

## Speaking Out Briefing No. 12

### HM Government Youth Crime Action Plan

**The Home Office, Cabinet Office and Ministry of Justice have jointly published the *Youth Crime Action Plan* which sets out how government, working with communities, parents, schools and others, will tackle youth crime. This briefing sets out the main elements of the Action Plan and considers the implications for the children and young people's voluntary and community sector.**

**This briefing is part of the Speaking Out series.**

#### Speaking Out

Speaking Out is a partnership between the National Council of Voluntary Child Care Organisations (NCVCCO) and the National Council of Voluntary Youth Services (NCVYS), which seeks to build a voice for the children and young people's voluntary and community sector across government.

The project aims to develop closer links between a range of government departments (Home Office, Ministry of Justice, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Communities and Local Government, Cabinet Office and HM Treasury) and the voluntary and community sector in delivering cross departmental policies such as *Every Child Matters* and *The Children's Plan* and the direct implementation of initiatives which affect children and young people.

Speaking Out aims to support children, young people and family voluntary and community organisations to better understand the impact on their users of a wider range of government policies and provide routes to influence them.

The project is funded by the Office of the Third Sector in the Cabinet Office.

#### Who are these briefings for?

This series of briefings intends to provide members of both NCVYS and NCVCCO and other interested parties with background and analysis on specific policy items affecting the sector.

### Other activities

In addition to these briefings the Speaking Out project is developing work streams around the policy themes which include:

- organising a series of seminars and events;
- establishing communities of interest amongst members and other organisations on specific policy themes;
- making representations to government; and linking with wider NCVYS and NCVCCO campaigns.

To discuss this briefing or any other aspect of the Speaking Out project please contact Hannah Dobbin, NCVYS's Policy Officer on 020 7278 1041 or email [hannah@ncvys.org.uk](mailto:hannah@ncvys.org.uk), or Sophie Griffiths, NCVCCO's Policy and Information Officer on 020 7833 3319 or email [sophie@ncvcco.org](mailto:sophie@ncvcco.org).

# 1. Introduction

In July 2008, the Government launched the *Youth Crime Action Plan*<sup>1</sup> (YCAP) which aims to achieve a 'truly comprehensive integrated approach to youth crime'. The YCAP sets out a **'triple track' approach of enforcement and punishment** where behaviour is unacceptable, non-negotiable **support** and challenge where it is most needed, and better and earlier **prevention**. As well as immediate actions, the YCAP contains a set of questions proposing longer term approaches to youth crime which are being consulted on until 17 October 2008.

The YCAP encompasses a range of issues connected to youth crime including police powers, provision of youth centres, safeguarding and family intervention schemes. The document also commits to working in partnership with communities, health services and schools.

This is the Government's first joined-up strategy on youth crime, reflecting a higher profile and broader shift towards cross-government departmental working. Youth crime has moved up the Government's agenda, coinciding with the increasing public and media focus on young people, anti-social behaviour and crime. In February 2008, *Speaking Out* jointly held a roundtable discussion with representatives from member organisations, working specifically around youth justice and youth crime prevention, and officials from the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), Home Office and Cabinet Office working on the YCAP. The majority of the organisations who attended deliver direct support and development services for children and young people, either directly within the youth justice system or working with young people at risk of entering the justice system.

The meeting provided government officials with a children and young people's voluntary and community sector (CYPVCS) perspective on measures which will help prevent young people from entering the criminal justice system and delegates shared their experience of doing this at the frontline. Agencies shared experiences of using preventative approaches steering young people away from the justice system but quite often receiving no official recognition of this role. It will be important to ensure that the views of the CYPVCS are now reflected in the implementation of the plan. This briefing paper provides some policy context to the YCAP and summarises its content, highlighting particularly pertinent areas of interest for the CYPVCS.

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1 <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications/youthcrimeactionplan/>

## 2. Policy context

The YCAP supports the Government's cross-departmental approach to issues affecting young people and builds on previous government action plans and consultation documents that tackle cross-cutting issues around youth crime, for example the *Youth Taskforce Action Plan*<sup>2</sup> (DCSF, 2008), *Aiming high for young people: a ten year strategy for positive activities*<sup>3</sup> (DCSF, 2007) and *The Children's Plan*<sup>4</sup> (DCSF, 2007). These cover a range of issues, including resolving the root causes of bad behaviour, providing positive activities for young people, developing the children and young people's workforce and developing joined-up approaches to policymaking and decision-making for services for young people. Other government publications that link to issues around youth crime include the *Youth Alcohol Action Plan*<sup>5</sup> (DCSF, Home Office & Department of Health, 2008) and the ten year drug strategy<sup>6</sup> (HM Government, 2008)<sup>7</sup>.

