

<b>Protective Marking</b>	Not Protectively Marked
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<b>Title</b>	Metropolitan Police Service Youth Strategy 2003 - 2008
<b>Version</b>	1
<b>Summary</b>	The Youth Strategy sets out the Aims and Objectives to reduce the chances of children and young people becoming involved in crime, either as offenders or perpetrators. The strategy articulates not just what the MPS itself will aim to do but also what activity we should try to stimulate amongst our partners – in Government, Local Authorities, the voluntary sector and elsewhere.
<b>Branch / OCU</b>	Territorial Policing
<b>Date created</b>	7 <sup>th</sup> March 2003
<b>Review date</b>	2008

Intelligence

Investigation

Diversion

Metropolitan Police Service

# Youth Strategy

2003 to 2008



**Working in partnership  
to reduce youth crime  
and victimisation**

Community Safety and Partnership Unit

Problem Solving

Targeting

Forensics



**METROPOLITAN  
POLICE**

*Working for a safer London*

***The overall aim of the MPS Youth Strategy for 2003-2008 is 'to reduce youth crime and victimisation of young people through a structured and holistic partnership approach'.***

## 1 Introduction

- 1.1** Our Youth Strategy sets out the policy for us to reduce youth crime and youth victimisation effectively and efficiently in line with our policing model for all young people up to and including 17 years old. This strategy is a five-year plan that covers the period 2003 to 2008. It sets out the broad framework that we can use, through the work of boroughs and in partnership with other criminal justice agencies, to adopt a longer-term approach to tackle the complicated areas of youth crime and victimisation.
- 1.2** It is also intended to be a guide for police borough command units when engaged in partnership planning and in developing local youth strategies.
- 1.3** This strategy is not meant to act as a constraint on existing work or to provide all the answers. However, it does provide a template for us, in partnership with other agencies, to reduce the involvement of young people in crime, reduce re-offending and to keep young people safe.
- 1.4** An annual Action Plan will provide extra guidance for the MPS as a whole, for boroughs and other key partner agencies to put the strategy into practice.

## 2 The need for the strategy

Concerns over the increased volume in youth offending have been developing for some time as a result of a number of factors.

- The increase in street crime, much of it committed by and against young people, when crime rates as a whole are falling.
- The high proportion of street crime offenders found, on arrest, to be first time entrants to the criminal justice system.
- Crime tends to be concentrated in the more deprived parts of inner cities and we will focus our actions in these areas.
- Academically validated risk factors for involvement in criminality tend to cluster around those who live in the more deprived localities within the inner cities.
- We believe that targeting resources to help young people avoid crime is a social responsibility and an effective way of reducing overall crime.
- The effectiveness of the criminal justice system in relation to young offenders and victims.

- The adequacy of secure facilities for detaining youth offenders and the need for improved quality and quantity of community sentences.
- The criminal careers of many delinquent children appear to be starting earlier, becoming more intense and ending later.

## 3 The causes of youth offending

There is no single cause of youth crime. However, research in a number of countries has consistently identified factors in childhood, adolescence and early adulthood that increase the risk of a young person offending<sup>1</sup>. These risk factors include the following.

### Family

- Their parents are involved in crime
- There is poor parental supervision
- Their parents neglect them, there is erratic discipline or they are treated harshly
- Family income is low or they are isolated
- Family conflict

### School

- They lack the commitment to go to school
- They play truant (with or without their parents' permission)
- Their behaviour is disruptive (including bullying)
- They are low achievers
- They have been excluded from school

### Community

- Lack of community cohesion
- There are opportunities for crime
- Drugs are readily available
- High child densities

### Personal

- Their personality
- They feel alienated with little or no commitment towards society or their community
- Early involvement in problem behaviour
- Their friends are involved in anti-social behaviour
- They spend a lot of unsupervised time with friends

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<sup>1</sup> From "Risk and Protective factors associated with youth crime and effective interventions to prevent it", Andreson, Bienhart, Pro Farrington, Longman, Sturgis & Utting, Youth Justice Board (YJB) Research Note No 5 2002.

## Early adulthood

- They have no qualifications
- They have no work experience
- They are unemployed or on a low income
- They receive no advice or support
- They are homeless, or are threatened with homelessness

It is important to emphasise that this is not a full list of risk factors. We have resisted the temptation to include other suggestions, because the list represents those that can be validated by academic research.

