had a significantly increased chance of remaining free of further convictions. Airborne's impact on employment prospects could not be accurately assessed because of the limited data available.

18.8 Costs

The cost of a successfully completed Airborne was estimated at £25,240 (the costs of 'failures' were spread across the successful trainees). This was higher than the average cost of an alternative sentence which was estimated to be £3,570.

18.9 Main conclusions

- The initiative provides a valuable addition to the range of non-custodial options but is costly. Costs would be lower if programme dropout, most likely to occur within two weeks of the start, was reduced. Costs could also be lowered if course time was reduced.
- The reason for the delay between an offender being assessed and starting a programme needs attention.
- Offenders with drug problems and those with previous experience of high tariff disposals were less likely to complete the programme.
- The system of recording information on referrals and programme outcomes should be improved. As increasing employability is an objective, information on this aspect should be obtained from the supervising social worker.
- The benefits of Airborne could be maximised in the longer term if supervising social workers took a more active role in supporting offenders who have completed their programme. Offenders should be helped to access employment and other opportunities in their local communities.

19 The Process and Outcomes of Probation Supervision

The research (McIvor & Barry 1998a) was one in a series of evaluations following the introduction of the 100 per cent funding and National Standards and was intended to establish the impact of government policies directed at reducing the use of custody for those most at risk of custody, especially young adult repeat offenders. The study examined the process and outcomes of probation supervision for 155 offenders by looking at arrangements in four areas, two urban and two rural.

19.1 Aims and objectives

The objectives of an individual's probation, contained within the Action Plans prepared by social workers, varied by area and according to the characteristics of the probationer (gender, age, type of offence). Those most frequently cited were, in descending order, offending behaviour, personal relationships, employment, accommodation and financial problems.

19.2 Referral criteria

Social workers made recommendations on the grounds that offenders were at the greatest risk of custody. Orders were mainly imposed by the sheriff court under summary proceedings.

19.3 Formal arrangements for involving the young person

Most services were delivered on a one to one basis by the supervising social worker with limited support from other agencies in respect of employment, alcohol, drugs and health issues.

19.4 Modifications over time

Nothing noted.

19.5 How offending behaviour was addressed

Offending behaviour was addressed in 73% of the Action Plans but most frequently in plans for those under 21 years of age (85%). Methods included offence focused programmes and other structured methods of intervention (such as anger management techniques) mainly on a one to one basis, for groupwork programmes were used to a more limited extent.

19.6 Difficulties encountered during the project

Nothing noted.

19.7 Effectiveness of the project in addressing offending

The evaluation was undertaken by looking at the cases of 155 offenders in the four areas. In some areas social workers were successfully directing services towards the main target group- young offenders at risk of

custody. Around three fifths of their objectives appeared to have been achieved in full or to a significant degree although this was true of only 14% of objectives identified in respect of probationers who were breached. Objectives related to offending behaviour appeared to have been achieved completely or to a significant extent in 56% of cases, those relating to employment or accommodation less so.

Young offenders were less likely than adults to be highly motivated to address their offending and other problems, less likely to have reduced their risk of re-offending and more likely to breach their probation orders as a result of re-offending or failure to comply.

Information on the longer term effectiveness of the project in reducing offending came from the third phase of the research series (McIvor & Barry, 2000). This was undertaken via a search of the SCRO records for further convictions in a 5 year period together with face to face interviews with probationers (38%).

Across the sample as a whole the rate and frequency of reconvictions was lower following the imposition of the probation order than before. Reconviction rates were higher among younger probationers (those under 21 when sentenced), among male probationers and those with higher numbers of previous convictions. The researchers suggested that probation supervision was more effective with probationers convicted of property offences such as housebreaking and thefts, which typically involve some degree of forethought or planning.

19.8 Costs

Nothing noted.

19.9 Main conclusions

- The researchers concluded that the findings from the earlier research presented a generally optimistic picture of probation supervision and that the National Standards and Objectives combined with the 100 per cent funding had provided optimum conditions for the development of effective probation practice.
- The social circumstances of probationers improved after they were placed on probation and reconviction rates were lower when the key objectives of probation supervision were achieved but the small sample size made it impossible to disentangle the contribution made by the different services to the pattern of outcomes.
- It was not possible to say whether the improvements in probationer's lives were influenced directly or indirectly by probation. Supervision was particularly effective with probationers whose orders carried additional requirements as this group were no more likely to be reconvicted than probationers on standard orders despite the former having characteristics which suggested their risk of re-offending was relatively high.