The Government has published cross-departmental targets, public service agreements (PSAs), for the period April 2008 to April 2011. Several of these targets relate to tackling youth crime including PSA 13: Improve children and young people's safety, PSA 14: Increase the number of children and young people on the path to success and PSA 23: Make communities safer. Relevant central government departments will be assessed against these targets and they are also reflected in local government performance indicators. It is hoped these will refocus central and local targets aimed at reducing reoffending. Third sector support in meeting these targets should be recognised by local partnership arrangements.

The CYPVCS often promotes a holistic approach to dealing with children and young people which includes looking at the whole family. The YCAP seeks to promote joined-up working and an integrated approach to dealing with issues around youth crime, for example the document endorses a 'Think Family' approach which developed out of the government's families at risk review<sup>8</sup> (Cabinet Office, 2008). This identified that excellent children's and adult's services are not enough in isolation to meet the needs of families at risk joined-up services that look at the whole family, build on family strengths and are tailored to need, must be provided in order to break cycles such as offending and to transform life chances.

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2 DCSF (2008) Youth Taskforce Action Plan is available to download via: <http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=DCSF-00262-2008&>

3 DCSF (2007) Aiming high for young people: a ten year strategy for positive activities is available to download via: <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/youthmatters/aiminghigh/>

4 DCSF (2007) The Children's Plan is available to download via: <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications/childrensplan/>

5 DCSF, Home Office & Department of Health (2008) Youth Alcohol Action Plan is available to download via: <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications/youthalcohol/>

6 HM Government (2008) Drugs: Protecting Families and Communities is available to download via: <http://drugs.homeoffice.gov.uk/drug-strategy/overview/> Speaking Out's response to the Drugs Strategy consultation is available via the NCVYS and NCVCCO websites: <http://www.ncvys.org.uk> or <http://www.ncvcco.org>

7 A Speaking Out briefing paper on the drug strategy will be available in autumn 2008. For further information or to be sent a copy email [policy@ncvys.org.uk](mailto:policy@ncvys.org.uk) or [sophice@ncvcco.org](mailto:sophice@ncvcco.org)

8 Cabinet Office (2008) Think Family: Improving the life chances of families at risk is available to download via: [http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social\\_exclusion\\_task\\_force/families\\_at\\_risk.aspx](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social_exclusion_task_force/families_at_risk.aspx)

In the run up to the next general election youth crime is becoming a key political battleground. The Conservatives have set out a number of proposals including helping get young people out of gangs and into work and training<sup>9</sup> and expectations of setting a new deal with the voluntary sector which will include longer contracts and less bureaucracy<sup>10</sup>. The Conservatives would also like magistrates to have greater powers over sentencing and increase the use of judges disqualifying young offenders from holding or obtaining driving licences. Schools will be targeted as sites for early intervention work with young people and the Conservatives would like to see a cultural shift returning to traditional family values and creating a sense of hope and respect within society.

Youth crime also receives an increased focus through the Mayor of London and government's London Youth Offer<sup>11</sup>, which aim to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour in the long and short term through the Positive Activities for Young People programme. In addition the Mayor has supported his manifesto pledge to reduce crime in the capital by allocating funding of £700k to three anti-youth crime projects and raising the profile of issues around violent crime by offering awards to young people volunteering in projects for example through the *Orange RockCorps* initiative, which this summer will be awarding young volunteers tickets to an anti youth crime concert.

The Liberal Democrats have also launched their proposals for dealing with youth crime, set out in *A Life Away From Crime*<sup>12</sup>. This document highlights how the party would work to stop young people from committing crimes and how to stop those who have committed minor offences from committing more serious crimes. The main proposals of the document include:

- making young people pay back the damage caused to communities without involving the criminal justice system;
- the formation of a Youth Volunteer Force to engage young people in activities that benefit local people;
- running nationwide restorative justice programmes;
- creating a dedicated Police Community Support Officer youth officer in every area to work with teenagers most at risk of offending; and
- targeting guns and knives through intelligence-led stop and search, hot-spot policing and action in schools.