# 4 The outline of the strategy

- 4.1** The youth strategy is based on our policing model<sup>2</sup> and is also based on the evidence that concentrating on enforcement or criminal justice system measures alone will not be enough to reduce youth offending.
- 4.2** This evidence relates to the fact that crime tends to be concentrated in the more deprived areas of London. These areas tend to have relatively high concentrations of people from ethnic minorities, within which population growth is above average. Reliance on purely enforcement measures may thus have negative consequences in terms of proportionality and social cohesion.
- 4.3** It is recognised that there are groups of young people who are not yet offending but who are at risk of drifting into crime or becoming victims of crime. The strategy is based on the suggestion that social conditions create potential criminals. An overall approach to each intervention and diversion will help prevent young people from becoming involved in crime.
- 4.4** Young people who become involved in crime, and go to prison or a detention centre, will continue to be labelled as criminals. Their chances in life (for example, employment) are often greatly reduced, and they may be excluded from society. Becoming a victim of crime damages children in the short term and may, in the longer term, have similarly negative effects.
- 4.5** An intelligence led approach to the problems of young people involved in crime is at the heart of the strategy. There may be a need to increase the overall resources base both from the MPS, but principally from other agencies, devoted to youth crime. Whatever the overall amount of resources devoted to this area of work, it is essential to target these resources at those young people and areas of greatest need and/or vulnerability. Targeting resources needs shared information to identify individuals and groups of young people, and specific areas for improved support.

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<sup>2</sup> The policing model looks at six areas of intervention – intelligence, investigation, diversion, problem-solving, targeting and forensics. This approach maximises involvement of all agencies looking to prevent young people from offending or becoming victims.

## 5 The aims and objectives of the Youth Strategy

The overall goal of this strategy is to reduce as far as possible the chances of young people becoming involved in crime.

The intelligence function is to provide information to identify individuals, groups of young people and specific areas which justify using either enforcement or diversionary measures to tackle offending or to prevent individuals or groups of young people from offending or re-offending.

We are not the only organisation responsible for carrying out the intelligence function. All agencies with the ability to collect and analyse information should be involved. In the medium to long term, we expect that the intelligence function will be carried out within either the Youth Offending Team (YOT) or as part of the joint work of the police, local authorities and any other agencies that are able to contribute. We will make sure this information is included in our intelligence process.

### Intelligence

#### **Aim:**

*To target 'persistent young offenders' and those most at risk of becoming either victims or offenders by intelligence-led policing and multi-agency partnerships.*

#### **Enabling Objectives:**

- 5.1** To create and facilitate an intelligence-led and problem solving approach to focus on 'persistent young offenders'.
- 5.2** To make sure that targeting 'persistent young offenders' is a borough policing objective.
- 5.3** To make sure that protocols are established with our main partners so that appropriate responses are in place at each stage of the youth justice system.
- 5.4** To establish a flow of 'community information' between young people and the police in schools and youth clubs in order to set up 'Junior Crimestoppers'.
- 5.5** To work with the Children and Young People's Unit (a cross-cutting Government unit) to develop the Identification, Referral and Tracking (IRT) Project.<sup>3</sup>
- 5.6** To work with individual boroughs to develop local aspects of the IRT Project.

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<sup>3</sup> The Identification, Referral and Tracking of Children at Risk is a national project run by many agencies and aimed at developing ways of dealing with vulnerable at risk young people. Partnerships need to have systems in place by September 2003. It is being tested at ten pilot sites, three within the MPS.

## 6 Investigation

### **Aim:**

*To support the Crown Prosecution Service and courts by providing quality case papers so that our partners can deal with children and young people quickly and effectively within the criminal justice system.*

### **Enabling Objectives:**

- 6.1** To make sure that police resources are appropriately directed towards those young offenders who are at the highest risk of re-offending.
- 6.2** To have efficient systems in place at borough level for dealing with 'persistent young offenders' to ensure that the time from arrest to sentence meets Government standards.
- 6.3** To make sure that a service level agreement is in place with YOTs for dealing with and processing Reprimands and Final Warnings (making sure that at least 80% of Final Warnings are accompanied by effective interventions).
- 6.4** To set up, in partnership with YOTs and youth courts, a service level agreement to make sure that young offenders keep to their bail conditions.
- 6.5** To develop robust data sharing arrangements between key partners, that ensures confidence, confidentiality and integrity.
- 6.6** To link police work in YOTs with local operational policing strategies to develop a more joined-up approach.
- 6.7** To participate in and support the work of YOTs, for example, the Intensive Support and Surveillance Programme (ISSP) and curfew schemes.
- 6.8** To promote the use of Acceptable Behaviour Contracts and, where appropriate, Anti-Social Behaviour Orders.
- 6.9** To work with professional and community partners to make sure that appropriate protection and support measures are in place to meet the individual needs of vulnerable young victims and witnesses throughout the criminal justice system.
- 6.10** To provide an environment for young people who are victims or witnesses to feel confident about reporting crime and disorder.
- 6.11** To establish a protocol with schools for crime reporting and information sharing.
- 6.12** To work with our main partners to develop the restorative justice process.