20 Community Based Throughcare

The research (McIvor & Barry 1998b), conducted in four authorities was another in the series of evaluations following the introduction of the 100 per cent funding and National Standards. It set out to establish progress towards the policy of reducing the risk of re-offending by providing community-based throughcare.

20.1 Aims and objectives

Each study area pursued a different objective. In one the focus was on employment and accommodation, in another on the re-settlement of offender in the community and in another on offending behaviour.

20.2 Referral criteria

The throughcare cases included ex-prisoners on parole, on statutory aftercare, voluntary aftercare and life licensees. Most of the sample was male over 20 years of age.

20.3 Formal arrangements for involving the young person

Most of the work was undertaken on a one to one basis by the supervising social worker with the exception of employment services and services for offenders with problems related to the use of alcohol or drugs.

20.4 Modifications over time

Nothing noted.

20.5 How offending behaviour was addressed

There were variations by area but overall offending behaviour was addressed in only 45% of the cases in most instances on a one-to-one basis by the social worker. There were no details of what this involved.

20.6 Difficulties encountered during the project

Nothing noted.

20.7 Effectiveness of the project in addressing offending behaviour

The study examined the outcome of community based throughcare services upon a sample of 60 ex-prisoners. Few of them received formal warnings while subject to supervision and only two were recalled to prison as a consequence of further offending. Eight were re-convicted of offences committed while in receipt of community based throughcare and one charged with an offence allegedly committed during this period. Young offenders were more likely than adults to be reconvicted and those who were reconvicted had more serious offending histories. There was evidence of improvements in social circumstances following the period of community based throughcare.

Information on the longer term effects of throughcare came from the later phase of the research series. This was undertaken via a search of the SCRO records for further convictions in a five-year period together with face-to-face interviews with just under half the ex-prisoners. This showed that reconviction rates were higher among younger ex-prisoners and among those with a prior criminal history.

20.8 Costs

None provided.

20.9 Main conclusions

- Effective pockets of throughcare practice existed, but greater clarity regarding the objectives of the practice, improvements in resources and a more consistent emphasis upon the practical needs of prisoners on release is required.
- The focus of throughcare should be on the practical re-settlement of the prisoner.
- Participants did not regard the experience of throughcare as having a main influence on the decisions not to re-offend.

21 National Evaluation of the Operation and Impact of Supervised Attendance Orders

Supervised Attendance Orders (SAO's) are a community based alternative to imprisonment for fine default. The researchers (Levy & McIvor 2001) reviewed their introduction by administering questionnaires to 30 local authorities.

21.1 Aims and objectives

- To provide an option to custodial sentences for fine default.

21.2 Referral criteria

The majority of SAOs were imposed upon men aged 18 years and over. The proportion imposed on women and on 16 and 17 year olds varied across authorities.

21.3 Formal arrangements for involving the young person

SAOs are imposed in multiples of 10 hours and the majority of orders were on 18 year old males for 40 hours' duration. Most schemes involved the offender in unpaid work but some offered core modules which were education focused, backed up by a range of different options according to needs/interests. Some schemes were delivered in-house; others were delivered in partnership with agencies.

Angus provided one of two schemes (the other was Borders) which focused specifically on young offenders. APEX provided the core programme with courses (computing, art, painting and decorating and mechanics) supplied by the local college. Added to this was PALS which helped young people to compile CVs and engaged them in outdoor activities aimed at building self esteem, Angus Training Services which provided technical training as part of New Deal, Next Steps which offered employment preparation and Six Circle computer skills. Unpaid work was discouraged in this scheme on the grounds that it was less capable of promoting personal development.

21.4 Modifications over time

Restrictions on local authority budgets led to some schemes being delivered primarily 'in-house'.

21.5 How offending behaviour was addressed

The SAO is not a disposal that is explicitly aimed at reducing offending and programmes were more concerned with social inclusion than addressing offending.

21.6 Difficulties encountered during the project

Half the SAOs resulted in an offender being issued with a formal warning for non attendance and 31% of orders were returned to court under breach proceedings. Breach applications prompted by non attendance, were most common among 16 and 17 year olds.

Group activities were more difficult to organise in rural areas and the range of activities was sometimes constrained because poor public transport made it difficult for offenders to take part. Arrangements were also more difficult if the offender was in employment.

The high breach rate by young offenders age 16 and 17 years on Section 237 orders placed them at risk of a custodial sentence. One justice resolved this problem by making greater use of deferred sentences and another by allowing orders to be breached on three occasions before imposing a custodial sentence. Respondents thought having more options in the event of a breach would promote the use of the SAO.