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9 Conservatives (2008) United Britain's divided cities is available to download via:  
[http://www.conservatives.com/tile.do?def=news.story.page&obj\\_id=145952](http://www.conservatives.com/tile.do?def=news.story.page&obj_id=145952)

10 David Cameron's speech on youth crime and measures to reduce it, given at Sudellside community centre in Darwen, Lancashire, is available to download via:  
[http://www.conservative-party.org.uk/tile.do?def=news.story.page&obj\\_id=138129&speeches=1](http://www.conservative-party.org.uk/tile.do?def=news.story.page&obj_id=138129&speeches=1)

11 Further information on the London Youth Offer is available via:  
<http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor/children/docs/youth-offer-2008.pdf>

12 <http://www.libdems.org.uk/media/documents/policies/A%20Life%20Away%20From%20Crime.pdf>

## 3. Youth Crime Action Plan summary

This section summarises the main points of the YCAP, highlighting areas that are particularly relevant to the CYPVCS.

### 3.1 Introduction

Key aims set out in the YCAP aim to:

- cut the number of young people entering the criminal justice system for the first time by preventing youth offending;
- reduce re-offending by young people;
- build public confidence, supporting victims and making children and young people safer; and
- ensure that young people in the youth justice system achieve the five Every Child Matters outcomes<sup>13</sup>.

This will be achieved by a ‘triple track’ approach of tough enforcement, non-negotiable support and challenge and prevention to tackle problems before they escalate. Actions within this approach will include:

- taking tough action to keep streets safe – dealing with gangs and young people out of control;
- expanding the provision of the most effective early and targeted preventative interventions;
- measures to enforce tough, visible, fair justice
- giving local people a say in community sentences;
- ensuring strong and effective custodial sentences for the most serious and prolific offenders;
- improving the education of young offenders;
- improving ongoing support for children following the end of their sentence; and
- clarifying and strengthening the collective responsibility of local authorities (LAs) and local partners, including Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) working together through children’s trusts to prevent youth crime and reduce re-offending.

The YCAP sets out both immediate actions and long-term solutions to dealing with youth crime. Government recognises the crucial role of local agencies in delivering the YCAP at a local level. Children’s Trusts, Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships and Local Strategic Partnerships are cited as ways of bringing agencies together to better achieve outcomes for local areas and to improve the public perception of youth crime through the following five key visible improvements:

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<sup>13</sup> <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/aims/>

- swifter action taken against young people involved in crime and disorder;
- problems tackled before they spiral out of control, including parents taking more responsibility for their children;
- better support for young victims;
- better sentences that people can see and have a greater say in, and that deal with the causes of offending; and
- effective punishment backed up by support for young offenders to ensure public protection and effective resettlement.

Each year around 100,000 young people, aged 10-17-years-old, enter the criminal justice system for the first time. Government aims to reduce this by one fifth by 2020. Government will also be introducing a new goal for reducing the number of young victims by 2020.

## 3.2 Dealing with unacceptable behaviour

Key actions that the Government proposes to take to deal with unacceptable behaviour are listed below and expanded on within the YCAP:

- ensure the police use all the powers they have to maximum effect, including powers to tackle underage drinking;
- engage young people involved in crime and anti-social behaviour with youth workers and ex-gang members, working in partnership with the police, to combat the negative influence of delinquent peer groups;
- use existing child protection legislation to ensure young people on the street at night are taken to a place of safety;
- link YOT workers with police stations;
- increase after-school patrols; and
- strengthen the identification and targeting of prolific young offenders.

Government plans for the future of policing will be set out in a separate green paper. It is expected that this will be published in autumn 2008.

As part of *The Children's Plan* the Government created a joint DCSF and Home Office Youth Taskforce<sup>14</sup> focussed on improving outcomes for some of the most disadvantaged young people. The YCAP indicates that the Youth Taskforce will work with around 70 local authorities to develop street-based outreach work to disaffected young people where, and when, it is most needed. Government recognises the importance of offering young people viable and attractive alternatives to anti-social and criminal behaviour and the need to break the cycle of negative influence to raise aspirations for future success.