## 7 Diversion

### **Aim:**

*To make sure that those children and young people at greatest risk of becoming involved in crime and anti-social behaviour are provided with the best possible support, through education, early intervention and partnership working, to avoid involvement in crime.*

### **Enabling Objectives:**

- 7.1** To offer support, guidance and training for officers working with schools.
- 7.2** To establish a Voluntary Cadet Corps in every borough, in line with MPS policy and guidance.
- 7.3** To set up, in partnership with local authorities, a Junior Citizen scheme in every borough to promote citizenship and personal safety.
- 7.4** To make sure that truancy sweeps are conducted in line with MPS policy and to ensure that they are conducted to meet the needs of schools, the local education authority and the police.
- 7.5** To help schools, Pupil Referral Units and key agencies to develop and establish systems to monitor and track excluded pupils.
- 7.6** To make sure that officers who work with children and young people are trained in child protection issues.
- 7.7** To set up a missing person's protocol for young people with key agencies with a focus on children who go missing from care.
- 7.8** To work with partners, families and communities (within the current information sharing arrangements) to maximise the diversionary activities available to the most at risk young people, Splash schemes and Youth Inclusion Projects (YIPs).
- 7.9** To identify, at local level, the voluntary groups, charities, community and religious groups, and to work with them and other partners to provide or improve support.

## 8 Problem Solving

### **Aim:**

*To build and maintain positive relationships between young people and the police.*

### **Enabling Objectives:**

- 8.1** To consult and talk with a variety of young people to help us understand the issues they face.
- 8.2** To take account of the views of young people in setting policing policy and practice at local community level.
- 8.3** To work with key partners to meet the identified needs of each 'persistent young offender', to break their cycle of offending behaviour.
- 8.4** To promote the use of our problem solving process within the Safer Schools Partnership and Youth arena.

## 9 Targeting

### **Aim:**

*To focus partnership working within statutory and non-statutory organisations, to make an effective contribution to reducing youth crime and victimisation.*

### **Enabling Objectives:**

- 9.1** To make sure that the key issues concerning young people i.e. crime and victimisation are featured in local Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategies.
- 9.2** To make sure that borough Community Safety Units tackle the needs of young victims of crime.
- 9.3** To make sure that all agencies involved with youth diversion schemes at borough level are in direct contact with the YOT.
- 9.4** To promote joint training between the police and other agencies to increase the awareness of youth crime and diversion.
- 9.5** To develop a 'youth media strategy' to promote good news stories concerning young people.
- 9.6** To actively identify young people leaving young offender institutions to make sure they receive adequate resettlement support – education, housing and medical care.
- 9.7** To offer support, guidance and care, in partnership with the YJB and YOTs, to young people released from young offender institutions.

## 10 Forensics

### **Aim:**

*To maximise the forensic opportunities when dealing with persistent young offenders.*

### **Enabling Objectives:**

- 10.1** To make sure that we use the fast-tracking system to prioritise forensic samples sent in for testing, and to deal with persistent young offenders and those who could be eligible for Anti-Social Behaviour Orders.
- 10.2** To make sure that all officers who deal with persistent young offenders are aware of the forensic opportunities available to them.

## 11 Monitoring and Evaluation

- 11.1** The Community Safety and Partnership Unit will produce a yearly Action Plan that will form the working document to deliver the aims and objectives within the strategy. It will outline the lead agency and individual task leader for each action. The actions have been grouped together under the headings of the Territorial Policing Model. They will monitor the progress of individual actions every three months, and will track the relevant performance indicators.
- 11.2** We have developed a computerised performance information framework to compare youth involvement in crime on a borough by borough basis. We will monitor the data on young people accused of crime and victims of crime to identify any disproportionality. Collection of this complex data has only just started. The data will also allow us to analyse both the demand for youth diversion activity and the relative success of boroughs. We should also be able to identify which boroughs are achieving above average success and so identify where good practice exists which can be shared with others.
- 11.3** The ability to measure the performance of boroughs is crucial if we are to play a full and effective role in managing our own performance and encouraging better performance by our partners.
- 11.4** We will review the strategy thoroughly each year and our MPS consultancy group will help us in the evaluation process.

