

Speaking Out project update

Gang, Gun and Knife Crime: Seeking Solutions

In partnership with the Association of Principal Youth and Community Officers (APYCO) and the National Youth Agency (NYA), the Speaking Out project has published a series of recommendations in a report entitled *Gang, Gun and Knife Crime: Seeking Solutions*, advocating that multi-agency work involving both voluntary and statutory sectors is key to responding effectively to this complex, multifaceted issue, and requires an appropriate mix of enforcement and prevention. Approaches must involve young people, families and communities to fully understand the problems and help create solutions. More transparent and needs-led commissioning is required along with sustainable long-term funding and cross-government strategic planning that tackles social and economic disadvantage as well as providing more relevant employment opportunities for young people.

To download a free copy of the document >> [Gang, Gun and Knife Crime: Seeking Solutions Report](#)

Speaking Out consultation meetings

Two roundtable consultation events were held in February 2008 to discuss the Ministry of Justice Third Sector Strategy and the forthcoming Youth Crime Action Plan, and the Defra Third Sector Strategy. The events gave delegates, from a range of children and young people's voluntary and community organisations, the opportunity to share their experience and highlight examples of good practice with colleagues from the public sector, jointly exploring ways in which the government could work more effectively with third sector stakeholders. Both events were well received and were regarded as a useful opportunity to hear other organisations' views, meet representatives working on similar issues and contribute to policy-shaping.

The Speaking Out project has submitted responses to both the [Defra Third Sector Strategy](#) and the [Ministry of Justice Third Sector Strategy](#). A response to the Youth Crime Action Plan is to follow.

For more general information on the project >> [Speaking Out Project](#)

Place-shaping Video Competition Winners

In January 2008, the Speaking Out project, with partners YMCA and the Foyer Federation, ran a place-shaping video competition to give children and young people the opportunity to influence the way their local communities are shaped, helping to create a place in which they can belong, contribute and thrive. The winners of this competition received up to £1000 to create videos, which will be screened at the upcoming place-shaping conference on 13 May. They will also be able to talk about where they live, what they want from their local area and how they can participate

in deciding how their area is shaped. The winning videos are by children and young people supported by the following organisations: CYCES Education (The Together Trust); Children's Links; NCH Herefordshire; Barnado's B76; Darlington YMCA; Bournemouth YMCA; Bradford Foyer and West Kent YWCA.

For more information on the conference, please contact Mubeen Bhutta at NCVCCO via email: mubeen@ncvcco.org

In the news

Libraries offer

In January 2008, the Museums, Libraries and Archives (MLA) Council launched an 'offer' to young people defining what they should be entitled to from their local library. This includes: participation in shaping the future of library services; volunteering opportunities with younger or older library users; formal and informal learning support for educational attainment; and free, safe and welcoming spaces in the local community.

For more information >> [Museums Libraries and Archives – Youth Offer](#)

Grassroots Grants

In January 2008, the Office of the Third Sector (OTS) launched the Grassroots Grants programme to be delivered by the Community Development Foundation (CDF). The programme, which will invest £130 million between 2008 and 2011, is divided into two parts: an £80 million small grants fund for community organisations; and a £50 million endowments programme to enable local funders to generate additional donations on a matched basis. The programme aims to build capacity by providing long-term funding for frontline community organisations.

For more information >> [Grassroots Grants programme](#)

Healthier choices

In January 2008, Health Secretary, Alan Johnson and the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families, Ed Balls announced a new £372 million cross-government strategy to support healthier living - *Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives: A Cross Government Strategy for England*. The strategy includes a £75 million marketing campaign to support and empower parents to make changes to their children's diet and increase levels of physical activity and an investment of £30 million in 'Healthy Towns' following the successful EPODE (Ensemble Prevenons Lobesite Des Enfants) model which uses infrastructure and whole town approaches to promote physical activity.

For more information >> [Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives: A Cross Government Strategy for England](#)

ACPO Strategy

In January 2008, the Association for Chief Police Officers (ACPO) published its *Strategy for Children and Young People – It's Never Too Early... It's Never Too Late*, arguing that early detection of potential young offenders could have a dramatic impact on cutting future youth crime. The strategy sets out four key themes: engaging with young people, supporting child victims and witnesses, helping those at risk of becoming offenders, and tackling offenders.

To download the full document >> [ACPO Strategy for Children and Young People](#)

Violent Crime Action Plan

In February 2008, the Home Office released *Saving Lives. Reducing Harm. Protecting the Public. An Action Plan for Tackling Violence 2008-11*, which set out what the government, together with police and local agencies, will do over the next three years to cut homicide, knife crime, gun- and gang-related crime, and sexual and domestic violence. Key actions include a £1 million campaign to challenge the idea that weapons are 'glamorous', and address the fear and peer pressure that drive youngsters to carry weapons. The plan also promises to do more to protect children from sex offenders.