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<sup>14</sup> Further information on the Youth Taskforce is available via:  
<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/youthmatters/ytff/>

Operation Staysafe<sup>15</sup> will be expanded with the Youth Taskforce working with local partners in priority areas to develop the programme and provide examples of good practice. Wider guidance will also be produced for Local Safeguarding Children Boards<sup>16</sup> (LSCBs) and other agencies on how the existing child protection system should be used to safeguard young people. Government will be consulting on this guidance later in 2008.

The YCAP envisages that for all practitioners working with young people, the implementation of actions within this chapter will mean:

- an expectation on police to use all the powers available to them
- practitioners will be expected to have a seamless approach to referring young people to the services they need from the point of arrest; and
- agencies involved with youth justice will be expected to work closer together, in particular the police and youth workers.

### 3.3 Intervening early

Key actions that the Government proposes to take to deal with early intervention, i.e. tackling personal and family problems before they may lead to young people offending, are listed below and expanded on within the YCAP:

- ensure universal services, such as Sure Start, are better targeted at families that need them most;
- significantly expand the reach of intensive family interventions, building on Family Intervention Projects<sup>17</sup>;
- make permanent exclusion from school an automatic trigger for a Common Assessment Framework<sup>18</sup>;
- improve support in schools through Safer Schools Partnerships<sup>19</sup>;
- increase the take up of parenting support, from the local YOT who may recommend a Parenting Order<sup>20</sup>, and explore better ways to engage parents in the youth justice system;
- invest in the capacity of the third sector to reduce youth crime; and
- expand the provision of Family Nurse Partnerships<sup>21</sup>.

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15 Operation Staysafe is a scheme piloted in Liverpool which tackles crime and anti-social behaviour in identified hotspots and protects children left to wander the streets at night without adult supervision. Police use existing child protection legislation to remove children and young people from the street late at night to a place of safety.

16 Further information on Local Safeguarding Children Boards is available via:  
<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/lscb/>

17 Family Intervention Projects are highlighted throughout the Youth Taskforce Action Plan, available to download via: [http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/\\_files/YouthTaskActionPlan.pdf](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/_files/YouthTaskActionPlan.pdf)

18 <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/deliveringservices/caf/>

19 Further information on Safer Schools Partnerships is available via:  
<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/ete/ssp/>

20 Further information on Parenting Orders is available via:  
<http://www.parentscentre.gov.uk/behaviouranddiscipline/parentingorders/>

21 Further information on Family Nurse Partnerships is available via:  
[http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social\\_exclusion\\_task\\_force/family\\_nurse\\_partnership.aspx](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social_exclusion_task_force/family_nurse_partnership.aspx)

The YCAP sets out the Government's progress over the last decade in improving services for children, young people and their families using early intervention and prevention as guiding principles. Children's Trusts are highlighted as now taking a strategic lead in forging integrated services and implementing the YCAP locally. The investment in positive activities and providing young people with things to do and places to go proposed in the ten year youth strategy and *The Children's Plan*, is reiterated in the YCAP. In particular, the Action Plan makes reference to the £190 million investment in the myplace<sup>22</sup> programme and investing £235m in accessible places for children to play<sup>23</sup>.

Investment in the capacity of the third sector to reduce youth crime is listed as a key action within this chapter. The engagement and innovation of the third sector is recognised as being crucial for reaching the most disaffected young people in local communities. The YCAP highlights previous strategies that have committed funding to the work of the third sector. For example, through its ten year youth strategy, government has made available £100 million funding and support through the Youth Sector Development Fund<sup>24</sup> (YSDF) for third sector youth organisations to expand their work. Preventing youth crime and re-offending are a focus within the YSDF. Other examples of potential third sector funding that will focus on youth crime include the Children, Young People and Families Grant Programme being run by the DCSF, a national programme to fund work by the third sector to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families<sup>25</sup>.

The YCAP envisages that for all practitioners working with young people, the implementation of actions within this chapter will mean:

- a greater focus on youth crime prevention within the broader context of the Every Child Matters framework;
- stronger links and better information sharing between services, so that the needs of the whole family are taken into account; and
- an increased focus on prevention and early intervention before problems spiral out of control.