21.7 Effectiveness of the project

The researchers examined SCRO data on 186 SAO attendees for the six months from the date of imposition of the SAO. In most cases 12 month reconviction data were available. Comparisons with a sample of offenders who had not been given an SAO were not possible but it appeared that lower proportions of the SAO offenders were convicted after getting an SAO than previously

55% of the sample had been reconvicted within six months and 69% within 12 months. Reconviction rates were lower among offenders who completed their SAO. It was suggested that the high rate of reconvictions might be attributed to the 'pseudo-convictions'.

Staff and sentencers thought SAO's were particularly suitable for young offenders, women, single parents and offenders who were unemployed.

Some offenders with serious drug or alcohol problems and young offenders were said by staff to have difficulty completing an SAO.

The impact of SAO's on the use of imprisonment for fine default was difficult to establish but analysis suggested it had had a positive impact.

Offenders reported having gained skills, confidence and increased insight through completing an SAO and some had gone on to undertake further training after their order had finished.

21.8 Costs

The mean direct costs of an SAO was £414 and the total mean cost per order was £733 when additional costs associated with breaches and reviews were taken into account. SAO costs appeared to be higher in rural areas and in schemes which made use of other service providers. However, the mean SAO cost was lower than the average custodial sentence for fine default (£837).

21.9 Main conclusions

- Sheriffs considered Supervised Attendance Orders were a success though concerns remained about the limited options for dealing with breaches.
- Schemes which offer constructive experiences are of benefit to offenders; they may be effective in the longer term through helping them to access training or employment and by reducing the likelihood of re-offending.
- Young offenders (under 21 but especially 16 and 17 year olds) had difficulties with compliance because they tended not to appreciate the consequences of non-compliance or take warnings seriously.
- There is evidence that the breach most often occurred at the stage of the initial interview.

22 Prison regimes for young offenders

Prisons in Scotland (HMI Prisons 1995, 1998, 1999, 2001) offer prisoners the opportunities to gain educational qualifications and provide programmes aimed at reducing offending behaviour such as anger management and violence, sex offending and substance abuse. Cornton Vale offers programmes designed or adapted specifically for the female prison population.

Rannoch Hall in Polmont Young Offenders' Institution (YOI) is a self-contained education unit catering for 26 young offenders under 18 years of age who are serving their first custodial sentence of between six months and four years.

The facility is designated a drug free area and each YO signs a compact to this effect. The conditions under which the regime operates are described in the HMI report as 'ideal and opportune'.

The work undertaken by the Hall has not yet been evaluated by external researchers but is considered a model for prison education and reform which might be extended on the lines described below:

- A core programme which would offer literacy, numeracy and IT skills together with personal and social education (social skills, drugs/alcohol education, anti-bullying, careers guidance and special needs).
- An options programme which would reflect personal interests and talents.
- A programme which addressed offending behaviour in line with government priorities. It was suggested that this element might be eligible for funding from the Princes Trust.

23 Key messages from the body of research about the effectiveness of addressing offending behaviour

Some of the projects reviewed above did not aim to reduce offending behaviour but still provide important messages. Some messages are relevant to particular age groups and/or particular crimes while others apply to any specialist project seeking to become established. Since the population of those involved in projects was predominantly male there are few key messages in respect of females.

23.1 Market research should be carried out beforehand

The level of demand should be established before setting up what are very specialist and fairly expensive services. This ensures project staff are fully engaged from the start and avoids the need to widen the referral criteria.

23.2 Projects should be embedded within the context of the local authority's services

Projects must be embedded within an authority's strategy from the outset through discussions with key players. This ensures needs (the market) are identified, commitment and co-operation are assured and the need for protocols considered.

23.3 Identify additional costs and formalise arrangements at the start

Embedding a project means additional costs such as co-working, schooling, and travel can be appreciated and formal agreements reached on how these will be met.

23.4 Projects should be marketed

It is essential to market the service and Advisory Group members are well placed to give a project 'the stamp of approval' and disseminate details of the aims and objectives. They have the necessary status, authority and knowledge, but marketing must be undertaken continuously as personnel change frequently.

Marketing may be more essential where the work is controversial such as with young people involved in sexual abuse or restorative justice. In such instances it may necessary to spend time creating knowledge and awareness of the issues.

23.5 Evaluation must be built in from the beginning

The only way to establish the effectiveness of a project is to put in place objectives which can be measured. Workers should record details of the characteristics of all those who are referred as well as those with whom they work and establish a check list of the indicators which will inform them of progress towards the realisation of their goals. It is essential that projects have the necessary resources, access to a data base and clerical support, to carry out these tasks. Moreover, in view of the need to establish the long term efficacy of a project, arrangements should be made to obtain follow up data. The important thing is to identify measurable objectives at the start, obtain baseline measurements and keep reliable records throughout.