For more information >> [Violent Crime Action Plan](#)

Integration and Cohesion

In February 2008, Communities and Local Government (CLG) published its response to the Commission on Integration and Cohesion's final report - *Our Shared Future*, which reviewed the major challenges Britain faces in responding to increasing change in local communities. The actions proposed by CLG include the creation of specialist cohesion teams to advise local authorities on managing migration, a new guidance for funders to support cohesion and guidance on creating introduction packs to help migrants to integrate into British life, contribute to the economy and help avoid community tensions.

For more information >> [CLG Response to the Commission on Integration and Cohesion's final report](#)

Teenage drinking

In February 2008, Home Secretary Jacqui Smith announced police powers to prevent underage drinking, and called for more involvement by parents and the alcohol industry to deal with the problem of teenage alcohol abuse. Key actions include a police crackdown on underage drinking in public places; getting parents more involved in their children's drinking addictions; and a new public information campaign directed at binge drinkers.

For more information >> [Teenage drinking](#)

Children's health research

In March 2008, the Department of Health announced £42 million in funding for research into childhood obesity, infant mortality and keeping children safe in the home. In total, 25 research teams received funding from the National Institute for Health Research to investigate a wide range of chronic and debilitating health conditions, including angina, long-term neurological conditions, skin disease and the effectiveness of vitamin D for preventing acute respiratory illness.

For more information >> [Children's health research](#)

Probation trusts

In April 2008, the Ministry of Justice launched six new probation trusts as part of the government's drive to reduce re-offending, operating in England and Wales: Dyfed Powys; Humberside; Leicestershire and Rutland; Merseyside; South Wales; and West Mercia. Trust status, introduced through the Offender Management Act 2007, will allow probation services more independence to focus their work on local communities. In explaining the reasoning behind the new trusts, the Minister

for Justice David Hanson MP said that for many offenders, community-based punishments have proven to be more effective at reducing reoffending than short-term prison sentences. In addition, they will allow the Probation Service to use services from the public, private and voluntary sector which provide the best route to help rehabilitate and punish offenders that are the most cost-effective to the tax payer.

For more information >> [Probation trusts press release](#)

NABIS

The new National Ballistics Intelligence Service (NABIS) began its roll-out in April and is expected to be fully operational by September 2008. The database NABIS will deliver comprehensive forensic information to identify weapons and link gun crime incidents, operating in Birmingham, London and Manchester. The intelligence gathered by NABIS will also be used to proactively prevent and detect the importation and manufacture of illegal firearms and ammunition into and within the UK. NABIS has initially been jointly funded by the Home Office and the Association of Chief Police Officers, with a total investment of £8 million.

For more information >> [National Ballistics Intelligence Services](#)

Events and consultations

Immigration and children

In January 2008, the Border and Immigration Agency (BIA) launched a consultation on the *Code of Practice for Keeping Children Safe from Harm*. The draft code used for BIA staff, sought for a range of views on how to improve the way that children are handled within and by the immigration system. The consultation closed in April and a response is expected.

For more information >> [Code of Practice BIA Consultation](#)

The BIA has also released the Government's key reforms as a result of the consultation on unaccompanied asylum seeking children from spring 2007. The document *Better Outcomes: The way forward improving the care of unaccompanied asylum seeking children* can be downloaded >> [Better Outcomes Document](#)

Voluntary Sector in Criminal Justice: Prospects for Citizenship

An event is being organised at Keele University on the voluntary sector's engagement in the criminal justice system, on 16-17 September 2008. The past two decades have witnessed a remarkable rise of the voluntary/third sector as a force in policy making and as a 'partner' with government in delivering criminal justice services. This conference will explore the positive prospects and critical implications of these developments for the voluntary sector, government, statutory criminal justice and welfare services, communities and offenders.

For more information about registering for the conference and/or contributing a paper for the event >> [Voluntary Sector in Criminal Justice: Prospects for Citizenship](#)

Children's Environment and Health Strategy

In March 2008, the Health Protection Agency (HPA) launched the *Children's Environment and Health Strategy for the UK*, making recommendations as to the areas that may need to be addressed in order to meet the UK's commitments to the Children's Environment and Health Action Plan for Europe (CEHAPE) and further improve children's environmental health in the UK. The HPA is currently seeking feedback from interested parties on the Strategy and responses are welcome until 13 June 2008.