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22 Further information on myplace is available via: [http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/prog\\_myplace.htm](http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/prog_myplace.htm)

23 Fair Play: A consultation on the play strategy sets out government's plans for improving delivering and accessing play for children and young people. This can be downloaded via: <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications/fairplay/> NCVYS and NCVCCO's response to the consultation is available via the NCVYS and NCVCCO websites: <http://www.ncvys.org.uk> or <http://www.ncvcco.org>

24 Information on the summer round of the YSDF is available via: <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/resources-and-practice/TP00046/>

25 Applications are invited for funding and will close on 31st October 2008. Further information is available at: <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/strategy/voluntaryandcommunity/cyfggrant/>

## 3.4 Supporting young victims

Key actions that the Government proposes to support young victims of crime are listed below and expanded on within the YCAP:

- pilot innovative ways to support young victims and ensure good practice is taken forward from these pilots;
- improve support for witnesses to attend court;
- provide young people with better information on dangers and risks so that they can protect themselves from crime and feel safer;
- be responsive and accountable to young people as well as the wider community; and
- work with partners to develop innovative design solutions to help prevent youth victimisation.

Government is committed to improving the safety of children and young people as detailed in the cross-government *Staying Safe Action Plan*<sup>26</sup>. As part of the YCAP four local projects will be commissioned, in areas where agencies are already providing some services and build on these, to test how the statutory and third sector can provide a more complete service to victims of crime.

The YCAP envisages that for all practitioners working with young people, the implementation of actions within this chapter will mean:

- a clearer message on the support that the Government is offering young victims of crime and what local areas are expected to provide;
- an opportunity, within pilot areas, to contribute to the design of a model of delivering services that meet the individual needs of young victims; and
- greater support to establish local models of support through good practice guidance and support from the Youth Taskforce.

## 3.5 Sentencing and custody

Key actions that the Government proposes around sentencing and custody are listed below and expanded on within the YCAP:

- give the public an opportunity to influence what reparation work young people on community sentences carry out;
- promote alternatives to custody, including continuing pilots of intensive fostering<sup>27</sup>;

<sup>26</sup> <http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=DCSF-00151-2008&>

<sup>27</sup> Intensive fostering can be offered to children on remand, as an alternative to a custodial sentence or part of resettlement after custody. The young person joins a foster family and simultaneously undergoes an intensive behaviour modification programme. Further information on intensive fostering is available via: <http://www.yjb.gov.uk/en-gb/practitioners/ReducingReoffending/IntensiveFostering/>

- ensure young people have things to do when they are likely to offend and that young offenders carry out reparation during their leisure time;
- increase feedback between courts and YOTs;
- commit to a set of principles for magistrates and district judges to follow on the use of custody;
- pilot court reviews of high-risk young offenders on community sentences; and
- explore how to enhance best practice in the delivery of YOT programmes.

The importance of providing places to go and things to do is reiterated in this chapter. Government will work to ensure that more youth centres are open late at weekends and evenings, particularly on Fridays and Saturdays when young people say they need access the most.

This chapter describes existing community penalties and promotes alternatives to custody. It also introduces the new Youth Rehabilitation Order (YRO) that will be in place from autumn 2009. The YRO will replace nine existing sentences and aims to make the sentencing framework more coherent. The new Youth Conditional Caution (YCC) will be piloted from April 2009 for 16-17-year-olds to reduce the number of young people being taken to court for relatively low-level offences.

The YCAP envisages that for all practitioners working with young people, the implementation of actions within this chapter will mean:

- agencies working together to increase community engagement in the response to youth offending;
- greater emphasis on reparative work with young offenders which makes a real difference to local people;
- enhanced relationships between criminal justice agencies working with young people; and
- greater flexibility to tailor interventions to respond to the risks and needs of young offenders.

### 3.6 Breaking the cycle of offending

Key actions that the Government proposes to break the cycle of offending are listed below and expanded on within the YCAP:

- improve education and training for young offenders by giving local authorities a statutory duty to fund and commission education services;
- ensure access to health services for all young offenders;
- reinforce the role of children's services in overseeing resettlement provision;
- develop a more comprehensive package of support for young people leaving custody backed, in the future, through legislation; and
- expand resettlement and aftercare provision.