If a reduction in offending behaviour is an objective, it is essential to reach agreement with the police and the Children's Reporter as to the nature of the data to be collected and the means by which it will be accessed. Thought should be given on how to resolve the problem of pseudo-convictions.

Other so called 'soft indicators' improvements in family relationships, physical and psychological health can be used to measure improvements. There is also a range of assessment tools which can be used to measure changes in an individual's personal development and social competence.

Projects are unlikely to be effective if the young person fails to complete the course so it is important to identify the causes of failure to attend. Were the project objectives relevant to the young person? Have the young people the cognitive ability/maturity to deal with the issues? Is the pace of the project one which fits with the young person? Projects which offered a range of modules had the possibility of a more flexible response, one which was adapted to the needs of the young person unlike those with a fixed 'agenda'. However, individualised programmes/time scales come at a price and incur greater costs. Failure to attend was more common in the first few weeks of starting, which suggests that it may be necessary to make adjustments to the induction period. It was also more common among the youngest age groups.

How do staff welcome the young people? This review has highlighted the importance of how young people valued project workers and carers who appreciated them and were not censorial; instructors who were non judgemental, facilitative and provided appropriate guidance; and felt let down if left to get on with a task without assistance or proper instruction.

23.6 There should be opportunities for progress to be maintained

Many evaluations provided proof of the efficacy of a project in reducing offending behaviour in the short term and some suggested that where support was provided at the close of a project, the outcome could be sustained. For the older offender this took the form of assistance with employment and housing needs and for young and old alike, but most especially the former support to maintain or re-establish family ties, something which research (Ditchfield 1994) indicates may help prevent recidivism.

Some projects realised the need for aftercare services but had insufficient resources to meet this need and so provided an informal service. In one instance, where a project had the additional objective of developing aftercare through mentoring, the objective was perhaps over ambitious given the resources needed to recruit, select and train volunteers, let alone manage the service. Recognition at the start of the need for a ladder of care through agreements with other service providers might resolve this problem.

23.7 Workers need a range of knowledge and skills to work with offenders

A main message was that those working with offenders need a range of knowledge and skills. Those working with the very youngest offenders needed to be willing and capable of combining aspects of good

practice from social work with children and families and criminal justice, to be open to influences from other disciplines and committed to the use of methods and styles of work in line with the evidence on effectiveness programmes for offenders. It was noticeable that few if any of the reports addressed the issue of staff training. How do practitioners gain skills in these areas? When the work was with older offenders there were authorities who bought in specialist services and others who expected supervising social workers to deliver the bulk of the service. It appeared that departmental budgets played a major role in these decisions. It is, therefore, important that workers have the opportunity to top up their skills where necessary or that projects have the funds to buy in specialists where these are required.

23.8 Projects should take a social inclusion approach

The preceding messages confirm that constructive changes in an offender's cognitive processes or social skills are insufficient to produce change. People change when they have a greater stake in society such as somewhere to live, improved relationships with family members and employment. It is, therefore, essential that projects/workers recognise the need to work in partnership with the range of agencies to address the issues of most concern to the offender for the system will only become effective when it 'sings the same tune.' Douglas' story (Buist & Harland 1998) shows what happens when the system fails.

Douglas, a persistent offender and a pupil at a residential school, had just reached his 16th birthday when he attended his review hearing. His school days came to an early conclusion that afternoon when the Panel unexpectedly terminated his supervision requirement.

His social worker accompanied him back to the school where he was given no opportunity to say goodbye to peers or staff or regain his possessions. (His social worker later returned some but not all of them to him). Douglas had no money and nowhere to live, being unable to stay with either parent. The social worker immediately arranged for him to move in with his older brother and a visit to Careers Services led to him accessing Bridging Allowance of £30 per fortnight. Rows with his brother concerning his 'dig' money of £10 a week very quickly resulted in Douglas being thrown out of his brother's house. He then moved to another town to live in a council flat with friends of a similar age and shortly afterwards was awarded Severe Hardship Benefit.

Douglas' social worker arranged for him to attend Freagarrach and as a result of staff help, he started on a Skillseeker placement with the intention of working towards Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs). This meant he received a training allowance of £45 per week.

Douglas was keen to obtain a qualification. He had not planned on leaving school, but he did not think the allowance of £45 would be sufficient to meet his expenses as he was totally independent, receiving no help from either parent. With insufficient funds and no preparation for making the transition from school to independent living in the community, Douglas was the victim of a system which had not taken a social inclusion approach. It is not possible to know what the outcome was for Douglas but the message is clear – the system has to be seamless and realistic.

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