For more information >> [Children's Environment and Health Strategy](#)

Information resources

Binge drinking

In January 2008, a new national survey of 1,250 young people revealed that drinking to get drunk is starting younger with serious consequences to health and crime. The survey, published in the report *Binge drinking: young people's attitudes and behaviour*, was commissioned by Positive Futures, a national social inclusion programme funded by the Home Office and managed by the charity, Crime Concern, which has recently merged with Rainer, a national charity for under-supported young people.

For more information >> [Binge drinking: young people's attitudes and behaviour](#)

Cannabis supply

In January 2008, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation published a piece of research suggesting that many young people gain access to drugs through older brothers and sisters, through friends and friends of friends, so-called 'social supply' networks. The study interviewed 182 young people aged 11–19, all of whom had used cannabis and/or been involved in cannabis transactions in recent months. This group is unlikely to be representative of young people in general, so the report presents a snapshot view.

For more information >> [JRF drug and alcohol research programme](#)

Rural activities

In January 2008, the Rural Youth Network, in partnership with The National Youth Agency, produced a briefing on *Positive Activities in a Rural Context*. The briefing was the result of a survey which was carried out at the end of 2007 to find out how well the Local Offer of positive activities has been developed and rolled out in rural communities.

For more information >> [Positive Activities in a Rural Context Briefing](#)

Preventing youth crime

In February 2008, the Institute for Public Policy Research published a report on preventing youth crime – *Make Me a Criminal: Preventing youth crime*. This comparative research on youth crime and anti-social behaviour makes the case for a more therapeutic and family-based approach to youth offending with a range of recommendations including goal-orientated extra-curricular activities and early interventions, as opposed to the present, more punitive system.

For more information >> [Make Me a Criminal: Preventing youth crime](#)

Alcohol epidemic

In February 2008, the British Medical Association published a report – *Alcohol misuse: tackling the UK epidemic* looking at how alcohol consumption represents an integral part of modern culture in the UK and internationally. The report focuses some attention on the growing rate of consumption among young people, and sets out policy recommendations for consideration.

For more information >> [Alcohol misuse: tackling the UK epidemic](#)

Healthy weight guidance

In February 2008, the Department of Health published a new guidance which follows on from the publication of the Government's obesity strategy *Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives: A Cross-Government strategy for England*. The guidance, aimed at health and social care professionals, provides advice to Primary Care Trusts and local authorities on how to set child obesity goals as part of the Vital Signs and the National Indicator Set.

For more information >> [Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives: A Cross-Government strategy for England](#)

Vulnerable children

In March 2008, the National Foundation for Educational Research published new research on meeting the needs of the most vulnerable children across the five Every Child Matters outcomes – *Narrowing the gap in outcomes for vulnerable groups: a review of the research evidence*. The research was commissioned by the Local Government Association and emphasises the importance of creating a positive school environment, whole-family interventions, home learning environments and local leadership.

For more information >> [Narrowing the gap in outcomes for vulnerable groups](#)

Mentoring and befriending resources

In April 2008, the Home Office published new resources on mentoring and befriending in relation to drugs, as part of the FRANK programme in partnership with the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation. *Mentoring, befriending and drugs: Advice for mentors and befrienders* is a guide to drugs and the issues affecting young people, containing advice on talking to young people about drugs; drug facts, risks and the law; and what to do if there's a problem. A second resource is aimed at co-ordinators running mentoring projects, and a pocket sized advice card is available, with tips for what to do in an emergency and details of the recovery position.

For more information >> [Mentoring, befriending and drugs resources](#)

Built Environment

The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) has worked in partnership with the Department for Children, Schools and Families in providing advice and guidance to partners involved in the delivery of the SureStart children's centre. In March 2008, CABE published a guide – *Sure Start: Every building matters*, drawing on the lessons that local authorities and other key partners have learned and highlighting the importance of quality design.

For more information >> [Sure Start: Every building matters](#)

As part of their regular publication 360 degrees, CABE have explored sustainability (Issue 15 – Spring 2008), reporting on how young people can learn about it through

the spaces and places around them. The articles include a visit to one of the largest skate parks in Europe and visit an eco-school in The Netherlands.

For more information >> [360 degrees – Spring issue 2008](#)

Further information

This free quarterly bulletin is prepared by Ilona Pinter as part of Speaking Out, a partnership project between the National Council of Voluntary Child Care Organisations (NCVCCO) and the National Council for Voluntary Youth Services (NCVYS). As a strategic partnership funded by the Office of the Third Sector, Cabinet Office, the project seeks to build a voice for the children and young people's voluntary and community sector across government.

If you forward the bulletin to other people or use information from it in your own publications, please make sure to credit the Speaking Out project. Please email ilona@ncvys.org.uk for further details.

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