The YCAP recognises that the social context of young people needs to change to help prevent re-offending. Underlying problems need to be tackled through a joint approach between mainstream children's services and those working in the youth justice system.

*The Children's Plan* stated that government would explore the continuity of care when a child leaves the youth justice system through a green paper. The YCAP replaces this green paper and incorporates proposals to develop a long-term package of reforms. Plans to expand existing resettlement provision include:

- exploring with employers how to improve the employability of young people with criminal records;
- providing suitable accommodation for all young offenders leaving custody;
- providing financial support for those who need it; and
- introducing further measures to support offenders with their sentences, including making suitable arrangements for release, e.g. ensuring that an appropriate adult meets the young person on release.

The YCAP envisages that for all practitioners working with young people, the implementation of actions within this chapter will mean:

- a clearer understanding of how children leaving custody should be supported and by whom and how support should continue past the end of the sentence;
- agreements locally on how children in the youth justice system should be supported when their sentence has finished to ensure they receive ongoing support where needed; and
- children in the youth justice system receiving education of a comparable standard to other children.

### 3.7 Making it happen

Key actions that the Government proposes to successfully implement the YCAP are listed below and expanded on within the document:

- ensure services and agencies take a joined-up approach to individual children, young people and their families;
- ensure there are robust mechanisms for improving the performance of local areas in reducing youth offending;
- consult with local authorities on new measures to support a strengthening of their contribution to the prevention of offending; and
- ensure that the entire children's workforce, including those in the youth justice system, have the capacity and skills to help prevent youth offending. This will be addressed in the *2020 Children's Workforce Strategy* to be published in autumn 2008 by DCSF.

The YCAP recognises the need to strengthen the strategic response to youth crime at a local level and highlights the role of local directors of children's services in bringing together relevant partners to improve outcomes in local areas. Government also wants to reinforce the role of Children's Trusts so that partnership secures prevention objectives more effectively. DCSF is currently consulting on the legislative strengths of Children's Trusts<sup>28</sup>.

Government aims to improve the performance of local areas through monitoring local authorities against 198 national indicators<sup>29</sup>, six of which are on youth crime and youth justice. Government will also consult with local authorities on new measures to strengthen their contribution to the prevention of offending. Measures to be consulted on include:

- making local authorities responsible for the full cost of court-ordered secure remand;
- making the costs of custody more visible;
- developing a formal review process for children who go into custody;
- strengthening expectations for robust resettlement planning; and
- recognising and sharing best practice.

The YCAP envisages that for all practitioners working with young people, the implementation of actions within this chapter will mean:

- a joined-up strategic response to tackling youth crime from all partners in the local area covering prevention of offending through to rehabilitation;
- clarity about who is responsible for individuals within the youth justice system; and
- measures to improve joint working and a wider focus on the skills required to work with children in the youth justice system for all those who are involved in that system.

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28 The consultation is open from 3 July to 25 September 2008, available via: <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations/conDetails.cfm?consultationId=1568>, the options presented in the consultation paper will be taken forward via the Education and Skills Bill expected in the 2008-09 parliamentary session.

29 <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/nationalindicator>

## 4. Possible implications for the children and young people's voluntary and community sector

The recognition within the YCAP that youth crime is a local problem and needs to be effectively dealt with at a local level is welcome. The emphasis on joined-up working and focusing on the needs of individual young children is also promising but the challenge for the sector, as ever, will be working to help ensure that the national rhetoric translates into consistent practice at a local level and that local commissioning structures and funding arrangements help to support this.

Although the YCAP does not specifically focus on the CYPVCS, its proposals can be applied to third sector settings, including organisations that work with children and young people.

This places an onus on the CYPVCS to get involved with government policymaking and influence how plans are implemented at a local level. Through its representation on local strategic bodies, for example Children's Trusts and LSCBs, the CYPVCS can influence decision-making and ensure that the third sector is fully involved in policymaking around children and young people. Representation is often facilitated by local infrastructure organisations such as Councils for Voluntary Youth Services and provides a valuable opportunity to ensure that youth crime remains high profile at local levels. Opportunities should also be used to ensure recognition of third sector support in helping to meet local PSA targets by targeted work with young people at risk of social exclusion. As the role and legislative powers of Children's Trusts are being considered it is crucial that the third sector is fully engaged with the process to ensure that its voice is heard and that the sector is fully reflected in the new arrangements.

The continuation, development and engagement of the CYPVCS in delivering services to children and young people and influencing policymaking is reliant on funding. The YCAP highlights investment in the capacity of the third sector to reduce youth crime through previous government strategies, such as the ten year youth strategy which launched the YSDF. The sector's experience of progressing through the YSDF has been varied, with many established organisations losing out, so it is crucial that the CYPVCS is aware of current and new government funding initiatives. CYPVCS infrastructure organisations can provide a role in sharing information between government and the sector, at both national and local levels.

The YCAP frequently highlights the importance of better links and the sharing of information between services, young people and families. The CYPVCS can facilitate this process as it is often in contact with the most hard-to-reach children, young people and families. However, it can only do this if it is recognised by government as a partner and funded to contribute to information sharing. CYPVCS infrastructure and network organisations should be used to provide an information

conduit between local authorities and local voluntary and community organisations. Government and the CYPVCS need to be proactive in developing and maintaining effective communication channels to ensure that vital information is communicated effectively across statutory and non-statutory agencies in order to strengthen local partnership arrangements and delivery of improved outcomes for young people.

The Youth Taskforce will be working with local partners to develop pilots and provide examples of good practice in areas including safeguarding and supporting young victims. The implementation of the plan will be an excellent opportunity for government to engage with the CYPVCS around these areas and learn from the good practice that already exists. The CYPVCS can also lead developments in engaging young people involved in crime with youth workers and ex-gang members and support when leaving custody and transition to adulthood.

Another area highlighted in the YCAP is the importance of offering children and young people places to go and things to do at times when they need it most. The CYPVCS, and in particular volunteer-led organisations, are key providers of activities for children and young people. These organisations, workers and volunteers need to be fully supported to ensure that their services are accessible in the evenings and weekends.

The YCAP highlights the third sector's role in relation to early intervention; however it is unclear from the document what role the third sector is expected to play in other areas, such as supporting young people in custody. The CYPVCS needs to make government aware of the vital role that it plays in the different areas highlighted within the YCAP to ensure that the importance of funding in these areas is recognised.

The CYPVCS is in an often unique position to get the voice of children and young people themselves heard. Children and young people's views are not included in the YCAP, however through advocacy and offering support, the CYPVCS needs to facilitate engagement with children and young people. The sector's existing work around participation and engagement of young people came out strongly in the recent roundtable discussion held as part of the *Speaking Out* project. Whilst there has been some welcome recognition of the third sector's value in engaging children and young people in local communities this needs to be strengthened further in local implementation plans to ensure sufficient capacity to continue engagement and participation initiatives.

A key part of policymaking is translating national strategy documents into practical reality, especially at a local level. The YCAP is very aspirational and to ensure that it achieves its vision of success, the CYPVCS needs hold the Government to account for delivery, especially at the local level.

## 5. Resources

HM Government's Youth Crime Action Plan is available at:

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications/youthcrimeactionplan/>

Other Department for Children, Schools and Families publications, including the ten year youth strategy and The Children's Plan, are available at:

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications/>

DCSF's Youth Taskforce Action Plan is available at:

<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/youthmatters/ytf/actionplan/>

Information on Every Child Matters is available at:

<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/>

The Speaking Out briefing paper on the Comprehensive Spending Review is available via the NCVYS and NCVCCO websites:

<http://www.ncvys.org.uk>

<http://www.ncvcco.org>

Information on central government funding opportunities is available via:

<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/youthmatters/aiminghigh/>

## 6. Other briefings

- Briefing 1** Knife, gun and gang crime
- Briefing 2** The Government's Social Exclusion Agenda
- Briefing 3** Access to Services in Rural Areas
- Briefing 4** Public Service Delivery
- Briefing 5** Community Cohesion
- Briefing 6** Local Government Reform
- Briefing 7** Placeshaping
- Briefing 8** The Comprehensive Spending Review
- Briefing 9** Rural migrant children, families and young people
- Briefing 10** Gang, Gun and Knife Crime: Seeking Solutions (Part 2)
- Briefing 11** Ministry of Justice Third Sector Strategy

All the briefings are available at [www.ncvcco.org](http://www.ncvcco.org) or [www.ncvys.org.uk](http://www.ncvys.org.uk)















